

THE WAR OF NGCAYECIBI 1877 - 8

Thesis

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MICHAEL WOLSELEY SPICER

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
PROLOGUE: THE MAIN CHARACTERS	iv
I THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872	1
II 1872-77: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED	24
III AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT	68
IV SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA	102
V DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED	144
VI GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE	186
VII THE TRANSKEI 1878-81: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT	214
CONCLUSION	241
 <u>APPENDICES</u>	
I REPORT ON FIELDWORK	249
II XHOSA GENEALOGY	253
BIBLIOGRAPHY	254
 <u>MAPS AND CARTOONS</u>	
1. South Eastern Africa 1877	opp p. 249
2. British Kaffraria after the Cattle Killing	opp p. 4
3. Southern Gcalekaland	opp p. 249
4. Eastward Ho! A Typical view of Sarhili	opp p. 88
5. The Perie Bush	opp p. 184
6. The Queenstown and Indwe District	opp p. 203
7. The Waterkloof, Schelmkloof and Blinkwater area	opp p. 212

PREFACE

This work makes no pretence at being a comprehensive account of the War of Ngcayecibi and its context in Cape and Imperial History. It omits all but passing reference to Imperial Policy, Frere's Federation plans, the Constitutional Crisis and the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry, all of which have been more than adequately covered elsewhere. Rather it concentrates on a study of the war in terms of black/white relations. The responses of the blacks to white pressures on their land and traditional society are examined, particularly those of Sarhili and the Gcaleka, for Sarhili, the gentlemanly but tragic Paramount Chief of the Xhosa, is the central figure in the canvas of black Ciskeian and Transkeian leaders of the time, and the War of Ngcayecibi is very much a Xhosa war. I have tried to avoid a conventional account of the military operations of the war, sketching only the broad outlines of military operations and concentrating on the strategies adopted by black and white forces, and the reasons for which various black chiefdoms or segments thereof participated in the war.

Orthography. The matter of orthography is a tricky one, for Xhosa orthography has been recently overhauled and is not yet finalised. I have attempted with the aid of Mr Sidney Zotwana of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University to adopt the most acceptable forms of Xhosa names. I have dropped the use of all prefixes since I felt their use would have been pedantic in what, after all, is an English language thesis and since there is no chance of confusion between historical figures like Gcaleka and the amaGcaleka people.

Sources. The documents printed in Cape and Imperial Blue-Books, especially the Cape Blue-Books on Native Affairs for the years 1874-1884, and the correspondence in the Native Affairs Archive in the Government Archives in Cape Town, proved to be the most valuable official and semi-official sources. The Merriman and Molteno Papers in the South African Library in Cape Town were the most useful private papers consulted, though odd items in the Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, proved of use.

The rash of memoirs published after the war were, with exceptions, singularly unilluminating. Most prominent amongst the exceptions was West W. Fynn: The 1877 War... (East London, 1911), an account of the war written by the Clerk of the Resident to Sarhili. Although Fynn has a grudge against treatment he received from the Colonial Government at the time, and is not above dramatising his role, he was in an unparalleled position to observe the events leading up to the war and records much valuable information.

The voluminous notebooks in Cory Library of the late Dr A.W. Burton, an amateur Border historian who had researched the war, were interesting but difficult to use because of an almost total lack of footnoting or reference to sources.

J.H. Soga's two works, The South Eastern Bantu (Johannesburg, 1930) and The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs (Lovedale, 1931) are well known and proved useful but, as will be seen, have to be treated with care. Of more modern works, J. Peires: "A History of the Xhosa c.1700-1835"

(unp. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1976) proved invaluable as a background to Xhosa society and earlier Xhosa history. The works of Christopher Saunders, who has written much on topics related to the war, were indispensable. C.J. Schoeman: "Die Negende Grensbotsing" (unp. M.A. thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, 1976), the one general study of the war thus far written, covers military operations at great length and is a work very much in the mould of traditional Afrikaner Frontier Historiography.

Abbreviations.

Col. Sec.	Colonial Secretary
D.S.A.B.	Dictionary of South African Bibliography
S.N.A.	Secretary for Native Affairs

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Professor T.R.H. Davenport, my supervisor;

My parents and my wife, Ireen.

PROLOGUE: THE MAIN CHARACTERS.

I have thought it useful here to summarise the relevant details about the main black and white protagonists. I have given the relevant D.S.A.B. reference as other sources are referred to in the text, except for Veldtman for whom there is not D.S.A.B. entry. There is a Xhosa genealogy in the Appendices for less important black figures not mentioned in the footnotes.

THE BLACKSMaphasa (c.1835-1894)

Not to be confused with Maphasa the Tshatshu Thembu chief. Son of Bhurhu, the Right Hand son of Khawuta. Maphasa was perhaps the second most important chief in Gcalekaland and head of the Tsonyana clan. The history of his opposition to Sarhili began when he refused to believe in the Cattle Killing and went into exile. In 1872 Maphasa again refused to support Sarhili, this time in his campaign against Ngangelizwe, and increasingly thereafter Maphasa advocated the reception of the Gcaleka under British rule, a step he anticipated would lead to independent status for himself and the Tsonyana. It was the Tsonyana who were involved in the beer-drink at Ngcayecibi's Kraal and who instigated much of the trouble that followed, but Maphasa refused to fight the whites and, looking for personal advantage, in an abrupt volte-face as the war broke out, he joined the colonists as an active ally.

D.S.A.B., i, 503-4.

Ngangelizwe (c.1840-1884)

The eldest son of Mthikrakra and Paramount Chief of the Thembu. A man of unstable temperament, he wished to unite the fragmented Thembu Paramountcy, but this ambition brought him into conflict with Sarhili and the nascent Gcaleka power. Ngangelizwe's ill-treatment of two Gcaleka women, one Sarhili's daughter, provoked open confrontation with the Gcaleka and Ngangelizwe turned to the British to save him from abject defeat. On the reception of the Thembu as British subjects in 1875, he was deposed for his misdeeds, but was reinstated to his position in 1876 when the Thembu rallied to his cause. Thereafter he sought official favour by demonstrating undivided loyalty to the Colony, and thus committed the Thembu as active allies of the Colonists in the War of Ngcayecibi, despite Thembu discontent with British rule.

D.S.A.B., ii, 514-5.

Sandile (1820-1878)

Son of Ngqika and his great wife Sutu, Chief of the amaNgqika and Paramount Chief of the Rharhabe. A popular chief despite a certain cruel streak which might have been related to his physical disability (he had a withered leg from birth), Sandile has wrongly been accused of having a weak and vacillating character. His siding with the war party in the War of the Axe, the War of Mlanjeni and the War of Ngcayecibi was not the result of vacillation and weakness, but rather of a fervent nationalism, and a realisation that white rule would undermine not only his power but also traditional Xhosa society as a whole. Thus in 1877, although the most influential of his chiefs

and councillors advised against war, Sandile, encouraged by the young bloods, felt compelled to support the Paramountcy in its struggle as well as desiring to engage in one last attempt to throw off white rule. Defeated with Sarhili in open engagement with the whites, he retired to the Perie Bush area near King William's Town where, with other Rharhabe chiefs he had summoned to his aid, he conducted a desperate guerilla war of resistance. The war of attrition mounted against him sapped his force's strength and he was killed by a Mfengu patrol in May 1878.

D.S.A.B., ii, 614-6.

Sarhili (Kreli) (c.1814-1892)

Great son of Hintsa, Chief of the amaGcaleka and Paramount Chief of all the Xhosa. A man respected and loved by his people and by those whites who knew him well, Sarhili was essentially a tragic figure. From the death of his father in 1835 at the hands of the colonists, Sarhili fought a losing battle with expanding white rule. A consummate diplomatist and ardent nationalist, Sarhili sought to maintain Gcaleka independence without ever directly clashing with the whites, but indirect Gcaleka aid to the Ngqika in the 1846 and 1851 wars resulted in the white invasion of Gcalekaland and the seizure of thousands of Gcaleka cattle. Sarhili fostered the Gattle Killing, almost certainly in a genuine belief in the prophecies of Mhlakaza and Nonqawuse, but this action sealed his fate as the villain of the frontier in white eyes. He was driven from Gcalekaland into exile across the Mbashe and when he was allowed back to part of his land in 1865, it was to find himself face to face with the indignity of the Mfengu settled on his former land. The Colonial Authorities, afraid of Sarhili's influence and potential power, thenceforth consciously discriminated against him and the Gcaleka in their dealings with the other Transkeian chiefdoms, and a quarrel with the Thembu hastened Colonial expansion into the Transkeian Territories and brought yet another Gcaleka opponent under British protection. Overcrowding and the slow constriction of Gcaleka independence drove the Gcaleka into a corner, and when a quarrel broke out with the Mfengu in 1877 Sarhili, despite the sure knowledge that the Gcaleka would be defeated and dispersed, decided under pressure from his councillors and chiefs to fight the Mfengu and their allies, the whites. Sarhili tried to unite the Xhosa in a common struggle, but after crushing defeats at the two major pitched battles of the war, he gave up the struggle and went into exile in Pondoland and later Bomvanaland.

D.S.A.B., i, 686-8.

Veldtman Bikitsha (c.1822-1910)

By birth a petty chief of the Zizi clan, he had fought with distinction under Sir Walter Currie in the wars of 1846 and 1851. As the most important Mfengu leader and living on the Gcaleka boundary, he was the focal point of Gcaleka hostility and his location was particularly threatened by the Gcaleka in August and September 1877. Successfully pleading for white support then, he rallied the Transkeian Mfengu to the Mfengu Levies during the war and was the only Mfengu to hold a commission.

J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside: A History of the Abambo... (Butterworth, 1912)

THE WHITESCharles Pacalt Brownlee (1821-1890)

Eldest son of the famous missionary John Brownlee, Brownlee was for twenty years Assistant Commissioner and Commissioner to the Ngqika. Brownlee had an unrivalled knowledge of the Xhosa language and Xhosa history, customs and traditions. While sympathetic to his charges, Brownlee had many of the shortcomings of a Victorian missionary upbringing. In 1872 he was a popular choice as the first incumbent of the newly created Secretaryship of Native Affairs. His policy was one of the gradual undermining of traditional society and the extension of British rule in what he saw as the Cape's "civilising mission". Although an able administrator, Brownlee was desperately short-staffed and short-funded and his administration suffered as a result. Summoned to the frontier as the threat of confrontation between Gcaleka and Mfengu grew, Brownlee, while not underestimating the severity of the situation as his colleagues did, contributed to black and white panic by making his views public. He mishandled the disarmament of Maphasa and Makinana, the minor Ndlambe chief, and this error of judgement contributed to the eventual rebellion of the Ngika. He was severely criticised by both Frere and Merriman for his loose tongue and bumbling actions, and Frere was in some senses correct when he said Brownlee would have been better suited as an Under Secretary of Native Affairs in Cape Town. Nevertheless, it must be said in Brownlee's favour that he had opposed the disarmament of Maphasa and Makinana as inopportune (as he later privately opposed Sprigg's disarmament policy), and the system of registration he devised for the Ngika who did not fight, encouraged the division of that people and did much to ensure that greater resistance was not faced by the colonists.

D.S.A.B., i, 126-9.

Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere (1815-1884)

After a highly successful career in India, Frere accepted the position of Governor of the Cape Colony in 1876 because he was attracted by the special mission with which Lord Carnarvon wished to charge him; that of federating the South African states. Frere arrived in March 1877 and was on his way to the recently annexed Transvaal in August 1877 when the Gcaleka-Mfengu quarrel broke out. He set up headquarters at King William's Town with Merriman, Brownlee and Cunynghame with whom he held a daily council to direct the colonial war effort. By a firm, but diplomatic, policy, Frere did his utmost to calm colonial panic, arbitrate between the disputants and prevent a war which he felt would be both unnecessary and a hindrance to his mission. Only later in the war did he foresee that the war could in fact be used to further his Federation plans. In the meantime, he consistently moderated the hasty and often ill-judged policies and plans of his advisers, but was driven to dismiss the Molteno Ministry both because it had adopted a strategy which made no sense militarily and economically and because Molteno stood in the way of the realisation of his Federation Plans.

D.S.A.B., ii, 243-6.

John Xavier Merriman (1841-1926)

Cape Parliamentarian and Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works in the Molteno Ministry. A commanding personality with erratic views, Merriman was on the frontier with Frere at the outbreak of the war and became a sort of Minister of War. At first inclined to co-operate with Frere, he came to share Molteno's views on Imperial interference and incompetence, while becoming overconfident of the ability of colonial troops to deal with what was an extremely delicate situation. In January 1878 after Molteno's quarrel with Frere and Carnarvon, he took over almost single-handed the conduct of the war. Despite his great ability, Merriman made serious errors of judgement and must share the responsibility for sending many colonial blacks into revolt.

D.S.A.B., ii, 463-9.

Sir John Charles Molteno (1814-1886)

The ardent champion of Responsible Government and first Prime Minister under it. As a Commandant in the Burgher forces in 1846, Molteno became convinced that the regular British army was incompetent under South African conditions. During his Office, Molteno became increasingly hostile to imperial intentions in South Africa, and during the War of Ngcayecibi, he clashed with Frere over the employment of Imperial Troops and Imperial Command of colonial troops in what he regarded as an essentially colonial police action. The result was the unprecedented dismissal of his Ministry in February 1878.

D.S.A.B., ii, 482-5.

Sir John Gordon Sprigg (1830-1913)

M.L.A. For East London a progressive farmer of the Komgha District, Sprigg was an unimaginative man representing many of the attitudes and prejudices of the frontier colonists. On the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry, Frere chose Sprigg, who had converted to Federalism, to head the new Ministry. Sprigg embarked on a harsh settlement policy involving the absolute crushing of all black resistance, the confiscation of lands, the disarmament of all blacks and the rapid extension of British rule in the Transkeian Territories. This policy, while effectually crushing Xhosa power for ever, encouraged resistance by other chiefdoms and was responsible for the Basutoland Gun War of 1880 and the Transkeian Rebellion of the same year.

D.S.A.B., ii, 698-700.

CHAPTER 1

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

The idea of interaction is now commonly used as a useful tool to explain the history of relations between black and white on the Eastern Cape Frontier.¹ Although interaction took place on many levels, the dominant feature was the competition between the two pastoral peoples over the scarce resources of land, water, and cattle. Black and white were thereby drawn into a century of conflict, by the end of which the militarily stronger whites subjected the blacks and incorporated them into aspects of their society.² As an introduction to the study of why, how and with what results the Xhosa and the whites fought for the last time on the Eastern Cape Frontier, it is intended here merely to survey briefly the history of the Ciskei and Transkeian Territories from the time of the Cattle Killing.

1. The Ciskei to 1872

Before the arrival of Sir George Grey as Governor of the Cape in 1854, successive Governors had grappled with the chiefdoms beyond the frontier in order to maintain the security of the Colony. A large

I have used the word Transkei in the title for brevity. There was no unified Transkei at the time, only a group of chiefdoms, some in various stages of colonial rule, and these are properly referred to as the Transkeian Territories.

1. Monica Wilson's chapter "Co-operation and Conflict: The Eastern Cape Frontier" in L. Thompson and M. Wilson (ed.): The Oxford History of South Africa I (Oxford, 1969), pp.233-271, is illuminating in this respect.
2. C. Saunders: "The Hundred Years War: Some Reflections on African Resistance on the Cape Eastern Frontier" (Unp. paper in Jagger Library, University of Cape Town) suggests the essential unity of Xhosa resistance over the period.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

colonial black population (apart from the Mfengu) only came into existence after Governor Sir Harry Smith at the end of the War of the Axe in 1847 proclaimed the Keiskamma River as the boundary of the Colony, and the area between that river and the Kei as the Crown Colony of British Kaffraria.³ Within three years, the Rharhabe Xhosa had risen against Smith's direct assault on their traditional society and government. Smith's successor, Cathcart, intended to segregate the colonial blacks, and control but not govern them by military means. To this end, the Xhosa and their allies were deprived of further land; the Amatolas from which the Xhosa had been expelled, were settled by Mfengu and military villages, and white settlements were placed on confiscated Ngqika, Khoi and Thembu land.⁴

Grey, fresh from his New Zealand success, planned a thoroughgoing integration of black and white in British Kaffraria, and the eventual extension of this system up to the Natal Border. He aimed to keep a firm military grip on British Kaffraria by maintaining the presence of troops, settling pensioners, building strategic roads and exercising personal diplomacy. The chiefs were thereby to be weaned from war, and the way opened for a removal of their power and the introduction of simple civil institutions. The latter were to be based on resident magistrates, salaries for the chiefs and a "suitable" code of laws replacing tribal custom. The absorption of blacks into the white

3. T.R.H. Davenport: South Africa: a Modern History (London, 1977).

The Rharhabe Xhosa were the descendents of Rharhabe, the brother to the Xhosa Paramount Gcaleka, who in the second half of the 18th century was defeated by Gcaleka in a struggle for power and who consequently retired across the Kei. J. Peires: "A History of the Xhosa c.1700-1835" (Unp. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1976), pp.86-90.

4. Davenport, pp.100-1.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

policy was to be facilitated by the establishment of Christian missions, schools and hospitals, as well as through the introduction of the black man to the civilising influence of regular labour on the farms of white settlers and on public works.⁵

Grey's policy, as well as being arbitrary and precipitate, was based on a total misunderstanding of tribal custom and ignorance of the reality of the land situation (though, of course, he was hardly an exception here). He facilely assumed that the blacks would welcome the magistrates, and the chiefs submit to the loss of their power when evidence to the contrary was so freshly available. Then Grey's plans to settle pensioners in British Kaffraria was absurd. In 1855 the average population of British Kaffraria was 33 people per square mile, but in the black areas it was much higher, reaching 83 per square mile in the Ngqika location. It has been calculated that in the 1850's the land in British Kaffraria could be expected to support a density of 12 people to the square mile. Yet Grey planned to import 5000 pensioners and settle them on 1 acre lots. Since these lots were not agriculturally viable at least 1500-2000 large farms would have to be established to provide work for the pensioners and the expected 20,000 dependents they would bring with them.⁶

Grey was saved from the fruits of his ignorance by the Cattle Killing, the millenarian response of the blacks to the pressures exerted on them by the whites.⁷ The black population of British Kaffraria was reduced in round figures from 104,000 to 37,000, it being estimated that

5. J. Rutherford: Sir George Grey (London, 1961), p.304.

6. Ibid., pp.327-8, 437-38.

7. See below, pp.7-8.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

20,000 died and a further 33,000 sought relief in the Colony.⁸

With the frontier chiefdoms shattered, and with an excuse for a military solution to the problems presented by his plans, Grey could move ahead.

Many of the chiefs who had participated in the Cattle Killing were arrested⁹ and part of their lands were confiscated, providing room for the establishment of military villages for the 2400 members of the German Legion who had arrived in the Cape in January 1857. The villages were duly established on the East London-Queenstown axis. Some land was sold to Mfengu. Direct rule was implemented with the importation of magistrates, paid headmen, a 10 shilling annual family tax and stock taxes.¹⁰

Those chiefs who had not joined in the Cattle Killing movement like Siwani, the Mdushane chief and Kama, the Christian Gqunukhwebe chief, were induced to accept the system by large personal land grants over and above their salaries. Attempts were made to introduce individual tenure, but the blacks displaying their constant suspicion of and hostility to white ideas and institutions, resisted the idea and so the plans fell away with time.¹¹

Native Policy remained static during Wodehouse's administration at the Cape; what attention was placed on black-white relations was almost exclusively focussed on the Transkeian Territories. The Grey system of "civilisation" was continued more in theory than in practice, for the decade of economic depression at the Cape coincided

8. M. Wilson in Oxford History, i, 258.

9. Amongst these were Maqomo, the valiant Ngqika warrior chief, Phato the Gqunukhwebe chief and his son Delima, and Mhala, the Ndlambe chief. Rutherford, pp.379-81.

10. Ibid., pp.379-81 and map opp. p.351.

11. Ibid., p.380.

A.E. du Toit: The Cape Frontier: A study of native policy with spécial reference to the years 1847-1866 (Archives Year Book, I, 1954), pp.265-8.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

with Wodehouse's stay, and Imperial Government financial assistance for the system had dried up with Colonial Office disenchantment with Grey.¹²

Apart from Grey's lead, the subjugation of the blacks of the Colony and of British Kaffraria, and growing shortages of land and labour made it natural that the focus of black-white relations should turn to the area beyond the Kei. There the turbulent relations between the various black chiefdoms seemed to whites to threaten the safety of the frontier and so require their interference.

2. The Transkeian Territories to 1872

a) The Kei-Mbashe area

Up to the Cattle Killing, the Kei-Mbashe area was the territory of the senior Xhosa chiefdom, the Gcaleka. The Cattle Killing and the white intervention that followed brought a radical change in the demographic pattern of the area, but the leading role played by Sarhili and the Gcaleka in the Cattle Killing was largely consequent on previous white intervention in the area.¹³

In 1835 D'Urban had believed that Hintsá, the Gcaleka Paramount Chief and Paramount of the Xhosa nation had instigated the war and safeguarded the cattle of the Colonial Xhosa combatants. Sir Harry Smith therefore invaded Hintsá's territory to punish him. Hintsá voluntarily surrendered himself to Smith and endured a period of captivity,

12. Ibid., pp.179-191.

R.F.J. Gruber: "John X. Merriman, the making of a South African Statesman 1869-1878" (Unp. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1961), pp.64-70, vividly sketches the economic climate of the Cape in the 60's.

13. I am especially indebted to C. Saunders: "The Annexation of the Transkeian Territories 1872-1895, with special reference to British and Cape policy" (Unp. D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1972), pp.35-85, for my account of the Transkeian Territories to 1872.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

but on being forced to accompany Smith to collect the fine of cattle and other stock demanded of him, he attempted to escape. He was shot dead and his body was mutilated by colonial volunteers accompanying Smith.¹⁴ Since according to Xhosa custom, the person of a chief was sacrosanct,¹⁵ such an event would have been cause for concern if only a minor chief had been killed. But for the Paramount Chief to be run down, killed and mutilated, and that by white "commoners", was an enormity for which many Gcaleka never forgave the whites. Certainly Hintsa's great son and heir Sarhili, who was a witness to the event, was deeply influenced by it in all his dealings with whites, of whom he henceforth, while maintaining strict courtesy, was profoundly suspicious.¹⁶

Another action of D'Urban's was to have even more profound consequences for all the peoples of the Frontier. The Mfengu, refugees from the Mfecane who had sought refuge with the Gcaleka, now claimed that they were being mistreated by them, though the truth is probably that they were not achieving sufficient advancement amongst the Gcaleka for their ambitions.¹⁷ The missionary John Ayliff, who was stationed at Butterworth in Gcalekaland, urged the Mfengu to seek British protection. D'Urban saw an opportunity of using the Mfengu as a buffer people who might aid and protect the colonists in any future wars. He therefore

14. Ibid., p.36.

15. Peires points to the sanctity of the chief's person in Xhosa society and cites the wounding of Xhoxho in the head and the consequent provocation of war in 1834-5 as an example of what might be termed, pace Campbell, 'culture conflict.' Peires, pp.211-13.

16. For evidence of Sarhili's suspicion of the whites, one has only to look at his behaviour prior to and during the War of Ngcayecibi.

17. This is Moyer's thesis. R. Moyer: "A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape 1815-1865" (Unp. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1976), p.11.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

arranged for their removal to the Peddie area. In 1835 17,000 Mfengu moved there from Gcalekaland, taking with them large herds of cattle which the Gcaleka claimed did not belong to them.¹⁸ The Gcaleka viewed the Mfengu move as treacherous and dishonest. As the Mfengu came to collaborate more and more openly with the whites and prospered under their patronage, relations between the Gcaleka and the Mfengu grew increasingly bitter.¹⁹

Again in both the War of the Axe and the Mlanjeni War, Sarhili's suspected implication in, and even instigation of, events in the Colony was the occasion for two punitive expeditions in which large numbers of stock were captured.²⁰ But Hints'a's policy, which Sarhili continued, was to avoid all direct entanglements with the whites because of their military superiority, and so Gcaleka involvement in these wars was limited to indirect assistance of the combatant Rharhabe, as blood ties demanded.²¹

In 1856-7 Grey was convinced that Sarhili, perhaps in conjunction with Mshweshwe, the Basotho Chief, was promoting the Cattle Killing as a means to forcing a desperate attack by the Xhosa on the whites.²² Most modern authorities agree that the evidence does not support such a "plot" theory. On the contrary it seems that Sarhili firmly believed

18. J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside: History of the Abambo, generally known as the Fingo (Butterworth, 1912), pp.20ff.
19. Peires, pp.198-202.
20. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.37-8.
21. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept., 1977.
Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 Nov. 1977.
22. Rutherford, pp.348-359.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

the prophecies of Mhlakaza and Nonqawuse.²³ Ironically blacks came to hold, and still do today, the theory that Grey and the whites were responsible for the Cattle Killing. But there is no evidence to support such a view.²⁴

With a firm belief in Sarhili's guilt, Grey in February 1858 ordered Sir Walter Currie to capture him or drive him so far away as to be never heard of again. Currie carried out a filibustering campaign with gusto and by the end of the month, Sarhili had been driven across the Mbashe, and Currie had swept Gcalekaland, burning, destroying and clearing the country.²⁵

Grey had in mind to extend the British Kaffraria system in the Kei-Mbashe area, as we have seen. Before leaving South Africa he only managed to establish the Idutywa Reserve. Wodehouse continued Grey's plans, but after gaining the Imperial Government's permission to proclaim British Sovereignty over the area, Wodehouse was faced with Colonial unwillingness to defend it despite the Legislative Council's recommendation that British authority be declared between the Kei and Natal for the purpose of frontier security. Meanwhile, Currie had been negotiating with Sarhili on behalf of Grey, to try and persuade him to accept land on the Mthatha and so release further land for colonisation, but Sarhili was determined to regain his former territory and so after some manoeuvring for advantage, he refused to move. In May 1864

23. Monica Wilson in Oxford History, i, 359-360 discusses the question at length and cites numerous sources to support her contention that the Cattle Killing was a millenarian movement and not a plot hatched by Sarhili. Rutherford, p.286, agrees that Sarhili almost certainly genuinely believed the prophecies.

24. Saunders, "Annexation", p.39.

25. Rutherford, 387-8.
Major D.B. Hook: With Sword and Statute (on the Cape of Good Hope Frontier) (Cape Town, etc., n.d.), pp.68-9.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

it was reported that Sarhili was about to cross the Mbashe to reclaim his territory, but it seems almost certain that this was a report engineered by Currie to enable him to drive Sarhili beyond the Mthatha and so clear the way for white settlement.²⁶

When it became clear that the Colony would not defend the area if British authority was extended over it, and the Imperial Cabinet thought that such a move would require extra defence, plans for both white settlement and the assumption of British authority were scrapped. The security of British Kaffraria was not deemed to require extra spending.²⁷

Thus Wodehouse refused to sanction Currie's desire for a punitive expedition, and decided to settle Sarhili on the coastal section of his former territory to appease him and prevent further trouble from that source.²⁸ In any case there was the chance of swopping land belonging to Colonial blacks for the rest of Gcalekaland, and so releasing land for white farms within the Colony. In the Northern section, Wodehouse had already intended to settle the Colonial Thembu from the Glen Grey area. That left the central section and this Wodehouse first offered to the Ngqika, but they refused, wishing neither to lose their de facto independence from Sarhili, nor to upset him by settling on former territory of his.²⁹ Wodehouse turned to the Mfengu who had become restless in their overcrowded locations in the Colony. Wodehouse believed that his settlement plan would create a balance of power in the area and prevent war. The Mfengu would, because of their numbers, be a

26. Du Toit, pp.179-195.
Saunders, "Annexation", pp.41-6.

27. Ibid., pp.46-7.

28. Ibid.

29. Du Toit, p.211.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

counterweight to the Gcaleka and a useful buffer between the Gcaleka and Ngqika.³⁰ The plan was strongly criticized by many, particularly because of the long-standing hostility between Gcaleka and Mfengu. Charles Brownlee, longtime Commissioner to the Ngqika, asserted that

a high spirited race like the Kafirs is not likely to sit quietly without a final effort to recover its independence.³¹

But the plan catered for such an eventuality. As a colonial official argued, the Government should

keep up until a fitting time, without actually causing a rupture, the old animosity between Kafir and Fingoe, and this has been effectively done by the latter being put in possession of the country that was formerly "Rhili's".... for many years the Kafirs will require a watchful policy, and if they are to fight, it is better that they should do so with the Fingo first...³²

The Mfengu had been advised by their missionary Richard Ross only to accept the offer of the land if they went as British subjects under a government official who was an accredited magistrate, and with title to the land. Currie who arranged the move accepted these conditions and Wodehouse assured them that they would "continue British subjects and receive support and assistance so long as they proved themselves deserving."³³ Reassured, by the end of 1865 almost 40,000 Mfengu had

30. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.48-9.
31. C.O. 3122: Brownlee to Colonial Secretary, 2 Nov. '67, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.49.
32. C.O. 3122: A. Bisset to Colonial Secretary, 23 Oct. '67, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.51.
33. A.14-'67, p.6: Wodehouse to Civil Commissioner, Grahamstown, tel., 25 July '65, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.52.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

moved into what became known as Fingoland. Although there was no legal basis to the continuance of the alliance between Mfengu and Colony, there was a strong mutual acceptance of this that made more formal ties between Fingoland and the Colony inevitable.³⁴

In September and October 1864, Sarhili and his people reoccupied his former territory. Sarhili was to be paid an allowance of £100 per annum and both this and his occupation of his former territory were made conditional to his 'good behaviour'.³⁵ Nevertheless, the missionary J.C. Warner who was sent to arrange the move, encouraged Sarhili to hope for more land by saying: 'Kreli, you have got the calf, the cow will no doubt follow'.³⁶

The removal of the Colonial Thembu became an extremely involved issue. Intra-tribal jealousies, as well as careful calculation ensured that only a portion of the people moved, despite the threat that they would have to endure strict colonial control. The Colonial Authorities were compelled to allow those remaining to retain the whole Colonial Location. Mathanzima, Ndarhala, Gecelo and Sitokhwe Ndlela were assigned separate locations in what became known as Emigrant Thembuland. These they occupied on the promise of the Colonial authorities that they might rule their people as independent chiefs.³⁷

34. Du Toit, p.216.
Saunders, "Annexation", p.54.

35. Du Toit, pp.192, 223.

36. G.H. 8/48: W.R.D. Fynn to Bowker, 7 May '71.

37. A.E. Du Toit, pp.208-224.
H.A. Averill: "Conflict and Confrontation: A study of Colonial Pressure on native lands on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony 1874-1883" (Unp. M.A. thesis, Queens University, 1971), pp.28-31. Mathanzima was the right hand son of Mthikrakra and a chief therefore of considerable importance. Ndarhala was chief of the Ndungwana clan and a distant relative of Ngangelizwe. Gecelo was regent of the non-Thembu Gcina and Sitokhwe was chief of the colonial branch of the Qwathi, and therefore also a non-Thembu. All four moved so as to escape the crowded conditions of the Colonial Location, obtain land and independence. Averill, p.30, footnote 5.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

To the colonist's chagrin therefore, no land at all became available for white settlement, either in the Kei-Mbashe area, or in the Colony. But the seeds of future unrest had been firmly sown, for the Colonial Thembu, particularly the Tshatshu of Gungubele, who had always maintained a close alliance with the Ngqika,³⁸ bridled at the implementation of greater Colonial control, especially when they saw their close relatives across the Indwe River in Emigrant Thembuland completely independent.³⁹

b) The Mbashe-Mthatha area

The area between the Mbashe and the Mthatha Rivers was occupied by the Hala Thembu, the main branch of this the senior Southern Nguni people. The Thembu as a whole had suffered severely in the 1820's because of the Mfecane and had assisted Col. Henry Somerset in his famous commando against the marauding Ngwane of Matiwane in 1828. Because they were not brought directly into contact with the whites and because of their early history of co-operation, they were regarded as friendly by the Colony. The majority of the tribe did not participate in the Cattle Killing and Sarhili's banishment once again impressed them with the power of the whites. Thus in 1862, Joyi, the Thembu Regent, turned to the whites for help against the Gcaleka, whose presence across the Mbashe had intensified the long-standing conflict between the two peoples, and asked like Mshweshwe to come under British protection. This was not granted.⁴⁰

38. Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 November 1977.

39. M.S. Griffiths: "The Development of Native Policy in the Transkei and in Glen Grey between 1870 and 1900" (Unp. M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1939), pp.43-4.

40. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.56-7.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

Ngangelizwe, Mthikrakra's heir, came of age in 1863. He planned to restore the Thembu empire so that it stretched from the sea to Glen Grey, but he had neither the means nor the temperament to be successful.⁴¹ The Bomvana under Moni lived on the seaward portion of land between the two rivers. Moni acknowledged the subject status of his people to Sarhili for the refuge granted by the Gcaleka earlier in the century to his grandfather Gambushe.⁴² Then the Emigrant Thembu under the four chiefs Mathanzima, Ndarhala, Gecelo and Sitokhwe intended to rule as independent chiefs acknowledging only the nominal Paramountcy of Ngangelizwe. Finally living within the main section of Thembuland next to Emigrant Thembuland, were two non-Thembu clans, the Qwathi under the determined Dalasile, the second most powerful chief in Thembuland after Ngangelizwe, and the Vundhle under Sitokhwe Tyhali a minor but turbulent chief who lived beneath the Drakensberg near Maxongo's Hoek.⁴³ Despite the fragmented nature of the Paramountcy, events were to show that the Paramount could still command considerable loyalty in a crisis.

But while Ngangelizwe was attempting to extend his influence, Sarhili was seeking to recover his former lands and power. Hence the rivalry between the Thembu and Gcaleka continued at increased tempo with continuous thieving and raiding. The central focus of the dispute was Bomvanaland which both chiefs sought to bring more effectively under their control. Caught between the two feuding peoples the Idutywa

41. Ibid., p.57.
Averill, pp.28-29.

42. G.M. Theal: A History of South Africa, X, (Struik facsimile, Cape Town, 1964), p.145.

43. J.W. Macquarrie (ed.): The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford, Volume 1 1850-1885 (Cape Town, 1958), pp.52, 57.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

Reserve with its polyglot population, became a hot-bed of intrigue and a highway for thieves, which its rather ineffectual magistrate sought vainly to control.⁴⁴

c) The Mthatha-Mzimkhulu area

The Mpondo people being closest to the Zulu, suffered the most during the Mfecane. With the establishment of the Trekker Republic came a second threat, which was however neutralised by the extension of Cape protection over the Mpondo followed by the annexation of Natal. But the Cape went further, and in 1844 drew up a treaty with Faku, the Mpondo Paramount, which aimed at ensuring frontier stability by setting up Faku as a policeman for the whole of the Northern Transkeian Territories. In return, Faku received prestige, a subsidy and recognition to his claim of territory from the Mzimkhulu to the Mthatha and from the sea to the Drakensberg. Under this arrangement, a number of tribes of which the Mpondomise (headed by the two feuding chiefs Mditshwa and Mhlontlo), the Bhaca and the Xesibe were the most important, were included in his territory. These tribes had sought protection from the Mpondo during the Mfecane, but once the danger was over, they began to seek to assert their independence.⁴⁵

In his attempt to extend the Cape's borders to Natal and impose his civilising regime over the Transkeian Territories, Grey turned his attention to a large, almost unpopulated area of Faku's territory which was not really under his control. Grey saw this 'Nomansland' as it came to be called as a convenient area to move peoples being challenged elsewhere, exert influence and prepare the way for formal British control.

44. Saunders, "Annexation", p.57.

45. Ibid, pp.58-60.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

Grey told Nehemiah Mshweshwe, who had been displaced by the first Basotho War of 1858, that he might settle in Nomansland subject to Faku's approval. Nehemiah moved in 1859 and in 1861 Mshweshwe persuaded Faku to agree to the cession of the area between the Bhaca in the East and the Mpondomise in the South to his Kingdom.⁴⁶

In the meantime Grey had changed his mind about the future of the area and now proposed to settle Adam Kok's Griqua who were being dispossessed of their land round Philippolis. Wodehouse, who took over the problem from Grey, saw it was impossible to move Nehemiah and therefore limited his territory to that west of the upper Mzimvubu and placed the Griqua in the area bounded by the Drakensberg, Mzimvubu and Ingela mountains, where by early 1863, 3000 had settled.⁴⁷

By now the Mpondo felt that British protection involved more than they had bargained for and, protesting (in vain) against the territorial changes already made, refused to sanction any further ones. Mqikela who succeeded Faku in 1867, adopted a hard line and stood firm against all attempts to interfere in any way with his territory. But Mqikela's position was weakened by the fact that Ndamas, Faku's eldest and favourite son had been granted a measure of autonomy in Western Pondoland by his father and was more amenable to co-operation with the British, a policy which his son Nqwiliso sought to further.⁴⁸

The attempts of the Griqua to set themselves up as a ruling class in the Northern Transkei prompted missionaries in the area to urge the Colony to exercise effective control over the area, and their charges to ask

46. Ibid, pp.62-3.

47. Ibid, pp.64-67.
For the move and details of Griqua rule, see Averill, pp.56-83.

48. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.70-72.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

for British protection.⁴⁹ In the Cape 1860's this was not the only inducement for the extension of Cape rule. There was growing instability over the whole Transkeian Territory, with the Mpondomise feud, rivalry between Sarhili and Ngangelizwe and a less pliant Mqikela, and as a result Cape officials pushed for an extension of Colonial rule as a solution to the instability which they felt threatened the frontier.⁵⁰

Governor Sir Henry Barkly approved such a direction as long as it was slow and peaceable. If the power of the chiefs was to be successfully undermined, civilisation promoted and warlike tribes kept apart, as Cape Native Policy aimed to do, he felt that the old chiefs should be allowed to die out. In 1872, prompted by the instability caused by the Griqua, Barkly appointed a Commission of Enquiry into the Northern Transkeian Territories, which recommended that British magistrates be appointed in Nomansland as a step towards annexation to Natal. Barkly decided to wait, feeling that Responsible Government was imminent.⁵¹

In the Colony it was generally felt that withdrawal from the Transkeian Territories would be the worst possible alternative, risking white prestige and even the whole white position. Since Britain was reluctant to assume extra responsibilities, the Cape would have to do so, and with the return of prosperity in the 70's, would be able to do so. Nevertheless, as Barkly foresaw, it would still need to be a cautious forward movement chiefly because the major motive of such a move was the preservation of frontier stability. If resistance was provoked the policy would be counter-productive.⁵²

49. Ibid., pp.72-5.

50. W.B. Campbell: The South African Frontier 1865-1885: a study in expansion (Archives Year Book, 1, 1959), pp.91-6.

51. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.76-85.

52. Ibid, pp.97-100.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

3. Charles Brownlee and Native Policy under Responsible Government

Under Responsible Government, finally achieved in 1872, a separate Department of Native Affairs was created headed by a Minister designated the Secretary for Native Affairs. Charles Brownlee, for twenty years Commissioner with the Ngqika, later Resident Magistrate of Cradock and King William's Town, and a man with an intimate knowledge of frontier affairs, was a popular choice for this post. Barkly agreed to be guided by his Ministers as regards policy concerning the Transkeian Territories. Responsibility for native policy, Colonial and Transkeian, rested therefore with the Cabinet, especially Brownlee.⁵³

Brownlee laboured under severe handicaps. Although a reasonably able administrator and a man of influence amongst the blacks, he was no politician and often seemed to lose his head in a crisis.⁵⁴ Then too, by 1872 the colonial blacks were recovering from the Cattle Killing both in numbers and in morale, and their recovery, plus continuing neglect for the reasons which follow, exposed all the weaknesses of the Grey policy, without allowing its strengths to operate.

The problem of Native Affairs was just too large for a Department consisting up to 1877 of Brownlee, a Chief Clerk, messengers, and, after 1875, two additional temporary clerks. Brownlee's budget of £2000 per annum was laughable and the salaries offered to officials insufficient to attract men of ability. No knowledge of an African language or of African customs was required to become a Civil Commissioner. Consequently a high proportion of officials in the period 1872-8 had to be reprimanded or removed.⁵⁵ The effect that inadequate appointments had on the

53. C. Saunders: "The Cape Native Affairs Department and African Administration on the eastern frontier under the Molteno Ministry." (Unp. B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Cape Town, 1964), Chs. II and III.

54. Ibid., p.8. Brownlee's shortcomings were to become only too apparent during the war, and were severely criticized. See below, p.132, footnote 118.

55. Ibid., pp.18-20.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

course of events relating to the War of Ngcayecibi will be followed in the careers of T. Liefeldt, Special Magistrate with Sandile from 1867-77, T. Cumming, longtime Resident at the Idutywa Reserve and Col. John Eustace, Resident with Sarhili from 1876. For the moment it is instructive to notice that although Brownlee tried to maintain personal contact with native affairs by touring the Frontier at frequent intervals,⁵⁶ the Special Magistrate at Middledrift who had charge of 14,000 blacks was able to tell the Barry Commission in 1880 that he did not speak an African language, knew little about 'native law' despite being a Special Magistrate for 25 years, and that he had not been visited by any government official since 1870.⁵⁷

The Native Locations Act No. 6 of 1876 "... to provide for the better and more effectual supervision of Native Locations" did attempt to remedy the neglect under which Colonial Locations suffered, particularly in the North East, but it had hardly begun to take effect before the outbreak of war in 1877 and the focus of attention of the departmental policy continued to be across the Kei.⁵⁸ Under the system inaugurated by Grey, Chiefs were supposed to have surrendered their judicial power in return for pensions or salaries. But because Government officials were few and far between, often inexperienced and even incompetent as we have seen, many chiefs recovered much of their power. This was particularly true of Sandile the Ngqika chief and Paramount of the ^{to the} Eastern Xhosa, the Rharhabe. In 1867 Brownlee, Commissioner with the

56. Ibid., p.12. Brownlee visited the frontier in October 1872, January 1874, March and July 1876, August 1877.

57. Ibid, p.23.

58. Ibid, p.25.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

Ngqika since 1847, was promoted to be Magistrate at Cradock, and for reasons of economy, was replaced by his clerk T. Liefeldt, in a downgraded position. Liefeldt was unable to control Sandile and was anything but an example to Sandile in the matter of drink.⁵⁹ Brownlee was horrified to see how complete the reversion of power to Sandile had been, when he had cause to visit him on the eve of the War of Ngcayecibi.⁶⁰ Theal, who from his position at Lovedale was in a good position to observe such developments, asserts that Sandile ruled virtually as an independent chief, dealing personally with all cases except those involving the death penalty and witchcraft, which, with the support of the Ngqika, he dealt with secretly.⁶¹ In this way Sandile, having successfully resisted much of the impact of colonial rule, was alarmed by events of 1876 and 1877 which seemed to threaten his quasi-autonomy, and encouraged to revolt in order to retain that independence.

De Kiewiet has aptly summed up the deficiencies of the Colony's approach to Native Affairs:

What one magistrate called 'a zig-zag, do nothing, Kafir speech regime' was the inevitable outcome of a public opinion that asked for little more than peace and a plentiful supply of labour properly controlled, and an administration that, however excellent its intention financially starved its native policy in favour of railways and public works projects.⁶²

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59. Many witnesses testify to the reversion of power to Sandile. Theal, X, 135-6. Cape Archives, Cumming Papers, folder 7: J. Cumming to Rose-Innes, 1 Feb. '79. C.2220, Encl. No. 3: Brownlee Memo., n.d.
60. Molteno Papers, No. 632: Brownlee to Molteno, 27 Sept. '77.
61. Theal, X, 136.
62. C.W. De Kiewiet: The Imperial Factor in South Africa (Cambridge, 1936), p.168.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

Sensible pragmatism and flexibility did not prevent the outbreak of war, and the divide and rule strategy continued by Brownlee actually contributed to the precipitation of the crisis.

4. Forward into the Transkeian Territories

The eruption of a new conflict between the Gcaleka and the Thembu (to be discussed fully in the next chapter) culminating in the defeat of the Thembu by the Gcaleka in a short campaign in 1872, drew the Colony irrevocably into increasing Transkeian involvement. Brownlee who had had to patch up a peace between the two chiefdoms, gave notice of his intention to pursue a gradual forward policy beyond the Kei in the Report of his mission.⁶³ He said he believed the Cape Government should continue to uphold Grey's civilising ideals, but should intervene East of the Kei only when the peace of the frontier was endangered. The exception was when small tribes, who were threatened, asked for protection, or with those who might already be considered British subjects. Thus he suggested that the Government might begin to extend its control over the Transkeian Territories with the Gatberg area. This would become

a strong advanced post, from which we can gradually extend our influence and protection to such tribes as desire it...overawe the Pondos, support the Tambookies Thembu and Umhlohlo, and prevent any combination for evil between the Amapondos and Kreli.⁶⁴

63. A.10-'73, p.8: Brownlee to Col. Sec. 10 May '73. See also N.A. 840: Brownlee to Col. Sec., 2 May 73, part of which is incorporated into his official report.

64. Ibid.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

In theory, therefore, the main motive for a continued divide and rule strategy was, as ever, the maintenance of peace on colonial borders.

Accordingly, the ardent expansionist Joseph Orpen was offered the post of Magistrate at the Gatberg. He was instructed to act as Government representative with the peoples beyond the Mthatha especially with Adam Kok to whom it was anticipated he would ultimately move as British Resident in Nomansland, once a subordinate had been appointed to the Gatberg. Orpen took up his position in April 1873 and explained to the Sotho inhabitants that the administration of the area would be run on lines very similar to that of Basutoland.⁶⁵

Orpen found the Mpondomise feud too tempting to resist and he was able to exploit the situation so that both Mditshwa and Mhlontlo again asked for British protection. Brownlee was surprised by Orpen's request to grant such protection. Faced with the opportunity, he agreed but made it clear that in future Orpen should keep in step with the Government's plans.⁶⁶

The Langelibalele affair impressed on the Colony the need for a representative in Nomansland and once again made clear the ineptness of Natal's handling of Native Affairs. Consequently, when the Colony considered consolidating its position across the Kei in terms of Brownlee's policy, there was a further reason why the Griquas, who might already be considered British subjects, should be included. Orpen in fact pressed the issue in 1874 by forcing Kok to demand clarification on the question of his independence. Brownlee was once

65. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.110-111.
Theal, X, 31.

66. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.112-13.
Theal, X, 31-2.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

again willing to seize the opportunity, but after some show of opposition on the part of Kok and the Griqua to direct annexation, agreed, but only on terms acceptable to them. It was therefore agreed that a British Commissioner who was not to be Orpen, reporting directly to Cape Town, would be appointed, and would rule in tandem with Kok until the latter's death. Kok was to receive £700 compensation for lost revenues.⁶⁷ Fingoland, and to a lesser extent, the Idutywa Reserve, were obvious candidates for annexation. The Mfengu had prospered under the able administrator Matthew Blyth who urged annexation, many of them becoming quite prosperous as peasant farmers. Despite the fact that they were not consulted on the move, the Mfengu on being assured that annexation was merely a formal recognition of a de facto situation, made no demur and even accepted the principle of a ten shilling hut tax.⁶⁸ For, as Moyer has pointed out, the Mfengu were not the unwitting collaborators that they have sometimes been portrayed as.⁶⁹ They had chosen to side with the British for the benefits that such a move promised, and in the forty years since that decision, their vastly increased landholding and relative prosperity as peasant farmers bore witness that these benefits had indeed accrued. The formalisation of their relationship with the British was a logical step and they certainly anticipated that benefits would continue to flow from it.

The significance of the formal reception of the Mfengu under British rule was not lost on Sarhili, and he was only too well aware of

67. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.114-23.
Theal, X, 34-7.

68. Saunders, "Annexation", p.118.
The Idutywa chiefs were less compliant, but their opposition was bought off by the grant of farms.

69. Moyer, p.10.

THE CISKEI AND TRANSKEI TO 1872

their prosperity on his former land.⁷⁰ This was only one of the pressures which increasingly threatened Gcaleka independence and it is in a detailed examination of such pressures that the Gcaleka response to them, that the more immediate origins of the War of Ngcayecibi must be sought. But one is tempted to echo De Kiewiet⁷¹ and suggest that, vis-a-vis colonial policy towards the Gcaleka and Mfengu, a contemporary might have warned: "As ye have sown, so ye shall reap."

70. Sarhili visited the Mfengu agricultural show in 1875 and was much impressed by what he saw. G.16-'76, p.44: J. Ayliff to S.N.A., 25 Jan. '76.

71. De Kiewiet, p.168:

The Gcalekas and the Fingos represented the opposite poles of frontier policy. That the Fingos were the favourites of the Government, praised for their prosperity and industry and the Gcalekas were despised for their surliness and indolence was due in no small measure to the opposite system of treatment that had been meted out to them.

CHAPTER 2

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

1. The Economics of War

De Kiewiet sees the springs of the war in the desperate economic situation on the frontier. His thesis, briefly, runs as follows: European expansion had produced overpopulation, overstocking and overcultivation in the Transkeian Territories. The sale of labour had become the only means of survival, and was a safety valve that prevented the desperation that had led to earlier wars. But should there be any major economic adversity, serious unrest would follow. The severe drought of 1876 and 1877 brought such adversity and was ultimately responsible for the outbreak of the war.¹

There is no doubt that the economic pressures on the Gcaleka were great. But they were not so great as to act as more than a contributory factor in the origins of the war. In April 1877 Eustace reported that excellent rains had fallen over the previous two months and consequently the harvest could be expected to be only just below average.² His assessment seems to have been born out by the fact that later that year, when the war had begun, colonial and imperial forces found plenty of grain in storage throughout Gcalekaland.³ Overcrowding, with its attendant problems, was severe. Allowing for the deficiencies of early population estimates and census figures, in 1848, when the Gcaleka

1. De Kiewiet, pp.148-165.
2. G.17-'78, p.28: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.
3. G.G.R. 1: Hook to Griffith, 23 Oct. '77.
G.G.R. 1: Elliot to Griffith, 18 Oct. '77.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

possessed all the territory between the Kei and the Mbashe, their numbers were estimated at 70,000,⁴ while in 1877 Moodie estimates that 66,000 Gcaleka were living on 1600 sq. miles, less than a third of their former territory⁵ (a population density of 42 to the square mile.) But Sarhili contributed to the land shortage (no doubt partly in order to demonstrate the necessity of more land for the Gcaleka) by discouraging emigration, even for work purposes, and by encouraging immigration.⁶ And conditions were far worse in the colonial locations where population density was far higher and the drought was more severe.⁷ De Kiewiet correctly draws attention to the appalling conditions there, reflected in the annual reports of the Civil Commissioners of King William's Town and Victoria East.⁸

The fact remains too that the war began in the Transkei rather than in the Colony, with white intervention in a Gcaleka-Mfengu quarrel, and when various colonial black groups joined in the war later, their decision to do so was as much a political one as one dictated by economic pressures. This is not to deny the significance of the sharp

4. M. Wilson in Oxford History, i, 255.
5. Moodie, ii, 154. Ayliff remarked in 1875 on the density of population, but the following year he contradicted what he had said about the necessity of Gcaleka seeking relief in labour. See footnote 10 below.
6. N.A. 152-5: Numerous reports after 1872 by W.R.D. Fynn and James Ayliff, successive Residents to Sarhili. Also found in Transkeian Resident's Letterbook 1865-76.
7. The population of Sandile and Anta's Locations in 1875 was 33,000. G.21-'75, p.63. Theal asserts the two locations were 585 square miles. Theal, vii, map between pages 187 and 188. Therefore population density in 1875 was 56 to the square mile.
8. G.12-'77, G.17-'78: Reports of J. Rose-Innes, C.C. King William's Town, P. Nightingale, C.C. Victoria East, R.H. Dugmore, Superintendent of Healdtown Location, and E.C. Jeffrey, Superintendent of the Kamastone and Ockraal Locations.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

upsurge in cattle theft during 1876 and 1877 as a sort of undeclared warfare against whites, reflecting the economic condition of colonial blacks (this issue will be dealt with in full later).⁹ It should also be noted that the sale of Gcaleka labour was not as great as De Kiewiet's thesis would tend to imply. The practice of labouring on the Public Works and even as servants in the Colony only really began after 1875, for before that date Sarhili had strenuously discouraged the practice.¹⁰ The same is true of the Diamond Fields. It is hard to assess how many Gcaleka worked there, but it must have been very few, as during the whole of 1876 only 103 blacks from the whole Cape Colony and Transkei went to the Diamond Fields as new labourers. The figure for ten months of 1877 was 218, but of these 98 went during the war months of November

9. See below, p.130.

10. Sarhili, who had refused to allow Gcaleka to go to the Public Works in 1874 when meeting Barkly, changed his mind in 1875, but in his yearly report written in early 1876, Ayliff seemed to contradict what he had said in his 1875 report (see G.21-'75, p.35):

Very few of the Gcalekas availed themselves of Kreli's permission to seek employment on the Public Works and about half of those that did go, returned in a very short time probably having found the work too heavy... their wants are so few that the money realized by the sale of wool and skins enables them to obtain all the clothing they require and Blankets - and the produce from their gardens supplies the family with food from year to year.

G.16-'76, pp.44-5: Ayliff - S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76. Ayliff admitted that with no reserves or foresight the Gcaleka would be reduced to misery or want by any natural disaster, like drought, but could then redeem the position by using the hitherto ignored expedient of the Public Works. This is precisely what happened later in the year, but even in December, Eustace only signed 124 passes to work at the Public Works, about 1% of the male population. G.12-'77: p.77: Eustace to S.N.A., 27 Jan. '77.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

and December.¹¹ While some Gcaleka did work on farms in the Colony, especially in the East London District, and while some squatted on farms in the same area,¹² it is hard to accept on the basis of the evidence above that De Kiewiet's contention that the bulk of the able bodied men depended on wages to maintain their living standards applied to the Gcaleka.¹³

2. Sarhili and Gcaleka Society

The reasons why the Gcaleka had resisted labouring in the Colony and continued to do so when, after the war, they fell on far harder times, point to the nature of Gcaleka society and to the response of that society to the non-economic pressures it encountered. The Gcaleka were an intensely conservative people, who had been less touched by Western influences than other frontier peoples, partly because they had for most of the century been cushioned from the main thrust of colonial expansion, and partly because they had resisted the advances of agents of Western Civilisation.¹⁴ Sarhili had welcomed and indeed urged the stationing of missionaries in Gcalekaland after his resettlement there in 1865, but he had limited the number and had made it clear that he regarded these as "his" missionaries whom he welcomed for political, rather than

11. R. Siebörger: "The Recruitment and Organisation of African Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Mines 1871-88" (unp. M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1975), pp.183-5.
Comparative figures for the Public Works were 250 for the year, of which 124 were for December. G.12-'77, p.77: Eustace to S.N.A., 27 Jan. '77.
12. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: W.R.D. Fynn to Ayliff, 22 April '73.
13. De Kiewiet, p.154.
14. The annual reports of W.R.D. Fynn and James Ayliff for the years 1870-76, to be found in the Transkeian Resident's Letterbook (and for the years 1874-6 in Government Blue Books G.27-'74, G.21-'75 and G.16-'76) stress these points repeatedly.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

religious or educational reasons.¹⁵ Indeed, he and the Gcaleka steadfastly ignored the religious and educational activities of the missionaries.¹⁶ Then Sarhili actively discouraged the Gcaleka from labouring in the Colony because he feared that allegations of theft levelled at them would draw him and the chiefdom into dispute and even conflict with the Colonial Authorities.¹⁷ His attitude to Western Civilisation may be summed up in his scorn of European dress.¹⁸ Sarhili had, as we have seen, personal reasons for his distrust of whites.¹⁹

Consequently Sarhili resolutely maintained an independent political line, though being careful not to antagonise or directly challenge the Colonial Authorities and risk the danger his father had warned against.²⁰ One can only marvel at the diplomatic skill and cunning which Sarhili exercised in his relations with the British. Sarhili's tragedy was that however scrupulous he might be in his relations with whites,²¹ the exercising of an independent line by him in the Transkei was inimical to the trend in Colonial Policy, which was not only to maintain British influence there, but also to gradually extend British control over the area in a 'civilising' mission. The history of the Thembu-Gcaleka conflict illustrates the developing confrontation between white and Gcaleka power and shows how thereafter, there was never the slightest

15. Chalmers: Tiyo Soga (Edinburgh, 1877), pp.347-8.

16. G.16-'76, pp.45-6: Reports by Revs. R.S. Leslie and J. Dewar, n.d.

17. G.21-'75, p.45: Ayliff to Brownlee, 2 Feb. '75.

18. Macquarrie, i, 47.

19. See above, pp.5-7.

20. See above, p. 7.

21. West Fynn: The '77 War (East London Daily Despatch, 1911) pp.3-4 cites numerous incidents to support this view and Stanford is also emphatic on the point. Macquarrie, i, 77-8.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

chance of Sarhili obtaining more land, the goal which he and the Gcaleka desired and needed most.

3. The Thembu-Gcaleka Quarrel

In May 1866 Ngangelizwe married Nomkhafulo, a daughter of Sarhili. This was not an unusual alliance in that such marriages were customarily arranged between chiefdoms to improve relations and to serve as obstacles to serious conflict.²² In this case the marriage proved to be a disaster for Ngangelizwe, because in 1870 Nomkhafulo fled back to Sarhili after being ill-treated by Ngangelizwe. The affair threatened to unleash a full scale war between the two peoples since Sarhili regarded his daughter's treatment as an insult to the Gcaleka, a view shared by his subjects. But, anticipating defeat in such a war, Ngangelizwe appealed to the Cape Government for advice and aid. Barkly saw the potential for a serious war and so sent E.B. Chalmers to Ngangelizwe as a Resident, and summoned Sarhili to meet him at King William's Town in March 1871. There he forced Sarhili to accept a fine of forty cattle, to be paid to him as compensation for the injury of his daughter.²³ Sarhili and his people felt this was inadequate, since there was no precedent for a cattle fine in a case involving an insult to a Paramount Chief and his people.²⁴

Ngangelizwe provoked the Gcaleka further by attempting to assert his authority over Bomvanaland. In 1871 he visited that territory under false pretext with Chalmers, and in 1872 he planned another visit.

22. Peires, pp.82-3.

23. F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, pp.28-9.

24. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: W.R.D. Fynn to Col. Sec., 28 April '70.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Raiding between the Thembu and Bomvana increased, culminating in a serious Thembu raid against the Bomvana in September 1872. Moni appealed to Sarhili for help and Sarhili decided to teach Ngangelizwe a lesson and make clear Moni's subject status to himself. He and his great son Sigcawu proceeded to administer a crushing defeat on Ngangelizwe in October, sweeping through Thembuland and burning Ngangelizwe's Great Place. Sarhili was persuaded to return to Gcalekaland by Rev. P. Hargreaves of the Clarkebury Mission station where Ngangelizwe was hiding.²⁵ Saunders asserts that it is likely that Sarhili had already achieved what he had set out to do by teaching Ngangelizwe a lesson and by giving his army a long-sought taste of battle, and would have retired anyway.²⁶ Sarhili was enough of a realist to realise that any direct seizure of Thembu territory would have involved him in conflict with the Cape. But he was to argue later in the Gcaleka-Thembu-Bomvana dispute that apart from historical claims to the land in question he was entitled to it by right of conquest,²⁷ and, refused land by Barkly in 1874,²⁸ his strategy in the long-drawn out boundary dispute may be seen as an indirect method of obtaining land by wearing down the resistance of the Colonial Authorities.

Barkly sent a Commission to investigate the conflict, which immediately warned Sarhili and Ngangelizwe that any further fighting would bring Colonial intervention. The Commission, after considering the history of the dispute, advised that despite the rashness of Ngangelizwe's behaviour, he ought not to be weakened any further, but

25. H.A. 95, No. 69: Report of Edmonstone Commission, 30 Dec. '72, pp.18-28.

F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.24.

26. Saunders, "Annexation", p.80.

27. See below, p.42.

28. G.21-'75, p.35: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Feb. '75. Sarhili had continually asked for more land for his people ever since he was allowed back to Gcalekaland in 1865.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

ought to be supported as an ally against the renascent Gcaleka power.²⁹ Indeed, Ngangelizwe in a panic after his defeat, had asked for British protection without consulting his councillors. But, when on Chalmer's insistence the people and councillors were consulted, they made it clear that they were not prepared to part so lightly with their independence. Ngangelizwe also had second thoughts when the Commission explained that he would forfeit his power over his people when British control was extended.³⁰

Since the Commission failed to prevent friction continuing between the Gcaleka and Thembu, particularly over the disputed boundary, Brownlee was sent to arrange a formal peace. He managed to patch up the quarrel temporarily, pointing out the boundary as that existing before hostilities and recognising Moni's openly admitted subject status to Sarhili.³¹ However, the boundary was soon in dispute again, and theft between Bomvana and Thembu, and Gcaleka and Thembu was frequent, so much so that Colonial Government Agents suspected the complicity of the chiefs.³²

The victory of the Gcaleka in 1872 greatly increased their confidence, and the failure of the Colonial Authorities to prevent the actual fighting encouraged them to turn their attention to the bitterly resented Mfengu. There is a passage in one of W.R.D. Fynn's reports soon after the war that is particularly interesting. Fynn wrote:

29. H.A. 95, No. 69: Report of Edmonstone Commission, 30 Dec. '72, p.30.

30. Averill, p.45.

F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.29.

31. A.10-'73, pp.1-4: Brownlee to Col.Sec., 2 May '73. Averill, pp.45-6.

32. N.A. 153: Ayliff to S.N.A., 9 July '75.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

In reference to Kreli's bearing towards the Fingoes - I notice that since he gained his victory over Gangelizwe, he and his people openly say that they are not afraid to fight any native tribe. I have also remarked that at any gathering of Fingoes and Gcalekas in shops or elsewhere, the Gcalekas invariably end their arguments by telling the Fingoes that they will some day serve them the same way as they did the Temboes - and drive them out of the country Government lent them. (My emphasis).³³

Certainly, immediately after the war, there was an upsurge in Gcaleka-Mfengu theft cases, and thereafter this trend continued, culminating in the fight at the beer-drink that launched the often predicted conflict.

A new crisis in Gcaleka-Thembu relations occurred in 1875. Nongxokozela, Nomkhafulo's waiting maid who had remained behind in Thembuland after her mistress had fled her husband Ngangelizwe's ill-treatment in 1870, was murdered. Sarhili heard rumours of Nongxokozela's ill-treatment and made enquiries of the Thembu. The Thembu prevaricated and so Sarhili referred the matter to the Colonial Government. Almost immediately thereafter, Ngangelizwe reported the ill-health and then the death of the woman.³⁴

Ngangelizwe came into conflict with Menziwe, an Mfengu Chief resident in Thembuland. Menziwe, who had sought refuge with Mthikrakra was favoured by Ngangelizwe in an attempt to strengthen himself against his neighbours, and in the 1872 war Menziwe had faithfully fought for the

33. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: W.R.D. Fynn to S.N.A., 27 April '73.

34. N.A. 153: Ayliff to S.N.A., 9 July '75.
G.16-'76, p.43: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Thembu against the Gcaleka.³⁵ Now, angry at Ngangelizwe's repeated blunders, he told Ngangelizwe that he would stay neutral in any conflict which arose out of the murder. Ngangelizwe responded by threatening Menziwe and forcing him to flee to the Idutywa Reserve. Here Menziwe reported that Nongxokozela's death was due to mistreatment in which Ngangelizwe was implicated, and not to ill-health.³⁶

When this became known, the Gcaleka were naturally incensed and prepared for war. Sarhili decided however, to make the issue a test case of previous Government promises and the much vaunted British Justice. He therefore gave strict instructions to his people to hold back and not provoke the Thembu in any way.³⁷

Regardless of Sarhili's appeal, the Government was bound to intervene, since policy was directed at preventing disputes which might endanger the security of the Colony. A renewed Gcaleka-Thembu conflict, resulting as in 1872 in Gcaleka victory and an increase in Sarhili's power, was perceived as such a threat.³⁸ Sarhili was forever cast in the role of the villain of the frontier for most whites.³⁹ On the other hand the Thembu had always allied themselves to the British⁴⁰ and increasingly after the 1872 war, the Thembu were perceived as the natural allies of the Colony and as a counterweight to the Gcaleka in the divide and rule strategy of native policy.⁴¹

35. F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.28.

36. N.A. 153: Cumming to S.N.A., 3 Aug. '75.

37. G.16-'76, p.43: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76.

The presence of the F.A.M.P., who had been quickly despatched by the Government to prevent a repetition of 1872, must also have had its effect.

38. N.A. 294: Brownlee to Colonial Secretary, 11 Aug. '75.

39. To arrive at this conclusion, one has simply to review frontier history from 1835.

40. See above, p.12.

41. See above, pp.30-31.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Hence Brownlee wrote to remind Ngangelizwe of his dependence on British support and to order him to take Menziwe and his followers back. Then he arranged for William Wright, the Resident with Ngangelizwe, and James Ayliff his counterpart with Sarhili, to conduct an enquiry into the death of Nongxokozela at Emjanyana, the Office of the British Resident with Ngangelizwe.⁴² When informed of the proposed enquiry, Sarhili protested that an enquiry in Thembuland was hardly likely to produce an impartial result and suggested that if an enquiry was needed at all, it ought to be held in the Idutywa Reserve.⁴³ Brownlee agreed, the venue was changed to the Reserve, the enquiry held, and Ayliff and Wright reported their findings on 28th August. They found that Ngangelizwe was directly implicated in the murder of the woman and that he had used his former concubine as a surrogate for his hatred of the Gcaleka and his desire for revenge.⁴⁴

Brownlee fixed on a fine of 200 cattle, a decision that prompted so much dissatisfaction amongst the Gcaleka that there was again talk of war.⁴⁵ Sarhili and his councillors told Ayliff that a fine in cattle however large, did not constitute a punishment of Ngangelizwe, since he would not personally have to bear it.⁴⁶ In any case, the Thembu, the Gcaleka said, could easily doctor the cattle. Sarhili told Ayliff:

42. N.A. 294: Brownlee to Colonial Secretary, 11 Aug. '75.

43. G.16-'76, p.43: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76.

44. G.39-'76, pp.4-5: Ayliff and Wright to S.N.A., 28 Aug. '75.

45. G.16-'76, pp.43-4: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76.

46. N.A. 153: Ayliff to S.N.A., 18 Sept. '75.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

If a fine is considered punishment you must remember that I am a wolf and you encourage me to do wrong... But I know that when I do wrong and break the Governor's word, I will be driven from my country.⁴⁷

Sarhili and his councillors at first firmly refused to accept the decision of the Colonial Government,⁴⁸ but eventually in December, Sarhili agreed to the fine, but only "out of consideration and obedience to Government." He felt his "responsible" behaviour merited greater recognition.⁴⁹ The knowledge that he was perceived as a threat by whites became an increasingly bitter pill to swallow. The fact that the fine cattle were dying from lungsickness on the road from Thembuland to Gcalekaland did not help.⁵⁰ Worst of all, the Nongxokozela incident precipitated the extension of British protection over Thembuland, effectively surrounding Gcalekaland by British territory, save for Bomvanaland in the North.

4. The Annexation of Thembuland

Commandant T.H. Bowker of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (F.A.M.P.), was the first to raise the question of the annexation of

47. N.A. 153: Minutes of a meeting between Ayliff and Sarhili, his councillors and members of the tribe, 21 Sept. '75.
48. N.A. 153: Ayliff to S.N.A., 22 Sept. '75.
49. N.A. 153: Ayliff to S.N.A., 18 Dec. '75.
Ayliff requested that the £100 that the Government had decided to deduct from Ngangelizwe's salary might be given to Sarhili as a 'sweetener' and Brownlee agreed to this. However, Sarhili had already accepted the fine before he knew of the gift.
50. Fynn, p.3.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Thembuland. In September he had been instructed to relocate Menziwe on his land. Whilst personally supervising this, he had concluded that only the annexation of the Thembu could bring permanent peace to the seriously troubled Transkei.⁵¹ Bowker, like his predecessor Currie an exponent of a vigorously expansionist policy, and greatly suspicious of Sarhili,⁵² raised the matter with Brownlee who told him that the Colonial Government approved of his proceeding with enquiries as long as no pressure was brought to bear on the Thembu.⁵³

The timing of the move could not have been more opportune. The Thembu were then disenchanted with Ngangelizwe, who so often had brought trouble down on their heads. They greatly feared a Gcaleka attack and a repetition of the 1872 disaster and looked for British support in the boundary question. Consequently, they proved receptive to the advances of Bowker, Wright and Rev. P. Hargreaves. A large meeting was convened in October and conditions were framed under which the Thembu, excepting Dalasile and the Qwathi who did not attend the meeting, were to come under British authority.⁵⁴

51. G.39-'76, p.14: Report of Bowker to S.N.A., 17 Dec. '75.

52. See below, p.76, footnote 38.

53. It is clear that the Thembu did not understand the implications of British rule. Brownlee later spoke of the Government acceding to a request by the Thembu to come under British rule, which was not true. G.12-'77, pp.169, 179: Brownlee Memo., April '77.

It should also be noticed that Bowker had the whole force of the F.A.M.P. with him and constantly patrolled the country. This in itself can be said to have been a strong pressure on the Thembu. That the Colonial Government was the instigator of the move may also be inferred by some intriguing correspondence in the Transkeian Resident's Letterbook, from which it appears that Bowker and Brownlee had arranged to make overtures to Moni as well as the Thembu. When James Ayliff heard of the proposal, he hastily wrote and pointed out the grave political consequences of taking such a step, and Brownlee, who should have known better, apparently dropped the matter.

Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: Ayliff to Bowker, 1 Nov. '75, Ayliff to S.N.A., 5 Nov. '75.

54. G.39-'76, p.11: Bowker to Under Colonial Secretary, tel., 29 Oct. '75.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

The salient conditions were:

Gangelizwe and several clan heads were to be recognised as chiefs and paid salaries. Boundaries were to be undisturbed, and no hut tax was to be paid until 1878. Except for certain crimes and the right to appeal to magistrates, the chiefs were to retain judicial authority over their people...⁵⁵

Bowker in forwarding his report and the conditions to the Colonial Authorities recommended that Ngangelizwe should be deposed because of his behaviour,⁵⁶ and the Government agreed - all the conditions were approved except the continued recognition of Ngangelizwe as Paramount. On 14th December Bowker informed the Thembu of the Government's decision. He included Dalasile, who was present, on the list of paid chiefs, having persuaded him to receive a magistrate. In handing over to his successor, Bowker felt confident that British rule could be instituted smoothly, since all the Thembu appeared to him satisfied with arrangements thus far.⁵⁷

In the meantime, Mr S.A. Probart, M.L.A. for Graaff-Reinet, had been appointed by the Government as a Special Commissioner to conclude arrangements, and at the same time, to investigate the boundary question and recommend a boundary line between the Gcaleka, Thembu and Bomvana.⁵⁸ He arrived at Emjanyana on 17 December and found that many Thembu were angry at an allegation they felt was trumped up by the English to get rid of Ngangelizwe.⁵⁹ This was to the effect that Ngangelizwe had

55. Campbell, p.127.

56. G.39-'76, p.11: Bowker to Under Colonial Secretary, tel., 29 Oct. '75.

57. G.39-'76, p.13: Bowker to Under Colonial Secretary, tel., 14 Dec. '75.

58. G.39-'76, p.1.

59. The account below is based on G.39-'76, pp.18-22, Probart to S.N.A. 16 Feb. '76.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

beaten his wife Nosepessi. Sympathy for him was widespread when, following on the investigation of the allegation by Inspector E.B. Chalmers, he fled fearing arrest and banishment from Thembuland.

On 24th December, Probart held a general meeting of the Thembu to announce the arrangements connected with the extension of British rule - he felt that Bowker's meeting had been too small and that the Thembu needed to be reassured that Ngangelizwe had nothing to fear as long as his behaviour was 'good'. All the Thembu chiefs except Dalasile attended (including the disguised ex -Paramount) but feeling ran high and Probart felt compelled to promise that 'good' behaviour on the part of Ngangelizwe might result in his being allowed to resume his former position.

On 31 December Probart visited Dalasile. The Qwathi Chief told Probart that he no longer wished to come under British authority, for he had no idea that when he agreed with Bowker to do so, that this would involve any loss of personal authority. He said too, that by accepting British Authority, he would be associating himself with the stigma attached to Ngangelizwe, whose followers had accepted British rule because they had lost confidence in him and feared Sarhili. Eventually Probart managed to persuade Dalasile to receive a magistrate, but it seems that, as with the rest of the Thembu, sleight of hand was practiced. Probart had already insisted that the Thembu could use the magistrates instead of the chiefs as a court of first instance in petty cases, and Brownlee who wishes to subtly undermine the power of the chiefs, agreed with him, despite the fact that this clearly contravened the terms of agreement accepted by the Thembu.⁶⁰ Now, when Stanford arrived in May as his

60. G.39-'76, pp.44-5: Probart to S.N.A., 16 Feb. '76.

Magistrate, Dalasile told him that he had only asked Probart for a Magistrate for himself, and not for one who would exercise power over his people.⁶¹ Dalasile certainly never drew his allowance,⁶² thus being careful not to give British rule over his people the stamp of legitimacy, and despite his previous assertion of independence from Ngangelizwe, he was one of the leaders of the Thembu movement to have Ngangelizwe reinstated.⁶³

5. The Thembu-Gcaleka Boundary Dispute

Believing that the extension of British authority over Thembuland was satisfactorily concluded and a popular regime inaugurated under Wright, Probart set about dealing with the problem of the Gcaleka-Thembu-Bomvana boundary. It is worth discussing the issue in some detail, for it illustrates Sarhili's attempts to maintain his freedom of action against Colonial interference, and his increasing inability to do so as white control expanded in the Transkei.

The dispute centred on the Ncehana valley, a fertile area of which Thembu had traditionally occupied the major part. Sarhili claimed that he had granted land here to Mlatha and Bacela, two Thembu chiefs who were refugees from the Mpondo.⁶⁴ Since then, Mlatha had left the area and Bacela had withdrawn, for the 1872 war had denuded the area of Thembu.⁶⁵ After the war, contrary to Brownlee's settlement agreement

61. Macquarrie, i, 56.

62. F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.32.

63. See below, p. 43.

During the next few years, Dalasile, as will be seen, was on the brink of rebellion several times, but prudence held him back until the Transkeian Rebellion of 1880.

64. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 20 Oct. '76.

65. N.A. 151: Correspondence between W.R.D. Fynn, E.B. Chalmers and S.N.A., March, April '73.

1872-1877 : SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

that all should occupy their previous kraals, Bomvanas had begun to build new kraals in areas previously occupied by Thembu.⁶⁶ Sarhili, who regarded the valley as his by conquest as well as by right, followed suit by sending Gcaleka across the Mbashe to reside in the valley.⁶⁷ But he failed to prevent Bacela returning in 1874.⁶⁸ Any solution to the problem was bound to be contentious, but it is clear that the Thembu expected British support (Bacela had been the most eager to embrace British rule)⁶⁹ and the Gcaleka were determined to prevent any favouritism.

Probart arranged to meet Sarhili on his northern boundary in early January.⁷⁰ He requested him not to try and overawe the Thembu by arriving with a large number of followers, yet in order to assert British authority and discourage resistance to it, Probart stationed Bowker with some of the F.A.M.P. in the Idutywa Reserve, while taking along a personal guard of 150 F.A.M.P. Sarhili, who probably intended anyway to manoeuvre for advantage, decided that two could play at this game, and therefore took along 2-3000 armed men to support his case and guard against Perfidious Albion. Probart had to dismiss the police before he could persuade Sarhili and his councillors to approach and enter into a discussion of the boundary.

At the meeting, Sarhili appointed his brother Lindinxuwa (also called Manxiwe) who had been living in Bomvanaland for some time while representing Sarhili's interests there,⁷¹ and Ayliff, to represent

66. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: W.R.D. Fynn to Chalmers, n.d. (c. early '73).

67. N.A. 151: W.R.D. Fynn to S.N.A., 14 March '73.

68. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: Ayliff to W. Wright, 6 Sept. '74.

69. G.39-'76, p.14: Bowker to S.N.A., 17 Dec. '75.

70. This account is based on G.39-'76, pp.24-30: Probart to S.N.A., 16 Feb. '76.

71. Cory Library, MS.111: Interview by G. Cory with Lindinxuwa, 29 Jan. 1910.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

himself at the boundary fixing. Wright was to represent the Thembu almost all of whom had been successfully scared off by Sarhili's tactics. Probart proceeded with this Commission to trace two suggested boundary lines. These he submitted to Brownlee with the suggestion that as soon as a decision had been taken, Ayliff and Wright should point out the boundary together with representatives of Sarhili, Moni and the Thembu.

The overburdened Department of Native Affairs required eight months to come to a decision. It was not until October that the Government decision on the boundary was announced,⁷² a singularly inopportune moment since the frontier was in the midst of a full blown war scare. The war scare, originating largely in the various Thembu group's disenchantment with Colonial Rule,⁷³ only served to render the issue even more delicate, because the Colonial Authorities could ill-afford to further antagonise their Thembu allies when they were convinced that Sarhili was hatching a conspiracy against them.⁷⁴

When in early October Wright and Cumming tried to mark off the boundary line decided on, Lindinxuwa and Tyali, Moni's eldest son, refused to accompany them, explaining that the present Magistrates did not know the whole history of the dispute and that W.R.D. Fynn, J.C. Warner and Brownlee ought to be present.⁷⁵ Sarhili told West Fynn that he could not accept Probart's line because it would cut off a

72. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 14 Oct. '76.

73. See below, pp.42-3.

74. See below, p.44.

75. N.A. 399: Cumming and Wright to S.N.A., 15 Oct. '76.

large portion of his country. He continued:

Of what have I been guilty that Government should treat me in this manner? I listened to the word of the Government in returning to my country after the war with the Thembu, then according to the rules of warfare (Kaffir and English) I would have been justified in obtaining a portion of Gangelizwe's country, as it was mine by conquest. Am I now merely to look on and see my country cut off and given to the Tembus and say nothing?⁷⁶

Sarhili argued that the Government should therefore appoint a new Commission of men acquainted with the country and its history, and allow him to accompany them on their inspection.⁷⁷ Brownlee was willing to make some concessions to Sarhili over the Ncehana,⁷⁸ but Colonial policy towards Sarhili hardened considerably towards the end of 1876 as the Government became more and more impatient with Sarhili's constant manoeuvring for advantage. In order to appreciate the threatening démarche between the Gcaleka and the Colony, it is necessary to review events of 1876 elsewhere on the frontier.

6. The 1876 War Scare

The 1876 war scare, despite the usual exaggeration of frontier propagandists and rumour-mongers, was a real gauge of tensions between black and white. Although the boundary question remained unsolved, the danger of a Gcaleka attack on the Thembu had receded. As a result, many of the Thembu came to reassess the step they had just taken in

76. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 20 Oct. '76.

77. Ibid.

78. N.A. 845: Brownlee to Wright, draft, 9 April '77.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

accepting British control. As it became clear that the institution of chieftainship, the very foundation of traditional society, was threatened by British rule, discontent became manifest. Sympathy for Ngangelizwe, already aroused at his deposition, coalesced into a movement for his reinstatement.⁷⁹ Whatever his faults, Ngangelizwe was the Thembu Paramount by birth, and he could not simply be made a commoner by an alien power. It was clear that the Thembu had not understood the implications of British rule when they accepted it, for as Scott wrote:

There seems to have been a sort of expectation on the part of the leaders of the people, that they would be taken care of, and yet allowed to do as they liked.⁸⁰

The lesson that this was not the case was a distasteful one. Dalasile used the fact that the British had not solved the boundary dispute as an excuse for not accepting his salary.⁸¹ The Emigrant and Colonial Thembu, although only nominally under the control of the Paramount, showed their support for the Paramountcy and their opposition to white pressures on them by joining the movement for Ngangelizwe's reinstatement. What had originally begun in February as a petition for Ngangelizwe's reinstatement, became more and more like a movement of resistance against British rule.⁸²

At the same time, black unrest stirred elsewhere in South Africa. Trouble between Sekhukhune and the Transvaal flared up and was compounded by the awakening of Zulu power under Cetywayo.⁸³ The death of Adam Kok

79. G.12-'77, pp.171-2: Brownlee Memo., April '77.

80. G.12-'77, p.89: J.H. Scott to S.N.A., 28 Dec. '76.

81. N.A. 40: W. Wright to S.N.A., 7 Oct '76.

82. G.12-'77, p.172: Brownlee Memo., April '77.

83. De Kiewiet, pp. 183-209 discusses the range of this unrest.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

in 1875 resulted in land jobbing in Griqualand East and there was growing opposition to the British rule which allowed this.⁸⁴ In the same area, Nehemiah Mshweshwe desperately tried to maintain an old land claim.⁸⁵ Federation Plans, particularly Froude's irresponsible utterances on Native Policy had already caused great unease in Basutoland,⁸⁶ with fears that Basutoland would be given to the Free State as an incentive to join Federation and as a sop for the Diamond Fields.⁸⁷ Federation was seen as an anti-black combination by whites with the prospective withdrawal of Imperial arbitration. Thus Nehemiah Mshweshwe in his campaign, whether he believed it or not, told Mqikela and Ndamas in March 1876

that the Queen had given up South Africa and was going to withdraw all the troops, and that the white men being about to continue to oppress the black race, the big chiefs ought to take counsel together to be ready to resist.⁸⁸

By May, the newspapers had converted Thembu dissatisfaction into a plot, including Mathanzima, the Emigrant Thembu Chief, Ngangelizwe and Sarhili.⁸⁹ Frontier opinion, whose concern was always with defence, found the scare useful in the campaign for a Defence Commission.⁹⁰ But

84. Averill, pp.84-109.

85. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.150-9.

86. Benyon: "Basutoland and the High Commission with particular reference to the years 1868-1884: The changing nature of the imperial government's "special responsibility" for the territory" (Unp. D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1969), pp.312-20.

87. G.52-76, p.7: Griffith to S.N.A., 21 April '76.

88. C.1748, No. 12: Barkly to Carnarvon, 25 March '76.

89. N.A. 154: Levey to S.N.A., 10 May '76.

90. Molteno and Merriman thought the war scare was begun by the Eastern Star, which was certainly guilty of much sensational reporting. Merriman Papers, No. 13: Molteno to Merriman; 5 Sept. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

the scare only really began in July. On 13th, the Rev. H.H. Dugmore of Queenstown telegraphed Brownlee:

Secret information - Kafirs invade in spring -
Nehemiah, New England - Gangelizwe, Dordrecht and
Queenstown - Kreli, Eland's Post and sea coast -
All concentrate at Amatolas... Do send means of
holding our ground before path is closed.⁹¹

Earthworks were thrown up at Dordrecht and Queenstown⁹² as the 'combination' rumours began to include Cetywayo, the Basotho and even Sekhukhune.⁹³ R. Cole the Magistrate at Wodehouse and E. Judge, the Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate at Queenstown sent alarmist reports to Brownlee, which reaching the press, contributed to the uproar.⁹⁴ The Government, although deprecating the alarm and insisting that reports from other frontier Magistrates were reassuring, decided to send Brownlee again to the Frontier. It is significant that Sarhili was the first whom it was deemed necessary to sound out.⁹⁵

Brownlee concluded from his trip, that the Colonial Thembu were mainly responsible for the scare at Dordrecht and Queenstown, which had so quickly spread over the whole frontier.⁹⁶ According to Judge they had discussed resisting Government and perhaps even launching a campaign against the whites⁹⁷. Some of the Thembu and Emigrant Thembu took part

91. C..1748, No. 50: Barkly to Carnarvon, 20 July '76.

92. Ibid.

93. C.1748, No. 158: Bulwer to Carnarvon, 20 Oct. '76.

94. C.O. 3262: R. Cole to S.N.A., 22, 29 July '76.
C.O. 3262: Judge Memo., 31 Aug. '76.

95. C.1748, No. 50: Barkly to Carnarvon, 20 July '76.

96. G.12-'77, p.165: Brownlee Memo., April '77.

97. C.O. 3262: Memo. by E. Judge, 31 Aug. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

in these discussions⁹⁸ but, as Brownlee pointed out, the Thembu as a whole, whatever their grievances, were too divided to embark on such a desperate venture.⁹⁹ Sarhili and Ngangelizwe certainly met, and it may be surmised that they discussed common grievances, but Brownlee was again right when he argued on the basis of information he had received, that mutual jealousy and suspicion between the two was too great to resolve differences, let alone to launch an effective anti-white front.¹⁰⁰ When it came to the Basotho, Cetywayo and Sekhukhune, a combination became even more manifestly impossible, not least because of sheer geographical distance. The strategy of simultaneous revolt may have been discussed, but it is impossible on available evidence to confirm or reject this. As in following years, when the same factors were to operate, a clear distinction must be drawn between consultation, which there most certainly was, since pressure from colonial expansion became an increasingly common issue in the Transkeian Territories and beyond, and co-ordinated steps to combat it, which in all probability it seems there weren't.¹⁰¹

Sarhili vehemently protested his desire for peace to Brownlee, a profession which is consistent with his previous policy. The scare seemed to him to be an attempt to find an excuse for attacking and subjecting his people to white rule - Sarhili could hardly be blamed for apprehension about white intentions and a determination to resist them, when such statements as this appeared in the press:

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98. N.A. 154: Ayliff to S.N.A., 22 July '76.
99. C.O. 3262: Brownlee to Attorney-General, 18 Oct. '76.
100. Molteno Papers, No. 508b Annexure 3: Brownlee reply on Memo. by Attorney-General, 21 Sept. '76.
101. Schoeman, p.48, gives no evidence to justify his conclusion that there was a combination, except the belief of contemporaries that such existed.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

The only chance I see for white settlement of the Transkei would be to conquer some tribe, say Kreli's, take his country, and exchange it for portions of land held by other tribes, and so get a foot in the centre of the masses of the native population.¹⁰²

West Fynn, who as will be seen had his finger well on the pulse of Gcaleka opinion, reported the statement of an old Gcaleka Government servant which is illuminating:

He said that the great talk amongst the Gcalekas has been that the Govt. [sic] is anxious to make war with Kreli, and only waiting for the slightest provocation, and war will be dictated against him.¹⁰³

When the Colonial Authorities, still suspicious of Sarhili, determined to implement their boundary decision and reinforce their position in the Transkei, began arming their allies the Mfengu in September,¹⁰⁴ Sarhili's suspicions of white intentions can only have deepened. Yet he was hamstrung by both his need to avoid conflict with the British, and by division within the chiefdom. On the latter point, a factor that cannot be underestimated in analysing Gcaleka reaction to British pressures, the same old man had this to say:

102. Graham's Town Journal, 29 Dec. '76, Report from the Thembuland Correspondent.

Brownlee refers to other indignities heaped on the blacks by the press and to racial incidents, such as the assault on a son of Tini Maqomo, and the acquittal of a German who had murdered a Thembu because a witness was drunk, as examples of the provocation of the blacks.

Molteno Papers, Reply to Merriman's reply to No. 467: Brownlee Memo., 3 Nov. '76.

103. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 22 July '76.

104. Molteno Papers, No. 508b: Brownlee to Attorney-General, tel., 21 Sept. '76. N.A. 154: Ayliff to S.N.A., 30 Sept. '76. This was a crucial, but in terms of policy, logical decision.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Also that he could not see how it could be possible for Kreli to combine with the other tribes against the Govt. [sic] when his own tribe would not be unanimous, as a very bitter feeling exists between Maphasa and Kreli and a great portion of the Chief Sibozo (Nzabele's) tribe sympathize with Maphasa and Kreli is aware of it.¹⁰⁵

The 1876 war scare demonstrated both growing black opposition to the advance of white rule and the concurrent lack of unity amongst the blacks. Thompson has rightly asserted that no real sense of racial identity among the blacks had developed and so the behaviour of chiefs and their people depended on their circumstances at the time and their perceptions of where their interests lay.¹⁰⁶ Colonial officials liked to talk about "loyal tribes", but in reality loyalty to an abstract concept like the British Monarchy was generally foreign to blacks, though the Mfengu and Basotho may be said to have been developing such an idea.¹⁰⁷ Even the educated Christian elite were to find the conflict of loyalties generated by the war of 1877 a traumatic experience.¹⁰⁸

7. Sarhili and the Gcaleka besieged

Brownlee, prompted by Wright, removed the chief cause of Thembu dissatisfaction when he restored Ngangelizwe to his position in November.¹⁰⁹

105. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 22 July '76.

For Maphasa's differences with Sarhili, see below, pp.63-4

106. L. Thomson in Oxford History, ii, 246.

107. R. Moyer: "A history of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape, 1815-65" (unp. Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1976), p.20.

108. See below, pp.157-9.

109. N.A. 294: C. Mills to S.N.A., 29 Nov. '76. Wright had urged this step on Brownlee: N.A. 40: Wright to S.N.A., 17 Oct. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Not only were the Thembu now retrieved as allies, and Wright, who had born the brunt of their dissatisfaction,¹¹⁰ restored in their faith, but the hold of the whites over Ngangelizwe was reinforced. Ngangelizwe owed to the British both his position and protection from his enemies (the Gcaleka, the Mpondo and Mpondomise).¹¹¹ It was a reasonable assumption that in any future conflict Ngangelizwe would see his interests in "loyalty" to the British, and that the large majority of Thembu would follow his example; though, where there were specific grievances combined with less pliant temperaments, this might not be the case.

But precisely because the Thembu had been brought back into the fold, colonial attention was again focussed on the Gcaleka. Sarhili had never achieved a really good working relationship with his Resident. William Fynn had asked to be transferred to another post after serious differences with the Chief¹¹² and in May 1873 he was replaced by James Ayliff.¹¹³ Ayliff did not stay long. He went on long leave to England in 1875 and in March 1876 he was appointed to Fingoland in the place of Blyth.¹¹⁴ Moyer's claim that Ayliff was a careerist without real interest in the Mfengu is born out by Brownlee.¹¹⁵ Ayliff's own reports indicate that, although energetic when he started with Sarhili,

110. Molteno Papers, Reply to Merriman reply to No. 467: Brownlee Memo., 3 Nov. '76.

111. G.21-'75, p.37: W. Wright to S.N.A., 19 March '74. Barkly's visit to the Thembu may have been the deciding factor in avoiding a war.

112. G.H. 8/48: W.R.D. Fynn to Bowker, 7 May '71. Relations between Fynn and Sarhili do seem to have improved after the quarrel.

113. F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.10.

114. N.A. 294: C. Mills to S.N.A., 18 March '76.

115. Moyer, p.31.
Molteno Papers, No. 508: Brownlee to Mills, Confidential, 27 Sept. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIAGED

he became less so as time went on. In the pre-war crisis, he was virulently anti-Gcaleka and pro British intervention on the side of the Mfengu in the Gcaleka-Mfengu dispute. A somewhat confused interregnum in Gcalekaland followed his departure for Fingoland. T.A. Cummung, the Magistrate at the Idutywa (and Brownlee's brother-in-law) was officially appointed to succeed Ayliff, but he remained based at the Idutywa.¹¹⁶ His lax control of the Reserve had been severely criticised by the 1872 Edmonstone Commission. He certainly found it impossible to exercise effective control over Gcalekaland from his distant base, and ran foul of the wily Sarhili, who saw it as his prerogative to interfere in the Idutywa where half the population was Gcaleka. In fact it was his inability to stop Sarhili's interference that was responsible for his discomforture in 1872.¹¹⁷ Now, in July 1876 Sarhili accused him of deliberate vindictiveness in his judgements against him,¹¹⁸ and in October Brownlee pulled him up for not submitting regular reports.¹¹⁹ Only West Fynn, Ayliff's clerk who had deputised successfully for him in 1875 and who now acted as a sort of unofficial Resident, was able to maintain effective liaison between Sarhili and Brownlee. His regular and highly informative reports are a valuable source for the period.¹²⁰

Sarhili was not only annoyed by the confusion in British representation with him, but also with many of the decisions of magistrates with

116. N.A. 294: C. Mills to S.N.A., 18 March '76.

117. H.A.95, No.69:Report of Edmonstone Commission, 30 Dec. '72.
pp.40-7.

118. N.A. 155: West Fynn to Cumming, 10 July '76.

119. N.A. 154: Cumming to S.N.A., 20 Oct. '76. In all fairness to Cumming, his was an impossible position, for he was sandwiched between the feuding Thembu and Gcaleka, and the Reserve, with its polyglot population, was particularly susceptible to all kinds of tensions.

120. His relationship with Sarhili is explored fully on p.83, footnote 65 below.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

surrounding chiefdoms. Such decisions seemed to be representative of a continuing discrimination against the Gcaleka by the British.¹²¹ The most important of these is significant also for its startling parallel with the incident that precipitated war between the Gcaleka and British in 1877.

Ndamas, the son of Maphasa, had gone in early 1876 into Fingoland without a pass, and had been caught by a Mfengu named Mbiko, arranging what seemed to be a liaison with his wife. An argment had followed, Mbiko had assaulted Ndamas, blinding him in one eye.¹²² When M. Liefeldt, the Acting Mfengu Agent, came to judge the case, he failed to examine Gcaleka witnesses (although he said none were produced) and relied on the evidence of Mbiko and his wife. He took Ndamas' lack of a pass as weighing against him and fined Mbiko only 3 head of cattle for the assault.¹²³

The importance of the person of a chief has already been stressed.¹²⁴ To fine an Mfengu three cattle for assaulting and seriously injuring a Gcaleka chief was therefore an insult to Gcaleka honour. When he reported the case, Maphasa explained its importance:

"I am dead because my son is dead - we live by our sons... I would like to see the tears of the Government in this case."¹²⁵

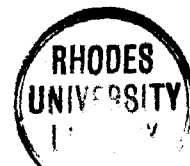
121. De Kiewiet, p.168 recognises this in a passage I have used to conclude this chapter. Sarhili referred to discriminatory treatment he and the Gcaleka received on numerous occasions. See for example, p.35 above.

122. N.A. 154: Ayliff to M. Liefeldt, 16 March, 25 March '76.

123. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 7 April '76.

124. See above, p.6.

125. N.A. 154: Ayliff to M. Liefeldt, 16 March '76. From what Brownlee, Warner and Dugmore say in Maclean, this would indeed be rather a light fine. J. Maclean (ed.): Compendium of Kaffir Laws and Customs (Wesleyan Mission Press, 1858), pp.33-34, 60-3, 110-112.



1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

When Maphasa and Sarhili heard of the fine, they were outraged:

"We refuse to receive the fine of three head of cattle as compensation in this matter. This is a fine for a dog, not for a chief's son. Altho [sic] the Govt. [sic] took our country away from us, it allowed us our Chieftainship and it is a chief's son that has been killed, losing the sight of an eye is death."¹²⁶

Fynn reported that as a result of the Gcalekas' outrage, they contemplated a reprisal.¹²⁷ Brownlee therefore instructed Liefeldt to increase the fine to five head of cattle with a further five on proof of blindness, pointing out that though Ndamas may have provoked the attack, the case was of great political importance and ought not to have received such summary treatment.¹²⁸

1876 also saw Brownlee seeking to extend his system of gradually undermining the chieftainship by subsidising individual chiefs. Well aware of the relations between Maphasa and Sarhili, Brownlee can only have had in mind an indirect attack on Sarhili's position when he suggested paying subsidies to Dalasile, Sarhili's second son of the Great House, Maphasa and his son Xhoxho.¹²⁹ That the suggestion was made as the war scare broke over the frontier can hardly have reassured

126. N.A. 154: Ayliff to M. Liefeldt, 16 March '76.

127. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 7 April '76.

128. N.A. 43: Liefeldt to S.N.A., 27 May '76, Brownlee Minute.

129. On 14th July, Brownlee explained in his Memorandum that Maphasa had long advocated measures which would lead to his reception under British rule as an independent chief and on 22nd July he wrote to Fynn to suggest the allowances:

C.1748, Encl. 2 No. 50, Brownlee Memo. on Transkeian Affairs, 14 July '76.

N.A. 154: Brownlee to West Fynn, 22 July '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Sarhili. He reacted immediately to Brownlee's suggestion, asking Fynn to point out to Brownlee that as he was responsible for the behaviour of his people and chiefs, he was greatly disappointed that he had not been consulted in the matter, and trusted that the orders would be countermanded: The Government did not realise that the suggested subsidies would place these chiefs in an awkward position with those of a higher rank in the chiefdom.¹³⁰ Fynn reported in September that Xhoxho was pressing for a public airing of the issue so that he and his father could confront Sarhili.¹³¹ Relations between Maphasa and Sarhili had obviously deteriorated for he and Xhoxho had not attended any meetings or consultations for some time.¹³² Since Brownlee refused to abandon the idea, Sarhili, again asserting that he did not approve of the subsidies, suggested that the Government confine them to Sigcawu and Mcofoma (the first son of the Right Hand House) who already had them, Dalasile and Xhoxho, and not to elder chiefs like Maphasa.¹³³ There is no correspondence to indicate the outcome of the issue, but Sarhili was clearly aware of Brownlee's tactics and was determined to prevent Maphasa being given any Government support.

Finally, Sarhili's claims for more land both for the chiefdom and for himself, were turned down.¹³⁴ The Government refused to let him purchase or lease a farm in the Colony in order to isolate his herds from the rampant lungsickness. Sarhili was able to point to a man in

130. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 5 Aug. '76.

131. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 30 Sept. '76.

132. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 22 July '76.

133. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 18 Nov. '76.

134. N.A. 154: Ayliff to S.N.A., 4 Feb. '76.

N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 30 Sept. '76.

Sarhili asked to be allowed to purchase or even lease a farm for his own personal use in either the Transkei or the Colony, because his cattle were dying from the lungsickness after mixing with diseased animals.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

the Idutywa Reserve who was leased a farm in the Peeltown District of the Colony by James Ayliff, when in November he complained to West Fynn that the Government was being very hard on him. Of course, he was also referring to all the other pressures that were being exerted on him.¹³⁵

But on balance, although the evidence of Gcaleka intentions towards the end of 1876 is contradictory, Cumming's assessment that Sarhili would not risk violence against the Colony seems realistic.¹³⁶ The Gcaleka were purchasing large numbers of guns and paying high prices for them,¹³⁷ but guns were regarded as an indispensable token of manhood,¹³⁸ and Sarhili promptly turned over two cannon to Fynn which an unscrupulous trader tried to sell to him.¹³⁹ Sarhili did request permission to visit Sandile in September, a step which aroused Brownlee's suspicions,¹⁴⁰ and about the same time he summoned all the Gcaleka working in Bedford back to Gcalekaland, though countermanding the order before they had left.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, Sarhili had done nothing more than have discussions with Ngangelizwe (amongst others no doubt) during the war scare and must have been painfully aware of the rift between himself and Maphasa, who after all was one of the strongest chiefs in Gcalekaland.¹⁴²

135. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 18 Nov. '76.

136. N.A. 154: Cumming to S.N.A., 28 Oct. '76.

137. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 22 July '76.

138. Certainly, Sarhili applied for permission to buy guns for his sons when they reached majority: N.A. 151: Ayliff to S.N.A., 21 Aug. '74.

139.. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 14 July '76.

140. N.A. 154: Fynn to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '76, Brownlee Minute.

141. G.12-'77, p.132: A.Stewart to S.N.A., 18 Jan. '77.

142. In 1870-2, W.R.D. Fynn estimated that there were about 8000 men in Sarhili's country and of these 2000 belonged to Maphasa and Nzabele. Transkeian Resident's Letterbook: W.R.D. Fynn to Col. Sec., 8 Dec. '70, and W.R.D. Fynn to Brownlee, 11 Oct. '72.

18-2-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

In the midst of the war scare, ploughing went on as normal in Gcalekaland and Sarhili took steps to prevent the sale of liquor by traders.¹⁴³

When there was an upsurge in theft later in the year as the drought deepened, Sarhili dealt promptly with each case, punishing offenders firmly.¹⁴⁴

When lack of rain halted ploughing at the end of October, he and his councillors visited Rev. R.S. Leslie at Thuthura and asked him to offer up prayers for rain, and returned after rain had fallen shortly afterwards to ask for thanksgiving prayers.¹⁴⁵ The first mention of the existence of a war-party in Gcalekaland came only in December after the arrival amidst dramatic circumstances of the new Resident.¹⁴⁶

In early 1876, the Gcaleka-Thembu-Bomvana boundary question began to assume in the eyes of the Colonial Authorities the proportions of a threat to peace. In addition to all the other pressures exerted on Sarhili, it was decided that a full time Resident should be appointed to Sarhili to exercise greater influence and restraint on him. The Government felt that it was necessary to have 'a gentleman on whose firmness, discretion and conciliatory manner the Government can place the fullest reliance.'¹⁴⁷ Not surprisingly Cumming was not chosen. But West Fynn, a man who, by virtue of his intimate connection with the Gcaleka people was on excellent terms with Sarhili, was passed over in favour

143. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A. 5 Aug. '76.

144. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 28 Oct. '76.

145. N.A. 154: West Fynn to S.N.A., 3 Nov. '76.

146. See below, pp. 57-9.

147. C.1748, No. 170: Barkly to Carnarvon, 13 Nov. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

of a man who was unsuited for the job on almost every ground.¹⁴⁸

Col. John Eustace, formerly of Her Majesty's regular army, sometime commander of the Cape Town Volunteers and M.P. for Cape Town for several years,¹⁴⁹ was a man of conventional military mind, unacquainted with the customs, language and territory of the Gcaleka,¹⁵⁰ he had the one major drawback which was bound to make Sarhili and his people highly suspicious of his appointment - he was a military man, connected with the British Army. For before Eustace's arrival at Nthlambe where the office of the British Resident with Sarhili was situated, there had been troop movements in the Colony. On 20 July Barkly had written to Carnarvon that although his advisers did not anticipate any serious threat consequent on the war scare, he nevertheless felt it wise to ask for the despatch of early replacements for the departing 32nd Regiment, so that these two could act in concert if necessary.¹⁵¹ The reinforcement duly arrived on 16 November in the form of 2 Divisions of the 3rd Buffs which were transferred to East London.¹⁵² As we have seen the Government viewed Sarhili's attitude to the Boundary Question as a serious threat to peace, and so Barkly had requested that the Imperial Troops should hold the frontier, while the F.A.M.P. were sent over the Kei. Fortunately,

148. William MacDowell Fynn, West Fynn's father, had become British Diplomatic Agent with Sarhili soon after the death of Hintsas, a post which he held until 1853. West Fynn was born in 1845 at Butterworth. His elder brother, William Rafferty Donald Fynn was Resident Magistrate with Sarhili from the latter's return to Gcalekaland in 1865 until 1873. The following year, West Fynn became his brother's successor's clerk.

M. Davies: Twin Trails (Salisbury, 1974), pp.39-69.

149. D.S.A.B., iii, 280-281.

150. West Fynn to Cory, 29 Sept. 1920, in Davies, p.61.
Rev. J. Dewar: A Testimony to Mr West Fynn's Work, in Fynn, The '77 war, p.25.
Cory Library, PR 1609: Major C.H. Malan to the Editor, 23 Aug. '78, in cutting from The Daily News, 31 Aug. '78.

151. C.1748, No. 50: Barkly to Carnarvon, 20 July '76.

152. C.1748, Encl. No. 191: Cunynghame to the War Office, 26 Nov. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

instead of sending the 3rd Buffs to King William's Town in accordance with these arrangements, Barkly told Sir Arthur Cunynghame the Imperial Commander in Chief in South Africa, to merely disembark the 3rd Buffs at East London.¹⁵³ But the mere disembarkation designed to make Sarhili respect the Colonial boundary fixing, produced a state of tension in the Transkei such that even the Mfengu suspected that the whites intended war.¹⁵⁴

Into this situation stepped the new Resident with Sarhili. That a stranger should be appointed when all previous Government representatives had been frontiersmen, well known to him even if not well-liked by him; that he was a military man at a time of troop movements and increasing white pressure; all this seemed to confirm Sarhili's fears that the appointment of Eustace was the first step towards depriving him at worst of the country, his freedom and position or at best, enforcing an unacceptable boundary line on him.¹⁵⁵

Sarhili was to be introduced to Eustace by Cumming on Tuesday 28th November. A report that the F.A.M.P. had crossed the boundary resulted in the war cry being raised on the Monday and armed men flocked to the Residency and its environs.¹⁵⁶ Sarhili, thoroughly alarmed, had already fled to his kraal on the Qora some ten miles away. West Fynn went repeatedly to try and allay his suspicions, but it was not until the Saturday that he agreed to be introduced to Eustace by Fynn.¹⁵⁷

153. Ibid.

154. N.A. 154: Cumming to S.N.A., 2 Dec. '76.

155. Rev. J. Dewar, in Fynn, pp.25-26.
Hook, pp.216-220.
The Cape Mercury, 1 December 1876 quoted in Hook, pp.216-220.

156. N.A. 154: Cumming to S.N.A., 2 Dec. '76.

157. Rev. J. Dewar in Fynn, p.26.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

The message delivered to Sarhili by Eustace was not reassuring as to the independence of the Gcaleka. Eustace told Sarhili:

The Queen... as Paramount Chief of South Africa, whilst willing to extend the protection of her laws... to all who seek to live under them... does not recognize the right of any chief or people to make war, or in any way to alter their boundaries, without the consent of her Government.¹⁵⁸

Sarhili was therefore to comply with the boundary line recently laid down. In reply Sarhili asked Eustace why he had not been consulted on the changes and asked if, as Eustace admitted he was regarded as Paramount Chief of the Gcalekas,

Where is my chieftainship, if I am not consulted on these changes? If I were to treat my servants as the Government treats me, they would not be satisfied.¹⁵⁹

Eustace was further questioned about the Government's military intentions, the shortage of land and the boundary question. The Gcaleka clearly indicated that they did not regard even the grant of the whole Ncehana valley, a concession Brownlee had made, as closing the matter. Nevertheless, when the meeting closed, Bhotomane, Maphasa and Sarhili said they accepted Eustace, but warned him that he would find his position a difficult one since the Gcaleka were "a people of many complaints."¹⁶⁰

158. Hook, p.225.

159. Ibid, p.228.

160. Ibid, p.231.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

An incident had been narrowly averted. Sarhili had told his councillors at a meeting on the Tuesday that he was sick and tired of being hunted by the English and preferred to die instead. Some of the converted Gcaleka warned their missionaries that war was imminent. And Cumming on the Saturday refers for the first time to the existence of a strong war party, though adding that Sarhili would avoid war if he possibly could.¹⁶¹ A report given to Richard Tainton, the Special Magistrate of King William's Town, by an Mfengu headman confirms Cumming's report. The Mfengu acknowledged the existence of a large war party amongst the Gcaleka, but said that Sarhili was doing all he could to suppress it. This he said was because a Basotho Doctor, who had been doctoring him, ordered two bulls to have their front right forelegs amputated. One represented Sarhili, the other the English. Whichever one survived longest would be successful if a war broke out. Sarhili's bull died first and he was consequently very frightened.¹⁶² But it is significant that on the day of Tainton's report, Ayliff wrote to Brownlee to tell him of a report by an Idutywa resident that Sandile had sent to Sarhili to say that the police were "dividing" his country, and that he was tired of the police. Sarhili replied that he must not submit to this - he would assist Sandile to defend his territory.¹⁶³

With the coming of the New Year, the crisis seemed to have passed. The rains of February broke the drought and averted the threat of

161. N.A. 154: Cumming to S.N.A., 2 Dec. '76.

162. N.A. 155: R. Tainton to J. Rose-Innes, 19 Dec. '76. Tainton was to be murdered along with his brother and a police officer almost exactly a year later at the beginning of the Colonial Rebellion. See below, pp.153-4.
The Basotho doctor may well be the same that Brownlee refers to as introducing the custom of salt-water injections and sea-bathing to the Gcaleka in 1876-7.
G.12-'77, p.169: Brownlee Memo., April '77.

163. N.A. 154: Ayliff to S.N.A., 19 Dec. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

famine.^{163a} Eustace, who had signed a spate of passes for the Public Works in the colony,¹⁶⁴ a real indication of distress amongst the Gcaleka, and who then anticipated a serious food shortage could remark in April at the great change wrought by the rains.¹⁶⁵ The Gcaleka-Bomvana boundary was beacons off on 3rd February, including the Ncehana Valley in Gcaleka Territory. Realising that an immediate separation of peoples would be unwise because of a scarcity of food and the preponderance of people on the Bomvana side of the boundary, Eustace allowed Bomvana to remain amongst the Thembu as long as they were prepared to stay under British authority.¹⁶⁶

But the lull was more apparent than real. Despite compensation elsewhere for the loss of the Ncehana, the Thembu were dissatisfied, and soon began to direct a stream of complaints through Scott to the Government. Thembu chiefs refused to let men go and seek work so as not to weaken themselves, and they would not allow the removal of people because this might prejudice their claim to land based on their occupation.¹⁶⁷ Nor was Moni satisfied. Eustace had suggested that W.R.D. Fynn be appointed British Resident with Moni because of his personal knowledge of the area and its inhabitants. Fynn was appointed

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- 163a. See above, p.24. Other Transkeian Agents reported similarly but warned of a shortage of food, except amongst the Mfengu towards Christmas: N.A. 155: various reports, June '77.
164. G.12-'77, p.77: Eustace to S.N.A. 27 Jan. '77. Eustace signed 224 passes for the Public Works in November and December, a startling increase.
165. G.17-'78, p.28: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. 78. N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 26 April '77. Eustace had felt confident enough in February to leave Gcalekaland to fetch his wife and children from Cape Town.
166. N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 8 Feb., '77.
167. N.A. 40: Scott to Wright, 19, 21 Feb. '77. N.A. 42: Wright to S.N.A., 27 July '77.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

retrospectively as from 1 February.¹⁶⁸ In July Fynn forwarded complaints from Moni that although Sarhili's claim to the Ncehana Valley had been recognised, his claim to the land formerly belonging to Mlatha, and since his departure, by his son Tyali, had not been recognised.¹⁶⁹ To show that they hadn't abandoned their claim, the Bomvanas began ploughing on the Thembu side of the border in late July.¹⁷⁰

There were other signs that the calm Eustace spoke of in April was illusory. There had been another Gcaleka-Mfengu flare-up before April. There was a case of murder involving Gvakeka and Mfengu,¹⁷¹ and another in which Sarhili, Fynn and eventually Brownlee thought that the Mfengu were trying to wrongfully lay the blame for a crime on the Gcaleka. This incident led to armed Gcaleka lining the border.¹⁷² In May Eustace warned Sarhili that the sale of brandy, which had encouraged several fights between Gcaleka, could involve Mfengu who were also crowding round the sellers and lead to bloodshed hard to localize.¹⁷³

Sarhili's relationship with Eustace was not cordial. Fynn's claim that Sarhili avoided Eustace for some time¹⁷⁴ is born out by reports of Eustace himself.¹⁷⁵ In April on Eustace's return, he had complained to him that he was "still made a bugbear of, as wishing for war" by

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168. C.O. 3277: Brownlee to Colonial Secretary, 3 March '77.
 169. N.A. 155: W.R.D. Fynn to S.N.A., 11 July '77.
 170. N.A. 42: Wright to S.N.A., 27 July '77.
 171. N.A. 155: Ayliff to S.N.A., 13 Jan. '77 and correspondence following.
 172. N.A. 154: West Fynn to Ayliff, 9 Nov. '76.
 N.A. 155: Ayliff to S.N.A., 3 Feb. '77 and Brownlee Minute.
 173. N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 5 May '77.
 174. Fynn, p.5.
 175. N.A. 154: Eustace to S.N.A., 22 Dec. '76.
 N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 25 Jan. '76.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

the Government. Eustace tried to assure Sarhili that the Government had never believed the rumours about him, and recommended to Brownlee that Sarhili should be granted a farm so as to remove one of the causes for complaint.¹⁷⁶

8. Dissension within the Walls: Gcaleka Responses

But it was perhaps in intra-tribal politics that the tensions amongst the Gcaleka were greatest at the time. The pressures brought to bear over several years on the Gcaleka, particularly over the last eighteen months had polarized opinion. The development of war and peace parties within the Gcaleka chiefdom has already been noted. The leaders of the two parties may be identified from contemporary reports.¹⁷⁷ The leaders of the war party were Runeyi and Qaza, two of Sarhili's most influential councillors and leaders of the armies of the Great Councillors, the Ntshinga Division of royal clans and the Qawuka Division of commoners respectively, Bacela, Qaza's son, Sigcawu, Ngubo, Sarhili's cousin and bosom friend, Ngxito the Gcaleka chief and tola (war-doctor) whom even Sarhili feared, and Sitshaka, a minor son of Hintsá. Taken together, these men wielded a tremendous amount of power and influence.

176. N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 28 April '77. The practice of buying off chiefs' opposition was not new - see above p.22, footnote 68.

177. The following sources yield information in this respect:

Cory Library, M.S. 14, 608(3): A.W. Burton: Notebook on 1877-8 war, pp.11-12.

C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Statement of West Fynn before Frere, 29 Sept. 3 Oct. '77.

C.1961, Encl. No. 57: Report of Lot-Khaie, Native missionary.

G.17-'78, p.217: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

Peires, pp.41, footnote 5, 78-9.

J.H. Soga: The South-Eastern Bantu (Johannesburg, 1930), pp.119, 240.

J.H. Soga: The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs (Lovedale, 1931) Ch. VI.

F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.10.

The most important source are Fynn's two reports to Frere. The fact that Fynn chose to keep information of this nature to himself for so long is just one of the many curious aspects of his role in the period before the war, a role that is explored more fully in the following chapters.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

The peace party was led by Bhotomane, Sarhili's chief councillor, and included Maphasa, head of the important Tsonyana clan, his son Xhoxho, Maki one of Sarhili's councillors, Sibozo a chief from the Qolora area, and a minor chief named Kusi. A black preacher attached to the Thuthura Mission, Rev. Lot-Khaie reported that Ngxito inclined for a long time towards the peace party and only joined the war party in mid 1877, and Brownlee repeated this statement in his Memorandum of May 1878. Sarhili as we have seen also inclined towards the peace party.

But at the same time the peace party was split by differing attitudes towards British rule. Sarhili was, as we have seen a convinced traditionalist, determined to preserve political and cultural independence. Maphasa and Maki on the other hand were both favourably disposed towards British rule, though for different reasons. Maki had formerly been an extremely influential councillor (Theal maintains that he was Sarhili's chief councillor) when Tiyo Soga began his mission work at Thuthura, in the late 1860's. Maki alone amongst the Gcaleka councillors expressed an active interest in the mission, and was reported by Tiyo Soga as being favourably disposed to European institutions as a whole.¹⁷⁸ Maphasa, son of Bhurhu, half-brother of Hintsa and adviser to both him and Sarhili whose uncle he was,¹⁷⁹ on the other hand sought British rule as a means to recognition of independent status. In 1872 he had expressed a wish "to live entirely under the Government"¹⁸⁰ and encouraged by W.R.D. Fynn, he had defied Sarhili and refused to fight the Thembu.¹⁸¹ In July 1876 Brownlee wrote in his Memorandum on Transkeian Affairs that Maphasa had long advocated measures which would lead to his independence and reception under British rule. We

178. Chalmers, pp.396-9.

179. Saunders, "Annexation", p.171, footnote 5.

180. C.O. 3205: Blyth to Col. Sec., 3 Sept. 1872.

181. Transkeian Resident's Notebook: W.R.D. Fynn to S.N.A. 31 July, 2 Oct., 11 Oct. '72.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

have seen how he became the centre of a controversy between Sarhili and Brownlee over subsidies and how he and Xhoxho had refrained from attending Gcaleka councils and meetings at the same time, being supported in their conflict with Sarhili by Sibozo.¹⁸² The account of Eustace's meeting with Sarhili in Hook depicts Maphasa as taking a strongly independent line.¹⁸³ Soon after the meeting, Xhoxho visited Eustace to assure him of his and his father's loyalty to the British, thus indirectly confirming Cumming's report of the existence of a war party.¹⁸⁴

That members of the two parties or rather in the early 70's opposing schools of thought, had long been involved in manoeuvring for advantage can be seen in the story of Maki and Ngubo. Maki's progressive ideas brought him into conflict with conservative elements in the chiefdom and he was accused of bewitching Sarhili's cattle (a standard mechanism for getting rid of people who were becoming too rich or powerful for the comfort of the chief or his councillors) and was forced to flee to the Idutywa Reserve.¹⁸⁵ Theal says he was replaced by Ngubo who was implacably opposed to the whites.¹⁸⁶ Maki must have returned, because he was one of the Gcaleka who accompanied Eustace when he marked out the boundary in February 1877.¹⁸⁷ Soga relates how Maki and Mbali, a diviner, drove a wedge between Sarhili and Ngubo by blaming the latter for the disaster which befell the Gcaleka troops at the second battle of the war. Ngubo, already in disfavour

182. See above, p. 48.

183. Hook, pp. 217-224.

184. N.A. 154: Eustace to S.N.A., 22 Dec. '76.

185. Chalmers, pp. 396-9.

186. Theal, X, 52.

187. N.A. 155: Eustace to S.N.A., 8 Feb. '77.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

because he had disobeyed Sarhili's orders in launching the first attack, went into voluntary exile.¹⁸⁸ It is interesting to note that Maki, Bhotomane and Mbali were the first Gcaleka to surrender to the British troops after the first apparently successful white campaign.¹⁸⁹

In June and July two developments took place which point to deepening tensions within the chiefdom. Cumming reported that many Gcaleka were visiting Ngxito, and were circulating stories of visions and revelations which produced much excitement, although it did not appear that Sarhili was involved.¹⁹⁰ Frere in October, after the war had begun, refers to reports that the Gcaleka had been influenced by one prophetess who claimed to have seen visions of Hintsa, other chiefs and armed men rising from the water and calling the chiefdom to arms. It was said she was responsible for the adoption of close formation tactics at Ibeka which contributed to the massacre of the Gcaleka.¹⁹¹ Some sources even claim that this prophetess was Nita, the daughter of Ngxito.¹⁹² These startling parallels to the millenarianism of the Cattle Killing are given more prosaic trappings by Lot-Khaie, the black preacher, who told Frere of many people in the period preceding the war having visions of armed troops, warriors, baggage wagons and so on. As the excitement increased women going for water said they saw these things, but Lot-Khaie dismissed this as the customary amusement of companions.¹⁹³

188. Soga, Ama-Xhosa, pp.113-5.

189. G.19-'86, p.8: Report on Resettlement of Sarhili in Bomvanaland.

190. G.17-'78, p.216: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

191. C.1961, No. 57: Frere to Carnarvon, 12 Oct. '77.

192. "An Ex Cape Mounted Rifleman" :With the Cape Mounted Rifles: Four years active service in South Africa (London, 1881), p.98. Henceforth referred to as Ex C.M.R.

193. C.1961, No. 57: Frere to Carnarvon, 12 Oct. '77.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Equally intriguing was the attempted "coronation" of Sarhili that both Eustace and Fynn refer to.¹⁹⁴ When Hintsä was killed Soga says that Sarhili was not formally installed as his successor and Paramount of the Xhosa. The ceremony of ubu-hlalu or placing a necklace of red beads around the neck of the new Paramount, was not performed because people thought the time was inopportune. A division of opinion took place over the umqolo ceremony whereby every adult male recognised the Chief by bringing a gift of cattle to him. The Ntshinga favoured the performance of this ceremony, but the Qawuka believed that this would provoke the new Chief to prove himself and so bring further troubles down on the Gcaleka. In the end, the Ntshinga went ahead and so some cattle were collected.¹⁹⁵

Both Fynn and Burton¹⁹⁶ mention that Qaza and Runeyi had acted as regents until Sarhili came of age, and both consider that the non-installation of Sarhili contributed to their influence. In June and July there was considerable excitement over the discussion of Sarhili's "coronation" amongst the Gcaleka, but neither Sarhili nor his councillors, in particular Qaza and Runeyi, were in favour of this. Fynn and Burton say that the latter's reasons were that this move would give power to Sarhili and since he supported Sarhili's policy, to Maki. Maphasa, Eustace says, also advised against it on the grounds that Hintsä had died only two years after the ceremony was performed on him.¹⁹⁷

194. C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Report of West Fynn to Frere, 29 Sept. '77. G.17-'78, pp.28-9: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

195. Soga, Ama-Xosa, pp.99-102.

196. Cory Library, MS 14, 608(3): A.W. Burton: Notebook on 1877-8 war, pp.11-12.
C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Statement of West Fynn before Frere, 29 Sept., 3 Oct. '77.
It may be that Burton is relying on Fynn but the context does not seem to indicate this.

197. G.17-'78, p.29: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

1872-1877: SARHILI AND THE GCALEKA BESIEGED

Sarhili would have preferred to have proceeded with the arranged great hunt, a customary activity which released the aggressive tensions of the chiefdom, but which, owing to the controversy over the "coronation" did not take place.¹⁹⁸

While the sources for these accounts above are not always entirely reliable, it seems certain that there was discussion of some formalisation of Sarhili's position and that this was rejected. When seen against the background of politicking and the activities of the war diviners, prophetesses and Ngxito, it seems reasonable to conclude that there was in the first half of 1877 increasing manoeuvring between those who feared that any such demonstration would bring ruin and disaster to the chiefdom.

Sarhili faced a dilemma: he wished ardently to preserve the position and traditions of not only the Gcaleka, but of the Xhosa nation as a whole, but he realised that any conflict with the Thembu or the Mfengu would draw in the British as their allies, and consequently would be disastrous. In the quarrel that erupted between the Mfengu and Gcaleka in August 1877, Gcaleka opinion as to whether to launch an all out attack on the Mfengu long trembled in the balance. The Mfengu, assured of white support in the eventuality of war, seemed to take malicious delight in rubbing salt into the wounds of Gcaleka resentment, and must bear much of the responsibility for tipping the scales in favour of war. There are good grounds for suspecting that many of the acquisitive and competitive Mfengu looked at this time of overcrowding and economic troubles to some tangible benefits from the outcome of a war with the Gcaleka.

198. C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Report of West Fynn to Frere, 29 Sept. '77. G.17-'78, pp.28-9: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

CHAPTER 3

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

1. The Beer-Drink of Ngcayecibi's Kraal

The story of the beer-drink at Ngcayecibi's kraal is one of the best known in Xhosa tradition and there are many versions. There are also several written accounts, some contemporary, which differ as to detail, but in sum, the main outlines are clear.¹ On 3rd August Ngcayecibi, a Mfengu living at Headman Qenqa's kraal near Butterworth, held a beer-drink in honour of the marriage of his son Kewuti. Some Gcaleka including a party of the Tsonyana clan under two petty chiefs, Mxoli and Fihla, attended the beer-drink.² The time came when the guests began leaving. Mxoli demanded more beer and was informed by his Mfengu hosts that there was none left. Now the Mfengu had a reputation for being very tight with their beer³ and obviously Mxoli suspected that they were, as usual, holding back a reserve to drink themselves when their guests had left. He insisted, and when another Gcaleka who was not of his party assured him that the beer was indeed finished, Mxoli struck him and a brawl developed. Outnumbered by the Mfengu, the Gcaleka were driven across the Gcuwa River. Mxoli and Fihla were severely beaten, and one of the companions died.

1. E.g. Theal, X, 53-4; J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside: A History of the Abambo, (Butterworth, 1912), p.63; Soga: S.E. Bantu, pp.255-6 (2 versions); Fynn: pp.1-2; C.2220, Encl. No. 21: Brownlee Memo., c.Aug. '77. Encl. No. 83: James Ayliff to West Fynn, 5 Aug. '77.
2. Soga and Theal say that an open invitation was customary on such occasions, while most informants assert that the Gcaleka were actually invited.

Soga: S.E. Bantu, pp.255-6; Theal, op.cit. Vol. X, pp.53-4. Under Blyth's firm control, no Gcaleka had been allowed to attend Fingo beer-drinks, but Ayliff had let the rule slide. Campbell, p.122.
3. The Gcaleka have a saying: "There is always beer in a Mfengu's outside room". Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

The Tsonyana were enraged and were only prevented from making an immediate retaliatory raid by a chief named Tuada.⁴ The fight was reported at the Resident's office the next day, and West Fynn, in the absence of Eustace,⁵ went on the 5th to the scene of the fight, where he took statements from those involved.⁶ Eustace decided on the basis of Fynn's report to him that there was no need to hurry back.⁷ Both he and Fynn assumed that the matter could be settled with Ayliff as was the custom in Gcaleka disputes with the Mfengu.⁸

But this was the third incident between Maphasa's people and the Mfengu, and the second actually involving relatives of his.⁹ Feeling between the Mfengu and Gcaleka was running high as has been seen, and the brawl was therefore no ordinary young-man's stick fight, especially since the person of a chief had been violated.¹⁰ The Tsonyana's anger therefore did not abate, and on the night of the 8th-9th August they carried out a large-scale retaliatory raid right along the Gcuwa River. Maphasa and Xhoxho were fully implicated, Xhoxho actually leading the raid.¹¹

4. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to Frere, 18 Aug. '77.

5. He was on a tour of Thembuland with the newly-appointed Chief Magistrate, Major Elliot. The idea of his accompanying Elliot was to demonstrate to the Transkeian blacks that Government officials worked in harmony and did not take sides in tribal disputes. N.A. 42: Eliot to Brownlee, 3 Aug. '77.

6. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: West Fynn to Ayliff, 9 Aug. '77.

7. G.17-'78, p.29: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

8. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to Frere, 18 Aug. '77.

9. See above, pp.51-2.

10. See above, p. 6, for a discussion of this question.

11. Fynn, p.2. Theal, X, 54 dates this event too early.

Maphasa when asked by a Mfengu headman why he had resorted to violence when the matter was in the hands of the magistrates simply replied that 'a Gcaleka chief had been killed.' G.17-'78, p.166: Ayliff to S.N.A., 11 Aug. '77.

Melane quotes a similar response by Xhoxho to Sarhili's injunction not to risk a war over a petty interview. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977. Maphasa was involved in a further case of theft from Mfengu the following week. G.17-'78, p.162: Ayliff to Eustace, 16 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

At the time West Fynn palliated their responsibility, saying that Maphasa was most annoyed with his people and reprimanded them severely for taking the matter into their own hands when he had referred it to his magistrate.¹² But in his pamphlet written in 1911, he admits that when he went to investigate the raid, he had to convince Maphasa and Xhoxho that their approval of the raid would bring severe consequences, before they agreed to assist him in collecting the stock that had been seized by the Tsonyana.¹³ This amounted to some 3 horses, 134 cattle and 629 sheep and goats.¹⁴

Xhoxho, Sarhili's brother, had reported the raid to the Paramount, who sent a message ordering the Gcaleka to return to their kraals. Together with Fynn's presence, this had a quietening effect, and the parties of armed Mfengu and Gcaleka who had been facing one another across the Gcuwa gradually dispersed.¹⁵ There is a Mfengu report that Sarhili told Maphasa to 'drive the Mfengu to the Tsomo',¹⁶ but this seems unlikely in the light of the evidence. Nevertheless, the two peoples remained

12. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: West Fynn to Ayliff, 9 Aug. '77.

13. Fynn, p.2.

14. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to Frere, 18 Aug. '77.

15. Fynn, p.2.

Melane confirms that Sarhili sent such a messenger. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. '77.

A Mfengu headman also reported that he had heard Bhotomane's messenger say that Sarhili had told the missionaries not to let their people (the Christians) flee, as the raid was Maphasa's responsibility, not his. G.17-'78, p.166: Ayliff to S.N.A., 11 Aug. '77.

16. G.17-'78, p.154: Evidence of Magida before Ayliff, 15 Aug. '77. C.2220, Encl. No. 21: Brownlee Memorandum, c. Aug. '78.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

extremely tense, particularly those who were further away from the boundary and did not know precisely what had occurred.¹⁷

When Brownlee was informed of the beer-drink and subsequent raid, he telegraphed Inspector E.B. Chalmers, commander of the F.A.M.P. at Komgha, suggesting he move up a troop of police to prevent further incidents. With the understanding that marked his behaviour throughout the next two months, Chalmers replied that such a move would be seen by the Gcaleka as Government favouritism to the Mfengu, and would therefore have a provocative effect. He sent to Ayliff advising that more good would be done by waiting and Ayliff, at that stage, agreed.¹⁸

Unaware of Eustace's continued absence, Brownlee also asked Chalmers to tell Eustace that he should demand the immediate restitution of the stock from Sarhili. Then, in co-operation with Ayliff, he should conduct an enquiry, depending on the outcome of which, further satisfaction might be demanded of Sarhili.¹⁹ It looks as if Brownlee, in the absence of reports from Eustace, jumped to the conclusion that the colony's bête-noire was responsible for the trouble.

Since Eustace had not returned, Ayliff began conducting an enquiry among the Mfengu as to the origins of the beer-drink brawl. Fynn sent to inform Eustace of the raid and to request his return,²⁰ and in the

17. G.17-'78, p.167: Ayliff to S.N.A., 11 Aug. '77.

18. G.17-'78, p.167: Ayliff to S.N.A., 12 Aug. '77.

A direct descendant of Veldtman, Thomas Bikitsha, asserts that Veldtman asked for Government support immediately after the raid, but at first the Government were only prepared to give the Mfengu arms. Interview with Mr T. Bikitsha, Zozulwana Location, Butterworth, 20 Sept. 1977.

It is interesting to note that all informants were agreed that the Mfengu actively solicited the aid of the Whites and were therefore partly, if not wholly responsible for their involvement.

19. G.17-'78, p.148: S.N.A. to Chalmers, tel., 11 Aug. '77.

20. G.17-'78, p.29: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

meanwhile did his best to collect the stolen stock. But some had been eaten and some taken by Gcaleka other than the Tsonyana. Consequently they proved difficult to trace, and no-one, including Sarhili, was keen to make up the missing Mfengu stock out of their own herds. Forty head of cattle were to remain outstanding for almost a month, a fact which Ayliff capitalised on when advocating strong measures against Sarhili.²¹

During the week following the raid, there were a series of petty clashes and thefts in which both sides were involved. The Mfengu generally obeyed Ayliff's order to fall back from the boundary and they did not follow up their successes in fights by invading Gcalekaland.²² But they were not all virtue and innocence, as Ayliff claimed, for there are several recorded instances of Mfengu provocation.²³ The Gcaleka, who were busy robbing some of the vacated Mfengu kraals along the border, threatened in return to drive the Mfengu to the Ndenxa River, the western boundary of Fingoland.²⁴ It was in the Idutywa Reserve that tensions were greatest. As had been apparent in 1872 and on several occasions since then, Cumming exercised little authority or control over the heterogeneous population.²⁵ The Gcaleka and Mfengu residents of the Reserve therefore took up this new quarrel with little let or hindrance. After the raid of the 9th, there were several incidents climaxing on the 17th in the reported wholesale theft of cattle from Mfengu residents.²⁶

21. G.17-'78, p.169: Ayliff to S.N.A., 18 Aug. '78. Theal, X, 55.

22. C.1961, No.29: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

23. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to Frere, 18 Aug. '77.

24. G.17-'78, pp.154-5: Evidence of Mfengu before Ayliff.

25. See above, p.50.

26. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 58: Eustace to Brownlee, 25 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Cumming at first expected a Gcaleka attack on the Reserve since there were numerous Gcaleka drawn up on the boundary, but these later retired.²⁷ Eustace, now returned, referred the matter of the Gcaleka on the boundary to Sarhili, who said the men had assembled without his sanction owing to alarming reports of fighting between the Mfengu and Gcaleka in the Reserve. Fynn supported Sarhili's claim. Eustace himself believed that most of the cases of theft reported by Cumming were committed by Reserve Gcaleka, although stolen stock was passed on to receivers in Gcalekaland. In the instance of Mfengu cattle, Eustace thought it likely that these in fact belonged to Gcaleka moving from the Reserve to Gcalekaland.²⁸

2. The White Dilemma

As a result of his enquiry and the continuing unrest, Ayliff wrote to Brownlee on 18 August strongly urging that seldom had a more favourable opportunity arisen to encourage the loyalty of the Mfengu. Government should show that it was determined to protect British subjects

and to put down with a strong arm if necessary such insolent and overbearing attempts to take the law into his own hands of Kreli or any other native chief.²⁹

To Ayliff's mind, there was no doubt of Sarhili's knowledge of the attack on 9th, and by implication, his approval and possibly even direction of it. He therefore urged that the time had come for the military occupation of

27. Ibid., G.17-'78, p.149: Civil Commissioner King William's Town to S.N.A., tel., 21 Aug. '77.

28. C.1961, Encl. 3, No. 58: Eustace to Brownlee, 25 Aug. '77.
An ironic reversal of the Mfengu "theft" of cattle from the Gcaleka in 1835 when they removed from the Gcaleka into the Colony. Moyer, p.159.

29. G.17-'78, p.170: Ayliff to S.N.A., 18 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

the country and the stationing of a force of troops at Butterworth to prevent a recurrence of events.³⁰ Ayliff followed his letter with a telegram to Brownlee on the 19th, warning that Veldtman Bikitsha, the most influential Mfengu headman, had been informed by friends in Gcalekaland that his location was to be attacked.³¹

Brownlee and the Molteno Ministry did face a dilemma. If, on the one hand, it appeared at all likely that the Gcaleka were preparing to attack the Mfengu en masse, the only course of action open to them that was consistent with the principles of native policy hitherto exercised by them, would be to intervene.

In 1876 when it was believed that the Mfengu were vulnerable to Gcaleka attack, Brownlee had sanctioned the arming of Mfengu by Ayliff.³² As Frere was to minute before the war broke out,

We are under the strongest obligations... to protect the Fingoes who have been placed in this country under our Government.³³

In mid 1877, the Gcaleka still vastly outweighed the Mfengu in terms of numbers and arms, and observers felt that in a free fight, the Gcaleka would sweep the Mfengu away.³⁴

30. Ibid.

31. G.17-'78, p.148: Chalmers to S.N.A., tel., 20 Aug. '77.

32. See above, p.47.

33. Molteno Papers: Minute for Ministers by Frere, 23 Sept. 1877 quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.170.

34. Cf. C.1961, Encl. 2, No. 30: Lt. Melvill to Col. Glyn, 2 Sept. '77. Reporting on the events of 29 August, when a Gcaleka army of 6000-7000 briefly invaded Fingoland, Melvill observed that had the Gcaleka pressed their attack, they would have swept the Mfengu and police away. Hook calculated that the total Gcaleka army numbered about 9000. Hook, p.234.

This number was down from the computed strength of 12,000 in 1876 because of the defection of the Tsonyana and the neutrality of Lindinxuwa and his followers. The figure of 12,000 is given by Theal, X, p.52, as Sarhili's strength before the war.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

On the other hand, such intervention would antagonize the Gcaleka further and would risk turning a possible tribal war into a black-white confrontation. Eustace and Chalmers had both shown that they were aware of the dilemma when they said that the arrival of the police on the Gcaleka-Mfengu border would be viewed as Government favouritism to the Mfengu. But in any case, the Mfengu had become the symbol for all the recent pressures affecting the Gcaleka, economic, social and political. Even if the immediate crisis were averted, the Mfengu would remain to confront the Gcaleka, and unless a radical revision of native policy were to occur, other crises would arise.³⁵

Unfortunately, Brownlee was not helped to a decision by a balanced view of the situation. Eustace's first reports which indicated the opportunity and necessity for cool negotiation only came to hand some time after Ayliff's alarmist telegram.³⁶ Meanwhile, in the absence of evidence contradicting Ayliff's view, Brownlee decided the time had come to send the troop of police to Butterworth. He tried to make that step as acceptable as possible to the Gcaleka by stressing through Eustace that the F.A.M.P. were sent to Butterworth as much to restrain the Mfengu as to support them in the event of a Gcaleka attack, and by reiterating the need for Ayliff and Eustace to conduct an enquiry into the initial dispute and subsequent raid. When the Government received the report of the enquiry it would decide on further action.³⁷ Brownlee,

35. G.17-'78, p.149: S.N.A. to Chalmers, 20 Aug. '78.

36. Frere had still not received any report from Eustace on 27 August. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 23: Frere to Molteno, tel., 27 Aug. Eustace's first report of 18th to Brownlee, explained only the initial disturbances, and his second of 25th missed Brownlee who had come to the frontier (see below, pp.86-7) C.1961, Encl.33: Eustace to Brownlee, 18 Aug. '77 and C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 58: Eustace to Brownlee, 25 Aug. '77.

37. G.17-'78, p.149: S.N.A. to Chalmers, tel., 20 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

as Frere was to do later, therefore resisted pressured for precipitate action³⁸ and tried, according to his lights, to adopt a course of action that would defuse a tense situation. Circumstances and mutual suspicion were to defeat his attempts.

3. The Police arrive, the Mfengu provoke

Eustace sent Fynn over to Sarhili to explain carefully why the police were coming, in order to allay the intense suspicion with which he correctly anticipated their arrival would be greeted. Sarhili told West Fynn that he was sorry the police had come because he feared their presence would inflame the situation.³⁹ His prognosis was borne out by events. The Mfengu began to taunt the Gcaleka by saying that they were glad their fathers, the police, had come, and that they would now drive the Gcaleka into the sea.⁴⁰ Aroused by these taunts, the Gcaleka gathered on the border and on the night of 22nd, the war cry was sounded. An incident involving a Mfengu policeman was largely responsible for provoking the Gcaleka into a new series of raids on the Mfengu, culminating in a serious confrontation with them. The policeman had brought a message from his employer, Mr R. Scott, the magistrate at Mqanduli, to Eustace, but he had not returned with the reply, as he said he had been concerned with the unrest. Instead, he had stayed at his property in Veldtman's Location. On 22nd, together with two others, he fired shots

38. See for example C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 30: E.B. Chalmers to Bowker, 2 Sept. '77, quoted in extenso, pp. 88-9 below.

Eustace confirmed that there was a powerful anti-Sarhili lobby of whom Bowker was one, indirectly characterising the policy advocated by them when he said

I don't think the knocking on the head all the independent chiefs on our border is the correct policy any more than the suppression of the native states in India...

Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 39: Eustace to Merriman, 1 Sept. '77.

39. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 58: Eustace to Brownlee, 25 Aug. '77.

40. C.1961, Encl. No. 29: Eustace to Brownlee, tel., 29 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

into the hut of a Gcaleka man and was almost immediately arrested. Thereupon he told Eustace's Gcaleka police that if the Gcaleka attempted a raid on Veldtman's Location they would meet with a very different reception to that they had received from the Mfengu at Butterworth.⁴¹

On the night of 23rd the Gcaleka gathered at the Kraal of the man shot at by Scott's messenger. A few shots were exchanged with Veldtman's Mfengu, but Veldtman soon withdrew his men in accordance with Ayliff's instructions.⁴² On the following day, while Ayliff and Eustace were investigating the disturbance, Gcaleka were reported to be crossing the boundary, but they only found parties of the two peoples gathered either side of the boundary, and these with the help of a patrol led by Chalmers, were persuaded to disperse. At nightfall, however, the forces regrouped and a full-scale clash below Butterworth ensued, with Maphasa's Tsonyana again prominent. Both sides claimed that the other had initiated the battle.⁴³ Fynn relates the story dramatically, no doubt embellishing his role, but his account is illuminating as regards Sarhili's involvement in the conflict.⁴⁴ Fynn says he was roused from bed at 12 p.m. by two of Sarhili's councillors. They reported serious fighting on the Gcuwa and asked him on behalf of Sarhili to go and stop the fight, since Sarhili's presence would inflame the whole tribe. Fynn duly went off, found Xhoxho, who was in the thick of things, delivered Sarhili's message,

41. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 58: Eustace to Brownlee, 25 Aug. '77, and C.1961 Encl. 1 No. 30: Eustace to Brownlee, 1 Sept. '77

Fynn dates this event in September (not his only error of dating), but otherwise his account agrees substantially with that of Eustace, save that he becomes the man who interviewed the prisoner and punished him! Fynn, pp.11-12.

42. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 58: Ayliff to S.N.A., 25 Aug. '77.

43. Ibid., C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 30: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '77.

44. Fynn, p.2. Fynn has dated the event rather early, but it is obvious he is referring to the same occurrence.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

managed to get the Gcaleka away, and convinced the Mfengu to do the same.

On returning home, he found Sarhili there with two of his sons.

Sarhili explained his presence to Fynn by saying:

'As I had sent you on a very dangerous and unpleasant business, I knew your wife and family would be very anxious about you, so I considered it best to come over and keep them company until you returned. I am very glad to see you safe, and trust you succeeded in stopping the fight'.

Fynn told Sarhili that he had succeeded but had counted nine dead Gcaleka which, Fynn says, upset the chief considerably.⁴⁵

Fynn did not tell Eustace of his midnight foray when the fight was officially reported the next morning. This may partly be explained by Fynn's low opinion of Eustace's abilities, and a certain amount of jealousy of him.⁴⁶ What is certain is that Fynn increasingly acted as a self-appointed "buffer" between the Gcaleka and the Government.⁴⁷ Eustace wrote in a most revealing passage that on 25th,

Mr West Fynn decided that he should go to Mapassa and the scene where the fighting was reported, and that I should visit large gatherings of Gcalekas assembling at Xoxo's (Finta's son) [Hints's] and Botman.⁴⁸

45. Ibid. W.T. Brownlee, Ayliff's clerk estimates the casualties at 16 Gcaleka and 7 Mfengu killed (see footnote 50) and Theal at 24 Gcaleka killed, a figure also given by Lt. Melvill in his report a few days after the fight. The higher figure would give weight to the Gcaleka reaction to the fight. Theal, X, 56. C.1961, Encl. 2, No. 30: Lt. Melvill to Col. Glyn, 2 Sept. '77.

46. See above, p.61.

47. Rhodesian Archives, FY 1/1/3: West Fynn to Rev. J. Dewar, Chief Mcotoma Kreli and others, 24 Oct. 1911. This is the reply to Cory Library Ms. 2018 quoted below, p.83, footnote 65c. Fynn refers to his role at the time of the war as like that of a railway buffer, pushed and pulled in opposite directions.

48. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to Frere, 25 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Fynn reported to Eustace that he found Maphasa and 800 men on the border. Maphasa was very bitter about the fight, but eventually agreed to withdraw if Fynn managed to get the Mfengu to do so as well. This he did with the help of W.T. Brownlee, Ayliff's clerk.⁴⁹ Brownlee's account confirms this.⁵⁰ Fynn crossed the river and told one of the Mfengu headmen that he had been sent by Kreli and Bhotomane and the Resident to disperse the Gcaleka forces, and he asked the Mfengu to do likewise.⁵¹

The significance the Gcaleka attached to the raid of 24 August emerges clearly from Eustace's report of his visit to Xhoxho and Bhotomane's kraals. The reason the Gcaleka advanced for the large assemblage of men there was the report they had heard of the previous night's attack by the Mfengu, who

since the coming of the police had threatened them with vengeance, saying their fathers had come, and they were going to drive them into the sea.⁵²

The cause of the previous night's attack, the Gcaleka said, was that some Mfengu had stolen a few Gcaleka goats and had ambushed the Gcaleka who pursued them. Despite the extreme hostility which the Gcaleka displayed towards the Mfengu, Eustace nevertheless arranged with Ayliff to meet on Monday 27th at Butterworth to begin the long-delayed official enquiry.⁵³

49. Ibid.

50. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 58: W.T. Brownlee to Ayliff, 26 Aug. '77.

51. Ibid.

52. C.1961, Encl. No. 83: Eustace to S.N.A., 25 Aug. '77. My emphasis.

53. Ibid.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

4. Treachery unmasked, war postponed

The following day produced dramatic developments. The accounts of the two missionaries stationed in Gcalekaland, Rev. R.S. Leslie⁵⁴ and Rev. J. Dewar,⁵⁵ and of Rev. J. Auld of Emgwali,⁵⁶ who had ridden over to Thuthura for a Presbytery meeting, confirm Fynn's more detailed account.

The fight on 24th and the resulting high Gcaleka casualties probably cemented the determination of the Gcaleka to launch an all-out attack on the Mfengu and their white allies. Dewar reports Sarhili as saying after the fight:

That so many sons of their fathers should have been killed by these Fingo dogs was not to be tolerated.⁵⁷

Whereas before, raids had involved only individual sections of the tribe, and the gathering of armed men in response to rumour had been similarly limited; and whereas certain signs had indicated that there was an ongoing debate as to the course of action to be pursued; and whereas preliminary steps such as sending cattle to the coast had been taken;⁵⁸ now, on 25th, the war cry was sounded throughout Gcalekaland, not to respond to some Mfengu threat actual or rumoured, but to summon all men armed to Sarhili's kraal to prepare the army for an attack on the Mfengu. Auld describes the numbers of armed men all making for Sarhili's place that he saw on his ride over from the Emgwali. Some of these shouted

54. R.S. Leslie to Fynn, 11 March, '79, in Fynn, p.24.

55. J. Dewar in Fynn, pp.24-31.

56. Cory Library, PR 1272-4: James M. Auld: 'Reminiscences' in Blythwood Review, Aug., Oct., Dec., 1924.

57. Dewar in Fynn, p.27.

58. Fynn, p.6. Fynn says that the cattle had been sent to the coast as early as some two weeks before.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

to him that 'it was war'. When he arrived at the Residency, he noticed numbers of armed men at each kraal. Most had already had the black war-mark applied on their forehead by the 'Tola' or war-doctor, Ngxito.⁵⁹

On Sunday 26th, Dewar says the roads were 'alive' with armed men on the way to their rendezvous.⁶⁰ It was this movement that prompted Fynn to leave the church service at the Thuthura and report the matter to Eustace. On his way, Fynn saw that one of the groups was led by Sibozo, a chief from the Qolora mouth area who was previously supposed to have belonged to the peace-party. Eustace dismissed Fynn's opinion that war was now certain, saying that he considered the day's activities to be merely part and parcel of the general unrest. Fynn refused to believe this and proceeded to Sarhili's kraal where his own opinion was confirmed. He estimated that he had seen about 5000 men on his way over, while at the kraal he thought there were a further 1500 men. These were engaged in catching horses, arranging guns and assegais. Ngxito, the Tola, was stirring a pot of blackish liquid and branding his mark on the forehead of men who passed him by in single file. Sarhili and 30 councillors were sitting together having already received the charm.⁶¹

Fynn was in possession of one extraordinary piece of information which he had hitherto kept secret, but which he now felt he ought to use to try and prevent the Gcaleka going to war. Maphasa had come to him 'a few nights previously' to ask him for a pass granting the Tsonyana protection in the colony. Maphasa explained that he made this

59. Cory Library, PR 1272: Auld, 'Reminiscences' in Blythswood Review, Aug. 1924.

60. Dewar, in Fynn, p.27.

61. Fynn, p.6.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

request because Sarhili, 'under the influence of his chief men' had decided on war with the Mfengu, and Maphasa believed, as he had in the past, that a clash with the Government would bring ruin to the Gcaleka. Fynn drew Sarhili aside and told him of Maphasa's proposed defection, warning him that he would not only therefore have to fight the Government if he chose war with the Mfengu, but would do so with a divided people.⁶²

Although relations between Sarhili and Maphasa were bad, and Maphasa had refused in 1872 to join Sarhili in his invasion of Thembuland as we have seen, Fynn's warning must have surprised Sarhili considerably. The Tsonyana had been the initiators of the unrest and had figured prominently in subsequent clashes.⁶³ At that very moment they were drawn up on the Gcuwa River, apparently ready for action.⁶⁴ Fynn contends that this revelation caused Sarhili to call off the attack and submit the whole matter to the Governor for arbitration, as he had suggested. After explaining that he personally was against war, but his people were 'like madmen', especially after the recent heavy Gcaleka casualties, Sarhili asked Fynn to ride over and inform Ngubo of their conversation. Fynn demurred saying he had already compromised himself with Government and could do no more. The following day Bhotomane informed Fynn that Sarhili had held a meeting of all the chiefs at Wapi's kraal near Nthlambe, and Maphasa had refused to attend. Later in the day Sarhili rode over to inform Fynn that he had prevailed on his chiefs to refer the whole dispute to the Government and that his men would consequently now disperse and

62. Fynn, p.7.

Maphasa is said to have exclaimed: 'If we fight this war, we will be scattered'.

Interview with Sub-Headman Z. Fihla, Thuthura Location No. 4, Kentani District, 22 Sept. '77.

63. See above, pp.69-70.

64. Fynn, p.7.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

return to their kraals. He had appointed some of his councillors and missionaries to represent him at the investigation to be held at Butterworth.⁶⁵

The events of the next two weeks prove conclusively that the attack on the Mfengu which seemed imminent on 26th had at least been postponed. But as time went on, it became more and more evident that Sarhili was merely temporising, while pressures increased from his people for a final settlement with the Mfengu.

The dispersal of the Gcaleka army was more easily promised than achieved. Mutual suspicion between Gcaleka and Mfengu remained. Firstly, the slightest rumour or movement on one side of the frontier raised the war cry on the other. Sarhili had told Fynn that Eustace must send to Ayliff and Chalmers to restrain the Mfengu and to withdraw

65. Fynn, p.7.

Fynn's account is plausible. It is confirmed by Dewar, Leslie and Auld (but they may have had much of the story from him), and also by evidence of the close relationship and trust between Fynn and Sarhili:

- a) Fynn offered to make up the 40 outstanding cattle to put Sarhili in the clear for the Enquiry. Sarhili declined gratefully, but made them up himself.
G.17-'78, p.179: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '77. Fynn, pp.9-10.
- b) Fynn was presented by Sigcawu with Sarhili's favourite armlet on the latter's death, at Sarhili's express desire. Fynn, p.30.
- c) In 1911 Sarhili's sons sent Fynn a letter expressing the Gcaleka people's debt to him, when Fynn moved to Rhodesia. Inter alia, the authors of the letter say, confirming b) above, that

Fynn's services were such as to win you the confidence of the native people and the respect and esteem of our late chief Kreli, in token of which among other evidences his last wish was that his favourite assegai and arm-ring should be delivered to you by the hand of his eldest son, the late chief 'Sigcawu', who commanded his father's forces during the war, which duty was faithfully performed.

Cory Library, MS 2018: Mootoma Kreli and others to Fynn, 16 Aug. 1911.

- d) Gcaleka informants to this day remember 'Wesi' and his role as peacemaker, while they have no particular recollection of Eustace. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977. Interview with Sub-Headman Z. Fihla, Thuthura Location No. 4, Kentani District, 22 Sept. 1977.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

the police from the frontier as they only served to encourage the Mfengu. He said that if there was any more fighting, he could not guarantee to keep his people quiet.⁶⁶ In actual practice, the presence of Chalmers and his police and his tactful behaviour did help to keep the two peoples apart.

Secondly, there were those in both the Gcaleka and Mfengu camp who were not keen on a settlement. The Gcaleka war party wished to see the removal of the police who were preventing them from getting to grips with the Mfengu. Ayliff was anxious to make an example of Sarhili.⁶⁷ Bryce Ross, the missionary, was of a similar mind and tried to influence the Enquiry when it began.⁶⁸ Some of the Mfengu naturally saw advantage in pressing the issue: they anticipated that as in previous wars, there would be the prospect of rewards of additional land and captured cattle. Having prospered in the Transkei, they too felt cramped for space.

Thirdly, anarchy in the Idutywa Reserve constantly involved the peoples of Fingoland and Gcalekaland.⁶⁹

Thus the enquiry made little progress. On Monday 27th, Ayliff and Eustace no sooner had begun, than the Enquiry was broken up by Mfengu reports of an imminent Gcaleka attack. This, Eustace acidly commented, turned out to be the attempted theft of three Mfengu sheep.⁷⁰ On the Tuesday, the Enquiry did not proceed as it seemed no Mfengu witnesses had

66. G.17-'78, pp.179-80: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '77.

67. See above, p.73.

68. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 36: Eustace to Merriman, 1 Sept. '77.

69. G.17-'78, p.32: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

70. G.17-'78, p.179: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

been warned to appear.⁷¹ On Wednesday a sharp skirmish took place near Barnett's shop, the future Fort Ibeka. Eustace, who rode over after reports of the fight had again broken up the Enquiry, was certain that a general attack was not intended. He saw two large groups of Gcaleka merely sitting in Gcalekaland. Sarhili told Fynn that Gcaleka resentment at the apparent collusion between the Mfengu and police, who were drawn up together at Barnett's shop, had accounted for the raid. But Eustace's opinion was borne out by the fact that the Gcaleka avoided the police, and Chalmers was able with the help of Sarhili's councillors to persuade the Gcaleka to withdraw.⁷² A military observer who had been sent by Col. Glyn, commander of the Imperial garrison at King William's Town, to report on the fifth reported that it was a deliberate attack on the Mfengu with Veldtman's kraal as the objective. His opinion is suspect, however, as he arrived the day after the fight and his sources were those favourable to the Mfengu.⁷³

On 30th there were still large numbers of Gcaleka drawn up, but they stayed two miles from the border. When Eustace relayed via Fynn a message from the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, calling on Sarhili to control his people or face the consequences, Sarhili replied that neither he, nor Ngubo, nor the majority of Gcaleka wanted war. He promised to break up the army, and by the next day, the men had dispersed to their kraals.⁷⁴ Eustace was too sanguine, though, when he reported the all clear on 1st September. Sarhili had told him that he had lost confidence in Brownlee who, he said, aimed at turning the Gcaleka into jackals⁷⁵

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid, pp.180-1.

73. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 30: Lt Melvill to Col. Glyn, 2 Sept., '77.

74. G.17-'78, p.181: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept., '77.

75. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 36: Eustace to Merriman, 1 Sept., '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

while he told Fynn that Mfengu interruptions of the Enquiry and their exaggerated reports of Gcaleka movements showed they did not really want an investigation.⁷⁶ Even if the Enquiry did achieve something, hostility between the two tribes would continue. Gcaleka men would, for example, be unable for some time to travel through Fingoland to the Public Works.⁷⁷

5. Frere, Merriman and Brownlee on the Frontier

Thus far emphasis has been placed on developments in the Transkei. Towards the end of August, quite fortuitously, the Colonial Government found it had representatives within striking distance of the disturbances, and it was therefore able to give close attention to them. Frere had been asked by his Ministers to travel to the Eastern Province to acquaint himself with its problems, and he had therefore undertaken a tour with J.X. Merriman, the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works. The Party arrived at Port Elizabeth on 21st, and reached Grahamstown on 27th.⁷⁸

In the meantime, the Cabinet in Cape Town was growing increasingly apprehensive at the lack of news from the frontier. It was believed in the absence of reports by Eustace that the disturbances were being directed by Sarhili.⁷⁹ Moltano therefore telegraphed Frere to announce that the Cabinet advised the forwarding of a wing of the 88th Regiment (the Connaught Rangers) from Cape Town to East London, and that Brownlee was

76. Fynn, p.9.

77. G.17-'78, p.181: Eustace to S.N.A., 1 Sept. '77.

78. Saunders, "Annexation", p.164.
Gruber, pp.277-8.

79. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 23: Moltano to Frere, tel., 27 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

proceeding to the frontier to join him.⁸⁰ From the start, Frere refused to be stampeded into hasty action, and said that until he had definite news from Eustace, it would be best to wait and form no conclusions about Sarhili's intentions. He advised that caution be displayed in sending the detachments since their arrival might increase unease on all sides.⁸¹ He proposed going to King William's Town where he would conduct an enquiry with the help of Merriman, Brownlee and Bowker. In the meantime he advised that the disputants be told to suspend hostilities immediately and refer to his commission.⁸² Accordingly, Eustace was telegraphed to report his views and to inform Sarhili of the Governor's warning, while Bowker was requested to make it clear to all parties that the Government would see that full justice was done to all.⁸³

Frere and Merriman arrived in King William's Town on 4th September and Brownlee on 5th. Informed of the dispersion of Gcaleka forces after the clash of 29th, Frere finally rejected Molteno's suggestion that the wing of the 88th be sent to the frontier. The two ministers agreed that Frere should order Ayliff and Eustace to complete their Enquiry and report the result, while they, the Governor's Party, conducted a tour through the affected districts.⁸⁴

The vast majority of frontiersmen and some important Government officers did not share Eustace's sanguine assessment of the situation and Frere's cautious policy. The whole frontier was in an uproar.⁸⁵

80. C.1961, Encl. 1, No. 23: Molteno and Frere, Telegraphic Conversation, 28 Aug., '77.

81. Ibid. As Saunders points out, Frere was upset by the prospect of war. Only when the war was some months old did he realise that, far from delaying confederation, it might, in fact, speed it up. Saunders, "Annexation", p.116.

82. C.1961, Encl. 1, No. 23: Molteno and Frere, Telegraphic Conversation, 28 Aug., '77.

83. C.1961, No. 30: Frere to Carnarvon, 5 Sept., '77.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

(From The lantern, c 1877)



Lithographed by Saml Solomon & Co. Cap

EASTWARD HO!!

BR—WNL—E:—What's the meaning of all that row there?

KRELI:—It's only my children at play, Father.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

At every station from Port Elizabeth on his progress to King William's Town, Frere had been met by deputations who, in customary frontier fashion, expressed the utmost anxiety about the threat to the frontier posed by the disturbances and demanded that positive steps be taken to end them. Frere's assurances that the unrest was merely an inter-tribal quarrel, a "matter of police", were met with open incredulity.⁸⁶ The majority of frontiersmen believed that Sarhili was directing a deep-seated anti-white conspiracy and that the Government was playing into his hands by refusing to take 'firm' action. Bowker, who had taken on the mantle literally and figuratively of Sir Walter Currie, urged an immediate concentration of troops at King William's Town.⁸⁷ E.B. Chalmers echoed the sentiments of many when he wrote to his superior, Bowker:

Kreli is foremost in his promises to maintain peace, and Eustace and Fynn both believe him. I am perfectly convinced in my own mind that the old fox has been acting a very treacherous part, and I am sorry to find that the officials were hood-winked. I have it on the most reliable sources that the Gcaleka intended war with the Fingos, and Kreli himself was as much for it as anyone else. I believe the retrograde move [the dispersal of Gcaleka forces] is only a dodge... I really do hope the affair will not be patched up. I do not see how the Government can wink at the fact of the Gcaleka having crossed the boundary last Wednesday

86. Ibid.

87. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 23: Moltano to Frere, Telegraphic Conversation, 28 Aug. '77.

But it is interesting to note that those whites who knew Sarhili felt that he would have avoided war with the whites if possible. Macquarrie, i, 76.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

i.e. the 29th August in such numbers, and attacked the Fingos... It is positively stated that Gangeliswe is as deep in the plot as any of Kreli's war party. Menziwe and the other Fingos in Thembuland were to be the victims. Sandilli was asked to join, but hesitated; some of his people would, however, have gone against the Fingos, but the majority were neutral. The Bomvanas crossed in considerable numbers...⁸⁸

Charles Mills, the Colonial Under Secretary agreed with Chalmer's sentiments. He wrote to Merriman saying he was sorry the reinforcements were not sent up and said he thought Sarhili should be driven beyond the Mbashe again where he could 'play at Kilkenny cats' with the surrounding tribes. In the same letter he indicates that Molteno and Merriman were in favour of immediate action too:

The chief [Molteno] is entirely of your opinion. He would have struck and crushed Kreli at once had he had his own way.⁸⁹

6. Anti-white conspiracy?

What was the evidence for the conspiracy theory which Chalmers advanced? In one of his conversations with Eustace, Sarhili denied that he had ordered those Gcaleka who had returned from the Idutywa Reserve to Gcalekaland to do so. He would have preferred them to stay in the Reserve to guard his flank against Ngangelizwe.⁹⁰ There was no reason why an alliance should be cemented in 1877 when those very

88. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 30: E.B. Chalmers to Bowker, 2 Sept. '77.

89. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 37: C. Mills to Merriman, 3 Sept. '77.

90. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 36: Eustace to Merriman, 1 Sept. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

differences that had been prevented any co-operation in 1876 still remained. In fact there was less reason since Ngangelizwe was now restored to his position and Bomvana/Thembu friction was once again in evidence.⁹¹

With regard to the Bomvana, the surprising thing is that more Bomvana were not present at the fights.⁹² Considering Moni's subject status to Sarhili, the message he asked his Resident, William Fynn, to relay to Government at the end of August is extremely significant. He said:

From what I can learn the disturbances between the Gcalekas and Fingoes was not an arranged affair, and I hope the Government will take matters quietly and not settle the quarrel in haste for fear it may lead to greater trouble and confusion. I wish the Government to understand that I will not take part in this quarrel, whatever turn it may take, and will do all in my power to prevent my people from assisting the Galekas who I hear are disregarding the words and wishes of their Chief Kreli.⁹³

Sandile was consulted on the subject of an attack against the Mfengu, but he refused to participate. Fynn relates how Runeyi went on a visit to Sandile with eight followers on 8th August returning about a month later. Runeyi was robbed en route in the Idutywa

91. N.A. 43: Elliot to S.N.A., 6 Sept. '77.

Though there was friction too, between the Thembu and the Mfengu. In one instance the Mfengu had refused permission for the Thembu to gether wood in Fingoland. This departure from custom had provoked the Thembu.

N.A. 43: Eliott to S.N.A., 30 Aug. '77.

92. C.1961, Encl. No. 29: Eustace to S.N.A., tel., 3 Sept. '77. See also above, p.89.

93. G.17-'78, p.183: W.R.D. Fynn to Eustace, 31 Aug. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Reserve, but did not let this detain him. Fynn heard that he had approached Sandile to join the Gcaleka in an attack on the Mfengu, but Sandile replied that he had had

'enough of wars, and his leg troubled him, he was getting old, and would have nothing to do with war.'⁹⁴

Sandile's attitude at this stage was probably that until such time as the whites definitely intervened and black-white conflict began, the beer-drinking fight, raiding and counter-raiding was purely a Gcaleka domestic issue.⁹⁵

The Court of Enquiry began sitting again in early September. Eustace and Ayliff agreed to hear the Mfengu case first, but, according to Eustace, Ayliff made no attempt to curb Mfengu verbosity and so the Court had not yet begun to hear Gcaleka evidence when war intervened some three weeks later.⁹⁶ Sarhili was represented for the first few days by Bhotomane, but after a while, he said he would leave his case with Eustace in whom he said he had confidence.⁹⁷ But at the end of August he had expressed misgivings about Brownlee's whole policy and the

94. C.1961 Encls.No. 43: Statements of West Fynn to Frere, 29 Sept., 3 Oct. '77.

Fynn's story is partially confirmed by correspondence between Ayliff and Eustace on the subject of the robbery.

G.17-'78, pp.161-2: Correspondence between Ayliff and Eustace, Aug. '77.

95. This is the explanation Chief Burns-Ncamashe offered when questioned about Sandile's attitude to the war in the light of his later support of Sarhili. Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 November 1977.

96. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 40: Eustace to Merriman, 8 Sept. '77.

97. C.2220, Encl. No. 21: Brownlee Memorandum, c. Aug. '78.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Enquiry in particular.⁹⁸ It is evident that despite what he told Eustace, the long-winded and one-sided approach of the Court must have confirmed these misgivings.⁹⁹ But Sarhili did try to keep his word. He retained only a few small armed bands on the border to act as scouts and immediately after the sole direct raid on Fingoland, he restored the twenty horses seized from a kraal in Veldtman's location.¹⁰⁰

Lack of control in the Idutywa Reserve, however, allowed conflict between Mfengu and Gcaleka inhabitants to continue which adversely affected efforts to pacify the two neighbouring territories. The most notorious case was the one which led to Cumming's dismissal. One of Veldtman's men on a visit to the Reserve was murdered and stripped of his possessions by four Reserve Gcaleka. When these men were arrested and brought before him, Cumming let them off with a warning saying he had not the authority to punish them and was going to refer the matter to Government.¹⁰¹

7. Sarhili refuses to meet Frere

In the meantime, Frere's tour of the frontier was continuing. On 16th September he arrived with his entourage at Butterworth. He received reports from both officials and Mfengu and explained it was his desire to understand the dispute and do justice to it. Whilst waiting for Sarhili whom he had asked to visit him at Butterworth, he received Thembu and Bomvana delegations. Ngangelizwe and his councillors accompanied by Elliot came to express their loyalty to Government and pay their respects to Frere. Two of Moni's sons, Langa and Serhunu,

98. See above, pp.85-6.

99. Fynn, p.9.

100. G.17-'78, pp.172-3: Ayliff to S.N.A., 15 Sept. '77.

101. C.1961, No. 39: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

accompanied by W.R.D. Fynn, brought a message from their father saying that in the case of Sarhili fighting the Government, he would be on the side of the latter.¹⁰² Xhoxho Maphasa delivered a message of similar import.¹⁰³

Sarhili sent a stream of excuses to Frere for not visiting him. Frere, anxious to avoid further delay and unwilling to see his peace initiative flounder, expressed to his advisers his willingness to visit Sarhili in Gcalekaland.¹⁰⁴ Frere certainly believed that the Gcaleka had to be disabused of the illusion that they could do as they pleased, but he felt that the lesson might be driven home without recourse to war.¹⁰⁵ In any case he was also motivated by a desire to postpone any possible engagement until the parlous state of frontier defence could be remedied. He wrote after the beginning of the war:

If an outbreak could have been postponed until the usual season for such disturbances after the Kaffir harvest, two or three months hence, we should have been better prepared. If it could have been deferred for a year there was good ground for hoping that effective measures might have been taken by the Government to make any such outbreak impossible or quite innocuous.¹⁰⁶

There were many good reasons why Frere's offer should have been approved by his advisers. Sarhili pointed out to the Fynn brothers and Dewar, when they rode over to try to persuade him to visit Frere,

102. Ibid.

103. C.2220, Encl. No. 21: Brownlee Memo., c. Aug. '78.

104. C.1961, No. 39: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

105. Saunders, "Annexation", p.170.

106. C.1961, No. 44: Frere to Carnarvon, 3 Oct. '77. Though it is clear that Frere envisaged subjecting the Gcaleka to British rule eventually.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

that if Frere had met the Mfengu in their country, it was only right that he should meet him in his own. There was a precedent. Sir Henry Barkly had visited him in 1874¹⁰⁷ and had even congratulated him for contributing to a building for receiving future dignitaries.¹⁰⁸ If the whites feared for Frere's safety, how much more had he to fear for his safety, firstly in what was enemy territory, and secondly at the hands of the whites.¹⁰⁹ The fate of his father Hintsisa was, as has been noted, ever present in Sarhili's mind, and this was by no means the only case of white duplicity towards the Xhosa.¹¹⁰ Bhotomane warned Frere himself that

the country was full of people who told falsehoods, and many people had said to the chief that the Governor had come to seize him.¹¹¹

If Sarhili had hesitated to meet his new Resident in his own country in 1876, it was absurd of the whites to expect him to meet the Governor in enemy territory with war trembling in the balance.

Although aware of these factors, Brownlee and Eustace allowed the longstanding white prejudice against Sarhili to cloud their advice. They argued that to visit Sarhili could be to make an exception of him when all other chiefs had visited Frere (and consequently presumably would mean a loss of face).¹¹² In any case Brownlee by now felt that

107. Fynn, pp.10-11.

108. Hook, p.237.

109. Sarhili's record was far better than the whites in this respect. Sarhili in fact had a reputation for fairness amongst whites, e.g. Fynn, p.5; Macquarrie, i, 76; Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.240.

110. See below, p.167.

111. C.1961, No. 39: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

112. Ibid.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Sarhili would have to be punished before peace would return to the Frontier.¹¹³ He did suggest meeting Sarhili himself as an alternative, but Sarhili refused to meet Brownlee, saying to West Fynn that he held Brownlee responsible for the present trouble for not having listened to his frequent warnings of the inevitability of a Gcaleka-Mfengu clash.¹¹⁴

Consequently Frere did not see Sarhili. Frere, although angered by his failure, sent a written message to Sarhili, setting out what he would have said in an interview, and enjoining him to keep the peace while the Enquiry proceeded. The tone of this message was friendly, not minatory.¹¹⁵ Before moving on 20th from Butterworth for King William's Town via the Ngqika and Ndlambe locations, it was decided that further precautions ought to be taken to prevent an outbreak of violence. Cumming

113. Molteno Papers, No. 609: Brownlee to Molteno, 2 Sept. '77.

Brownlee found the continuing disturbance significant, since the normal custom was to suspend raids while the question of peace or war was discussed.

C.1961, No. 39: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

If Sarhili had been detained, the Gcaleka would have regarded this as the end of the nation. Such a risk could not be taken.

It is certain that if Sarhili was willing to go, his councillors would have refused to allow him to do so.

Interview by J. Peires with Chief Ford Mgangele, Mgwali Location, Stutterheim, September 1975.

Theal says that the warriors were completely under the influence of Sigcawu and Ngubo. Gcaleka opinion therefore would not sanction Sarhili's pandering to the whites.

Theal, X, 58.

114. Fynn, p.11.

Cory Library, MS 1272: Auld: 'Reminiscences' in Blythswood Review, Aug. 1924.

115. C.1961, Encl. 1 No. 39: Frere to Sarhili, 20 Sept. '77.

Saunders cites an undated press report that reports Frere as threatening Sarhili with imprisonment on Robben Island. Saunders, "Annexation", p.171.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

was replaced by E.B. Chalmers who moved up to the Idutywa Reserve with a troop of police,¹¹⁶ while it was arranged for half the F.A.M.P. force to be stationed in the Transkei where they were to have both military and police duties.¹¹⁷ Bowker's ill-health had made his replacement essential and Charles Griffith, the Government Agent in Maseru was then hurrying to the frontier to take over as Commandant of the F.A.M.P.¹¹⁸ On 20th too, Merriman telegraphed Molteno suggesting that an assistant Magistrate be appointed at Butterworth and that a Mfengu militia of picked men from Veldtman's location be trained. He said such steps, if immediately implemented, would show Sarhili that the Government meant to support the Mfengu and would also serve to reinforce the loyalty of the Mfengu, which the Government were naturally keen to retain.¹¹⁹

8. The Die is cast

Unfortunately while those moves which had been made by the Government by 20th September seemed to the Gcaleka to be clear evidence of Government support of the Mfengu, it was not apparent that an attack on the Mfengu would be opposed by any substantial opposing force, for there were then only about 200 police in the Transkei.¹²⁰ In the absence of a clear deterrent, war seemed the solution of the problem most likely to be favourable to the Gcaleka. Many of the Gcaleka were still under the impression that the whites, as in 1872, would not intervene in the actual fighting.¹²¹

116. G.17-'78, p.34: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

117. Molteno Papers, No. 616: Frere Minute for Ministers, 19 Sept. '77.

118. Cory Library, PR 822: A sketch of the public career of Colonel Charles Duncan Griffith, King William's Town, 1881, p.7.

119. Molteno Papers, No. 618: Merriman to Molteno, tel., 20 Sept. '77.

120. Including the 150 sent up by Brownlee on 20 August.
C.1961, Encl. No. 23: Brownlee Memo., 28 Aug. '77.

121. This belief was still held when Soga interviewed informants for his books which were published in 1930 and 1931. Soga, S.E.Bantu, p.250.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

Two events served to hasten the slide to war. On 21st September, Bacela, the son of Qaza (both of whom were supposed to be prominent members of the war party)¹²² led 300 Gcaleka on a raid into Fingoland and the Idutywa Reserve. They seized cattle, sheep and goats. When accosted by a troop of F.A.M.P. they refused to hand over their spoil, saying: 'We do not care any longer for your government, we will take the cattle'. Although they relinquished the sheep and goats, they rode off with the cattle and the police did not attempt to stop them. The following day there was renewed raiding.¹²³ About the same time (soon after Frere left Butterworth, Fynn says) Runeyi returned from his mission to Sandile. On his arrival, so formidable was his reputation as a warrior, and so determined was he on war, that people everywhere said: 'now there will be war'. He was not particularly hostile to whites, says Fynn, but believed they should stand aside as they had done in 1872.¹²⁴

Even such optimists as Frere and Eustace read the signs and concluded war was imminent. When the latter, West Fynn and Dewar rode over to Sarhili's kraal on 21st to deliver Frere's message of 20th, Sarhili appeared to them to be sulky, complaining of being worried on all sides by his people's raids into the Idutywa and white pressure on him over there. He said he could not prevent these raids, but desired peace and wished the enquiry at Butterworth was concluded.¹²⁵ The next day, Eustace heard the details of Bacela's raid, and his view that the situation was deteriorating was confirmed by the news Xhoxho Maphasa brought to

122. C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Statement of West Fynn to Frere, 29 Sept. '77.

123. G.17-'78, p.34: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

124. C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Statement of West Fynn to Frere, 3 Oct. '77.

125. G.17-'78, p.33: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

him that night. Xhoxho said he had just come from Sarhili's kraal where large numbers of men were gathering. He feared Sarhili meant war, for one of his councillors had said that he was in a similar frame of mind as he had been during the cattle killing twenty years before. Xhoxho, on behalf of his father, assured Eustace that the majority of the Tsonyana would not join Sarhili in a war and requested Government protection since he expected Sarhili to attack them on the outbreak of war. This Eustace promised.¹²⁶

As a result of the raids, Frere decided to ask Eustace to make one final demand to Sarhili to restrain and punish his people.¹²⁷ Frere had, however, by then concluded that a resort to force was inevitable. Eustace sent messages to Sarhili demanding an explanation for the raids, restitution of stock and the restraining of his people on pain of his quitting the country. While he was awaiting a reply he heard that Chalmers had sent for a reinforcement of 75 men and a gun, saying he would not be able to hold the reserve without them so anarchical were conditions there.¹²⁸ On 23rd more confirmation of preparations for war appeared. One of the last traders to leave Gcalekaland told Eustace that the war cry had been sounded since the previous day. Men were swarming up from the coast, some saying to him that they had come up once before, but had been prevented from fighting 'by the old magistrate' presumably Fynn; now they were determined not to go home without a fight. Love, the trader in question, had been warned to leave Gcalekaland by his chief. Leslie, the missionary, said many men were flocking to Sarhili's kraal

126. Ibid, p.34.

127. C.1961, No. 39: Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77.

128. G.17-'78, p.34: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

and Eustace's police told him there was going to be war, and asked for passes to leave the country.¹²⁹

When Sarhili eventually replied to Eustace's messages, he simply requested to see Fynn, whom Eustace declined to send, saying in any case Fynn did not wish to go.¹³⁰ Fynn went all the same, and Sarhili told him that he was

sorry Colonel Eustace should think of leaving the country, but it was now in such a muddle that there was no settling anything, not only in his (Kreli's) country, but also in the Idutywa Reserve, where the magistrate could not manage his people. How could Colonel Eustace expect him to manage his people when they had gone so far? It was useless collecting cattle; as fast as he collected them, more were taken.¹³¹

The substance of what Sarhili told Fynn was relayed to Eustace by one of Sarhili's councillors the next morning. Eustace decided immediately to leave for Ibeka (Barnett's shop), and began making arrangements for the transportation of his family and goods.¹³² Fynn says he and the missionaries had decided to stay, but during the day he received a telegram from Merriman advising the remaining whites to leave Gcalekaland, warning them that they remained there at their own risk.¹³³ The same day Merriman sent a telegram to J. Rose-Innes, the Civil Commissioner

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. C.1961, Encl. No. 43: Statement of Fynn to Frere, 29 Sept. '77.

132. G.17-'78, p.35: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

133. Fynn, p.12.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

and Resident Magistrate at King William's Town, desiring him to publish the next day a Government notice making arrangements for the outbreak of war, as a clash between the police and the Gcaleka was imminent.¹³⁴

Sarhili had finally decided that there was no other solution that war to the growing pressures which beset him and his people. As happened in 1835, when the bands of reluctant Xhosa Chiefs were forced into war by the actions of their people,¹³⁵ so now Sarhili found the actions of his people had made war the only alternative. Information given by a Thembu servant to Walter Stanford, whose sources, as will be seen, were usually reliable, provides important evidence in this regard. This man, "Soldat" by name, told Stanford in early October that he had been visiting in Gcalekaland, and was at Sarhili's kraal after the visit of Eustace and the Fynn brothers (almost certainly 21st September). Sarhili said after the white officials left:

I mean war, and war with the English as well as the Fingoes. We shall drink coffee together with the English.¹³⁶

The last part of his statement appears enigmatic to say the least, but it is clear that Sarhili had decided for the second time to fight the Mfengu and their white allies. Accordingly, "Soldat" says, Sarhili sent to Ngubo to make ready and summoned Ngxito, who arrived three days later and began the ceremonies of doctoring the warriors.¹³⁷ That night, the 24th, Fynn says that he could hear the men singing the war

134. C.161, Encl. 3, No. 39: Merriman to Rose-Innes, tel., 24 Sept. '77.

135. Peires, p.213.

136. G.G.R.I.: Stanford to Elliot, 13 Oct. '77.
The 21st September is the only occasion Eustace mentions riding over to Sarhili's kraal. West Fynn accompanied him according to Eustace (see above p.97, footnote 125). Such a dating fits in with white accounts of Ngxito's activities. Fynn, p.13.

137. G.G.R.I.: Stanford to Elliot, 13 Oct. '77.

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1877: THE GCALEKA DECIDE TO FIGHT

songs amidst a continual war-cry.¹³⁸

Sarhili, characteristically provided an escort led by Sigcawu and Mcotoma to ensure the safety of Fynn, the missionaries and their families. Fynn relates how Mcotoma told him that as long as he was over the Kei by the 26th he would be in no danger.¹³⁹

When one reviews the events of August and September 1877, one is left with the overwhelming impression of a complex situation gradually slipping out of control. Simplistic explanations do not suffice. It is as untrue to simply assert that the Gcaleka made an unwarranted attack on British territory and British subjects pace white contemporaries,¹⁴⁰ as to imply that the whites set out to deliberately use what might have been an easily resolved and petty inter-tribal quarrel to make war on and crush the Gcaleka, pace some modern Xhosa historians.¹⁴¹

138. Fynn, p.13.

139. Fynn, p.13.

140. Such as Ayliff, see above, p.73.

141. Such as Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe and Mr Mda-Mda.

Chief Burns-Ncamashe says

Many of us who are studying this part of history think that had the British left this to the blacks themselves to decide, it would not have grown into a war... There were the whites wanting to take sides and settle it in a foreign way when it could have been settled by the chiefs themselves.

Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 November 1977. The Chief did admit, on being pressed on this point, that there were extraordinary circumstances affecting this particular "quarrel", which was no ordinary youngster's stick-fight.

Interview with Mr Mda-Mda, Nyokana Store, Nyokana Location, Willowvale District, 17 September, 1977.

CHAPTER 4

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

1. The Battle of Gwadana

Anticipating an imminent clash between the Gcaleka and Mfengu after the events of 20-30 September, the Colonial Government stepped up its preparations for war. On 25th Molteno gave Merriman and Frere sanction to act for him on the Frontier.¹ On the same day Merriman published a special Government Gazette announcing the steps taken by the authorities including the establishment of an Mfengu levy, and informing the frontier population where they might seek refuge in case of war.² Also on 25th, Brownlee issued a Government Notice directed at colonial blacks, calling on them as subjects to refrain from participating in any possible Transkeian disturbances.³ In order to drive home its message, Frere's party visited King William's Town soon after. The exact relationship between Imperial and Colonial Troops was not defined until after the first clashes.⁴

As Frere observed later, the Gcaleka were almost certainly aware that delay would not assist their efforts to expel the Mfengu from Fingoland and the Idutywa Reserve.⁵ But although the renewed raiding

1. Molteno Papers, No. 628: Molteno and Frere Tel. Conversation, 25 Sept. '77; C.1961, No. 39. Frere to Carnarvon, 25 Sept. '77. Molteno also gave Merriman and Brownlee permission to act for the whole Cabinet.
2. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 39, Merriman Memo., 25 Sept. '77. Mfengu levies had first been raised in the 7th Frontier War. During the Gcalekaland campaign three Divisions of Transkeian Mfengu under the overall command of James Ayliff served with the white forces. Each Division was composed of 6 local units of 250 men each commanded by white officers, except in the case of one led by Veldtman. Cory Library, MS 14, 254/13: Burton, ii, 71.
3. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 39: Notice from the Department of Native Affairs to her Majesty's subjects on the Eastern Frontier, 25 Sept. '77.
4. There was much correspondence, though, between Frere and Cunynghame on the lack of communication between the F.A.M.P., the Imperial troops and the civil authorities. See C. 1961 Nos 42, 49 and enclosures.
5. C.1961, No. 44: Frere to Carnarvon, 3 Octo. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

continued, the Gcaleka evinced a clear desire to avoid the police by withdrawing whenever they approached.⁶ The question of what to do about the whites was in fact still being discussed at Sarhili's Kraal, Holela. On 25th, Chalmers sent to Merriman saying that he had heard that the Gcaleka were due to attack Fingoland in the afternoon and requesting instructions.⁷ Merriman replied:

You will prevent any violation of our border or molestation of our subjects in any way, peaceable if possible, but by force if necessary. First warn Galekas, then arrest them if they show resistance - use force and be careful that it is effectual.⁸

On the morning of 26th, as Chalmers was about to leave Ibeka on a patrol, he got confirmation of these orders from Griffith, who had just arrived there.⁹

Proceeding on his patrol, Chalmers learnt that a Gcaleka army had crossed into the Reserve and was attacking some Mfengu Kraals.¹⁰ Soga identifies the Gcaleka involved. He says that Sitshaka, Khiva and Mxoli, whilst on their way to the meeting at Holela, attacked some Mfengu

6. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44: Griffiths - Merriman, 30 Sept. '77.
7. Molteno Papers, No. 628: Telegraphic Conversation between Merriman and Molteno, 25 Sept. '77.
8. Ibid.
9. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44: Griffith to Merriman, 30 Sept. '77.
10. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 102: E.B. Chalmers to Griffith, 28 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

Kraals beneath the Gwadana Mountain in the Reserve. . The war cry was sounded and was heard at Holela, which was only a couple of miles distant. Thereupon the Qawuka Division of the army under Ngubo left the meeting without waiting for Sarhili's orders, and joined the fray.¹¹

Chalmers summoned Ayliff and his Mfengu Levy from the Mpuluse store nearby and on their arrival according to orders, committed his forces in support of the Mfengu under attack. The Gcaleka attached the whites in three columns, numbering some 5,000 men, but were temporarily checked by the 7-pounder gun of the police. After a while, the gun carriage broke down and Chalmers ordered the withdrawal of the gun. Mistaking that for a general withdrawal, the Mfengu retreated en masse, becoming entangled with the F.A.M.P. horses. Chalmers feared at this stage that the F.A.M.P. would be cut off and surrounded by the Gcaleka, and so he ordered a withdrawal.¹² Ayliff confirms that the retreat became a rout in the confusion precipitated by the Mfengu,¹³ and as a result, white casualties were relatively high - one officer and six men killed.

In view of the reverse at Gwadana, the weakness of the force when compared to that of the Gcaleka, and the anarchy of the Reserve, Griffith decided to abandon the Reserve and concentrate his forces at a place that came to be known as Ibeka. Over the two days following the battle, the shop and outbuildings there of the trader John Barnett were fortified, and preparations were made for the attack which, considering the large movement of troops in the vicinity of Sarhili's Great Place, some six miles distant, seemed imminent.¹⁴

11. Soga, Ama-Xosa, p.120.
Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.258.

12. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 102: E.B. Chalmers to Griffith, 28 Oct. '77.

13. Macquarrie, i, 75.

14. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44: Griffith to Merriman, 30 Sept. '77.
Ex C.M.R., p.76.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

At Holela, the meeting of the whole chiefdom continued. The Gcaleka were elated by their success and the desire for war must have become overwhelming, especially when on 28th the Mfengu under Veldtman attacked Gcaleka Kraals below Butterworth, including the Kraal of the pacific Bhotomane.¹⁵ Soga maintains that Sarhili resolutely refused to make the customary official declaration of war, even refusing to give the order for attack on 29th September before the battle of Ibeka.¹⁶ In view of preceding evidence, this is unlikely.¹⁷ Melane's account of the meeting after Gwadana is far more plausible. He says that Sarhili explained to the Gcaleka that war with the Mfengu - and therefore with the English - would be 'above' them (i.e. too much for them). Khiva, dressed in all the finery of a favoured general challenged this view. In a rousing speech to the effect that Sarhili must simply sanction his army according to custom, and let events follow their course, he won the approval of the majority. Sarhili then submitted to the inevitable, and said that the Gcaleka should in that case fight to show that they were men. However, he predicted the defeat and dispersal of the Gcaleka and therefore ordered Lindinxuwa and his people, the Bojela, to stay neutral in the war, so that he could look after the chiefdom's interests when the war was over the the whites were punishing the combatants.¹⁸

15. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44: Griffith to Merriman, 30 Sept. '77. Kaffrarian Watchman, early Oct. '77, "In defence of Kreli."
16. Soga, Ama-Xosa, pp.114-119. Soga says that when an enemy approaches and the Xhosa army is mobilised a state of war has to be proclaimed by the supreme chief, and the warriors given authority to fight by him. This legal constitution of the army is called aku-yolola.
17. See above, pp.100.
18. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977. Fihla confirmed the outlines of Melane's account: Interview with Sub-Headman Z. Fihla, Thuthura Location No. 4, Kentani District, 22 Sept. 1977. Khiva had won his spurs in the 1872 war, when he commanded the Tsonyana for the first time: Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.251.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

Whatever the truth, Sarhili did make one final effort to get the whites to withdraw before launching the attack on Ibeka. On 28th, Sigcawu rode up to Ibeka accompanied by a party of 500 men. Bearing a white flag and accompanied by an interpreter, he asked to speak to the commander of the Post, Captain Robinson. Sigcawu explained to Robinson that he had come to apologize on behalf of his father for the death of the policemen at Gwadana. He said the Gcaleka did not wish to fight the police, but only the Mfengu, and therefore asked Robinson to retire and let the attack take place. If he failed to retire, the attack would take place within two days all the same. Robinson told Sigcawu plainly that any Gcaleka transgression of the boundary would be met by force on the part of police, and Sigcawu and his party accordingly withdrew.¹⁹

2. The Battle of Ibeka

Gcaleka strategy was determined by several factors. The Gcaleka had never been officially involved in previous frontier wars and therefore had less reason to avoid direct attack on prepared positions than the Rharhabe, who usually avoided costly head-on confrontations in favour of proven guerilla tactics. But the Gcaleka were also emboldened by their success at Gwadana, by the acquisition of guns, by the youthful inexperience of those most eager for war and by the activities of Ngxito and his prophetesses.²⁰ Apart from the customary war mark applied to the forehead to give immunity from bullets, each warrior was given a charm to be worn round the neck for the same purpose, by a woman reputed to be Ngxito's daughter. The same woman was reputed also to be responsible

19. Ex.C.M.R., pp.77-8.

B. Holt: Where Rainbirds Call (Cape Town, 1972), p.126.

There is an official report by Robinson printed in the Kaffrarian Watchman, 22 Oct. '77.

20. For the activities of these, see above, p.65.

Theal, X, 61, also states that the woman dictated these tactics, but he may have got this from Ex C.M.R.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

for the adoption of close formation in favour of the customary open formation.²¹ The Gcaleka evidently believed after all this that the 180 F.A.M.P. and 2000 Mfengu at Ibeka²² could easily be overwhelmed and Fingoland and the undefended Idutywa entered and swept clear of Mfengu.

On the afternoon of 29th September, the Gcaleka army numbering some 8000 warriors approached Ibeka, and after initial skirmishing, launched a major head-on attack against the post. Grouped in close formation they proved easy targets for the three artillery pieces, rocket tube and measured fire of the police. Checked and then driven back by the Mfengu, without whom the whites would have been overwhelmed, the Gcaleka re-grouped and tried to turn first the right and then the left flank of the post in what appears to have been an imperfectly co-ordinated pincer movement. But again the withering fire and Mfengu charges drove back the Gcaleka. On the right flank, the prophetess Nita was killed leading a division into the attack. After one final feeble attack, the Gcaleka retreated in good order, leaving several hundred killed and wounded to a colonial loss of one wounded policeman and six killed and six wounded Mfengu. The following day, the Gcaleka made a far less determined attack on the post. It seems that the ability of the police to shell them at distances up to 2400 yards, plus their considerable losses, had demoralised them, and by mid-morning, they had withdrawn to a spot some ten miles from the post. For the Gcaleka, delay in August had cost them that surprise which

21. Ex C.M.R., p.97-8.

22. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44, Griffith - Merriman, 30 Sept. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

in the face of superior arms, was their only hope of success.²³

3. Black Responses to Ibeka

Before the battle, there had been much activity by the whites to prevent any possible combination or co-operation with the Gcaleka. Now, the defeat the Gcaleka suffered, cost them the potential support of the other black chiefdoms.

Just before the outbreak of war, Brownlee had made one of his periodical reshuffles of Departmental Officers. In line with the policy of placing 'officers and gentlemen' in the more important posts (cf. Eustace's appointment) Sir Henry Elliot became Resident with Ngangelizwe. The former Resident, William Wright was appointed to replace Theophilus Liefeldt, the special Magistrate with Sandile since 1867, who had been downgraded to the less important position of Resident

23. C.1961, Encl. No. 61, Griffith to Military Secretary, 3 Oct. '77. Frere to General Ponsonby, 17 Oct. '77, quoted in J. Martineau: The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere (London, 1895), Volume II, p.202. Theal, X, 61, says the number was variously estimated at 7-10,000.

One must be careful to qualify Moyer's generalisation that in the first months of the war, before colonial troops could be mobilised effectively, most of the fighting was done by the Mfengu (Moyer in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt (eds): Beyond the Cape Frontier (London, 1974), pp.121-2)

and the impression he seems to give that the Mfengu saved the whites from disaster. After all, the whites had stepped in to prevent the Gcaleka from overwhelming the Mfengu in a war the latter had helped precipitate (albeit that the whites were far from disinterested participants) and the Mfengu had unintentionally contributed to Gcaleka victory at Gwadana. The skirmishing prowess and large numbers of the Mfengu were a vital and effective complement to the superior fire power of the numerically weak whites at Ibeka, but after Ibeka, while Colonial troops were mobilised, the Gcaleka retired and showed only a determination to resist invasion and attack. The truth is, whites and Mfengu played a true complementary role throughout the war and by December, there were just under 2000 Imperial troops at the Cape, just over 1100 F.A.M.P., 300 trained and untrained volunteers and burghers, 3000 Thembu and over 3000 Mfengu. G.H. 21/5: Return of Military Force at the Cape, Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

with Anta because of his drinking and inability to influence or control Sandile.²⁴ On 25th September Frere's party made a quick visit from King William's Town to Tembani,²⁵ both to introduce Wright to the Ngqika and to persuade them to stay out of any Transkeian war. At this meeting, Sandile emphasised that he was determined to remain quiet whatever might happen to other tribes, a profession which his chief councillors echoed. Frere left the meeting with the impression that the only real danger was the panic stricken frontier talk which inflamed black and white suspicion equally.²⁶ Brownlee however, noted that there was great sympathy for Sarhili and antagonism towards the Mfengu. He observed that since his removal as Special Commissioner to the Ngqika in 1867, the neglect of Ngqika by the colonial authorities had allowed them to resume much of their independent status.²⁷ Sandile, in fact, as was to become increasingly clear in the next few weeks, ruled the location virtually as an independent chief.²⁸ Brownlee remembered too, that Sandile had at the end of 1876 said he was tired of the police in his location and had been encouraged by Sarhili to resist activities of their's that threatened his position.²⁹ Brownlee therefore determined to stay on in the Location to try and set the Ngqika on an even keel, but his indiscretion in voicing his fears

24. Frere later commented acidly on Colonial "government" of the Ngqika:

We send a sot [Liefeldt] to represent us, and then we wonder that the chief is not cured of drunkenness. We replace him by a man who is said to have been sent here [the Colony] because he allowed a petty chief in Kaffraria to call him a liar on the bench: and we wonder Sandili's people do not respect us more.

Frere to Merriman, 21 Nov. '77 quoted in Martineau, ii, 205.

25. G.17-'78, p.117: W. Wright to W. Ayliff, 22 Feb. '78.

26. C.1961, No. 44: Frere to Carnarvon, 3 Oct. '77.

27. Molteno Papers, No. 632: Brownlee to Molteno, 27 Sept. '77.

28. See above, p.19.

29. See above, p.59.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

excited both black and white inhabitants of the area and led to Frere asking Merriman to recall him back to King William's Town.³⁰ Meanwhile the Governor met the Ndlambe and Mdushane chiefs of the King William's Town District, including Siwani, Toyise and Jali, and warned them to 'sit still' and wait for orders from J. Rose-Innes, their magistrate.³¹

Brownlee was also at variance with Merriman and Frere on the question of the Thembu. He knew that there was great antipathy towards the Mfengu on the part of the Thembu and sympathy for Sarhili. There was a danger that some Thembu might be drawn into the war and so he suggested that the danger might be lessened by removing Menziwe, the Mfengu Chief, from Thembuland and relocating him at the Bolotwa River (a measure long demanded by Ngangelizwe). Merriman however, felt no concessions should be made to Ngangelizwe whom he abhorred, and the Governor was inclined to agree.³²

However, on the more important question of the possibility of a general "combination" of chiefdoms, Brownlee and Frere were agreed. There was much evidence of consultation. Xhelo, a councillor to Ngangelizwe, told Stanford, the magistrate with Dalasile, that Sarhili had sent messengers to Nqwiliso, chief of the Western Mpondo. These had been referred to Mqikela's kraal, where they had met emissaries from Cetywayo. The latter told Mqikela that the Zulu 'were not going to put up with Shepstone any more, because he was destroying them'.³³

30. Molteno Papers, No. 646: Merriman to Molteno, tel., 2 Oct. '77.

31. Cory Library, MS. 14, 254/13: Burton, i, 21.

The main concern these chiefs expressed at the meeting was the severity of the drought.

32. Molteno Papers, No. 632: Brownlee to Molteno, 27 Sept. '77.

33. C.O. 4429, p.74: Elliot to Brownlee, 28 Sept. '77, and enclosure.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

Brownlee knew of these visits, but did not countenance the wild frontier rumours of a deeply laid anti-white plot directed by Cetshwayo. Although some Gcaleka might hope that aid would be sent to them by the Mpondo and Zulu, he thought such aid was highly improbable and

with the conflicting interests in existence between the several tribes, it was hardly possible that an organised plan for action could be arranged.³⁴

Soga's conversations with some of Sarhili's councillors confirm Brownlee's point that there had been consultation, but that conflict of interest prevented any arrangements being made. Sarhili is said to have told Zulu emissaries that he did not intend to fight the whites and that in any case, Zululand was too far away for co-operation. He is also said to have explained to Basotho emissaries after Ibeka that he expected to be attacked by the Thembu supporting the whites and that his only way of retreat was through Pondoland. If the Basotho could arrange with Mqikela for right of passage he would join them thereafter.³⁵ Frere agreed with Brownlee's conclusion.

I can only say that I could never learn anything tangible to support the suspicion... of any conspiracy or combination among the Kaffir tribes;

34. G.17-'78, pp.216-17: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

35. Soga, Ama-Xosa, pp.116-8.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

though, doubtless, there would have been no lack of sympathy had any success attended the first efforts to dislodge and plunder the Fingos.³⁶

Frere's proviso explains the significance of Ibeka. Had the Gcaleka followed the success of Gwadana with another victory, it is more than likely that the Ngqika and Thembu would have seized the chance to drive out the upstart Mfengu and overturn colonial authority. The clear-cut defeat of the Gcaleka at Ibeka, followed soon after by a rapid colonial drive through Gcalekaland, made it expedient for frontier chiefdoms to at least stay their hands and await events if they did not actively pursue self-interest by joining the colonists.

Thus Nqwiliso sent a message to Frere offering the assistance of the Western Mpondo on 1st October.³⁷ Moni stuck to his earlier profession of a desire to remain neutral and on 4th October pleaded with W.R.D. Fynn not to move with his family and thereby bring his loyalty in question. The Gcaleka chiefs of the Idutywa saw self-interest now in offering support to the whites, despite their previous active involvement in disturbances with the Reserve Mfengu.³⁸

36. C.1961, No. 44: Frere to Carnarvon, 3 Oct. '77.

Frere was later to change his mind as he began to focus on the Zulu problem. In March 1878 he wrote of

my conviction, which has been gradually and unwillingly growing, that Shepstone and others of experience in the country were right as to the existence of a wish among the great chiefs to make this war a simultaneous rising of Kaffirdom against white civilisation.

However, he did qualify this statement by expressing his continued belief that, as evidenced by the war itself, a combination was impossible.

Frere to Herbert, 18 March '78 quoted in Martineau, ii, 223.

37. G.G.R.I.: Nqwiliso to Frere, 1 Oct. '77.

38. G.G.R.I.: Elliot to Griffith, 4 Oct. '77.

Merriman continued to distrust them as did Elliot. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Griffith, draft, 9 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

Perhaps the most vital question was the reaction of the Thembu. Griffith immediately after abandoning the Idutywa Reserve requested Elliot to raise a Thembu levy. With Ngangelizwe's help, the Idutywa might be reoccupied and held.³⁹ Merriman did not let his antipathy to Ngangelizwe prevent him from seeing the advantage of involving the Thembu on the colonial side and so he supported the move.⁴⁰ But Brownlee, whose apprehensions relative to the Thembu have been noted, thought it prudent only to ask Elliot to call on the Thembu to remain neutral. Not unnaturally Elliot was confused by such disparate orders emanating from military and governmental sources, but he grasped the importance of Ngangelizwe as the key to the Thembu's 'loyalty'.⁴¹ Elliot says he persuaded Ngangelizwe to call on his people to turn out and support the Government,⁴² but only the Thembu who had been harassed by the Bomvana responded immediately. The rest waited for some days before joining the Paramount and Elliot in the Reserve. Significantly, Dalasile and Sitokhwe Tyhali did not send any men.⁴³

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39. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 44: Griffith to Merriman, 30 Sept. '77.
40. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Griffith, draft, 9 Oct. '77. Eustace had made the same recommendation to Merriman, with whom he appeared to be on terms of some intimacy. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 60, Eustace to Merriman, 6 Oct. '77.
41. C.M.T. 1/58: Elliot to Brownlee, 12 Oct. '77.
42. G.H. 21/7: Elliot to Griffith, 4 Dec. '77. Elliot clearly states that Ngangelizwe followed him immediately, but Theal, X, 62 says that the delay in raising the Levy, which soon numbered 3000, was due to hesitation on the part of Ngangelizwe.
43. N.A. 43: Stanford to S.N.A., 5 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

4. White Responses to Ibeka

The battle of Ibeka also served to crystallise the objectives of the whites. According to their perceptions of the situation, they had attempted to prevent a war.⁴⁴ Now that full-scale war had broken out, they determined to take advantage of the opportunity it presented to end what had been both an anomaly and a perpetual thorn in the side of colonial rule of the frontier.⁴⁵ On 5th October Frere issued a proclamation announcing the deposition of Sarhili as Chief of the Gcaleka, and the intention of the Cape Government to invade, to militarily occupy and to finally annex Gcalekaland. These steps were justified as the necessary punishment of Sarhili and the Gcaleka for their invasion of British territory (Fingoland and the Idutywa Reserve), their attack on British subjects (the Mfengu) and their attack on British troops.⁴⁶

Although agreed on their objective, there was disagreement amongst members of the Government on the mechanics of the limitation of the disturbances and suppression of the Gcaleka, as well as on the post-war settlement plan. Molteno, with his acute suspicion of Imperial interference in his Government's affairs and his poor opinion of the suitability of Imperial troops to colonial campaigning, desired to restrict the role of Cunynghame and the Imperial troops as far as possible. He favoured an immediate, short, sharp and exclusively colonial campaign in which the F.A.M.P. would be supported by volunteers, burghers and Mfengu, Thembu and Mpondo levies.⁴⁷ Frere pointed out the many flaws in this

44. This was particularly true of Frere - see above, pp. 87-8.

45. Saunders, "Annexation", p.173.

46. C.1961, No. 51: Frere to Cunynghame, 10 Oct. '77. and Enclosure.

47. Molteno Papers, No. 654: Molteno and Merriman, Tel. Conversation, 5 Oct. '77.

P. Lewsen (ed.): Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman 1870-1890 (Cape Town, 1960), footnote 3, p.28.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

plan. Firstly, it would lead to the creation of a divided command which in military terms was most dangerous. Secondly, in the absence of a strong colonial defence force, the use of native levies and volunteers was a sad necessity which ought to be limited as far as possible - these were men who served more out of a desire for plunder than out of loyalty, and they were bound to strip Gcalekaland bare. Further,

these people are not likely to confine themselves to plunder. They will certainly commit atrocities after their wont, and bring discredit on the colonial system of native management.

Thirdly, the F.A.M.P. was in a parlous state, less than half its theoretical strength of 1100 being operational and the whole force in urgent need of a complete refit. Fourthly, and most importantly, the objective the Government had set themselves could be best achieved by a well equipped and organized force rather than a hastily assembled motley band. A certain amount of delay was inevitable.⁴⁸

Merriman came to agree with Frere. He was happy to see Cunynghame appointed on 2nd October to overall command of the Imperial and Colonial troops, reassuring Molteno that Cunynghame did not intend interfering with Griffith's handling of the Gcalekaland campaign.⁴⁹ He acquiesced

48. Frere to Merriman, 5 Oct. '77, quoted in Lewsen, Selections 1870-90, pp.27-30. The state of the F.A.M.P. had been exposed by an inspection conducted by H. Hallam Parr, Frere's Military Secretary, on 9th October. Merriman wrote to Molteno:

In place of a well-seasoned body of men, hardened and ready for exposure, like the force of a few years back... we have now a mob of raw unseasoned lads, without drill, without discipline and utterly unreliable.

Merriman to Molteno, 31 Oct. '77, quoted in Lewsen, Selections 1870-90, pp.30-31. See also Ex. C.M.R., p.15 for further details.

49. C.1961, Encl. No. 49: Merriman Memo. on Cunynghame's military proposals, 1 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

in Cunynghame's joining the daily council held by Frere, Merriman and Brownlee since their return to King William's Town.⁵⁰ Although keen to involve the Thembu and volunteers in Gcalekaland, Merriman was alive to the dangers of using volunteers as police in the colony and of raising Mfengu levies there.⁵¹ The panic by the colonists and the overbearing attitude of the Colonial Mfengu after the successes of their Transkeian counterparts could have a disastrous effect on the colonial blacks and thereby draw them into the war.⁵²

Government strategy aimed therefore at localising the war to Gcalekaland where a decisive blow was to be administered to the Gcaleka in an open confrontation. Failing that, the Gcaleka were to be hemmed in by the Bomvana guarding the Mbashe, the Thembu driving from the Idutywa, Griffiths driving from Ibeka. The Gcaleka were to be kept out from the Colony by the Imperial troops, including the 88th summoned to the frontier after Gwadana. Initially a landing of Imperial troops at Mazeppa Bay was contemplated as the best means of preventing a Gcaleka escape across the Mbashe, but the plan was abandoned because it was thought that the landing would be too dangerous.⁵³

Griffiths was issued with instructions by Merriman who assumed the mantle of a sort of Minister of War. Frere's influence is to be seen particularly in the part of his instructions relating to booty and to the suppression of the more "traditional" aspects of colonial

50. Molteno Papers, No. 654: Molteno and Merriman, Tel. Conversation, 5 Oct. '77.

51. C.1961, Encl. No. 49: Merriman Memo. on Cunynghame's military proposals, 1 Oct. '77.

52. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Frere, draft, 1 Oct. '77. Frere was equally alive to these dangers. C.1961, No. 44: Frere to Carnarvon, 3 Oct. '77, and Frere to Brownlee, 9 Oct. '77, quoted in Martineau, ii, 195-7.

53. C.1961, No. 48: Frere to Carnarvon, 9 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

campaigning: all captured stock were to be allocated strictly, firstly to cover Government expenses, secondly, for commissariat purposes and only thirdly as booty. Griffith was authorized to make a summary distribution of booty in order to avoid waste, chicanery and dispute; he was strictly enjoined to suppress all irregular marauding and in case of Gcaleka non-combatants suffering, he was to aid them to resume their avocations or to proceed to the Public Works.⁵⁴

Merriman also outlined Government intentions on the future of Gcalekaland. Those people and chiefs who had taken no part or only a small part in the disturbances were to be disarmed and resettled under British authority, the chiefs having no power other than that they were granted as Government appointed headmen. It was clearly intended to confiscate some Gcaleka territory, but members of the Government were in disagreement as to which parts should be confiscated and who to settle in these.⁵⁵

Percy Nightingale, the Civil Commissioner of Victoria East devised a plan which envisaged Mfengu occupation of Gcalekaland with only a small area reserved for the resettlement of the Gcaleka. The valuable lands released by the Mfengu in this way in the Colony would be available for white use.⁵⁶ Merriman, while agreeing that the Gcaleka ought to be punished for their 'wrong doing' by having some territory confiscated,

54. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Griffiths, draft, 3 Oct. '77.

Prize money, of course, was an integral part of the volunteering system. Theal, X, 64. Ex. C.M.R., p.92, states openly that the volunteers didn't profess to be disciplined and came for the sake of booty, but he rightly adds that many stayed on when there was no chance of booty and despite inadequate pay. Some, however, did leave (see below, p. 124) and Griffith, who frustrated these men by his attempts to follow his orders (Ex. C.M.R., p.109) was in turn frustrated in his task by their activities. (See below, p. 122.)

55. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Griffiths, draft, 3 Oct. '77.

56. Rhodes House Library, Mss. Afr.s. 23/3, ff. 110-4: Memo. re Transkei Affairs by P. Nightingale, 23 Oct. 1877, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.176.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

was strongly opposed to Mfengu settlement. The Mfengu had been far from blameless in the war, and were already 'cock-a-hoop' at their successes. Their being rewarded in such a way would only serve as an inducement to continue their high-handed behaviour towards their neighbours. Rather he proposed that the area to be confiscated be that between the Kei and the Qora rivers, since this had the advantage of serving as a buffer between the Colony and the Gcaleka resettled to the north. In this area he suggested that a settlement of German agriculturalists be placed.⁵⁷ Having consulted with Schermbrucker who may have had a hand in the genesis of this plan, he was aware that there would be no shortage of applicants for grants. He felt that the success of the German agriculturalists in the King William's Town area proved their suitability.⁵⁸ Unsupported by other Ministers, Molteno, who favoured Nightingale's plan,⁵⁹ reluctantly agreed to Merriman's plan when it was amended to provide a smaller area for white settlement and a few grants to Mfengu.⁶⁰ Eustace was later appointed Chief Magistrate of Gcalekaland, and held himself in readiness for the end of the campaign.⁶¹

57. Molteno Papers, No. 705: Molteno-Merriman, 3 Nov. '77. G.G.R. 46: Memo. on the proposed settlement of Gcalekaland, n.a., n.d. (Rhodes House Library, MSS. Afr. S. 23/3, ff. 104-6: Memo. on proposed settlement of Gcalekaland by J. Merriman, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.177, seems almost certainly to be the same document, and so identifies Merriman as the author of the document in the Cape Archives).
58. Merriman Papers, 1877 file, No. 67: Schermbrucker to Merriman, 10 Oct. '77.
59. Molteno Papers, No. 705: Molteno to Merriman, 3 Nov. '77.
60. Molteno Papers, Merriman folder: Merriman to Molteno, 2 Nov. '77 and Molteno to Merriman, tel., 12 Nov. '77, quoted in Saunders, "Annexation", p.178.
61. See below, p.136.

5. Sarhili, the Reluctant Warrior

The Government was determined to execute its strategy despite signs that Sarhili still wished to negotiate. Soga says that Sarhili attempted to wait behind after the battle of Ibeka so that he might explain himself to the whites when they arrived, but his councillors dragged him off saying:

Where is your father Hintsu who was blamed for Gaika's cattle? Your father was not at war, he died for just this reason in the camp of the whites in whom he confided.⁶²

However, Sarhili remained the reluctant warrior chief and sent to Brownlee on 3rd October to ask for terms. Brownlee replied that at this late stage in the proceedings, negotiation was out of the question and the Gcaleka were to be punished in terms of the Governor's Proclamation.⁶³

Indeed after issuing the Proclamation, Frere asked for the Attorney-General's opinion on the precise legal status of Sarhili and the combatant Gcaleka: before what tribunals and under what laws could they be charged?⁶⁴ Stockenström replied that Sarhili was in effect an independent chief despite the terms on which he had been allowed to re-occupy his land in 1865; and since the Gcaleka had not entered or fought within the Colony, they could not be charged under colonial law in colonial courts. He felt that Sarhili could, however, be imprisoned for breaking the 'good behaviour' clause attached to his reoccupation

62. Soga, S.E. Bantu, pp.260-261. Burton dates this on 9th October after the burning of Sarhili's kraal, but this does not affect the point in question. Cory Library, MS 14,254/13: Burton, i, 29.

63. C.1961, Encl. 47: Brownlee note on his conversation with Sarhili's emissary, 5 Oct. '77.

64. C.1961, Encl. B No. 84: Frere to Ministers, 9 Oct. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

of Gcalekaland.⁶⁵ In the meantime, Griffith was warned that pending further instructions, no assurances should be given to Sarhili, that would bind the Government in any way, except that his life would be spared and that punishment would be as mild as was compatible with the maintenance of peace. Surrender of chiefs or members of Sarhili's family had to be unconditional.⁶⁶

Although he was still unable to begin a general advance into Gcalekaland owing to a shortage of ammunition for the native levies, Griffith felt it was important that the Gcaleka should not be allowed to recoup their strength.⁶⁷ Consequently, he arranged a four-prong attack on Gcalekaland aimed at converging on and destroying Sarhili's Great Place at Holela. Early on 9th October the four columns set out. In the North, Elliot and his Thembu with some F.A.M.P. and Queenstown Burghers attacked and destroyed Sitshaka's Kraal. In the South, the Gonubie and Maclean Town volunteers under Commandant Gray clashed with and eventually defeated a strong force of Gcaleka said to be under Khiva.⁶⁸ In the centre the Mfengu under James Ayliff converged at Holela with Griffith's column of F.A.M.P. and King William's Town Burghers under Commandant Bertram Bowker. There they surprised a large number of Gcaleka, shelled them out of the kraals, and after driving them off, burnt the whole complex of huts in the area.⁶⁹ Soga says that Sarhili had withdrawn from his kraal a week before, fearing the

65. C.1961, Encl. C No. 84: Opinion of Stockenström, 19 Oct. '77.

66. C. 1961, Encl. A No. 84: Merriman to Griffith, 8 Oct. '77.

67. C.1961, Encl. No. 61: Griffith to Military Secretary, 10 Oct. '77.

68. Hook, p.239.

69. C.1961, Encl. No. 61: Griffith to Military Secretary, 10 Oct. '77. Theal, X, 66 places Gcaleka casualties at over a hundred killed.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

proximity of Ibeka (some six miles distant) but that Bhotomane had re-occupied it several days later and was there when the colonial forces arrived. He retired and regrouped with Sarhili's sons, Sigcawu, Mcotoma, Yekanye and Mtoto who had their forces drawn up nearby, but the combined force was again driven off, Mtoto being wounded. During the battle, Sarhili sent a messenger to Bhotomane telling him to withdraw and allow the kraals to be burnt.⁷⁰

Griffith refused to pursue the fleeing Gcaleka army for fear that he might expose his relatively small force which was low in ammunition to the danger of sudden regrouping of the Gcaleka, and so he returned to Ibeka where the preparations for his field force were completed within a week.⁷¹

On 15th October two Christian Gcaleka were sent by Sarhili to ask Griffith to delay any troop movement until he had an opportunity of opening negotiations for peace. These messengers repeated to Griffith that Sarhili did not wish to fight the Government, but in a telegram to King William's Town Griffith reported that he thought that the mission was a blind.⁷² Merriman replied repeating his instructions of 9th with the addition that Griffith could assure Sarhili that he would not be imprisoned in perpetuity. However, on no account was he to halt his movements. The Government could not let Sarhili's negotiations prevent them from moving against those whom he had admitted he could not control.⁷³

70. Cory Library, MS. 14, 254/13: Burton, iv, Appendix VI.

71. Griffith was much criticised for not pursuing the Gcaleka - many thought a golden opportunity had been missed. Ex. C.M.R., p.109.

72. C.1961, Encl. D No. 84: Griffith to Merriman, tel., 15 Oct. '77.

73. C.1961, Reply to Encl. D No. 84: Merriman to Griffith, tel., n.d.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

6. The Gcalekaland Campaign

Griffith's campaign got under way again on 19 October. Gcaleka strategy was now to give way before the whites, avoiding open confrontation and resorting to guerrilla tactics. It is clear in retrospect that the Gcaleka, in traditional fashion, took their women and children and that portion of their herds not needed for food to safety in Bomvanaland and Pondoland, before returning to continue the struggle.⁷⁴ Some Gcaleka even avoided Griffith's columns and remained in hiding in Gcalekaland.⁷⁵ The failure of Griffith's columns to come to grips with the Gcaleka was also attributable to the irrepressible greed for Gcaleka cattle. By the end of the campaign, Griffith exclaimed in exasperation:

Hang the cattle! With such forces as I have at my command, it [sic] paralyses every movement. I wish there was not a cow in South Africa.⁷⁶

Brownlee, who correctly foresaw that Sarhili preferred death to delivering himself into the hands of the whites, gloomily watched Griffith vainly pursuing the Gcaleka towards the Mbashe. He felt that the guerrilla tactics of the Gcaleka would necessitate a far larger force and firmly recommended that 2 - 3 regiments of Imperial troops be

74. Theal, X, 77. Hook, pp.248-9.
Interview with Headman Qeqe, Butterworth, 20 Sept. 1977. Headman Qeqe's father was taken for refuge in Mpondoland.
Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.
75. Melane says that Sarhili remained hidden in Gcalekaland at a place called Entweni Yomhlaba, ~~where~~ he summoned his warriors on Griffith's return to Ibeka.
76. C.1961, Encl. No. 19: Cunynghame to Secretary of State for War, 5 Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

sent out as reinforcements,⁷⁷ a call which Frere and Cunynghame were to make increasingly over the next few months.⁷⁸

Moni was not able to stop the Gcaleka crossing the Mbashe even if he had wished it, and many Bomvana gave succour to the refugee Gcaleka and hid their cattle with their own.⁷⁹ Inevitably, there was friction between the Thembu levy and the Bomvana over cattle which the latter seized, claiming, probably with a measure of truth, that they belonged to Gcaleka.⁸⁰ Even Nqwiliso was unable to stop the progress of the Gcaleka, because he would have had to fight the Gcaleka and Gwadiso, the Khonjwayo chief and brother-in-law to Sigcawu with whom he had been feuding for some time, before the whites arrived. When Griffith arrived, Nqwiliso did offer to mount a combined operation against the Gcaleka who were then sheltering with Mqikela.⁸¹ But Griffith, whose columns had reached the Mthatha River, decided against continuing the pursuit any further for several reasons.⁸² Firstly, the Gcaleka had lost at least 700 men killed including several chiefs, and upwards of 13,000 cattle not to mention

77. Molteno Papers, No. 718: Brownlee to Molteno, 7 Nov. '77.

78. Though, of course for slightly different reasons. Lewsen, The First Crisis, pp.241-52.

79. G.H. 21/5: Cunynghame to Frere, 26 Oct. '77.
G.H. 21/6: Elliot to Cunynghame, 2 Jan. '78; F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.34.

80. G.G.R.I.: ? to Merriman, 4 Nov. '77.

81. Macquarrie, i, 86. Gwadiso was doubly related to Sarhili, for he himself had married a daughter of Sarhili's: G.19-'86, p.7: Stanford Memo., 19 May '85.

82. C.1961, Encl. No. 10: Griffith to Deputy Adjutant-General, 29 Nov. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

numerous other small stock.⁸³ The enemy, defeated in all engagements were broken up and in flight from a country denuded of supplies and habitation.⁸⁴ Secondly, any pursuit of the Gcaleka into Pondoland would almost certainly be extremely impolitic, considering the poor relations that existed with Mqikela who was reported to be intriguing both with Cetywayo and the Griquas.⁸⁵ Thirdly, the Mthatha was in danger of flooding and Griffith wished to return before more rains set in.⁸⁶ Finally, the volunteers had had a long and arduous campaign, suffering frequently from a faulty commissariat.⁸⁷ They desired now to return to their homes and families and with no real prospect of capturing more booty, they pressured Griffith to allow them to return home.⁸⁸

Griffith therefore set out on the return march to Ibeka, consenting to the return of the volunteers on 19th November.⁸⁹ Unable to guard the whole Mbashe against a return of the Gcaleka with the 500 police and

83. Martineau, ii, 202.

Moodie, ii, 177 estimates that 15,000 sheep and 20,000 cattle were captured.

84. The Aborigines Protection Society complained that

num erous villages and large quantities of provisions have been burned under circumstances which in ordinary warfare would justly be regarded not only as barbarous but as being certain to provoke savage reprisals.

C.1961, No. 82: Aborigines Protection Society to Colonial Office, 28 Nov. '77. Of course this was the traditional mode of warfare. The Gcaleka corn pits were certainly used as a commissariat for Mfengu levies - the Mfengu were often not issued with rations at all and lived off captured grain and cattle.

G.H. 21/6: Glyn to Cunynghame, 15 Dec. '77.

85. e.g. G.H. 21/7: Blyth to S.N.A., 11 Feb. '78.

86. C.2000, Encl. No. 10 :Griffith to Deputy Adjutant-General, 29 Nov. '77.

87. Ex-C.M.R., pp.131-3 is vocal in this respect.

88. Hook, p.247.

Theal, X, 72 lists those volunteer groups that left and those that stayed.

89. G.H. 21/5: Griffith to Cunynghame, tel., 19 Nov. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

remaining volunteers and Mfengu, he left a police and artillery contingent of 200 men at Fort Bowker to hold that post and patrol the Mbashe. Some police and volunteers were also left to guard the line of communication between Fort Bowker and Ibeka, at which latter post Griffith arrived on 26th.⁹⁰

7. The Maphasa/Makinana Affair

In the meantime, another crisis had arisen. Maphasa had fled to Impetu in the Colony before the Gcaleka attack on Ibeka. There he was joined by Makinana, with 50 warriors. Makinana was the son of Mhala the Ndlambe chief, and brother to Ndimba and Smith Mhala. Altogether Maphasa's followers numbered some 4315 people, including about 600 fighting men.⁹¹ Brownlee regarded Maphasa's defection as having an important political effect on the frontier, for other tribes would see that there was a split in the Gcaleka, and would fear the same thing were they to join in the disturbances. Others did not find Maphasa's presence so welcome. The colonists regarded him with the utmost suspicion and believed that he would commit treachery at the first opportunity.⁹² Cunynghame shared this belief and strongly advocated the disarmament of Maphasa's men.⁹³ There was the further problem that while located temporarily on two farms near Mpethu neighbouring farmers' stock was

90. C.2000, Encl. No. 10 :Griffith to Deputy Adjutant General, 29 Nov. '77.

91. G.17-'78, p.207: Brownlee Memo., May '78. Theal, X, 60.

If the warriors numbered only 600, then a considerable number of Tsonyana must have fought under Khiva and Mxoli (see estimate of Tsonyana numbers p. 54 above, footnote 142).

92. G.17-'89, p.208: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

93. Sir A. Cunynghame: My Command in South Africa, 1874-8 (London, 1879), p.316.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

bound to be exposed to theft. Nevertheless, Brownlee successfully resisted pressures to disarm Maphasa, pointing out that such a move would be likely to have a negative effect on the Tsonyana. He did, however, tell Maphasa that at some future date he and his people (including Makinana) would have to surrender their arms as a token of their submission, and pay a fine for their part in initiating the disturbances.⁹⁴

By early November, Gcalekaland was clear and Maphasa and Makinana could be resettled, not in their old area which was now intended for white or Mfengu settlement, but in the area between the Qora and Shixini rivers. Brownlee still felt it unwise to disarm Maphasa, but disarmament was beginning to emerge as one of the fixed points of Frere's settlement policy and Merriman, like Cunynghame, had always favoured it.⁹⁵ Brownlee was therefore over-ridden and was instructed to go and supervise the disarmament and collection of the fine prior to the removal of the people across the Kei.⁹⁶ Inspector Hutchinson, the second in command of the F.A.M.P. was deputed to effect Brownlee's orders with his troop of police.⁹⁷

Brownlee arrived on 15th November at Mpethu and proceeded to mishandle the whole operation. Maphasa had already heard that he was to be

94. G.17-'78, p.208: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

Cape Archives, Accession 459 (i): The Life of Sir E.T. Brabant, Typescript, p.52. Brabant, who had a farm close to Mpethu backed up Brownlee's objection to disarmament on the grounds that it was likely to drive the Tsonyana and Makinana into rejoining the Gcaleka.

95. Disarmament was part of the first Gcaleka settlement plan. See above, p. 117.

Frere said in December 1877 that he would recommend the complete disarmament of the natives. The Cape Argus, 25 Dec. '77. Merriman had pushed the disarmament of the 'loyal' Ngqika - see below, p.161.

96. Molteno Papers, No. 729: Merriman to Molteno, 21 Nov. '77.

97. G.G.R. 14: Merriman to Hutchinson, draft, 12 Nov. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

disarmed and settled beyond the Kei, as Brownlee admits⁹⁸ but Brownlee delayed for two days because of rain, allowing the rumours, fears and suspicions of the Tsonyana and Ndlambe to mature.⁹⁹ On Saturday, 17th, he informed Maphasa of the Government proposals. Maphasa objected strongly to being disarmed and deprived of his old land, saying that it was precisely to guard against the loss of his land, which he had foreseen would be the result of a clash with the whites, that he had deserted his countrymen. If he settled beyond the Qora, he would be placed in the midst of the Gcaleka who were now bitterly opposed to him, and being disarmed, he would be at their mercy. Brownlee over-ruled his objections, and told Maphasa that his orders were not negotiable. Maphasa, though clearly very unhappy at such arbitrary and harsh treatment, submitted, for he had so far committed himself to white support that he had no alternative.¹⁰⁰

It was otherwise with Makinana. Brownlee told him that he was to be disarmed, fined 200 head of cattle and resettled with Maphasa in the Transkei. Before the war, Makinana had on several occasions requested permission to move from Gcalekaland to stay with his brother Ndimba, who stayed in the Southern portion of the Ngqika location in the Colony. Sarhili had supported his requests, but Brownlee had turned them down.¹⁰¹ Now Makinana, obviously surprised by the size of the fine¹⁰² and objecting

98. G.17-'78, p.209: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

99. Molteno Papers, No. 731: Frere to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 25 Nov. '77.

100. G.17-'78, p.209: Brownlee Memo., May '78.
Fynn, p.16.

101. N.A. 153: Ayliff to Brownlee, 17 Feb. '75.
G.16-'76, p.44: Ayliff to S.N.A., 2 Jan. '76. Some of Makinana's men had moved anyway.

102. C.2000, Encl. 1 No. 38: Brownlee Memo., 14 Dec. '77, (this is the same memo. as printed in G.17-'78 with more detail in places). Brownlee says that he fined Makinana so many cattle because many Tsonyana had deliberately registered as followers of his to avoid paying the fine. Theal, X, 74-5 says that Makinana, apart from the 60-70 Ndlambe families living under him, also had a number of nominal Gcaleka retainers, but adds that Makinana had fought in the initial disturbances, which is why Brownlee imposed the fines.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

just as strongly to disarmament, asked Brownlee what he had done wrong that he was not allowed to go and live amongst his own people. Brownlee cut him short and told him to go and collect the arms of his people and the cattle for the fine.¹⁰³

Brownlee had told Makinana and Maphasa that they were to collect and hand in the arms of their people, but he had also instructed Captain Von Linsingen of the German Volunteers to disarm any of the people caught moving about with arms. With the zeal that was not uncharacteristic of volunteers, Von Linsingen exceeded instructions and roughly searched some of Makinana's huts, seizing arms in the process.¹⁰⁴ Von Linsingen's action, following after what they felt were the harsh and unjustified orders of Brownlee, so alarmed Makinana's people that they began to believe that disarmament was but a prelude to their extermination and the seizure of their cattle. Consequently, Makinana secured a pass from Brownlee to go to the Ngqika location on a spurious search for lost cattle, and fled with his people at midnight on the Sunday to his brother Ndimba's location at Draaibosch.¹⁰⁵

Brownlee was almost immediately informed of all this by Maphasa who had been warned by Makinana before he fled of what he suspected their fate would be. Instead of allowing the obviously panic-stricken Ndlambe time to cool down and then reassuring them, Brownlee sent Hutchison and his police in pursuit with orders to disarm them and bring them back to Impetu. One of the troops of police duly confronted a large number of men with cattle going into the location at Draaibosch, but being outnumbered, the police allowed them to reach their destination.¹⁰⁶ The following morning,

103. G.17-'78, p.210: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

104. C.2000, Encl. 1 No. 38: Brownlee Memo., 14 Dec. '77.

105. G.17-'78, p.210: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

106. Ibid.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

however, the same troop entered the location with the intention of seizing the cattle they then saw. They made no attempt to ascertain whether these were all Makinana's cattle or whether some of Ndimba's cattle were now mixed in with them.¹⁰⁷ Not unnaturally, the police movement appeared to the Ndlambe to be an attack on their property and both Ndimba and Makinana therefore resisted the advance of the police. Hutchinson arrived just in time to see the police securing the cattle and was aghast at what had happened. He told the Sub-Inspector in charge of the police troop that he ought not to have entered the location without first informing Wright and Sandile, and ordered him to return the cattle while Brownlee's arrival was awaited. Both Brownlee and Hutchinson had at least been aware of the importance of treating the Ngqika diplomatically and evidently hoped to catch Makinana before he arrived at the location, and claimed that the whole incident was due to a mistake over the precise boundary of the location.¹⁰⁸

But the damage was done. The first conflict between black and white within the colony had been precipitated by precisely the sort of occurrence that Frere and Merriman had feared and had sought so assiduously to avoid. On Brownlee's arrival the following day, Ndimba refused to come and see him, saying he was too frightened, and when Brownlee sought him out, he found three armed groups overlooking Ndimba's kraal. Ndimba told Brownlee they were there because of the previous day's occurrences, because the police remained on the location border and because the police had now been joined by troops. Ndimba asked Brownlee why his brother had not been allowed to settle amongst his friends, and made it clear that he would not give up Makinana as Brownlee demanded at least until

107. Ibid., p.211.

108. Ibid., p.212.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

the force threatening the location had been removed. Sandile's reaction was even more ominous. He angrily asked why he had not been consulted before the police entered the location, and observed 'A snake if trodden upon would bite'¹⁰⁹

Brownlee thought Sandile's and Ndimba's words and actions were openly defiant and concluded that war was imminent.¹¹⁰ Superficially there was much to confirm his opinion. Since the war began, there had been an upsurge in stock theft, already at a high level. Both farmers and Mfengu in the areas surrounding the Ngqika location began to suffer huge losses.¹¹¹ But an increase in stock theft is a difficult phenomenon to analyse. Peires has observed that a certain amount of theft is inevitable in a frontier situation. A sharp increase, he says, is indicative of special circumstances - here the drought, the absence of whites from their farms, the fact that the stock so temptingly left behind belonged to men who were fighting the Gcaleka brothers of the Ngqika, and Ngqika hostility to the Mfengu. Such an increase, Peires continues, also presupposes the complicity of the chiefs who would sanction large-scale theft for special reasons only, well knowing the dangers involved.¹¹²

The missionary, James Auld, who was stationed at Emgwali was able to observe the Ngqika closely and his views, recorded many years later, are illuminating. At first, he says, he was certain that the Ngqika

109. Ibid. See p.59 above for Sandili's reaction to the police in 1876.

110. Molteno Papers, No. 731: Frere to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 25 Nov. '77.

111. Frere cites the example of Commandant Gray, who lost 600 sheep from theft in one day. Gray believed that nothing but a war of extermination could save the farmers' property.

Ibid.

112. Peires, pp.102-3.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

intended to stay out of the war. Then in October, the young men began stealing from the Mfengu and despite the wishes of chiefs like Kona, Sandile refused to punish the guilty parties. From mid-October onwards, Auld says, Sandile increasingly disregarded both Wright and his councillors.¹¹³

But as was to become clear during the Makinana incident, the opinion of all the most influential councillors and chiefs was against war with the whites.¹¹⁴ Thus although the increased stock theft was an indirect form of warfare carried out by the 'war party' - the young warriors and Sandile - it did not signal an imminent recourse to overtly hostile behaviour. For the Ngqika to join the Gcaleka in a war against the whites would require a political decision of the whole people, and the evidence points to the fact that Sandile would not receive sanction for such a decision at that time, particularly as the position of the Gcaleka remained unclear. However, overtly hostile behaviour by the whites, was under the circumstances sure to be resisted. That was the lesson of the Makinana incident which Frere was quick to perceive.¹¹⁵

The pressure exerted by the colonists for strong measures, was immense. Brownlee returned to King William's Town convinced that the Government would have to use force to arrest Makinana for disobeying orders and resisting colonial authority.¹¹⁶ Merriman, although critical of Brownlee's handling of the whole incident, shared his assessment. Frere reported Merriman as

for carrying matters with a very high hand,
in a manner which must bring about a collision

113. Cory Library ; PR.1273, J. Auld in Blythwood Review, Oct. 1924.

114. Ibid.

115. Molteno Papers, No. 731: Frere to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 25 Nov. '77.

116. Ibid.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

with the Gaikas, a result which he avows he would not regret, as enabling us forcibly to break up the present Gaika location, and to deprive Sandili and the other chiefs of the power hitherto accorded to them by our acts of negligence.¹¹⁷

Brownlee's habitual indiscretion resulted in his opinion reaching the papers.¹¹⁸ News of Makinana's flight and the subsequent clash with police, combined with Brownlee's opinion convulsed the frontier in a paroxysm of rage and panic. The wildest rumours flew about:

The Gaika war cry had been sounded on all sides during the night. Mackinnon was making for the Amatolas. The Kaffirs were assembling on all sides, and flocking to march on Komgha.¹¹⁹

Delegations swamped the Governor and his Ministers at King William's Town, demanding that firm measures be taken to safeguard the lives and property of frontiersmen and to punish the rebellious Ngqika and Ndlambe.¹²⁰

Frere however, refused to bow to all these pressures. He pointed out in long letters to Molteno and Merriman that the Ngqika and Ndlambe were colonial subjects and that what frontier opinion contemplated was

117. Frere to Carnarvon, 21 Nov. '77, quoted in Martineau, ii, 202.

118. Frere was furious with Brownlee and was prompted to remark:

He is fatally deficient in all that is required for administration of so important a Department [nerve, promptitude and judgement] ... His proper place is as an under-secretary for Native Affairs in Cape Town.

Molteno Papers, No. 731: Frere to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 25 Nov. '77.

119. C.1961, No. 102: Frere to Carnarvon, 21 Nov. '77.

120. Ibid.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

the launching of a civil war.¹²¹ He said he could not see "any call of duty to the use of force, unless these misgoverned people in their terror should attack us"¹²² and pointed out that much of their behaviour was attributable to the deplorable panic by the colonists, frontier propaganda and the almost total lack of any preventative police force to combat stock theft. They had acted like rats in a trap in resisting the police. In fact, Makinana had committed no crime and had fled out of terror, not out of hostile intent. He therefore persuaded Merriman to set in motion the rapid extension of police services¹²³ and with his ministers, appointed W.B. Chalmers, at one time a Commissioner to the Ngqika and currently Magistrate at Cathcart, as a special Commissioner, entrusted with the task of settling the Makinana affair. Chalmers was instructed to tell Makinana that he only need pay the fine and hand in the arms of his people and then he would be allowed to settle where he wished.¹²⁴

Chalmers arrived on 24th November at Ndimba's location and began a series of meetings with Ndimba, Makinana and Sandile. He found the location in an extreme state of excitement. The women, children and cattle had been moved across the Kubusi, and the men were under arms. Ndimba explained to Chalmers that the clash had resulted from his people's conviction that they were under attack and although apologising

121. Molteno Papers, No. 731: Frere to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 25 Nov. '77.

122. Frere to Merriman, 21 Nov. '77, quoted in Martineau, ii, 205.

123. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to various military and civil officers, dated the end of November. In Kaffraria, the popular and highly regarded Alan Maclean of the F.A.M.P. was appointed to head a Divisional Police force (G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Warren, 30 Nov. '77) while other Divisions were pressed to set up such forces in terms of the 1873 permissive legislation providing for them, Act 8 of 73: The Divisional Police Act.

124. Molteno Papers, No. 729: Merriman to Molteno, 21 Nov. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

for it, he expressed anxiety about Government intentions. Chalmer's assurances brought an immediate return to normality. Meeting next with Makinana, Chalmers was told that Brownlee had never made it clear that Makinana would in any way be punished for leaving Sarhili and desiring to 'come under Government', and that the terms announced to him on 17th were as unexpected as they seemed unjust. His flight, he told Chalmers, had been caused simply by fear at the sudden commencement of an enforced disarmament.¹²⁵

Proceeding to Sandile's kraal on 27th, Chalmers found that calm had returned to that area as well. After hearing Chalmers, Sandile said that he and his people wished to remain at peace with Government and that he would assist in getting Makinana to comply with Government demands. Although he admitted the prevalence of stock theft, he regretted the panic amongst the whites which facilitated it and alarmed his people.¹²⁶

There was some delay in Makinana's compliance with Government demands. It seems that apart from a natural reluctance to fulfil these, some Tsonyana retainers had recrossed the Kei with their cattle whilst others had scattered throughout the location, making the collection of arms and cattle a difficult task. When by 4th December Chalmers had collected a certain number of arms and half the cattle fine, he wisely decided to declare the matter closed.¹²⁷

Of course the resolution of the crisis was more apparent than real. Frere's remedy was prevention rather than cure, and Sandile had evidently

125. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 38: W.B. Chalmers to Merriman, 21 Nov. '77. Brownlee is adamant that Maphasa and Makinana had both been informed on their arrival in the colony of the possibility of disarmament: G.17-'78, p.208: Brownlee Memo., May '78.

126. C.1961, Encl. 2 No. 38: W.B. Chalmers to Merriman, 21 Nov. '77.

127. Ibid.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

not abandoned his desire to make one last bid to throw off colonial control and reassert his independence, but had merely temporised in the face of overwhelming opposition to his plans. Auld reports Tyala, Sandile's chief councillor and acknowledged leader of the peace party as accusing Sandile at this time of being glad to see the young men excited and eager for war, because it had long been his (Sandile's) desire to find a pretext for war. Auld also reports one of Sandile's sons (almost certainly Mathanzima judging from later events) as saying

I have as yet done nothing that could praise my father's name. The spirit of my father speaks to me, and I shall let myself be known that I am a son of Sandile.¹²⁸

A 'loyal' Ngqika told Brownlee the following January that Tyala had distinctly told Sandile at the first meeting held by the Ngqika over Makinana that

if Sandilli did not implicitly obey all the orders of Government or if he did anything to bring trouble upon himself and the Gaikas, he must not look to Tyala and his party for assistance, that they would abandon Sandilli and would not again submit to suffer for his folly.¹²⁹

With Gcalekaland cleared and the campaign ended, the attention of the Government turned to finalising settlement plans. On 21st November an amnesty was offered to all Gcaleka who would lay down their arms and

128. Cory Library, PR.1273: J. Auld in Blythswood Review, Oct. 1924.

129. For a somewhat romanticised and sentimental picture of Tyala, see Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp.334-370.
G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Brownlee Memo., 11 Jan. '78, statement of Mkosana, a 'loyal' Ngqika before Brownlee, 10 Jan. '78.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

submit to the Colonial Authorities.¹³⁰ The Makinana débacle did not interrupt the implementation of the Government plan. In the absence of Brownlee, West Fynn was delegated the duty of collecting Maphasa's fine and the arms of his people and of then delivering him into the hands of Eustace and Griffith for resettlement.¹³¹ In the meantime Government notices in English and German had already appeared in the frontier press calling for applicants for grants of 300 acres in the western part of Gcalekaland between the Kei and the Qora.¹³²

On 28th November Eustace was issued with his instructions by Brownlee and was told to start as soon as possible. The Idutywa Reserve and Gcalekaland were to be united under Eustace as Chief Magistrate with three sub-magistrates under him. Two of these, Schermbrucker and Donald McDonald were appointed on 1st December. The actual resettlement of the Gcaleka aimed at breaking down tribal tenure and feeling, and the establishment of the Government as the owner of the land and ruler of the country. In line with this policy, it was intended to settle the disarmed Gcaleka in carefully defined and supervised locations, each head of family being granted six acres of arable land on individual tenure, and access to commonage. As in the Colony and the Colonial areas of the Transkei, hut tax of 10 shillings per annum would be paid, and Government-appointed headmen could control villages.¹³³ Although the Thuthura mission station was situated in a white designated area, Leslie was given permission to return and locate there any mission Gcaleka he found.¹³⁴

130. C.1961, Encl. 3 No. 102: Proclamation signed by Merriman and Molteno, 21 Nov. '77.

131. C.2000, No. 13: Frere to Carnarvon, 5 Dec. '77.

132. e.g. Kaffrarian Watchman, 14 Nov. '77.

133. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to Leslie, 14 Nov. '77.

134. G.G.R. 13: Brownlee to Eustace, 28 Nov. '77. ..

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

8. The Return of the Gcaleka

The reappearance of the Gcaleka from across the Mbashe and from their hiding places within the Colony changed the complexion of the frontier situation completely. The change became only too apparent on 2nd December. On that day, Inspector Bourne of the F.A.M.P. was leading a patrol of police and volunteers, some 152 in number near the Qora, when they were suddenly confronted by large numbers of armed Gcaleka. The latter attacked at a place called Mzintzani where a trader named Holland kept a store, and were beaten off. Later that day between 1000 and 3000 Gcaleka attacked the police camp, and a very fierce engagement followed with heavy loss to the Gcaleka.¹³⁵ Despite these losses, the fact that reinforcements had to be sent for must have encouraged the Gcaleka, as Frere pointed out.¹³⁶ That was in the North of Gcalekaland. In the South, the same day brought confirmation that many Gcaleka had been lying low in Gcalekaland having eluded Griffith's columns. Maphasa and his son Xhoxho had just been put across the Kei, having been fined and disarmed by Fynn. No sooner in Gcalekaland than they reported to a Mr Raymond deputising for Fynn, that large parties of Gcaleka were gathering between the Qora and Khobonqaba Rivers with the intention of attacking them. Maphasa and Xhoxho told Raymond that unless a force was sent to protect them, they would have to recross the Kei.¹³⁷

135. C.2000, Encl. 1 No. 22: Bourne to Griffith, 3 Dec. '77.

Hook, pp.249-52. Hook says the 3000 Gcaleka were led by Bhotomane who surrendered a few days later, having not recommenced the attack since he thought reinforcements for the whites had arrived.

136. C.2000, No. 22: Frere to Carnarvon, 12 Dec. '77.

Moodie, ii, 170 confirms that the battle was a close shave for the whites, and Parr, p.74 says that the battle was represented as a great victory by the Gcaleka.

137. C.2000, No. 13: Frere to Carnarvon, 5 Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

By 5th December it was clear that the few small bands of Gcaleka who had taken advantage of the amnesty to surrender were the exception, and that the majority intended to continue to resist the presence of the whites in their territory. The news of the return of the Gcaleka and the fight at Mzintzani renewed the panic amongst the colonists and this in turn further encouraged those amongst the colonial blacks who were contemplating a rebellion against white rule.¹³⁸

Griffith met the immediate crisis in Gcalekaland by sending the Idutywa garrison to reinforce Bourne and by re-enlisting the Mfengu levies.¹³⁹ He tried to avoid calling out the Thembu again, fearing that a second summons after their dilatory response to the first might be testing their 'loyalty' too far, but he was compelled to do so by sheer necessity.¹⁴⁰ On 5th December he wired Cunynghame that he needed another 700-800 men to secure Gcalekaland from the centre and the coast.¹⁴¹ But Cunynghame himself had just wired Griffith to send some police down south to protect Maphasa. Griffith replied explaining the impossibility of such a step - he needed all the men he had and in any case, the few police who had been fit for the campaign were now almost all unfit for service.¹⁴²

After all the remaining Imperial troops at Cape Town had been called up, there were scarcely enough men to garrison the frontier posts and to

138. At a meeting at Kei Road, for example, the inhabitants threatened "to take the law into their own hands and shoot every nigger found on their farms". Moodie, ii. 170.
139. C.2000, Encls 6 and 7 No. 19: Griffith to Merriman, Cunynghame, tels, 3 Dec. '77.
140. G.C. 21/7: Griffith to Cunynghame, tel., 6 Dec. '77.
141. C.2000, Encl. 7 No. 19: Griffith to Cunynghame, 5 Dec. '77, 6.30 a.m.
142. C.2000, Encl. 7 No. 19: Griffith to Cunynghame, 5 Dec. '77.

send small detachments to Toleni and Ibeka.¹⁴³ The real need was for mounted men who were able to move quickly. Where were the necessary troops to come from, and what force should be used in the new Gcalekaland campaign? The Cabinet and Daily Council were split. Molteno and Merriman considered that Imperial troops were slow, cumbersome, expensive and unsuited to local conditions, and therefore rejected the notion of Imperial Reinforcements, and an Imperial Campaign.¹⁴⁴ Frere, Cunynghame and Brownlee thought the converse.¹⁴⁵ But in the absence of suitable local troops, Merriman despite a growing antipathy to Cunynghame whom he found unendurable,¹⁴⁶ had to accede to an Imperial led campaign. He wrote to Molteno explaining the position:

You seem to think that I rush into the arms of the military but you can little know what personal pain it causes me to have to confess that Griffith had blundered and that there seemed no course open but appointing some man [i.e. an Imperial officer] and giving him the assistance he required.... You ask me what I am doing to get volunteers. I enclose a copy of the regulations which I have sent to the various Civil Commissioners - but the real burgher, the man who has a horse, will not come forward unless he is compelled.¹⁴⁷

143. C.2000, No. 22: Frere to Carnarvon, 12 Dec. '77.

144. Molteno Papers, No. 758: Merriman to Molteno, 3 Dec. '77.

145. Brownlee wrote in October when Griffith was seemingly routing Sarhili's forces, that the war would drag on for another 5-6 months unless two to three regiments of Imperial Reinforcements were sent, because Sarhili would never surrender.
A 24-'78, p.122: Brownlee Memo., 29 Oct. '77.

146. Molteno Papers, No. 737: Merriman to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 3 Dec. '77.

147. Molteno Papers, No. 758: Merriman to Molteno, 15 Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

There was 'lots of jaw' amongst the public but no active support.

Merriman aptly summed up for Molteno the situation as it then existed:

Our strength lies in the weakness of our foe
and our weakness lies in the utter and
disgraceful panic among our own people.¹⁴⁸

Colonel Glyn of 1/24th Regiment was therefore appointed to head the combined Imperial and Colonial forces in the Transkei, and Col. W. Bellairs took over from him in the same position West of the Kei.¹⁴⁹ Two bodies under semi-military regulations and headed by Imperial Officers were also raised to help meet the immediate crisis.¹⁵⁰

9. Black responses

It is hard to assess black intentions and feelings in early December. It seems certain that Sarhili, possibly from within Gcalekaland, had ordered back the Gcaleka warriors.¹⁵¹ He must have been aware of the Government's plan to settle both Europeans and the treacherous Maphasa on his lands and a return of his warriors would at least prevent this while he opened negotiations again, as indeed he did soon after Mzintzani.¹⁵²

148. Ibid.

149. C.2000, No. 22: Frere to Carnarvon, 12 Dec. '77.
Theal, X, 80.

150. Theal, X, 84. Lieut.-Col. Pulleine of 1/24th enrolled four hundred footmen in a body that came to be known as Pulleine's Rangers and Lieut. Carrington also of 1/24th enrolled two hundred horsemen in a troop that came to be known as Carrington's Horse.

151. G.H. 21/7, Miscellaneous file: Griffith to Merriman, tel., 7 Dec.'77.
Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.

152. See below, p. 144.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

But at the same time, it seems likely that Sarhili and the Gcaleka expected help from the colonial blacks, and Stanford reported that he could be expected to try to contact them.¹⁵³ Informants stress that Sarhili and Sandile would have kept each other constantly informed of their progress and intentions, and therefore Sarhili would have been aware that Sandile was willing if not eager to fight, but that opinion amongst the Ngqika was far from unanimous.¹⁵⁴ That Sarhili gave orders to the effect that colonial blacks should continue stealing, but should not attempt to break out in revolt until he had succeeded in drawing the Imperial troops across the Kei, is therefore also quite possible.¹⁵⁵

During December, the panic amongst the colonists and worsening relations with the Mfengu made it seem unlikely that the peace party amongst the Gcaleka would be able to restrain Sandile and the young bloods indefinitely. The scare, instead of quietening down after the resolution of the Makinana affair, continued to grow, fanned by papers such as the Eastern Star, The Standard and Mail and the Cape Mercury.¹⁵⁶ Merriman was exasperated by the panic which contributed to unrest amongst the blacks,¹⁵⁷ and for once Frere seems to have contributed by declaring

153. G.H. 21/7: Griffith to Merriman, tel., 7 Dec. '77.

154. Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 Nov. 1977.
Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.

155. G.G.R.I.: Private L. Combes to Inspector Bailie, 8 Dec. '77.

156. The Cape Argus, lead article, 29 Nov. '77.

157. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 90: Merriman to Molteno, tel., 4 Dec. '77. Merriman to Molteno, tel., 13 Dec. quoted in Lewson, Selections 1870-90, pp.33-4. Molteno Papers, No. 758: Merriman to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 15 Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

to a deputation after Mzintzani that the situation was "most critical."¹⁵⁸ A vocal minority of farmers publicly proclaimed that they would rather have war than suffer the continual stock losses,¹⁵⁹ and there is some evidence that a few actually tried to precipitate war.¹⁶⁰ The campaign of rumours directed against the Ngqika was particularly severe in the cases of Oba Ngonyama and Tini Maqomo, both of whom owned land in the Colony from which white farmers were anxious to see them ejected.¹⁶¹ As so often in the past, Government investigation of the rumours and the farmers' claims, proved them to be exaggerated, if not unfounded.¹⁶² Wherever the white panic was greatest, there the black population, although apprehensive, was found to be relatively peaceful,¹⁶³ although there were exceptions, like Gungubele, the Tshatshu Thembu chief whose special case is discussed in a separate chapter.

158. Ibid.

159. G.G.R.I : Edward Phillips to George Meurant, 19 Dec. '77. Merriman Papers, No. 758: Merriman to Molteno, Private and Confidential, 15 Dec. '77.

160. Percy Nightingale gives a vivid account of frontier panic and the activities of scaremongers:

Whilst the Fingo-Gcaleka disturbance was in its first stage false reports were got up, and circulated by trader's and others regarding the loyalty of this tribe [Oba's], and creditors began to press for a settlement of their claims. The district became excited by mischievous agitators, conspicuous amongst whom were two or three individuals living in this town, and reason lost her sway; there was a clamour for guns, a general trek, and an outcry against all Kaffirs... As telegrams poured in day after day containing exaggerated accounts of Transkeian affairs and then were exaggerated again by those who retailed them from mouth to mouth, panic took possession of the land...

G.17-'78, p.121: Nightingale to S.N.A., 29 Jan. '78. See also C.2000, Encl. No. 77: Extract from Official Report of Mr. Liefeldt, n.d., for evidence of attempts to precipitate war, and De Kiewiet, p.172.

161. See below, p.186 et seq.

162. G.G.R. 2: Frost to Merriman, 22 Dec. '77.

163. G.G.R. 2: H.J. Elliot to P.B. Borchards, 15 Dec. '77.
G.G.R. 2: B. Holland to Merriman, 21 Dec. '77.

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1877: THE RETREAT AND RETURN OF THE GCALEKA

The Colonial blacks were not only provoked by the war psychosis of the whites, but also by the arrogance of the Colonial Mfengu, who were jubilant after their Transkeian counterpart's success.¹⁶⁴ Colonial whites demanded on the return of the Gcaleka that the Colonial Mfengu be armed, and the latter were only too willing to oblige. When most of the new stock and Divisional Police arranged by Merriman turned out to be Mfengu, resentment boiled over, and incidents followed.¹⁶⁵ The Ngqika (and Thembu) increasingly as the month proceeded, showed their hostility to the Mfengu by stealing their stock, and in many areas, the Mfengu began to separate themselves from their black neighbours.¹⁶⁶ Archdeacon Waters of St Mark's Mission Station, which was located in Emigrant Thembuland on the border of the Tshatshu Location, concluded that an anti-Mfengu and anti-white conspiracy was being hatched.¹⁶⁷

Still, open rebellion for the Ciskeian blacks was, in their fragmented, depressed and weak state, an act of desperation. While it was clear from the Makinana affair that resistance would be offered to any threat to the people and their property by the colonists, it required some striking act or success by the Gcaleka to kindle the flame of open rebellion.

164. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to W. Wright, 22 Oct. '77.

165. e.g. N.A. 155: T. Wright to W. Wright, 3 Nov. '77.

Mfengu police helped precipitate the Tini Maqomo revolt. See below, pp.204, 206.

166. G.H. 21/7, Miscellaneous file: A Kropf, Sen. to Brownlee, 3 Dec. '77.

167. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 139: Archdeacon Waters to Hon. C. Brown M.L.C., 6 Dec. '77.

CHAPTER 5

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

1. Sarhili, the reluctant warrior again

On 19th December, Bhotomane, Wapi, Maki and a few other Gcaleka surrendered at Mzintzani and said that Sarhili was anxious to do the same, but was frightened and wished to know what terms he would be granted before he did so. The Gcaleka were especially anxious that Sarhili should be allowed to remain with his people, even if, as had been done with Sandile before, he was deprived of his chieftainship. But the Government had no intention of allowing Sarhili to stay on in Gcalekaland, for his presence and influence would negate much of their settlement policy. So, although Glyn guaranteed Sarhili's personal wellbeing, he made no new concessions. A six day armistice was granted for Bhotomane to convey the Government's terms to Sarhili, and to bring back his answer.¹

Shortly afterwards, Sarhili sent to Eustace to hear the terms from him personally. A meeting was arranged for 24th December near the ruins of Holela. Taking elaborate precautions, Sarhili arrived on Christmas day accompanied by a large armed bodyguard. He defended his behaviour to Eustace, reiterated his constant desire for peace and said that

the terms offered by Government were very hard,
that he wished himself and his people to be under
Government, and could not see why he might not
live in his country.²

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1. G.H. 21/7, Native Resident's file: Report of a meeting between Bhotomane, Captain Robinson and others, 19 Dec. '77.
C.2000, No. 26: Frere to Carnarvon, tel., 25 Dec. '77.
 2. G.H. 21/7, Native Resident's file: Eustace to Frere, 25 Dec. '77.
G.17-'78, pp.37-8: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Eustace's explanations were all in vain, and Cunynghame told Bhotomane the following day that there could be no further armistice and, with a reward of 500 cattle or £1000 being offered for Sarhili's capture, Glyn's campaign got under way.³

The campaign was much like Griffith's, though the Gcaleka offered even less resistance. Glyn's forces were divided into four columns which drove the Gcaleka forces north and south. In the fortnight's operations up to 5th January, 120 Gcaleka were killed and some 2369 cattle captured.⁴ Of those Gcaleka driven north, some took refuge with Thembu friends, whilst others passed through Mditshwa's territory to receive shelter with Mqikela. Those Gcaleka driven south fled for the most part into the Tyityaba Valley.⁵ This valley, densely forested and extending both sides of the Kei, was to become the refuge of Ngqika forces and their herds once they had broken out into open rebellion.⁶ Black forces in this area were responsible for briefly laying siege to Forts Linsingen and Warwick, but these were relieved by Maphasa and Colonel Lambert of the 88th.⁷ Lambert was to be much criticised for abandoning Mpethu, and this was one of the examples of Imperial blundering that Molteno used to justify a separate Colonial Command.⁸

2. The attempt to forge Xhosa solidarity

Khiva Xoseni, who had worked his way south, is the one Gcaleka who features prominently in contemporary despatches. By 14th December, he

3. G.H. 21/6: Cunynghame to Frere, tel., 26 Dec. '77.
4. C.2079, Encl. A No. 23: Glyn to Cunynghame, 5 Jan. '78.
5. C.M.T. 1/58: Stanford to Elliot, 8 Jan. '78.
Blyth reported that feeling in Pondoland was very sympathetic to Sarhili and antagonistic to British rule. G.H. 21/7, Miscellaneous file :Blyth to S.N.A., tel., 11 Feb. '78.
6. Theal, X, 89.
7. C.2079, Encl. 1 No. 9: Bellairs to Cunynghame, 14 Jan. '78 and following enclosures.
8. Schoeman, p.194.

DECEMBER 1877 to JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

was marauding close to the Kei and Merriman warned Griffith and Cunynghame of the necessity of engaging him before he could meet up with the Ngqika.⁹ Glyn's armistice only applied to the Gcaleka north of the Qora River, but Khiva was not engaged. Cunynghame, on his way to Ibeka to help launch Glyn's campaign, actually witnessed his crossing the Kei, but failed to stop him,¹⁰ a failure that provided much ammunition to the critics of Imperial military capabilities like Merriman.¹¹

Khiva's mission poses a number of awkward problems. Bhotomane's peace bid certainly was a forlorn hope from the start as far as Sarhili was concerned, and Sarhili, aware of this, could have given Khiva the go ahead to cross the Kei and summon aid from the Ngqika as soon as he had word from Bhotomane that the whites refused to change the terms for peace. But the time that elapsed between Bhotomane surrendering on 19th and Khiva crossing the Kei on the night of the 22nd is very short, while the distances between Bhotomane at Mzintzani, Sarhili on the Qora, and Khiva near the Kei were great. The fact remains that Sarhili was meeting with Eustace when Khiva was already in the Ngqika location.¹²

All informants are agreed that Sarhili sent Khiva and that Khiva was not on an independent mission. But they disagree on the message that Khiva took to Sandile. Mda-Mda asserts that Sarhili sent to say:

9. A.54-'78, p.73: Merriman to Griffith, 14 Dec. '77.
10. Cunynghame, pp.341-2, explained that this was because he was outnumbered, had no cavalry support, and did not wish to expose his guns to capture or destruction.
11. C.2079, Encl. 85: Merriman Minute, 29 Dec. '77.
12. Eustace found Sarhili near that River on Christmas Day. G.17-'78, p.37: Eustace to S.N.A., 31 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Keep out! - we're involved in this war
 against our will and we don't think we'll
 succeed. We need a place of refuge and you
 are to provide that.¹³

But the weight of evidence and opinion is against this version. Far more likely is the message that was reported by Siwani to Brownlee. According to this, Khiva told Sandile that he had been abandoned by his friends across the Kei and now, renouncing peace, he intended to fight in the Ciskei until he died. Sandile and all the other Xhosa must therefore prepare to aid him.¹⁴

Chief Burns-Ncamashe stresses that the Ngqika always regarded the ties of blood between themselves and the Gcaleka as overriding, in a crisis, the independence from the Gcaleka that they exercised in everyday affairs.¹⁵ The Xhosa Paramountcy, as Peires has put it "possessed symbolic and emotional associations which transcended its narrow political foundations".¹⁶ Thus Sandile is reported as replying to advice to reject Khiva's mission:

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13. Interview with Mr Mda-Mda, Nyokana Store, Nyokana Location, Willowvale District, 17 September 1977.
 14. C.2000, Encl. 86: Brownlee report on Siwani, 28 Dec. '77. Sarhili was reported as saying that Komgha would be his first target, and indeed the first engagement in the Colony was sparked off by Khiva just outside that town, see below, p.155.
 15. Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 November 1977.
 16. Peires, p.72.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

How can I sit still when Rhili fights? If
Rhili fights and bursts and is overpowered, then I
too become nothing. No longer will I be a chief.
Where Rhili dies, there will I die, and where he
wakes, there will I wake.¹⁷

It was Sandile's desire to embark on a national war in one final attempt to regain Xhosa independence, but what Peires calls 'the ethic of lineage solidarity' was, after the 8th Frontier War, no longer an operating principle.¹⁸ That this is so may be seen from the differing responses of the various Rharhabe peoples to the call to fight.

Firstly, the Ngqika themselves were split down the middle by the question of trying to throw off white control. The response of Tyala during the Mekinana incident has been noted, and he was supported by the majority of the Ngqika chief and Headmen.¹⁹ The peace party continued to vehemently oppose involvement in the war. Thus, when a meeting was summoned to Sandile's Kraal on the Kubusi, the four leaders of the peace party were not present, and it seems reasonable to interpret their absence either as a protest on their part, or an attempt to isolate them on the part of Sandile. But the Ngqika at the meeting insisted that Sandile refer the question of Khiva's mission to the four before

17. Interview with Chief F. Mpangele, Mgwali Location, Stutterheim District, 26 Aug. 1975, in Peires, p.72. Mr Mda-Mda quoted Sandile to almost exactly the same effect.

18. Peires, p.215.

19. Wright (p.154, below) mentions Chiefs Feni and Kona, and Headman Soga, one of Sandile's most respected councillors. Cumming adds the name of Sandile's brother, Dondashe, see below, p.157, footnote 55.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE KHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

any decision was taken.²⁰ While Sandile sent his son Gumma to join Khiva, his young men to raid the Mfengu, to burn the Draaibosch hotel and to loot trading stores,²¹ the peace party remained firm. At a general meeting of the Ngqika which Wright summoned on 29th December because Sandile had not yet consulted Tyala, Soga, Feni and Kona, Tyala, acting as the spokesman of the tribe, said the decision of the tribe was:

Kiva is to return from whence he came. Messengers are to go out at once to Kiva with the word of the tribe to this effect. Sandile said he was sincere in saying he wished to sit still.²²

Kona told Auld that he doubted Sandile's word,²³ and the first clashes between Ngqika forces and the whites on 29th and 30th show that there was reason to do that.

But while the Ngqika remained divided, Sandile temporized, refusing to commit himself one way or another. On 1 January he sent for Feni and told him that Wright had invited him to meet him, but that he was afraid to go. He added that there was a further problem to his going because Adonis, a Mfengu headman who had tried to move his cattle out of the location, had been murdered. Feni in reply warned Sandile to remember the people's decision and urged him therefore to apprehend the murderers and to see Wright, adding that he would not join in any move

20. C.2000, Encls. 86: Wright to S.N.A., 25 Dec. '77 and Craigie to Deputy Adjutant-General, 25 Dec. '77.

21. C.2220, Encl. No. 3: Brownlee Memo., n.d.

22. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Wright to S.N.A., 8 Jan. '78.

23. Cory Library, PR 1273: J. Auld in Blythswood Review, Oct. '24.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

against the Government and that he regarded the murder of Adonis as such a move.²⁴

By mid-January, the split in the Ngqika was total, the Government having moved to separate the non-combatants from the combatants.²⁵ Despite the extreme bitterness that existed between the two groups (members of the same families stripped each other of property before joining opposing camps), the peace party regarded themselves as having acted honourably. Their stand had been publicly stated and accepted at meetings of the people and far from seeing themselves as abandoning their chief, they saw him as abandoning them.²⁶ They did not turn traitor to their people as Maphasa did, nor did they aid the whites as he was later to do. In fact, when instead of being treated as loyal subjects, they began to suffer at the hands of the colonial commandants and colonists who regarded them as a potential menace, many were bitterly disillusioned.²⁷

There is a Xhosa tradition that says that when Sandile decided to join the war, he called a meeting of all the Ngqika at Bolo. There he told them that this was the last war that he would fight in, since he had had a premonition of his death. He asked some of the Ngqika chiefs, especially those near the forests to be non-combatants and to act as a Xhosa commissariat.²⁸

24. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Statement of Feni before Wright and others, 12 Jan. '78.

25. See below, pp.156-7.

26. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Brownlee Memo., 11 Jan. '78, Statement of Mkosana, a "loyal" Ngqika before Brownlee, 10 Jan. '78. Cory Library, P.R. 1273: J. Auld In Blythswood Review, Oct. '24.

27. See for example, N.A. 158: W. Cumming to W. Wright, 20 April '78, and reply, 24 April '78. Cumming expressed amazement that after the succession of raids on Tyala's people by Rorke's Mfengu, they did not join the rebels.

28. Interview with Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe, Rhodes University, 1 November 1977.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

The evidence is that the decision of most of the Ngqika chiefs on whether to participate or not in the war, was determined by individual circumstances as much as by Sandile's orders. The case of the Hleke and Anta seems to support to some extent this tradition. There is evidence that the former supplied Sandile from the Perie mission area when he was fighting a desperate war of resistance in the last stages of the war,²⁹ and that the latter's location acted as a refuge for combatants and their cattle, particularly over the period of the disturbances in the North-East.³⁰ But Anta was an old man (he died before the war ended)³¹ and some 3-400 of his young men participated in the Gungubele revolt at the end of January, so it is clear that Sandile's desires were not the only reason for his behaviour and that of his people.

In Tini Maqomo's case, which is discussed in a separate chapter,³² evidence does not support the suggestion that he and his people were acting as a commissariat for Sandile, and his eventual revolt was certainly a response to particular pressures exerted on him.

Oba's case illustrates the point that the influences of a white official or missionary was often the telling factor in the response of individual chiefs to the war. Oba had moved from the overcrowded location, like Tini, when he bought two farms in the Victoria East district in 1874.³³ By the time of the drought of 1877-8, the farms were overcrowded and overgrazed, there was a shortage of food and a

29. See below, p.171, footnote 151.

30. See below, pp. 186-202.

31. Theal, X, 83.

32. See below, pp. 203-213.

33. G.17-'78, p.120: Nightingale to S.N.A., 29 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

great amount of stock theft and generally Oba's people were in a desperate plight and susceptible to political unrest.³⁴ However, in December 1877, after months of pleading, Nightingale in a far sighted move, persuaded the Government to appoint G.M. Theal as Special Resident to Oba's people. Theal was unable to effect an immediate improvement in their social and economic condition, but he was able for some months through his influence and Oba's willing co-operation to prevent the restless young men of the tribe from joining Sandile.³⁵

As for the rest of the black inhabitants of the Ciskei, their responses were determined by their individual circumstances, interests, officials and predisposition of their chiefs. Burton quotes a servant as saying that all the Ciskeian blacks except Kama would rise. He said:

This time it is no work of Mlanjeni or witchdoctors; formerly we were peaceable and quiet; but since the white man came we have had nothing but war and are now penned up in circumscribed localities and will stand it no longer. We are determined to sweep the white men from the earth or perish.³⁶

This statement, accurately pinpoints the feelings of most Ciskeian blacks, but exaggerates their unanimity of purpose. Sandile had sent to Siwani, the Mdushane chief living at Tamacha in the King William's Town district to tell him of Khiva's presence and his message, and requesting him to pass on the message to all his countrymen, by which Siwani understood

34. Ibid., G.17-'78, p.127: Theal to Nightingale, 12 Jan. '78.

35. Theal, X, 80.

36. Cory Library, MS 14,254/13: Burton, ii, facing p.70.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

the Mqhayi chief Jali living near Berlin, Toyise the Gasela chief living on the outskirts of King William's Town, William Shaw Kama the Christian Gqunukhwebe chief who lived near the same town, and Seyolo, his own half-brother who lived at Line Drift.³⁷ The missionary who lived with Siwani, Rev. Nauhaus advised him to report these messages to Brownlee which he did and he began increasingly to co-operate with the whites.³⁸ Jali and Seyolo were both to fight, but only in March 1878, while Kama and Toyise stayed out with portions of their tribes joining in.³⁹

In the East London District the main portion of the Gqunukhwebe under Delima were also not to join for some time, while it was with the blacks squatting on farms that immediate trouble was to come, not because of any feelings of black solidarity, but because of a dispute over stolen cattle. On 24th December Brabant who was investigating a stock theft, was defied by some Gqunukhwebe tribesmen on the East Bank of the Gonubie, and outnumbered, was forced to retire. Richard Tainton the Special Magistrate for Tamacha⁴⁰ who was well known to and well liked by all the blacks in the King William's Town and East London District, persuaded Brabant not to try to seize the cattle and those involved with his colonial troops, but rather to let him mediate. Tainton stressed that the troops would have a provocative effect. Tainton went to mediate and was accompanied by his brother John and also Field Cornet W. Brown of the Divisional police and 50 of his Mfengu policemen. After locating the kraal where the stolen cattle had been

37. C.2000, Encl. 86: Brownlee report on Siwani, 28 Dec. '77.

38. N.A. 400: Von Linsingen to S.N.A., 6 Sept. '78. See above pp. 147, 152.

39. See below, pp. 175-6.

40. A special post with responsibility for the blacks in the King William's Town District. Theal was appointed to this post in 1878. Theal, X, 137.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

taken, they were promised that the cattle would be returned. Tainton and his force returned to their camp at St. Luke's Mission Station on the Kwelerha River where, shortly afterwards on the same day, they were surprised by a number of armed men from the kraal they had just visited. The Mfengu police fled and the three whites were murdered. Immediately afterwards, all those blacks involved sent their cattle to the Kei and went to join the Ngqika rebels.⁴¹

3. The White Response

At first the Colonial Government had sought to persuade Sandile to reject Khiva's advances. Wright was telegraphed by Brownlee on 23rd December and was instructed to go immediately to Sandile to explain to him his duty as a British subject.⁴² Accompanied by Rev. J. Auld and Lt. R.W. Craigie, R.N., Wright went to Sandile's kraal on the Kubusi and found that Sandile had just, as he admitted, been addressing a meeting of his people on the subject of Khiva's visit. Sandile was in an aggressive frame of mind and told Wright bluntly that he resented that his neutrality should be called into question and that his people were armed because Government used force rather than consultation. He asked that the Government should take no action with Khiva until his people had made their own decision, and refused to move back to his Great Place on the Gqolonci River near Wright's Residence at Tembani as Wright requested. Sandile told Wright that he was going to consult his councillors and the other chiefs as his people had requested,⁴³ but he had not done so by the 29th, by which stage the situation had deteriorated.

41. Cape Archives, Accession 459(1): The Life of Sir E.Y. Brabant, typescript, pp.54-9.

42. C.2000, Encl. No. 86: Brownlee to Wright, tel., 23 Dec. '77.

43. C.2000, Encls.No. 86: Wright to S.N.A., 25 Dec. '77 and Craigie to Deputy Adjutant-General, 25 Dec. '77.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

On 25th December the Mfengu began moving their cattle out of the Ngqika Location despite Ngqika attempts to prevent them.⁴⁴ On 28th a Ngqika raiding party penetrated six miles into Fingoland burning huts and seizing cattle, while the hotel at Draaibosch, one of Sandile's favourite haunts, was burnt. A couple of local farmhouses were also burnt and a white trader was killed.⁴⁵ At the meeting which Wright had arranged for the 29th to force Sandile to a decision, Tyala announced that the Ngqika were for peace and that Sandile wished to 'sit still'. But at the same time Tyala significantly asked the Government to 'keep the Fingoes Quiet' and Kona told Auld that he did not think Sandile was sincere.⁴⁶

The dénouement came on the same day. Postriders had been prevented by numbers of armed blacks from carrying the mail from Komgha to the Transkei for several days. On 29th, Major Moore of 88th took a patrol of F.A.M.P. out from Komgha to clear the road. Two engagements followed, the first with 100 blacks who retreated, the second with 300 who forced the patrol to retreat with the loss of one man. On the following day, Moore took out a stronger patrol to escort the mails and an ammunition wagon, and was confronted by 600 black infantry and 50 black mounted men. A sharp engagement followed, but this time the blacks were forced to retire.⁴⁷

Sandile denied that he had ordered the attacks and asserted that Ndimba's Ndlambe were responsible,⁴⁸ but Ndimba was cleared of personal

44. Cory Library, PR 1273: J. Auld in Blythswood Review, Oct. 1934.

45. Molteno Papers, No. 803: Brownlee to Molteno, 29 Dec. '77.
G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli File: Wright to S.N.A., 8 Jan. '78.

46. See above, p.149.

47. C.2000, Encls No. 90: Moore to Lambert, 31 Dec. '77 (2 reports).

48. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Wright to Brownlee, 8 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

involvement and responsibility at his trial the following October⁴⁹ and evidence was led that implicated Makinana and his people. From what Soga says, it seems that Mathanzima and Khiva were the directing forces behind the attacks, and that it was Khiva's purpose to involve the Ngqika irrevocably in the war.⁵⁰

Brownlee, before learning of the engagement of 29th, had already decided that Sandile was sympathetic to Khiva's overtures but was temporizing because of lack of support. His advice was to delay any action against Sandile and the war party so as to strengthen the hand of those who favoured peace. At the same time, he advised that the latter be given an opportunity to separate themselves from the former by concentrating at Emgwali Mission Station, where Wright could register them as 'loyal' citizens.⁵¹

Brownlee's suggestion was adopted, and on 31 December, Wright sent messages to Sandile and other important Ngqika calling on all those who disassociated themselves from violence to concentrate at Emgwali Mission Station where they would be received and protected by Government.⁵²

Wright's task was a difficult and complex one, made more so by the suspicion with which colonists regarded the so-called 'loyals', and also by the imprecise and even contradictory orders that he received from Merriman and

49. The Cape Argus, Report on trial, 29 Oct. '78.

50. Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.264.

51. C.2000, Encl. No. 86: Brownlee Memo., 29 Dec. '77.

52. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Wright to S.N.A., 8 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Brownlee.⁵³ Wright was much criticized for being too lenient in his treatment of the Ngqika,⁵⁴ but there is evidence that his tolerant and flexible handling of the whole issue encouraged many waverers not to become combatants, but to register under him.⁵⁵ In the end Tyala, Feni, Kona and all their followers registered, while Soga was the only one of Sandile's chief councillors to join him, and that out of loyalty rather than conviction.⁵⁶

4. The Black Elite

As Saunders has pointed out, the case of the educated and Christian elite is an interesting one.⁵⁷ The practice of sending the sons of chief's to education institutions like Zonnebloem and Lovedale had

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53. Brownlee urged that those Ngqika who registered should not be disarmed and was prepared to prolong the registration period. G.G.R. 4: Brownlee Memo., 1 Jan '78. Merriman, encouraged by his commandants, who were acutely suspicious of the 'loyals', insisted on disarmament and a limitation of the registration period.
See G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file :Wright to S.N.A., 8 Jan. '78.
and
A.54-'78, p.12: Merriman to Schermburcker, tel., 5 Jan. '78.
A.54-'78, p.15: Schermburcker to Merriman, tel., 15 Jan. '78.
A.54-'78, p.21: Schermburcker to Merriman, tel., 10 Jan. '78.
A.54-'78, p.24: Merriman to Frost, tel., 14 Jan. '78.
A.54-'78, p.24: Frost to Merriman, tel., n.d.
54. e.g. C.2079, No. 9: Frere to Carnarvon, 9 Jan. '78.
55. John Cumming the missionary stationed at Emgwali wrote to Rose-Innes after the war to say that the able way Wright had secured the persons and property of the "loyal" Ngqika greatly increased confidence in the Government and with the lead of Tyala and others, stemmed defection to the rebels. Cape Archives, Cumming Papers, folder 7: Cumming to Rose-Innes, 1 Feb. '79.
56. Cory Library, PR 1274 Rev. J. Auld in Blythswood Review, Dec. 1924. Theal, X, 82. Theal gives the number of men who were registered as 1418. Brownlee asserts that some 2000 men who were Sandile's subjects registered under Wright, a very sizeable proportion of the tribe (according to the census of 1875, the total population of both Sandile and Anta's Locations was 33,000 - G.21-'75, p.63). G.17-'78, p.213: Brownlee Memo., May '78.
57. Saunders, C.C.: "The New African Elite in the Eastern Cape and some late Nineteenth Century origins of African Nationalism" in Collected Seminar Papers on The Society of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. I, pp.44-9.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

resulted in the emergence before the war of an elite who were then employed as interpreters or clerks in Magistrates Courts. The few blacks who had reached positions of responsibility in the Church may also be classed as members of the elite. Whilst the great majority of such people remained 'loyal' to the Government, a few prominent examples resigned their posts and joined the rebels. The most notable examples are Dukwana, the son of Ntsikana the first christian convert, who was a lay preacher at Emgwali; Gonya (Edmund), Sandile's eldest son, who was clerk in the office of the Magistrate at Middle Drift, Mlindazwe (Bisset) another of Sandile's sons who was an interpreter in the Civil Commissioner's Office at Bedford, Nathaniel Mhala, brother to Makinana and Ndimba, an interpreter at King William's Town.⁵⁸

Of these four Dukwana and Nathaniel are the most interesting perhaps because more is recorded of them, although the picture that emerged of Gonya at his trial for treason in October was not one of a man of force or character.⁵⁹ Dukwana, who joined the rebels almost immediately, was an excellent marksman, and he accounted for many of the white casualties during the closing stages of the war. Continuing to hold services in the field, he is on record as saying that he was not fighting against Christianity or 'civilisation' but against the English who had robbed his people of their land.⁶⁰ Dukwana was killed in late June in the same skirmish as Sandile.⁶¹

58. Ibid., p.45.

59. The Cape Argus, lead article, 2 Nov. '78. Theal, X, 87 shared this view of Gonya.

60. Lecture by Rev. R. Johnston, Port Elizabeth, 1878, in Cory Library, MS 14254/13: Burton, iv, Appendix XIII. Johnson who remembered Dukwana well from his missionary days, said he was the orator of the Ngqika and second only to Tiyo Soga in his moral influence on the people.

61. See below, p.182.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Correspondence of Nathaniel with Brownlee and others,⁶² a diary he kept at the time and the record of his trial⁶³ provide a fascinating insight into the dilemma of an educated and religious black man who had close relatives involved in a struggle with a Government whose servant he was. On the one hand he felt the call of blood and race, on the other the call of religion, intellect and Victorian duty.⁶⁴ His dilemma was intensified by the prejudice of white colonists. After the murder of the Taintons, every black man was the subject of suspicion and in early January, Nathaniel became the subject of a scurrilous campaign in the Cape Mercury which accused him of being a traitor.⁶⁵ The kraal of a correspondent of his, an Ndlambe headman, was ransacked by Bowker's Rovers acting without a warrant, in an attempt to find confirmation of his treachery. Nathaniel wrote to Brownlee explaining that he felt compelled to resign

knowing... how madly enraged the demonstrative
is an English populace apt to be against one who
is branded the enemy of peace.⁶⁶

Brownlee offered to have him transferred to Cape Town but Nathaniel felt he ought to join his people in their time of trial. Nevertheless, he appealed to Brownlee to appoint a Resident to the Ndlambe and to show concern for their plight, otherwise,

62. To be found in G.H.21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file and N.A. 400.

63. Both published in The Cape Argus, supplement, 30 July '78.

64. C.2144, No. 107: Frere to Hicks-Beach, 1 June '78.

65. G.H.21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Nathaniel Mhala to Mvalo, 3 Jan '78.

NA.400: Nathaniel Mhala to Brownlee, 13 Jan. '78.

66. Ibid.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Left all by themselves, with the highly provocative Fingoe, armed, with the idea that Government has forsaken them, cast them off and with the knowledge that their kinsmen are struggling for their lives under Makinana, there is no calculating to what steps of desperation they might be driven to by their derelict situation.⁶⁷

Nathaniel went home to join his people, and although he did not join his combatant brothers, he went into hiding because he feared with the Government might do to him. During this time he wrote in his diary of his desire for a 'Saviour' for the blacks, and wished that they were either united in war or peace, preferably the latter.⁶⁸

Arrested and charged with High Treason as well as the murder of a farmer and some Mfengu, Nathaniel was tried before Judge Dwyer on 15 July 1878. The first charge was withdrawn, and Nathaniel was acquitted of the second. Nathaniel applied to be readmitted to Government service, but was refused.⁶⁹

Frere wrote to the Bishop of Grahamstown, who had applied to have Nathaniel readmitted that this could not be, because Nathaniel had failed to learn 'civil obedience to law'.⁷⁰

This is curious, because in June, he was sympathetic to Mhala's case when he defended the educated elite from the charge that it was disloyal and attached to the traditional politics of the chiefdom. So too did Dr James Stewart of Lovedale and the role of missionaries in education by publishing Lovedale, Past and Present. A Register of 2000 Names.

Frere and Stewart were right in their assessment of the majority of the

67. G.H. 21/8, Conduct of Sandilli file: Nathaniel Mhala to Brownlee, 9 Jan. '78.

68. The Cape Argus, supplement, 30 July '78: Diary of Nathaniel Mhala.

69. Cory Library, MS. 14,254/13: Burton, iv, V.

70. Frere to the Bishop of Grahamstown, 23 Sept. '79, quoted in Martineau, ii, 215-16.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

elite: after the war they abandoned the armed struggle and tried to gain a voice in the political institutions of the whites.⁷¹

5. Divided White Strategy

There was increasing division between Members of the Government on the steps to be taken to meet the crisis in the Colony. In December Merriman favoured a comprehensive disarmament of Ciskeian blacks as the only means to ensuring future peace,⁷² but Molteno pointed out that such a step would be intensely provocative.⁷³ He continued to resist the idea of Imperial Reinforcements which Frere and Cunynghame favoured, preferring the proclamation of Martial Law as a means of speedily putting down any rebellion. He envisaged the ruthless application of drum-head court martials under such a proclamation. But when, for want of an alternative, Martial Law was proclaimed in the Districts of Stutterheim and Komgha on 31 December,⁷⁴ Frere insisted on a less arbitrary system of special courts with terms of hard labour, rather than execution, as punishment for blacks convicted of rebellion.

On 1 January the Burgher Act was proclaimed in order to strengthen the number of available troops, but burghers were still inclined to negotiate the terms on which they served, and some refused to serve under Imperial control,⁷⁵ a point which Molteno made capital of when he arrived in King William's Town on 8th January. Molteno, determined to

71. Saunders in Societies of Southern Africa, i, 50-1, notes 9 and 10. See especially C.2144, No. 107: Frere to Hicks-Beach, 1 June '78.

72. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 106: Merriman to Orpen, tel., 28 Dec. '77.

73. Molteno Papers, No. 796: Molteno to Merriman, 28 Dec. '77.

74. C.2079, Encl. No. 86: Proclamation on Martial Law, 1 Jan. '78. For the controversy over Martial Law, see C.2144, Encls. No. 69.

75. Molteno Papers, No. 862: J.A. De Wet (M.L.A. Somerset East) to Colonial Secretary, tel., 1 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

have his way, announced on 11th that the Colony would undertake a separate military campaign within the Ciskei.⁷⁶

Griffith was appointed Commandant-General of all Colonial troops and thus two separate military establishments, including two competing commissariates, came into being. Merriman henceforth issued all orders for colonial troops on his own authority as a sort of Minister of War, while Bellairs, with Cunynghame in the Transkei, issued orders for the Imperial campaign in the Colony. Cunynghame had intended to first attack the Gcaleka in the Tyityaba Valley before turning in a combined operation on the Ngqika in the Kubusi area.^{76a} Merriman and Molteno frustrated this plan by embarking on an immediate and independent campaign against the Ngqika. Briefly put, the Colonial campaign involved a sweep by Commandant John Frost moving from the Amatolas in conjunction with forces at Stutterheim, Bolo Drift and Draaibosch, to the Kubusi and Kei Rivers. The Imperial forces went ahead with the original plan; under Colonel Lambert of 88th they were to sweep the Tyityaba Valley.⁷⁷ Frere was later to claim, with more than a measure of truth, that the Ngqika had been prematurely pushed into active revolt by a Colonial Campaign that was unable to deal with the situation it created.⁷⁸

The Imperial campaign began on 14th January. On the previous day, Khiva, who had moved down the Kubusi River with Sandile, went on ahead and crossed the Kei in an attempt to keep communication open between the Tyityaba and Transkei, that is between the Ngqika and Gcaleka.⁷⁹

76. Lewsen, *Selections 1870-90*, p.35, footnote 25.

76a. C.2079, No. 42: Frere to Carnarvon, 24 Jan. '78.

77. Ibid., A.54-'78, p.79: Merriman to Frost, tel. 11 Jan. '78.

78. C.2079, No. 84: Frere to Carnarvon, 20 Feb. '78.

79. C.2079, Encl. 84: Ayliff to Frere, 15 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Maphasa was stationed with Captain Robinson F.A.M.P. Artillery at Ebb and Flow Drift and although Khiva eluded them, Robinson was able to report his move to Major Owen, the Commander of Glyn's right column who was encamped at the Nyumaxa River, four miles south west of Quintana Mountain. Glyn was stationed there and was able to reinforce Owen in time for the engagement. This was strangely like the second battle of Quintana (called the Battle of Kentani) on 7th February, only it was on a smaller scale. Veldtman's Mfengu used the same tactic as was to be used then of retiring and drawing the Gcaleka on to the rest of the force. Owen and Glyn, although greatly outnumbered, were so carefully deployed that they beat off the Gcaleka after two hours of heavy fighting. The Gcaleka lost about 150 men with 200 wounded.⁸⁰

After the battle, Glyn's column co-operated in Lambert's operations in the Tyityaba, which had begun early the same day. Lambert and Moore had a total of 400 white troops and 1000 Mfengu deployed in two columns. On the 15th they were joined by Brabant and his East London Volunteers.⁸¹ Although 12000 cattle and 8000 sheep were captured,⁸² indicating that the valley had been used as a place of concealment for the herds of the Gcaleka and Ngqika, most of the blacks managed to escape the forces of the whites. Many including Makinana, eluded Maphasa and the people who were still guarding the drifts, and passed into Gcalekaland.⁸³

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80. Cory Library, MS. 254/13: Burton, ii, 74. Theal, X, 185, gives the casualties as only 50 Gcaleka killed.
81. C.2079, Encl. No. 25: Bellairs to Sec. of State for War, 16 Jan. '78. Cunynghame, pp.359-60.
82. C.2079, Encl. No. 32: Bellairs to Cunynghame, 22 Jan. '78.
83. Cape Archives, Accession 459(1): The Life of Sir E.Y. Brabant, typescript, p.62. Merriman transferred some badly needed Mfengu Levies from Lambert's command to Griffiths just before the campaign started, so it is not surprising relations between the imperial and colonial troops plummeted to a new low point.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Frost's campaign was superficially successful, but in reality had grave shortcomings which Frere pointed out.⁸⁴ Firstly, Frost may have 'cleared' the Ngqika location, but he did not manage to engage his opponents to any significant degree, and they simply melted away and regrouped on the periphery. Most ended up on the Thomas River, which Frost 'cleared' in a second sweep starting on 25th,⁸⁵ but the Ngqika were still in the vicinity to encourage and receive the Tshatshu Thembu in their resistance of a colonial attack at the end of the month.⁸⁶ Thereafter many sought refuge temporarily in Anta's Location, before crossing the Kei and joining the Gcaleka at the beginning of February.⁸⁷

Secondly, the same scorched earth type of campaign as had been pursued in Gcalekaland, brought inevitable complications. The Colonial Mfengu levies which had been raised since the end of December, were involved in several incidents and continued to provoke other blacks,⁸⁸ while colonists were involved in the usual excesses. Merriman did try to exercise some sort of control,⁸⁹ but his Commandants demanded freedom of action. Frost swept aside Wright's efforts to stop the burning of huts of loyal Ngqika and angrily wrote to Merriman:

84. C.2079, No. 84: Frere to Carnaryon, 20 Feb. '78. Frere says he pointed out all these shortcomings at the time.

85. G.G.R. 46: Merriman Memo., n.d. (c. end of January).

86. See below, pp.196-8.

87. See below, p.198.

88. There were rumours amongst the Rharhabe of a concerted rising arranged by Sarhili against the Mfengu: G.G.R. 3: Statement of Frans to R. de la Tour Lonsdale n.d. (c. early Jan.)

89. Merriman telegraphed Schermbrucker on 18th January about complaints that had been made of him burning huts of non-combatants round Isidenge.
A.54-'78, p.29: Merriman to Schermbrucker, tel., 18 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Only this morning received telegram from Wright which states that Government do not wish me to destroy huts in Quand and Bolo, this I have already done. I shall burn Sandilli's huts about there tomorrow. My instructions are to clear the country. Women must be ordered out or they will get shot. I must not now be hampered.⁹⁰

What with the destruction of their homes and the seizure of food supplies there, the capture of the bulk of their cattle and the continuing drought, famine was becoming a distinct possibility for the blacks. On 27 January, Deputy Commissary-General Strickland reported to Cunynghame that it would be absolutely necessary to feed the starving blacks, not only women and children, but also the men. The Imperial Commissariat was already feeding Gcaleka and now officers had begun asking for instructions on Ngqika who were flocking around posts asking for food. He estimated that half the total population of Gcaleka and Ngqika could have to be fed for 3 months at a cost in excess of £70,000.⁹¹ Cunynghame agreed to this, but when Frere referred to his Ministers on 29th January,⁹² the Imperial-Colonial quarrel broke out again. The Ministry was determined to crush the Rebellion as swiftly as possible by the traditional colonial methods of warfare. Merriman argued that the relief of any distress was a colonial matter which the military were not called to deal with. Since women and children were acting as a commissariat for their men, and since several Ngqika killed in skirmishes were found to be 'loyals', any relief provided would merely prolong the

90. A.54-'78, p.46: Frost to Merriman, tel., 27 Jan. '78.

91. G.G.R. 3, E.H. 2.770, Correspondence re. natives and approaching famine: Strickland to Cunynghame, 27 Jan. '78.
Strickland to Cunynghame, 27 Jan. '78.

92. Ibid., Minutes by Cunynghame, Frere, 29 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

war indefinitely. The only relief that the Ministry was prepared to offer therefore was employment for all able bodied men, women and children on the Public Works; arrangements for this had already been made. The Ministry ordered 2000 tons of grain from Buenos Aires as emergency relief, but were not prepared to do more without the sanction of Parliament.⁹³

Finally, the separate commands exacerbated the jealousy between the Imperial and Colonial troops. Cunynghame might well have been intolerable in the Council,⁹⁴ some of Molteno and Merriman's criticisms of Imperial Troops were justified,⁹⁵ but the Imperial troops certainly had distinct advantages in a Civil War situation.⁹⁶ The disastrous Gungubele campaign which extended the Colonial Civil War, enabled Frere to dismiss the Ministry on the grounds of their military policy, although as Lewsen and Gruber have shown, he was really motivated by the Ministry's refusal to co-operate in his confederal schemes.⁹⁷

93. G.G.R. 3, E.H. 2.770, Correspondence etc: Merriman minute for Frere, 30 Jan. '78.

94. See above, p.139.

95. Cunynghame's allowing Khiva to pass through to the Ngqika Location, and the unnecessary abandonment of Mpethu by Lambert after Forts von Linsingen and Warwick had been relieved early in January (see pp.145,146 above respectively) spring to mind.

96. See above, pp.114-5. What Frere had pointed out in early October was borne out by events - one has only to look at the effects of the presence and often undisciplined behaviour of colonial troops in the Maphasa/Makinana affair, the Colonial campaign and the Tini and Gungubele campaigns to see the justness of Frere's arguments.

97. The best discussion of the Constitutional Crisis that resulted in the fall of the Molteno Ministry and its replacement by the Sprigg Ministry in February 1878, is still to be found in P. Lewsen: The first crisis in Responsible Government in the Cape Colony (Archives Year Book, II, 1942). Gruber, op.cit., follows Lewsen closely.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

6. The Battle of Kentani

Stanford, whose intelligence usually proved reliable and invaluable to the whites, reported at the end of the Ciskeian operations, that Sarhili had summoned all his men back to Gcalekaland and that they were returning fast from their places of refuge, some of which were in Gcalekaland.⁹⁸ Soga confirms Stanford's report.⁹⁹ Glyn too, who had noticed Gcaleka crossing the Qora on the way to the Kei, had heard that

Kreli has sent fresh messages to Sandile and
said rather than fall into the hands of
Government he would prefer death like his
father Hintza.¹⁰⁰

Melane actually relates a discussion between Sarhili and Sandile before the battle of Kentani at a place called Nyumaxa which is particularly interesting in the light of the two chiefs' behaviour after the battle.¹⁰¹ Sandile proposed that the Gcaleka and Ngqika should fight to the last man since the English could never be trusted even when they spoke of peace - his life's experience of the English, he said, bore witness to this.¹⁰² Sarhili agreed on this point and said he would never 'speak' to the English again. Nevertheless, he was dubious of a fight to the last: one could not kill the English since they seemed to have an endless stream of reinforcements. In the end, though, Sandile convinced him to make a last stand with him and they chose the camp at Kentani as their target.

98. G.H. 21/7: Native Resident Magistrate's file: Stanford to Deputy Adjutant-General, 26 Jan. '78.

99. Soga, S.E. Bantu, pp.264-5.

100. G.H. 21/7, Glyn file: Glyn to Cunynghame, tel., 28 Jan. '78.

101. Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.

102. The most notorious was his imprisonment under false pretext during the War of the Axe.
C.2220, Encl. No. 3: Brownlee Memo. on Sandile, n.d.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

That the decision to fight the battle was an act of desperation seems clear. Gcaleka experience at Ibeka and recently at Quintana was not such as to recommend the strategy of a direct attack on a fortified position.¹⁰³ Maphasa reported on 5 February that a major attack for the purpose of getting ammunition was imminent, and his report was only the confirmation of many signs.¹⁰⁴ With forewarning Glyn was able to strengthen both Ibeka and Capt. Upcher's camp at Quintana, where Upcher had a total of 436 white officers and men, 560 Mfengu levies under Veldtman and Smith Poswa as well as the support of Maphasa's people under Xhoxho.¹⁰⁵

Tradition has it that Ngxito with Sigcawu and Khiva advised Sarhili that the best strategy would be to make an early morning dash to overwhelm the post and thereby obtain the crucial ammunition and food.¹⁰⁶ At any rate Ngxito doctored the Gcaleka army of some 3-4000 men and gave them the usual charms.¹⁰⁷

Early on the morning of 7th February, the Ngqika under Khiva and Sandile advanced on the camp from the Kei, while the Gcaleka army

103. Frere to Carnarvon, 17 Feb. '78, P.R.O. C.O. 879/13, confidential Print African, 150, quoted in C. Saunders: "The 100 years war: Some reflections on African Resistance on the Cape Eastern Frontier" (Unpublished paper in Jagger Library, University of Cape Town), p. 19. Frere had said of Kentani that the battle had demonstrated not only the superior fire power of the whites, but the fatal error of the "new" tactic of the blacks in attacking the whites in the open in mass formation.

104. G.H. 21/7, Glyn file: Glyn to Cunynghame, tel., 5 Feb. '78.

105. C.2079, Encl. 1 No. 81: Glyn to Deputy Adjutant-General, 12 Feb. '78. C.2079, Encl. 1B No. 81: Upcher to Glyn, 8 Feb. '78.

106. Cory Library, MS. 14,254/13: Burton, iv, v

107. Theal, X, 93.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

approached from the sea under Dalasile, son of Gxaba, chief of the Velelo clan.¹⁰⁸ Together the two forces numbered some 5000 men.¹⁰⁹

It seems the attack was to have been a combined one but Sandile had been followed from the Kei by Maphasa who took up a position on a hill above him. So Sandile sent a message to Sarhili saying he was unable to attack with Maphasa threatening his flank.¹¹⁰

Therefore the Gcaleka advanced alone. As at the first battle of Quintana they were lured on to the awaiting artillery and rifles of the whites by a company of 1/24th and Carrington's Horse. The Gcaleka advanced bravely under a withering fire of nine pound and seven pound guns, rocket tubes and Martini-Henry's, but gave way after 20 minutes, whereupon, according to order, the Mfengu under Veldtman pursued and harried them. Veldtman drove some Gcaleka as far as the Qolora killing 54, while Carrington's Horse pursued others up the Mnyameni.

In the meantime Sandili's force advanced, but were attacked both from the front and by Xhoxho in the rear. Regrouping briefly on a nearby conical hill, the Ngqika were scattered by the white artillery.

108. Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.265.

C.2079, Encl. 1B No. 81: Upcher to Glyn, 8 Feb. '78.

109. C.2079, Encl. 1 No. 81: Glyn to Deputy Adjutant-General, 12 Feb.'78.

110. Soga, S.E. Bantu, p.265.

Melane related that Sandile had suggested attacking Maphasa, but Sarhili (curiously, but perhaps typically) had refused to exact revenge on him for his treachery. Now the Ngqika were seriously embarrassed by Maphasa in their rear, particularly since, being jealous of Khiva's prowess, they had been anxious to prove themselves.

Interview with Mr N.C. Melane, Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District, 14 Sept. 1977.

Theal relates another version. He says the Ngqika were in favour of a raid on Fingoland for booty, and when Sarhili would not agree, resolved to let the Gcaleka take the lead in the attack and watch the result.

Theal, X, 93.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

The whole action was over by midday, having cost the Gcaleka and Ngqika forces a staggering three to four hundred killed. White and Mfengu casualties were two Mfengu killed, seven wounded and two whites wounded. The enormous difference in casualties between the two sides was, as usual, not due to want of valour, but rather to the inferior arms of the blacks and their inability to use them with any effect.¹¹¹

The battle made a deep impression on the Gcaleka and confirmed Sarhili's belief in the pointlessness of continuing the armed struggle. To all intents and purposes therefore, the Transkeian campaign ended with the battle, and although a few armed bands continued to wander in Gcalekaland, they all, save for Khiva who maintained his reputation, offered little resistance.¹¹² After the battle, Sarhili made for his headquarters on the Qora River where he was joined by Khiva. Ngxito travelled with them, but was reported shortly after to be seriously ill in Pondoland. Makinana fled to Bomvanaland: he appears to have been a coward for he was described by blacks as a good runner.¹¹³ Ngubo was arrested by Nqwiliso in early May and was sent to Robben Island as a state Prisoner, being released in 1888 under Sprigg's amnesty.¹¹⁴

But when active resistance on the part of the Gcaleka ended, passive resistance to colonial rule began. The great majority refused to surrender to Eustace who established himself at Ibeka as the

111. C.2079, Encl. 1B No. 81, Upcher to Glyn, 8 Feb. '78.
Soga, S.E. Bantu, pp.365-6.
Theal, X, 93-5.

112. Khiva and three of his younger brothers were killed on March 15 by Pattle and his Mfengu. Cory Library, MS. 14,254/13: Burton, iii, 103.

113. Soga, S.E. Bantu, pp.365-6.
Cory Library, NS. 14,254/13: Burton, ii, 78.

114. N.A. 44: Scott to S.N.A., 9 May, '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

representative of Government authority. They declined to enter Gcalekaland and settle until peace was proclaimed. Some sought refuge with other chiefdoms, others wandered around in small armed bands necessitating the continued military occupation of Gcalekaland. They all refused to take advantage of the Public Works, preferring to alleviate their own distress by offering their services in helping neighbouring chiefdoms collect their harvest, or in the case of women, even going to the extent of entering domestic service under the Mfengu. Those who found no work lived by thieving.¹¹⁵

Sarhili made several more attempts to arrange terms for surrender: he sent to E.J. Warner in April to ask him what to do as he wished to give himself up as long as he was granted his life and liberty.¹¹⁶ He also sent to West Fynn twice to ask to see him about surrendering, but West Fynn was out of favour, and William Ayliff, the new secretary for Native Affairs, decided that Sarhili must deal directly with Eustace. Fynn disregarded orders and arranged to see Sarhili, but as he subsequently learnt, Inspector Hook of the F.A.M.P. learnt of the attempt, and attracted by the reward of £1000 for Sarhili, tried to capture him and so frightened him away.¹¹⁷

Moving through Bomvanaland where Moni had accepted British rule

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115. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 26 April '78.
 N.A. 1: Memo on letter of Chief Magistrate of Fingoland regarding occupation of Gcalekaland, n.d., 31 May '78.
 N.A. 44: Scott to S.N.A., 14 June '78.
 N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 18 June '78.
116. N.A. 400: E.J. Warner to W. Ayliff, 27 April '78.
117. Cory Library, MS. 2016: West Fynn to Cory, 1 Aug. 1920. Fynn, p.21.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

under pressure in January,¹¹⁸ Sarhili sought shelter with Gwadiso. But in September Nqwiliso reported his presence and that of three of his sons and he narrowly escaped the attempt to capture him. This was largely because Gwadiso persuaded a troop of the Cape Mounted Rifles (as the F.A.M.P. were now known) to place themselves in a position where they were safely out of the way, while he feigned an attack on Sarhili and allowed him to escape.¹¹⁹

7. Desperate black resistance and the war of attrition

The Ngqika, although from the start weaker militarily than the Gcaleka,¹²⁰ were roughly in the same situation as the Gcaleka had been in November the previous year. They were not totally defeated and had many potential Xhosa allies in the Colony who were hostile to colonial rule, sympathetic to their cause and in a desperate economic situation.

118. Elliot, instructed by Frere and Cunynghame announced to Moni on 17 Jan., that the Government found it necessary to occupy Bomvanaland militarily for the duration of the war, and 'suggested' that he might like to accept British rule.

F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, pp.34-5. Elliot himself encouraged the Government to press the issue. He wrote to Cunynghame on 2 January:

The Govt. [sic] in my humble opinion should be very firm with Fynn and Moni otherwise our efforts will be fruitless. (G.H. 21/6: Elliot to Cunynghame, 2 Jan. '78)

Brownlee had contemplated extending British rule over Bomvanaland at the same time as over Thembuland, and it was W.R.D. Fynn who pointed out that Brownlee himself had recognised Moni as Sarhili's subject, and that such a step, which he considered undesirable anyway, would need Sarhili's permission. See above, p.36, footnote 53.

119. N.A. 44: Elliot to S.N.A., 19 Sept. '78.

120. Whereas the Gcaleka probably marshalled 9-10,000 at their peak during the early stages of the war, Sandile does not seem to have been able to raise half that number even when supported by the other Rharhabe peoples. See figures quoted above pp.54, footnote 142, 74, footnote 34,

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

The Ngqika's own country was devastated and militarily occupied, and there was no prospect of any terms except total surrender.¹²¹ Sandile therefore determined to carry on the struggle after Kentani. He appealed to the other Rharhabe peoples to join him and worked his way to join his sons Mathanzima and Gonya who had been operating in the North East since the outbreak of the Civil War.¹²² There on 22 February his sons and Gungubele were involved in a major action with Griffith's Field Force at Bacela's Kraal at the junction of the Swart and Wit Kei Rivers. Like the engagements in early February between the Colonial Thembu and Griffith's force, it was a disaster for the blacks, and they lost 128 of their force of 1000.¹²³

After the fight, Griffith's force, reinforced from King William's Town by Colonial Troops, attempted to surround Sandile and the Ngqika. They attacked on 8th March, killing 70 Ngqika and capturing 1200 cattle. But Sandile with 800 followers, managed to slip between two columns and entered the Perie Bush between Keiskammahoek and Izeli.¹²⁴ This mountainous area of about 286 square miles, broken up by boulders and ravines, and covered by dense bush, was traversed by only two passable roads 17 miles apart, one leading from Izeli to Stutterheim via Frankfort Hill, the other from Bailies Post to Keiskamma Hoek.¹²⁵ The Perie Bush was therefore absolutely ideal for guerrilla tactics, and

121. See below, p.179.

122. Cory Library, MS. 14,254/13: Burton, ii, 96-9.

123. C.2100, Encls No. 9: Reports by Captain Harvey and Captain Nettleton, 25 Feb. '78.

124. C.2100, Encl. No. 43: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 12 March '78. W.C.F. Molyneux: Campaigning in South Africa and Egypt (London, 1896), p.51.

125. C.2144, Encl. 1, No. 126: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 26 June '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Sandile who well knew this, having never left the area during the 8th Frontier War,¹²⁶ obviously determined to conduct a war of resistance from there.

While the nature of the war was in the process of changing, the command of the white troops changed too and reinforcements arrived. Cunynghame was replaced, as the Duke of Cambridge explained to him at the end of January, because of the 'want of cordiality' between him and the Molteno Ministry, though what he did not explain was that even Frere found Cunynghame a liability both militarily and politically.¹²⁷ Lietu-General F.A. Thesiger, later Lord Chelmsford of Zulu war fame, formally took over the command on 4th March.¹²⁸ Frere left the frontier soon after Cunynghame, to return to Cape Town where the Parliamentary session, delayed by events, was imminent.¹²⁹ Soon after Thesiger's arrival, 450 men of 90th Regiment, 112 of the Royal Artillery and the second battalion of the 24th Regiment arrived in King William's Town, while 100 men of 88th returned to Cape Town.¹³⁰

Thesiger immediately set about constructing two east-west roads in the Perie Bush, one from Isidenge to Mount Kempt and another from Bailie's Post to the Gozo Heights. Between 11th and 17th March, he arranged a series of pickets around the whole area to try and hem Sandile's men in. He had a force of 555 infantry, 1185 mounted troops and 1159 Mfengu (2900 in total) but, since Sandile's force was constantly being augmented

126. C. Hummel (ed.): The Journal of Major John North Cradock (unp. typescript), p.44.

127. G.H. 21/5: Duke of Cambridge to Cunynghame, 29 Jan. '78. Gruber, p.286.

128. C.2100, Encl. No. 56: General Order signed by Cunynghame, 4 March '78.

129. Theal, X, 107-8.

130. A.24-'78, p.27: Cunynghame to Frere, 11 Feb. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

from the Ciskei, Sandile having between 2-4000 men, Thesiger's force was inadequate for the job which he set himself. This was particularly true of Mfengu levies who were the only troops who could or were prepared really to get to grips with the Nqika in such terrain. Thus the operations Thesiger conducted from 18th March to 5th April, produced few results.¹³¹ Thesiger also had difficulty welding the Colonial and Imperial troops together into an effective whole: when Brabant for example, disobeyed orders on 18th by leaving his post to capture a herd of Ngqika cattle, he ruined the combined movement arranged for that day: on the other hand, Commandants Meurant and Schermbrucker who later obeyed orders, sat and watched 2000 Ngqika and their cattle pass below them.¹³²

Just when the rebel's cause seems to have been most hopeless, Sandile's calls for aid seemed to have finally persuaded some of the Rharhabe chiefs to join the revolt against colonial rule. In recent weeks they had been alarmed by the activities of the Mfengu and the expedition which the colony had launched against Tini Maqomo. Tini had escaped a bush campaign in which there were many irregularities to eventually join the Rharhabe forces at the Intaba kaNdoda.¹³³ On 28th March Commandant Von Linsingen with three hundred volunteers and six hundred Mfengu were despatched to the Chalumba area, east of the lower Keiskamma to deal with the Gqunukhwebe who had risen under Delima, son of Phato. The Peddie Mfengu lined the Keiskamma to prevent the Gqunukhwebe escaping to the Fish. On 31st March and 1st April,

131. C.2144, Encl. No. 20: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 25 March '78.
C.2144, Encl. 1 No. 126: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War,
26 June '78.

132. Graham's Town Journal, 20 March '78.

133. See below, pp.210-211.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

engagements were fought in which 3000 cattle were captured and 30 Gqunukwhebe killed.¹³⁴

At the same time the Mqhayi under Jali and the Mdushane under Seyolo rose.¹³⁵ On 3 April pursuing Government instructions to find out whether Seyolo was a rebel, Von Linsingen together with Rev. Nauhaus, Siwani's missionary, tried to interview Seyolo. Von Linsingen succeeded only in talking with Mjesu, Seyolo's son, who, when asked why he was in arms against the Government, replied "because you are in arms against me, and I intend to defend the army."¹³⁶ He and Seyolo managed to give Von Linsingen the slip and headed for the Perie Bush, but they were confronted on 5th April by Warren and the Diamond Field Horse at Debe Nek. In the engagement that followed, Seyolo lost at least 58 of his 1200 men, including Mjesu and another of his sons. The following day he and the Mqhayi and other forces in the area lost a further 78 men. Seyolo, a warrior renowned for his bravery from the days of the 8th Frontier war, was particularly conspicuous in repulsing two Mfengu attacks on 6th.¹³⁷ On 7th Jali was killed.¹³⁸

On 15th April Kama's people were disarmed after some had joined the rebels in burning Mfengu huts, but the Graham's Town Journal¹³⁹ reported that they had been seriously provoked by the Mfengu and colonial troops.

134. C.2100, Encl. No. 71: Precis of operations by Capt. H. Spalding 3 April '78. Theal, X, 125.
135. Ibid.
136. Kaffrarian Watchman, 15 April: "The Affair of Seyolo".
137. C.2144, Encl. No. 29: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 10 April '78. C.2144, Encl. 1 No.126: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 26 June '78. Theal, X, 126-7. Hummel, pp.76-8.
138. F. Streatfeild Reminiscences of an Old 'Un (London, 1911), pp.192-3.
139. Graham's Town Journal, 4, 19 June '78. Hummel, p.63. Theal, X, 126-7.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

Kama, who had protested at the disarmament, was offered a place on Thesiger's staff if he would raise a levy, but he declined the offer. Many of his followers and those of the aged Toyise who died on March 30th were known to have joined the rebels in the Peri (though Theal states that Toyise's people went into customary mourning and so were prevented from joining in, though they would probably have stayed out anyway).

Oba who had been summoned again by Sandile was expected to lead the Mbalu, the Mdange (two small Rharhabe fragments which had almost been destroyed by the cattle killing)¹⁴⁰, as well as his own followers and those of Kama. Having great difficulty in restraining the young men, he devised the plan of surrendering himself to Nightingale, after which Nightingale called on his followers to surrender their arms.¹⁴¹ Just under a third of Oba's followers refused to obey Nightingale and joined Sandile in the Perie, including Oba's brother Kokwe¹⁴² who had remarked to Theal in January that if Sandile had gone into the Perie other Ngqika would join him.¹⁴³ Theal settled with Oba and his followers at Calderwood where they were presented to Frere on his way to Cape Town. Thereafter Theal was appointed to oversee the employment of native labour in the Western Cape and Oba was housed in a military

140. Brownlee, Reminiscences, p.179. The Mdange of Peelson Mission and the Ntinde of Berlin, both professed to be 'loyal'. Theal, X, 125-7.

141. N.A. 400: Nightingale to S.N.A., 24 May '78. Cape Argus, 13 April '78, Telegrams.

142. Cape Argus, 18 April '78, Telegrams. Theal's contention that not a drop of blood was spilt by Oba's people (x, 80) is incorrect.

143. G.G.R. 3: Lonsdale to Merriman, 28 Jan. '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

barrack in Wynberg.¹⁴⁴ There is an interesting postscript to the story of his farms.¹⁴⁵

While Ciskeian blacks streamed to support Sandile, Thesiger's campaign ran into several problems. Sprigg had ordered Mfengu reinforcements from the Transkei on 21 March. But the Transkei Mfengu who had prospered in the war, felt they had done their fair share whilst not always receiving adequate compensation. They therefore at first refused to come, and agreed only when James Ayliff personally exerted pressure on them and accompanied them to the scene of operations. When they arrived, they contributed to the failure of Thesiger's grand sweep of the Perie Bush on 5th April by their half-hearted scouring and waste of ammunition, and Thesiger was forced to send them home.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, most of the colonists elected to return home since their three month tour of duty was completed.¹⁴⁷ Thesiger therefore had a chance to reassess his tactics both in the light of his previous operations and in the light of Government policy.

144. Theal, X, 80, 107.

145. In May, the owners who had only been paid £2100 out of £3,300 purchase price, attached the farms. Nightingale, who was at sea on his way to England on leave, wrote to W. Ayliff to protest and urged that Government should recognise Oba's service. He, like Hemming in the case of the farm Gungubele purchased, complained that the price charged was outrageously high. Although the Sprigg Ministry allowed the farms to be sold, they seem to have accepted Nightingale's argument, for after the war, Oba was granted the farm Aberdeen in the Victoria East district in recognition of his services. However the several hundred families of his followers were, like all other "loyals", relocated across the Kei in the new district of Kentani.

146. C.2144, Encl. No. 29: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 10 April '78. On 5th April, 1000 Transkeian Mfengu were issued with 60 rounds each, which they totally expended in killing 10 Ngqika! Molyneux, p.64.

147. C.2144, Encl. 1 No. 126: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 26 June '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

There was a feeling amongst some in the Cape in which The Cape Argus took the lead, that the war was developing unnecessarily into a war of attrition and that an amnesty should be proclaimed to end a war which did not need to continue. The Cape Argus in March and April in calling for an amnesty argued that the colony had made its point and was not interested in indiscriminate slaughter.¹⁴⁸ But Sprigg had come into office promising a 'firm' native policy that looked to the complete subjugation of the blacks.¹⁴⁹ He therefore refused to entertain pleas for amnesty and was only willing to grant Sandile terms of unconditional surrender. When Sandile, whose forces suffered terribly during Thesiger's second campaign, sent to Brownlee on 15th May to ask what terms he might have, Brownlee replied that the Government's terms were unconditional surrender because

Government is determined to adopt new measures with you, and prevent your chiefs from making any more war.¹⁵⁰

Sprigg's policy only served to force the black population into more desperate resistance: not only had many Rharhabe chiefs joined Sandile, but there is evidence that many "loyal" Ngqika and school blacks provided clandestine aid to the rebels.¹⁵¹ Then the women and

148. The Cape Argus, lead article, 13 March, 13 April '78.

149. See his statement of policy quoted on p.215, below.

150. Brownlee, quoted in The Cape Argus, 16 May '78, Telegrams.

151. C.2144, Encl. A No. 55: Wood to Deputy Adjutant-General, 18 May '78. Hummel, pp.69, 89. Despite Ross's protests, the men of Perie Mission were convicted on several occasions of aiding the Ngqika rebels. The black clerks at the Alice Telegraph office were involved in several incidents in which they were suspected of betraying information. Molyneux, p.75 cites the example of messages routed through Lovedale being passed on to the Ngqika. Streatfeild: Reminiscences, p.187-8 refers to similar incidents.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

children acted as a commissariat force for the rebels and often obtained food from Imperial camps which they then passed on to the soldiers as well, it seems, or intelligence that they had gleaned there.¹⁵² Though there were many applications in the Colony for labour under Ayliff's notice of 25 February 1878,¹⁵³ the blacks not involved in the war evinced no desire to go and work for the whites, particularly when this meant moving far from home. They therefore remained in areas where they were subject to the pressures which had driven so many of their compatriots into rebellion.¹⁵⁴

Thus, in order to crush the hostile black population, Thesiger and the Ministry decided to adopt tactics similar to those employed in the Second Anglo-Boer War. Captured women and children were sent to the Western Cape for indenture as labourers.¹⁵⁵ The scorched earth type campaign had already devastated the territory of many of the Ciskeian blacks and they had been driven into an inaccessible area from which they conducted a guerilla war of resistance. Thesiger elaborated his system of co-ordinated sweeps. He divided the Perie Bush area into

152. C.2144, No. 21: Frere to Hicks-Beach, 16 April '78.

153. See below, p.216, for details.

154. Oba's followers are a prime example. Theal struggled in vain to persuade them to go to the Public Works or to the Western Province to alleviate their misery. In this way, the Ciskeians were similar to the Gcaleka. A.31-'78, pp.1-37.

155. Theal, X, 123-5.

Theal relates the fate of the just under 4000 women and children sent to the Western Cape. After entering service in the Western Province, most deserted as soon as the winter was over, and walked back to the frontier, where, many of them widowed, they either journeyed on to Kentani, or entered service, or attached themselves to Ngqika clans. In 1879 those remaining in the Western Cape were sent back by the Government.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE KHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

11 districts, each under its own commandant and garrison. These had to sweep each district in a co-ordinated movement allowing for the immediate reinforcement by neighbouring forces of any garrison that made contact with the enemy. In each sweep, troops were to be stationed to prevent escape and Mfengu levies were to be used to harry the blacks and capture their food supplies and cattle.¹⁵⁶

The bitterness of the struggle that ensued may be gauged from the fact that in drives from 30th April to 8th May, 328 bodies were counted. The Ngqika resolutely refused to surrender. But, deprived of food and chased continually, the Ngqika and their allies began leaving the forests in small parties. These were, however, attacked as they emerged from the bush, and a further 169 were killed in this way up to 28th March.¹⁵⁷ Seyolo and Tini abandoned Sandile at this time, Seyolo joining Delima in the Fish River Bush, and Tini returning to his old haunts in the Schelmkloof. It was reported that the chiefs had quarreled over Sandile's leadership and that he had become capable of any action at all owing to his drunkenness.¹⁵⁸ Tradition denies that this is true and has it that Sandile abandoned drink at the start of the rebellion and was a determined leader throughout the war.¹⁵⁹

Nevertheless, it seems likely that as prisoners reported, the morale of

156. C.2144, Encl. No. 11: Spalding's Diary for Frere, 17 April '78. Theal, X, 128-9.

157. Theal, X, 129.

158. C.2144, Encl. 1 No. 126: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 26 June '78.

The Cape Argus, 16 May '78, Telegrams.

The Cape Argus, 2 Nov. '78, Evidence at the trial of Edmund and Bisset Sandile.

159. Theal, X, 87 asserts that the war led to a 'complete change' in the character of Sandile - he became sober and determined. Informants generally bear out this view.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

the rebels was low, and that they were suffering from a desperate shortage of food, so that Tini and Seyolo had reason enough to abandon the Perie, without taking into account any quarrel with Sandile.

The Cape Argus continued to call for an amnesty, asserting that the war was dragging on unnecessarily and criticising Thesiger's campaigns. It said that the Imperial troops were slow and cumbrous and the colonial troops were no longer composed of patriots but of idlers and profiteers who benefitted from the continuation of the war. It drew attention to the open supplying even of munitions of Sandile from King William's Town and had hard words for the frontier shop keepers who were turning such a good profit from the war.¹⁶⁰

But, on 29th May, Sandile was shot alongside his able marksman, Dukwana, by an Mfengu patrol and what little spirit was left amongst the rebels promptly deserted them. Even Theal refers to the last weeks of the campaign as a sordid period when the confused and leaderless rebels were rooted out and shot like jackals by colonists impatient to return to their homes.¹⁶¹ Sandile had been on his way to join Gonya and Mathanzima who had again returned to the Thomas River.¹⁶² The latter two, after trying to make terms with T. Liefeldt, their old magistrate, were captured hiding at Stokwe Ndlela's Kraal on 30th June.¹⁶³ Tini Maqomo was taken prisoner in the Schelmkloof, where Oba's brother Kokwe and Tini's brother Ngaha were killed.¹⁶⁴ Ndimba

160. The Cape Argus, lead article, 16 May '78.

161. Theal, X, 133.

162. C.2220, Encl. No. 3: Brownlee Memo., n.d.

163. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 1 July '78.

164. C.2144, Encl. 1 No. 77: Thesiger to Frere, 2 June '78.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

surrendered on 11th June at Komgha.¹⁶⁵ Seyolo, the valiant old warrior whose blanket was reputed to be full of holes, was shot near the Fish River in early June.¹⁶⁶ Anta died a natural death on 10th June.¹⁶⁷ Only Delima and a few fragmentary forces remained to engage in desultory skirmishing, but he too surrendered on 30th July.¹⁶⁸

With the war so obviously at an end, there were renewed calls for an amnesty. Mr George Blaine M.L.A. for King William's Town, urged on 25th June that an amnesty be proclaimed, arguing that while he had lost more property and friends than almost all other Members of the Assembly, he felt that further prosecution of the war would be gratuitous and inhumane. He pointed out too, that there had been no wholesale massacres during the war as in previous wars, that almost all farmers were warned by their servants of impending danger, and that those left at the mercy of the rebels had almost without exception been left alone.¹⁶⁹ Sprigg responded by proclaiming an amnesty on 30 June for all involved in the rebellion save prominent chiefs, headmen and councillors and any men involved in murder cases.^{170.}

165. C.2144, Encl. 2 No. 99: Summary of Events by Capt. Spalding, 12 June '78.

166. C.2144, Encl. 1 No. 110: Thesiger to Sec. of State for War, 18 June '78.

167. C.2144, Encl. 2 No. 99: Summary of Events by Capt. Spalding, 12 June '78.

168. The Cape Argus, Summary for the Year 1878.

169. Cory Library, PR. 1234: Question by Mr George Blaine, Sr., H.A., to Colonial Secretary re. granting amnesty to native rebels, 25 June 1878.

170. Cory Library, MS. 14, 254/13: Burton, iv, Appendix IV.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

8. The Aftermath

Tini, Gungubele, Sitokhwe Tyhali and Mfanta were all tried for High Treason in July in accordance with the Ministry's intention of making examples of the leaders, but a popular revulsion of feeling of the first two made it expedient for Sprigg to ask Frere to commute the death sentences imposed.¹⁷¹ When therefore Sandili's four sons, Gonya, Mathanzima, Gumna and Mlindazwe, and Ndimba were tried on 23 October before Sir J.D. Barry in King William's Town, they were only charged with the lesser crime of sedition.¹⁷² Mathanzima openly acknowledged his guilt, if, as he said, it was guilt to follow his father. He was sentenced to twenty years penal servitude.¹⁷² Gonya claimed that he had joined his father to persuade him to surrender, but evidence was led that while pursuing a non-combatant role, he had increasingly taken over the reins of power as the demoralised Sandile turned in desperation to drink. Consequently he was sentenced to penal servitude for life. Gumna received a lighter sentence of 15 years and Ndimba one of only 6 months because it seemed clear that he had been the victim of circumstance, had never personally been engaged in the military activities of the rebels and had done his best to protect the property and life of Macdonald, the Draaibosch hotel owner. Mlindazwe was discharged for lack of evidence.

The official casualty figures give no real indication of the cost in human lives of the war. The blacks were reported as having lost

171. See below, pp.202,212.

172. Cape Argus, 29 Oct., 2 Nov. '78, Reports of Trials.

DECEMBER 1877 TO JUNE 1878: THE XHOSA DIVIDED AND DEFEATED

3680 killed and 45,336 cattle captured, while white casualties were put at 60 killed and those of their black allies, 137 killed.¹⁷⁴ Theal estimates that the official death toll of the blacks represents about half the total numbers of blacks actively involved in the war - an exceptionally high proportion.¹⁷⁵ Mr G. Blaine calling for an amnesty on 25 June said that black losses were greater than the aggregate of the wars of 1835, 1846 and 1851.¹⁷⁶ Certainly, if the number who died of wounds and starvation, including women and children be included, this must be true. The War of Ngcayecibi in terms of casualties then, was far from the insignificant little war that it has sometimes been considered.¹⁷⁷

174. C.2144, Encl. 3 No. 110: Deputy Adjutant-General to Military Secretary, 21 June '78.

175. Theal, X, 133.

176. Cory Library: PR 1234: Question by Mr George Blaine Sr., H.A. to Col. Sec. re granting amnesty to native rebels, 25 June '78.

177. W. MacMillan, The Road to Self-Rule (London, 1959), p.135, quoted in C. Saunders: "The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81", South African Historical Journal No. 8, Nov. 1876.

CHAPTER 6

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

It is convenient to consider the war in the North-East separately, not only because the area of operation was removed from the main theatre of the war, but also because the three separate cases of resistance to white rule illustrate almost all the facets of black-white relations on the frontier at the time. The rebellions of Gungubele and Tini Maqomo point to the deep insecurity of the blacks over land. In both cases, white pressure on their land, a basic rejection of colonial rule and white panic and hostility, drove peoples who were determined only to resist aggression, into open rebellion. The case of Sitokhwe Tyhali, the only chief living in Thembuland to go into rebellion in 1877-8, illustrates how the temperament of individual chiefs determined the response of chiefdoms and clans to colonial rule.

1. Gungubele and the Tshatshu

Gungubele was the son of Maphasa, the Tshatshu Thembu Chief who had joined the Xhosa against the British in the 8th Frontier War.¹ As a result of the war (in which Maphasa was killed), Cathcart created the new district of Queenstown out of the confiscated Thembu lands.² The Thembu were relocated in the Glen Grey area, an area between the Swart and Wit Kei Rivers including the Staalklip, Pauline, Gwatyu, Xelana and Madikana districts.³ The swop of Transkeian lands for the Colonial

1. F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.23. It is important when considering Gungubele's case, to remember that the Tshatshu had a tradition of military co-operation with the Xhosa.
2. A.E. Du Toit, pp.70-74; F. Brownlee, Transkeian Historical Records, p.23.
3. C.O. 1065: "Re Gungubele and Tambookieland Rebellion", encl. in Acting Clerk to the Solicitor-General to Attorney-General, 15 Aug. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CAST STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Location failed in 1865 when only some of the Colonial Thembu moved, despite Colonial assurances that colonial law would apply in the location whereas it would not across the Kei.⁴ However, colonial rule of the location was extremely lax and for many years it was like other colonial black areas, neglected.⁵

When conflicting land claims arising out of the confusion of a haphazard land tenure policy induced the Government to appoint a Commission in 1870, it was found that the influx of blacks into the location had brought numbers back to their pre-1865 level. The Commission divided the location between the Wodehouse and Queenstown Districts with some European farms providing a buffer between the two parts. Land tenure policy was still not consistent, some farms being held on individual tenure, others on communal tenure under the Government headmen appointed by E. Judge, the Civil Commissioner at Queenstown.⁶

Because of the contiguity of the independent Emigrant Thembu and because of the poor quality of supervision, it was hard to persuade the colonial Thembu Chiefs that the Government could not legislate as it desired in the location. Gungubele told Judge that only he as the chief had the power to appoint headmen, and after 1870 Gungubele, his councillors and people opposed the authority of the headmen, even threatening and assaulting them on occasion.⁷ With the history of military co-operation

4. See above, p.

5. Griffiths, pp.36-44.

6. C.O. 1065: "Re. Gungubele and Tambookieland Rebellion", encl. in Acting Clerk to the Solicitor-General to Attorney-General, 15 Aug. '78.

7. Ibid.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

with the Rharhabe⁸ and dissatisfaction with colonial rule, there was, as Griffiths concludes, little doubt that any black unrest elsewhere would be reflected amongst the Tshatshu.⁹ It was not surprising, therefore, that Brownlee found the Colonial Thembu to be the most disaffected people in his tour of the frontier during the 1876 war scare, and that he found the focal point of dissatisfaction to be the erosion of the power of the chieftainship.¹⁰ What was true of 1876 was even more so of 1877 when the actions of Gungubele brought increased pressure on him and his people from the colonial authorities.

In November 1876, Gungubele purchased one of the supervening farms named 'Mapassa's Poort' from a Mr W.C. Bouwer for the sum of £2,200.¹¹ John Hemming, the Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate of Queenstown, and Mr R. Driver, the Superintendent of the Thembu Location tried to dissuade Gungubele, pointing out inter alia that the price of the farm was inflated and that he did not realise how large a sum £2,200 was and would, even with contributions from his several hundred followers, be unable to pay it. But Gungubele was determined, particularly as the farm was part of his father's former territory; and as the transaction was perfectly legal there was nothing, Hemming thought, that could be done.¹² A down payment of £200 was made and the second instalment of £800 became due on 1st January 1877. Gungubele was unable to pay the full amount and so Bouwer applied in October for a provisional order of

8. See above, p. 186, footnote 1.

9. Griffiths, p.44.

10. See above, pp.45,49.

11. G.17-'78, p.188: Messrs. Bell and Shepstone to Hemming, 26 Nov. '77.

12. G.17-'78, p.188: Hemming to Merriman, 26 Nov. '77.

It is interesting to note that Oba also bought farms for inflated prices which he could not meet. See above, p.178, footnote 145.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

sequestration and a summons was issued on Gungubele to show by 12 January 1878 why the order should not be made final. Meanwhile the balance of £1200 fell due.¹³

Hemming was especially anxious that the sequestration should not go through, because Boucher would receive as part settlement a farm in the Transkei, title to which Gungubele held but had not taken up. This would create a precedent and possibly lead to future alienation of land from black owners. Boucher, probably therefore under pressure from Hemming, offered to cancel the sale, keeping only the £500 already paid for his expenses and trouble, but Gungubele refused to accept, though pressed by Hemming, saying he could not understand why Boucher should keep both the money and the farm.¹⁴

Unable to get assistance from his followers, Gungubele told them that the matter was now a Government one and he would be arrested for not paying. It is difficult to know whether he really believed this or whether it was an attempt to force his people to assist him, but his statement greatly excited his people and they said they would resist any attempt to arrest him.¹⁵

The evidence presented in the papers laid before Parliament in the 1878 session, and that heard in the preliminary examination and trial of Gungubele in July 1878, is somewhat contradictory.¹⁶ The former gives the impression that Gungubele, being keen to fight, actively sounded out Sandile and other surrounding chiefs, with a view to co-operating with

13. G.17;'78, pp.188-9: Messrs. Bell and Shepstone to Hemming, 26 Nov. '77.

14. G.17-'78, p.189: Hemming to Merriman, 26 Nov. '77.

15. Merriman Papers: 1877 file No. 112: Digest of evidence in the Gungubele Rebellion.

16. The former published as an appendix, pp.188-202, of the Blue Book of Native Affairs G.17-'78, the latter various correspondence and memoranda in C.O. 1065.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

them. The latter presents a picture of a Gungubele unwilling, or at least hesitant, to fight, being sounded out by Sarhili and Sandile and others and being coerced into a defiant posture by his councillors.

Two opposing tendencies perhaps explain the discrepancy. The first is the propensity of Colonial officials to misunderstand the democratic nature of tribal societies, and so to assign more power to a chief than was his, consequently blaming him for the actions and decisions of a tribe. The second is the tendency of blacks to shield their chiefs from responsibility for calamities that had occurred.¹⁷ In retrospect it seems that Gungubele was caught up in a situation he could not control: hostile to British rule, entangled in the legal complexities of a system he did not understand and subject to pressures from his councillors, his people and surrounding chiefs, he was prepared to offer indirect resistance to colonial rule, but was not yet prepared for open rebellion when a colonial expedition sent against him forced him into that.

On the outbreak of war, Tshatshu messengers to the Ngqika were told by Sandile that he did not intend to join Sarhili. Later, when Sandile changed his mind, Gungubele was told at a council meeting of the Tshatshu that if he continued to see Hemming and refused to fight the English he would be deposed. Mshweshwe, his cousin and the step-brother of Ngangelizwe, was reported to Anta as saying that Gungubele had agreed to fight with the Ngika. But the same Mshweshwe reported Gungubele's supposed intentions to Hemming. Gungubele got to hear of Mshweshwe's treachery through Dondashe, one of Hemming's interpreters, who added that Gungubele was to be arrested. The same rumour reached Sandile via his son Gonya (Edmund), clerk to the court at Middledrift but this time the intention of the whites to arrest Sandile and Anta was also rumoured.¹⁸

17. For a similar case see Soga, Ama-Xosa, p.114. Peires, in conversation with the author confirmed that this was a frequent occurrence.

18. C.2079, Encl. No. 53: Statement of Hendrick "(alias Bamba) before John Hemming, 27 Jan. '78.
C.O.1065: Preliminary examination of Hendrick (Bamba) before Hemming, 11 April '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Despite reassurances about Government intentions that Hemming sent to Gungubele through a missionary in whom he confided, Gungubele refused to see Hemming again.¹⁹ Sandile and Mfanta, a brother of Ngangelizwe resident in the location and at feud with him,²⁰ had both advised him against doing so. Mfanta was reported to be keen on war. At the end of November and beginning of December, dissatisfaction over the farm issue and suspicion of the intentions of the whites had progressed so far that the war cry was sounded on several occasions both at Gungubele's and Mfanta's kraals. Gungubele told Driver on 2nd December that the war cry had been sounded the previous night because some of his people had heard at Tylden that a commando was about to be sent to arrest him.²¹ But the Tshatshu behaviour went farther than mere preparation for defence. In addition to military preparations, the Tshatshu now refused to pay any further taxes and violent depredations on neighbouring tribes and on those Tshatshu against war began.²²

Dwyer, writing to Sprigg after Gungubele's trial commented:

It is quite clear from the evidence, even from the prosecution that the convitt Gungubele did all he could to avoid rebellion.²³

While this is true to the extent that Gungubele's intentions were limited at this stage to defending his property against Government seizure,²⁴

19. Ibid.

20. Theal, X, 90.

21. G.17-'78, pp.196-8: Driver to Hemming, 3 and 4 Dec. '77.

22. G.17-'78, p.190: Hemming to Merriman, 5 Dec. '78.
G.17-'78, pp.199-202: Depositions before Hemming, variously dated.

23. C.O.1065: Dwyer to Sprigg, 17 Aug. '78.

24. C.17-'78, p.197: Driver to Hemming, 5 Dec. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Stanford asserts that stock and grain stolen from Mfengu, surrounding tribesmen and 'loyal' Tshatshu were placed in charge of headmen at Gwatyu by Gungubele's orders, indicating Gungubele's complicity, if not direction, of the thefts.²⁵

Hemming who shared Stanford's opinion that Gungubele was at the root of all the trouble in the area, wrote to Merriman on 5th December, recommending that Gungubele 'be brought to account'.²⁶ He thus rejected Driver's eminently sensible suggestion that the farm issue be settled by the Government buying the farm for Gungubele in return for the Transkei farm. Then, having removed one of the major causes for fighting, Gungubele and his headmen could have been punished for raising the war cry.²⁷

On 11th December Hemming went to Bolotwa to hold his monthly court and to obtain information on the state of the location. He had warned Gungubele especially to attend, but he did not appear and Hemming had to go and find him. Having had no reply from Merriman, Hemming took matters into his own hands by issuing Gungubele with an ultimatum, saying that he must apprehend those responsible for the several crimes committed recently or himself be held responsible.²⁸ On his return, Merriman telegraphed him warning him that before Gungubele could be 'brought to account' there would have to be some specific charge which might justify a warrant for arrest and which would stand up in court. He reminded him in this connection of Nehemiah Mshweshwe's case.²⁹

25. G.17-'78, p.193: Hemming to Merriman, 5 Dec. '77.

26. Ibid.

27. G.17-'78, p.197: Driver to Hemming, 5 Dec. '78.

28. G.17-'78, p.194: Hemming to Merriman, 14 Dec. '77.

29. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 102: Merriman to Hemming, tel., 17 Dec. '77.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Gungubele's progress was intimately connected with black responses elsewhere to the war situation. When Sandile heard of Hemming's threat, he was reported to be very angry and to have told Gungubele 'to catch' Hemming. He told Gungubele that he, Anta, Sitokhwe Ndlela, Sitokhwe Tyhali, Mfanta and a 'whole stripe' of chiefs were going to fight. Mfanta sent a similar message detailing further participants - Morosi the Basotho Chief, Dalasile and Adam Kok (he must have meant the Griquas since Kok had died in 1875). Sarhili would assist them, while Anta would act as a decoy 'to blind' Thomas Liefeldt his magistrate.³⁰ However, Sarhili is reported to have told Gungubele, like Sandile not to break out yet, but to first help him with the Mfengu. On the receipt of these messages, a Tshatshu Council was held and it was decided to fight. At this meeting Gungubele said he had no aggressive intentions against the whites, but was determined to resist any aggression by them.³¹

Gungubele had already decided to deal with Mshweshwe in which decision Mfanta supported him,³² but it appears that the Tshatshu young blood jumped the gun, because an attempt to seize Mshweshwe failed and Gungubele angrily exclaimed that he was not yet ready for war.³³

30. C.2079, Encl. No. 53: Statement of Hendrick (alias Bamba) before Hemming, 27 Jan. '77.

C.O. 1065: Preliminary examination of Hendrick (Bamba) before Hemming 11 April '78.

31. Ibid.

32. C.O. 1065: Evidence of Herman Kube, 20 April '77.

The very bitter feeling which existed against Mshweshwe is celebrated in D.L.P. Yali-Manisi's poem "Indabi'Lasegwayu" in a collection by the author entitled Inguqu, published by Khundulu Methodist School Bolotwa, 1954. I am indebted to Prof. J. Opland for drawing my attention to this poem and for giving me a rough translation of it.

33. C.O. 1065: Preliminary examination before Hemming of Hendrick (Bamba) 11 April '77.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Nevertheless, marauding continued; a body of Ngqika joined the Tshatshu in early January and were involved in an attempt to break through into Emigrant Thembuland, but were driven back by Ndarhala, abandoned trading stores were looted and the arming, drilling and doctoring of men continued.³⁴ In one of the most telling remarks made by any black participant in the war, Mfanta is reported as saying that he urged the burning of a shop at the Bolotwa

because it was the way of the Englishmen
to establish one shop. Then another followed,
and presently there was a town like Queenstown.^{34a}

On 11th January, Hemming reported the increasing lawlessness of the Tshatshu and said that although Gungubele was not directly implicated, he was convinced of his indirect implication. He therefore suggested that special constables be sworn in, armed and sent to arrest the criminals. He added: 'I am quite confident they will meet with armed resistance, and be fired upon' and recommended therefore that a large force be sent so that Gungubele could be driven against Frost's force, where they could be disarmed.³⁵ Merriman agreed with Hemming that Gungubele was trying to raise a rebellion with neighbouring tribes against the Government, and so he agreed with Hemming's plan, and issued him with instructions on 14th January. He told Hemming to treat Gungubele as a British subject who had either committed acts of violence or incited others to do so, and to therefore take out warrants for specific charges,

34. Ibid; also Merriman Collection, 1878 file No. 158: Levey to Hemming, 20 Jan. '78.

34a. C.2079, Encl. No. 53: Statement of Hendrick (alias Bamba) before Hemming, 27 Jan. '78.

35. G.17-'78, p.195: Hemming to Merriman, 11 Jan. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

and to serve these or attempt to serve them. He warned Hemming to hold his men back and not to provoke violence, but authorised him to use force if resisted. In the event of resistance he was to disarm the Tshatshu. In any event, he was to occupy the area with his police during the current disturbances.³⁶

These instructions may be criticised on several grounds, as they were indeed by Frere.³⁷ Merriman did have a difficult decision: if he stayed his hand, the colony would be caught on the wrong foot in the event of an outbreak; on the other hand, the expedition was tantamount to a declaration of war by the colonists on fellow subjects on somewhat shaky legal grounds, and was sure to spread the Civil War. Brownlee, whose part in the whole affair remains obscure, had clearly warned in November, that while they would not commit aggression, they would certainly resist it.³⁸ Considering the imminent opening of a major campaign against the Ngqika to the South, complicated by a dispute with the Imperial troops, such an extension of the war was highly inexpedient. But Merriman had not even taken adequate precautions to ensure that the expedition would be able to deal with the explosion it was sure to unleash. He had approved Hemming's accompanying the expedition in his civil capacity, but left the appointment, or rather delegation of the military command, to Hemming. Further, apart from instructing Hemming to 'on no account take an insufficient force', he left the composition of that force entirely up to Hemming, a man without military experience.³⁹

Hemming gathered about 400 volunteers and Burghers and marched to the

36. G.G.R. 46: Merriman to Hemming, 14 Jan. '78.

37. Merriman Papers, 1878 file No. 9: Frere Minute for Ministers, 28 Jan. '78.

38. Merriman Papers, 1877 file No. 85: Frere to Merriman, 24 Nov. '77.

39. G.G.R. 46: Merriman to Hemming, 14 Jan. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Bolotwa River. There he was joined by about 250 native levies.⁴⁰ He gave overall command of the expedition to Jeremiah Thomas, the magistrate at Gatberg, by virtue of his military experience. Early on the morning of 24th January, the force marched to the Gwatyu. The surrounding heights were manned by armed blacks, and as Hemming's force unsaddled they were fired upon.⁴¹ Battle was immediately joined. In the two hours of severe fighting, the Tshatshu lost 150 dead. Mshweshwe who had acted as a guide for the whites was found dead with 32 assegai wounds.⁴² Hemming learnt that amongst the blacks who fought, there were 300-400 Ngqika who fled into Anta's location after the fight.⁴³ He concluded his report by saying: "It was quite impossible to restrain the Native Contingents from burning a few huts and capturing a little stock."⁴⁴ No wonder he was certain the rebellion was spreading!

Rather belatedly, Merriman now admitted the necessity of a firm and experienced command, and so ordered Griffith up to the Thembu Location, instructing him to 'crush all disaffection', and to arrest the leaders thereof.⁴⁵

Griffith arrived on 28th to hear that Mfanta had joined the rebellion by sweeping off 50 horses from Hemming's camp earlier that day.⁴⁶ Hemming told him that Khiva was said to have joined Gungubele between the Swart

40. G.17-'78, p.196: Hemming to Merriman, 22 Jan. '78.

41. C.2079, Sub.Encl. 5 No. 46: Hemming to Merriman, 24 Jan. '78.

42. Cory Library, MS 14,598 (16): Burton Notebook no. 16, p.11.

43. C.2079, Sub Encl. 16 No. 46: Hemming to Merriman, tel., 27 Jan. '78. Bamba confirms that these were Anta's people.

44. C.2079, Sub Encl. 5 No. 46: Hemming to Merriman, 25 Jan. '78.

45. G.G.R. 46: Copy Merriman to Griffith, 29 Jan. '78.

46. A.54-'78, pp.48-9: Griffith to Merriman, tel., 29 Jan. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

and the Wit Kei with about 800 men. Gungubele had 600 men while 300 of Anta's men were reported to be there as well as Mfanta's 300 men, making 2000 in all.⁴⁷

Colonel Charles Warren, riding down from Kimberley with the Diamond Field Horse, gave a vivid picture of the atmosphere in the area before the final dispersal of the blacks (as well as a clue to the identity of the two chiefs Mfanta plaintively complained had deserted him in his hour of need):

Tambookies between this and Dordrecht in a very disturbed state, and likely to rise at any moment if opportunity offers. Kaffir scouts have watched our progress from Bethulie, and signal fires have heralded our progress... Tambookies desired to intercept our progress and mounted men watched our camp last night... Baragwanath reports Umfanta's people armed and in possession of Bengu heights. Women, children and cattle trekking across border. Burghers in Dordrecht district called out. Fingoes fled from Xalanga. Little doubt about intention of Stokwe or Gecelo to rise.⁴⁸

The first three days of February saw severe fighting in the Thembu Location, but on 4th, the 2000 Colonial troops Griffith had mustered, completed the dispersal of the black forces at great cost to them.⁴⁹ Gruber has calculated that the cost in black lives of the fighting in the area over five days was greater than in five months of fighting in Gcalekaland.⁵⁰

47. A.54-'78, p.53: Hemming to Merriman, tel., 29 Jan. '78.

48. A.54-'78: Warren Assistant Adjutant-General, tel., n.d. (c. 4 Feb. '78).

49. A.54-'78, pp.48-9: Griffith to Merriman, tel., 29 Jan. '78.

50. Gruber, p.305.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

After the final battle, the Tshatshu were completely broken up, some seeking refuge with Anta, some with Mfanta⁵¹ who fled through Emigrant Thembuland to join the rebellious Sitokhwe Tyhali. Gungubele made his way with others to the Thomas River area, where he joined the Ngqika who had returned there after the battle of Kentani.⁵²

The battle had a decisive effect on the rest of the neighbouring Thembu of Emigrant Thembuland and the Engcobo district.

2. The Thembu and Sitokhwe Tyhali

In November Levey had reported that, as in 1876, there was considerable dissatisfaction over the erosion of the independence of the Emigrant Thembu.⁵³ The feelings of Dalasile towards both Ngangelizwe and British rule were well known, and Sitokhwe Tyhali, the turbulent Vundhle chief was known by the Thembu as igeza (madman) for his open defiance of all authority.⁵⁴

As the Gungubele affair came to a climax, Stanford reported to Brownlee:

Matters are not going well in Emigrant Thembuland. The location beyond Stokwe Ndlela has declared for war, Gecelo cannot be trusted... Ndlela's cattle are already coming this way - it is likely Dalasile will receive them. Stokwe Tyali is ready to join the war party any moment. Dalasile cannot be trusted and the cattle belonging to disaffected tribes are working towards the mountains in the upper part of my district.⁵⁵

51. G.G.R. 4: Commandant J. Thomas to Griffith, 10 Feb. '78.

52. G.G.R. 4: Inspector James Surmon to Griffith, 20 Feb. '78.

53. Merriman Papers, 1877 file, No. 85: Frere to Merriman, 24 Nov. '77.

54. Macquarrie, i, 57.

55. N.A. 44: Stanford to S.N.A., n.d. (clearly January).

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Indeed as has been seen, there had been continuing consultation between the chiefdoms of the North-East, particularly the Thembu and Thembu affiliated ones, and Sandile and Mfanta expected Sitokhwe Tyhali, Dalasile, Sitokhwe Ndlela and possibly even Gecelo to join any revolt.⁵⁶

But when intra-tribal jealousies and differing responses to colonial pressures had prevented unity of action amongst the relatively stable and disciplined Gcaleka where tradition still flourished, it was highly unlikely that the fragmented Thembu groupings would be able to effect any unity of action. Levey's Emigrant Thembu Society for the Promotion of Civilization had already in its short life span been responsible for the emergence of a strong class of peasant agriculturalists who favoured stability.⁵⁷ Then each of the four Emigrant Thembu chiefs had come across the Kei in 1865 so that he might exercise individual independence. Levey was able in the crisis of 1877 to foster jealousies between the four chiefs, and between each of those and ambitious relatives and rivals.⁵⁸ The lesson of what might happen had been clearly demonstrated with Sitokhwe Ndlela. This man, the most hostile of the Emigrant Thembu to colonial rule, had been involved in a continuing clash with Brownlee and in January 1877 Brownlee gave half of his location to Sitokhwe's brother for Sitokhwe's continuing lawlessness.⁵⁹

Thus when the Tshatshu became involved in a struggle with colonial troops, individual interests weighed stronger than the still relatively light burden of colonial rule. Ndarhala had already openly manifested his opposition to any rebellion or resistance, for which he was attacked by

56. See above, p. 193.

57. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 24 May '78. Levey refers to the considerable progress made in the short life of the Society both here and in his annual report to Brownlee, G.12-'77, pp.100-106.

58. The Cape Argus, lead article, 6 July '78.

59. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 1 July '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

the Tshatshu and the Ngqika on several occasions.⁶⁰ Mathanzima, the most powerful of the Emigrant Thembu chiefs, warned Gungubele to submit to the Government over the issue of his farm and refused to safeguard his cattle for him.⁶¹ Gecelo, who had reported gun-running activities from Queenstown in November,⁶² but whose people had been disturbed by the events in the Colonial Thembu Location, evidently came to the same conclusion after seeing the swift and brutal suppression of the Tshatshu revolt. Dalasile, while giving refuge to the rebel's cattle, decided that the scale was weighted too heavily in the whites' favour.⁶³

It seems that Sitokhwe Tyhali might never have been attacked by the whites had he not fired on a patrol sent out by Stanford. The crushing of the Colonial Thembu Revolt had given pause to his warlike activity and while his people began to disperse in small parties, he reported the presence of Mfanta to Ngangelizwe. But Stanford thought this a ruse and the firing on the patrol must have confirmed his opinion.⁶⁴ Thus when Sitokhwe refused to give himself up to the colonial authorities Sprigg and Ayliff concluded that the time had come to 'call him to account'.⁶⁵

60. G.G.R. 4: Levey to Sprigg: 6 March '78.
Merriman Papers, 1878 file, No. 157: Levey to Hemming,
20 Jan. '78.

61. G.17-'78, p.197: Driver to Hemming: 5 Dec. '77.

62. G.G.R. 13: Merriman to various, draft tels., 5 Nov. '77.

63. He had paid the fine of 200 cattle imposed on him for not contributing to the Thembu Levy raised in September and, with ill grace, had sent some men to the one raised in December.

N.A. 43: Stanford to S.N.A., 6 Dec. '77.

N.A. 44: Stanford to S.N.A., n.d. (early Jan.).

64. N.A. 44: Stanford to S.N.A., 6 March '78.
Sitokhwe had refused to serve in or contribute to either of the Thembu Levies and had threatened whites in his area, forcing them to leave.

N.A. 43: W. Cumming to Stanford, 13 Dec. '77.

65. N.A. 44: Minute by Sprigg, 19 March, '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Elliot was instructed to assemble a force, and on 23rd March he advanced with three thousand burghers, volunteers and native levies (chiefly Thembu). By the advice of Thomas, the Magistrate at Gatberg, he was able to corner Sitokhwe and his 4-500 followers against the mountain side at Maxongo's Hoek. Hidden in the dense undergrowth Sitokhwe was able to keep Elliot's force at bay until night, when he fled over the mountain, having lost 60 men, 1200 cattle and 2500 sheep and goats to only 4 colonial dead.⁶⁶

Elliot's expedition decisively ended all resistance in the North-East. Gungubele was captured at the end of March, and brought a prisoner to Queenstown.⁶⁷ Mfanta was captured two weeks later, and Sitokhwe was captured on 13th April by Mhlontlo who handed him over to Thomas.⁶⁸

It seemed therefore that when the Emigrant Thembu Society for the Promotion of Civilisation met on 24th May and had a successful meeting, that normality had returned to the area.⁶⁹ But the Emigrant Thembu grievances remained. Sitokhwe Ndlela did not attend this meeting,⁷⁰ and in fact Gonya and Mathanzima (Sandile's sons) were found sheltering at his kraal on 30th June after the final collapse of the Ngqika. Mathanzima, it seems, although he reported their presence, tried to give them time to escape.⁷¹

Gungubele was tried on charges of High Treason in King William's Town on 24th July 1878 by Justice Dwyer. Sprigg's Ministry had indicated by not extending the amnesty to leaders of the colonial blacks who had

66. C.2220 Encl. 1 No. 11: Elliot to S.N.A., 29 March '78 and annexures.

67. Theal, X, 128.

68. The Cape Argus, 18 April '78, Telegraphic News.

69. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 24 May '78.

70. Ibid.

71. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 1 July '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

revolted, that they wished to make examples of them.⁷² The trials that followed were conducted rather hastily on the state's part, and without too close a regard for legal niceties. In one particular case, a 15 year old boy from Lovedale who had joined the rebels, was tried and convicted of murder: he was no more guilty than hundreds of Ngqika who surrendered after the amnesty and who were not punished or others who had been sentenced by the special courts under Martial Law to a period of hard labour.⁷³

Against this background Dwyer, although he was compelled to sentence Gungubele to death because he was technically guilty of the charge, felt obliged to recommend that his sentence should be commuted. Writing to Sprigg, he gave both particular and general reasons for his recommendation. Firstly, the civil proceedings instituted against him had acted as a provocation to resist: secondly, on the evidence before the Court Gungubele was in the hands of his councillors who had been the ones to promote rebellion while he resisted it; thirdly, to execute him would be to create a martyr; fourthly, a life sentence was regarded as a heavier punishment than execution by the blacks and three of the jurors had entered a plea for mercy; and lastly the victory of Government was complete and there had been enough slaughter without further bloodletting.⁷⁴ Upington, the Attorney-General, took a strictly legalistic approach and said he could see no reason for commutation,⁷⁵ but Sprigg's Ministry was taken by surprise by the change of feeling in favour of Gungubele that took place. Petitions for clemency flowed in, not only from the

72. C.O. 1065: Frere memo. on Dwyer's trial notes, 10 Aug. '78.

73. C.O. 1065: voluminous correspondence re case of Myassi.
The Cape Argus, 6 Aug. '78.

74. C.O. 1065: Dwyer to Sprigg, 17 Aug. '78.

75. C.O. 1065: Minute by Upington in case of Regina v. T. Macomo, 9 Aug. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Aborigine's Protection Society⁷⁶ and Church Institutions, but from those very townspeople who had been buying for Gungubele's blood earlier in the year.⁷⁷ Consequently Sprigg found it expedient to ask Frere, who was sympathetic to Dwyer's arguments and disturbed by the casual and hasty conduct of the trials,⁷⁸ to commute Gungubele's sentence to life imprisonment. This Frere duly did.⁷⁹ Gungubele in fact served only ten years, being released by Sprigg in an amnesty for all prisoners from the war in 1888.

3. Tini Maqomo

The case of Tini Maqomo is remarkably similar to that of Gungubele. The major difference is that the local officials who urged action against Tini and so drove him into revolt were motivated by a conviction that for the good of the district, Tini should be driven from his lands and replaced by Europeans.

Tini, the son of the renowned Ngqika warrior Maqomo, bought two farms in the Fort Beaufort area in the early 1870's and settled there with his followers. Subsequently some of these became tenant farmers in the Fort Beaufort District.⁸⁰ As elsewhere on the frontier, overcrowding soon brought its attendant problems, overstocking and overgrazing, and stock was stolen from neighbouring whites to pay rents.⁸¹ In 1876 and 1877 these problems were exacerbated by the drought and the war

76. C.2220, No. 36: Aborigines Protection Society to Hicks-Beach, 4 Sept. '78.

77. C.O. 1065: Encls. in Hemming to Sprigg, 9 Aug. '78.

78. C.O. 1065: Frere memorandum on Dwyer's trial notes, 10 Aug. '78.

79. The Cape Argus, lead article, 9 Sept. '78.

80. Theal, X, 27.

81. A.52-'78, p.10: W.B. Chalmers to Col. Sec., 18 Feb. '78.
G.17-'78, p.50: Holland to S.N.A., 29 Jan. '77.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

situation. Blacks and whites became mutually suspicious and often mutually hostile.⁸²

In December 1877, the return of the Gcaleka and Khiva's mission focussed the spotlight of colonial fears on Sandile and the other Rharhabe chiefs. Maqomo's exploits in the Waterkloof were remembered and it was noted with apprehension that Tini could muster 1000 warriors in the area.⁸³ The districts of Stockenstrom and Fort Beaufort, as has been noted, became particularly infected with colonial panic.⁸⁴ On 2nd December Adelaide farmers reported that Tini intended to join Sandile⁸⁵ and on 6th Tini was reported to have attended a meeting at Oba's place where Kama and Edmund Sandile were also present.⁸⁶ But Tini was equally suspicious of the whites. He heard that he was to be sent to Robben Island, which naturally had a particular dread for him since his father had died there in 1873, and he enquired of a Rev. van Rooy, a local missionary, whether this was true, and also what volunteers were doing near his farm. Van Rooy reassured Tini,⁸⁷ but the use of Mfengu in the newly appointed stock police militated against Tini's attempts at that time to co-operate in suppressing theft. W.B. Chalmers was to admit later:

There is no doubt that the employment of Fingoes
against the Kafirs is most irritating to the

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82. As with Oba, panic stricken whites, and those who wanted to precipitate a conflict, played a major role. A.24-'78, p.24 Merriman Memo. for Frere, 8 Dec. '77.
83. Theal, X, 119.
84. See above, p.142.
85. A.52-'78, p.1: Nightingale to Holland, 4 Dec. '77.
86. G.G.R. I: Private L.M. Combes to Inspector Bailie, 8 Dec. '77.
87. A.52-'78, p.2: Holland to Merriman, 10 Dec. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Kafirs and that a great deal of mischief is thus created where mischief would not otherwise arise.⁸⁸

Soon Tini and his people were reflecting the rise in tensions in the Ngqika location. When Tini went to give evidence in a case of theft at Fort Beaufort, he was accompanied by 200 armed retainers. The Fort Beaufort Advertiser thought Tini's attitude 'insolent' but it seems far more likely that it was one of apprehension.⁸⁹ Tini was reported to have told a meeting which he held just after this that he did not desire war, but was afraid of attack and was determined to resist it.⁹⁰ White actions must have seemed hostile to him: during December, there had been an exodus of whites and by the beginning of January several districts were entirely without whites, including Blinkwater. Most of the whites had gone to the towns or the Free State, but some were leagured,⁹¹ and the area around Tini's farm was patrolled by armed white volunteers.⁹² A memorandum drawn up by Merriman for Frere bears witness to the state of the Fort Beaufort District: Holland, the Magistrate, was new and so his opinion carried little weight, while Blakeway, the Inspector of Divisional Police was not popular with the farmers; the town was split into antagonistic cliques, particularly susceptible to panic and to a belief that the Ministry were doing nothing to safeguard their interests. Merriman recommended that a

88. A.52-'78, p.9: W.B. Chalmers to Sprigg, 18 Feb. '78.

89. Fort Beaufort Advocate, 28 Dec. '77, quoted in A.52-'78, p.2.

90. Fort Beaufort Advocate, 4 Jan. '77, quoted in A.52-'78, p.3.

91. G.G.R. 3: T. Atmore to P.B. Borchers, 7 Jan. '78.

92. G.G.R. 3: Report of a Patrol of Beaufort Rangers on Friday, 11 January, by Lt. J. Richards.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

well-known officer be appointed to restore confidence, but it appears that nothing was done for over four critical weeks.⁹³

Tini responded to the pressures on him, that now included a serious shortage of food, by arming, and stock theft increased.⁹⁴ On the side of the whites, Holland was anonymously informed that Tini was concentrating his men in the Waterkloof to seize cattle or attack Fort Beaufort.⁹⁵ Faced by a situation that threatened to get out of control, Holland recommended on 9th January that Tini and his followers ought to be disarmed, even if this meant bloodshed as he expected it would, and that the Mfengu in the area should be armed.⁹⁶ Fortunately, Merriman seems to have had the sense not to launch yet another campaign by acceding to these requests.

On 2nd February though, it was decided that the unabated theft of stock necessitated the stationing of some of Blakeway's police on the farm next to Tini's. Most of these were Mfengu. This was too much for Tini: he told the commander of the troop, Inspector Booth, whom he met when the latter was on the way to his post, that he, Tini, was the Government of the area, and that he would not give up his cattle. Booth, testifying later, admitted that Tini appeared drunk at the time. Later that evening, Tini arrived with about 100 armed followers at the farmhouse where Booth was stationed. He ordered the police to leave,

93. G.G.R. 3: Merriman Memorandum for Frere, 4 Jan. '78.

94. Fort Beaufort Advocate, 11 Jan. '77, quoted in A.52-'78, p.3. denied that there was a shortage of food, but the evidence seems overwhelming that the whole Ciskei was suffering from the drought in 1878.

95. G.G.R. 2: Holland to Merriman, 9 Jan. '78. The informant remained anonymous, Holland commented, because the exposure of a white rumour monger by Nightingale in Alice the previous week had caused a stir on the frontier.

96. Ibid.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

threatening to kill them if they did not.⁹⁷ Holland, on hearing of the incident, telegraphed Merriman for instructions, but Merriman, more cautious after the Gungubele affair, told him to take out a warrant for Tini's arrest, but to defer serving it for a few days, and to be very careful not to create a new area of disturbance.⁹⁸ Sprigg followed suit by telegraphing Holland immediately on assuming office, on no account to serve the warrant (or that which had been taken out against Tini's brother, Ngaka.)⁹⁹ At the same time, Sprigg appointed W.H. Chalmers, the Ngqika Special Commissioner, to act again as a Special Commissioner in investigating the situation in the Fort Beaufort area.¹⁰⁰ Tini apologised profusely to Chalmers for the incident, saying he only asked on whose authority the police had been sent there, since he had not been consulted.¹⁰¹

But in the meantime, the existence of the warrants became known, and Tini reacted by moving around under armed guard, while blacks flocked from Adelaide to help him resist any attempt to arrest him. Tini and his followers began to sleep in the fastnesses of the Schelmkloof rather than in their kraals.¹⁰² As excitement grew, so did lawlessness. The police were constantly hindered in their work. On 16th February

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97. A.52-'78, p.5: Holland to Merriman, 3 Feb. '78.
 A.52-'78, p.25: Booth to Holland, 3 Feb. '78.
 A.52-'78, p.6: Deposition of H. Nel, sergeant in Blakeway's Police, 4 Feb. '78.
98. A.52-'78, p.5: Merriman to Holland, n.d.
99. A.52-'78, p.8: Sprigg to Holland, n.d.
100. A.52-'78, p.29: Holland to Sprigg, 27 March '78.
101. A.52-'78, p.8: Holland to Sprigg, n.d. (between 8th and 18th Feb.)
102. A.52-'78, p.9: W.B. Chalmers to Sprigg, 18 Feb. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

police tracing a spoor to Tini's farm were surrounded and told that the next policeman to set foot on the farm would be killed.¹⁰³ A previous attempt to execute a writ for debt had caused a near riot.¹⁰⁴ Increasingly Tini openly repudiated Government authority and began to punish the thieves who brought pressure on his people from the whites, by fining them cattle and guns.¹⁰⁵ Tini's attitude is summed up in the report of a speech he is said to have made to his people:

He did not recognise Government. He said he had been long living in the mountains; that the white people would not let him rest; they had been hunting for him and he was tired of the bush.¹⁰⁶

Chalmer's conclusion is crucial: he told Sprigg, after recommending Tini's apprehension and punishment even if this meant bloodshed, that whatever happened, the black owned farms in the area ought to be purchased and sold to Europeans. It had been a mistake to allow the Ngqika back into the Waterkloof.¹⁰⁷ Reiterating this theme constantly in his reports over the next few weeks, Chalmers found an ally in Holland, who was to write:

Whatever interested parties may say to the contrary, I feel convinced that this movement [the expedition against Tini] has been a splendid thing for the country generally, and

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103. A.52-'78, p.12: Evidence of "Margaa" before Holland, 18 Feb. '78.
104. A.52-'78, p.14: Statement of Thomas Clarke, Chief Constable of Fort Beaufort.
105. C.O. 1065: Preliminary examination of Tini Maqomo before Holland, 31 May '78.
A.52-'78, pp.23-4: Depositions of various witnesses.
106. A.52-'78, p.26: Statement of Kandilli, one of Blakeway's Police, 3 Feb. '78.
107. A.52-'78, p.9: W.B. Chalmers to Sprigg, 9 Feb. '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

will be the saving of the district if the country is permanently occupied by a number of Europeans.¹⁰⁸

Sprigg agreed with Chalmers on the basis of his report that it was necessary to suppress the lawlessness and 'rebellion of Tini' immediately - he would either have to surrender completely and be disarmed or else he would have to be forced to do so. Consequently Sprigg sent to Cunynghame to have a Colonel Palmer appointed to command all the forces in the area.¹⁰⁹ On 20th February, a warrant for Tini's arrest on the grounds of sedition was drawn up.¹¹⁰ But Chalmers realised, perhaps after the Gungubele affair, that it would be impossible to serve the warrant without sacrificing the lives of the servers. He therefore planned to surround the Blinkwater, Schelmkloof and Waterkloof with a force sufficient to quell any resistance at one fell swoop.¹¹¹ This was an impossible undertaking - the radius of a circle encompassing the area was 8 miles and the terrain ideally suited to guerrilla warfare.¹¹² Tini got early warning of the plan when one of the tenant farmers asked for his rents early, explaining to the blacks that he was doing this because they would be attacked next week.¹¹³ Consequently when Chalmers surrounded Tini's kraal on the morning of the 4th March with a force of

108. A.52-'78, p.30: Holland to Sprigg, 22 March '78.

109. G.H. 21/5: Sprigg to Cunynghame, Copy, 19 Feb. '78.

110. A.52-'78, pp.13-14: Warrants signed by Holland.

111. A.52-'78, p.26: Chalmers to Sprigg, tel., 23 Feb. '78.

112. See map, opp. p. 212.

113. A.52-'78, p.13: C.P. Owen, before J. Sweetnam, J.P., 2 March '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

1700 men, Tini had already fled to the Waterkloof.¹¹⁴ Here Tini steadfastly refused Chalmer's offers of a safe passport out of the area for his men and his stock if he surrendered.¹¹⁵ But it was small wonder that Chalmer's offers were spurned. Although no formal decision seems to have been taken on the future of Ngqika occupation of the area, his messages informed Tini and his people that

On account of the great trouble which the Kaffirs in Schelmkloof and Waterkloof have given for a long time past, the Government is determined that these fastnesses shall no longer be occupied by Kaffirs.¹¹⁶

Surrender on such terms would have involved not only material loss, but a loss of dignity too.

There followed the ludicrous spectacle of a full scale campaign involving several thousand Government troops and including the intensive bombardment of kloofs, to induce Tini and his few hundred followers who had committed no overt act of rebellion, to surrender.¹¹⁷ The campaign might well have persuaded blacks in the surrounding areas to hand in their arms,¹¹⁸ but the forces were unable to catch Tini, who fled to the

114. A.52-'78, p.29: Holland to Sprigg, 27 March '78.

115. A.52-'78, pp.47-9: Chalmers to Sprigg, 2 April '78.

116. A.52-'78, p.54: Chalmers to Sprigg, 2 April '78, Appendix B.

117. The various reports in A.52-'78 give a picture of a futile campaign in which needlessly harsh treatment was handed out to innocent blacks in pursuit of Tini's few hundred followers. The Cape Argus, 18 July '78 says only 300 men followed Tini into rebellion.

118. A.52-'78, p.51: Chalmers to Sprigg, 2 April '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

Perie bush, where he reappeared in April with Seyolo in the Intaba kaNdoda area. Further the campaign brought to light some notorious cases of excessive zeal on the part of colonial troops. There had been no declared rebellion, nor any formal declaration of war, nor was any warning given as in the case of the Ngqika so that those who did not wish to fight might separate themselves from those who did. Instead, Palmer's force treated every black in the Fort Beaufort area as a rebel, and blacks on private farms were taken prisoner, their huts burnt and property confiscated as the colonial forces 'cleared' the country.¹¹⁹

The Argus exposed these excesses and Saul Solomon called for a Commission of Enquiry both through the medium of the Argus and in Parliament. Solomon argued that if it had been desirable to destroy the location, that ought to have been openly stated and legally done.¹²⁰ Chalmers had a hard time justifying the actions of some of the forces and indeed of the whole operation. He claimed that he had learnt that Tini's plan was to set up a base for Sandile and to get provisions for him by raiding surrounding farms,¹²¹ but on the evidence a more realistic explanation of Tini's conduct is the desperate shortage of food of his people and a deep suspicion and fear of white intentions, particularly over his land. Chalmers even considered appealing to the public through the press to justify his actions, but Charles Mills wrote hastily to him

119. A.52-'78, p.30, et seq.
The Cape Argus, 18 July '78.

120. The Cape Argus, lead article, 26 March '79.
W.E.G. Solomon: Saul Solomon (Cape Town, 1948), pp.222-5.

121. A.52-'78, p.49: Chalmers to Sprigg, 2 April '78.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

to him to say that the Government was 'perfectly satisfied' with his conduct in connection with the expedition, and that consequently no appeal would be necessary.¹²²

The Government indeed did appear satisfied that a Commission was unnecessary, and Tini was, like other leaders, brought to trial after his arrest. After fighting several actions in the Intaba kaNdoda, Tini became disenchanted with Sandile's leadership and returned to the Schelmkloof where he was captured in early June.¹²³

Tini was tried before Judge Dwyer on 19th July in King William's Town. He was accused of High Treason in that on six separate occasions he, as a subject of the Queen, had levied and made war and rebellion on the Queen's forces.¹²⁴ But as many of the witnesses for the prosecution failed to support depositions made before the trial, counsel for the prosecution felt obliged to drop five of the charges, and concentrate only on the one referring to 6th March when Tini had been seen to resist the force sent to capture him.¹²⁵ Apart from this change of front amongst the black witnesses, the same revulsion of feeling in favour of Tini as had happened with Gungubele took place after his conviction. Two petitions from Fort Beaufort inhabitants, secure now that the blacks had been cleared from their midst, pointed out how Tini had tried to stay at peace and how it was only when the column moved against him that he

122. A.52-'78, p.62: Charles Mills to Chalmers, 17 April '78.

123. C.O. 1065: Preliminary Examination of Tini before Holland, 31 May '78.

124. C.O. 1065: Copy of charge sheet.

125. C.O. 1065: J. Brown (prosecutor) to J. Rose-Innes, n.d.

GUNGUBELE, SITOKHWE TYHALI AND TINI MAQOMO: CASE STUDIES IN RESISTANCE

resisted.¹²⁶ Dwyer's recommendation for commutation of the death sentence to life imprisonment was based on similar grounds: he agreed it was clear that Tini had resisted the action of Government and had only taken an active role in the war when driven to it.¹²⁷

So Tini's fate was the same as Gungubele's. Sentence was commuted by Frere on 18th September to life imprisonment,¹²⁸ and Tini was released from Robben Island under the same amnesty in 1888.

126. C.O. 1065: 2 Petitions, one forwarded by Harry L. Watkins, Fort Beaufort, 31 July '78.

127. C.O. 1065: Dwyer to Col. Sec., 17 Aug. '78.

128. The Cape Argus, lead article, 19 September '78.

CHAPTER 7

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

1. The Sprigg Ministry's Native Policy

Benyon unfavourably compares the vigour of Sprigg's policy with the "pragmatism" and "sensible laxity" of the Molteno Ministry's policy.¹ It is tempting to contrast the two too starkly and to gloss over the many shortcomings of Brownlee in particular. The laxity to which Benyon refers, was not so much sensible, as the result of the Molteno Ministry's lack of interest in native policy and the overwhelming attention paid to Railways and Public Works.² Brownlee, indeed, had set out with a cautious, flexible approach to his "civilising mission", but he had allowed himself to be rushed by Orpen and Bowker, and the pressures which he and his colleagues applied to Sarhili and the Gcaleka were amongst those which were responsible for the war. The neglect of the Ngqika, which Brownlee did nothing to remedy, was also partly responsible for the rebellion of that people. Brownlee's handling of the Maphasa/Makinana affair, and Merriman's advocacy of disarmament and precipitation of the Tshatshu rebellion, highlight the fact that the Sprigg Ministry's native policy was more of a continuation of elements of the Molteno Ministry's policy than a radical departure from it.

Nevertheless, there were differences. Sprigg made "vigour" and "firmness" official policy, and being beholden to its Eastern Cape

1. Benyon, p.372.

2. De Kiewiet, p.168.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Constituents, his entirely Eastern Cape Cabinet³ was bound to reflect the attitudes and prejudices of that area, attitudes and prejudices which the Molteno Ministry had often criticised and resisted.

Soon entering office, Sprigg announced the immediate aims of the Ministry: the war was to be brought to a conclusive end and the blacks were to be completely subjugated. Sprigg told his East London constituents that

He was determined that the Kaffir war should be put down not in the manner of the former Kaffir wars but that the Kaffirs should be made to know and feel that the white man was master of the land. This land would not be worth living in unless such was the case... There will be no patched up peace this time - the Kaffirs will be effectually conquered and the white man henceforth be master of the land.⁴

Soon afterwards William Ayliff the new Secretary for Native Affairs elaborated. He emphasised firstly, that because the blacks were responsible for the war, they would have to atone for their guilt. Secondly, using an argument so dear to frontier hearts, he explained how the blacks, once subjugated and punished, were to be civilised

3. The Ministry consisted of:

John Gordon Sprigg, M.L.A. East London, Premier and Colonial Secretary
 John Miller, M.L.C. for Eastern Province, Treasurer
 John Laing, M.L.A. for Fort Beaufort, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works
 William Ayliff, M.L.A. for Fort Beaufort, Secretary for Native Affairs.
 Thomas Upington, for whom the Colesberg seat was found, Attorney General. Theal, X, 105-6.

Brownlee was appointed as Resident Commissioner of Native Affairs, a sort of deputy to the Secretary, based on the frontier at King William's Town. Saunders, "The Cape Native Affairs Department", p.33.

4. Kaffrarian Watchman, 11 Feb. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

through labour.⁵ Routes hitherto used to escape labouring for the whites, such as squatting and stock theft, were to be closed and labourers were to be sent to the West and the Midlands, where

by long periods of contract and apprenticeship, with constant contact with civilised men, they [might] acquire a preference for civilised life.

In this scheme of things only a simple education was to be offered to blacks as an inducement "to labour for a higher form of life."⁶

On 25th February, Ayliff launched his labour scheme in a Government Notice. Adult blacks were to enter a contract for three years, while children were to be apprenticed up to the age of 17 and 18 in the case of girls and boys respectively. Colonists who applied for labourers through their Civil Commissioners were subject to conditions laid down to try and ensure the retention of family units and the proper treatment of those labouring.⁷

Within a couple of weeks, Sprigg revealed further details of his settlement plan. The complete subjugation of the blacks, the guiding principle of his policy, was already clearly in operation on the battlefield. Now he announced that, after military defeat, any remaining power the blacks retained was to be broken by disarmament and detribalisation and a strict system of colonial control. There was to be no return to the pre-war position of independence through neglect as had obtained with Sandile.⁸

5. Hence De Kiewiet, p.157:

It cannot be seriously disputed that in the native policies of the two major British colonies, the desire to tap more profitably the resevoirs of labours..... played a leading role.

6. Kaffrarian Watchman, 25 Feb. '78.

7. Government Notice No. 222, 25 Feb. 1878.

8. Kaffrarian Watchman, 13 March.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Thus the blacks were to be disarmed by an Act of Parliament, because Sprigg said, like the Irish, they could not be trusted with arms which they only needed for war. Sprigg did not however, explain which blacks were to be disarmed, although after disarmament had been much criticised, he said that he did not have in mind the wholesale disarmament of the blacks.⁹ Then the tribes were to be broken up and the people resettled as British subjects in small locations on a non-tribal basis. Colonial rule was to be enforced through magistrates and government appointed and paid headmen. Individual tenure would replace communal tenure, removing much of the chief's power. It was envisaged that each individual would be settled in small villages and would be granted a small allotment, while commonage would be available to each village. For more effective control, the locations thus established would be controlled by an inspector of locations, while neighbouring locations would be separated by a buffer area occupied by whites. Finally, apart from this implicit promise of confiscated lands, Sprigg announced that rebel lands would be confiscated and 'perhaps' given to whites who had fought in the war.¹⁰

Sprigg's plans came in for much adverse criticism. Sprigg was warned against considering disarming the "loyal" blacks.¹¹ Opposition

9. J.T. Jabavu to Somerset Advertiser, n.d. reprinted in The Cape Argus, 10 Dec. '78.
10. Kaffrarian Watchman, 13 March.
It must be remembered that Sprigg's Defence Commission of 1876 had constantly stressed that the colonists needed more land.
De Kiewiet, p.172.
11. E.g. The Cape Argus, lead article, 14 March '78.
Merriman dryly wrote to his sister:
You may well imagine a native policy carried out by W. Ayliff with Brownlee as his right hand man. Alternate bursts of spasmodic energy and laissez-faire indolence.
Merriman to Julia Merriman, 26 March '78 quoted in Lewsen, Selections 1870-90, pp.43-4.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

to the conduct of the war and the transportation of women and children has already been noted;¹² now the Argus and the Aborigine's Protection Society turned their interest to Ayliff's labour scheme, criticising particularly the indenturing of children.¹³ Even the Kaffrarian Watchman, which had often criticised the Molteno Ministry for not taking a firm enough line in native policy, now warned against what seemed to be a certain racialism and desire for revenge infecting the Ministry's plans.¹⁴

Much of the impact of such criticism was dulled by the great issue of the Parliamentary Session, the dismissal debate, which together with Defence Bills and the taxation measures needed to finance the war and the proposed Defence measures, occupied the major portion of the Session.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is most interesting to note that Sprigg's disarmament plans were presented in the form of a permissive non-racial, non-discriminatory measure entitled the Bill for the Preservation of Peace within the Colony (commonly known as the Peace Preservation Bill).¹⁶

Article 1 of the Bill provided that the Governor, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, could 'proclaim' certain districts or areas of the colony where it would not be legal to possess arms except

12. See above, pp.182-3.

13. The controversy raised by the issue continued into 1879 and 1880. See C.2482, No. 5: Aborigines Protection Society to Hicks-Beach, 28 June '79.

J.T. Eustace: Letters addressed to the Secretary of the Aborigine's Protection Society, (Cape Town, 1880).

14. Kaffrarian Watchman, lead article, 25 Feb. '78.

15. Theal, X, 115-6. The relevant Acts were: Act 5 - '78, The Cape Yeomanry Act; Act 7 - '78, The Burgher Act; Act 9 - '78, The Cape Mounted Rifles Act; Act 10 - '78, The Volunteer Act.

16. C.2220, Encl. No. 68: Text of the Peace Preservation Act.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

by licence. Article 2 provided that every such proclamation would be published in the Government Gazette and in local newspapers. The remaining articles laid out the procedure for the handing in of arms in proclaimed areas, the issue of licences and the payment of compensation for arms handed in and not returned under licence.¹⁷

The facade of the Bill was soon shattered. Merriman said during the Debate on the Bill that the measure did not go far enough because he was opposed to the Mfengu retaining arms since they could not be trusted with them.¹⁸ Sprigg, in replying, agreed with him. He justified his position by saying that the safety of the blacks, in the light of the ill-feeling between them and the Mfengu, necessitated such a step.¹⁹ As the debate continued, Members of the House began to speak openly about the 'disarmament of the natives'.²⁰

The stricter control of locations and the clampdown on squatting that Sprigg had promised, were embodied in Amendments to the Native Locations Act of 1876. The new Act redefined a location as any collection of more than 5 huts per square mile on private property occupied by non-employees of the owner of the property. Existing locations were allowed to remain, but the Government could and did abolish them by proclamation. There was a procedure for the creation of new locations, but this was difficult because it required Government sanction. Superintendants of locations were empowered to hear all civil cases while Magistrates heard criminal cases unless they went to the Supreme Court.²¹

17. Ibid.

18. The Cape Argus, 18 May '78, Assembly Report for 15 May.

19. The Cape Argus, 21 May '78, Assembly Report for 17 May.

20. See Assembly Reports in The Cape Argus for this period.

21. Averill, p.114.
Theal, X, 136.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

The measure was almost immediately brought into operation and its application in the East London District serves as another example of the 'vigour' of Sprigg's policy. Black squatters and tenant farmers were ruthlessly evicted in this area without any alternative land being provided. This resulted in the increased congestion of existing locations and the absorption of more and more blacks like Oba's people into the labour market. From the whites' point of view, this was a most satisfactory result - land that was urgently needed for the German and Scottish settlers, who had arrived in 1877, was released, and at the same time the shortage of labour was partially relieved.²² In the long run, however, Sprigg was to find that the problem of resettlement became so pressing that waste Crown Lands had to be used for the creation of new Locations, a policy officially embodied in the Native Locations, Lands and Commonage Act of 1879.²³

2. The confiscation of the Ngqika Lands

The eventual outcome of Sprigg's plans for the settlement of the Ngqika and Gcaleka was similarly affected by the sheer weight of numbers and the existing land shortage on the frontier. The traditional policy of confiscation of black lands therefore faced severe limitations from the start. Under the Molteno Ministry, the area between the Kei and the Qora had been marked down for white settlement and only the return of the Gcaleka in December 1877 had prevented the implementation of the scheme.²⁴ We have seen that Sprigg had already indirectly promised

22. The Cape Argus, 11 June '78.
De Kiewiet, pp.176-7.
Theal, X, 136-7.

23. Averill, p.114.

24. See above, pp.117-8, 136-7.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

rebel Ngqika lands to the colonists. In the debate on the annexation of Gcalekaland during the session, while confirming his promise of Ngqika rebel lands, Sprigg seemed to be backtracking on white settlement in Gcalekaland.²⁵ Averill cites evidence that the change was due to pressure from Frere, who was planning his Transkeian Council, and to a Cabinet split, Laing, the Commissioner of Crown Lands being strongly opposed to a white settlement. Sprigg, realising how unpopular the abandonment of the scheme would be, did not shut the door on white settlement in Gcalekaland until the last day of the Session.²⁶ Then he announced that the Government proposed to move the "loyal" Ngqika of Chiefs Feni, Kona and the recently deceased Anta as well as the followers of Tyala, across the Kei. Because their lands were to be divided into European farms, there would be no European farms in Gcalekaland.²⁷

But the opposition from Parliamentarians and colonists to the loss of prospects in Gcalekaland was so great, and apart from anything else Sprigg sympathised with their view, that Sprigg indicated on a tour of the Eastern Districts that he undertook after the Session, that he had reverted to a policy of white settlement in Gcalekaland.²⁸

Soon after the prorogation of Parliament, two Land Boards were appointed, the one to arrange for the division of the Ngqika location into European farms and the other, chaired by Colonel Eustace, to demarcate Gcalekaland into European farms and black locations.²⁹ In

25. Saunders, "Annexation", p.183.

26. Averill, pp. 115-6.

27. The Cape Argus, 6 Aug. '78.

28. Averill, pp.115-6.

29. The Cape Argus, 10 Sept. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Gcalekaland all planning was to be carried out with the defence of the European population in mind, a twelve-mile wide belt along the Fingoland border extending from the Kei to the Mbashe being established for white settlement, while a similar buffer area was to be established from the Kei to the first of the locations. These locations were to be limited to 20,000 acres in size, situated in open country to facilitate policing, and to be separated one from the other where possible by European settlements.³⁰

The Ministry had difficulty in justifying the removal of the 'loyal' Ngqika convincingly. Ayliff was to suggest in all seriousness that the main reason for the move was the necessity of removing the Ngqika from the influence of drink,³¹ while Sprigg was later to say that the advantages of the new system of village settlement, closer magisterial supervision, and the imminent introduction of individual tenure outweighed any emotional attachment to their old land that the Ngqika might have had. For the black man, he said, conditions in South Africa were better "than in any other country of mixed European and African population".³² Sprigg was certainly determined to push the move through and so instructed Wright and Brownlee who were in charge of the move not to allow the Ngqika to "talk" or delay a season.³³

The "loyal" Ngqika who had not been consulted about their prospective removal, did not agree with Sprigg. When Wright informed the Ngqika at Greytown of their fate on 6th August, they expressed their amazement at the arbitrary nature of the Government's plan and the bluntness with

30. The Cape Argus, 3 Sept. '78.
Averill, p.117.

31. C.2482, Encl. 4 No. 152: Ayliff Memo., n.d. (1879).

32. Saunders, "Annexation", p.226.

33. The Cape Argus, 3 Sept. '78.
Averill, p.117.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

which it was conveyed, particularly that they were expressly forbidden to discuss the move.³⁴ Tyala said that he would rather die than be moved, and in fact the tragic old man died the day before the move began.³⁵ Anta's people informed by Brownlee of the move later in the month, were similarly aghast.³⁶ A Free Press Correspondent reported that they looked on themselves as cowards for not fighting (as indeed they were regarded by those who had fought) and regretted their neutrality.³⁷ John Cumming, the missionary at Emgwali reported that perhaps half the total number of 'loyal' Ngqika scattered and sought refuge on Ciskeian farms in order to avoid the move.³⁸

Unmoved by opposition from the press and Ngqika alike, the Government went ahead, and consequently the comfort of their charges suffered at the expense of the attempt to meet the deadline.³⁹ In early September the Greytown people were settled in 2 locations of 20,000 acres each in the new district of Kentani, and Anta's people followed to two other locations of the same size later in the month. In all, a total of 7664 people including 1019 men, and 6665 cattle, were settled in the new area.⁴⁰ Land was set aside for those who were working on contract

34. The Cape Argus, 3 Sept. '78.

35. Cape Archives, Cumming Papers, Correspondence Box, folder 5 1846-83: Cumming to Dr MacGill, printed in circular from United Presbyterian Mission House, 7 Nov. '78. Brownlee, Reminiscences, pp.364-5.

36. C.2220, Encl. 79: C. Brownlee to S.N.A., 5 Sept. '78. The Cape Argus, lead article, 17 Sept. '78.

37. The Cape Argus, 17 Sept. '78.

38. Cape Archives, Cumming Papers, Correspondence Box, folder 5 1846-83: Cumming to Dr MacGill, printed in circular from United Presbyterian Mission House, 7 Nov. '78.

39. Ibid. Averill, p.117 suggests the rush was required because Sprigg wished to call an election, before which he wanted the Ngqika location cleared and the way to European farms open.

40. N.A. 2: Wright to S.N.A., 28 Sept. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

in the Colony. Matthew Blyth was appointed Chief Magistrate of the new district of the Transkei, an area comprising Fingoland, the Idutywa Reserve and Gcalekaland.⁴¹

Since the move had been hurried, the Ngqika were not forced to immediately adopt the village system but were allowed to erect temporary huts while the surveying of the ten acre lots proceeded.⁴² Blyth announced the new regulations to the assembled Ngqika on 30th September on the occasion of the introduction of M.B. Shaw, son of Rev. William Shaw, as first magistrate of the District of Kentani. No liquor sales were to be allowed. Certain rights connected with circumcision and initiation were prohibited. A strict pass system was to be enforced and a hut tax of 10 shillings was to be imposed from June 1879. There was to be a district police force and the government was to receive fines in civil cases, effectively ending the chief's imisila. All cases were to be heard by the magistrate, and in order to bring a case a complainant would have to deposit 10 shillings and a further ten shillings if the case went on appeal. The loser of the case would pay the court dues.

41. Sprigg did not bring into force the Act for the annexation of Fingoland, the Idutywa and Nomansland which had received Royal Assent early in 1878, for he hoped to be able to introduce legislation for the annexation of Gcalekaland, Bomvanaland and Thembuland soon. Thus Sprigg's government rationalised its administration of areas under its control East of the Kei without regard to the stages they had reached along the road to annexation. Apart from the Chief Magistracy of the Transkei, the Chief Magistracy of Thembuland was formed out of Thembuland, Bomvanaland and Emigrant Thembuland, and the Gatberg and Xesibe territory was added to Nomansland to form the chief Magistracy of Griqualand East.
C.O.3299: Under Secretary of Native Affairs to Col. Sec., 12 Dec. '78. Saunders, "Annexation", p.183.
42. Theal comments that ten acres was "much more than was necessary, as the district was one of the most fertile in South Africa." Theal, X, 137. Nevertheless, the blacks did not take up the ten acre lots, and the history of labour migrancy would tend to suggest that, with population increase, the land granted was no more than was necessary to ensure an adequate flow of labour.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Finally, those people who had been permitted by Wright in January to retain their arms, would now have to submit to disarmament.⁴³

The Ngqika were too shattered by the war to think of resisting, but their attitude was clear from the general silence with which the regulations were received and the odd muted protests that were raised. Chief Feni asked to be allowed to purchase land explaining that the blacks did not wish to live in villages but to live as they had always done in the open. In the following years, opposition to the village system remained constant.⁴⁴

Although the Government did provide seed and ploughs, feeding the Ngqika before their first crop was a problem. But in line with previous practice, Ayliff had given Blyth instructions that there were to be no charity hand outs to any able bodied adults - they were to obtain food only for labour. Ayliff went as far as to instruct Blyth only to hand out food to the disabled on a promise of repayment at the first harvest. He did however, make some concession to the plight of the Ngqika, asking Blyth not to exact the 10 shillings court dues while the people remained in straightened circumstances.⁴⁵

3. The resettlement of the Gcaleka

After the Battle of Kentani, still acting as Chief Magistrate of Gcalekaland, Eustace located himself at Ibeka and settled Bhotomane and Maphasa's people in locations close by. In June there were 229 people in Bhotomane's location and 1381 in Maphasa's.⁴⁶ There had, however, been more Gcalekas who had surrendered to Eustace and had been resettled

43. N.A. 1: Blyth to S.N.A., 2 Oct. '78, and attached minutes of meeting.

44. Ibid.; C.2482, Encls.No. 138: Blyth to S.N.A., 7 July, 8 Sept. '79.

45. N.A. 1: W. Ayliff to Blyth, 16 Oct. '78.

46. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 18 June '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

earlier in the year, but who had subsequently dispersed again because of hunger. It is instructive to note that the Gcaleka preferred working for neighbouring tribesmen rather than on the Public Works and that the women even went to the extent of working for the Mfengu. Migratory Labour as it came to be known, was resisted for as long as possible.⁴⁷

In May, William Ayliff complained that so few Gcaleka had given themselves up, and recommended that they be given a short period of grace before which the rest of the land would be given out. His brother James, now Chief Magistrate of Fingoland, suggested that Mfengu be allowed to occupy this land, but William said that he had serious reservations about contributing further to the arrogance of the Mfengu. He was only prepared to consider such a proposal if the Mfengu exchanged land in the Colony for their new land. Otherwise he favoured European agriculturalists placed in the Transkei for the purpose of frontier defence.⁴⁸ The idea of using the Transkei as a dumping ground for unwanted Ciskeian blacks in order to release land for Whites, was fast taking hold of the official mind.

In June Eustace wrote to Ayliff pleading for instructions. He complained that he had received no instructions at all since his appointment in December as Chief Magistrate of Gcalekaland and explained that conditions were driving away those who had surrendered. He argued that the Government owed it to Maphasa's people, who had suffered extensively during the war for their support of the Government, to give them some certainty of tenure. He recommended that they should not again be removed, but should be allowed to resettle where they were,

47. Ibid; N.A. 2: Eustace to W. Ayliff, 26 April '78.

48. N.A. 1: Memo. on letter of Chief Magistrate of Fingoland regarding the occupation of Gcalekaland, 31 May '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

especially since he had assumed that the land from the Qora to the Mbashe was for Gcaleka settlement and had consequently assured the Gcaleka that they would not be moved for some time, if at all.⁴⁹

In reply, Ayliff informed Eustace that Thesiger had been instructed to move the Gcaleka in question back to what had been Seyolo's location in the Colony. He said this move was part of overall military strategy which aimed to prevent the elusive Sarhili being informed of military movements.⁵⁰ Eustace objected to the move, but in the meanwhile new orders had been issued. This time Eustace himself was to take charge of move of the Gcaleka to Jali's old location and not Seyolo's location.⁵¹ With ill grace, Eustace effected the move in August.⁵² But the removal was in the long run only temporary, for Maphasa was relocated by Brownlee in 1879 at Thuthura where he had resided before the war. Bhotomane and Wapi joined the rest of the Gcaleka in Kentani.⁵³

Although the Gcalekaland Land Board under Eustace surveyed white farms in several areas of Gcalekaland, very few were ever taken up.⁵⁴ In Kentani the Ngqika locations rapidly filled up and then overflowed. First the women and children prisoners of war who had been shipped to the West, returned.⁵⁵ Then the several hundred families of Oba's clan had to be resettled after the sale of Oba's farms.⁵⁶ Rebels who had

49. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 18, 21, 22 June '78.

50. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 21 June '78.

51. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 5 July '78.

52. N.A. 2: Eustace to S.N.A., 23 July, 26 Aug. '78.

53. D.S.A.B., i, 504.
G.19-'86, p.8: Stanford Memo., 19 May '85.

54. In 1883, there were 10 Scotch immigrants near Nthlambe. G8-'83, p.129.

55. See above, p.180, footnote 155.

56. See above, p.178, footnote 145.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

surrendered under amnesty were also allowed to settle there, as were those who had completed their sentence of hard labour. Finally refugees continued to stream back from all parts of the Transkei and even the Colony.⁵⁷ By 1881 pressure on the land was so great that the Ngqika were granted an additional 30 sq. miles of territory adjoining their upper locations. The Ngqika petitioned for even more land, claiming that they had been promised all land between the Kei and the Qora and had never been informed before their move of areas for European settlement. The Scanlen Ministry handed over much of the land designated for European occupation indicating that they had decided to accept the inevitable and give up the idea of European settlement. With the passage of time village settlement and individual tenure, steadily resisted by the Ngqika, were also abandoned.⁵⁸

The settlement of the northern half of Gcalekaland, or the District of Willowvale as it came to be known, followed the same pattern as that of Kentani. On 2 January 1879 F.N. Streatfeild, a commander of Mfengu Levies during the war, was appointed first Magistrate⁵⁹ after Eustace, disgusted at his treatment, refused to take the post. He established his magistracy on the site where he later surveyed and laid out the village of Willowvale.⁶⁰ Lindinxuwa, Sarhili's younger brother, settled in the district in 1879.⁶¹ Sarhili, having fled through

57. Theal, X, 139.

58. G.3-'84, pp.108-9, 115-6.

59. Theal, X, 139.

60. G.13-'80, p.161.

61. G.20-'80, p.46: Streatfeild to Chief Magistrate of Transkei, 31 Dec. 1880. Lindinxuwa's sons maintained that the land was given to their father in token of his loyalty, which is interesting in the light of Melane's story (see p.105, above).
Cory Library, M.S. 1861: ? to Cory, 9 March 1910.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Bomvanaland in 1878, was received by Gwadiso, the Khonjwayo chief. Sarhili remained about a year in Pondoland, but with growing pressure from the Mpondo, he decided to recross the Mthatha into Bomvanaland, where he went into hiding with a few followers.⁶² In 1881 Blyth was instructed by the Scanlen Ministry to offer Sarhili terms of free and unconditional pardon and relocation with his family and immediate followers on the Qora, near Holela. Blyth says he refused, being advised by many of the rebels from the Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81 who had attached themselves to him, and who thought that Sarhili's skill in diplomacy would eventually win back his whole country for him.⁶³ Sarhili certainly continued to petition for relocation in his old country, and the Colonial Government became more and more worried by his influence. In 1883 Sarhili was pardoned anyway and was allowed to settle in the Mbashe valley below the Ncehana River.

However, the presence of Sarhili and 300 Gcaleka in their country paying no taxes while they were taxed, made the Bomvana very discontented. The Colonial Authorities anticipated an impossible situation developing once annexation, which was imminent, took place, and so in 1885 they reconsidered the whole question of Sarhili's position.⁶⁴ They considered it would be impolitic to let Sarhili back into his old country not only because of the influence he still wielded, but also because his authority might devolve on his heir, Sigcawu. W.E. Stanford wrote, indirectly paying tribute to the ageing chief :

62. G.19-'86, p.7: Stanford Memo., 19 May '85.

63. G.19-'86, p.7: Blyth Memo., 9 May '85.

64. G.19-'86, p.1.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

It will be said that Kreli's influence over the Amaxosa is such that place him where you will, he is able to make himself almost as much felt as if actually in the midst of them. This is true. For fifty years Kreli has stood up against the advancing tide and has battled with it.

The wars he has bravely fought, his many personal hairbreath escapes, his wisdom and eloquence in Council, and consummate skill in diplomacy cling like moss to a tree about the person of the old Chieftain, and make him even in adversity, the central figure on the Kaffir political stage. But he is ageing now, and what we must guard against is not so much the influence of his declining years, as the transmission to his son of the Chieftainship unimpaired, and the occupation by Sigcawu of their old country with its historic battlegrounds and traditions.⁶⁵

Sarhili was consequently given Ncehana, Sholora and Mcelwana Locations as a permanent habitation, on condition that he accepted British rule and all its concomitant regulations. The old chief, after some hesitation and unable to manoeuvre any more, accepted, but continued to fear imprisonment on Robben Island until his death at Sholora Mouth in 1892.⁶⁶

4. Disarmament

Disarmament was the most potent factor in the unrest that was to lead to a major attempt to overthrow the alien yoke of white rule almost exactly two years after the end of the war. The few Ngqika who had been

65. G.19-'86, p.9: Stanford Memo., 19 May '85. Sigcawu's great son Gwebinkumbi, was allowed to return to Willowvale in 1907 to join the major part of his people.

66. Soga, Ama-Xosa, p.123. D.S.A.B. i, 688.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

allowed to retain their arms and the Rharhabe remnants in the Colony were disarmed first, and offered no resistance. This was not surprising, for the Xhosa nation's final bid for independence had resulted in their effectual demise as a warrior nation or even as a nation at all.⁶⁷

But when the Government's intention to disarm all the blacks became known, not only was there considerable opposition in the colony, but the Transkei saw the return of the same tension as experienced during the war scare of 1876, and open resistance was narrowly averted. As with Griffith in Basutoland,⁶⁸ many Government officials were either opposed to disarmament on principle or on grounds of expediency. One of the Merriman family friends wrote:

Mr Brownlee says it is all very well for them [the Sprigg Government] to crow over Disarmament at present. They are taking weapons from a people who have just passed under the yoke and on whose necks the foot of Government is at present placed. But wait till they tackle the Transkeian Fingos, he adds - or Gangelizwe's Tembus... or the Basutos and then there may be a different tale to tell.⁶⁹

Prophetic words!

67. To speak of the Xhosa as a nation is incorrect, for historically, they were always disunited and British rule had prompted further division. However, the war came to represent an attempt at a unified Xhosa struggle, which having failed, could never be repeated.
68. Benyon, p.291. Saunders, "Annexation", p.198 cites Blyth as an example of officials who opposed disarmament in private.
69. Merriman Papers, 1878 file No. 55: J. Sievwright to Agnes Merriman, 23 Oct. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

The Act could not in theory be applied east of the Kei before that territory was annexed, but the Gcaleka and Ngqika were disarmed before settlement in Gcalekaland, and other Transkeian groups were asked to surrender their arms 'voluntarily'.⁷⁰ Thus on 23rd September it was announced that all Mfengu and inhabitants of the Idutywa Reserve were to be disarmed.⁷¹ Later the Emigrant Thembu were also informed of their 'voluntary' disarmament. Neither the letter, nor the spirit of the Peace Preservation Act were followed, for the law was not proclaimed in any district in accordance with Articles I and II of the Act, the Act had not provided for Transkeian disarmament, and the non-racial and permissive aspect of the Act were ignored.⁷² However, the blacks were not caught unawares, for their worst fears were merely being confirmed as J.J. Jabavu wrote in December in an interesting letter to the Somerset Advertiser:

From the very outset the natives knew that it has been the intention of the present Government to disarm every black man, merely because he is black, to gain popularity from a section of the colonists, whose aim it is to reduce the natives to nonentity for its own selfish ends.⁷³

70. Saunders, "Annexation", pp.197-9.

71. The Cape Argus, lead article, 23 Nov. '78.

72. Ibid, see also J.T. Jabavu's letter quoted above. That Sprigg was rushing through a measure on his own authority, which was unpopular in the Department of Native Affairs seems to be confirmed by a minute Bright (the Under Secretary) wrote in November, in which he told Blyth he regretted he could not advise him as regards compensation for guns collected, as "nothing whatever is known in this department as to the wishes of Govt. in connection with disarming any of the natives."
N.A. 2: Blyth to S.N.A., 11 Nov. '78, Bright minute.

73. J.T. Jabavu to the Somerset Advertiser (2 letters) printed in The Cape Argus, 10 Dec. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Jabavu protested bitterly about the departure from the law and questioned what circumstances had made it necessary to disarm the Mfengu, 'loyal' Ngqika and Thembu. Compensation for the arms collected was only paid in late 1879 and was at face value, rather than the cost price, increasing the bitterness felt over the move.⁷⁴

Unrest caused by disarmament and the imposition of new Colonial control measures was greater among the Thembu and Emigrant Thembu. We have seen that the attitude of both groups towards British rule was already more than a little ambivalent - in fact the neutrality of Dalasile and Sitokhwe Ndlela, Gecelo and Mathanzima during the war had been an extremely shaky thing.⁷⁵ Sprigg was therefore treading on dangerous ground when he decided to dispense with the formality of being requested by the Emigrant Thembu to become British subjects, before incorporating their land into the Chief Magistracy of Thembuland and placing them under the new system of colonial control.⁷⁶ Even the Bomvanas had been dignified with the token motions of obtaining their consent to accepting colonial control.⁷⁷ In August there were reports that Ngangelizwe had expressed a determination to resist the expected disarmament, and that he had warned the other Thembu Chiefs to be ready to support him. The killing of cattle in Gecelo's location was said to be a prelude ordered by Ngangelizwe to open resistance. William Cumming thought that the atmosphere was like that of the war scare of 1876⁷⁸, and Levey confirmed that there was excitement at Xalanga because it was believed that the

74. C.2482, Encl. No. 138: Blyth to S.N.A., 10 Oct. '79.

75. See above, pp.198-200.

76. Theal, X, 143.

77. See above, p.172, footnote 18.

78. N.A. 158: W. Cumming to Levey, 24 Aug. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

that the Government intended to disarm the Thembu. It was his opinion that if the Governemnt attempted disarmament, there would be resistance.⁷⁹

On 16 September Ayliff met Mathanzima, Gecelo, Ndarhala and Sitokhwe at Cofimvaba to explain the new system to them. The minutes of the meeting give the impression of a muted antagonism to the system on the part of the Thembu. The chiefs were particularly suspicious of a dimunition of their powers.⁸⁰

By October Levey, volatile as ever, felt that he had talked away any reservations and 'misconceptions' the Emigrant Thembu might have had about disarmament,⁸¹ but in November, when he began the 'voluntary' procedure aided by an armed party, he discovered that his earlier apprehensions had been justified. Sitokhwe who had been implicated in encouraging Mfanta to rebel, began to encourage resistance to disarmament and even fired at Levey in what Elliot saw not as an attempt on his life, but as a mark of defiance. Sitokhwe's behaviour had the effect of checking disarmament particularly amongst Gecelo's people, and Levey had to resort to force to complete it. Rumours again began to fly, this time to the effect that the Government intended to take the wives and children of the Thembu away.⁸²

It was not surprising then that Sitokhwe and Gecelo did not arrive to meet Elliot on the occasion of his first visit as Chief Magistrate of Thembuland in December. The Emigrant Thembu at the meeting were discontended and defiant. Mathanzima complained that the Government

79. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 29 Aug. '78.

80. CO.3299: Minutes of a meeting of the Emigrant Thembu with the S.N.A. and C. Brownlee, 16 Sept. '78.

81. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 22 Oct. '78.

82. N.A. 158: Levey to S.N.A., 19 Nov. '78.
N.A. 45: Elliot to S.N.A., 11 Dec. '78.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

had acted arbitrarily in destroying the independence promised to them in 1865, by imposing magisterial control and by disarming them. He asked Elliot to give them an explanation, particularly of disarmament, reminding him that the Emigrant Thembu had not fought the Government during the war. They had kept faith with the Government, but the Government had not kept faith with them.⁸³ Gecelo and Sitokhwe expressed the same grievances when Elliot sought them out.

In a report to Ayliff, Elliot concluded:

There is beyond doubt a great deal of intriguing between Native Tribes going on at the present time, and it is impossible to say what course the Emigrant Thembu may not be induced to adopt.

He implicitly criticised Levey's conduct of the disarmament, but it is unlikely that more tactful handling of the issue would have induced the Emigrant Thembu to swallow the bitter pill of disarmament.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Elliot approved Ayliff's decision to remove Sitokhwe from his chieftainship because of his behaviour, and this step was consequently taken in January.⁸⁵

Sprigg hesitated to disarm the Thembu and the people of Griqualand East, not because of apprehensions of resistance, but because he feared that it would leave them defenceless before the Mpondo, when they were needed by the Colony as allies against that troublesome chiefdom.⁸⁶

It seems that the non-disarmament of the Thembu contributed to the continuation of peace, for without Ngangelizwe's support the Emigrant Thembu were not then prepared to openly resist Colonial rule.

83. N.A. 44: Minutes of a meeting of Major Elliot with the Emigrant Thembu, 2 Dec. '78.
Macquarrie, i, 104.

84. N.A. 45: Elliot to S.N.A., 11 Dec. '78.

85. N.A. 45: Elliot to S.N.A., 30 Dec. '78. ..

86. Saunders, "Annexation", p.199.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Elliot's undoubted influence over Ngangelizwe was also crucial. When Elliot and Ayliff met the Thembu in September to explain to them the new government regulations, Ngangelizwe made special mention of Elliot and his instrumentality in keeping the Thembu on the Colonial side during the war. He said the Thembu looked forward to having their children educated and he himself looked forward to a promised visit to Cape Town with Elliot.⁸⁷ For a while then, the non-disarmament of the Thembu, Ngangelizwe's clientship and the fresh memory of white successes in the recent war restrained those disenchanted with British rule.

5. The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880

However the vigour of Sprigg's policy and the increased momentum of the forward move into the Transkeian Territories brought a new and common consciousness⁸⁸ of what white rule entailed all over the Transkeian Territories. The Emigrant Thembu's cup was full when after disarmament had been followed by the imposition of the hut tax in 1879, there was talk in 1880 of a further house duty of ten shillings. Mathanzima told a Cape official

Government does not say to me like a man I am
going to take this and that privilege from you,
but one by one my rights are stolen in the
dark. Government is a wolf.⁸⁹

He and other Emigrant Thembu chiefs presented a petition against the Thembuland Annexation Bill to the Cape in mid 1880. The petition

87. C.2220, Encl. No. 77 : Ayliff to Frere, 28 Sept. '78.

88. I am indebted for the following account to C. Saunders: "The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81: A Case-Study of Transkeian Resistance to White Control", South African Historical Journal, No. 8, Nov. 1976, pp.32-39.

89. Ibid., quoted p.34.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

was ignored. It seemed to the Emigrant Thembu that annexation was imminent, for they could not anticipate the ramifications of Imperial and Colonial policy that were to delay the implementation of annexation until 1885. The drastic diminution of the chief's powers contained in Sprigg's policy was made clear in St. John's where the confiscation of the Mpondomise Chief's tiger tails, the symbol of his judicial authority, caused great resentment. Finally Sprigg's announcement that he intended to confiscate Morosi's land in Quthing after his isolated rebellion in 1879 brought home the colonial threat to the black's land. Rebellion seemed the only desperate solution to an alien rule which threatened not only the whole fabric of traditional society, but its land as well. Sprigg's announcement of the application of disarmament to the Sotho people in Basutoland in April 1880 was thus both the signal to the Sotho there to rise up and throw off the yoke of a government that had betrayed their hopes, and the signal to the Transkeian peoples not yet beaten into submission, that the same fate awaited them. They therefore decided the moment had come to get rid of Colonial rule, particularly the magistrates who personified the system.

Saunders argues that the Transkeian Rebellion which began in October 1880 presented a more serious challenge to the Cape Colony than the 1877-8 war.⁹⁰ This is true insofar as the potential danger was greater. Imperial help was not available, and most of the F.A.M.P. stationed in the Transkei had been removed to Basutoland. A larger part of the Transkeian Territories was involved than in the 1877-8 war and perhaps a fifth of the population from the Drakensberg to the sea was directly active in the Rebellion.⁹¹

90. Ibid., p.32.

91. Ibid., pp.36-7.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

But the same factors which had prevented a combination of all Transkeian peoples in the 1877-8 war operated again in 1880. Although conspiracy was as popular a theory then as in 1877, there is no more evidence of the existence of such a conspiracy than previously. Chiefdoms and peoples still weighed self-interest before the interest of their race. The Mfengu, despite their bitterness over disarmament, again joined the whites, not least because their record on the frontier made them totally unacceptable allies to other blacks. Elliot was able again to command the support of Ngangelizwe and most of the Thembu again followed his lead. Mqikela had been teetering on the brink of conflict with the whites since his implication in the Griqualand East Rebellion of April 1878, but the way Frere had seized Port St. John's from him in 1879 when he refused to hand it over, persuaded him that he had more to lose than to gain by interference. Nqwiliso, like Ngangelizwe, owed much to white support and had not been subjected to white rule, so he gave active support to his allies. Small chiefdoms like the Bhaca who hoped for white support in their attempts to become more independent of the Mpondo also aided the whites. Finally, the Xhosa had been too effectively crushed in the three years before to contemplate assisting the rebels.⁹²

Thus the Rebellion although it involved the Sotho of Griqualand East, the Mpondomise, Sitokhwe and Gecelo of the Emigrant Thembu, the Qwathi and some minor Thembu chiefs, was within the power of the Colony which had strengthened its defensive powers after the 1877-8 war, and was crushed by the end of February 1881.⁹³

92. Ibid., p.37.

93. Ibid., p.38.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

Its significance as an example of black resistance may be gauged by the fact that although far shorter than the 1877-8 war, casualties were almost as high, and by the fact that it cost £1, 250,000 to suppress as compared with the total Imperial and Colonial expenses in 1877-8 of almost £1,800,000.⁹⁴ Then too, coming so soon after the war of Ngcayecibi the Rebellion ensured that a major rethink of colonial policy took place. Sprigg's Ministry was rightly blamed for both the Transkeian and Basutoland Rebellions and was replaced by Scanlen's Ministry in May 1881. The proposed annexation of Gcalekaland and Thembuland which might have been expected to be followed by the annexation of Pondoland, was abandoned for the moment as the colony lost confidence in its ability to rule the native territories. By 1883 the Cape Government had reached the conclusion that all native territories east of the Kei should be handed over to direct British rule.⁹⁵

The Upington Ministry came to office in 1884 on the platform that this should not happen and so no such transfer took place. Gcalekaland and Thembuland were annexed in 1885 as their position could not be allowed to remain so anomalous, and as Imperial opposition was withdrawn. But it was by then accepted that the Transkeian Territories should become a reserve separately ruled from the Colony in which no further land should be alienated from the blacks.⁹⁶ The widespread inroads by white farmers on the Western Transkei as a result of the 1880-1 rebellion were consequently the last expropriation of black land by whites and with the

94. Ibid., p.38. Theal, X, 134.

95. C. Saunders: "The Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-81". S.A.H.J., No. 8, Nov. 1976, p.39.

96. Ibid.

THE TRANSKEI 1878-1881: SETTLEMENT AND UNSETTLEMENT

changes made after the 1877-8 war, served to set the pattern of land ownership that obtained well into the Twentieth Century.⁹⁷ Likewise the pattern of administration of the Transkei was set after the Rebellion, some of the far-reaching changes being made as a result of the Report of the Native Laws Commission of 1883,⁹⁸ a commission whose work the Rebellion had done much to stimulate.

97. See Averill, Ch. VII, pp.150-200 for details.

98. G.4-'83: Report and Proceedings with Appendices, of the Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs.

CONCLUSION

The War of Ngcayecibi falls very definitely within the hundred-year tradition of Xhosa armed resistance to white encroachment and white rule. For the Eastern Xhosa, the Gcaleka, it was a reaction to the slow constriction of Gcaleka independence by the whites, while for part of the Western Xhosa, the Ngqika, who had experienced British rule and then had been allowed to resume a state of quasi-autonomy, it was both an act of desperation and a conscious attempt to throw off white rule altogether. The failure of the Xhosa to present a united front, and the response of other Ciskeian and Transkeian chiefdoms to the war, is evidence that the blacks had developed little sense of racial identity or common interest in the face of colonial rule. The responses of individual chiefs and their people to the war were determined by numerous factors, amongst which were how far a particular chiefdom was along the road of colonial rule, the character of the individual chief, perceptions of self-interest, the influence of colonial agents and missionaries and inter- and intra-tribal politics.

Contrary to what De Kiewiet seems to imply, political factors are equally if not more important than economic factors in explaining why the Gcaleka fought. Gcalekaland was overcrowded, there was a shortage of food and some measure of economic deprivation. But the Gcaleka had yet to be driven to labour on a large scale for the whites, and Sarhili himself encouraged the overcrowding in an attempt to lend weight to his pleas for more land and to reinforce his political and military muscle vis-a-vis neighbouring chiefdoms.

On numerous occasions in the past - when his father was

callously killed at colonial hands in 1835, when Gcalekaland was invaded on dubious grounds during the Seventh and Eighth Frontier Wars, and when he was driven across the Mbashe in 1858 on unfounded suspicion of having masterminded the Cattle Killing - Sarhili had had an equal, if not greater reason for fighting the whites. But as informants stressed and his actions confirm, Sarhili consciously strove to avoid war with the whites in the knowledge that war would prove disastrous to Gcaleka independence and perhaps even to the existence of the chiefdom. Unfortunately for Sarhili and the Gcaleka, the maintenance of a strong, independent Gcaleka chiefdom was at variance with colonial attitudes and official colonial policy: Sarhili was viewed with intense suspicion and his continued existence as an independent chief was seen as prejudicial to frontier security. Brownlee's "civilising mission" therefore sought subtly (and on occasion not so subtly) to undermine both Sarhili's position and Gcaleka independence. Gcaleka independence and advancing white rule were bound to clash.

The Gcaleka-Thembu quarrel is a classic example of how inter-tribal conflict became entangled with the response of blacks to white pressures. The Colonial Authorities saw the security of the frontier as necessitating intervention in the conflict; but instead of acting as impartial arbitrators, the fear of a renascent Gcaleka power under Sarhili determined that the Thembu should be drawn within the orbit of the Colony, first as allies, and then as subjects. In turn, the Thembu, misunderstanding the nature of colonial rule, willingly looked to it to protect them against the Gcaleka and generally to advance Thembu interests.

Sarhili was only too well aware of the discrimination he and his people suffered at the hands of the Colony. He had only to look at the Mfengu living and thriving on his former territory to see the personification of that discrimination. While refusing to be provoked into open defiance and, while maintaining his customary courtesy to all whites, Sarhili continued to employ his supreme diplomatic skill in resisting the pressures exerted on his people. In the cat-and-mouse game he played with the Colonial Authorities, he managed not only to keep the Gcaleka-Thembu boundary question open for a number of years, but actually to wring concessions from the unwilling hands of the Colony.

However, as pressures on the Gcaleka increased, the tribe became divided. The politicking that took place at the end of 1876 and the beginning of 1877 was partly the product of traditional rivalries and partly the product of differing responses to Colonial pressures. The minority "progressive" element was favourably inclined to western institutions and British rule, although Maphasa was predominantly motivated by self-interest when he advocated the reception of the Gcaleka under British rule. The majority conservative party wished to preserve traditional cultural and political forms and were increasingly inclined to fight those forces which seemed to be standing in the way of a return to pristine Gcaleka power, the Mfengu and the whites. Sarhili was caught between the two camps, for he shared the ideals of the conservatives but foresaw that their methods could only bring disaster to his people. Soga's contention that Sarhili entirely washed his hands of the war cannot be sustained, but it must be pointed out that Sarhili made his opposition to the war

quite clear and only finally bowed to the majority opinion of the chiefdom after he had postponed the war once at the news of Maphasa's intended defection, and when the war was virtually inevitable.

The Mfengu must accept some of the blame for the war. They shamelessly used the support of their white allies to provoke the Gcaleka and one cannot escape the conclusion that many, at a time of overcrowding, looked forward to a war in the expectation of the same sort of rewards that they had received for participation in previous frontier wars. At the same time, it should be noted, as Moyer has pointed out for an earlier period, that they fought for substantially the same reasons as the whites.

While frontier opinion, in a frenzy of panic, was all for firm measures with Sarhili, and while men like James Ayliff and Bowker saw the Gcaleka incursions into Fingoland as an opportunity to expand colonial rule over Gcalekaland, leading officials, according to their lights, did much to prevent a war. Frere's role in this respect is particularly striking. But a resolution of the immediate crisis would have left the more general one unsolved and Frere, who began after some months to see the contribution the war could make to his Federation plans, did foresee the necessity for eventually coming to grips with Sarhili and the Gcaleka.

Many Gcaleka, remembering the 1872 war, did not really believe that the whites would interfere if they launched an attack on the Mfengu. When they were disabused of this illusion, they launched a close-formation, head-on attack on Ibeka. They did this because they were over-confident and trusted to the advice of their diviners and prophetesses that such atypical tactics would enable

them to sweep aside this impediment to their goal. Poorly armed and unable to employ those arms they had effectively, they fell victim to the combination of the superior fire-power of the carefully deployed whites and the skirmishing skills of their Mfengu allies.

After the battle of Ibeka, the war was characterised by Gcaleka resistance to the invasion and occupation of their land by the enemy allies. The Gcaleka made a strategic retreat taking, in the traditional fashion, their women and children to safety before returning to prevent the white settlement of Gcalekaland and the relocation of Maphasa. Very few, except some members of the peace party, like Bhotomane and Maki, responded to the whites' amnesty. Sarhili made a forlorn attempt to negotiate on the basis of a return to the status quo ante-bellum, but the young firebrand Khiva and his like were for a continuation of the struggle, and so Sarhili sent him on a mission to obtain the aid of the Rharhabe.

Ngqika opinion was more completely split than ever before. A prominent group of Ngqika councillors and chiefs lead by Tyala counselled against war, but Sandile, who in the previous ten years had recovered much of his power, felt compelled to support the Paramountcy in its struggle, as well as desiring to throw off white rule altogether. The resilience of traditional Xhosa society and its institutions and Sandile's determined espousal of them is illustrated by this decision. The success of the colonial divide and rule strategy and the numerous other factors that determined the black responses are illustrated in the response of other Ciskeian and Transkeian chiefdoms to the war.

The late response of Seyolo, Jali and Delima and of portions

of Kama and Toyise's people to Sandile's call for aid, was clearly a measure of the desperation of the colonial blacks, for by then the military superiority of the whites and their allies was plainly to be seen. It is clear that economic adversity, provocation by the colonists and Mfengu, the suffering of blood relatives and, above all, a dislike of colonial rule, were more than the blacks could bear, unless there was some exceptional restraining influence. In Tini Maqomo and Gungubele's case, the response of the whites to the two chiefs' discontent and the unrest amongst their followers drove them both into open rebellion. In Tini's case, the whites explicitly aimed to deprive him of his land, while in Gungubele's case this was implicit. In the case of Oba, the whites obviously sought to do the same thing but the foresight of Nightingale and the presence of Theal was perhaps the deciding factor in delaying and limiting the response of Oba's people to Sandile's call. Thus the excuse for a colonial campaign was not forthcoming, though Oba lost most of his land nevertheless. Likewise, the Rev. Nauhaus had a strong influence on Siwani and encouraged him to collaborate with the whites. The death of Toyise, Kama's Christianity and Anta's old age were factors limiting the response of their followers. Whilst most of the educated elite had adopted certain aspects of Western culture, they too felt the plight of their people keenly, and those like Dukwana articulated their motive for joining the rebels not as a rejection of Christianity, but as an espousal of Xhosa nationalism in the face of white pressures.

Of the Transkeian chiefdoms, the response of the Thembu was most crucial to the outcome of the war. Both the Thembu

and Emigrant Thembu had manifested their discontent with colonial rule in 1876, but the restoration of Ngangelizwe to the Paramountcy removed their most tangible grievance and so temporarily defused their discontent. Ngangelizwe was now not only indebted in the past to the whites for protection from the Gcaleka, the Mpondo and the Mpondomise, but also in the present for the enjoyment of his position and he sought to retain official favour by demonstrating undivided loyalty to the Colony. Hence he responded to Elliot's call to bring out the Thembu.

Despite the fragmented nature of the Thembu Paramountcy, Ngangelizwe's lead, plus the failure of the Gcaleka, and later the Ngqika, to meet with any success, ensured that the rest of the Thembu and Emigrant Thembu, save Sitokhwe Tyhali, either actively collaborated with the whites or remained neutral. British rule was not as yet long established, far-flung or intolerable enough to forge a common black identity overriding sectional differences and the obvious military superiority of the whites and their allies. Self-interest was the main guideline in responding to the war.

If this was true of the Thembu, it was even more true of the rest of the Transkei. There was great sympathy with Sarhili and the Gcaleka and they were given succour and refuge, especially by those who, like Moni and Gwadiso, had blood ties with them, but there was little incentive to join in a common struggle. Where individuals like Nqwiliso and Mhlontlo collaborated with the whites, it was in pursuance of self-interest, and even Nqwiliso did not bring himself to betray Sarhili. Geographical distance made any effective combination of the Basotho and Zulu with the Gcaleka and Rharhabe little less than an impossibility, and the Basotho were not yet disenchanted

enough with colonial rule to resort to a strategy of simultaneous revolt.

That there was little effective co-ordination between those who did fight may be explained partly by the division not only between chiefdoms but between progressives and conservatives within individual chiefdoms, and partly by the fact that many blacks who went into open rebellion only did so when provoked by colonial campaigns launched against them.

The policy of the Sprigg Ministry was not a radical departure from the Molteno Ministry's policy, particularly from the policy that seemed to be developing during the war. Nevertheless, it was foolishly precipitate and arbitrary, and rapidly inflamed existing dissatisfaction with colonial rule until the Transkeian Rebellion of 1880-1 and the Basutoland Gun War were precipitated. The Xhosa, uprooted from most of their Ciskeian lands and relocated in only a portion of Gcalekaland, were left as a totally crushed people by the War of Ngcayecibi. The hundred years armed struggle against white expansion and white rule came to an end for them in 1878.

A final word of conclusion. Writing in Grahamstown on the War of Ngcayecibi in its centenary year was in many respects to experience the sensation of *deja vu*. There has been no fundamental change in racial attitudes "on the frontier" and there are striking parallels between the Cape Governmental policies, and the arguments advanced for them, adopted in the settlement after the war (which, as we have seen, were really only an extension of those in operation before the war) and the policies of the present South African Government.

APPENDIX I.REPORT ON FIELDWORK.

Any kind of thorough attempt to gather oral tradition from the descendents of the many chiefdoms involved in the war would have required far more time and greater resources than I had at my disposal. I therefore aimed only to take a quick sampling of oral tradition from amongst the Gcaleka and Ngqika peoples of the Willowvale and Kentani districts of Transkei. Even such a limited assignment ought properly to be stretched over several weeks, if not months, to allow time for the fieldworker to observe the customary traditional forms of social intercourse and to thereby establish himself amongst the people with whom he is working. The assistance of Jeffrey Peires, who suggested the names of several informants he had found knowledgeable on earlier Xhosa history, and the invaluable aid and guidance rendered by my interpreter, Alcott Blaauw, who both knew and was known by many of the people I wished to interview, smoothed my way considerably and enabled me to achieve a fair amount in two weeks of concentrated interviewing, despite my inability to speak or write Xhosa.

All interviews were tape-recorded. Informants seemed to show no aversion to this practice, possibly because many of them had been interviewed in this way before. Mr Blaauw gave a running translation during the interview and this was checked and corrected when the tapes were transcribed. The names of the most useful informants are given below. From the brevity of the list, it may be inferred that most informants actually contacted had little to

offer, and that the setting up of interviews with potential informants is a process requiring much time and patience.

WILLOVALE DISTRICT.

The most useful interview of the whole trip was conducted with Mr Nonho Cyril Melane of Qwaninga Location, Willowvale District. Mr Melane, whose father was a young man in Sarhili's bodyguard at the time of the War of Ngcayecibi, was able to recite not only a detailed account of the origins of the war, the bare outlines of which most informed Xhosa know, but also, uniquely, a detailed and illuminating account of the progress of the war from the Xhosa side. Although literate, Mr Melane has channelled his interest in history into transmitting exactly the stories passed down to him by his father and others, and both Moyer and Peires have found him extremely useful.

Mr Makasi, the Willowvale Inspector of Education, referred me to Mr Mda-Mda of Nyokana Store, Nyokana Location, Willowvale District. Mr Mda-Mda, like Mr Melane, displayed a special interest in the history of his people. Previously having practised as an attorney, Mr Mda-Mda has read all the available accounts of Xhosa history. But he has also assimilated tradition through sources such as the late Chief England Bhotomane, whom he knew well, and Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe. The interview was therefore of special interest and produced several important points.

KENTANI DISTRICT.

A Mr Jonas of Engcobcobo, who was known to Mr Blaauw, set up an interview with Sub-Headman Z. Fihla of Thuthura Location No. 4, Kentani District. Sub-Headman Fihla, a Tsonyana and direct descendant of the Fihla involved in the beer-drink at Ngcayecibi's Kraal, had a

useful knowledge of local history. The Reverend Hugh Mason Nikani of Kentani, who was referred to me by Peires, was most willing to help but unfortunately those people he suggested I interview were either away or knew little of the period.

BUTTERWORTH.

Mr Cordwell Manona, headmaster of the Lamplough High School, directed us to Mr Thomas Bikitsha of Zozulwana Location, Butterworth. Mr Bikitsha, born in 1890, is the grandson in the right hand house of Veldtman Bikitsha, the renowned Mfengu leader, and speaks good English. Ndawongqola Qeqe, ritual head of the Qawuka, had temporarily left Shixini Location, Willowvale District, where he resides, and was working in Butterworth when we interviewed him at the Butterworth Hostels.

RHODES UNIVERSITY.

Chief S.M. Burns-Ncamashe was attached to the Institute of Social and Economic Research in 1977 and I was therefore able to interview one of the greatest living authorities on Xhosa history whilst he was there. Chief Burns-Ncamashe, Chief of the Gwali, praise-singer to the late Paramount Archibald Velile Sandile and a former Minister of Education of the Ciskei, cleared up several important points for me.

If I might generalise on such limited experience, the sad truth is that there is a disturbing and constant "wastage" of good informants through old age, while seemingly, oral tradition is no longer actively passed on. For example, two of the informants Peires had suggested might be most useful to me

Chief England Bhotomane, the son of Sarhili's councillor Bhotomane, universally considered as the greatest traditional authority, had passed away, whilst the powers of James Kepe, a Tsonyana councillor of Thuthura Location, Kentani District, had failed in the short space of time between Peires' fieldwork in 1975 and mine in 1977.

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