

THE FORMULATION OF
MODERN POWER CONFIGURATIONS
IN THE KEISKAMMAHOEK DISTRICT
OF THE CISKEI FROM C.1948
TO THE PRESENT

T H E S I S

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ABSTRACT

Much of the available documentation, and the multiple oral testimonies collected for this thesis agree that the most important changes that have occurred in Keiskammahoek district over the past half century resulted from the implementation of the government's conservationist policy known as betterment. The work is thus dominated by a wide-ranging look at betterment in Keiskammahoek.

The thesis is arranged chronologically, and each of the successive periods designated is analysed in terms of power. The first period considered is c.1920-c.1936; this was the time during which betterment policy was conceived. The key question that is posed here is why the policy was formed. Foucault's idea of power/knowledge features prominently in answering this question.

For all of the remaining periods a conspicuously important power relation (unequal relationship) is chosen, and the analyses consist of plotting the histories of the various relations. The first of these periods is that which preceded the implementation of betterment in the district, i.e. c.1936-1960. Since multi-form resistance against betterment characterised this period, the power relation considered is that between the state and the various communities of Keiskammahoek.

Next, attention is given to the actual implementation of betterment in the district. Because betterment affected locations in which land was held communally so differently from locations in which land was held under title, these two categories of location are analysed

separately. In communal locations, a power relation spawned by betterment that has come to dominate life is that between village neighbours. In the other category of location, betterment has often further differentiated the power relation between title-deed holders and non title-deed holders.

The thesis is not exclusively devoted to betterment. The 1970s saw many people being forcibly removed to Keiskammahoek. The final section of the work examines these events in relation to the changing economy of South Africa. In this section the power relation that is deemed important is that between the employed and unemployed.

The overall aim of the thesis then is to give an indication of the variety of forms or configurations of power that run through modern-day Keiskammahoek.

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Usually the typist of a thesis does little more than type; in this case however, the typist played a very significant role. Not only has my mother typed both competently and patiently, but she has also

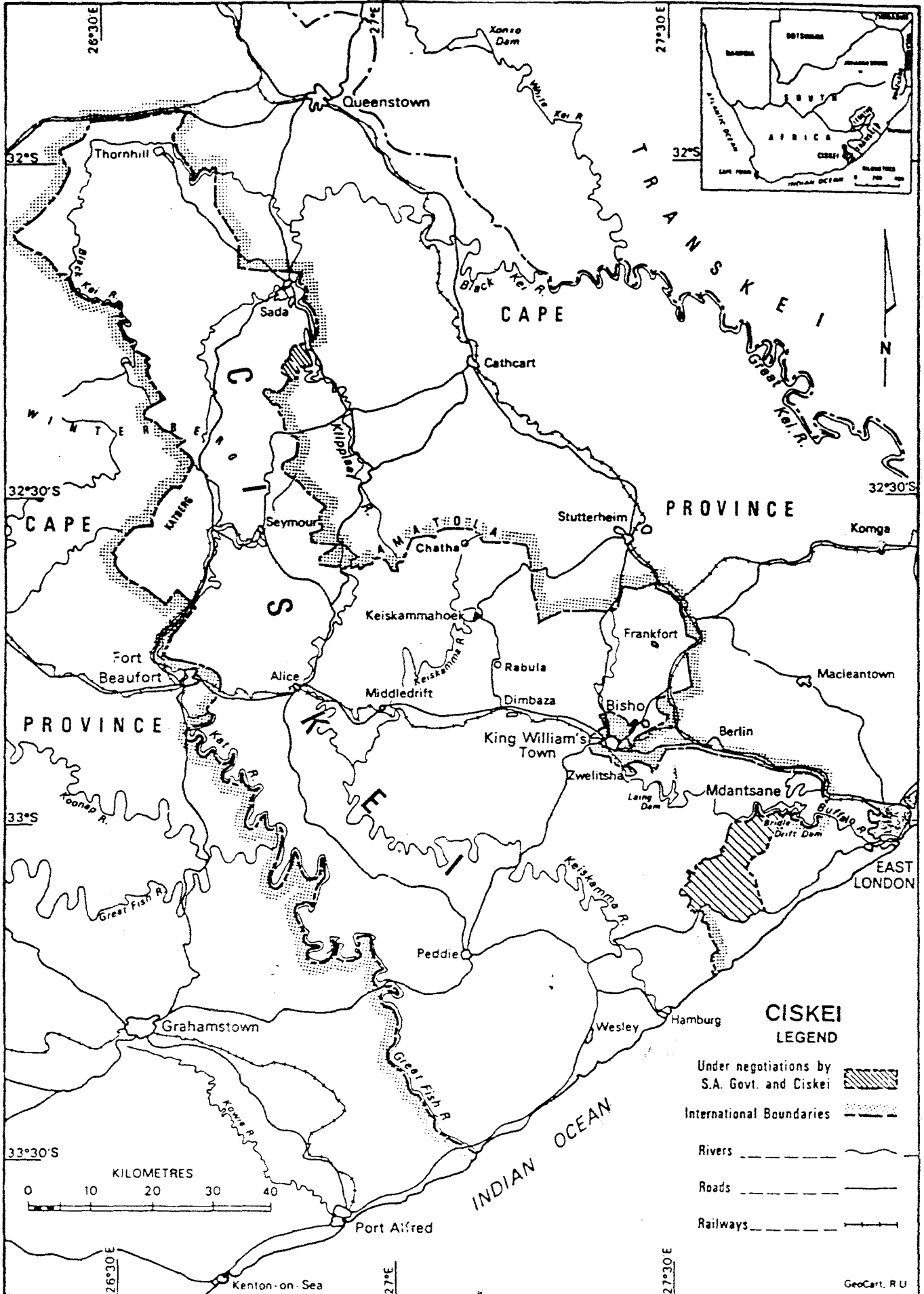
continually encouraged me to press forward with my ideas.

Lastly, a special word of thanks to Lise Schroeder for her companionship, support and critical commentary.

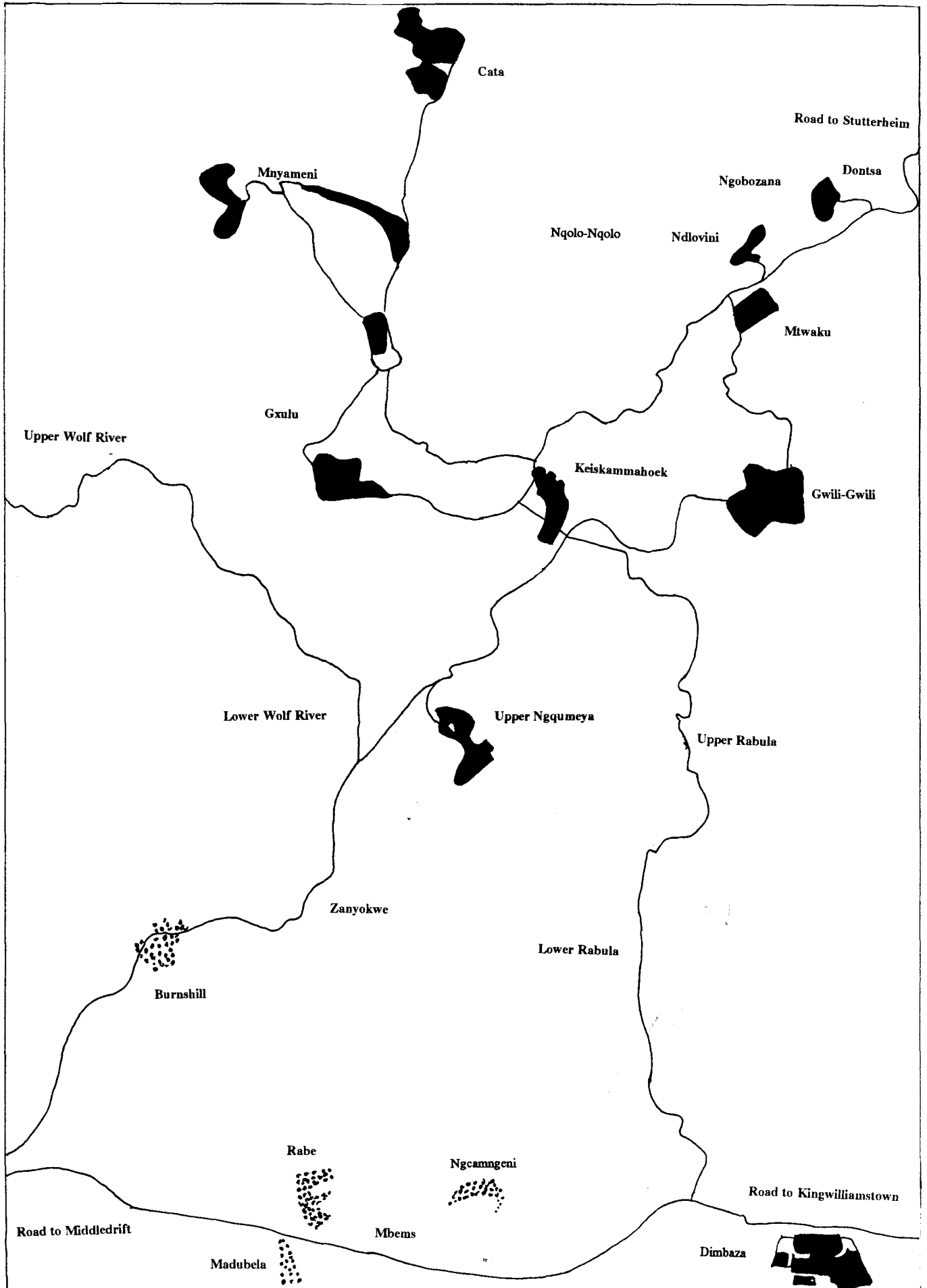
[P]ower isn't localised in the State apparatus and ... nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatus, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed.

Michel Foucault
Power/Knowledge: selected
interviews and other writings,
1972-1977 (1980), Harvester
Press: Brighton, 60.

MAP 1: CISKEI



MAP 2: KEISKAMMAHOEK DISTRICT



INTRODUCTION

Geographical and historical basics

Keiskammahoek district is situated in Ciskei, South Africa. It lies about 80 kilometres north-west of East London, 40 kilometres north-west of Kingwilliamstown and 30 kilometres south-east of Stutterheim.¹ The district covers about 350 square kilometres of hilly terrain, surrounded by an almost complete ring of heights, broken only in the south west. The landscape is undulating despite its forming a natural basin, carved out by the winding Keiskammahoek river. The area experiences a humid sub-tropical climate and usually enjoys a moderate rainfall. The population density of the district is very high.

In the early nineteenth century Keiskammahoek district was occupied by the Ngqika, under Chief Ngqika who was based at Burnshill (some 14 kilometres south-west of present day Keiskammahoek¹ village).² The mid-century Mlangeni war (1850-1853) with the Cape Colony resulted in the expulsion of the Ngqika from the district. Keiskammahoek was then declared a 'Royal Reserve' in which the colonial authorities encouraged dense settlement by 'loyal Natives' and whites. Many Fingo³ groupings subsequently moved into the district from the south.

¹See map 1 on page 2.

²For the precise positions of the various villages and locations, see map 2 on page 3.

³I am fully aware of the high emotion currently involved in the naming of these people. I write 'Fingo' (as opposed to 'Mfengu') not to concur with Webster/Cobbing - I have serious difficulties with core aspects of the anti-'mfecane' writings - but rather to demonstrate my

According to traditions, it was the chiefs of the various groupings who decided what type of tenure would pertain to their areas of jurisdiction. (In Burnshill however, it was a missionary, Rev. Laing, who insisted that a surveyed quitrent system be installed in that location).⁴ This accounts for the fact that various systems of land tenure co-exist within the district. In the 1860s there was a flurry of surveying activity and many people were issued with title-deeds. From the late 1930s yet another form of tenure, Trust tenure, became operative.⁵

Historiographical basics

Although there has been academic involvement in Keiskammahoek since the 1920s it has been intensive over short periods, and virtually non-existent during the intervening times. Furthermore, the various research teams have generally confined their attentions to specific areas of the district. In the 1920s, Dr Schonland led botanical research on the north-eastern ridges of Mnyameni. The most well-known research conducted in the district was undertaken in the late 1940s by a group of Rhodes University academics known as the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey team. This multi-disciplinary group focused its attention on the locations of Cata, Ngqumeya, Rabula and Burnshill.

awareness of the debate.

⁴The term location is used to denote an administrative unit of the district, whereas the term village will refer to concentrated settlements.

⁵The material on which this subsection is based was derived from: Houghton, D and Walton, E Economy of a native reserve (1952), Shooter and Shooter: Pietermaritzburg, 1-6; Mills, M and Wilson, M Land tenure (1952), Shooter and Shooter: Pietermaritzburg, 1-4; Mountain, E (ed) The natural history of Keiskammahoek district (1952), Shooter and Shooter: Pietermaritzburg, 1-5.

Its findings were published in a four volume work in 1952.⁶ There was a lull in academic interest in the district until the early 1980s when anthropologists de Wet⁷ and Manona began researching in Cata and Burnshill respectively. They are still actively involved in these locations. The economist Leibbrandt undertook some research in Rabula later in the decade.⁸ In the last couple of years comprehensive multi-disciplinary research has been conducted, but it should be stressed that the Survey researchers' choice of locations continues to influence the decisions of modern researchers as to exactly where to study. Most academic interest is still focused on Rabula, Cata and Burnshill.

This thesis seeks to present a history of the district - not in the sense that it tells the whole story, but rather that it does not limit itself to specific locations. Ironically, three of the locations to which I devoted the least time were Rabula, Ngqumeya and Cata; in fact these locations (together with Ngolo-Ngolo) were the only locations in which I did not have time to collect oral testimony.⁹

⁶Houghton and Walton, Economy; Mills and Wilson, Land tenure; Mountain, The natural history; and Wilson, M, Kaplan, S, Maki, T and Walton, E Social Structure (1952), Shooter and Shooter: Pietermaritzburg.

⁷De Wet has published numerous articles on Cata, the most well-known of which is 'Betterment planning in a rural village in Keiskammahoek district, Ciskei' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 15, No 2 (1989), 326-345.

⁸De Wet, C and Leibbrandt, M 'Separate developments: the differential impact of homeland policy on two rural Ciskei villages', unpublished paper presented to the 1990 meeting of the Association of Anthropology in Southern Africa, Umtata.

⁹Pseudonyms will occasionally be used to protect the reputation and standing of informants in their communities. Without pseudonyms, there is always a possibility of controversial or unpopular testimony that will appear in the thesis filtering back into the research area and causing social tension. Pseudonyms will also be given in cases

The main focus of the thesis is the implementation of betterment in Keiskammahoek. (The term betterment refers to the conservationist policies pursued by successive governments from the late 1930s until about 1970). The organising theme of de Wet's work in Cata location was also betterment, and thus his work is considered in fine detail, especially in sections of the thesis dealing with communal locations.

More generally speaking, betterment emerged strongly onto the South African historiographical scene in the early 1980s. Most of the histories of betterment to emerge in the last ten years - for example those produced by Yawitch,¹⁰ Moll,¹¹ James¹² and Hendricks¹³ - have been materialist in nature. The two most common themes running through them have been reasons behind the implementation of betterment policy, and local resistance to it. Beinart ought to be mentioned as having developed an exceptional line of argument about why betterment was implemented, one in which conservationist discourse features prominently.¹⁴ De Wet should be noted (again) as being the only

when I reveal actions or perceptions of headmen or other prominent men in the community that are likely to produce a strong reaction today. The reason for this is to protect the descendants of such people.

¹⁰Yawitch, J Betterment The myth of homeland agriculture (1981), South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg.

¹¹Moll, T 'No blade of grass: rural production and state intervention in Transkei, 1925-1960', Cambridge African Occasional Papers 6 (1988).

¹²James, D The road from Doornkop (1983), South African Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg.

¹³Hendricks, F 'Loose planning and rapid resettlement: the politics of conservation and control in Transkei, South Africa, 1950-1970' Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 15, No 2 (1989), 306-325.

¹⁴Beinart, W 'Soil erosion, conservation and ideas about development: a southern African exploration, 1900-1960' in Journal of South African Studies, Vol II, No 1 (1984), 52-83.

academic to devote substantial consideration to the theme of the effects of the implementation of betterment, a theme central to this thesis.

The big questions

Abstract philosophical ramblings would be out of place in the body of the thesis, but I think it is important for the reader to be aware of where I stand in relation to macro issues such as fact and accuracy. There are three main positions regarding the relation between history and fact: firstly, the Rankean position which claims that there is a manageable number of self-evident historical facts that the historian must gather, and then present in unbiased fashion. Secondly, there is the Annales position which claims that the number of historical facts is vast, and that the historian must therefore work diligently to collect a maximum number of such facts, and then process them objectively (often with the aid of a computer). Thirdly, we have the 'critical'¹⁵ position, which claims that the concept of accuracy is misleading in history because all history is narrative, and all narratives select from a mass of information and subsequently order the chosen material according to a logic that is/was absent in life.¹⁶

¹⁵I am aware that the term 'critical' is bandied about fairly freely in many different academic contexts. Here I follow Bannet's usage of the term (Bannet, E Structuralism and the logic of dissent: Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan (1989), Macmillan: London, 110), for sake of convenience and because I regard the third position to be the most critical of the three.

¹⁶Bannet, Structuralism, 110. The claim is not that life is illogical, but rather that the logic that pertains to life is so complex that it cannot be accurately represented in historical texts. There is just too much happening simultaneously and there are too many interlinked sequences of events for us to claim realistically that we have grasped the logic that underpins life.

It is clear that the Annalists lie in between the Rankeans and critical historians, although they are closer to the former than the latter. The Annalists share a basic belief in the possibility and necessity of historical accuracy with the Rankeans, and an appreciation of the vastness of the field of historical evidence with the critical historians. The Annalists however want to defy that vastness, whereas the critical historians realise the futility of this aim. The critical thinkers are alone in subjecting the process of interpretation to scrutiny: they argue that one cannot divorce the field of evidence from the historian because his theoretical dispositions predetermine what phenomena he heralds as facts. Change the theory and one changes the facts.¹⁷ E H Carr summed up the situation succinctly: "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate".¹⁸

Because critical historians are released from having to purport to the composition of a complete, fact-saturated picture, they are freer to experiment with facts that excite them. It is this implicit freedom in critical history that draws me to it. Perhaps a brief survey of this genre's history would be helpful at this point. Bannet locates its origins in the late seventeenth century with the French thinker, Bayle.¹⁹ Critical history has had a rather irregular trajectory, having risen to prominence on numerous occasions, only to fade quickly and lie dormant for the duration of the intervening periods. Interestingly, the various surges enjoyed by critical history have occurred in a number of different countries, for example in Germany

¹⁷And no-one is immune from theory.

¹⁸Carr, E H What is history? (1962), Macmillan: London, 6.

¹⁹Bannet, Structuralism, 110.

in the late nineteenth century and in Italy in the early twentieth century.²⁰ So although many of the genre's well-known recent exponents have been French, it cannot be considered to be a French school of thought. Indeed one of the most renowned historians who can be located in this genre is the eminent British historian, Carr, whose influential book What is history? continues to be used as a prescribed text in many fairly standard historiography courses.

Before leaving the related issues of objectivity and truth it is necessary to make mention of some of Michel Foucault's thoughts about them. His notion of truth differs markedly from a conventional perception thereof. Whereas most people use the term to refer to ultimate, pure or uncontestable knowledge, Foucault uses it to refer to that body of knowledge that society holds to be ultimately true. Whether this knowledge is ultimately true or not is irrelevant to its being classified as true; what is important is that it is elevated as such. Foucault claimed that every society has a distinct "regime" or "general politics" of truth which he defined as "the types of discourse which it [the given society] accepts and makes function as true".²¹ Thus Foucault notes that although he would describe his academic works as fiction, they can have a significant influence on the realm of truth.²²

As mentioned before, the dominant subject of the thesis is betterment, a government policy informed very strongly by the science of conservationism. We are interested in the intrusion of science into Keiskammahoek. The main reason for my having introduced and accepted

²⁰Carr, History, 14.

²¹Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 131.

²²Foucault, M (edited by Morris, M and Patton, P) Power, truth, strategy (1979), Ferral: Sydney, 74.

the Foucauldian terminology above is that science is indisputably the core of truth in modern western society. More specifically, in South Africa the word science infers authority, objectivity, fact - it is difficult to resist scientific truths. When one adopts the Foucauldian definition of truth, a nasty semantic puzzle and clumsy strings of inverted commas are neatly side-stepped. Science is not (necessarily) ultimately true; it is however accepted as such. Government conservationism was named betterment as it was believed that agricultural science would improve people's lives - that it did not is no reason to place the term betterment in inverted commas for this would simply display a deep nostalgia for and belief in the potential of agricultural science (in the same way that putting truth or fact in inverted commas implies one's adherence to a belief in ultimate knowledge). This thesis seeks to treat worldly things - for example truth and betterment - as man-made, and to avoid all implications of an idealistic hope in their having utopian potential.

If one dispels the possibility of objectivity, the idea of the historian as classless, sexless, apolitical, impartial observer is simultaneously rebuffed. This thesis is not a general history of modern Keiskammahoek; it is a history of the region written from a specific viewpoint and therefore one that inevitably privileges certain groups (especially elderly men) at the expense of others. I could say that this is a general history, one that represents the most significant sections of the society, but that would amount to a slap in the face of women, youth and many other marginalised groups. The documents that I read were written by men and most of the people interviewed were men (invariably the persons to whom I was directed in the villages were men, and when I did come across women some of them told me that they did not know anything about village politics), thus the agenda of the thesis was partially predetermined by men. And of course the thesis is written by a man -I write this as a matter of fact, not as a statement of arrogance or smugness (nor as an admission

of guilt).

It should be stated very clearly that I am sceptical of the ranking of people's situations. It was commonplace a few years ago to hear the claim that African women were the most exploited group in South Africa - the argument went along the lines that together with the economic and racial exploitation/discrimination suffered by African men, the women had to deal with sexual exploitation as well. This kind of a simplistic hierarchy of suppression refuses to acknowledge the enormous variety of power struggles, or unequal relationships. The perspectives of the women and youth of the district are just as valid (but no more so) as those of the men.²³ But it is the elderly male perspective to which I have been exposed and with which I have empathised, and this is the perspective that I seek to explore, expound and understand through the next 200 or so pages.

Once free from the constraints of having to maintain the illusion of closely approximating historical truth, one can turn attention to more realistic and modest goals. The aim of this thesis is that it be relevant to the new South Africa. A quick perusal of leftist historiography covering the twentieth century reveals that the focus has fallen mainly on the state. Over the past twenty years especially

²³I certainly do not wish to dismiss feminist perspectives and gender issues. On the contrary, it seems to me that studies dealing critically with the power relations between men and women in Ciskei would complement this thesis. A very interesting such study was published late last year. Mager's 'The people get fenced: gender, rehabilitation and African nationalism in the Ciskei and Border region, 1945-1955' (in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 18, No 4 (1992), 761-782) investigates the impact of early betterment on the resource bases of various gender-related social groupings, principally wives, independent women, and young and old men, and thus seeks to explain why they responded differently to betterment. Her analysis of the variable impact of betterment revolves around a discussion of its effects on stock farming and agriculture, and the implications that this had on traditional patriarchal power.

the academic hammer has fallen fairly and squarely on the state. Although this has been necessary, what is worrying are some of the theoretical assumptions underlying the focus on the state, for example that the apartheid state has saturated South African society, that all latter-day woes can be traced back to the state, that power is a commodity that lies solely in the hands of the state. (Those who prioritise the state generally see it as representing dominant bourgeois interests). The corollary of such assumptions is of course that once the National Party surrenders power to an organisation representing the majority of South Africans, power will be on the side of the people. As the atrocious apartheid era comes to an end, it becomes increasingly clear that life is likely to change little for most South Africans, no matter who wins any forthcoming election.

It is understandable that the days of apartheid produced state-centric revisionist histories, but now it is time for histories that are relevant to today. Although the state is not ignored in the thesis, its pulse lies elsewhere: in nooks and crannies, and amongst shadows; at roving window-ledges and in bedrooms and transparent yards; on boundary lines between residential sites, amidst the confusion and rivalries that accompany title-deeds, and in shrinking grazing camps; in brandy bottles, wistful smiles and tragic tales related by forgotten people in peripheral places. This thesis (especially chapters III, IV and V) attempts to discern the origins and histories of some phenomena that affect everyday life in Keiskammahoek, phenomena that are relatively independent of the apartheid state and that will far outlive its demise.

The apartheid state has been one of the most brutal that the twentieth century has seen; it has constantly banned, maimed, killed and repressed. Thus, corresponding to the academic concentration on the state, there has been an emphasis on the brutality that has characterised modern South Africa. This thesis attempts to uncover

forms or configurations of power more subtle than ruthless state power. There may be those who, pointing to recent bloody upheavals in Ciskei, would want to deride the value of this project at the present time. In the face of conspicuous destructive power, one's immediate reaction is to brush the subtleties aside or ignore them as inappropriate. Nevertheless, it is of crucial importance to realise that shrouded non-state power mechanisms have co-existed alongside explicit state activities. Furthermore, one hopes and expects that as a post-apartheid South Africa is born, violence will haunt us less and less. The full potential of this thesis will be realised only once this becomes the case. A likely scenario in academia is that post-election South Africa will signal a sudden theoretical vacuum resulting from the diminished importance of state-centric histories; I would like to think that this thesis could act as a stepping stone to new South African historiography.

Brief introduction to the chapters

The chapter divisions of this thesis are more significant than in many historical works, for the spaces of discontinuity they signify are relatively vast. The thesis is arranged chronologically, but the theoretical devices and types of evidence used vary from period to period. In other words, time is not the only variable that sets adjacent chapters apart from one another; they also differ markedly in analytical terms. Chapter I, which concerns itself with the genesis of betterment policy in the 1920s and 1930s, is a revision more than anything else. Little new evidence is brought to light - all that is note-worthy in that regard is an analysis of soil erosion in Keiskammahoek. Rather, the chapter takes a fresh look at the body of general evidence referred to in secondary sources and recomposes it. The works of Beinart and Dubow can be singled out as invaluable sources, and the Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge as the key

theoretical device utilised.

Chapter II deals with the period preceding the implementation of betterment policy, that is c.1936-c.1960. Documentary and oral evidence are used extensively in this detailed chapter. On a theoretical level, Foucault is used but only on a limited scale. For the most part, this study of resistance in Keiskammahoek is fairly straightforward and predictable for the reader familiar with recent South African historiography. It should be noted that in this and in all other chapters, I present contrasts between my arguments and those of others whenever appropriate.

Chapter III describes the implementation of betterment policy in the 1960s in locations in which land was held communally, and seeks to uncover the effects of the implementation. The descriptive part of the chapter relies on an evenly balanced mix of documentary, secondary and oral evidence. The analysis of the effects of betterment implementation is more complex, leaning on an unorthodox blend of oral testimony, anthropological input and further Foucauldian ideas.

Chapter IV is closely related to Chapter III as it discusses the 1960s implementation of betterment in the locations in which land was/is held under title (quitrent and freehold). Nevertheless, it simultaneously stands in contrast to the preceding chapter; it is a much more conventional history, in terms of both the type of evidence relied upon and the theoretical perspectives employed. Documentary and oral evidence dominate the chapter, while there is also a smattering of references to secondary sources. On the theoretical front, Chapter IV is relatively uneventful in comparison to the chapters on either side of it.

The last chapter (Chapter V) concerns itself with the post-betterment (post-1972) era of Keiskammahoek's history, and it seriously questions

some prevalent marxian assumptions about modern South Africa. It attempts to analyse some of the linchpins of grand apartheid that affected the reserves (principally forced removals and influx control) in relation to shifts in the urban national economy, and in this way to suggest appropriate theoretical perspectives. The key influence on the chapter is Baudrillard's thunderous critique of Marx. In the chapter there is a significant number of references to both written and oral sources.

In the above brief introduction to the individual chapters I have supplied summarised information about three features: chronological details, theoretical launch-pads, and types of evidence. The various chapters deal with different periods, using different theory and relying on different mixes of evidence. The message that I hope to convey through the contrasts is that history is a very open field. Within the constraints of chronological order, there is a host of possible stories to be told. This freedom to choose and explore is a vital ingredient of the thesis. I hope that the reader is invigorated and provoked by the diversity of the five chapters.

CHAPTER I

Discourse and context in 1920s and 1930s South Africa

Much has been written about the 'crisis' of the 1930s and its relation to the introduction of betterment legislation. Most writers argue that it was introduced with the intention of bolstering the economic role of the reserves, namely the subsidization of the costs of industry. Only Beinart, in an unprecedented and seminal article, has opposed this line. He pointed out that in order to explain the precise shape of conservationism and the timing of its rise to prominence in policy, one should study conservationist discourse.¹ This discourse was forged and developed in Europe and America, and then imported into the colonies; it was not conceived in South Africa in the service of capital. The explanation of the conception of betterment offered here has more in common with Beinart's approach, but will attempt to transcend it by elaboration and contextualisation. This attempt will follow after an explanation and critique of the first approach.

'Ideal output level': the materialist impasse

The early revisionist writers who were concerned with mainly macro issues such as segregation and apartheid, inadvertently predetermined the shape of the arguments about betterment to be formulated later by

¹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 52, 53.

leftist academics. Here we take a brief look at the influential argument of Wolpe in order to get some idea of the background of the betterment writers of the 1980s. He argued that the function of segregation was to preserve the productive capacity of the reserve economies so that the costs of maintaining and reproducing the proletariat could be depressed. Betterment initiatives were part of this attempt to bolster declining rural agricultural output. Ultimately however, this proved to be an impossible task, and there followed a change with regard to the function of the reserves and consequently the state's approach to them.² No longer were their economies to supplement sub-subsistence urban wages, now they were to be used primarily as breeding grounds of the work force and as peripheral places of controlling that work force without threatening political stability and economic efficiency.³ The reserves would henceforth be unhindered in their path to destruction; indeed the reserve population would be forced to accept life-long poverty. This was the significant change from segregation to separate development (apartheid). Wolpe summarised as follows:

... Separate Development ... must be seen as the attempt to retain, in a modified form, the structure of 'traditional' societies, not, as in the past, for the purposes of ensuring an economic supplement to the wages of the migrant labour force, but for the purposes of reproducing and exercising control over a cheap African industrial labour force in or near the 'homelands', not by means of preserving the pre-capitalist mode of production but by the political, social, economic and ideological enforcement of low levels of subsistence.⁴

²Wolpe, H 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid' Economy and Society, Vol I, No 4 (1972), 439.

³Wolpe, 'Capitalism', 450.

⁴Wolpe, 'Capitalism', 450.

Although there is considerable disagreement about precisely when the reserves' function changed from subsidization to control,⁵ leftist betterment thinkers are unanimous in agreeing that this transition had not occurred as early as the 1930s. They agree that an ecological crisis in the reserves placed considerable pressure on their ability to subsidize white capital, and that betterment was fashioned to counter this crisis.

Despite these discrepancies concerning the changing role of the reserves in relation to the development of South African capitalism, there is broad agreement that in the 1930s the key issues were the deterioration of the reserves and the consequences of this for the supply of labour, and wage levels. Superficially, the arguments based on this issue as determinant seem satisfactory, but when one requires of them rigorous completion, their empty centre becomes apparent. What follows is an attempt to present the argument in full in order to expose its emptiness. With the discovery of minerals in the late 19th century, the demand for labour increased dramatically. What the mining capitalists required was a perpetuation of the precapitalist

⁵For Lodge, the reserves had no direct functions in the wider economy from the 1940s onwards (Lodge, T Black politics in South Africa since 1945 (1983) Longman: London, 262). Hendricks argues, in Wolpean vein, that the 1948 election brought a new alliance of capital into power: the United Party, representing manufacturing capital, was ousted by the National Party, representing mining and white farming capital (Hendricks, 'Loose planning', 309). With this change, concern for the conservation of the reserves ended because a migrant labour force rather than a permanent proletariat was required by the new alliance of capital (Hendricks, 'Loose planning', 249). In other words, control became the dominant function of the reserves from 1948. Moll presents a more open chronological shift: he argues that although conservationism remained an element of reserve policy beyond the 1950s, the reserves became gradually more "explicit means of controlling Africans and diluting urban political resistance" over the 20 years from 1940 to 1960 (Moll, 'No blade', 5). Finally Yawitch argues that the change in reserve function occurred in the 1960s (Yawitch, Betterment, 43, 44).

modes of production on a reduced scale so that reserve dwellers would be forced to seek urban work and that their wages could simultaneously be depressed - the migrant's family should live off the land so that the wage need only support the migrant.⁶ The key is that the rural agricultural product should be insufficient to support the entire family but sufficient to support it partially.⁷ The 'crisis' that occurred in the 1930s threatened to destroy the pre-capitalist economies completely, thus increasing family urbanization and forcing wage levels up. The point is that mining capital desired to maintain rural agricultural output on a knife edge - not too much could be produced for that would threaten the labour supply; not too little could be produced for that would put upward pressure on wage levels because of family urbanisation.

Both the 'fall of the peasantry' in the late 19th century and industry's desire to perpetuate the pseudo-peasantry in the 1930s are explained in terms of capital's supposed need for rural output to be pegged at an invisible and unspecified amount. Rural output must be both in balance and at a certain ideal level to suit the needs of industry. What that level is in material terms is never questioned. Indeed, any serious study in that direction would destroy the great strength of the idea of an 'ideal rural output' - that it can be invoked time and time again, in any context and to explain anything. If betterment legislation had not been passed in the 1930s, the explanation would be that rural output was more or less equivalent to the 'ideal level', hence mining capitalists were not perturbed and hence state policy remained unchanged. This strength of purposive ambiguity is also, in theoretical terms, a crippling weakness. Foucault criticised this type of analysis - he called it descending

⁶Wolpe, 'Capitalism', 432.

⁷eg Yawitch, Betterment, 31.

type analysis and defined it as one in which everything can be deduced simply by ascertaining the dominant class configuration - precisely for its empty and meaningless explanation.⁸ (In our case the aspect of the economic from which all capital requirements and state policies are derived is the 'ideal rural output').

These kinds of deduction are always possible. They are simultaneously correct and false. Above all they are too glib, because one can always do exactly the opposite. I believe that anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the domination of the bourgeois class.⁹

Ambiguous terms that are designed to annex all explanatory territory, apart from being obviously theoretically unsound, can also lead to contradictory remarks being made in the name of total explanation. Hirson for example concludes his article on rural resistance thus:

The need to make some improvement ("to provide a partial living ..."), together with the need to force more men into the labour market, were combined in the betterment scheme.¹⁰

In terms of his own usage of the concept of 'ideal rural output' (i.e. the greater the output, the less the people needed to wage labour) Hirson's conclusion transparently reveals contradiction.

The crucial problem of marxian assumptions about the convergence of

⁸Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 99, 100.

⁹Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 100.

¹⁰Hirson, B 'Rural revolt in South Africa: 1937-1951' The societies of southern Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Vol 8, collected seminar papers No 22 (1977), University of London, 127.

capital and state interests has been mentioned many times in different contexts by critics. An equally interesting line of critical enquiry in this case is to scrutinise the perception of mining capitalists themselves about ramifications of rural decline on the labour market and wage structure. Interestingly, the only two authors who consider this question, Beinart and Lodge, each refer to the same document, using it to argue along contradictory lines.¹¹ The said document is a report commissioned by the Chamber of Mines that considers the relationship between food supply and migrant labour. The report was undertaken by two doctors, Fox and Back, who researched in the mid-1930s in the Ciskei and Transkei. Lodge mentions the report in the context of his argument about the reserves' declining ability to subsidise urban capitalism from the 1930s. He quotes very ambiguously from the document as follows: "semi-starvation is a very insecure basis with which to build a permanent labour supply".¹² The implication of Lodge's usage of this quotation is that the report was very concerned about the effects of declining rural productivity on the wage structure of the industry. Beinart on the other hand claims that the report argued that full subsistence was not in conflict with labour supply.¹³ This perception is obviously the antithesis of the core of materialist analysis of the relation between the urban capitalist centre and the rural sub-subsistence periphery in South Africa. Beinart's usage of the document appears to be the more

¹¹Beinart, W 'Soil erosion, conservationism and ideas about development: a southern Africa exploration - Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa, 1900-1960', seminar paper delivered at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, March 1984, 24; Lodge, Black politics, 202.

¹²Lodge, Black politics, 202.

¹³Beinart, 'Soil erosion' [unpublished], 24.

correct when one reads some of Dr Fox's other publications.¹⁴ Interestingly, Fox recognised the rural areas as "main reserves of labour", and analysed them in that light;¹⁵ that is to say, he recognised the obvious link between the rural and urban areas. But his arguments about the details of that link seem very strange today in the light of 1970s and 1980s analysis. His comments warrant lengthy quotation.

It is a common error to regard the encouragement of Native farming and the provision of labour supplies as antithetical; they are really complementary. In communities which are allowed to stagnate and to be content with a subsistence standard of living there is little natural incentive to wage-earning. A flourishing and progressive Native community with increasing wants will find in wage-earning a welcome additional source of income; moreover the development of cultivation by and for the Native definitely assists the formation of a more efficient labour force, subsidises his family and improves his health.¹⁶

This is a very interesting piece of 1930s writing, that mentions two contemporary perceptions about the link between African agriculture and migrant labour. The first perception is that raised at the beginning of the quotation, which Fox claimed to be commonly believed. This argument is that the more agriculture deteriorated, the greater the supply of potential labour would become. A noteworthy aspect of this for our purposes is that, by the late 1930s, many people were

¹⁴Fox, F (i) 'Some nutritional problems amongst the Bantu in South Africa' in South African Pamphlets (in Cory Library, Rhodes University), Vol 64 (1937); (ii) 'Can South Africa feed herself?' in South African Affairs Pamphlets (in Cory Library, Rhodes University), No 11 (1945).

¹⁵Fox, 'Some nutritional problems', 16.

¹⁶Fox, 'Some nutritional problems', 20.

still not perturbed about rural decline.¹⁷ Indeed they would have argued that since the decline of African agriculture leads to greater labour supply, the decline should not be impeded. Things were seen in black and white; there was no argument about an 'ideal output level' and its relation to urbanisation and wage levels.

The second perception, that adhered to by Fox, held that far from African agriculture and labour supply being related inversely, they were in fact related directly proportionately. Indeed he wrote explicitly earlier in the article that the shortage of labour would deteriorate further unless food provision in the rural areas increased. The higher the African standard of living the more incentive there would be to labour.¹⁸ This argument seems closely related to the contemporary ideas about 'civilisation' and wants: the more 'civilised' one becomes (the level of 'civilisation' would be reflected in the standard of living), the more one desires, and therefore the more willing one is to work.¹⁹ For Fox the desirable level of output was that attainable by modern 'scientific' farming

¹⁷Fox does not specify whether they were capitalists or government officials. But interestingly Bowen, quoting a 1942 letter written by the Secretary for Native Affairs, writes that "[relief] measures were initially resisted by government officials at both the local and the central level, who felt that as long as black people resisted recruitment for labour purposes, a little starvation would "promote industry"" (Bowen, J 'History of the Amatola Basin' in de Wet, C and Bekker, S (eds) Rural development in South Africa (1985), Shuter and Shuter: Pietermaritzburg, 29, 46). Bowen is saying nothing less than that many government officials believed in a laissez-faire approach to the declining reserves in order to end labour shortage. If, as the Marxists argue, the state represents capitalists' interests, then a large proportion of them would also have opposed the provision of relief (or betterment) to the reserves.

¹⁸Fox, 'Some nutritional problems', 2.

¹⁹This argument is pervasive in Union of South Africa (U.G. 22/1932) Report of the Native Economic Commission, Government Printer: Pretoria, 13.

methods (i.e. far beyond subsistence levels!). Also, this second perception pointed out the obvious link between health and efficient labour.

Obviously, if one wishes to make claims about the dominant mining capitalists' perception concerning the relation between rural economies, urbanisation and wage levels one would need to scrutinize a broad spectrum of relevant primary documents. Nevertheless, it is possible that the Fox and Back Report had a number of supporters in the mining industry. More importantly, the above Fox quotation indicates that neither of the two dominant contemporary perceptions in the internal mining debate coincides with what is projected onto 1930s capitalists by recent academics. Since the mining houses themselves were not calling for policy to restore/stabilise African agriculture in order to slow down family urbanisation thereby permitting the maintenance of depressed wage levels, it is rash (to say the least) to assume that betterment was conceived in the service of mining capital. Theoretically unacceptable and empirically problematic then, the 'ideal output level' explanation of betterment initiatives should be abandoned.

Simkins' chronology of reserve agriculture

Before explaining Beinart's counter to the above approach, it is necessary to put in place a key foundation stone for the argument that will follow. In 1981 Simkins challenged the widely accepted chronology of the decline of rural agriculture.²⁰ Specifically he challenged the idea of the 'crisis' of the 1930s, as heralded by the

²⁰Simkins, C 'Agricultural production of the African reserves of South Africa, 1918-1969' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 7, No 2 (1981), 256-276.

1932 Native Economic Commission.²¹ Although he monitored a sharp dip in total agricultural production in the mid (not early!) 1930s, this was merely a temporary deviation from an output level which remained constant from 1918 to 1965.²² The reason for the period beginning in 1918 is that that was the year in which the first Union Agricultural Census was taken. These censuses, together with the population censuses, form the core of evidence around which the argument is constructed. In terms of the per capita requirements met by agriculture, the period of constancy diminishes somewhat, ending at 1955.²³ For Simkins the crucial legislative/political event in this regard is the tightening of influx control which followed the 1948 electoral victory of the National Party.²⁴ The reason for per capita requirements only decreasing after 1955 is that the terms of trade for reserve agriculture improved in the decade 1945-1955.²⁵ Simkins is not claiming that the reserves were self-sufficient between 1918 and 1955, but rather that this was a stable period in terms of output.

Taking the reserves as a whole, one finds that their inhabitants were far from able to provide for the subsistence requirements from agricultural production as early as 1918. However, the proportion of requirements they were able to meet remained substantially constant between 1918 and 1955, declining rapidly after that date.²⁶

²¹This commission, also known as the Holloway Commission, was appointed to study the economic and social conditions of Africans throughout South Africa.

²²Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 262, 270.

²³Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 264.

²⁴Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 271.

²⁵Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 265.

²⁶Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 264.

Simkins calls this period one of "fragile productivity maintenance", and the subsequent period, from 1955-1969 one of "rapid decline".²⁷

The implications of Simkins' argument with regard to the state of the soil are obviously profound. Clearly one can see that the widely made claims about accelerated decline and consequent imminent desertification were largely unfounded. Quite simply, if the ground managed to produce constant output, it could not have been declining markedly. Yet Moll points out that it is not that simple. He draws attention to the fact that Simkins ignores factors like enlarged reserve size and the bringing under cultivation of considerable previously unused tracts of land.²⁸ Moll claims that constant output can only be explained in terms of increased agricultural lands; he argues that the soil had been declining steadily for a considerable period.

[T]he 1918-1954 period, which he [Simkins] terms one of 'fragile productivity maintenance' is more one of (very) fragile output maintenance and steadily falling productivity.²⁹

Although Moll puts the state of the soil into longer chronological perspective than most, he ends up agreeing with the Native Economic Commission that 'crisis' hit in the early 1930s.³⁰ Notwithstanding his general criticisms of Simkins' ignorance of extra land, it seems reasonable to argue that if 'crisis' had hit, not even land added to the reserves in accordance with the 1936 Land Act (known as released

²⁷Simkins, 'Agricultural production', 270-1.

²⁸Moll, 'No blade', 15, note 10.

²⁹Moll, 'No blade', 15, note 10.

³⁰Moll, 'No blade', 8.

land) or previously unused land could have had the stabilising effect necessary to make sense of the output figures. Furthermore, and this is of utmost importance, for the period 1918-1930 - in other words the years leading up to the declaration of 'crisis' - the issue of Released land is obviously not relevant.

This thesis argues that while the gross amount of soil erosion in the reserves increased during the first half of this century, there was no sudden exaggerated deterioration that sparked the declaration of 'crisis' in 1932. In other words, there was no objective ecological crisis in the reserves in the early 1930s. This is not to say that devious academics and politicians conspired to invent serious ecological problems, but rather that the declaration of crisis coincided with the first conservationist intrusions into the reserves. Conservationism enabled officials and academics to recognise and analyse problems that they had previously been blind to. One must distinguish between objective deterioration of the ground and identification of that deterioration. While the gross amount of erosion in the reserves was on the increase, the rate of erosion and consequently the state of the soil varied from district to district. In some areas, like Keiskammahoek,³¹ there were already serious problems of ecological decline by the very early twentieth century; in others the downturn quite possibly coincided with the Native Economic Commission; and in still others fertility of the soil would not have declined at all in the first forty years of this century. What is being claimed here is nothing ground-breaking; rather it is merely a reaffirmation of what Beinart was saying a full seven years ago.

To accept that there was recognisable erosion is not to establish that there was a general threat ... [T]he impact

³¹See case study below, pages 29-35.

of colonisation was highly uneven, while the recognition of erosion as a major and general problem was remarkably sudden and uniform ... It is difficult to escape the conclusion that officials were looking at the African areas with new eyes and that their response was moulded by a set of ideas which constructed the problem of erosion in a specific way and generalised it.³²

The radicalism of this suggestion is easily overlooked. Conservationism did nothing short of fundamentally transforming officials' perception; it gave them "new eyes". And it was these "new eyes" which saw impending deserts.³³ The Keiskammahoek case is presented now to illustrate the inaccuracy of generalisation about reserve ecology.

Erosion in Keiskammahoek: The Amatola Problem

Whereas the Keiskammahoek Ngqika suffered land losses as a result of the 'frontier wars',³⁴ for post-war era Keiskammahoek people (many of whom had gained as a result of the 1850-1853 war) the trauma and dislocation of land loss began in the 1880s and has continued into the late 1980s (more about the recent period will follow in Chapter V). A crucial event in the ecological history of Keiskammahoek was the 1885 reservation of the Crown Lands (5600 morgen).³⁵ The land

³²Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 65, 67.

³³One of the main features of conservationism is that it is a panic discourse. See below, pages 39-40.

³⁴The nature of these conflicts is currently being reconsidered by Julian Cobbing and some of his students, principally Alan Webster.

³⁵Story, R A botanical survey of the Keiskammahoek district (1952) Memoir No 27, Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, 145; Union of South Africa (U.G. 49/1923) Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, Government Printer: Cape Town, appendix 12, 122. The term 'Crown Land' refers to land that was at

(mountain tops and the steeper slopes)³⁶ thus taken from the African people had been used as important grazing lands. With the excision of these lands, on which the people claimed to have been given perpetual grazing rights in 1853 because of loyalty to British colonial forces,³⁷ the people had to maintain a constant number of cattle on reduced pasture. A consequence of this was diminishing soil fertility. It is not a case of failure to adapt traditional practice; it is rather a case of too little land. Not even the most modern veld management procedures would have prevented ecological deterioration. It is also not a case of the people of Keiskammahoek having too many cattle; it is a case of insufficient cattle on insufficient land. Even those white conservationists who supported the 1885 reservation conceded that there was not enough land for the Keiskammahoek people to practice subsistence pastoralism.³⁸

There was still significant stock shortage in the district by the time of the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. (The survey was commissioned in the late 1940s in response to a call by a government council entitled the Council for Educational, Sociological and Humanistic Research, for an in-depth study into a rural district). Houghton and Walton,

the disposal of the state.

³⁶Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 12, 122.

³⁷Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 6, 104. See also Houghton and Walton Economy, 172.

³⁸The Chief Conservator of Forests, C Legat, who had been stationed previously at Keiskammahoek, said in 1923 that "while freely admitting that there is not enough grazing for all Natives who wish to possess cattle, I am utterly unable to concur in this recommendation [that the African rights on the Crown Lands be restored]" (Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 12, 122).

although they were conservationist discreditors of the people's lifestyle, admitted that while the least number of cattle required per family ³⁹for basic dairy requirements is five, the average cattle holding in 1948 (before the serious drought of 1949) was four per family.⁴⁰ Furthermore because of the unequal distribution of cattle holdings, 45% of the families had two or less head, and only 28% had sufficient cattle.⁴¹ Survey scholar Story managed to present a somewhat sympathetic summary of the position, writing that "the grazing grounds which the Natives possess are under the present conditions insufficient to support even this inadequacy",⁴² but Houghton and Walton adopted a more ruthless attitude:

Admittedly, the demarcation of forests has restricted the grazing area but it was a necessary and wise step without which the denudation and soil erosion would certainly be even worse than they are today.⁴³

In other words there was an admission on the part of the officials and academics who approved of the 1885 excision that the Africans had insufficient land, but they argued that the crux of the ecological issue was not land size but land management. The narrow tunnel vision of conservationism perceived a completely inaccurate picture of land

³⁹In this thesis the word 'family' is used in a limited sense to refer to a nuclear family; thus 'family' and 'household' are used interchangeably. The term 'homestead' refers to the physical dwellings of the family. I am aware that the term 'homestead family' is commonly used to refer to the larger cluster of houses inhabited by families of related men; I use the term 'hamlet' for this grouping.

⁴⁰Houghton and Walton, Economy, 172.

⁴¹Houghton and Walton, Economy, 173.

⁴²Story, A botanical survey, 152.

⁴³Houghton and Walton, Economy, 172.

management in Keiskammahoek. The unanimous conservationist opinion was that there was no veld management. For example, with regard to African claims to Crown Lands, Schonland wrote:

If all the claims of the Natives, whether legal or moral, read or fancied, were conceded there would not be sufficient grazing for the stock owned by the Natives as long as they live in the old style ... This is the crux of the Amatola Problem.⁴⁴

For scientists no fences meant no veld management; it was as straightforward as that. Thus Houghton and Walton claimed that the situation of Keiskammahoek was most accurately described as a "lack of management".⁴⁵ This type of diagnosis was not at all unique to Keiskammahoek, but was produced wherever conservationism intruded.⁴⁶

A number of recent anthropologists have pointed to indigenous veld management techniques which predated the invasion of conservationism. As is well known, African communities that resided on communal lands lived in a scattered manner; however the way in which the scattered homesteads were arranged was highly structured, according to male lineage details. On a political level the location was divided into units called sections, which represented one or two lineages.⁴⁷ It was in terms of these units that veld management was arranged. McAllister and de Wet have explained similar practices in Shixini and

⁴⁴Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 6, 104.

⁴⁵Houghton and Walton, Economy, 164.

⁴⁶eg Gold, R 'Aspects of native life' in Man and his environment (1950) (A collection of papers presented at a symposium sponsored by the Buffalo Catchment Association), King Printing Company Limited: Kingwilliamstown, 44. For a general discussion of the Darwinism and technicism of conservationism, see below, pages 41-42.

⁴⁷Wilson et al, Social structure, 9.

Cata (a location in northern Keiskammahoek) respectively.⁴⁸ In both areas grazing was sectional - each section grazed different units of communal land - and if any of the grazing units required a recovery period, it would be closed and two sections would double-up on a single grazing unit. De Wet confirms the pre-colonial closing of grazing units: "If the grass was poor in one ... section's area, its cattle were sent to graze in another ... section's area, where the grass was better".⁴⁹

There is documentation that gives a strong indication that the turn of the twentieth century marked the onset of the decline of the land. The evidence consists mainly of a string of summary comments made by previous inhabitants or officials of Keiskammahoek district. These comments were then quoted in 1920s writings, and subsequently referred to again by Story of the Rural Survey team. The 1920s research interest of Schonland, Professor of Botany at Rhodes University College, was Helichrysum argyrophyllum or the 'Amatola weed'. This is a plant species which spreads only into overstocked land; its spread is therefore an excellent indicator of soil deterioration.⁵⁰ Its other characteristics include an ability to bind the soil and thus prevent accelerated erosion, and it is also inedible thus rendering the land useless for grazing purposes.⁵¹ Indications are that the turn of the century saw the start of its tightening stranglehold on the high reaches of the district. The 1922 Kingwilliamstown Conservator of Forests, E Dwyer, wrote:

⁴⁸De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 340.

⁴⁹De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 340.

⁵⁰Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 6, 105.

⁵¹Schonland, S 'On the reclamation of ruined pasturage on the Amatolas, near Keiskamma Hoek' in Science Bulletin, No 55 (1927), 6, 7.

I was stationed at Keiskamma Hoek from 1889-1893, and the areas now affected were then stretches of waving rooi gras in autumn, and the paths up from Mnyameni to the ground behind were scarcely visible from below.⁵²

Comments made by the Conservator of Forests in the Transvaal, J Keet, supplement the above observation nicely.

When I first made acquaintance with the Amatolas in 1907 this plant had a firm foothold on the Mnyameni Ridge near Keiskamma Hoek, covering about one square mile, and there were outliers at Cata, on the Hogsback Plateau ... The Forest Department and the Magistrate at Keiskamma Hoek watched the spread of the plant with great anxiety. (My emphasis).⁵³

Hereafter the spread of the 'Amatola weed' was rapid, Dwyer claiming that its area doubled in the period 1910-1921,⁵⁴ and Legat writing that its proliferation between 1914 and 1921 had been "alarming".⁵⁵ Story picked up on these and other sources of evidence, and timed the beginning of accelerated ecological decline in Keiskammahoek at the turn of the century.

Records from newspapers and Government files report abundance before 1890, and scarcity after 1910, from which one may deduce that the beginning of this century was the likely turning-point in the composition of the veld.⁵⁶

⁵²Quoted in Schonland, 'Reclamation', 6.

⁵³Quoted in Schonland, 'Reclamation', 7.

⁵⁴Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 6, 105.

⁵⁵Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 12, 122.

⁵⁶Story, R 'Botanical survey' in Mountain, The natural history, 53.

Not only was the impoverished state of the soil indicated by the sprawling 'weed' but there was also worsening erosion in areas unaffected by it. The Chief Conservator of Forests, C Legat, testified in 1922 that "Evidence of erosion was everywhere and in some places threatening dangers showed up".⁵⁷ In the face of extensive documentation therefore, it is reasonable to argue that serious ecological problems in Keiskammahoek predated the Native Economic Commission by at least some twenty odd years.

Beinart and Conservationism

Beinart's 1984 Journal of Southern African Studies article appeared out of the middle of nowhere, and still exists as an isolated fragment of inspired writing. It provoked only one poor critique,⁵⁸ and although it has been widely acclaimed, those writing about betterment have never managed to incorporate it fluently or naturally. Interestingly de Wet divides betterment writers into two camps, those adopting a political economy approach and those adopting a conservationist approach.⁵⁹ While he calls Beinart the leading proponent⁶⁰ of the conservationist approach, he is in fact the only proponent of that approach. After introducing some of Beinart's main arguments, reasons for his isolation will be explained and an elaboration of his approach attempted.

⁵⁷Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, appendix 12, 122.

⁵⁸See brief comment below, page 37-38.

⁵⁹De Wet, C 'Betterment planning in South Africa: some thoughts on its history, feasibility and wider policy implications' in Journal of Contemporary African Studies, Vol 6, No 1/2, (1987), 108, 116.

⁶⁰De Wet, 'Betterment planning in South Africa', 116, 7. "[This line of argument] is represented primarily by Beinart."

Beinart's point of departure was a desire to understand and explain the details of betterment intervention. If Wolpean type analysis can sometimes be useful in a very broad sense, it is incapable of explaining detail.⁶¹ Beinart realised that discourse must be scrutinised if one wants to account for the shape of conservationist intervention (a discursive practice). He thus studied the history of the discourse of conservationism. His first notable finding was that conservationism originated and was developed in Europe and the United States.⁶² This obviously implies that "the technical thinking which was so often central in agricultural planning was not born out of the forces operating in any particular southern African political economy".⁶³ Secondly, when conservationism was exported into the colonies it was applied similarly throughout southern Africa.⁶⁴ (Of the colonies, Beinart studied South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Tanganika). Thirdly, one of the main similarities in this regard was that conservationism was applied to settler farming well before it was to African farming.⁶⁵ Beinart locates betterment intervention on a continuous line of conservationism: it was developed in Europe and the United States, exported into South Africa where it was applied to white farming and thereafter it was used as the basis for betterment.

Before continuing with a substantiation and elaboration of Beinart's claims about the continuity of the spread of conservationism from settler areas into the reserves, it is necessary to clarify his ideas

⁶¹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 53.

⁶²Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 56, 57.

⁶³Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 53.

⁶⁴Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 53.

⁶⁵Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 53.

about the relationship between discourse and context. It must be stated clearly that Beinart's argument (as summarised above) is not incompatible with the (obvious) assertion that discourse is produced within a socio-economico-academico-political context. He did after all write that conservationist ideas alternatively "meshed or conflicted with",⁶⁶ "intertwined with",⁶⁷ "intersected with"⁶⁸ social, economic and political factors in the process of the formulation of official policy. Although he did not unravel the context, he certainly insisted upon the fact that the development of conservationism did not occur in isolation but within a context. If there is one thing about Beinart's context that one can say with certainty it is that its components are not hierarchically ordered (for example with the economy in an ultimately determining position and with discourse as ultimately determined). While conservationism developed within a context, it was simultaneously a vibrant and important part of that context. Beinart thus implicitly rejects the base-superstructure model and the repression of discourse and knowledge which it dictates. This is a main reason for the continued isolation of the 1984 article in a historiography of betterment and conservation which is dominated by historical materialism. A few brief remarks about the article and comments that it provoked show this clearly. In the name of context, Phimister desperately attempted to re-place capital in its 'rightful' position: "[t]he final shape of the official prescription for the future was forged by the

⁶⁶Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 53.

⁶⁷Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 67.

⁶⁸Beinart, W 'Introduction: the politics of colonial conservation' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 15, No 2 (1989), 146.

imperatives of secondary industry."⁶⁹ (My emphasis). To pass off crude determinism under the veil of supposed contextualisation is not only misleading but also academically unacceptable. Drinkwater's subsequent attempt at forcing Beinart and Phimister into false matrimony⁷⁰ says nothing so much as that he could not have read Beinart thoroughly. Beinart stated categorically that conservationism was more than a justification for intervention,⁷¹ yet Drinkwater distinguished between ideology and practice, and claimed that Beinart's appropriateness lies solely in the realm of ideology.⁷²

We now return to the continuity of the spread of conservationism. Beinart provides abundant evidence to substantiate his related claims that pre-1930 conservationism had a considerable history, including its creation overseas, its importation/exportation into the colonies and its application in settler farming, and that this conservationism informed betterment very strongly. What follows is an attempt to strengthen the second claim; this will be done by identifying key features of white conservationism which in turn became hallmarks of betterment. The discussion of white conservationism that follows covers a fairly prolonged period ending only in about 1945, but careful attention has been given to ensuring that its features presented in the discussion were clearly evident before conservationist energies were turned to the rural African areas.

⁶⁹Phimister, I 'Discourse and the discipline of historical context: conservationism and ideas about development in Southern Rhodesia, 1930-1950' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 12, No 2 (1986), 274.

⁷⁰Drinkwater, M 'Technical development and peasant improvement: land use policy in Zimbabwe's Midland Province' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 15, No 2 (1989), 288.

⁷¹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 82.

⁷²Drinkwater, 'Technical development', 288.

Firstly, even in its infancy in South Africa, conservationism was a panic discourse. If a piece of land was not evidently eroded, then all possible indications of stealthy erosion were highlighted, and disaster predicted. This characteristic comes through very clearly in the Interim Report of the Drought Commission, a commission concerned with settler farming activity. It is well known that this report warned that "The logical outcome of it ['unscientific' farming practice] is 'The Great South African Desert' uninhabitable by Man".⁷³ Areas which seemed unaffected were diagnosed as just as endangered, only differently so. "The surface erosion [as opposed to splot erosion] is, in a sense, the more dangerous form. It is an insidious evil creeping in unseen like a thief in the night and robbing us of our national wealth".⁷⁴ Erosion was a national problem, and it required an enormous effort if total breakdown was to be avoided. As late as 1944, C Smith in a paper entitled 'The Soil Declares War on Man' wrote of white farmers, "We are precariously, but how extravagantly living on borrowed Time, and Time is a merciless usurer!"⁷⁵ Similarly, when H Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service in the United States Department of Agriculture, visited South Africa in 1944 he spoke of impending doom and attempted to motivate swift and decisive action throughout the country. }

The longer effective action is postponed the greater the difficulties will be - and the more costly their solution. Posterity is helpless to do anything about the matter. South Africans now on the stage are responsible - and their

⁷³Union of South Africa (U.G. 20/1922), Interim Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, Government Printer: Cape Town, 2.

⁷⁴Union of South Africa, Interim Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 11.

⁷⁵Smith, C 'The soil declares war on man' in South African Affairs Pamphlets, No 3 (1944), 26.

children and unborn children will hold them responsible.⁷⁶

Erosion and the soil were seen in terms similar to the Bible's parable of leaven in meal. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened."⁷⁷ Even with only a minuscule amount of leaven, all the meal is affected. Likewise with soil: once the first indications or effects of erosion are noticed immediate and ever worsening acceleration of the problem is taken for granted.⁷⁸ This is a core element of conservationist discourse generally, not merely of conservationism as applied to African areas.

Hand in hand with declarations of crisis and prophecies of wastelands, conservationism prescribes radical action, spearheaded by the state and experts. In analysing the issue of state intervention in international and settler conservationism, it is helpful to turn to the Drought Commission Reports. Quite clearly, the commission held that it was reasonable for government to grant farmers a certain amount of scope in which they were free to farm as they wished, but that if erosion or soil deterioration resulted from such farming practices, the government should step in.⁷⁹ In the opinion of the

⁷⁶Bennett, H Soil erosion and land use in the U.S.A. (1945), Department of Agriculture and Forestry: Pretoria, 10.

⁷⁷Matthew chapter 13, verse 33.

⁷⁸Thus Moll misses the point completely when he writes ('No blade', 19) that "[i]n retrospect it appears colonial views were mistaken in their assessment of the urgency of the need for conservation to avert ecological and agricultural collapse". He is looking at government reports for unfiled evidence, whereas they should be analysed as examples of writing which have been produced within the strict confines of conservationist discourse. They tell us more about the new eyes with which officials viewed the countryside than about what was actually happening in the countryside.

⁷⁹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 60.

commission, the settlers had misused their autonomy.

[Y]our Commission ... desires to affirm that success in the preservation of our large catchments can only be attained by systematic work, and that this demands State-direction.⁸⁰

If the people could not save the soil for posterity, then the body which supposedly sought the best for the long-run prospects of the nation, the government, was bound to intervene. As Beinart has pointed out, the relationship between conservationism and the state in the United States was very close from the turn of the century.⁸¹ Furthermore the prominent position of the state in conservation initiatives was strongly vindicated by the 1930s successes of the Roosevelt government in conquering the Dustbowl.⁸² So when Bennett offered his suggestions in South Africa, extensive involvement by the state was taken for granted: "the State must help" he stated categorically.⁸³

While the state was called in to guide and oversee the conservationist intervention, it was technical experts who were required to specify the detail of such projects. It is of crucial importance to recall that conservationism has its roots in the natural sciences of the nineteenth century, which were obviously very influenced by Darwinism. The milieu or system of power/knowledge of this period prescribed very narrow discourses: there was one path to 'civilisation', there was one science, there was one logic. Conservationism prescribes a black

⁸⁰Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 54.

⁸¹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 57.

⁸²Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 67.

⁸³Bennett, Soil erosion, 11.

and white diagnosis/analysis of farming systems. (For example, if there are no fences, then there is no veld management). If certain 'rational' practices are followed, positive consequences will result, and if others are adhered to, disaster will result. There is no place whatsoever for experiential science.⁸⁴ Beinart notes that since the Drought Commissioners, some of whom were trained in the United States, "saw the problem and solution as essentially technical in character", they believed that any future improvement depended on efficient execution of rational plans.⁸⁵ Since conservationism prohibits diverse approaches to any ecological issue, it tends to be very dogmatic and unilateral in its prescriptions. Writing about white agriculture, Smith wrote:

When we feel sick, out of sorts, or when illness threatens, we call in a doctor, or several doctors, specialists and the like. Our soils are sick, many unto death and beyond recovery; our economic system is pulsing with a highly irregular and dangerous throb. We must call in the specialists.⁸⁶

While this is the fairly matter-of-fact side of conservationism, its other complementary and equally broadcast side is far more dictatorial. American observer Jacks for example was downright brutal in his plea for the soil.

No European administration dares hand over the organisation of national defence to the lowest and least educated strata of society or even let them have a say in the matter. In South Africa the soil has already declared war on European civilization, and no half measures can be permitted in coping with the situation. In his life-and-death struggle

⁸⁴Beinart, 'Introduction', 159.

⁸⁵Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 59, 60.

⁸⁶Smith, 'The soil', 27.

with Nature, the white man cannot show much consideration towards underlings.⁸⁷

Here is a world-renowned American justifying Proclamations 116/1949 and 303/1957, those vicious pieces of legislation that granted unprecedented powers to the Native Commissioners with regard to ecological and land matters, and removed the government's obligation of having to consult the people respectively, long before they were tabled. The land was at risk, and since people are transient whereas future generations would depend on that self-same land, the misusers of land had to be ignored. Just as medical discourse proclaims that the doctor understands the patient's body better than the patient, so too does conservationism rest on the assumption that the agricultural scientist understands the farmer's soil better than the farmer. Just as the patient must submit his body entirely to the doctor, so too is the farmer - especially the 'backward' farmer - required to submit his land to the expert. A fundamental difference between medical and conservationist discourse however, is that the former allows for more internal debates than the latter. If one disagrees with a specific medical diagnosis, one can seek an alternative one; in the case of the land, diagnosis and prescription are far more uniform. Conservationism is a monolithic discourse.

Furthermore, a number of the technical issues which dominated betterment policy (for example, those involving cattle) had earlier been priorities of the Drought Commission. The commission had been preoccupied with the "evils"⁸⁸ of overstocking - it held that

⁸⁷Jacks, G in Jacks, G and Whyte, R The rape of the earth: a world survey of soil erosion (1939), Faber and Faber: London, 276.

⁸⁸Union of South Africa, Interim Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 7.

overstocking was "prevalent throughout the country"⁸⁹ - had condemned the kraaling of stock and had called explicitly for "complete grazing control".⁹⁰ It should however be noted that much of conservationist discourse has evolved over the years (of course some of its features, like its being a panic and monolithic discourse, have been enduring); it is well known that betterment changed considerably from its legislative beginning in 1939 to the mid-1950s. But it is clear that the technical character of initial betterment was informed very strongly by conservationism as it had been developed in South Africa in relation to white farming.

It must be reiterated: the conservationist discourse as described above was applied to settlers before Africans. Until the mid-1920s, conservationism in South Africa concerned itself almost exclusively with settler farming. It is important to note in passing how this discourse was translated into practice in white farming. Many writers have made mention of the multi-faceted aid that the government granted to white farmers between 1910 and 1930; in an effort to ground white farming on a more ecologically-sound basis, the government intervened to assist the farmers. Both Quail⁹¹ and Bowen⁹² stress the founding of the Land Bank, which granted generous credit to white farmers, as important aspect of beneficial government policy. One of the main reasons for the favourable translation of discourse into practice in white farming was the strong political status of whites. Beinart sums it up succinctly: "In settler states where white farmers were so

⁸⁹Union of South Africa, Interim Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 6.

⁹⁰Union of South Africa, Interim Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 9.

⁹¹Ciskei Commission Report (1980), Conference Associates: Silverton, 66.

⁹²Bowen, 'History', 27.

powerful politically, conservation minded officials and ideologues had to tread carefully".⁹³ Before that period African farming techniques "had not yet been generally identified as destructive".⁹⁴ This point is confirmed in startling fashion in the final report of the Drought Commission:

Whenever your Commission took evidence in the vicinity of a Native Reserve, the same complaint was heard - obviously a case of seeing a mote in the eye of one's neighbour and missing the beam in one's own - European farmers waxing very eloquent on the deterioration of the veld in such reserves.⁹⁵ [My emphasis].

Towards an explanation of the phenomenon of the spreading of conservationism into the reserves

A looming question which demands answering in the light of the confirmation of the fact of the continuous spread of conservationism from white to African farming is why this should have occurred. This question is partially answered by applying Foucault's principle of power/knowledge to conservationist discourse. He considered knowledge to be bound up with power.

We should admit that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not

⁹³Beinart, 'Introduction', 152.

⁹⁴Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 62.

⁹⁵Union of South Africa, Final Report of the Drought Investigation Commission, 63.

presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.⁹⁶

One can easily illustrate the implicit power of conservationism by pointing to two of its features as described above. Integral to conservationism are the privileged positions which it ascribes to the state and experts. Firstly, a key assumption of conservationism is that the state must organise and lead the campaign against ecological decay.⁹⁷ Responsibility is deferred away from communities and individuals onto the state. Conservationism commissions the state to increase its field of activity; state power consequently grows.

Secondly, conservationism demands that preliminary research be done so that effective plans can be drawn up. Experts collect facts about the selected land areas, and use these as the basis upon which they formulate plans.⁹⁸ Conservationism removes from local people the basic right of being able to organise their own lives and gives this right to the experts. As it turned out, this aspect of the power intrinsic to conservationism was exaggerated in Keiskammahoek district because a uniquely extensive rural survey was conducted there in the late 1940s under the leadership of Rhodes University academics. With the arrival of some survey scholars in the district in early 1948, a notice was sent to some outlying locations. The notice appealed to the local people to surrender all the details of their lives to the researchers.

You may have seen young men from the Universities driving about the district, looking at rocks and plants.

⁹⁶Foucault, M Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison (1977), Penguin: Harmondsworth, 27.

⁹⁷See above, pages 40-41.

⁹⁸See above, pages 41-42.

Do you know why they are here and what they are doing? The Government has sent them because it wishes to help you and to make conditions better for you. We feel we shall be able to help you much better if we first find out as much as we can about the way you live, the way you farm, the food you eat, the diseases you suffer from, and your animals' diseases. The workers who are coming now are coming to find out what is wrong. They themselves will not make any changes, but they will tell the Government what they find out and then the Government will know much better how to put things right. That is why we want you to help the workers and to tell them what you think is wrong and answer their questions.

Many people will come from the Universities and from other institutions and some of them will be trained Natives.

We want you to co-operate with us and help us every way you can. Give all the information you have to the people who come to your locations. It is not easy to cure a sickness unless we find out what caused the sickness.

When you tell what we want to find out you will help not only the Natives of Keiskammahoek but all the Natives in the country, because the Government plans to help all the other districts as it will help you. You are the first to be chosen and we people of Keiskammahoek feel very pleased and proud that we are the first, and we are going to try to make this work a great success.⁹⁹

Questionnaires accompanied the researchers into the locations; these were very wide-ranging, demanding details about amongst other things, all household members (employment, marriage status, etc.), household income and expenditure, migration and urbanisation, and agricultural and pastoral activities.¹⁰⁰ As the notice had warned, the researchers wanted to "find out as much as we can". The district was sick and academics were the doctors. In other words, the people of Keiskammahoek were regarded as being incapable of running their own lives. Conservationism required them to submit everything before the

⁹⁹Notice attached to rural research progress report, April 1948, in unboxed file N2/11/5, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁰⁰The questionnaires are held in Cory Library, Rhodes University.

tirelessly searching light of science. If they wanted better lives, they had to pull their secrets out of the darkness, out of the unknown, and present them to the light, make them known. They had to lay their lives and integrity on the examination table.

The state was and remains very unaccommodating when it comes to secrets and darkness. It would be far too simplistic and in fact inaccurate to regard the academics as the representatives of the state in rural areas. But there is a clear correlation between the functioning of science and research, and the administrative concerns of the state. Science makes things known, and that suits the state perfectly.

To sum up, conservationist discourse charged the state to motivate and oversee research of areas believed to be affected by soil decay. This research involved the collection of hitherto unknown facts. Plans to be implemented by the state were drawn up on the basis of these plans. Conservationism decreed that state activity in the countryside be stepped up¹⁰¹ (which implies increased state power) and thus the phenomenon of the spread of conservationism is not surprising.

If one surveys the academic scene in 1920s South Africa one soon discovers another reason for the spread of conservationism into the reserves. Beinart wrote that "[e]stablished conservationist concern in the settler states was important in lending to recognition ... of the problem in African states in the late 1920s and early 1930s".¹⁰²

¹⁰¹The past tense is used because an elaborate conservation industry has developed in the modern era. The role of the state now is thus smaller than it was before the 'decolonisation' of Africa in the 1960s, but is still significant. See Ferguson, J The anti-politics machine: "development", depoliticisation, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho (1990), David Philip: Cape Town.

¹⁰²Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 67.

While this is true, it was the sudden rise to prominence of the discipline of anthropology that focused scientific attention onto the African areas for the first time.

1921 was an important year for that discipline in South Africa: it saw the last of the four teaching universities acquire its Department of Anthropology;¹⁰³ and it was also the year during which Radcliffe-Brown was appointed to the new Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town.¹⁰⁴ The obvious change that anthropology ensured was that Africans became objects of research, to be scrutinised under the sharp light of science. It is remarkable how in most prefaces or forewords to the early anthropological works, references to objectivity and fact are very prevalent.¹⁰⁵ Whereas previously curiosity was the main incentive that led isolated observers into African areas,¹⁰⁶ by the 1920s scientific thoroughness demanded that every secret and idiosyncrasy of African 'tribal' cultures, lifestyles and mentalities be analysed. Rich has confirmed this discontinuous shift, noting "a growing professionalisation of intellectual and academic knowledge in the place of previously amateur

¹⁰³Dubow, S 'Race, civilisation and culture: the elaboration of segregationist discourse in the inter-war years' in Marks, S and Trapido, S (eds) The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa (1987), Longman: London, 80.

¹⁰⁴Dubow, 'Race', 80.

¹⁰⁵eg Smuts, J in Hunter, M Reaction to conquest (1936), Oxford University Press: London, vii.

¹⁰⁶Loram, C 'Foreword' in Cook, P Social organisation and ceremonial institutions of the Bomvana (1931), Juta and Co: Cape Town, ix. He wrote that before the advent of anthropology in South Africa, when African groupings had been studied, it had been a matter of mere intellectual curiosity.

and informal charitable and philanthropic concern".¹⁰⁷ The point is that with the establishment of the African, and thus of African areas also, as objects of scientific research (as a result of anthropology), the way was cleared for the diagnosis of these areas by conservationism.

It is notable that once conservationism had entered the reserves it and anthropology proved directly complementary. The conservationist diagnosis of the reasons for erosion in the reserves was that Africans were plagued by ignorance and that they therefore practised backward farming techniques. Conservationism therefore encouraged study of reserve areas so that their internal dynamics could be understood and subsequently appropriately adapted. In other words, conservationism not only upheld the usefulness of anthropology, but went further by charging it to scrutinize the African areas. Anthropology in its turn confirmed the technical arguments of conservationism. In 1926 for example, the anthropologist Herskovits wrote a comprehensive, four part article entitled 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa' which was published in American Anthropologist.¹⁰⁸ This was the first time that the argument about supposedly irrational African attitudes towards cattle was formalized.¹⁰⁹ Cattle occupied a prominent position in East African societies as wealth, dowry, ceremonial value; further they were associated with sexual and occupational taboos, and central

¹⁰⁷Rich, P 'W.M. Macmillan, South African segregation and Commonwealth race relations, 1919-1938' in Macmillan, H and Marks, S (Eds) Africa and Empire W.H. Macmillan, historian and social critic (1989) Temple Press: University of London, 192.

¹⁰⁸Herskovits, M 'The cattle complex in east Africa' (Parts i, ii, iii, iv) in American Anthropologist, Vol 28 (1926), 230-272, 361-388, 494-528, 633-664.

¹⁰⁹Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 67.

in milk customs.¹¹⁰ The enormous importance of cattle in a wide range of African activities resulted in their not being seen in economic terms. This is exactly the type of analysis that conservationists wanted to hear; their arguments about the ecological problems being rooted in technical 'backwardness' were confirmed. Clearly, conservationism and anthropology complemented one another tremendously.

The implicit power of conservationist discourse and the sudden rise of anthropology in South Africa then are two important reasons which help to account for the phenomenon of the spread of conservationism into the reserves. But what about its timing? Obviously the fact that anthropology established itself in South Africa in the early 1920s is a reason for the spread of conservationism into the reserves from the mid to late 1920s. But a look at the socio-political context is necessary for a more adequate explanation of the chronology.

Towards an explanation of the chronology of the spread of conservationism into the reserves: a scan of the socio-political context

1. Control

Bundy and Beinart have written about how the paternalist style of government of the Transkeian districts was maintained into the twentieth century.¹¹¹ (This occurred despite the phenomenon that colonial alliance groups in these districts changed over this period:

¹¹⁰Herskovits, 'The cattle complex'. See 653 for a summary of the range of the importance of cattle.

¹¹¹Bundy, C and Beinart, W 'Introduction: "Away in the locations"' in Bundy, C and Beinart, W Hidden struggles in rural South Africa (1987), Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 12.

in the light of entrenched and extended intervention the progressive peasants were no longer needed as agents; conversely, the previously threatening but now potentially useful traditional leadership was inserted into colonial authority structures). The officials "preferred co-operation to coercion, the court-room to the corvee".¹¹² Information obtained through local networks was the key to the success of the paternalist approach. However by the late 1920s, Bundy and Beinart argue, this approach had outlived its usefulness. There was by this time widespread fear amongst officials that they were losing touch with, and control of, the rural areas.

The affairs of rural Africans 'away in the locations' were submerged, and were dropping below the gaze of government, of white sympathisers, and even of African political leaders.¹¹³

One of the key reasons for this submersion, Bundy and Beinart point out, was the rising tide of rural Africanism.¹¹⁴ Similarly Dubow has noted the official fears and resultant loss of confidence in the 'personal Transkeian tradition'¹¹⁵ of N.A.D. rule, but significantly he times it earlier, and also attempts to link it to changes in the political economy.¹¹⁶ What is of primary importance is to clarify the issue of chronology. Dubow writes

¹¹²Bundy and Beinart, Hidden struggles, 12.

¹¹³Bundy and Beinart, Hidden struggles, 1.

¹¹⁴Bundy and Beinart, Hidden struggles, 34.

¹¹⁵Dubow wrote of "the distinctive Transkeian tradition, with its stress on personalising relations of authority". (Dubow, S Racial segregation and origins of apartheid in South Africa, 1919-1936 (1989), Macmillan: Basingstoke, 93).

¹¹⁶Dubow, Racial segregation, 12.

Images of rebellion and anxious references to a 'developing sense of race consciousness' among Africans were wildly pervasive within the administration from the early 1920s.¹¹⁷

Since Dubow has uncovered "pervasive" images of rebellion in official documents from the early 1920s, it seems reasonable to argue that this is the crucial period as far as official perception of growing rebellion is concerned. In the case of Keiskammahoek there were certainly official fears that 'tribal' authority was breaking down by the early 1920s. In August 1924, the superintendent wrote to the magistrate as follows:

I am actuated by a strong conviction that the ingrained respect for established authority, which in the past has ensured the necessary obedience, is fast disappearing, and unless some steps are taken to check this, contempt and disregard of law will follow and spread.¹¹⁸

Apart from the documentation, there is another reason to place the period of official paranoia (re rural control) in the early 1920s. Dubow has related that the mid-1920s saw a resurgent N.A.D.¹¹⁹ After a period of decline, mainly to the benefit of the Department of Justice, the N.A.D reinvented itself and emerged stronger than ever. The key to its reinvention was the replacement of the personal Transkeian tradition of government with a technicist scientific approach¹²⁰ in which both conservationism¹²¹ and anthropology¹²² were

¹¹⁷Dubow, Racial segregation, 12.

¹¹⁸Letter dated 12/08/1924, in unboxed file 2/17/2/1(5), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹⁹Dubow, Racial segregation, 93-95.

¹²⁰Dubow, Racial segregation, 93.

prominent. Science, with its "cool, gentle, serious spirit" was called on to take charge of departmental policies.¹²³ The point is that an important reason for the replacement of paternalism was a belief that it could no longer control the rural areas. Its substitution in the mid-1920s thus implies that official paranoia was prevalent in the early 1920s. In the context of feared rural anarchy, conservationism presented itself as a modern, rational and effective discourse which could be used (together with other scientific discourses)¹²⁴ as the basis for an appropriate rural policy.

¹²¹In the late 1920s the N.A.D. employed an increased number of soil experts, and in 1929 its first Director of Native Agriculture, R Thornton was appointed (Dubow, Racial segregation, 95).

¹²²In 1925-26 the N.A.D. created a new ethnology section under G Lestrade (Dubow, Racial segregation, 94). The university anthropology departments, soon after they were established, devised diploma courses in 'Bantu Studies' that were crafted especially to suit the purposes of N.A.D. officials (Dubow, 'Race', 81). For a number of years officials who completed these courses were paid bonuses (Dubow, Racial segregation, 94).

¹²³Dubow, Racial segregation, 94.

¹²⁴The implicit power of conservationism was spelled out on pages 45-48 above. In the case of anthropology, the validity of Foucault's notion of power/knowledge is even more obvious. There was contemporary awareness of the value of anthropological knowledge in the government of peoples. Circular No 60 of 1927 instructed magistrates "to exhibit a considerate and painstaking understanding of Native ways of thought and methods of business". (Quoted in Bowen, 'History', 14). Loram wrote that Smuts "realised the importance of a knowledge of Native life and languages in determining Native policy and in administering Native affairs". (Loram, 'Foreword', ix). Furthermore, certain anthropologists themselves stressed the usefulness of anthropology in relation to controlling people. "Radcliffe-Brown [made] visionary claims for what could be achieved in the realm of social engineering once adequate 'laws of social development' had been worked out." (Macmillan, H 'Paralyzed conservatives: W.M. Macmillan, The social scientists, and "the common society", 1923-1948' in Macmillan, H and Marks, S (eds) Africa and empire W.M. Macmillan, historian and social critic (1989), Temple Press: University of London, 76).

2. Urbanisation

Hendricks dates the beginning of increased twentieth century African urbanisation in South Africa at 1921.¹²⁵ That there was considerable urbanisation in the 1920s (relative to previous decades) is accepted here. Urbanisation is a complex phenomenon; there are many aspects of it (for example, its structural and local causes, its urban and rural effects) that can be analysed. As it turns out, if one wants to understand how it contributed to the timing of the movement of conservationism into the reserves, one must look at the precise way in which it was perceived during the 1920s and early 1930s.

The main aspect of urbanisation which interested early 1920s academics and officials alike was its effects in the cities. Although Macmillan recognised that an obvious cause of urbanisation was ecological decay,¹²⁶ he was equally concerned with the effects of urbanisation in the cities. He warned of a mass of Africans that would appear as "a flood that must overwhelm us".¹²⁷ In the light of the fact that the imagery of swamping captured the white public during the 1929 election, it seems that white South Africa generally became anxious about the Africanisation of 'their' cities towards the end of the decade.

The Native Economic Commissioners continued the trend of laying emphasis on the effects of urbanisation on the cities.

¹²⁵Hendricks, F The pillars of apartheid land tenure, rural planning and the chieftaincy (1990), Almqvist and Wiksell International: Stockholm, 94.

¹²⁶Macmillan, W Complete South Africa An economic foot-note to history (1930), Faber and Faber Ltd: London, 216.

¹²⁷Quoted in Dubow, Racial segregation, 66.

The rapid increase in the drift to the towns ... has already assumed such a magnitude as seriously to disturb the European mind, and to create grave problems of urban housing, administration, and Native morality ...¹²⁸

What is interesting about this quote however, is that concern was being expressed not only for "the European mind", but also for "Native morality". The reason for this is that the commissioners were primarily interested in the continuation of 'civilisation' in South Africa. They regarded the 'native' as capable of becoming 'civilised', but his 'progress' depended both on the upholding of European values in the cities and the prevention of the too rapid disintegration of 'native morality' in the reserves.¹²⁹ Thus they argued that it was of utmost importance to ensure that the reserves remained habitable.

So only in the early 1930s did anxiety about urbanisation translate into a drive to conserve the rural areas. (Before that time, urbanisation was analysed in terms of its effects on urban areas). Thus it would be incorrect to claim that the initial mid to late 1920s movement of conservationism into the reserves was sparked off by a desire to slow down urbanisation by bolstering reserve ecologies. But once the N.E.C. directed attention onto the reserves, the context of African urbanisation was certainly very conducive to the firm establishment of conservationism in the reserves; it should also be seen as contributing to the late 1930s movement of conservationism into legislation governing the reserves.

¹²⁸Union of South Africa Report of the Native Economic Commission, 13.

¹²⁹Union of South Africa, Report of the Native Economic Commission, 30.

Legislative expression of the movement of conservationism into the reserves

The first piece of betterment legislation per se was Proclamation No 31 of 1939. Some prior government proclamations relating to the reserves did contain traces of conservationism. For example, Beinart cites a 1931 proclamation that granted officials power to "formalise and regulate" grazing procedures by resting specified sections of the commonage for parts of the year.¹³⁰ The focus of 1930s conservationism re African areas was undoubtedly on stock holding practices.¹³¹ Not surprisingly therefore, Proclamation 31/1939 dealt with the control and improvement of livestock. The gist of the proclamation was that any land unit in the reserves could be declared as a betterment area after consultation with the inhabitants of that land unit.¹³² (Thus the onus was placed on the authorities to convince rural inhabitants of the benefits of betterment. The propaganda campaign in Keiskammahoek and the local response to the campaign are the focal issues considered in the next chapter). Each betterment area could be subjected to a stock count and, if the number of stock exceeded the carrying capacity, to culling.¹³³

The 1940s and 1950s saw successive betterment policies undergo many changes.¹³⁴ (Notably however, the consultation clause lasted until 1957). What is important in the context of this thesis is that the total differentiation of all land within betterment areas - since a

¹³⁰Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 74.

¹³¹De Wet, 'Betterment planning in South Africa', 90.

¹³²Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 31/1939' in Government Gazette (24/02/1939), Government Printer: Pretoria, 475.

¹³³Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 31/1939', 475.

¹³⁴De Wet, 'Betterment planning in South Africa', 86-93.

specified portion of the location is laid aside for residential purposes, it is clear that total differentiation implies villagisation - became a central principle of post World War II betterment policy.¹³⁵ This principle was included in legislation for the first time in 1949 (in proclamation 116).¹³⁶ A thorough analysis of the consequences of villagisation in communal locations in Keiskammahoek district is presented in chapter three.

Summary of the argument constructed above

The overall question that this chapter has sought to answer is why betterment was conceived (in the late 1930s). In order to present the answer to this broad question as logically as possible, it was decided to break it down into a number of smaller, more manageable questions. The first issue tackled was the ecological history of the reserves in the early twentieth century. Following the work of Simkins and Beinart, and using the case of Keiskammahoek, two things became apparent. Firstly different communities reacted differently to the land losses which resulted from colonial expropriations; they adapted their economic practices in varying manners, to varying degrees and with varying success.¹³⁷ Therefore the rate and extent of erosion varied from district to district. Secondly, in the districts that were affected by erosion in the early twentieth century (for example Keiskammahoek), there is no evidence to suggest that the late 1920s and early 1930s witnessed accelerated decline. Thus one cannot explain the conception of betterment in terms of a general or a sudden

¹³⁵De Wet, 'Betterment planning in South Africa', 90.

¹³⁶Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 116/1949' in Government Gazette (13/05/1949), Government Printer: Pretoria, 405.

¹³⁷Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 65-67.

ecological crisis. Rather one must turn to conservationist discourse, and its movement into the reserves; it was conservationism that made the recognition and definition of soil problems possible, and that insisted on the declaration of crisis. In order to show the importance of discourse in respect of the details of betterment, care was taken to strengthen Beinart's contention of the strong continuity between early 1920s conservationism which dealt with white farming and later conservationism which dealt with African farming (as expressed in betterment policy).

In the light of this argument, the next question that required answering was why conservationism actually spread into the reserves. Two reasons were given. Firstly, since the discourse of conservationism reserved a large role for the state, it obviously stood to benefit from the expansion of the discourse into the reserves; a large measure of the implicit power of conservationism was state power. Secondly, the sudden rise of anthropology as a prestigious scientific discipline in South Africa resulted in added attention being given to the reserves, and in their being established as entities that ought to be studied scientifically. Hereby anthropology encouraged the movement of the science of conservationism into the reserves.

The last question that required answering in order to account for the conception of betterment was why conservationism moved into the reserves specifically from the mid to late 1920s. Two key reasons in this regard were found by looking at the socio-political context of the time. Firstly, there was a perception amongst officials in the early 1920s that the prevailing paternalistic style of governing the rural areas was no longer effective. Reports of brewing rebellion were common during these years. In the mid 1920s, the N.A.D. thus changed its creed, replacing paternalism with technicism. Conservationism was part of this technicism. Secondly, there was

increased African urbanisation from the early 1920s. While the initial response to this by academics and officials was anxiety about its consequences in the cities, finally the N.E.C. stressed that the only way to halt the urbanisation was to halt the deterioration of the reserves' ecology. So while the phenomenon of urbanisation did not initially lead to calls for conservation, such calls were belated from the 1930s and were partially responsible for the movement of conservationism into the law governing the reserves.

CHAPTER II

Power and Resistance, 1939-1963

Having completed the explanation of the conception of betterment, the discussion now shifts from broad, national issues to the implementation of betterment in Keiskammahoek district specifically. As Proclamation 31/1939 insisted that the community living on a land unit be consulted before it could be declared a betterment area,¹ the first task in this chapter is to consider the attempts of the local government to fulfil the consultation clause. In 1939 there was a concerted effort by officials to get as many locations as possible declared as betterment areas. Their efforts were shortlived and their claims to having consulted the communities properly very dubious, but they did result in most of the locations in the southern half of the district (Mbems, Burnshill, Lower and Upper Ngqumeya, Zanyokwe, Upper and Lower Rabula) being declared as betterment areas.² However, the only one of these locations in which Proclamation 31 was actually implemented in the early 1940s was Burnshill, where "negotiations for culling are now in progress" by late 1944.³ The early 1940s saw no attempt at consulting the other locations, but activity in this regard was stepped up considerably after the second world war. This new

¹See above, page 57.

²Letter dated 17/11/1944, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/17/2/1(5), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³Letter dated 17/11/1944, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/17/2/1(5), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

flurry of activity in Keiskammaheok district corresponded with new urgency on a national level; in 1945 the Secretary for Native Affairs, D Smit, had declared the 'New Era of Reclamation'.⁴ The crucial years of 'consultation' in Keiskammahoek were 1947 and 1948, during which 'consultative' meetings were held in Cata, Gwili-Gwili, Mtwaku, Gxulu, Mbems, Nqolo-Nqolo, Mnyameni, Lower and Upper Ngqumeya and Wolf River.⁵ These meetings were the starting-point of the local government's campaign aimed at the smooth introduction of betterment throughout Keiskammahoek district; this was a campaign that would span about fifteen years and be characterised by the formulation of special strategies to counter widespread resistance.

The 1940s meetings: the importance of knowledge

The aim of Keiskammahoek Native Commissioner Warner in the late 1940s was to be able to report to the Chief Native Commissioner in Kingwilliamstown that the villagers of Keiskammahoek had been consulted and that they had consented to the declaration of their land units as betterment areas. The 'consultations' took the form of Inkundla meetings⁶ at which the officials of the Native Affairs Department (N.A.D.) presented conservationist arguments to some of the men of the locations (no women attended Inkundla meetings), and

⁴Statement of Policy, 'A New Era of Reclamation', made by the Secretary for Native Affairs at the Ciskeian General Council in 1945, see unboxed file 7/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵See unboxed files N8/5/3(5), (13), (12), (11); 7/3 (Magadaza) (pseudonym, used for personal reasons); N8/5/3(14), (8), (9), (10), (4), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁶These were meetings, attended by the men of the various locations, at which a host of location affairs were discussed.

thereafter demanded a response. The meeting scenario, although straightforward, can easily be misjudged. The officials were part of a rejuvenated, science-permeated N.A.D.⁷: they possessed knowledge of conservationism. The local men adhered to knowledge derived from experience, and were not sufficiently educated to enter into debate about the science of conservationism. In other words, in the Inkundla meetings, scientific knowledge differentiated the officials from the local men. The officials possessed knowledge of conservationism and the inhabitants of Keiskammahoek did not. Thus the latter were disqualified from being able to engage with the former on an academic level. Just as a medical patient is not in a position to contest the details of a doctor's diagnosis presented in medical discourse, so too was the rural inhabitant ill-equipped to contest the diagnosis of N.A.D. officials. It is a technical point: because of the consultation clause of Proclamation 31/1939, the N.A.D. officials faced an unusual situation. In the consultation meetings, the relationship between the officials and the populace was different from usual. Usually, the officials were the arms and eyes of the government, implementing policies and monitoring areas. In the meetings, the consultation clause rendered them relatively weak in terms of state capacity; rather it was knowledge which placed them favourably vis-a-vis the Keiskammahoek men.

The theory informing this analysis is that of Foucault. He held that all differentiated relationships are power relations.⁸ Further, instead of regarding all power relations as having a stereotypical form (for example that of the sovereign-subject relationship) or as being secondary to a principal power relation (for example that

⁷See above, pages 53-54.

⁸Foucault, M 'Afterword' in Dreyfus, H and Rabinow, P Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics (1982), Harvester: Brighton, 223.

between proletariat and bourgeoisie), he believed that all differentiated relationships are unique and important power relations.⁹ Thus for example, the relationships between doctor and patient, parent and child, teacher and pupil, husband and wife are all unique power relations. Likewise, the relationship between a knowledgeable person and an ignorant person is a unique power relation.¹⁰ When one considers the N.A.D. official/Keiskammahoek male power relation at Inkundla meetings in Foucauldian terms, the issue of the officials' access to state machinery and authority is superseded by the differential of knowledge. Foucault allows one to consider the concrete details of relationships.

The fact that the rural men were unable to engage the officials in debate about conservationism does not imply that they accepted the dictatorial gospel of betterment. Their general response was a withdrawal into sullen silence and non-participation, boredom and indifference.¹¹ The officials conveniently interpreted this response as unanimous acceptance of betterment. Indeed all of the official correspondence dealing with allegedly successful (from government point of view) 1947/8 meetings claimed or implied that betterment had been accepted unanimously. Here is a typical example:

[A]t the request of the headman and people of Mnyameni I held a meeting in that location on 7th July 1947 at which it was unanimously decided to agree to the provisions of Proclamation No. 31 of 1939 being applied to Mnyameni Location ... there are 467 General Taxpayers in this location of whom 87 were present at the meeting. I

⁹Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 188, 198.

¹⁰Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 187.

¹¹Beinart, 'Soil erosion' 81, and oral testimony from people in Gwili-Gwili, Gxulu, Ndlovini, Ngobošana, Lower Mnyameni and Wolf River in May 1991.

consider that the meeting was fully representative of the location.¹²

Whilst the Native Commissioner claimed ubiquitous unanimity, it is clear that there was no voting in the usual manner of people being given an opportunity to show their support for or disapproval of a proposal. One can assume without doubt that if there had been proper voting there would have been a number of men in each village who would have voted 'no' to any form of betterment intervention. Ironically then, the word which exposes the lie of the government is 'unanimous'. If there had been unanimous support for Proclamation 31 in 1947/8 in Cata, Gwili-Gwili, Gxulu, Mtwaku, and Lower and Upper Ngqumeya (as government reports claim), then there would not have been the widespread resistance to betterment in those locations which occurred in the 1950s.¹³ If those attending the meetings had been cumulatively convinced by the arguments for betterment then there would also have been no reason for a prolonged heightening of the propaganda campaign launched by the government in 1945.¹⁴

A more likely meeting scenario is that after pedantic ramblings by officials, the Native Commissioner would have closed proceedings with a statement-cum-question such as: 'All right, no-one has asked any questions or disagreed with any of our arguments. I am correct then in assuming that everyone desires that Proclamation 31 be applied to the location? ... [silence] ... Okay, that settles it.' When I asked

¹²Letter dated 18/09/1947, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown in unboxed file N8/5/3(8), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³Letter dated 28/02/59, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Headman Tabata (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), Zanyokwe Location, in unboxed file N8/5/3(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁴See next section, 'The ideological onslaught', page 67.

an old Gxulu man whether the men had wanted betterment, this was his response:

We did not want it, but the government said it ... [A] vote is this: we accept even if we don't want ... I know how a vote is supposed to be held: one is supposed to lift one's hand for or against.¹⁵

It should be noted that there is one exception to the 1947/8 norm of reported unanimity. Only in Mbems, where Proclamation 31 of 1939 was accepted by 44 votes against 24, was there some sort of actual voting.¹⁶

Most commentators have regarded the supposed acceptance of betterment by reserve locations very sceptically. Lodge for example doubts that the meetings were representative of village populations.¹⁷ More accurately stated, it is very improbable that the meetings were properly representative of village male populations. Beinart has drawn attention to the broody silence which characterised 'consultation' meetings.¹⁸ De Wet denounces the supposition that consultation was a priority of the government.¹⁹ One commentator who is strangely uncritical of the 'consultation' meetings is Ndlovu. After noting the haziness of the government's notion of consultation -

¹⁵Interview with Mr Mbona, an old Gxulu resident, in mid May 1991.

¹⁶Letter dated 31/07/1947, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁷Lodge, Black politics, 264.

¹⁸Beinart, 'Soil erosion', 81.

¹⁹De Wet, 'Betterment planning in South Africa', 105.

"consultation ... whatever that meant"²⁰ - he goes on to account for the success of betterment in parts of Middledrift district as follows:

Consultation and consensus were principles these people were familiar with in their traditional structures of authority ... What better method was there then, than to start from these known principles.²¹

Clearly, Ndlovu's argument here is contradictory and untenable.²²

The ideological onslaught

The priority of the officials in the meetings was to fulfil the consultation clause of Proclamation 31/1939, however unscrupulously, so that betterment planning of the locations could get under way. But they and the central government were patently aware that such plans were subsequently going to be implemented in the locations and therefore would meet with a popular reaction. While initial 'consent' could be contrived, successful implementation of plans required some degree of actual consent. A nationwide propaganda campaign was launched in 1945 to coincide with Smit's announcement that the government intended pursuing a more comprehensive and speeded-up

²⁰Ndlovu, T 'Progress in the midst of adversity' (1991), unpublished University of the Witwatersrand Honours paper, 6, 7.

²¹Ndlovu, 'Progress', 65.

²²He specifies ('Progress', 47, 48) that authoritarian, progressive headmen played a large role in forging local acceptance of betterment planning. Such enlightened headmen were equally unapproachable and unsympathetic to the people as the Native Commissioners. There was no consultation to speak of, just laying down the law.

betterment effort.²³ The national directive was that this campaign be "intensive and continued".²⁴ Strategy consisted of information bombardment by all the people employed by the Native Affairs Department; these included, amongst others, the Native Commissioner, agricultural and engineering officers, agricultural demonstrators and headmen.²⁵ The Native Commissioners were instructed to use every "tribal and council" meeting to attempt to convince rural Africans about the benefits of betterment.²⁶ They were to note local responses to the scientific arguments so that the propaganda strategy could be improved continually.²⁷

The propaganda campaign was renewed in the mid-1950s when the apartheid government moved away from the detailed planning of post-1945 policy toward accelerated planning (on the grounds that the

²³Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁴Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁵Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁶Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁷Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

progress of the former had been too slow).²⁸ In Keiskammahoek, Magistrate Schaffer was instructed to report quarterly on all propaganda work being undertaken.²⁹ Through that year he reported having held well attended "propaganda meetings" in Mnyameni, Dontsa, Burnshill, Ngolongolo and Mbems.³⁰ General Circular No. 21 of 1955 instructed the reserve magistrates to coordinate a knowledge accumulation programme; familiarity with the facts would increase the efficiency of the local officials in their propaganda work.

It is suggested that in order to obtain greater efficiency from district staff and to enable better propaganda to be disseminated among the Natives, each district should have its facts established so that the local officers could approach the Natives with full facts regarding areas, stock, population, etc. District officers should for instance know the carrying capacity, stock numbers, number of donkeys, areas under the plough, etc. in their districts. They should make a point of knowing the facts about their districts.³¹

The infrastructure necessary for the sorting, storing and making available of knowledge was already in place in Keiskammahoek: the Department of Native Affairs had established an Information Service

²⁸General Circular Number 44 of 1954, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁹Letter dated 08/02/1955, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁰Letters dated 01/07/1955 and 12/10/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³¹General Circular Number 21 of 1955, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

in 1954.³²

In 1945 the agricultural and engineering officers were also given instructions. They were to explain the principles of betterment conservation to both their staff - with particular attention to be paid to their African staff - and to all Africans with whom they had dealings.³³ At a 1953 conference, the officers were instructed to "pay special attention to gaining the necessary co-operation of the people, by means of propaganda, discussions and in every way possible".³⁴ Even the agricultural demonstrators were required "to make propaganda on the rehabilitation of the Native Areas ... the main feature of their work".³⁵ In 1949, the Chief Native Commissioner in Kingwilliamstown reminded Native Commissioner Warner that "persuasion of the people to accept improved methods" was the main task of the demonstrators.³⁶

An important cog in the propaganda machine was the headman. The

³²Native Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, 31/03/1954, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³³Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁴Circular No 13 of 1953, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁵Letter dated 06/07/1945, Secretary for Native Affairs, to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁶Letter dated 12/10/1949, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N8/1/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

government regarded it as essential that the villagers have progressive leaders. To this end it controlled the appointment of headmen very closely; there is abundant evidence that the government frequently overturned the results of Inkundla headmen voting when an unsuitable candidate was chosen.³⁷ The qualities which the government sought in headmen included loyalty, maturity, progressiveness, genealogical qualification, leadership strength and Christian convictions. Personality reports were included in the correspondence of the Native Commissioner with the Chief Native Commissioner in Kingwilliamstown whenever headmanship appointment was involved. Here is an example of a favourable report.

Barnes Kweta [pseudonym, used for personal reasons] qualifies for appointment as a Headman. He is married, he is 45 years of age and is otherwise suitable for appointment. As far as I have been able to ascertain he is not a member of or connected with in any way any subversive organisation or movement. He is heir to Sagoni Kweta who was Headman of the location until 28.4.1920. He is held in high esteem in the location and is comparatively well off.³⁸

When the desired qualities were conspicuously lacking in elected candidates, the Native Commissioner simply overlooked the electorate's choice and installed his personal choice. Although the government was not over-hasty in ignoring the popular choice in all cases involving doubt about the credentials of the candidate, for this would have exposed clearly the despotic nature of its approach to headmanship, it did intervene when it deemed it vital to do so. As de Wet has pointed out in the case of Cata, this form of government autocracy far

³⁷See cases cited below, pages 72-73.

³⁸Letter dated 24/06/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 (Kweta) in box 2/17/3/44, 2/17/4-7 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

pre-dated the legislative beginnings of betterment,³⁹ but once the government prioritised betterment it intervened frequently to ensure that supporters of conservationism were installed as headmen. Here are fragments of evidence detailing government intervention in some cases:

[Lower Rabula 1941] Notwithstanding that E. Jara has received more votes than T. Nkanjeni [23 versus 21], I am not prepared to recommend him for appointment; in these times particularly, a man of mature age and experience is needed.⁴⁰

[Gwili-Gwili 1950] There were 73 natives present who were adamant that Mgwebi Myeki [pseudonym, used for personal reasons] who has been dismissed should be re-appointed. I made every effort to persuade them to nominate someone else but they refused to do so⁴¹ ... [I therefore recommend Ernest Patani [pseudonym, used for personal reasons], aged 60;] he has a certain following in the location and he is reported to be loyal and in sympathy with conservation measures. He will have a difficult time at first but I consider that if he receives the full backing of this office he will successfully carry out his duties.⁴²

[Zanyokwe 1959: Ntsobi [pseudonym, used for personal reasons], 41 votes versus Tabata, 13 votes] The two candidates are unknown to me, the one living in East London and the other in Cape Town, but a man who has attained the rank of sergeant in the Police force and whose age is

³⁹De Wet, C 'The dynamics of political factionalism in a rural Ciskei village from 1880 to 1950' in African Studies, Vol 46, No 1, (1987), 68-73.

⁴⁰Letter dated August 1941, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N1/1/5(5) in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁴¹Letter dated 16/11/1950, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁴²Letter dated 25/11/1950, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

approximately 55, appears to have the necessary qualification for appointment, especially as he is the son of the outgoing headman, who has been a loyal and apparently honest leader of his people. The other candidate, while favoured by the people, is suspected of being a supporter of a reactionary group, members of an unrecognised National Baptist church body, and I would prefer in the ordinary course of events to see the ex-headman's son appointed.⁴³

So then, the government retained headmanship voting because it wanted its decisions to smack of democracy. But when the local men's wishes did not coincide with those of the government then it acted unilaterally. The most important point here however, is that the government regarded reliable headmen as a necessary condition for success in its propaganda campaign.

Once appointed, headmen were to act in accordance with the 'Schedule of Duties' of headmen which specified, amongst other things, that they were to assist in all scientific agricultural innovations, report the presence of any strange people or strange things in their locations and permit practices only if they were compatible with the "laws and principles of humanity and decency".⁴⁴ Betterment was the economic expression of rationality just as normality was its moral expression; the headmen were to promote rationality. In order to have this rationality ingrained into them, they were required to meet frequently

⁴³Letter dated 04/12/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni) (pseudonym, used for personal reasons) in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁴⁴Government Notice 2252 of 1928, 'Duties and Powers of Village Headmen', was re-enacted in toto in 1947. See letter dated 15/10/1949, Department of Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N1/1/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. That the 'Schedule of Duties' dates from the late 1920s confirms that science had taken hold of the official mind by this period. (This contention was a vital part of the overall argument of Chapter I).

with the Native Commissioner⁴⁵ (who was given increased control over them in 1947 by being made responsible for their bonus payments),⁴⁶ and from 1952 they were obliged to attend headmen's conferences at which the underlying theme was always rational practice (in various spheres, eg. economic, educational, medicinal, developmental, etc.).⁴⁷ Having come to appreciate the importance of rationality, they were to return to their locations and impart the message of the way to a better and fuller life.

Government control over headmanship was not limited to its unilateral appointment of relatively unpopular candidates; it ensured that such candidates received active support in conducting their location affairs.⁴⁸ Conversely, if a headman proved intractable and unwilling to act in accordance with the Schedule of Duties, the government had the authority to suspend his headmanship; on occasion it exercised this authority.⁴⁹

It is clear therefore that there was a concerted reserve-wide propaganda campaign from the mid 1940s to the late 1950s which was aimed at convincing the rural masses about the necessity for western science. This campaign was certainly carried out with zeal in the Keiskammahoek district, especially from 1952 when A Schaffer took

⁴⁵The magistrate held quarterly meetings with the headmen. See unboxed file N1/1/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴⁶General Circular Number 28 of 1947, in unboxed file N1/1/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴⁷See unboxed file N1/1/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴⁸For example see below, page 94.

⁴⁹For example see below, pages 93-94.

office as magistrate. The question which must be posed however, is whether the campaign actually achieved its aim: were the ideas of the people transformed by science? Did the people actually begin calling for the dawn of "the new era of Bantu history"⁵⁰ or was it thrust upon them? In fact it is clear that the state was largely unsuccessful in its attempts to break down people's perceptions and replace them with scientific sensibilities. The knowledge-bashing approach of the government only heightened people's opposition to any form of further government interventions in their lives. As one pro-betterment local complained to a survey team researcher: "The approach of the Government is bad, and people do not understand what is being done by the NAD".⁵¹ The people's diagnosis of the problems of the soil - too little land, not inappropriate farming techniques⁵² - stood firm. In 1957 headmen returning from conferences were still being accused of spreading government propaganda.⁵³ Many communities became very active in their rejection of and resistance to betterment intervention in the 1950s.⁵⁴ Even today, science does not colour (never mind dominate) people's perceptions of betterment. Of the hundred or so men whom I interviewed, only a handful - retired teachers and those previously involved in some aspect of betterment administration - were anxious to point out the benefits derived from western scientific land

⁵⁰Statement of Policy, 'A New Era of Reclamation', made by the Secretary for Native Affairs at the Ciskeian General Council in 1945, see unboxed file 7/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵¹Wilson *et al*, Social structure, 186.

⁵²Wilson *et al*, Social structure, 181.

⁵³Letter dated 31/01/1957, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N1/1/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵⁴See following section, 'Three case studies', page 77.

management and farming practice; the rest poured out scorn and bitterness at the mention of 'Trust'.

Predictably, the only section of some locations that rallied to the call for scientific principles to dictate farming practice was the educated stratum led by the teachers. In Mbems, for example, anti-conservation activities seem to have been conducted almost exclusively by the uneducated; a retired teacher whom I spoke to referred to Charles Pamla (leader of the resistance, see following section) very condescendingly as uneducated and illiterate, as though that automatically disqualified his ideas.⁵⁵ That the educated generally did support betterment is confirmed by Wilson's finding that "Among 'progressives' [the educated] there is usually greater acceptance of innovations, such as scientific farming practices".⁵⁶

Thus the two sections of the African communities that generally supported betterment more than any other were the headmen and the educated. In the late 1940s and early 1950s however, the latter group was equally as critical of the headmen as it was of the government's propaganda approach. The educated regarded the headmen as under-educated;⁵⁷ no doubt they would have approved of the introduction of headmen's conferences. In 1955 Schaffer contributed towards smoothing the relationship between the two pro-betterment groups by accommodating a number of "influential headmen" on the School Board.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Unrecorded, informal interview with Mr B Ngoxo (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a retired teacher from Burnshill, in February 1991.

⁵⁶Wilson *et al*, Social structure, 156.

⁵⁷Wilson *et al*, Social structure, 186.

⁵⁸Letter dated 25/03/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file N12/1/2 in box N12/1/1, N12/2/2, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

In sum, while the propaganda campaign deepened the pre-existing societal division between the educated and the uneducated, it did not succeed in transforming people's minds.

Three case studies

It has been shown that the late 1940s meetings were superficial in that officials were interested merely in contrived consent, and that the propaganda campaign in Keiskammahoek failed to convert people to a belief in science. Despite the government's failure to gain the people's support however, it remained undaunted in its resolve to implement scientific measures and draw up betterment plans. The first point to be stressed in this section is that all the communities reacted to the prospect of having their locations planned. Some people felt a sense of despair; today many people are still convinced that the government has the power to do whatever it wills.⁵⁹ Other people were not prepared to see fate unfold; they resisted, using a variety of tactics. But importantly, all people reacted and they had a choice of how to react. Some courses of action involved probable arrest and hardship,⁶⁰ but they were available and open, and some people chose them. Here, three communities in which some sector(s) chose to resist have been selected for specific study. The focus will be two-fold: on the details of the resistance in these three communities; and on the special strategies that the government had to contrive in order to counter the resistance. These cases have not been selected because they represent the district; response to the prospect of undesired government intervention varied from location to location, and therefore even to talk of a district response is

⁵⁹This sentiment was expressed frequently by interviewees.

⁶⁰See all three cases discussed below.

misleading. Gwili-Gwili/Mtwaku, Mbems and Wolf River have been chosen because they were sites of dogged resistance and therefore witnessed the implementation of specially devised government strategies; such strategies were unnecessary in locations characterised by inhibiting fear or unsustainable resistance. These case studies reveal both a variety of resistance in the more forthright communities and also a variety of tactics devised by the government to quell this multi-form resistance.

1. Gwili-Gwili/Mtwaku

Gwili-Gwili village lies about five kilometres due east of Keiskammahoek village. Mtwaku location borders Gwili-Gwili location on its northern border, and the village lies about eight kilometres north-east of Keiskammahoek village.

The 1940s saw prolonged and united resistance to betterment in both these locations. The two headmen, Myeki of Gwili-Gwili and Sotaka of Mtwaku, led the resistance in their respective locations. In Gwili-Gwili, the prime issue that angered the people about government conservation was the diminishing of their grazing lands through the fencing off of the municipal commonage and the reservation of the mountainous areas.⁶¹ In the early 1940s there were reports of fence cutting around Gwili-Gwili.⁶² The central involvement of headman Myeki in the resistance can be gauged from the official report of a

⁶¹See unboxed file 3/6/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. Also, group interview organised by Mr Booï, the ex-chairman of the residents' association in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

⁶²See complaint dated 17/06/1943, in subfile 2/28/2/21(1), in unboxed file 3/6/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

1950 court case in which Myeki was accused (and found guilty) of provoking a certain B Phela (pseudonym, used for personal reasons) to assault a forest guard.

From the evidence it is clear to me that Accused No. 1 [Phela] was out to pick a quarrel with Complainant [forest guard] and when the headman [Myeki] said that he had told the men long ago that the blood of these policemen was to be spilled it gave him the necessary incentive to carry out his purpose which was to assault Complainant.⁶³

Thus it is clear that Myeki had been at the helm of resistance to the encroachment of the government onto the grazing lands of Gwili-Gwili. There are no helpful details of the 1947 'consultation' meeting in government documentation, but it is implausible that even a section of the community (60 men attended the Inkundla meeting)⁶⁴ could have unanimously supported Proclamation 31/1939, which, it will be recalled, involved possible stock culling.⁶⁵ After all, Myeki himself was in firm opposition to the conservationist principle of the closure of mountainous areas in 1950, that is, after he and a representative male contingent of his community are supposed to have accepted the need for more conservation. It seems clear that the Gwili-Gwili community would (in the late 1940s) have held that the core of the ecological problem was land size, not cattle numbers. Today the community is adamant in its claim that it was not consulted about what it wished to happen, only informed of what was to happen.⁶⁶

⁶³1/KHK Vol 1/11/1, Criminal Records - Criminal Cases, in Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town.

⁶⁴Letter dated 18/09/1947, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(13), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁶⁵See above, page 57.

⁶⁶Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

Neighbouring Mtwaku was equally intractable in its stand against betterment. Headman Sotaka (headman from 1935 until his death in 1954)⁶⁷ had been unwavering in his opposition to Proclamation 31/1939 from March 1939.⁶⁸ Oral testimony indicates that the community was united in opposition against betterment for most of the 1940s.⁶⁹ Whereas in Gwili-Gwili the government was content with farcical consent, in Mtwaku it actually executed strategies to break the will of the people to resist. Firstly, it arrested Sotaka and a number of other prominent and influential members of the community who were opposed to betterment.⁷⁰ Secondly, once Warner had obtained 'unanimous support' in Gwili-Gwili in July 1947, he threatened the Mtwaku people that, unless they accepted Proclamation 31, he would give privileges to Gwili-Gwili at their expense.⁷¹ Such privileges included exclusive access to the best grazing land, and to portions of land traditionally used by Mtwaku residents.⁷² This twin government strategy of arresting leaders and playing off adjacent locations gave the Mtwaku people little option but to accept betterment in October 1947.⁷³ The exercise of the strategy of

⁶⁷See unboxed file 7/3 (Sotaka), in Keiskammahøek magistrate's offices.

⁶⁸Letter dated 15/03/1939, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(12), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁶⁹Interview with Mr Kebeni, an old resident of Mtwaku, in early May 1991.

⁷⁰Interview with Mr Kebeni from Mtwaku, in early May 1991.

⁷¹Interview with Mr Kebeni from Mtwaku, in early May 1991.

⁷²Interview with Mr Kebeni from Mtwaku, in early May 1991.

⁷³Notably however, the enforced submission of the Mtwaku community was shortlived. In 1955 Schaffer summed up the situation there as follows: "Residents are not prepared to move from location or to new

threatening to privilege acquiescent areas at the expense of recalcitrant areas in order to render them malleable was not limited to Keiskammahoek district. Ndlovu reports that it was a standard mechanism used to deal with such areas.⁷⁴

Now attention reverts back to Gwili-Gwili. After the July 1947 meeting, the government began implementing scientific measures in the location. One of its first priorities was the laying down of contours, but the manner in which this was performed fuelled the flames of the people's anger against the science of the government.⁷⁵ Whereas the people had been told that contours would be built on the eroded lands, they were in fact introduced unilaterally throughout their arable lands. This resulted in the destruction of many crops, primarily wheat and beans.⁷⁶ The later 1950s and early 1960s witnessed renewed resistance to betterment. Firstly the community hired the services of a lawyer from Port Elizabeth, a Mr Spilkin, in a vain attempt to protect itself against further betterment.⁷⁷ Secondly, there was another fence cutting campaign at the end of 1960.⁷⁸ The suspected leader of the campaign, and spokesman for the

residential areas. They are not prepared to make any sacrifices nor to contribute towards the cost of rehabilitation measures in cash or free labour" (letter dated 28/02/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commission, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University).

⁷⁴Ndlovu, 'Progress', 39.

⁷⁵Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

⁷⁶Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

⁷⁷Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

⁷⁸Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

anti-betterment activists was none other than Bonakele Phela,⁷⁹ the person who had been convicted in the 1950 assault trial.

In the early 1960s, the Gwili-Gwili community was informed that the government intended to villagise the location. Villagisation was a vital part of new betterment, as embodied in Proclamation 116/1949. Section 13 of this proclamation reads as follows:

The Native Commissioner may ... [f]or the better use and occupation of the land in any betterment area, and the orderly lay-out and settlement of such area ... cause to be defined and demarcated, areas for residential and arable ... purposes as he may deem expedient ...⁸⁰

De Wet has pointed out that since the strict differentiation of land was not part of the government's betterment thinking when Proclamation 31/1939 had been drafted, the late 1940s meetings, which were aimed at contriving popular consent for the application of that proclamation to the locations, did not address villagisation or relocation.⁸¹ The 1960s proposal of villagisation was anathema to the Gwili-Gwili community. A scattered form of settlement was basic to its lifestyle,⁸² and it was strongly opposed to the prospect of this being destroyed.

⁷⁹Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁰Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 116/1949', 405.

⁸¹De Wet, C 'An analysis of the social and economic consequences of residential relocation arising out of the implementation of an agricultural development scheme in a rural Ciskei village', Rhodes University PhD thesis (1989), 210.

⁸²See below, page 131.

Bantu⁸³ Affairs Commissioner A Leppan realised that a special strategy had to be devised if betterment villagisation was to be effected in Gwili-Gwili without overwhelming non-compliance. Toward this end, he recognised that grazing shortage was one of the deepest grievances of the people. The argument that he conjured up and presented to the community in 1962 was that if it wanted more grazing land, everyone would have to be villagised so that some old residential sites could be opened up as grazing camps.

[W]e were told something that we knew: that we did not have grazing camps. Then it was suggested that we all live here and their sites [the sites of those who were to be moved] opened as grazing camps.⁸⁴

This proposal divided the community into two groups: those who were already living in the proposed residential area and liked the prospect of extra land for their stock; and those who were to be relocated to that area. Importantly, the residential pattern of the former group was more loosely patrilocal than that of the latter group; male lineage members settled in the same village section but usually at considerable distances from one another, in other words one's neighbours were usually not relatives on the male side.⁸⁵ (It must be noted in advance of Chapter III that this situation was very exceptional in Keiskammahoek).⁸⁶ Thus for the former group, potential land gain seemed to more than counter the prospect of living next to unknown people in a compact arrangement. (Notably, one of the people

⁸³The official name change from 'native' to 'bantú' appears to have occurred in the second half of the 1950s.

⁸⁴Interview with ex-headman of Gwili-Gwili, Mr B Phela, in September 1991.

⁸⁵Interview with Mr Phela in Gwili-Gwili, in September 1991.

⁸⁶Unique in the locations which I visited.

in this group was long-time and prominent anti-betterment activist, B Phela. Leppan's arguments convinced even him, and overnight he began promoting the 'Trust'.⁸⁷ In 1963, he was installed as headman!).⁸⁸ But for the latter group, kinship disruption and a changed living pattern were terrible prospects - it opposed villagisation vehemently. The issue was taken to a vote and since the former group comprised the majority of the Gwili-Gwili people, villagisation was approved.⁸⁹

In the space of fifteen years therefore, the government had successfully utilised two divide-and-rule tactics in the Gwili-Gwili/Mtwaku area: in 1947 it had threatened to give the allegedly acquiescent location of Gwili-Gwili privileges at the expense of Mtwaku unless it accepted Proclamation 31/1939; and in 1962 it divided the Gwili-Gwili community on the issue of villagisation by promising to transform some residential sites into grazing areas.

2. Mbems

Up until the 1960s, there were four scattered settlements (Tshetshi,

⁸⁷Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁸Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁹Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices. See also letter dated 16/03/1965, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Gwili-Gwili people working in Lange, Cape Town, in unboxed file N8/5/3(13), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Madubela, Rabe and Ngcamngeni) situated within the boundaries of Mbems location. During that decade, however the inhabitants of Tshetshi were forced to relocate to Rabe or Madubela⁹⁰ and the other settlements compressed into villages. Mbems thus now consists of the three villages of Madubela, Rabe and Ngcamngeni. They are all situated adjacent to the R63 which links Kingwilliamstown and Alice, and lie about 20 kilometres south-southwest of Keiskammahoek village.

Mbems is unique in the Keiskammahoek district in that it did indeed have a referendum in 1947.⁹¹ Strangely, this referendum was held despite the fact that it had already been declared a betterment area in 1939;⁹² Native Commissioner Warner was apparently unaware of this 1939 declaration. Although the referendum returned an acceptance vote, it was clear very soon thereafter that the defeated minority was not at all prepared to abide by the majority decision. Leader of the group that rejected betterment was a particularly colourful character, Charles Pamla. It is very common in contemporary South African historiography that rural ideology is analysed in terms of derived and inherent elements,⁹³ and in Pamla one has a clear example of a meeting and amalgamation of unrelated, half-formed but very interesting ideas. Both anachronistic and contemporary political ideas meshed with religious millenarianism and proud tribalism to produce a charismatic

⁹⁰Interviews with a group of old men from Madubela, and with ex-headman Bongoza and other residents of Ngcamngeni, both in late April 1991.

⁹¹See above, page 66.

⁹²Union of South Africa 'G.N. 791/1939' in Government Gazette (09/06/1939), Government Printer: Pretoria, 569.

⁹³eg Bundy, C 'Land and liberation: popular rural protest and the national liberation movements in South Africa, 1920-1960' in Marks, S and Trapido, S (eds) The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa (1987), Longman: London, 255.

man who managed to rally around himself a considerable number of supporters. A small selection of extracts from his innumerable letters of protest to Warner give some indication of the many-sidedness of his worldview.

[27.7.47] Mgodana [the headman] should be officially installed into his position as chief ... May Jehovah ... touch your heart and enable you to foresee what hardship is being levelled against our chief Mgodana.⁹⁴

[27.8.47] [T]he Bunga is a Trust to us, and we cannot be its members. We told you we do not want all the Trust laws. Here is another request we would like to inform you about. We ask you to withdraw the demonstrator from our location. He holds meetings with our wives which had not first been reported at the chief's kraal.⁹⁵

[19.10.47] I ask you in the name of Queen Victoria to please tell the Mngqesha German people to stop seizing and impounding Debe Nek cattle while grazing on Debe Nek commonage ... I have observed that the impounding of our stock is authorised by Government Officials ... [I]t is better for one to be cheated about what he has no knowledge of, than to be cheated about what he knows ... The Government placed the Germans on this land and authorised them to illtreat us. Now therefore the Germans must go to town and live with other Europeans there, so God informed us.⁹⁶

Importantly, his political opinions about 'Trust' had the full backing of the organisation to which he belonged, namely the Independent

⁹⁴Letter in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁹⁵Letter in file N2/8/3/1(1) in box N2/3/2-53, N11/2/3-5, N11/1/2,3, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁹⁶Letter in file N2/8/3/1(1) in box N2/3/2-53, N11/2/3-5, N11/1/2,3, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices. Later letters contained anti-Semitic remarks, and caustic comments about the neighbouring Burnshill people.

Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (I.I.C.U.).⁹⁷ (The I.I.C.U. was a faction that emerged from the ruins of the I.C.U. in the late 1920s. The I.C.U. had been founded as a trade union but quickly turned into a mass political organisation for a brief period in the mid-1920s).⁹⁸ Clements Kadalie, who had been leader of the I.C.U., actually wrote to Warner twice in 1948 on behalf of Pamla.⁹⁹ That the I.I.C.U. had a considerable following in Mbems emerges very clearly through both the documentation and oral interviews. One elderly interviewee claimed that he had met personally with Kadalie in Johannesburg.¹⁰⁰

It would be remiss if the Mbems case were not tied in with Bundy and Beinart's recent work on the I.I.C.U.¹⁰¹ They argue that the inclusion of Africanism and a certain rural sensibility into the ideology of the I.I.C.U. were crucial reasons for its sudden rise in the Border region in the late 1920s.¹⁰² Interestingly, they cite a report of a speech made by a migrant woman from Keiskammahoek district, Selina Bungane in order to illustrate the kaleidoscopic nature of I.I.C.U. ideology.¹⁰³ Charles Pamla held a very similar

⁹⁷It is well known that the left-wing African political organisations of the day were opposed to the government's betterment policies.

⁹⁸Bundy, C and Beinart, W 'The union, the nation and the talking crow' in Bundy, C and Beinart, W Hidden struggles in rural South Africa (1987), Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 271.

⁹⁹Letters dated 11/09/1948, 06/12/1948 Kadalie, East London to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in file N2/8/3/1(1) in box N2/3/2-53, N11/2/3-5, N11/1/2,3, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁰⁰Group interview in Madubela, in late April 1991.

¹⁰¹Bundy and Beinart, 'The union', 270-320.

¹⁰²Bundy and Beinart, 'The union', 272, 310.

¹⁰³Bundy and Beinart, 'The union', 313-314.

admixture of ideas to that which characterised I.I.C.U. preachings in the late 1920s. How much support the I.I.C.U. during its zenith enjoyed in Keiskammahoek district is not known, but it certainly had a significant following in Mbems long after it had "faded into insignificance in 1933".¹⁰⁴ It could just be that Keiskammahoek was the last arena of I.I.C.U. activity.

By the early 1950s the undercurrent tension in Mbems surfaced over the issue of inter-location boundary definitions. There had been long-standing confusion over the grazing boundaries of Mbems. The mid 1940s saw numerous boundary disputes revolving around that location.¹⁰⁵ One of the two specific areas most fiercely contested was Matafeni plateau, the piece of land directly behind Ntaba Ndoda.¹⁰⁶ (The other area was the Ann Shaw Commonage to the west of Mbems location).¹⁰⁷ According to a 1921 court ruling, Zanyokwe, Mbems and Burnshill were given joint rights over the land.¹⁰⁸ But in terms of Section 2 of Proclamation No. 31 of 1939, grazing rights on land within any location were terminated on its being declared a betterment area.¹⁰⁹ Thus when Zanyokwe, Mbems and Burnshill were declared as such in 1939 they lost their rights to the shared land; even if only

¹⁰⁴Bundy and Beinart, 'The union', 315.

¹⁰⁵See file N2/8/3/1(1) in box N2/3/2-53, N11/2/3-15, N11/1/2,3, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁰⁶Statement dated 20/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Mbems people, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁰⁷See file N2/8/3/1(1) in box N2/3/2-53, N11/2/3-15, N11/1/2,3, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁰⁸Statement dated 20/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Mbems people, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁰⁹Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 31/1939', 475.

one of the locations had been declared a betterment area, all three locations would have had to forego their rights to the shared land.¹¹⁰

The section of the community that rallied around Pamla (and to a lesser extent headman Mdodana) refused to accept the suspension of its grazing rights on Matafeni plateau. In Mbems, the suspension of grazing rights, and betterment, came to be seen as two sides of the same coin: it was the faction that rejected betterment that insisted on grazing on Matafeni plateau. With the grazing issue reaching boiling point in the early 1950s, the intra-community division lines - which, as noted earlier, apparently corresponded to education levels - deepened. The pro-betterment faction of the community began sending letters of protest against headman Mdodana. R Tsoli (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a prominent pro-betterment man, wrote to the Native Commissioner as follows in early 1952: "Mdodana has proclaimed that his people, those who are against Betterment Proclamation should either assault or kill those people who applied for it".¹¹¹ Later that year the government began fencing the boundary between Mbems and Zanyokwe; the contested plateau was to be fenced off during this operation. The fencers were authorised to suspend their activities however when "a number of men of Mbem's threatened to assault [them] ... with axes and sticks".¹¹² Apparently some of Pamla's supporters

¹¹⁰Statement dated 20/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Mbems people, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹¹Letter (precise date not recorded; sometime in early 1952) by Tsoli to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹²Statement dated 20/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Mbems people, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

from Rabe were responsible for the (threatened) assault.¹¹³

It can be noted that 1952 saw an attempt by two Port Elizabeth based men, Elliot Notshe and Chris Njibilili, to recruit Mbems residents as African National Congress (A.N.C.) members.¹¹⁴ A police sergeant however uncovered this drive and summarily prohibited them from holding any meetings.¹¹⁵

The official correspondence around this time is characterised by confusion over the legislative status of Mbems. Schaffer was now the Native Commissioner and whereas Warner had been unfamiliar with the 1939 declaration of Mbems as a betterment area, Schaffer was not informed about the 1947 'yes' vote for betterment.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, he was unconvinced that the people had been adequately consulted in 1939.¹¹⁷ Schaffer thus attempted to justify the excision of Matafeni plateau to Mbems inhabitants in terms of Zanyokwe and Burnshill (only)

¹¹³Interview with Mr Tsoli and other residents of Ngcamngeni, in late April 1991. These informants claimed that the fencers were actually assaulted, not merely threatened.

¹¹⁴Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹⁵Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹⁶In his ample correspondence about betterment in Mbems in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University, Schaffer never mentioned the 1947 vote.

¹¹⁷Letter dated 21/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

having been declared betterment areas.¹¹⁸ The people of Mbems, suffering as they were from severe congestion,¹¹⁹ found this justification unsatisfactory, and they continued depasturing their stock on Matafeni. Cattle seizures continued.¹²⁰

Eventually the government resorted to bribery/blackmail in a bid to stabilise the ever-deteriorating situation. It offered to purchase some adjacent white-owned properties (Lots B, 54, 55, 55A, 60) and - on condition that the Mbems people welcomed the planning of their location - to make them available to the people.¹²¹ In order to avert further anger in Mbems and other locations to which the 1939 declaration had been applied, it was felt that the question of its legal validity should not be raised.¹²² Native Commissioner Schaffer presented the bribe/blackmail to the men of Mbems in late 1953 and

¹¹⁸Statement dated 20/11/1952, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Mbems people, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹⁹Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁰Letter dated 26/10/1953, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²¹Letter dated 03/12/1953, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. See also the reply letter, dated 09/12/1953, in the same file.

¹²²Letter dated 03/12/1953, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. See also the reply letter, dated 09/12/1953, in the same file.

told them that they had until the end of February 1954 to respond.¹²³

The vote which occurred on 20 February 1954 indicated that the community was still deeply divided. Although the 'yes' vote was still the majority vote, proportionally more people voted 'no' in 1954 (59 out of 138) than in 1947 (24 out of 68).¹²⁴ The meeting was characterised by rowdiness and constant anti-'Trust' interjections; the two opposing sections of the community sat apart.¹²⁵ Reasons given by the antagonistic section for its rejection of 'Trust' included uncertainty about future land rights, and opposition to culling and relocation.¹²⁶ Schaffer explained the persistence of opposition to betterment in terms of headman Mgodana's inefficiency and the infiltration of the area by the I.C.U. and A.N.C.¹²⁷ Schaffer singled out Notshe and Njibilili of the A.N.C. and a certain Alex

¹²³Native Commissioner's minutes of meeting at Mbems, dated 19/12/1953, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁴Native Commissioner's minutes of meeting at Mbems, dated 20/02/1954, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁵Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁶Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁷Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Njaba of the I.C.U. as the most notorious troublemakers.¹²⁸ He alleged that Njaba had been involved in organising opposition to the land bribe of the government.¹²⁹

The successive Inkundla meetings that followed after the February vote were increasingly bitter affairs. A statement issued by 23 residents of Mbems represented by Tsoi maintained that not only was the pro-betterment faction prevented by Mgodana from speaking at these meetings but also that its adherents had "inflammatory" language hurled at them.¹³⁰ "You are cowards! The blood of those who are in favour of the Trust should be shed".¹³¹ Although Mgodana rejected the allegations, Schaffer insisted that they were true.¹³² By this time he had decided that a prerequisite for the restoration of order in the location was the dismissal of the headman. The allegations gave him an ideal opportunity to effect this dismissal. In October 1954 he

¹²⁸Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁹Letter dated 23/02/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁰Statement dated 18/08/1954, 23 adult males of Mbems to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³¹Statement dated 18/08/1954, 23 adult males of Mbems to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³²Mgodana's denial dated 20/08/1954 and Native Commissioner's decision dated 24/08/1954, both in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

suspended Mgodana and immediately appointed Tsoli as acting headman.¹³³ To coincide with this appointment, Schaffer decided to lessen the plight of the Mbems people with regard to grazing.

To boost the position of the Acting Headman and to indicate that co-operation is a profitable attitude, I propose to lease grazing on the adjoining Trust farms to Mbem's location residents at the prescribed charge and to permit them to fell scrub (which should be eradicated in any case) at standard price for firewood. This would ... be a departure from my previous policy in respect of these people.¹³⁴

Unfortunately for Schaffer his 'pampering' did not pay dividends. Renewed fence cutting started in early 1955; he responded by promptly withdrawing the October concessions.¹³⁵ In order to ensure that people could not violate the closing of the Trust farms, he burnt them.¹³⁶ Schaffer had also not foreseen the possibility of Tsoli modifying his opinions of betterment once appointed to the headmanship. Whether he did in fact undergo a turnabout is not clear, but he certainly stopped actively promoting betterment after his appointment. Bantu Affairs Commissioner Leppan wrote in 1959 that "all reports received tend to show that he is either disinterested or swayed by the few malcontents in the location, who appear to have

¹³³Notice dated 24/08/1954, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁴Letter dated 19/11/1954, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁵Native Commissioner's minutes of meeting at Mbems, dated 26/01/1955, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁶Group interview in Madubela, and interview with Mr Tsoli and other residents of Ngcamngeni, both in late April 1991.

A.N.C. interests".¹³⁷

The years 1955-1957 then did not witness the dawn of any new era in Mbems history. Despite the dire shortage of land, and the arresting and conviction of "A.N.C. sympathisers and anti rehabilitation agitators",¹³⁸ the resisters stood firm. But then the new Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Leppan, decided that Schaffer's collective bribe/blackmail would be much more effective if it was disaggregated. Individuals could gain access to the 'Trust' farms (as grazing camps) only if they accepted betterment (including the limitation of their stock holdings to eight).¹³⁹ The appointment of S Magadaza to the acting headmanship in mid-1958 when Tsoli took ill¹⁴⁰ helped to complement Leppan's strategy. Magadaza was very active and insistent in his support for betterment.¹⁴¹ Some interviewees described him as a cruel man.¹⁴² This leads one to suspect that he might have been

¹³⁷Letter dated 08/01/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁸Letter dated 22/09/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³⁹Group interview in Madubela, and interview with Mr Tsoli and other residents of Ngcamngeni, both in late April 1991. Excess stock were to be sold at the Rabula stock sales.

¹⁴⁰Letter dated June 1958, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁴¹Letter dated 08/01/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁴²Group interview in Madubela, in late April 1991.

involved in the alleged intimidation and threatening of people who delayed moving their cattle into the S.A.N.T. area.¹⁴³ Steadily, the Mbems people moved their starving cattle onto the Trust lands; thus ended over a decade of resistance to betterment. Predictably, Charles Pamla was the last inhabitant who submitted to the government bribe/blackmail.¹⁴⁴ The location which had "been a thorn in the administrative flesh for so long" had been starved into submission.¹⁴⁵

Bundy and Beinart have noted that the recent historiographical trend toward African political history has put organised resistance under the spotlight; the corollary of this is that unorganised, spontaneous and parochial resistance has, for the most part, been ignored.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, not only has such resistance been ignored, but the focus on organisation-motivated and -led resistance has resulted in some commentators subconsciously assuming that organisational participation is a necessary condition for 'proper' resistance. No organisational penetration of an area implies no noteworthy resistance. Chris de Wet for example explains the supposed lack of resistance in Cata location partially in terms of geographical and (consequently) political isolation.¹⁴⁷ The assumption that organisational involvement is a necessary condition for resistance constricts one's notion of and therefore ability to analyse resistance to an unacceptable degree. It is much more helpful to recognise that organisational involvement

¹⁴³Group interview in Madebela, in late April 1991.

¹⁴⁴Group interview in Madubela, in late April 1991.

¹⁴⁵Letter dated 08/01/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁴⁶Bundy and Beinart, 'Introduction', 2.

¹⁴⁷De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 342.

gives resistance certain features, but certainly is not a prerequisite for resistance.

It is clear that Mbems was exceptional in the district in terms of the extent to which it was penetrated by the A.N.C. and I.I.C.U. The reason that one can be certain of this point is that officials in the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s were particularly paranoid about banned organisations. They believed that the best way to avoid trouble was to keep such organisations out of the district. (The viewpoint criticised in the above paragraph echoes the sentiments of these passionate and paranoid N.A.D. and B.A.D. officials.) Schaffer's delirious comments about the A.N.C. and I.C.U. in Mbems illustrate official anxiousness to report potential problems as soon as they were perceived/imagined.¹⁴⁸ Thus one should interpret official silence on banned organisations in most of the district as a clear indication of their absence. Indeed at the end of 1963, Leppan thanked the headmen for their role in preventing the organisations from gaining a foothold in the district.

[Something] of which you all could feel justifiably proud is the lack of support with which the subversive elements, in particular Poqo, had met. Although one of the ring leaders was a man of this district and had been arrested in the district, evidence showed that his efforts to recruit supporters had been in vain.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸Letters dated 24/08/1954 and 25/08/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Magadaza), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University, and file 11/5/1(6) in box 11/1/3 to 11/5/1 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices, respectively.

¹⁴⁹Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963 in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. Efforts to clarify the identity and location origin of this 'ring leader' were in vain.

Nonetheless, there was resistance in many locations in Keiskammahoek district that were not penetrated by political organisations.¹⁵⁰ This is clearly illustrated by the Gwili-Gwili/Mtwaku case study above and by the Wolf River case study below.

3. Wolf River

The most fierce 1960s resistance to betterment occurred in the very isolated north-western location of Upper Wolf River where land is held under freehold title. This was one of the two locations not declared as a betterment area by the late 1940s.¹⁵¹ Informants maintain that the Wolf River community had opposed the government's scientific measures from the outset and claim that its resistance against contour building had been successful.

There were some attempts ... to introduce contours on our fields as a method of blocking soil erosion but the people of Zingcuka [Wolf River] rejected this -as you can see, our fields have no contours.¹⁵²

In 1948, a delegation from Wolf River reported to Native Commissioner Warner that the community was not prepared to accept Proclamation

¹⁵⁰Mbems is the only location for which evidence of organisational penetration was found.

¹⁵¹The other one was Dontsa. Government Notice 791 of 1939 declared Burnshill, Mbems, Upper and Lower Nqumeya, Upper and Lower Rubula and Zanyokwe as 'betterment areas'; Government Notice 2260 of 1947 declared Gxulu as such; Government Notice 2262 of 1947 declared Ngolongolo, Cata, Mnyameni and Gwili-Gwili as such; and Government Notice 2834 of 1948 declared Mtwaku as such.

¹⁵²Interview with ex-residents' association chairman of Wolf River, Mr Mekuto, in early May 1991.

31/1939.¹⁵³ In his report to the Chief Native Commissioner, Warner claimed that this decision was an unsubstantiated "change of mind".¹⁵⁴ Hereafter, Wolf River was ignored by the government until the late 1950s. It is unclear why Schaffer overlooked this location as entirely as he did. Thus it was left to Leppan to orchestrate its declaration as a betterment area.

Apparently, Leppan was initially unaware of the tenacity and extent of the antagonism against betterment in Wolf River. Both title-deed holders and those living on the commonage or in freeholders' gardens (referred to as squatters) were opposed to betterment. The meetings which Leppan organised in the late 1950s were marked by bitter acrimony, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner writing that the community was "totally opposed" to any suggestion of betterment.¹⁵⁵ In 1963 Leppan reflected on the late 1950s situation in Wolf River as follows:

There had been refusal to co-operate in other directions because of the presence of agricultural officials who were identified with Trust. So strong had been the spirit of resistance that when the Chief had been asked to hold a meeting there himself, he had asked to be excused saying he was being sent to his death. When the Bantu Affairs Commissioner and the unwanted agricultural overseer went to hold a meeting there themselves, the feeling had been so tense that the Acting headman had even sat at some

¹⁵³Letter dated 29/09/1948, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(4), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁵⁴Letter dated 29/09/1948, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(4), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁵⁵Letter dated 21/11/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(4), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

considerable distance from the official party so as not to show too close association with that party ...¹⁵⁶

It appears that the resisters placed a high premium on location unity; one informant (the ex-Residents Association chairman) revealed that a pro-betterment man was forced off a cliff to his death during this period.¹⁵⁷ Leppan devised manifold tactics to counter the opposition. Firstly he attempted to incriminate prominent members of the resistance. An old man living on Trust land (i.e. he was previously a squatter¹⁵⁸) said that such people had been arrested for making "minor mistakes".¹⁵⁹ He went on to say that the actual reason for their being arrested was their resistance to betterment. He illustrated his claims thus:

There was a man on the other side, an old man, who was not at all in favour of the new measures like Trust and others; there was fire - then this old man was blamed for the fire and arrested. It was then that I noticed that the government was after people who were opposing its measures.¹⁶⁰

Secondly, Leppan attempted to blackmail the people of Wolf River, threatening in 1959 to make them forego "the privilege" of free

¹⁵⁶Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁵⁷Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁵⁸For details of residential arrangements in freehold locations, see below, pages 158-160.

¹⁵⁹Interview with a resident of Wolf River living in a new residential area, Mr N. Fonte, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁰Interview with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

fencing.¹⁶¹ The people were not interested in fencing in any case however.

The other tactics deployed by Leppan all divided the community into discrete squatter and freeholder sections. He argued that since the squatters had no legal right to any land, he would consult only the freeholders.¹⁶² The first issue about which he engaged the freeholders was the commonage. Initially he threatened to remove the squatters from the location if the freeholders did not agree to the setting aside of an area of the commonage as a residential area for the squatters, but the freeholders simply rejected this threat.¹⁶³ Leppan then changed his tack by claiming that the commonage belonged to the government.¹⁶⁴ The freeholders responded by seeking legal advice, and resisted this claim through their lawyers.¹⁶⁵ Ultimately however the government steamrollered the legal resistance.

Furthermore, Leppan decided to change the title-deed arrangement in Wolf River by issuing new documents to the eldest sons of the title holders.¹⁶⁶ The sons were instructed to visit Leppan individually at the magistrate's office where the new title-deeds were to be

¹⁶¹Letter dated 10/07/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Headman Tabata, Zanyokwe, in unboxed file N8/5/3(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁶²Interviews with Mr Mekuto and with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, both in early May 1991.

¹⁶³Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁴Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁵Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁶Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

issued.¹⁶⁷ Thus he created for himself an ideal opportunity to speak to a significant number of freeholders on a one-to-one basis - if he met with an uncooperative person he could threaten to withhold the title-deed from him until a more acceptable attitude was evident. In this way, Leppan was preparing the way for his final bid at gaining local approval for the introduction of betterment. This last meeting was convened in November 1963. At the outset he insisted that only the freeholders could have a voice and demanded the division of the men into two separate groups, freeholders and landless.¹⁶⁸ Many squatters however surreptitiously joined the freeholders.¹⁶⁹ They realised that it would be impossible for Leppan to verify on the spot that all voters were freeholders. This tactic of resistance easily countered Leppan's strategy. Only 20 of the 90 people who voted approved the declaration of Wolf River as a betterment area.¹⁷⁰ One old Trust settler remembers the day very clearly:

[T]he magistrate said: "Listen here, I will talk only with the title holders ..., not squatters; here we need to introduce Trust, then we need you to elect eight men who will serve as your representative committee ..."
We did not accept that.

The magistrate then said: "Those who are for should stand on one side, and those who are against should stand on the other side ..." Those who were against were in the majority because they were mixed with squatters ... The people without title deeds did not reveal themselves because the magistrate did not demand titles; the people without titles were assisting the title holders ... The magistrate perceived that he was splitting only the

¹⁶⁷Interview with Mr Mekuto in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁸Interview with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁶⁹Interview with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁷⁰Letter dated 21/11/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(4), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

freeholders ... The number of people who were against the introduction of Trust was increased by the joining in of the squatters.¹⁷¹

The people thus succeeded in deceiving Leppan.

The victory of Wolf River however, was short-lived. On his way out of the meeting, Leppan remarked that although the men disapproved of betterment, "my men will just appear from there [far away] and they will move in here to introduce Trust".¹⁷²

By this time the consultative clause of Proclamation 116/1949 had been removed. Up until the early 1950s there had been official commitment to gaining local approval, albeit approval stemming from blackmail or incapacity to dispute scientific claims. By the middle of the decade however, there was much more official anxiousness to commence with widespread implementation of betterment.¹⁷³ There was an urgency to see rationality¹⁷⁴ introduced throughout the African countryside. Consequently, there was no longer any place for consultation. Irrational people would henceforth be forced to live in a rationally planned environment, hence the removal of the consultation clause of previous betterment legislation through Proclamation 303/1957. Part of this proclamation reads as follows:

The Minister may ... declare any land unit a betterment

¹⁷¹Interview with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁷²Interview with Mr Fonte in Wolf River, in early May 1991.

¹⁷³For an analysis of the government's stepping-up of betterment implementation, see Hendricks, 'Loose planning', 318, 319, and Moll, 'No blade', 38-40.

¹⁷⁴Any confusion about my understanding and usage of terms such as rationality and science can be cleared up by re-reading the subsection of the introduction entitled "The big questions".

area after the Native Commissioner has explained the provisions of this Proclamation [116 of 1949] to the appropriate tribal or community authority ... or, where no such authority has been established to the Natives, residing in any land unit, at a public meeting called for the purpose ...¹⁷⁵

Hendricks notes that it was widespread legal resistance that led to the need for the proclamation.¹⁷⁶ It is likely that it was its tabling that resulted in the arrival in Mnyameni of the slogan, "Trust cannot be legally contested";¹⁷⁷ this slogan convinced the people there that it would be ultimately futile to resist betterment.

It is clear that by 1960 Leppan's patience had worn thin. No longer was he prepared to be delayed by any kind of resistance. He was desperate to see betterment implemented immediately throughout the district. Thus he began speaking about the futility of resistance: resisting betterment he said is "kicking against the pricks"¹⁷⁸ since it "will be coming in all locations in the district as part of the government's five year plan to improve conditions in this area for rural Bantu and ... no good purpose can be served by the young folk trying to get action put off".¹⁷⁹ The united standing firm of the people of Wolf River in their rejection of betterment forced the

¹⁷⁵Union of South Africa 'Proclamation No 303/1957' in Government Gazette (27/09/1957), Government Printer: Pretoria, 1.

¹⁷⁶Hendricks, The pillars, 118.

¹⁷⁷Interview with ex-residents' association chairman, Mr Mashologu, and Messrs Z and S Mdledle, in Mnyameni, in mid May 1991.

¹⁷⁸Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 29/12/1961, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁷⁹Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 30/03/1962, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

government to act unilaterally. Having failed to break resistance by dividing the community, Leppan authoritatively sent out his men to Wolf River.

Some historiographical and theoretical remarks

While a number of supposedly progressive changes in South African historiography are in fact retrogressive and conservative,¹⁸⁰ some recent expositions and illustrations of rural resistance are certainly ground-breaking.¹⁸¹ The key to an acceptable analysis of resistance is variety. This demands that one forego firstly reductionistic definitions of rural subjects - such as "Popular history ... defines people as the producers of social wealth"¹⁸² - and secondly preconceived notions about resistance having any kind of typical form or ontological essence. Clinging to reductionistic definitions results in one being open to resistance only in exclusive aspects of life -in the example cited above one would look for resistance only in the economic sphere. Similarly, insisting that resistance has a typical form results in failure to recognise countless activities as instances of resistance.

This second weakness is noticeable in many recent South African

¹⁸⁰See Deacon, R 'Hegemony, essentialism and radical history in South Africa' in South African Historical Journal, Vol 24 (1991), 166-184, for an excellent critique of the proposed synthesis of radical history offered by Bozzoli and Delius ('Radical history and South African society' in Radical History Review, Vol 46/7 (Winter 1990), 13-43).

¹⁸¹eg Bundy and Beinart, Hidden struggles.

¹⁸²Crummey, D 'Introduction: The great beast' in Crummey, D (ed) Banditry, rebellion and social protest in Africa (1986), James Currey: London, 2.

writings. Three examples will be cited briefly. Lodge's selection of Witzieshoek, Zeerust, Mpondoland and Tembuland¹⁸³ as case studies of rural resistance in mid-century unwittingly reveals that he adheres to a fixed notion of resistance. He believes that rural people should have responded to apartheid evils in a certain way, and since the four abovementioned areas did respond in this 'proper' way they were chosen as the case studies. Hendricks's assumptions about resistance are similar. In the preface to his recent thesis he briefly compares western Pondoland to eastern Pondoland. After noting the well-documented resistance on the eastern side, he writes that "in neighbouring Western Pondoland virtually nothing happened besides a few isolated instances of resistance".¹⁸⁴ Clearly he has a strict set of criteria that an action must meet for it to qualify as resistance. De Wet shares this sort of perception with Lodge and Hendricks. In the recent special Journal of Southern African Studies edition on conservation, he claims that

Apart from people voicing their disapproval at meetings, no real resistance to Betterment took place in Chatha until 1960 when the huts of the headman, as well as two of his councillors, were burned down in the same night ... The only other activity which might be interpreted as resistance has been the occasional cutting of fences of grazing camps.¹⁸⁵ [My emphasis]

In Hidden Struggles, Bundy and Beinart chose a very appropriate title for their book of essays. What they were concerned with in the book was the realm of parochial, everyday, spontaneous rural struggles. Their openness resulted in an ability to accommodate (as opposed to standardise) various types of struggle. Also, it enabled them to

¹⁸³Lodge, Black politics, 261-294.

¹⁸⁴Hendricks, The pillars, ix.

¹⁸⁵De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 342.

recognise usually ignored tactics of resistance - for example, "delaying stratagems" - as such.¹⁸⁶ A number of other analysts, for example James and Ndlovu, have also exhibited openness in their approach to resistance.¹⁸⁷ In this chapter an attempt has been made to stress the variety of resistance to betterment in Keiskammahoek district: fence cutting and legal resistance in Gwili-Gwili; letters of millenarian protest, and aggression toward government employees in Mbems; and stubborn refusal to accept betterment rationality, and deception of Leppan in Wolf River. Apart from in the second case, there was no organisational involvement; even in Mbems this involvement was essentially indirect - in other words, the I.C.U. and A.N.C. did not organise the resistance, rather the ideas of rural leaders (eg. Pamla, Njaba and others) were partially derived from the organisations.

Another interesting aspect of the ideas of Bundy and Beinart is that they propose a two-way relation between state power and rural resistance. They argue that the direction and nature of rural resistance impacted directly on the strategies used by the state.¹⁸⁸ The expression of this two-way relation in the 1920s was very interesting:

Our case studies indicate that parts of the rural population were formulating demands at the time that actually accorded with some of the new segregatory institutions and policies ... In this sense, the introduction of segregationist measures may have been facilitated by the very direction that popular rural struggles were taking.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶Bundy and Beinart, 'Introduction', 17.

¹⁸⁷James, The road, 60; Ndlovu, 'Progress', 36.

¹⁸⁸Bundy and Beinart, 'Introduction', 36, 37.

¹⁸⁹Bundy and Beinart, 'Introduction', 36, 37.

This compelling argument, that people can be involved in their own subjection, proved too much for Hendricks to stomach. For him, the "social historians" obscure "the fundamentally determining role of colonial capitalism".¹⁹⁰ "They have lost sight," he claims "of the repressive nature of the state in a racial system of domination and substituted in its place a caricature of an arrangement of compromise between equals."¹⁹¹ In his anxiety to uphold an exaggerated importance of the state in relation to power Hendricks has seriously misread Bundy and Beinart. He has confused an argument claiming that rural Africans participated in the state/rural subject power relation with one claiming the equality of the two parties. It is clear that Bundy and Beinart perceive the relation between state and rural people as distinctly differentiated (i.e. as a power relation); their suggestion is that African participation in the differentiated relationship influenced the manner in which the form and details of the relationship changed.

It is ironic that, after beginning his thesis with an attack on the "social historians", Hendricks should present some of his empirical data in arguments compatible with those of Bundy and Beinart. For example, mention has already been made of his claim that it was legal resistance against betterment which led to the 1957 amendment to Proclamation 116/1949 that removed the 'consultation clause'.¹⁹² He also argues that culling and fencing were removed from the mid-1950s intensified betterment strategy (which was also known as the

¹⁹⁰Hendricks, The pillars, 10.

¹⁹¹Hendricks, The pillars, 10.

¹⁹²See above, page 104.

Stabilisation Plan) because they had caused too much resistance.¹⁹³ Here then are crystal clear illustrations of resistance impacting on state strategy. At one point he actually comes out and echoes precisely the sentiments of those he criticises:

The particular manner in which policy penetrated the reserves was ... at least partially shaped by rural resistance ...¹⁹⁴

In this chapter abundant illustrations of the interplay between resistance and strategies of power have been presented: antagonistic non-reception of betterment arguments led to a tapering down of rhetoric and an increase in unilateral planning; in Gwili-Gwili, Mbems and Wolf River resistance resulted in government having to devise new strategies. In Gwili-Gwili the government used the fact that the people were seriously short of grazing land to split the community, in Mbems the people were starved into compliance, and in Wolf River persistent resistance gave the government no other choice but to act autocratically.

The two ideas of Bundy and Beinart that have been discussed in this section, namely that resistance can take a wide variety of forms and that the shape of resistance influences the shape of power strategies, are rather Foucauldian in nature. During the discussion on the 1940s 'consultation' meetings, it was stated that Foucault argued that all differentiated relationships are power relations. In fact this is only a half-truth: he did add one other characteristic which must be

¹⁹³Hendricks, The pillars, 135, 136. In fact, culling was not removed from betterment policy, rather it was moved down the order in the list of priorities. See General Circular No 44 of 1954 and General Circular No 21 of 1955, both in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁹⁴Hendricks, The pillars, 133.

evident in a relationship for it to qualify as a power relation.

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse compartments may be realised.¹⁹⁵

In other words, the differentially disadvantaged party has a choice of how to respond to any strategy implemented by the advantaged party. Once this choice evaporates, one is no longer dealing with a power relation as defined by Foucault.

The exact place that resistance occupies in Foucault's realm of choice is not clear. Possibly because of variant translators, some of his comments stand at odds with one another. In the History of Sexuality (1978) he wrote as follows:

[W]here there is power, there is resistance ... Resistances are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite.¹⁹⁶

Here resistance denotes the full range of possible responses to power strategies, presumably including compliance. However, also in 1977 in an interview Foucault had opted for a more conventional notion of resistance.

I am just saying: as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in

¹⁹⁵Foucault, 'Afterword', 221.

¹⁹⁶Foucault, M The history of sexuality (volume 1) (1978), Pantheon: New York, 95, 96.

determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy.¹⁹⁷

Quite obviously one cannot simultaneously uphold both these arguments. It seems that the second is more appropriate, largely because the terminology is less problematic. The Foucault accepted here is the one who argues as follows: in power relations the disadvantaged always have a range of possible responses to power; included in that range (but not exhausting it!) are various strategies of resistance. So the choice is not simply compliance or resistance: once the disadvantaged party chooses to resist, there is a number of possible strategies to choose from.¹⁹⁸ Just as Foucault argued against power having any ontological form, so too were his ideas about resistance in keeping with the principle of variety.

It can easily be derived from the above quotation that Foucault held that the power relation is a two-way relation. The metaphor that he believed most appropriate for understanding power relations is war;¹⁹⁹ what one has is a series of strategies and counterstrategies, which obviously are formed in relation to one another. In the event of the differentially disadvantaged party choosing to resist, it is always possible for it to devise a strategy of resistance that results in the advantaged party having to alter its strategy of power. That is to say, it is always possible for the former party to orchestrate a modification of the "grip" of power. In Keiskammahoek, as has been shown, when communities opted to resist, their actions often forced the state to revise its strategies or devise new strategies.

¹⁹⁷Foucault, M 'Power and sex' in Telos, No 32, (1977), 160.

¹⁹⁸Foucault (The history, 95) spoke about "a multiplicity of points of resistance".

¹⁹⁹Foucault, M (edited by Morris, M and Patten, P) Power, truth, strategy (1979), Ferral: Sydney, 39, 40.

This chapter has concentrated on the interplay between the various state strategies aimed at securing the smooth implementation of betterment and the various strategies of resistance emanating from the locations. The arguments have been informed by the theoretical writings of Foucault, and the recent undertakings of Bundy and Beinart. Whereas the thesis has, up to this point, looked at the period leading up to betterment in Keiskammahoek, the focus now shifts to the consequences of its 1960s implementation.

CHAPTER III

The consequences of betterment in the communal locations: "Every comrade becomes an overseer"¹

A whole history remains to be written of spaces - which would at the same time be the history of powers.

Foucault²

Although the local government had to devise special strategies to secure implementation of betterment plans in locations characterised by stubborn resistance, all the locations of the district had been subjected to such plans by the beginning of the 1980s. More precisely, betterment plans were launched in most of the locations during or shortly after Leppan's term as magistrate (1958-1965). The following two chapters will be devoted to considering the effects that the implementation of betterment plans had on the district. The reason why two chapters are required is that betterment plans for communal locations differed fundamentally from those for locations in which land was held under title (freehold or quitrent). In this chapter only the communal locations in Keiskammahoek district - namely Cata, Mnyameni, Gxulu, Gwili-Gwili, Mtwaku and Upper Ngqumeya - are considered. In other words, it is concerned roughly speaking with the effects of betterment planning in most of the northern half of the district.

Hendricks has noted accurately that "virtually all that remained in the new [betterment] scheme by the late 1950s was that the people were

¹J Bentham (designer of the panopticon) quoted in Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 152.

²Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 149.

required to move to the new arable and residential areas."³ The crux of betterment planning in the communal locations of Keiskammahoek was space rearrangement. Thus the arguments to be presented regarding the effects of betterment in these areas revolve around the spatial changes that it wrought. Foucault's ideas about space and power, as expounded in Discipline and Punish and other writings and interviews, are particularly helpful here. After a full explanation of how spatial change influenced the affected communities, a survey of the historiography of villagisation and related issues will follow.

The drawing up and implementation of betterment plans, 1952-1967

Planning of the communal areas occurred in two phases; the north-western locations of Cata, Mnyameni and Gxulu were planned in the 1950s and the north-eastern locations of Gwili-Gwili and Mtwaku in the early 1960s. Unfortunately the documentation accessible to me is silent on planning in Upper Ngqumeya, and I conducted no interviews there either. Consequently there will be no further specific reference to this location, but one can assume with a considerable degree of confidence that the analysis to be outlined below will also be pertinent to it.

The initial drive to plan the north-western locations occurred in the early 1950s.⁴ At that stage there was one body, a Planning Committee, responsible for all the planning in Ciskei.⁵ (There were three other

³Hendricks, The Pillars, 136.

⁴De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 330.

⁵Statement of policy, 'A New Era of Reclamation', made by the Secretary for Native Affairs at the Ciskeian General Council in 1945, in unboxed file 7/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Planning Committees in the Union, one each in the Northern Areas, Natal and the Transkei. Each Planning Committee consisted of seven experts, namely an administrative officer, an agricultural officer, an engineer, a soil chemist, a surveyor, a draughtsman and a clerical supervisor).⁶ The plans which were drawn up for the north-western locations were met with criticism from the headmen, the local agricultural officer and Native Commissioner Schaffer.⁷ They were not implemented. As mentioned in Chapter II the National Party government decided in 1954 that betterment activity should be accelerated;⁸ as part of its bid in this regard, the planning process was decentralised. The Planning Committees were scrapped and replaced by a host of Ad Hoc Committees, one for each district.⁹ The Ad Hoc Committees consisted of the Native Commissioner, the district engineer, three agricultural officials and a rotating African member (the headman of each location).¹⁰ A fixed Ad Hoc Committee was appointed for the three north-western communal locations; there were

⁶Statement of policy, 'A New Era of Reclamation', made by the Secretary for Native Affairs at the Ciskeian General Council in 1945, in unboxed file 7/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁷De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 331.

⁸See above, page 103.

⁹General Circular No 44 of 1954, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁰General Circular No 44 of 1954, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. In 1957, the Assistant Professional Officer, Circuit Inspector and a representative of the Chief were appointed as additional members of the Ad Hoc Committee in Keiskammahoek (letter dated 12/12/1957, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University).

two African members, the headmen of Cata and Mnyameni.¹¹ In 1957 this committee set about reviewing the plans that had been drawn up earlier in the decade by the Planning Committee.¹² Also established were three Advisory Committees, one in each location, which were to comment on the Ad Hoc Committee's proposals and act as liaison between the committee and the communities.¹³ The Advisory Committees were made up solely of Africans from the locations. The Ad Hoc Committee submitted its reports for the three locations in October 1958; significantly, they did not differ markedly from the 1951 plans.¹⁴

Only after planning Burnshill, Rabula, Zanyokwe, Mbems and Nqolo-Nqolo (all locations in which land is held under title) did the Ad Hoc Committee turn its attention to the north eastern communal locations.¹⁵ In 1962 Bantu Affairs Commissioner Leppan informed the Gwili-Gwili community that it was to be "planned next".¹⁶ Since betterment plans were introduced within a year of one another in Gwili-Gwili and Mtwaku later in the 1960s,¹⁷ it is probable that the

¹¹De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 332.

¹²De Wet, 'An analysis', 175.

¹³De Wet, 'An analysis', 176.

¹⁴De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 331.

¹⁵Letter dated 9/9/1958, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁶Letter dated 12/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in file 7/3 M in box 7/3 in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁷Land allocation occurred in Gwili-Gwili in 1965 (see letter dated 16/03/1965, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Gwili-Gwili migrants in Langa, Cape Town, in unboxed file N8/5/3(13), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University) and in Mtwaku in 1966 (see Bantu Affairs

latter was planned immediately after planning was completed in the former. There is no indication that Advisory Committees were appointed in these locations.

The plans that were drawn up for the communal locations all revolved around the central principle of the strict differentiation of all the land.¹⁸ In each location, there was a specified section that would henceforth be the area to be used exclusively for residential purposes, a different section that would be used exclusively for arable purposes and a third section that would be used exclusively for grazing purposes. The residential area was to be divided by a grid of streets. The rectangles of space that were formed by the imposition of this grid were in turn divided into double rows of back-on-back residential sites.

Tasks to be completed before plans could be implemented were the fencing off of the residential area, arable land and grazing camps, and the demarcation of specific residential and arable sites. The planners commenced with these tasks in the north-western locations in 1961,¹⁹ and had completed them in all the communal locations by 1966.²⁰ Hereafter implementation of the plans could commence. First of all, sites had to be allocated to the people of the locations.

Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 30/09/1966, in unboxed file N1/15/4, also in transit to the Cory Library).

¹⁸Union of South Africa, 'Proclamation No 116/1949', 405.

¹⁹De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

²⁰As sites had been allocated in all communal locations by 1966 (see below in this paragraph), preliminary demarcations must have been completed by this stage at the latest.

Allocation of sites was the duty of the headmen.²¹ Many informants testified that the agricultural officer was in attendance during the process of allocation. In some locations (e.g. Cata)²² these were the only allocation officials but in others they were assisted by various people or groups. In Gxulu for example, the Advisory Committee was responsible for ensuring that the allocation of residential sites was as fair as possible.²³ In Gxulu and Mnyameni, members of the Tribal Authority acted as arbiters in the process of the allocation of arable lands.²⁴ In Gwili-Gwili, informants testified that Agricultural Officer Scrooby was assisted by local African employees of the Department of Agriculture.²⁵ Informants in Ndlovini and Ngobozana (villages in Mtwaku location) also spoke of a number of agricultural officials being involved in the allocation process.²⁶ In September 1966, Headmen Phela from Gwili-Gwili and Mdledle from Mnyameni were paid bonuses for their work as arbiters during land allocation in

²¹April 1956 memorandum on betterment planning, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²²De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

²³For membership details of the Gxulu Advisory Committee (also known as the Rehabilitation Committee) see unboxed file N8/5/3(11), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. A number of informants confirmed the leading role played by the committee in the allocation of sites.

²⁴Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁵Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

²⁶Group interview with the following residents from Ngobozana village: Mr and Mrs Njobe, Mr Jumba and Mr Bunyele; and group interview with the following residents from Ndlovini village: Mr Sotaka (son of an ex-headman), Mr Sotcishe (an ex-headman), Messrs Mgcweba, Gwexa, Mtshakaza and Mewayi, both in early May 1991.

Mtwaku.²⁷ De Wet writes that the method of allocation (for both residential and arable sites) in Cata was that on the appointed day, people were required to stand on the site of their choice.²⁸ There is no reason to believe that this method of allocation was not used in the other locations. (At the time when I conducted oral research I had not yet recognised the importance of the issue of site allocation and thus did not pursue it in my questioning). In the north-western locations the residential sites were allocated in 1962 and 1963;²⁹ the arable lands took longer to allocate, some allotments in Cata only being allocated in 1968.³⁰ In the north east, the years of allocation were 1965 and 1966.³¹

All that remained was to move the people onto their new residential sites. This process usually occurred in the space of a couple of years;³² the only exception was Cata where it took as many as four years.³³ So villagisation seems to have been achieved in Gxulu and Mnyameni in 1964, in Gwili-Gwili and Mtwaku in 1966 and in Cata by

²⁷Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 30/09/1966, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁸De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

²⁹Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁰De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

³¹See footnote 17 (this chapter) above.

³²This was the testimony of most of the interviewees in the communal locations visited.

³³De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

1967.³⁴ It appears that the local authorities became increasingly impatient to see villagisation completed. An informant in Ndlovini village stated that the people were required to move "in such a hurry".³⁵ A son of the headman of Mtwaku at that time, Mr Sotaka, told me about the procedures that were followed.

I saw clerks carrying big books, going to my father. They instructed him and members of the community to be settled in the Trust settlement within a stipulated time.³⁶

In the light of what betterment planning did to the communal locations of Keiskammahoek - it divided them into differentiated segments in which different activities were to occur - it is most convenient to look at its effects in terms of the three categories of stock keeping, agriculture and residential arrangements. The main change that betterment imposed on stock farming was that the animals were permitted to graze in fixed grazing camps only. Grazing was to occur on a rotational basis, with over-grazed camps being closed to allow them to recover.³⁷ As mentioned in Chapter I, stock previously grazed above the homesteads, but the grazing area was not rigidly defined.³⁸ Thus the old men talk of the cattle having previously grazed "freely",

³⁴All the dates, apart from the last, have been calculated from oral evidence. For Cata, see de Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 337.

³⁵Group interview in Ndlovini village, early May 1991.

³⁶Mr Sotaka was one of the people in the group interviewed in Ndlovini in early May 1991.

³⁷For details of 1980s rotational grazing arrangements, see files numbered 7/3/5/4, 9/2/3, 9/2/8 and 22/14/5/2, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

³⁸See above, pages 32-33.

but now being confined.³⁹ Confinement of stock more than grazing land shrinkage emerges as the dominant manner in which the people of the communal villages perceive betterment to have changed stock holding practice. The inhabitants of the communal locations were largely successful in their resistance to stock culling; only in Mnyameni and Gxulu did culling apparently occur.⁴⁰

When it comes to the other farming activity, agriculture, land loss is the dominant complaint. Since the planners excised land on steep slopes (and other land considered non-arable) from the gross area of land that was demarcated as arable land, it was inevitable that some individuals would lose land. De Wet writes that in Cata, 61% of the land was declared non-arable by the Ad Hoc Committee report.⁴¹ Whether or not this figure indicates the extent to which arable lands were diminished in all the locations has not been established - I was not able to obtain access to the Ad Hoc Committee reports - but as all of them are situated on hilly terrain, it is reasonable to assume that arable land losses were generally considerable.⁴² Informants from all communal locations in which interviews were conducted complained either of people having lost land or of the small size of the arable allotments. To make matters worse, it appears that there was corruption during the process of allocation in the north east. Informants in both Ndlovini and Ngobozana claimed that certain

³⁹Interviewees from a number of locations spoke in these terms.

⁴⁰Interview with Mr Mashologu and Messrs Z and S Mdledle, in Mnyameni, in mid-May 1991; and see correspondence from mid-1960s relating to culling in Gxulu, in unboxed file N8/5/3(11), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴¹De Wet, 'An analysis', 241.

⁴²Mr Mnyandeni from Mnyameni confirmed (mid-May 1991) that land on slopes in his location was declared non-arable.

individuals bribed officials in order to secure arable land.⁴³

The changes that betterment enforced onto human settlement are just as easy to recognise as those imposed on farming practice, but their importance warrants their being spelt out. The first change concerns the distances between neighbours. As is well known, until villagisation the African people of the Eastern Cape/Transkei region who lived on communal lands, resided in a scattered form.⁴⁴ Distances between neighbouring homesteads obviously varied but were generally considerable. For all conservationists (including university researchers) this scattered living style was anathema - Houghton and Walton described the "typical African village" as a "straggling amorphous affair".⁴⁵ They reckoned that orderly farming required orderly living and this implied that the people ought to be moved into closer settlements. The most obvious spatial change involved in the movement of people from the peripheries into a village was that the distances between neighbours were greatly diminished. Instead of broad bands of space separating adjacent homesteads, now they were separated by a fenced boundary line.

The second change is analogous to the setting up of grazing camps; fixed residential sites were allocated to the people. Whereas previously the living areas of the people (their homesteads) had been loosely defined, now they were precisely defined.⁴⁶ People who were

⁴³Group interviews in Ndlovini and Ngobozana villages, both in early May 1991.

⁴⁴De Wet, 'An analysis', 142-147; O'Connell, M 'Resettlement and development in Transkei' in Africa Insight, Vol 11, No 1 (1981), 45.

⁴⁵Houghton and Walton, Economy, 4.

⁴⁶De Wet wrote ('Betterment planning in a rural village', 339) of betterment "taking the flexibility out of the land use pattern".

already settled in the proposed residential area were allocated the site corresponding most closely to the placement of their extant homestead. They were required to relocate their living quarters within the boundaries of the new site.⁴⁷ Some people had to move their houses a few metres because they were said to be "out of place".⁴⁸

The third change also concerns the sites, and this time is analogous to the diminishing of the arable lands. Implicit in the fact that the living areas were previously loosely defined is that they could expand if necessary or desired (for example if the household head wanted to build an extra house). The sites in the villages are smaller than those that the people were accustomed to.⁴⁹ One of the reasons for the sites being small is that the planners' minds were infused with the Tomlinsonesque idea of the villages only accommodating 'proper' farmers (x), and the excess population (y) being moved to other areas, thus when the residential areas were demarcated the minimum area was set aside. However, once there was recognition that the surplus people (y) would have to be accommodated in the villages - supposedly only for a while but in effect in perpetuity - the villages were

⁴⁷This occurred despite an April 1956 memorandum that called for flexibility when dealing with houses already built in the residential area. See unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴⁸Interview with Mr Kebeni, an old resident of Mtwaku, in September 1991.

⁴⁹Although residential sites were not supposed to be smaller than one quarter of a morgen (General Circular No. 44 of 1954, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University), officials did not adhere to this regulation (de Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 331). For evidence that the people were dissatisfied with site size, see below in the paragraph.

divided into $x + y$ sites instead of only x sites.⁵⁰ Furthermore, by the end of the 1950s the state foresaw the possibility of the mass removal of Africans to the reserves, and it thus instructed planners to make provision for "more residential sites than are immediately required".⁵¹ With the emphasis on mass accommodation, it was inevitable that site size be minimalised. The ex-chairman of the Residents' Association of Gwili-Gwili described the issue of the small size of the residential sites as a "major complaint" of the people.⁵²

Given the shape of conservationism during the period of intensive planning in Keiskammahoek district (late 1950s, early 1960s), with the centrality of the principle of differentiation and the lingering influence of the ideas of Tomlinson, it was inevitable that the above three changes resulted from the implementation of the plans. But the fourth change resulted from the manner in which those plans were implemented. It was not implicit in the plans that neighbourhood patterns had to be broken up but this is in fact what occurred in the communal areas.

The living pattern of pre-betterment African communities on communal land was patrilocal; in other words people descended through the male line generally lived close to one another. This is a well-known anthropological fact. As de Wet writes, citing the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey,

⁵⁰De Wet, 'Betterment planning in a rural village', 334, 335, 337. It is not clear whether the Ad Hoc Committee persisted with Tomlinsonesque calculations in the 1960s. But as the testimony below indicates, site size in the locations planned in the 1960s was still regarded as greatly inadequate.

⁵¹General Circular No 22 of 1959, in unboxed file N2/12/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵²Interview with Mr Booï in Gwili-Gwili, in September 1991.

Since sons usually set up their own homesteads near to those of their fathers, the residential settlements or hamlets were usually occupied by households belonging to a few lineages ...[M]ost of the members of a lineage were usually found, if not in the same hamlet, then in adjacent hamlets ...⁵³

It would be mistaken to claim that kinship was the only factor that determined living patterns - habitation in a hamlet (a few of which comprised a section) was not limited strictly to kinsmen - but it certainly was a dominant factor.⁵⁴ Indeed in 1930 the government prohibited outsiders from acquiring residential sites in communal areas,⁵⁵ thus maintaining the kinship-based homogeneity of these areas. The traditions and history of each hamlet revolved around a couple of dominant lineages; kinsmen and non-kinsmen alike would have partaken in those traditions and related to that history.⁵⁶ The important point is that hamlet dwellers were intimate with one another; they were very much more familiar with one another than with people from other hamlets (especially those not grouped together in a section).

With the movement of the people into betterment villages in Keiskammahoek district, established residence patterns were broken down. The question of why the break-up of kinship groupings occurred is worth pondering. It appears that the apartheid government, with its obsession with cosmetic tribalism, wanted to maintain patrilocality in the closer settlements. General Circular No. 23 of 1965 (which was based on the proceedings of a 1964 conference)

⁵³De Wet, 'An analysis', 143.

⁵⁴O'Connell, 'Resettlement', 45.

⁵⁵De Wet, 'An analysis', 154; Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 34, 122.

⁵⁶O'Connell, 'Resettlement', 45.

reminded the Bantu Affairs Commissioners about the policy of the government as follows:

By die uitleg van woongebiede moet, binne perke van die beskikbare ruimte, die tradisionele woonwyse van die stam eerbiedig word in soverre as wat die stam dit self verlang. [With the planning/laying out of the residential areas, the traditional living manner of the district should, within the limitation of the available space, be respected if that is what the district wants.]⁵⁷

The Nationalists believed that in order to minimise dislocation and maximise continuity through change in the sphere of living patterns, the closer settlements should retain as much semblance as possible to the scattered settlements. Central government then did not want villagisation to upset the long-established neighbourhood patterns. On the local level, however, things turned out very differently. Usually, one or two hamlets were already housed on the land set aside as the residential area.⁵⁸ The people who were relocated into the area were interspersed between those already there. After an incoming family had been allocated a site, relatives were usually unsuccessful in their bid to obtain adjacent sites since these were either occupied by an original hamlet dweller or had already been seized in the rush of site allocation, or were in demand by others seeking sites adjacent to their relatives or because of their positions in relation to

⁵⁷General Circular No 23 of 1965, in unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵⁸An April 1956 memorandum on betterment planning read as follows: "A residential area will usually be selected where a collection of huts has already been built". See unboxed file N2/11/1, in transit from Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University. For the Gwili-Gwili case, see above, page 83. For Cata, see de Wet, 'An analysis', 193.

resources.⁵⁹ As Leppan told de Wet: "you had to sort it out on the spot ... we couldn't go back ... I don't know that our planning had taken that into account to any serious extent."⁶⁰

From this point the focus of the chapter narrows down to how these four spatial changes influenced the behaviour of the villagers (i.e. interest in arable and grazing lands is suspended). This consideration is very reasonable: in fact the spatial layout of the locations changed so radically that to doubt that it had an impact on the villagers' emotions, attitudes and lifestyles is very unreasonable. The simple way in which this contention is confirmed is by asking the villagers how villagisation has affected them. A considerable number of testimonies will be presented in due course. So there are two givens: the physical changes in the countryside, and the changed attitudes and lifestyles of the villagers. The crucial question therefore is why their attitudes and lifestyles have changed in the precise way that they have. The historical insights of Foucault with regard to the complex interworkings of space and behaviour will prove helpful in answering this question. The following section is set aside to recapitulate his ideas about power relations, and summarise his analysis of space in the case of the panopticon.

Power and space: historiographical insights

For Foucault, power is the name given to differentiated relationships.⁶¹ He wanted as open, as accommodating a definition as

⁵⁹De Wet, 'An analysis', 186, 192, 193.

⁶⁰De Wet, 'An analysis', 186.

⁶¹Foucault, 'Afterword', 223.

possible so that he would be able to consider the political dimensions of any relationship in society. So even in a seemingly neutral, apolitical relationship, if there is differentiation it is a power relation. The key is to realise that there is a variety of differentials, for example economic, gender, educational, age, etc. One of the least expected, most groundbreaking suggestions that Foucault made with regard to the recognition of differentiation was the importance of space. Relationships between people are not conducted in a void, but in detailed and fixed spaces, and often the precise shapes of these spaces in themselves imply differentiation. A history of spaces (in a populated area) is thus a history of powers. Before relating Foucault's most well-known illustration of the inherent power in space, namely the panopticon, it is useful to draw attention to the links between Foucault and the Annales school. For Foucault the principal contribution of the Annales school, and of Bloch and Braudel in particular, is that it put space back onto the historical agenda.⁶² Until this innovation, issues of space had been regarded as dead and anti-historical.⁶³ The Annales school showed that history and geography are indeed interconnected but its conception of this inter-relationship, that spatial configurations predetermined history which then in turn reworked space, is too bound up within the narrow confines of causality.⁶⁴ Foucault argued that "anchorage in space is an economico-political form which needs to be studied in detail."⁶⁵ The details of spatial arrangements and changes are of prime historical importance.

The panopticon was created in the eighteenth century by Bentham. It

⁶²Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 149.

⁶³Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 70, 150.

⁶⁴Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 149.

⁶⁵Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 149.

is an architectural design aimed at ensuring the efficient reform of prisoners. At the centre of the circular prison is a tower which is "pierced" with broad windows.⁶⁶ Around the periphery of the circle is a building of an unspecified number of levels. Each level is divided into identical cells which are completely closed off from one another; no communication between prisoners is at all possible.⁶⁷ Each cell has two windows, one on the inside and one on the outside; the inside window corresponds to a window in the tower, while the outside window provides for the complete illumination of the cell.⁶⁸ Each cell is thus absolutely visible to the tower. To enhance the warder's sight of the prisoners' actions, back lighting is used.⁶⁹ The details to be emphasised are those of lateral invisibility and axial visibility.⁷⁰ With the inmates incapable of communicating with one another, the threat of an uprising is significantly reduced.⁷¹ Conversely, with permanent peopling of the tower, the prisoners are constantly seen. There is no end to the surveillance.

This is not an exhaustion of the panopticon's potential; there is a simple manner of accentuating its effect ten-fold. By making it impossible for the inmates to verify whether or not there is a warder in the tower, the warder-inmate power relation is internalised within the inmate.⁷² This results in the automatic functioning of power.⁷³

⁶⁶Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁶⁷Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁶⁸Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁶⁹Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁷⁰Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁷¹Foucault, Discipline, 200, 201.

⁷²Foucault, Discipline, 201, 202.

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.⁷⁴

The panopticon has been explained above in the narrow terms of the prison, but Bentham pointed out correctly that it could be used successfully to monitor and/or reform anyone, "a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy".⁷⁵ Indeed one can take this even further: if mature, well-respected citizens were incarcerated in panoptic cells, the warder-inmate power relation would be internalised in those citizens just as deeply as in the meanest criminals. The point is that in the panopticon it is solely the place that one occupies (not one's social standing, class membership, etc.) that determines one's role/status.⁷⁶

It was shown earlier that betterment villagisation involved considerable spatial changes, and it was also noted briefly that these led to the villagers' attitudes and actions changing. The question that was posed was: why have the spatial changes led to attitudinal and behavioural changes? The key to answering this question is a recognition that space and power are intertwined. That power relations produce changes in people's lives is clear: the inmate normalises his behaviour - he controls himself. So the space-power-behaviour link is established. The specific way in which space and power are intertwined in the communal locations in Keiskammahoek will

⁷³Foucault, Discipline, 201.

⁷⁴Foucault, Discipline, 202, 203.

⁷⁵Foucault, Discipline, 200.

⁷⁶Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 158.

now be analysed. The four spatial changes outlined above will be considered separately, and in a different sequence so that the analysis can flow more fluently.

Space, power, attitudes and behaviour in the communal locations

1. Distance and the principle of visibility

In pre-betterment communal locations there was a considerable distance between neighbours. The old men express this principally in terms of relaxation and privacy. To illustrate, here are the testimonies of four old men, all from different villages (Mtwaku, Ndlovini, Mnyameni and Cata).

...in the earlier period we had space for relaxation ... I would say that we Xhosas are not used to living in a kind of settlement in which when you speak here, someone is making noise on the other side. In Xhosa practice my homestead is supposed to be here, where I am; there was no homestead there [pointing] - it was only that one there [pointing further away], on the other side of the dongas you can see. We don't co-operate harmoniously in a situation in which when I'm doing something here, then the other one there on the other side is objecting.⁷⁷

Where we were previously settled, we lived harmoniously with enough space. We had nothing to quarrel about.⁷⁸

We were not used to living a township life, we were living a relaxed life. Can you see me where I'm settled now? Now you get in through that gate; on the other side is another

⁷⁷Interview with Mr Kebeni in Mtwaku village, in early May 1991.

⁷⁸Group interview in Ndlovini village, in early May 1991.

homestead - do you realise that? But before that in the earlier days, this land from here to there [pointing] would be mine, and I could be doing my own secrets. [My emphasis].⁷⁹

When people are living in separate hamlets, a thing from over there would not cause trouble here.⁸⁰

These four testimonies give a good indication of the importance of spatial configuration as a cornerstone to a way of life. Quite simply, homesteads were sufficiently far apart for all families to arrange and carry out their own lives in privacy. Not only could people have secrets, these could even be spoken about between family members without any danger of their being overheard (testimony 1) and they could also be lived out without losing their secrecy (testimonies 1 and 3). Private affairs were not open to either public discussion or public display. There was an invisibility that protected each homestead; this darkness permitted people to do in their homesteads whatever they wished without any threat at all of their actions being judged. The darkness permitted freedom of action. It would be incorrect to claim that this freedom was enjoyed by all family members to the same extent. That would be to deny the existence of intra-familial power relations. The children for example were subjected to parental control, and thus had less autonomy than their parents. Nevertheless the family as a unit was exempt from extra-familial control, and for the household head in particular, distance implied licence to enact secrets unobserved.

Villagisation of course resulted in distances between neighbours diminishing radically; instead of broad banks of open space separating homesteads, the new rectangular sites were divided by a

⁷⁹Interview with Mr Mnyandeni in Mnyameni, in mid-May 1991.

⁸⁰De Wet, 'An analysis', 200.

wire fence. The period of darkness and secrecy was replaced by one of visibility and publicity. As can be gauged from the above testimonies, private discussions are easily overheard in the closer settlements and then become subjects of public debate, and people's behaviour is likewise open to public scrutiny. There are many eyes. Unless one lives on the corner of two intersecting roads, one's site is visible to two adjacent sites, three sites behind one's own (one directly behind and two diagonally behind) and three sites in front of one's own across the road (one directly in front and two diagonally in front). That is a total of eight sites from which one can be observed. The changed rural space has turned every neighbour, willing or not, into a monitor; the mere fact of one's physical presence in the village is all that is relevant in this regard. So why does this monitor relation between neighbours qualify as a power relation - what differentiates a villager (by necessity a monitor) from his/her neighbour (also a monitor)? To answer this one must consider the details of the villagers' positions on their sites in relation to one another. If A is located at a window watching a neighbour B, then clearly A is advantageously situated in relation to B: A is differentially advantaged in the power relation between A and B. But to stop the analysis here would be foolish since the villagers do not remain transfixed in set positions. They move both individually and in relation to one another and this implies that the spatial power relations between them are constantly in a state of flux. Once A and B change positions, rendering A visible to B, then the power relation between them is reversed with B becoming temporarily advantaged.

The analysis should be taken further: we have seen that the typical residential site is adjacent not to one but to eight sites. Many of the places of activity on one site (for example yard, rooms with large windows) are visible to a number of sites. If one wanted to engage in a controversial activity (for example witchcraft), one would have to check not one but a number of places to ensure that there were no

onlookers. And one would have to check not once, but throughout the duration of the exercise. With this amount of checking and rechecking, unselfconscious activity is impossible. In most cases however, the villager would not check manically for onlookers during activity but simply recognise that there was always a possibility of being seen. Consequently, the power relation is internalised within the villager; he/she monitors him/herself.

The above analysis of space and power in the communal villages was developed on three levels. Firstly, the relation between two neighbours fixed in specific places on their respective sites was considered to establish the fact that space differentiates the neighbours. Secondly it was acknowledged that the neighbours move around; this permitted appreciation that the spatial power relations between neighbours are easily reversed. Finally cognisance was taken of the fact that each site is surrounded by many sites. This led to the contention that all villagers are constantly aware of the possibility of their being watched or seen accidentally by a neighbour; this is the same as saying that the observer/observed power relation is internalised in every villager.

It is opportune to present a brief comparison between the panopticon and the village. Both are geographical, physical structures that house people in precise ways rendering some visible to others. In both structures the details of who can monitor whom determines who is differentially advantaged and who is disadvantaged. In the village nobody is hidden behind one-way glass; because there is the possibility of anyone being seen at any time, everyone internalises the observer/observed power relation. In the panopticon, one is either an inmate or a warder, not both; the inmates are confined in the exposed cells while the warders inhabit the invisible tower and monitor behaviour; only in the inmates is the observer/observed power relation inscribed. The second contrast between the village and the

panopticon is the placement of the eyes. For each villager the multiple eyes are situated symmetrically around his/her site, but in the panopticon the eyes are located in the central tower. So while the principle of visibility operates inward from the periphery of every residential site in the village, in the panopticon it operates outward from the tower. The village then comprises hundreds of overlapping, inverted panopticons.

Having argued that this power relation permeates the social body of the villages, it is now necessary to ask how it actually affects the villagers. The basic principle of its functioning is as follows: he who inhabits an area in which there is always a possibility of being watched, and who consequently always fears the worst, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power.⁸¹ The last clause is the important one: the internalised power relation results in the villager modifying his/her behaviour (if need be) to correspond with behavioural norms. Whereas there was previously opportunity to act unselfconsciously, now the villager must constantly control him/herself - this is the fundamental change in rural people brought about by the new power configuration.

[I]n thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking ... of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives.⁸²

A crucial aspect in the automatic functioning of the internalised observer/observed power relation is the existence of a vast array of penalties that are administered to individuals who fail to control

⁸¹Note that this is an intentional adaptation of Foucault's panoptic principle, footnote 74 (this chapter).

⁸²Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 97.

themselves adequately.⁸³ The penalties vary in severity from community criticism - expressed by the informants above as objections, quarrels, trouble⁸⁴ - to police interrogation and imprisonment, or admission to mental hospitals.⁸⁵ Total exclusion from the community indicates that one has failed completely to abide by the norm, and should be classified abnormal. It is the 'lighter' forms of penalty like public discussion of one's activities however that are most significant in correcting behaviour. The reason for classifying public debate of one's private life as a penalty is that only behaviour that deviates in some way from the norm warrants being spoken about. To sum up, there are penalties and these - even the most insidious of them, namely gossip - are recognised as such by the rural people (who consequently do their utmost to avoid them).

2. New neighbours: exacerbated suspicion

It is clear that the pre-betterment patrilocality settlement patterns were decisively broken by the rush of villagisation; understandably the men were particularly distressed about this phenomenon. (For the women, villagisation meant no kinship dissolution; on the contrary they were brought into closer proximity with friends and relatives). Leppan informed de Wet that kinship disruption had been felt acutely in Mnyameni and Gxulu.⁸⁶ In Gwili-Gwili, a community leader expressed the problems of the relocated people as follows:

⁸³For Foucault's discussion of penalties and norms, see Discipline, 177-184.

⁸⁴See above, pages 131-132.

⁸⁵I managed to gain access to the files covering recent admissions of Keiskammahoek people to mental hospitals. They are filed in boxes numbered 11/5/2, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁶De Wet, 'An analysis', 186.

[I]n several cases the relatives are no longer close, nor settled as neighbours - one would be here, while the other would be on the opposite end of the village, and people around them are not related to either and thus they can't co-operate easily.⁸⁷

An ex-headman of Mtwaku (living in Ndlovini village) described the disruption of kinship-based neighbourhood patterns as "the Trust tearing the people apart."⁸⁸ His anger at having to have new neighbours was clearly expressed: "previously, repellents were not joined together."⁸⁹

It is opportune to note that the strangeness of people from hamlets and sections different from one's own⁹⁰ was compounded by the Africanisation of the bureaucracy from the middle of the century. In 1948 Native Commissioner Warner proposed the hiring of ten 'native' rangers in an attempt to limit fence cutting.⁹¹ The minutes of the quarterly meetings between magistrate and headmen reveal a concerted push to employ Africans in various government positions: in 1957 and then again in 1964 and 1965, magistrates Schaffer and Leppan advertised openings for 'native' and 'bantú' constables

⁸⁷Interview with Mr Booi in Gwili-Gwili, in September 1991.

⁸⁸Interview with Mr Sotcishe in Ndlovini village, in September 1991.

⁸⁹Interview with Mr Sotcishe in Ndlovini village, in September 1991.

⁹⁰De Wet, 'An analysis', 213.

⁹¹Letter dated 07/10/1948, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/5, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

respectively;⁹² in 1961 the headmen were instructed to recruit dog tax collectors and dipping labourers.⁹³ The Advisory Committees can be mentioned again here, for although they were non-professional bodies, they did work with the government. The phenomenon of a sprawling bureaucracy must have impacted on a considerable number of people. Since the bureaucracy was growing there were opportunities for local employment that had not been there before. This would certainly have placed pressure on the perceptions of those who even so much as contemplated applying for such a job. The point is that many people's attitudes were in a state of flux towards government, modernity, law, and so forth.

Thus, not only were one's new neighbours usually unrelated, but it was also quite possible that one or more of them was a recently appointed teacher, policeman, dipping labourer, agricultural demonstrator, forest ranger or member of the Advisory Committee, or was vying for such a position. This implies that villagers were generally not familiar with their neighbours' backgrounds, attitudes, morals and behavioural norms. It must be remembered at this stage that the residential sites were directly adjacent to one another: unfamiliar neighbours were exposed to one another. Because the rural people were thrust into a situation in which they could be observed by neighbours whose characteristics (in a broad sense) were unknown, they tended to live a life that offended least. Illegal collection of wood is very dangerous if one has a (prospective) forest ranger as a neighbour; minimal clothing cover is certain to be frowned upon if one has an

⁹²Native Commissioner's/Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meetings with headmen, dated 31/12/1957, 30/09/1964 and 26/10/1965, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁹³Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen dated 29/09/1961, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

ardent student or staunch Christian as a neighbour; witchcraft activities are undoubtedly going to offend if one has an elder of the church as a neighbour; the holding of secret meetings is bound to be monitored and investigated if one has a (prospective) policeman as a neighbour. More broadly, one's individual quirks or eccentricities may displease any neighbour unknown by one. Thus, as a direct result of villagisation each villager scrutinised his/her own life with a fine tooth comb, and uncompromisingly deleted all that was potentially or even vaguely unacceptable. To put it in a theoretical nutshell, the penetration of the internalised observer/observed power relation into the people of the village was deepened by having strangers as neighbours.

It is necessary to add some chronological perspective at this stage. It is clear from interviews with the older generation that the most traumatic period of the last fifty years was that immediately following villagisation. Trying to cope with the sudden changes of space and neighbours was particularly trying. This is precisely why the testimonies of the old men about villagisation are so anguished and vivid. But the change happened only once. What does this say about the effects of villagisation today, nearly thirty years after it occurred? Clearly each villager's neighbours are not as strange as they were originally.⁹⁴ Most villagers have in all likelihood attempted to strike up acquaintances with their neighbours - indeed de Wet has shown in the case of Cata that proximity is an important factor in determining the composition of various intra-village

⁹⁴O'Connell has taken a much more hardcore line in this regard. Writing 20 years after betterment villagisation in Nzongisa village, he wrote ('Resettlement', 46) that the people "have become more sensitive to intrusions into their personal space, more suspicious of the strangers or aliens who live around them, more conscious of theft and trespass".

groupings.⁹⁵ Furthermore, people who were young when villagisation occurred and those born in the villages did/do not have to adjust from old to new settlement style. Thus if one spent time interviewing the younger generation one would hear much less about the importance of spatial detail than when one interviews the elderly. Nevertheless, and this is the crucial point, the immutable physical constraints of the closer settlement (village) are just as real now as they were in the 1960s. The fact that every villager is potentially observable in most situations implies that there is an indelible thread of self-consciousness, alertness, wariness, restraint that is woven into the fabric of the post-villagised community. Lives conducted and relationships pursued in the villages are of necessity different from those in scattered settlements, and will remain so into the future. This is true whether recognised by the new generation or not.

3. The precise boundary definition of each site and confinement

Just as the confinement of the inmates in cells in the panopticon is a prerequisite for it to function as a "house of certainty"⁹⁶ (re monitoring/reform), so too is the post-betterment power configuration in the villages dependent on each villager being consigned to (in effect confined in) a strictly defined residential site. The change from a loosely defined residential space which was not used exclusively for residential purposes to a strictly defined residential site to be used exclusively for residential purposes has made people feel constrained and constricted.⁹⁷

⁹⁵See discussion below, pages 152-153.

⁹⁶Foucault, Discipline, 202.

⁹⁷There were many references to jail/prison in the testimonies.

... the people were bound in this new settlement ... we were built into a township form ... we have been set into a jail ...⁹⁸

This testimony is revelatory: the old men feel that the entirety of the closer settlements, including the inhabitants, is ossified and fixed. The people have actually been installed into the very substance of the villages. His immobility in "Leppan's jail"⁹⁹ led one old man to describe the Gwili-Gwili closer settlement as "a heavy stone burdening the people".¹⁰⁰ A massive, broad rock presses down upon the shoulders of the villagers, preventing them by its sheer weight from moving. This rock is precisely the boundaries of the residential sites.

The argument would be too fragmentary if feelings of confinement were attributed solely to the people having been accustomed to loosely defined residential areas. The issue of distance between neighbours as expounded above must also be considered. Not only are the boundaries fixed, but beyond them is a sea of roving eyes. Since the villager is constantly aware that he/she could be being watched, he/she is doubly conscious that the perimeters of his/her site are fixed. So feelings of confinement are related to the fact that the sites are directly adjacent to one another.

⁹⁸Group interview in Ndlovini village, in early May 1991.

⁹⁹During the group interview in Ndlovini village, in early May, 1991, one informant said: "we are now prisoners in his [Leppan's] jail".

¹⁰⁰Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

4. The site size and new architecture

A further reason for the widespread feelings of confinement is the size of the residential sites; they are small relative to the land areas previously set aside for residential purposes.

There is another consequence of the move to the small residential sites: the increased incidence of rectangular (as opposed to circular) houses. With each family having to organise its living quarters on a much reduced (and now rectangular) piece of land, many families that had previously resided in rondavels now built rectangular houses. The anthropologist O'Connell noted exactly the same phenomenon in Mount Ayliff district in the Transkei: "In response to a general shortage of space the number of square houses ... is increasing."¹⁰¹

Before considering the effects on a family caused by moving from many rondavels to one rectangular house, it should be mentioned that the prevailing system of taxation apparently demanded payments for buildings not sites. The following was an exchange between my colleague/interpreter and an interviewee from Mtwaku:

Q Do you know how the tax worked; were the people supposed to pay for each hut or for the yard?

A It was said that each hut was R1.

Q Now let's make an example: if you've got one big house, would you

¹⁰¹O'Connell, 'Resettlement', 48. Whereas it was missionaries that led a late 19th century drive to encourage Africans to move into square houses (Bundy, C The rise and fall of the South African peasantry (1979), Heinemann: London, 37), in the late 1960s and early 1970s it was simply the dictate of limited space that drove people to make the switch.

pay R1?

A Yes, you were to pay R1, even if it's big; ... [for] this one for instance (where we are) you won't have to pay R1, R1, R1 for the rooms inside.

Q Going on with my example: now if you have six small huts?

A Even if they are small ... R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1.¹⁰²

Clearly the imposition of such a system of taxation would have accelerated the change from rondavels to square houses. It seems however that it was only half-heartedly implemented, or that the people generally refused to pay the tax.¹⁰³ Of the people interviewed, the proportion familiar with the tax was insignificant.

The question to be considered now is: what is the difference between conducting one's domestic life in many similar separate rooms (rondavels) and conducting it in a single house divided into different rooms? In a conversation with Barou and Perrot, Foucault had the following to say about the importance of domestic architecture:

Philippe Aries has written some things which seem important to me, regarding the fact that the house remains until the eighteenth century an undifferentiated space. There are rooms: one sleeps, eats, receives visitors in them, it doesn't matter which. Then gradually space becomes specified and functional. We see this illustrated with the building of the cites ouvrières, between the 1830s and 1870s. The working-class family is to be fixed; by assigning to it a living space with a room that serves as a kitchen and diningroom, a room for the parents which is the place of procreation, and a room for the children, one prescribes a form of morality for the family.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Interview with Mr Kebeni in Mtwaku village, in September 1991.

¹⁰³An interviewee, Mr Phela (an ex-headman of Gwili-Gwili) told me in September 1991 that only people with "sleeping minds" paid the tax.

¹⁰⁴Foucault, Power/Knowledge, 148, 149.

The important detail of the pre-villagisation period is that all the rondavels were similar to one another. One could thus perform any one of a number of activities in any of the rondavels; they did not prescribe specific activity, gesture and motion. One could choose what one wanted to do and, to an extent, how one wanted to do it. There was opportunity to be unpredictable, disorderly, exciting, unconventional, innovative, revolutionary. This opportunity was of course curtailed by moving into a house divided into functionally specific rooms.

Now, in my square house I may have three or more rooms: children's room, voorhuis [lounge], diningroom, bedroom and another bedroom for older people. [Q But before that?] But before that we would all sleep in one house.¹⁰⁵

This testimony indicates clearly that the move into differentiated houses meant that lives were to be conducted in accordance with an entirely new morality. Key aspects of intra-familial morality and politics changed overnight. One bows spontaneously and unconditionally to the dictates of functionally specific space; one limits the carrying out of daily activities (now performed in precise ways) to specific rooms. One's life becomes divided up, with the fragments each being assigned to different rooms.

At this point the reader is quite possibly asking why there has been a relative dearth of oral testimony pertaining to this issue. A reason for this is that most of the people do not make a direct connection between villagisation and rectangular houses. There were of course rectangular houses well before the 1960s; having to organise one's living quarters on a small area accelerated the already existing trend away from rondavels toward rectangular homes. The people today are generally proud of their rectangular houses. The

¹⁰⁵Interview with Mr Malusi in Gwili-Gwili, in September 1991.

most commonly used word to describe the new houses is nkqubela, meaning progress.¹⁰⁶ The main reason for the people being favourably disposed toward their new homes seems to be, quite simply, their appearance - they look modern (they look like the houses seen on television programs). Conversely, a reason for them not being seen critically is that whereas the other spatial changes that accompanied villagisation led to paranoia, alienation and feelings of confinement (mental states and emotions), moving into a many-roomed house acted directly on people's bodies and their actions, but minds and emotions were not changed or roused to a significant extent. So the new architectural structures have quietly and insidiously worked on the body while skirting the mind. Hence when one asks the villagers to share their attitudes and feelings about rectangular houses, one is usually told nothing about the way in which they must move and act in a manner compatible with the architecture.

Taking stock and taking cover

Essentially, what has been argued above is that the spatial changes that were brought about through betterment villagisation have changed people's attitudes, emotions and actions. People are more self-conscious, alert and paranoid because of close neighbour proximity, they feel confined in the precisely defined and small residential sites, and they perform their domestic tasks and functions differently in the differentiated rectangular houses from how they were previously performed in the undifferentiated rondavels. In sum, the spatial

¹⁰⁶Even Mr Malusi (footnote 105) said that rectangular houses are "progressive".

changes of the 1960s have tended to normalise¹⁰⁷ the people. Villagisation has caused people to control themselves. In the context of South African historiography, this is a startling conclusion: a silent but sprawling geo-political machine of control in which the state plays only a minor role has been discovered! Inter-neighbour and resultant intra-personal power relations are far more important for the functioning of this machine than is the state-citizen power relation.

It should be stressed that this chapter is not a disguised attempt to excise the apartheid state and the Sebe regime from the political field in South Africa, and thereby exonerate them. Rather it is an attempt to open up the political field, to encourage the extension of critical analysis. The argument here is that most of the changes in the realm of power that resulted from the implementation of betterment involved the state only indirectly.¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that developments during the last 30 years that have impacted on the state-citizen power relation are not important. But it most certainly is to say, along with Foucault and a considerable proportion of the post-modern left, that the political field is by no means permeated by the state. Differentiated relationships are power relations and not all differentiation in South Africa stems from racist state policy, although of course a lot does. (Similarly not all differentiation stems from capitalist exploitation; many who uphold the importance of the state argue that it represents capital or various 'fractions' thereof.) In Keiskammahoek, spatial details differentiate people of the same race, class, gender, etc., and further result in their becoming involved in their own subjugation.

¹⁰⁷This word is used in a very literal sense of bending, orienting or forcing people towards the dominant norms of the day. In this thesis we are referring to modern, western, Christian norms.

¹⁰⁸For the exception see below, pages 149-151.

A couple of scattered brief comments about oral testimony have been made during the course of the above analysis. But it is necessary - in order to pre-empt traditionalist denunciations - to justify as historical the methodology utilised in this chapter. Perhaps the loudest complaint will be that there have been very few (state) documents referred to. The reason for this is that I have not seen any documents that deal with the effects of the 1960 spatial changes. Obviously there may be such documents, but it is most likely that the state is oblivious to the fact of villagisation having led to a new power configuration.¹⁰⁹ So the question becomes: should historians deal with past events that are not broached in state records? Or put another way: can the historian study what he/she deems as important aspects of the past or is he/she compelled to be concerned exclusively with what appears in the documentation? Those who support the latter option assume inadvertently or otherwise that all the worthwhile things of the past have been discussed in documents. Clearly this assumption is false. If they admit that numerous crucial past events and phenomena have been omitted, yet cling to the argument that the content of history must be shaped by documents then one can question the value and purpose of their history. Although the latter option is thus easily falsified and discredited many historians adhere to it stubbornly. It can be noted briefly that there is a correlation between this insular history and state-centric ideas about power. Since many historians immerse themselves in state documents (which by definition concern those matters that interest the state), it is not surprising that their histories give the state a privileged position and by implication assume it to be the centre of the political arena.

The crunch question for historians who recognise that there are bound to be important historical facts, developments and phenomena not

¹⁰⁹As apparently was Leppan (see above, page 127).

illuminated in documents, is how can or should one analyse these issues? Clearly, a general answer to this broad question is impossible because there is an infinite number (yes, a number greater than any countable number)¹¹⁰ of such issues. Rather one should retain an openness to the undocumented when researching and once a specific issue is recognised as important, a special means of dealing with it can be devised. In this case the issue is spatial change - nobody doubts that rigorous differentiation of land occurred in the communal locations of Keiskammahoek in the 1960s; it is an undeniable historical fact. Furthermore the people testify that the spatial change affected them profoundly, thus it is clear that it is an issue of considerable relevance to the historian interested in rural change. Spatial change in Keiskammahoek is of historical importance. The two readily available guidelines in understanding the details of exactly how spatial change affected life were oral testimony and historiographical precedents. The oral testimony of the old generation was very helpful because it contrasted the pre- and post-betterment periods, usually noting the importance of villagisation while doing so. With the spatial changes easy to clarify and the people's experiences of those changes available through interviews, all that remained was to make sense of those experiences. For this task the work of Foucault proved felicitous.

A question worth pondering is why the state was and remains seemingly oblivious to the new power configurations in the previously communal areas. Why has the state not recognised that which so obviously and considerably assists it in its task of maintaining order? It is suggested that the key reason for the state's ignorance derives from the pervasiveness of the closer settlement; cities, towns and

¹¹⁰This is because there are an infinite number of possible types of perception, and with each different type, different things emerge as valid phenomena.

villages are of course all examples of closer settlements. Westernised people accept the scarcity of space and therefore accept without question precisely defined and fence-thin boundaries, and small residential sites. There is nothing strange or untoward about these things; they are commonsensical. And because they are regarded as necessary and convenient, nobody considers their implications in terms of power. It is the degree to which the closer settlement has become a fundamental part of the western experience and conception of common sense that explains the state's obliviousness to the power relations inherent in every closer settlement. Conversely, because this type of settlement format was so foreign to pre-betterment African communities, they were able to be aware of how it affected their attitudes, emotions and behaviour. They were not born in villages, they did not live in areas in which scattered settlements evolved into closer settlements; they were forced into villages, and thus they had the capacity to be critical of them. The testimonies of the villagers of Keiskammahoek about the effects of living in closer settlements do not pertain merely to Keiskammahoek, but also help to unveil the shrouded underside of city life.

The historiography of villagisation: the selective spatialisation of critical thought in South Africa¹¹¹

There is a last spatial change that occurred because of betterment villagisation, which has been referred to throughout but not actually analysed. It is that all the people in the communal locations were concentrated in large villages. The greatest number of villages in a previously communal location in Keiskammahoek district is three, that location being Mtwaku. In Gxulu, Mnyameni and Cata there are two

¹¹¹This section should be read in conjunction with the sub-section in Chapter I entitled "Control", page 51.

villages per location, while in Gwili-Gwili and Upper Ngqumeya there is only a single village in each location. So it was not a case of people being moved into many small closer settlements, rather they were all moved into a few large closer settlements. Whereas the four spatial changes identified above each affected intra-community life, this change affected the relationship between the community as a whole and the state. Quite clearly, the concentration of people into a few large villages (or large settlement villagisation) facilitated the government's control of rural areas. Unacceptable groundswell action or even feeling is much more easily detected and quelled when persons are concentrated than when they are scattered. The key is the physical, geographical relation between the state and rural people. This argument is held by most academics who have dealt with betterment. Yawitch quotes Wilson as follows: "Administrators always prefer the people they rule to be concentrated, for then control ... is easier",¹¹² and in the light of this calls control "a prime, albeit implicit function of betterment".¹¹³ Moll devotes slightly more space than Yawitch to his analysis of villagisation and control but merely restates rather than transcends Yawitch's comments: "Close surveillance of the people was ensured by means of concentrating them in rural villages. Political dissent and organisation became difficult and easily detected, and repression of participants far easier."¹¹⁴ De Wet's comments echo those preceding: "Villagisation provides them [governments] with greater control over their rural populations, as people are more directly accessible in nucleated

¹¹²Yawitch, Betterment, 49.

¹¹³Yawitch, Betterment, 49.

¹¹⁴Moll, 'No blade', 31.

settlements than in scattered residential clusters."¹¹⁵

Before commenting on this historiography it is worthwhile to note that whereas the pre-betterment state was ignorant of the intra-village power changes that would result from villagisation, it is likely that it was aware of the geographical principle that concentration of people facilitates their control. The advantages of concentrating rural Africans were well known from very early on the colony's history, as this portion of an 1850 letter to governor Harry Smith testifies:

The hold which the Government would thus from the concentration of persons and property, have over the population would be vastly increased ... as sedition could more easily at once be nipped in the bud.¹¹⁶

So anticipated enhanced state control was almost certainly one of the reasons for the government's anxiousness to villagise the rural communities.

The most significant thing about the historiography of the political consequences of betterment is not that large settlement villagisation has been dealt with, but that all the other spatial changes have been completely ignored. Why have South African academics picked up on only one spatial detail of betterment? The answer is not that it is the only such detail to be documented; as with respect to the other aspects of spatial change the documents are silent about large settlement villagisation. Clearly the reason for its exclusive analysis in relation to power is that it concerns the state, and state

¹¹⁵De Wet, C 'Some socio-economic consequences of villagisation schemes in Africa and the future of "betterment villages" in the "new South Africa"' in Development South Africa, Vol 8, No 1 (1991), 5.

¹¹⁶Bowen, 'History', 21.

power. An assumption held by all the aforementioned analysts is that the state holds power (as a commodity), and is therefore the prime actor in the political field. So when they ponder changes in the political sphere, their considerations focus on the state and its functionaries. To sum up, the selective spatialisation of betterment analysis is rooted in state-centric theories of power.

In the light of the observation that the only spatial change incorporated in the historiography of the effects of betterment on rural power configurations is large settlement villagisation, it is worthwhile to consider whether any of the other spatial changes are incorporated in the overall historiography of betterment. (Many analyses do have sections dealing with changes in arable land allotments,¹¹⁷ but what is being considered here is specifically residential arrangements). The only academic who makes any genuine attempt to consider spatial change is de Wet. The main aim of his doctoral thesis was to examine how villagisation changed relationship patterns in the economic, political and ritual spheres in Cata location.¹¹⁸ Since people's residential arrangements have changed, it is not surprising, he argues, that membership of groupings in which considerations of proximity are important, has also changed.¹¹⁹ The two spatial issues that he recognises as relevant in this regard are the breakup of lineage-based residential patterns, and distance between previous neighbours in closer settlements.¹²⁰ He argues that only in those cases where distances are greater than they were

¹¹⁷eg Yawitch, Betterment, 48, 49.

¹¹⁸De Wet, 'An analysis', xiii-xv.

¹¹⁹De Wet, 'An analysis', xiii, 394.

¹²⁰De Wet, 'An analysis', xiv, xv, 168, 169, 186, 192, 193, 264, 284.

previously, is there pressure to terminate or curtail relationships.¹²¹ So A might live on an opposite side of the village from a previous neighbour B, but if the distance between them was previously greater than it is now - even though they are no longer neighbours - there is not pressure on them to stop assisting one another agriculturally or attending ceremonies involving one another. To summarise the above, de Wet sees the villagers as having to consider a host of distances, between themselves and fellow villagers, in making decisions about partners for activities.

There are two sharp contrasts between the pictures sketched by de Wet and by myself. The first concerns conceptualisation of the bearing of space on the villager. De Wet endows the villager with a capacity to make decisions one way or the other about how he/she should adjust his/her patterns of co-operation in response to changed distances. My conception of spatial change is that it has acted directly on the villager (and continues to do so). Without the villager even considering spatial change it has had direct effects on his/her emotions, attitudes and actions. Are these two conceptions irreconcilable or is there some way of accommodating both? When one realises that de Wet's project and mine are different, that he is interested in how spatial change has affected relationship patterns, while I have been analysing how it has affected individuals' lives, then it is possible to map out some common ground. Whilst space can and does impact directly on emotions, attitudes and actions, some dimensions of the human experience are much freer from the workings of space than others. Spatial details for example do not determine exactly who individual villagers co-operate with, rather they are one factor that villagers consider when choosing partners.

The second contrast is more extreme. It lies in the way in which

¹²¹De Wet, 'An analysis', 264, 284.

post-betterment activities are thought about. For de Wet, associates have changed but the actors and their activities have remained essentially the same. Certain environmental changes have made the people review their patterns of association but have not influenced them or the way in which they undertake their day to day tasks. I believe that villagisation has changed the rural people on a very deep level. Consequently, it would be misleading to convey the impression of unchanged activities. A dominant theme running through many of the testimonies of old men in villages is that of loss: life in the villages lacks relaxation, secrecy and freedom; it is of a lesser quality than in former times. It is different. The analysis above was formulated with this depressing sense of loss in mind. The people are not hapless victims, they do make decisions in line with how to fulfil goals, but at the same time villagisation has changed them, how they go about their lives (their activities) and the way in which they relate to people. Essentially then, the difference between de Wet's work and this analysis is that they have been informed by very different ideas about space and power: for de Wet, the villagers stand outside of or lack power,¹²² and space is neutral;¹²³ whereas for me spatial changes have differentiated the villagers - both from one another and within themselves - in other words, involved them in power relations that have changed them.

Conclusion: a brief assault

When the principle of differentiation was first incorporated into betterment thinking in the early 1940s its place was limited: it was

¹²²He sees the political field in narrow state-centric terms. See de Wet, 'An analysis', 298.

¹²³In other words, the idea that spatial details in themselves imply power relations does not arise in de Wet's work.

to provide the spatial skeleton needed for the flesh and blood of conservationism. But by the 1950s all that remained of betterment was the skeleton. For any scholar of betterment as it was implemented (as opposed to how it was developed) it is thus necessary to concentrate on the spatial changes dictated by the principle of differentiation. Yet when one surveys the historiography of betterment one discovers a post-1960 black hole. Scholars have had plenty to say about the relation between the political economy and the changing shape of pre-1960 betterment policy, but there has been tentativeness to analyse the dogged planting of those lifeless bones that made up post-1960 betterment.

A likely reason for the historians' refusal to study the effects of villagisation is that this would throw them headlong into the strange, uncharted and even seemingly dubious world of spatial change. The villagers cry that villagisation has been deeply and tragically important but historians turn a deaf ear. More and more people have recognised that space has re-emerged strongly onto the academic agenda - leading American thinker Edward Soja has already achieved significant progress in his aim "to open up and recompose the territory of the historical imagination through a critical spatialization"¹²⁴ - but historians keep their blinkers in place. The challenge is straightforward: in order to remain relevant, history must be sensitive to broad academic shifts; there must be a meaningful two-way dialogue between history and other disciplines. History must respond to both the Keiskammahoek villagers and world academia.

Whether historians choose to utilise the insights of Foucault in their ponderings about space is irrelevant; the point is that they must

¹²⁴Soja, E Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory (1989), Verso: London, 12.

begin pondering. In this case his insights have however been very useful because he pioneered the study of space in terms of power. It has proved helpful and illuminating to analyse the relationships between neighbours in the villages as power relations. We have seen that one of the main reasons for the inability of South African academics to recognise the importance of space in the countryside is their adherence to very narrow, state-centric ideas about power. The political field must be opened up because sooner or later the apartheid state will end. And when 'the people' eventually govern, much will remain unchanged because they are involved in their own subjection.

CHAPTER IV

The diverse effects of betterment on locations in which land is held under title (freehold or quitrent)

The analysis of the impact of betterment on communal locations in Keiskammahoek district was relatively straightforward because of the similarity of the locations to one another: there was a typical pre-betterment settlement style, and a common form of tenure that pertained to the entire land area of the locations. Conversely, there was very little commonality between the remaining locations in the district. In some, land was held under freehold tenure, in others under quitrent tenure, and in others still some land was held under freehold tenure and other under quitrent tenure.¹ In some locations all land was held by Africans, but in others there was some held by whites. Betterment affected the locations in which land is held under title - Burnshill, Mbems, Upper and Lower Rabula, Zanyokwe, Lower Ngqumeya, Wolf River, Ngolo-Ngolo and Dontsa - differently, in accordance with such details. Thus district-wide generalisations are rarely valid. This chapter opens with a discussion of the freehold locations and how they were variously affected by betterment. Special attention will be focused on Zanyokwe, not because it is a microcosm of the freehold locations, but because I conducted numerous interviews there and the testimonies thus collected are nicely supplemented by the available documentary materials. Thereafter the two locations in which quitrent is the predominant form of tenure, namely Burnshill and Mbems, will be studied. The various similarities and differences

¹For sake of convenience, the locations are classified according to the dominant land tenure arrangement.

between the post-betterment locations will be pointed out in a concluding section.

Freehold locations

(i) Pre-betterment classes

It is important to note at the outset that it is residential and arable land that is held under title, not grazing land. The arrangement in the pre-betterment days was that whoever had a title deed had automatic access to grazing land; in other words the commonage was shared by the title deed holders. Apart from title deed holders there was another class of residents - the backyard dwellers. Mills and Wilson noted that ever since people acquired titles and moved onto their lands there had been backyard dwellers:² these people lived on the property of the freeholders, worked as tenant farmers³ and in exchange for their services were granted a portion of the crop. It is difficult to specify the precise nature of the pre-1930 relationship between the title holders and backyard dwellers. The former remember it as a time of harmony;⁴ this is understandable since they were then obviously advantaged in their power relations with the backyard dwellers, and they still retained absolute control of an uninhabited commonage. The fact is that before 1945 many backyard dwellers moved off their landlords' lands onto the commonage,

²Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 45.

³Interestingly, Beinart and Delius write generally that "the tendency was for African landowners to let their land to tenants and claim rent, rather than to farm extensive tracts themselves." Beinart, W and Delius, P 'Introduction' in Beinart, W, Delius, P and Trapido, T (eds) Putting a plough to the ground (1986), Ravan press: Johannesburg, 44, 45.

⁴For example, interview with ex-headman of Zanyokwe, Mr R Ndabeni, in late April 1991.

thereby sometimes absolving themselves from obligations to the landlords.⁵ Thenceforth, they were in a position to pick and choose their work; the freeholder who provided the most favourable tenancy arrangement could be sought. Perhaps the most balanced and correct perception can be obtained by recognising that many of the backyard dwellers who moved were permitted to build on the commonage by the freeholders themselves. As Mills et al write,

The commonage belongs to the freeholders of the villages [sic], and building on it is in fact illegal, but families already accepted as members of the village [sic] are, in practice, permitted by the freeholders to build on it ...⁶

An ex-headman of Zanyokwe, Mr Ndabeni, described the system of temporary site allocation on the commonage as follows:

[A site was provided] by the headman due to the plea of the freeholder for his backyard dweller, and that depended on the period of stay of the backyard dweller on the freeholder's land ... The case was first taken to the headman (by the freeholders), then he referred the matter to the magistrate, who could grant permission to the headman to allocate a residential site ...⁷

So by the 1960s, some of the landless people in the freehold locations were still living as backyard dwellers, while others had moved onto the commonage as squatters. It can be noted that the government

⁵Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 45, 46.

⁶Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 46.

⁷Interview with Mr Ndabeni in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991. For documentary confirmation of the prominent role played by the Inkundla and headman, with regard to pre-betterment land allocation, see letter dated 22/06/1951, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/28/1/9, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

policies of segregation and apartheid exacerbated the already serious overpopulation in freehold locations. With the movement of some backyard dwellers onto the commonages, their dwellings on the freeholder properties were left vacant. These new squatters often sent for family members to immigrate into the district to occupy the vacated dwellings.⁸ The question of course is why there would have been a significant number of people anxious for a new home. The answer is simple: many people were being displaced from their old homes, and they needed somewhere - anywhere - to live. One of the issues dealt with at the final quarterly meeting of 1959 between Leppan and the headmen was the considerable immigration of outsiders into Keiskammahoek district.⁹

(ii) Trust land

Although there were some scientific measures introduced in the communal locations in the 1940s, betterment only really transformed them in the 1960s. The situation was different in the freehold locations in which some land was owned by whites. Here, the Land Act of 1936 - which can be seen as precursory legislation to Proclamation 117/1939 - had an immediate and significant impact. The South African Native Trust (S.A.N.T.) was created by this act in order to purchase Released Land (land earmarked to consolidate the Reserves). Land held by whites in Zanyokwe, Wolf River, Rabula, Ngolo-Ngolo, Lower Ngqumeya

⁸Interview with a freeholder ex-headman, Mr Poyo (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), and a prominent freeholder spokesman, Mr Tabata, in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

⁹Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1959, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

and Lenye was earmarked as such.¹⁰ The land subsequently acquired by the Trust was divided into residential and arable sections with specific allotments being demarcated in both sections.¹¹ Residential and arable sites were then allocated to the maximum number of backyard dwellers that could be accommodated on this land (commonly called Trust Land). Trust settlers had to submit to strict rules of cultivation; if they failed to abide by these rules they were liable to forego their rights of occupation and cultivation.¹² They were also required to limit their stock holdings to five head (they were not permitted to keep small stock).¹³ In Keiskammahoek district, the S.A.N.T. was quick in buying many properties from whites.¹⁴ In 1945 Acting Native Commissioner Jubb reported that 200 of the 900 landless families in the district had already moved onto Trust land.¹⁵

So reflecting on the pre-1960 situation there were three groupings of people in freehold locations in which there was no Trust land - namely

¹⁰Letter dated 01/10/1942, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/17/2/1(5), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹¹Land bought by the S.A.N.T. in Mbems location (quitrent) was used as extra grazing; see footnote 134 (Chapter II).

¹²Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 93, 94, 99.

¹³Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 101.

¹⁴By as early as February 1939, "practically all the European and Coloured farmers in the district have been bought out" (letter dated 24/02/1939, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Provisional Secretary, Kingwilliamstown, in sub-file 3/6/2 in unboxed file 3/6/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University).

¹⁵Letter dated 18/07/1945, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

freeholders, backyard dwellers and squatters - and the extra grouping of Trust settlers in the other freehold locations. It is important to explain that the birth of the two younger groups (i.e. squatters and Trust settlers) impacted directly on the rights of the freeholders. The backyard dwellers were not permitted to keep stock,¹⁶ therefore the commonage was initially used solely for the pasturage of freeholder cattle. With the granting of temporary sites on the commonage to squatters, the amount of land that could be used as pasture diminished. Put another way, the freeholders lost control over an amount of their land. They lost further control with the movement of backyard dwellers onto S.A.N.T. land, because Trust settlers were permitted to keep five head of cattle each, which grazed on the commonage.¹⁷

The coming of betterment

From as early as the 1940s the local administration was aware of the freeholders' vigilance over their arable and residential sites. In 1945 Jubb wrote that in the freehold locations,

[i]t seems ... that only measures for the regulation of the commonage, the elimination of encroachments by land holders, and provision for the future of squatters on the

¹⁶There is a documentary hint however, that some backyard dwellers were granted permission to graze cattle on the commonage (letter dated 20/10/1908, from the office of the Surveyor General, in unboxed file N2/10/1, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University).

¹⁷Cokwana, M 'A close look at tenure in Ciskei' in Cross, C and Haines, R (eds) Towards freehold (1988), Juta: Cape Town, 311.

commonage will fall within the purview of the rehabilitation scheme [i.e. betterment] ...¹⁸

Similarly, in February 1955 Schaffer reported to his senior in Kingwilliamstown about Zanyokwe, Lower and Upper Rabula, Nqolo-Nqolo, Lower Ngqumeya, Wolf River and Dontsa as follows:

Residents would not oppose improvements in the communal grazing area (e.g. dams) but are not prepared to make any sacrifices nor to contribute labour or cash towards the cost of communal improvements. They oppose interference with their properties which they hold under freehold ... tenure.¹⁹

What the administration failed to recognise was that the freeholders also felt very strongly about their exclusive and total authority over the commonage.²⁰ It is crucial to comprehend this for one to be able to understand the intra-location bitterness and xenophobia that resulted in some locations from the implementation of betterment. In the case study of Wolf River in Chapter II it was recognised that the

¹⁸Letter dated 28/06/1945, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁹Letter dated 28/02/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁰The reason behind the government's failure in this regard was its unequivocal assumption that it had complete and exclusive ownership rights over the commonage - in 1945 the Acting Native Commissioner wrote that "the commonage belongs to the Trust" (letter dated 28/06/1945, Acting Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University). It was so sure in its assumption that it never stopped to consider the possibility (which was in fact the reality) of the title-deed holders also laying claim to the commonage.

commonage was a hot point of contention between Leppan and the freeholders.²¹ They perceived that betterment would compromise or undermine their land rights, and for this reason opposed it. In this perception of betterment, the title deed holders of Wolf River were not alone. In April 1959 the headman of Lower Ngqumeya stated that his people were opposed to any fencing in their location.²² Earlier that month three representative freeholders, one each from Wolf River, Lower Ngqumeya and Zanyokwe, had written to Leppan that they rejected camp fencing.²³ Apparently, the freeholders were beginning to reckon that they were losing control of the commonage, and they feared that betterment would accelerate this loss.

The Ad Hoc Committee's planning programme in the late 1950s and early 1960s included Rabula, Zanyokwe and Ngqolo-Ngqolo.²⁴ Leppan mentioned at a 1963 quarterly meeting with the headmen that planning at Ngqolo-Ngqolo was being undertaken.²⁵ The last freehold location to be

²¹See above, page 101.

²²See correspondence dated 28/04/1959, in unboxed file 148/5/3(9), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²³Letter dated 06/04/1959, three freeholders to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, and letter dated 10/07/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, both in unboxed file N8/5/3(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁴Letter dated 09/09/1958, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/11/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁵Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

planned was Dontsa; its plans were completed only in the early 1980s.²⁶ Since planning occurred over such a prolonged period, it was inevitable that the implementation of the plans would occur in a correspondingly staggered fashion. The period of the most intense activity appears to have been that of the late 1960s - early 1970s. The most important change that betterment involved was the establishment of a precisely demarcated residential area on the commonage. This area was divided into rigorously defined sites. All landless people, that is squatters and backyard dwellers, were required to move onto these sites.²⁷ As in some communal locations the process of site allocation in some freehold locations was overseen by advisory committees. There is evidence that these were formed in Upper and Lower Rabula, and Wolf River.²⁸ The squatters were initially not permitted to keep any cattle²⁹ and they were not allocated any arable allotments. The other main betterment

²⁶See file 7/2/5/4, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

²⁷As was the case in the communal locations, betterment resulted in the establishment of closer settlements (Trust settlements, and new residential areas on the commonages) in the freehold locations. There are notable differences between the settlements in the two types of location; for example in communal locations the entire populations were villagised, whereas in freehold locations only those without title deeds were concentrated. But insofar as hitherto scattered peoples were concentrated, the analysis presented in the previous chapter is for the most part - there are aspects of it like those relating to kinship which are obviously not true for the freehold locations - applicable.

²⁸See 1965 correspondence in unboxed files N8/5/3(7), (6), and the Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, all in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

²⁹Although the squatters probably adhered to this regulation for the first few years - no doubt the culling officers probably kept a close eye on them - at a later stage they began acquiring cattle. The cattle were/are grazed in the camps (formerly the commonage), thereby reducing their carrying capacities.

inauguration was rotational grazing; this required the fencing of the various camps. The fences were erected in the 1960s and 70s. Specific rotational arrangements for most of the freehold locations for the period 1975-1984 are documented in the Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.³⁰

In some locations, betterment also involved a regimented reorganisation of the Trust lands.³¹ Many Trust settlers were required to move onto newly demarcated residential sites. Apparently, some Trust settlers had previously used arable lands where the new residential areas were laid out. Since these settlers were not allocated new lands, for them betterment meant an abrupt end to their agriculture.³²

It is clear that the betterment plans did not interfere with the freeholders as far as their arable and residential sites were concerned. In 1968 the Bantu Affairs Commissioner reported as follows:

Ek verstaan dat toe die bepalings van Proklamasie 116/1949 ... aan die Bantoe verduidelik is, is dit aan hul gemeld dat eiendomsgronde nie by beplanning ... geraak sal word nie. Elke grond eienaar sal nou afsonderlik genader moet word om te verneem of hulle bereid is om herwinningswerke op hul grond to onderneem. [I understand that when the regulations of Proclamation 116/1949 were explained to the Bantu, they were told that land owned by them would not be affected by planning. Every landowner will now have to be approached individually to ascertain whether he is willing

³⁰See files 7/3/5/4, 9/2/3, 9/2/8, 22/14/5/2, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

³¹De Wet and Leibbrandt 'Separate developments', 11.

³²De Wet and Leibbrandt, 'Separate developments', 11.

to undertake rehabilitation (betterment) work on his land].³³

There is no documentary or oral evidence that the freeholders were ever approached individually. If they had been, they would almost certainly have been unwilling to allow (never mind undertake) any rehabilitation work on their lands. One can be confident in this assumption because they were angry about lost control of the commonage. Therefore it is very unlikely that they would have consented to an attack on their autonomy over their arable and residential properties.

What emerges clearly is that the main effect of betterment in freehold locations was that diminution of freeholders' land rights to the commonage (which began with the establishment of Trust lands from the late 1930s) was exacerbated. A vital question that needs to be posed at this point is: how did the freeholders react to this further corrosion of their rights? Predictably, it is clear that they were generally unhappy, but in some locations the intensity of their anger was far more extreme and lasted longer than in others.

The only location in the district in which research around this issue has previously been undertaken is Rabula. Leibbrandt and de Wet reported that "gossip suggests tension between freeholders and residents in the new residential areas".³⁴ De Wet was evidently unhappy with the inconclusiveness of this remark and delved deeper into the details of the post-betterment relationship between freeholders and new residential area people. His findings were

³³Letter dated 12/07/1968, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/10/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

³⁴De Wet and Leibbrandt, 'Separate developments', 15.

recorded in an interesting 1991 paper.³⁵ Proceeding from the truism that "oral expression of social distance and actual patterns of social interaction are not necessarily congruent",³⁶ he studied those patterns with regard to ceremonial attendance and intermarriage. His findings initially seem puzzling: interaction between freeholders and new residential area people has increased since 1948-50 (when the latter were still squatters).³⁷ But his argument is convincing. The main reason he gives for the increasing interaction is that the proportion of the household incomes generated within the location has declined rapidly from mid-century.³⁸ More precisely, whereas agricultural products made up over 12% of total household income in 1949, by 1987 their contribution was negligible (4%). Developments in the regional and national economies - including increases in pensions (1950s), and in manufacturing and mining wages (1970s), economic growth in the Border region because of decentralisation policy and the enormous enlargement of the Ciskeian bureaucracy - meant not only that real incomes in Rabula have risen by an average 530%, but also that the share of the household income that is brought/sent into the location has increased significantly.³⁹ Since the relative importance of intra-location economic activity has declined substantially, it is not surprising that lahd tenure is not an important category in relation to social differentiation.

³⁵De Wet, C 'Land tenure, economic differentiation and social interaction in the village of Rabula (Keiskammahoek district, Ciskei)', unpublished paper presented to the 1991 meeting of the Association of Anthropology in Southern Africa, Johannesburg.

³⁶De Wet, 'Land tenure', 3.

³⁷De Wet, 'Land tenure', 15.

³⁸De Wet, 'Land tenure', 22.

³⁹De Wet, 'Land tenure', 10.

Before considering locations in which the post-betterment situation is markedly different, it is important to note three more relevant facts about Rabula. Firstly, since it is situated in the south-eastern corner of the district and is traversed by the tarred road between Dimbaza and Keiskammahoek village, it is well placed to have benefited from decentralisation developments.⁴⁰ Secondly, since the overwhelming majority (500 out of a total of 835, i.e. over 60%⁴¹) of Rabula households are freeholder, it is clear that the landless did not impinge on the freeholders' access to the commonage to the extent that they did in locations where they constituted the majority of the population. Thirdly, another important demographic detail is that some freeholders' sons moved onto the commonage with the backyard dwellers and subsequently, with the coming of betterment, were presumably allocated sites in the new residential areas - this blurred the distinction between landed and landless.⁴²

In other locations however, land rights are still considered to be of paramount importance. In isolated locations, people are less aware of new economic opportunities (eg at Dimbaza or in the bureaucracy), and are also unfavourably situated to exploit them. While increases in pensions and urban wages have rendered farming activities relatively less economically important, the consciousness and considerations of many of the freeholders are still rooted firmly in the land. An interesting expression of freeholders' anxiety to defend their rights recently occurred in the isolated north-eastern location of Dontsa. In Dontsa betterment activity occurred in an unusual sequence, with the establishment of fenced grazing camps far predating the establishment of a new residential area. Dontsa was declared a

⁴⁰De Wet and Leibbrandt, 'Separate developments', 22, 23.

⁴¹De Wet, 'Land tenure', 9.

⁴²De Wet, 'Land tenure', 7, 15.

betterment area only in 1959, after the freeholders had approached Leppan requesting the fencing of their location to prevent cattle from Mtwaku and Gwili-Gwili locations from trespassing on their pastures.⁴³ The residential area was established in one of the camps and laid out so that it could accommodate the landless and (as in Rabula) some freeholders' descendants.⁴⁴ But word spread into neighbouring Stutterheim district that the new settlement had opened up in Dontsa, and soon there were a number of immigrants, who later began building houses without permission.⁴⁵ The freeholders' energy and attention was thus directed on minimising the amount of immigration from Stutterheim district; location unity has grown alongside xenophobia.⁴⁶ Again, geographic locality has been significant in relation to location socio-politics.

In Zanyokwe and, to a lesser extent, Wolf River, one comes across a more predictable post-betterment scenario: the communities are divided along the lines of land tenure status. In the case of Rabula, de Wet deduced smooth intra-community relations by monitoring ceremonial attendance patterns and the frequency of intermarriage. In the case of Zanyokwe, documentation of formal headmanship politics is overwhelmingly dominated by references to sectarian division. That this division is a dominant fact of Zanyokwe life was stressed with spitting vehemence by freeholder informants; the ex-backyard dwellers were more ambivalent in their commentary. Since I have accumulated

⁴³Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of meeting held at Dontsa on 30/12/1958, in unboxed file N8/5/3(15), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁴⁴Group interview with Mr and Mrs Manentsa and Mrs Lunguza (all freeholders) and Mrs Mbane (a new residential area resident) in Dontsa, in early May 1991.

⁴⁵Group interview in Dontsa, in early May 1991.

⁴⁶Group interview in Dontsa, in early May 1991.

a wealth of relevant documentary and oral evidence for Zanyokwe, its case study follows, after which some comparative remarks will be made.

Zanyokwe - bitterness as a way of life

Zanyokwe lies about fifteen kilometres south-south-west of Keiskammahoek village. Before 1936 there were properties in the location owned by whites and 'coloureds'. These were bought by the S.A.N.T. shortly after its establishment.⁴⁷ This Trust land was quickly divided into allotments which were allocated to various backyard dwellers. The movement of these people onto the Trust land did not cause significant problems between the remaining backyard dwellers and the freeholders. One can be sure of this because the freeholders subsequently supported the bids of a few long serving backyard dwellers to acquire sites on the commonage.⁴⁸ Moreover, ex-headman Ndabeni (1964-75) claims that during the headmanship of N Tabata (1959-64), the freeholders successfully urged the local authorities to grant backyard dwellers permission to hold up to four head of cattle each.⁴⁹ This claim however is dubious because if there was a specific headmanship during which the relationship between the freeholders and the backyard dwellers turned very sour, then it was that of N Tabata. Before elaborating, it is worthwhile to note that antagonism between the freeholders and the Trust settlers originated during the headmanship of N Tabata's father, Bartholomew (1945-59).

⁴⁷Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991; a woman, Mrs G Skenjana (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), interjected at crucial points of the discussion about the Trust lands to add helpful clarifications.

⁴⁸Interviews with Mr Ndabeni, and with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata, in Zanyokwe, both in late April 1991.

⁴⁹Interview with Mr Ndabeni in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

In September 1953 he wrote to Schaffer as follows:

As headman of Zanyokwe Location many disputes have been brought to my notice regarding the Trust people ... [T]he Trust people begged to be freed from my powers as headman, they rather prefer your power.⁵⁰

Furthermore, there is documentary evidence that the tenant/landlord relationship (between backyard dwellers and freeholders) had become less harmonious shortly after N Tabata's term of office began; Leppan wrote in February 1960 that the former were "not on the best of terms" with the latter.⁵¹ It is important to note that the freeholders appear to have closed ranks from the late 1950s, when K Ndabeni and N Tabata began writing letters on their behalf.⁵² Significantly, the freeholders began formulating arguments relating to their land rights. This resulted in a deepening of the chasm between them and the Trust settlers. Tabata sent the following freeholder argument to the Chief Native Commissioner in Kingwilliamstown in early 1960:

We ... would like to know if one of the causes of overstocking at Zanyokwe might not be caused by the Trust

⁵⁰Letter dated 20/09/1953, B Tabata to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁵¹Letter dated 02/02/1960, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices. Although Leppan calls the former group 'squatters', it is clear - in the context of the whole letter - that he is referring to backyard dwellers; it is merely a case of different terminology.

⁵²For some of the early letters, see unboxed file N8/5/3(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

land at Zanyokwe which is overburdened by people.⁵³

With the battle lines between both freeholders and backyard dwellers, and freeholders and Trust settlers clearly drawn, backyard dwellers and Trust settlers found themselves in some sort of informal, convenient alliance.

Most of the intra-community skirmishes of the period 1960-90 were fought on the electoral front. The first headmanship election in which the backyard dwellers and Trust settlers formed a united block against the freeholders was that of October 1959. (The political allegiance of the five backyard dweller families that were given permission to live on the commonage is not known).

The two candidates in the 1959 election were M Ntsohi and Tabata. The former was backed by the Trust settlers and backyard dwellers, and thus managed to command overwhelming majority support: 41 votes against Tabata's 13.⁵⁴ But these 13 were all freeholder votes, and the ruling from both Chief Kolo⁵⁵ (pseudonym, used for personal

⁵³Letter dated 30/01/1960, N Tabata to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N8/5/3(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁵⁴Letter dated 04/12/1959, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁵⁵In order to understand the sudden appearance of the term chief, it is necessary to outline briefly the changes that resulted from the implementation of the Bantu Authorities Act in Keiskammahoek in 1956 (unboxed file N11/1/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University). It resulted in the division of the district into two Tribal Authorities, the Keiskammahoek North and South Tribal (or Community) Authorities, which together comprised a Regional Authority. Myeki from Gwili-Gwili was appointed chief of the Northern Tribal Authority and head of the Regional Authority (letter dated 16/10/1956, Native Commissioner,

reasons) and Leppan was that the freeholders "have some claim to prior consideration over the others".⁵⁶ Consequently, Tabata was appointed headman. Although he held office for only four years it is apparent from the oral testimony of some of the freeholders (including N Tabata's son) that this period witnessed a sudden deterioration of the tenant/landlord relationship.⁵⁷ In fact, in many cases the breach grew so deep that the backyard dwellers moved off the freeholders' holdings to become squatters on the commonage. Different explanations of the exodus are held by the two parties. On the one hand, some squatters argue that the freeholders could not provide for their needs as backyard dwellers,⁵⁸ while others accuse the freeholders of having mistreated them.⁵⁹ The freeholders on the other hand, argue that Tabata expelled the backyard dwellers because "they caused problems".⁶⁰ The following is an excerpt from the dialogue between myself and Tabata's son:

Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N11/1/2, in transit to Cory Library). Kolo was appointed chief of the Southern Community Authority (see unboxed file N1/1/3(7), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices). Although the Bantu Authorities Act is usually given priority in rural historical studies of the 1950s, it appears to have had little actual impact in Keiskammahoek.

⁵⁶Letter dated 02/02/1960, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁵⁷The other freeholder interviewed together with Mr Tabata, namely Mr Poyo, as well as everyone else who listened in on the interview, agreed with him on this point.

⁵⁸Interview with an elderly Zanyokwe ex-squatter, Mr S Mnyaka (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), in late April 1991.

⁵⁹Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

⁶⁰Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

Q Were the squatters previously backyard dwellers?

A Yes, they were backyard dwellers but we could no longer stand their attitude.

Q How did they come to occupy that land [the commonage]?

A ... The then headman was my grandfather [Bartholomew] and was very kind to them; he let them stay there [that is, on the sites of the freeholders]. And then my father and his brothers got fed up with their activities, went to the [magistrate's] office, and they were given notice to go across to the other side [that is, the commonage].⁶¹

Just before the implementation of the betterment plan in Zanyokwe therefore, the situation was that there were many squatters dotted haphazardly across the commonage. The prime thrust of the plan was to concentrate these squatters into a formal closer settlement on the commonage. Around the turn of the decade, the squatters relocated to the new settlement. One squatter interviewed, S Mnyaka, was required to move his homestead by a couple of hundred metres. There is no indication that betterment in Zanyokwe involved a reorganisation of the Trust land.

Meanwhile, another freeholder had been appointed as the new headman. (N Tabata resigned in 1964 because of ill health). Although Ndabeni's appointment appears to have been a fairly harmonious affair, his headmanship ended in 1975 in controversy and anger. In February 1975 the non-freeholders of Zanyokwe passed a motion of no confidence in Ndabeni.⁶² In an interview, he told me that the non-freeholders accused him of having recommended freeholders for pensions at their

⁶¹Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

⁶²Letter dated 06/02/1975, Zanyokwe Farmers' Association to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

expense.⁶³ They wanted to be represented by their own leadership. By this time the freeholders had formalised their unity by founding the Zanyokwe Farmers Association.⁶⁴ In its letter reporting the 1975 motion, the association levelled a number of charges against the non-freeholders: holding secret meetings, having "deliberately sabotaged" full Inkundla meetings at which important decisions needed to be taken, and spreading false rumours about Ndabeni.⁶⁵ The letter ended with a call for the government to fulfil its promise that it would remove the new residential area people from the location;⁶⁶ during the next 15 years the association would remind the government frequently of this supposed promise.

The magistrate (van Zyl) decided to establish a commission to investigate the problems. The commission blamed the new residential area people - "who do not want to obey the rules and regulations of the state" - for the "whole trouble", but its ruling did nothing to restore harmony to Zanyokwe.⁶⁷ Rather the situation deteriorated further, prompting the Keiskammahoek Southern Community Authority to call it "explosive", and to recommend the suspension of Ndabeni's

⁶³Interview with Mr Ndabeni in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

⁶⁴The first filed letter drafted by the association is that referenced in footnote 62.

⁶⁵Letter dated 06/02/1975, Zanyokwe Farmers' Association to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁶⁶Letter dated 06/02/1975, Zanyokwe Farmers' Association to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁶⁷Letter dated 28/02/1975, Secretary of the Keiskammahoek Southern Community Authority to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

headmanship on the grounds of his being "too weak".⁶⁸ Van Zyl concurred with the Community Authority and Ndabeni's headmanship was terminated. In reaction to this and in a vain attempt to have him reinstated, the Farmers' Association immediately sought legal advice.⁶⁹

Confusion over the appointment of a headman to succeed Ndabeni held sway for the following year.⁷⁰ Eventually in mid-1976 headmanship elections were held. Mr Mnyaka from the new residential area received 47 votes as opposed to the 5 votes of Mr Poyo, a freeholder.⁷¹ Mnyaka was appointed. Why, one may ask, had the government policy about the freeholders' "claim to prior consideration" changed? This cannot be conclusively answered but there is a very interesting suggestion that will be made briefly. In a scathing analysis of Sebe's attempt at pseudo nation-building, Peires argues that one of the main devices he used to empower himself in the early and mid-1970s was "beating on the ethnic drum".⁷² He attempted to forge support for himself by bolstering feelings of proud Rharhabe unity; Fingos bore the brunt

⁶⁸Letter dated 28/05/1975, Secretary of the Keiskammahoek Southern Community Authority to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁶⁹See correspondence of July 1975, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁰See correspondence from July 1975 until August 1976, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷¹Magistrate's minutes of election meeting at Zanyokwe, dated 17/08/1976, in unboxed file 7/3 (Ndabeni), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷²Anonymous 'Ethnicity and pseudo-ethnicity in the Ciskei' in Vail, L (ed) The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa (1989), James Currey: London, 399. Peires has since acknowledged authorship of this article.

of his ethnic strategies.⁷³ In Zanyokwe, some of the freeholders are Fingos, while the squatters are mainly Xhosa peoples. When I asked the freeholders about their ethnicity, they said that they were "a mix" but went on to say that non-freeholder Ciskei National Independence Party (C.N.I.P.) card carriers "used to call us Fingos knowing very well that we are not ...They were using that rhetoric to make a schism between us [freeholders and non-freeholders]".⁷⁴ It is possible that Sebe's pro-Rharhabe policies of the mid 1970s filtered through to the district at location level, and that their expression in Zanyokwe was an electoral equalising of the men. There certainly is a neat symmetry between central and local politics in this case.

Peires goes on to argue that the late 1970s saw Sebe change tack: instead of ethnic identity he made personal loyalty the quality necessary for one to get ahead in Ciskei.⁷⁵ Again there is a correlation between this change and Zanyokwe electoral politics. Mnyaka was eventually dismissed as headman in early 1986 for "excessive use of intoxicating liquor and ... embezzlement of monies".⁷⁶ The subsequent election was fraught with precisely the same difficulties as previous ones. The overwhelming majority of new residential area people and Trust settlers formed a block of support for their candidate Y Mtana (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), against the freeholder choice J Poyo. Therefore the former won the

⁷³Anonymous, 'Ethnicity', 399-401.

⁷⁴Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

⁷⁵Anonymous, 'Ethnicity', 401, 402, 409.

⁷⁶Letter dated 30/12/1985, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Chief Ngena, Southern Community Authority, in file 8/13/4 (Mnyaka), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

election by a landslide, 208 votes against 57.⁷⁷ But Mtana had "once displayed disgraceful insolence in the Tribal Authority and in the presence of the chief",⁷⁸ while Poyo was known to be a staunch government supporter.⁷⁹ Consequently, and despite his being a freeholder - the group associated with Fingos - Poyo was appointed as headman.

With the ousting of Sebe in March 1990, the Freeholders Association was quick to present its case, for the expulsion of the non-freeholders, to what it hoped would be a more sympathetic administration.⁸⁰ Its arguments were those that had been developed during the preceding 30 years. Here is an excerpt of its June letter to the magistrate:

We desire the complete removal of the squatters from our Commonages ... [T]he overcrowding of our Commonages together with their stock impedes Freeholders from stock farming as there are no grazing pastures. They are not allowed to have stock. This matter has been a bone of contention for ... 74 years ... All previous magistrates have been promising us that a place would be especially demarcated elsewhere for their use but nothing has

⁷⁷Letter dated 27/01/1987, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director-General, Bisho, in file 8/13/4 (Poyo), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁸Letter dated 27/01/1987, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director-General, Bisho, in file 8/13/4 (Poyo), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁹Letter dated 27/01/1987, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director-General, Bisho, in file 8/13/4 (Poyo) in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁰Letter dated June 1990, Chairman, Zanyokwe Freeholder Farmers' Association to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 8/13/4 (Poyo), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

materialised up to now ...⁸¹

Unfortunately for the freeholders this supposed promise was to remain unfulfilled. In fact, instead of things getting better for them, they suffered a further setback later in the year.

With Gqozo's⁸² abolition of the headmanship in 1990 (as it turned out he would reintroduce that institution, more discredited than ever, the following year) and his replacement of it by residents' associations, the freeholders lost the leadership ground they had fought so bullishly to regain. N Tabata's son - who no doubt holds that the non-freeholders have stolen his birthright, that is leadership of the location - gave me this account of the formation of the residents' association:

Mr Poyo was the headman. Then well, over-night he was 'coup-d'etated' and without our knowledge they called the meeting, elected the residents' association and went their own way. They do not even notify us about their meetings. They hold them on their own. And well of course, we have the Zanyokwe Freehold Farmers' Association; we don't care what they do or what they want or what happens to them.⁸³

So, after 20 years since the landless were accommodated on the commonage, the gulf between them and the freeholders is wider than before and shows no sign of narrowing. Indeed the freeholders' bitterness and their desire for revenge/justice is sharper and more

⁸¹Letter dated June 1990, Chairman, Zanyokwe Freeholder Farmers' Association to magistrate, Keiskammahoek in file 8/13/4 (Poyo), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸²He is the military leader who staged the successful 1990 coup against Sebe.

⁸³Interview with Mr Poyo and Mr Tabata in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

jarring then ever.

Making sense of the differences

Although betterment affected each freehold location differently from the next it is fairly straightforward to reconcile the variant post-betterment realities. There are two primary factors/variables that relate to the way in which the locations experienced betterment. The first of these factors is their precise locality. For those locations that are situated so that they were able to exploit the few fruits born of apartheid, the implementation of betterment was relatively unimportant; the interests of the inhabitants of such locations lay more in industries or bureaucracies than in the land. For those locations that are situated on the periphery of the district (clearly there is some degree of overlap between these locations and those discussed immediately above), a primary result of betterment was increased immigration. The new residential areas created on the commonages were attractive to surrounding displaced peoples. Xenophobia can be detected in the location bordering Stutterheim, viz. Dontsa. For those locations that are isolated (again there is an overlap, because some peripheral locations are isolated), the impact of betterment was often rather greater. Changes in the regional political economy went relatively undetected in these locations; the changes that impacted on people's consciousness were those that occurred in the locations. Betterment was one such change. Official recognition of the (land) rights of the landless that betterment involved has led to a deterioration in intra-community relations in some of these locations.

The second important variable with regard to the impact of betterment was the ratio of freeholders to non-freeholders. In locations such as Rabula in which there were relatively few non-freeholders,

freeholders' rights to the commonage were only slightly diminished. Conversely, where the former outnumbered the latter as in Zanyokwe, the latter stood to lose significantly both in terms of land and village politics. Thus it is understandable that freeholder/non-freeholder conflict seems to be more evident and significant in these locations than in the others.

Although, as will become apparent, there were significant differences between betterment plans for freehold locations and those for quitrent locations, the two variables recognised here as important with regard to the impact of the plans in the freehold locations will be equally relevant for the quitrent locations.

Quitrent locations

There are only two locations in Keiskammahoek district where land is held under abolished quitrent tenure, namely Mbems and Burnshill. The latter was subjected to betterment as early as 1945, which as the reader by now knows was exceptionally early in relation to the rest of the district. Burnshill was also unique in another respect: being the only location that had been planned by a missionary, its inhabitants were originally placed in a closer settlement.⁸⁴ Similarly, Mbems had/had some distinctive features: for example, it was the site of the most forthright and stubborn resistance in the district in the 1950s and thus attracted much government attention;⁸⁵ and being situated on the southern-most tip of the district, it is the only location through which the road between Dimbaza and Alice passes. The point is that the two locations were very different from one

⁸⁴Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70.

⁸⁵See case study in Chapter II, pages 84-96.

another and thus experienced betterment differently, so much so that it is impossible to construct a meaningful general analysis of the effects of betterment on the quitrent locations. Nevertheless, before the presentation of the two case studies, it is helpful to explain briefly the difference between freehold and quitrent tenure, specifically in relation to how betterment affected the respective title deed holders.

It is unnecessary for purposes of this thesis to nitpick at the legal details of quitrent tenure. Suffice it to note that one who holds land under quitrent tenure does not enjoy the same degree of security of tenure or autonomy from administrative control as the one who holds land under freehold title.⁸⁶ Consequently, when betterment intervened in the quitrent locations, the title holders were considerably more vulnerable than their counterparts in the freehold locations. Betterment did not affect the residential or arable sites of the freeholders at all, but the quitrenters were forced to move their living quarters into areas set aside for residential purposes.

Case studies

(i) Burnshill

The early history of Burnshill is fascinating. It was noted above⁸⁷ that a missionary (Rev. Laing) planned a closer settlement in the location; the residential sites were centralised in various adjacent blocks, thereby cumulatively forming a village, and the arable lands

⁸⁶Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 132.

⁸⁷See pages 5, 182.

and pastures were situated beyond the boundaries of the village.⁸⁸ But the quitrenters found this to be an irksome settlement style and moved their dwellings centrifugally onto areas of the commonage bordering their fields.⁸⁹ Already situated on the commonage were squatters, many of whom practised share-cropping, while others leased land from the quitrenters.⁹⁰ In the light of the way that events were to unfold, it is relevant to note that the quitrenters were vehemently opposed to the acquisition of lands by outsiders - so much so that they established a secret vigilance committee which worked actively towards keeping outsiders out - because they held that the commonage was overgrazed.⁹¹ As in the freehold locations, the title holders in Burnshill claimed ownership of the commonage.

Burnshill was one of the locations in the group of six that were declared betterment areas in 1939.⁹² As the reader will recall, this was a period in which betterment thinking and policy was nascent and in constant flux. Cattle control had not yet been superseded by differentiation of land as the crux of the policy. Nevertheless, the original residential sites were already surveyed, and from the early 1930s the administration desired the people to return to these sites. It had enforced its will by 1945.⁹³ There is uncertainty about

⁸⁸Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70.

⁸⁹Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70.

⁹⁰Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70, 86.

⁹¹Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 74.

⁹²Union of South Africa 'Government Notice 791' in Government Gazette (09/06/1939), Government Printer: Pretoria, 569.

⁹³Comments made by Councillor Majola of Keiskammahoek at the 1945 special session of the Ciskeian General Council confirm this. For a transcript of proceedings at this session, see unboxed file 2/36/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

precisely when the people were re-villagised. Thus one cannot be sure whether this process occurred as a part of betterment or independently of it. Wilson locates villagisation "in the 1930s",⁹⁴ which would imply the latter alternative. Although one cannot pinpoint the date - a retired teacher, Mr Mobo (pseudonym, used for personal reasons) puts it significantly later, at 1945⁹⁵ - it is probable that re-villagisation in Burnshill had more to do with a local government desire to return the people to surveyed sites than with betterment. Nevertheless this is merely a technicality, because if the community had still been scattered by say 1949 betterment would certainly have dictated that it be villagised. Thus re-villagisation in Burnshill is considered in this discussion.

So by 1945 at the latest Burnshill had been villagised once again. There is no primary evidence that sheds light on the response of the community to villagisation, but Mills and Wilson wrote in 1949 that "There is still much grumbling about the village layout."⁹⁶ Also, in 1954, headman Kolo reported that "The people in this area dislike the Trust."⁹⁷ Even more interestingly, the current chief, Ngena (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), holds that the intra-community split between quitrenters and non-quitrenters, that would later dominate the location, originated with the 1940s villagisation.⁹⁸ According to him, the quitrenters were opposed to the villagisation

⁹⁴Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70.

⁹⁵Interview with a quitrenter, ex-teacher, Mr Mobo in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

⁹⁶Mills and Wilson, Land tenure, 70.

⁹⁷Native Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/03/1954, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁹⁸Interview with Chief Ngena in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

process whereas those without title deeds were either indifferent or supported it.⁹⁹ If this was the case, and there is no reason to doubt his testimony on this issue, it definitely makes sense. The quitrenters argued that they had exclusive rights to the entire land area of the location, and thus they would have been unfavourably disposed to any initiative that gave the non-quitrenters any foot in the door as far as land rights were concerned. At least some of the (landless) non-quitrenters would surely have welcomed being entitled to their own residential sites.

If the quitrenter/non-quitrenter conflict remained repressed, or even subsided in the 1950s, it certainly reared its head during the following decade. The headman for the period 1960-65 was M Tembela (pseudonym, used for personal reasons). Although a quitrenter, he seems to have become something of a champion of squatter rights. By January 1965 the quitrenters, who were in control of the Burnshill Rehabilitation Committee had had enough of Tembela's corrupt behaviour and pro-squatter rulings.¹⁰⁰ The following were two of its complaints:

There are people he allows to build on the commonage without consulting the Inkundla or Committee.

The Committee and Government ruled that ... squatters (sic) ... must not keep livestock w.e.f. [with effect from] April, 1964. At a Inkundla meeting held on 16th January, 1965 he caused confusion or disorder between squatters (sic) and land owners because ... he said: "The cause of these people not to have livestock is the Committee which does not agree that they should keep livestock." He is trying on their behalf that they should keep livestock.

⁹⁹Interview with Chief Ngena in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹⁰⁰Letter dated January 1965, Burnshill Rehabilitation Committee to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek in unboxed file N1/1/5(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Yet he is also a Member of this Committee and as such he ought not to go behind it.¹⁰¹

Tembela died shortly after these complaints. It is evident that the emerging intra-community tension revolved around the commonage. By this time the quitrenters had resigned themselves to the landless having been granted sites during villagisation, but they were determined to defend their exclusive rights to the commonage. No commonage dwellings and no non-quitrenter cattle would be tolerated.

There is no documentary evidence available on the headmanships of Qwele and Tamba (both pseudonyms, used for personal reasons), 1965-77 but the testimonies of ex-headman Kewana (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), ex-Residents' Association Chairman Mawisa and Chief Ngena agree that quitrenter/non-quitrenter relations reached new levels of hostility during that time.¹⁰² Ngena specified that during Qwele's period one of the multiple disputes had concerned rental payments for land.¹⁰³ As in Zanyokwe, the 1970s witnessed the first appointment of a non-title holder to the headmanship. In 1978, after very close voting, E Kewana received official approval.¹⁰⁴ Peires's arguments discussed above with respect to Zanyokwe are equally relevant here. (Most of the quitrenters are Fingos, whereas the majority of the non-

¹⁰¹Letter dated January 1965, Burnshill Rehabilitation Committee to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N1/1/5(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹⁰²Interviews with ex-headman Kewana, ex-residents' association chairman Mawisa and Chief Ngena, all in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹⁰³Interview with Chief Ngena in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹⁰⁴See correspondence of early 1978 in file 8/13/4 (Kewana), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

quitrenters are Rharabe.¹⁰⁵ Mawisa confirmed that Sebe favoured the non-quitrenters).¹⁰⁶ Another similarity is that, as in Zanyokwe, the title holders of Burnshill refused to accept Kewana as their representative leader, and challenged the legality of his appointment through their attorneys.¹⁰⁷ There is a third comparison: in their pleas for the immediate suspension of Kewana's headmanship, the landed claimed that the ex-squatters had been "given sites with a promise that they will be taken away by the Government when there is land available".¹⁰⁸ Occupants of these sites had apparently been granted untransferable certificates of occupation.¹⁰⁹ Yet once they had died, the certificates were taken over by their descendants. The quitrenters claimed that this was illegal.¹¹⁰ Kewana's headmanship appointment brought the quitrenters' anger to a head: if the landless could not refrain from steadily and surreptitiously wresting their rights from them, then they were going to press for the removal of the landless. But the argument of the quitrenters achieved nothing. Kewana's headmanship dragged on into the late 1980s.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵Interview with Chief Ngena, in late April 1991.

¹⁰⁶Interview with Mr Mawisa in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹⁰⁷Letter dated 17/04/1978, Attorneys Radebe, Mankahla and Mdlalana to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 8/13/4 (Kewana), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁰⁸Letter dated 10/02/1978, 9 Burnshill landowners to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 8/13/6/2 Southern Tribal Authority, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁰⁹Letter dated 25/10/1990, Burnshill residents' association chairman to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 7/3/5/4 Burnshill, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹¹⁰Letter dated 25/10/1990, Burnshill residents' association chairman to magistrate, Keiskammahoek in file 7/3/5/4 Burnshill, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹¹¹See file 8/13/4 (Headmen), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

In 1981 Ngena was appointed as chief for the Rharabe tribe in the Southern Tribal Authority area.¹¹² In keeping with his official title, he did his utmost to bolster the position of the Rharabe in his home location. His main initiative in this regard was the 1984 establishment of a new residential settlement for the landless (most of whom were Rharabe).¹¹³ The settlement, named Mangweni, was sited in one of the grazing camps.¹¹⁴ Understandably the quitrenters were opposed to the opening up of the settlement, but they were not consulted and it went ahead regardless. Thereby the quitrenters lost valuable grazing land. It can also be mentioned in this regard that a quitrenter testified that the non-quitrenters were permitted to keep stock from the 1980s,¹¹⁵ thus diminishing the carrying capacity of the reduced grazing lands. Ngena claims that the establishment of Mangweni (his brainchild) led to the improvement of intra-community relations; an analysis of how it eroded the quitrenters' pastures leaves one with precisely the opposite conclusion however. Mangweni was not the end of the quitrenters' anguish. In the late 1980s further sites for the landless "were demarcated despite a strong opposition by the land owners who were claiming that the sites are ... robbing them of their grazing camp, something which is going to affect the carrying capacity of their grazing land and result in stock limitations".¹¹⁶

¹¹²See file 8/13/2 (Ngena) in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹¹³Interviews with Mr Kewana, and with Chief Ngena, both in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹¹⁴Interview with Chief Ngena in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹¹⁵Interview with Mr Mobo in Burnshill, in late April 1991.

¹¹⁶Letter dated 25/10/1990, Burnshill residents' association chairman to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 7/3/5/4 Burnshill, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

(ii) Mbems

Ten to fifteen years after the Burnshill people had been re-villagised, their neighbours in the south east were still embroiled in their fight against betterment. As was noted in the Chapter II case study, two of the principal reasons for the resistance in Mbems involved land: the quitrenters believed that betterment would jeopardise their (land) rights; and squatters on the commonage were opposed to being villagised.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to reconstruct, with a high degree of accuracy, the pre-betterment layout of Mbems locations. The impression derived from the oral testimonies is that the four distinct living areas (namely Tsheshi, Rabe, Madubela and Ngcamngeni) were more concentrated than any residential areas in other pre-betterment locations in the district. At the same time it must be said that they were not as clustered as the existing Mbems betterment villages or the betterment villages in the communal areas. (The latter are noticeably more compact than the former).

Drawing up and implementation of the betterment plans followed shortly after the administration finally broke the resistance at the end of the 1950s. The Ad Hoc committee undertook its planning in 1960 and submitted its report the following year.¹¹⁸ The main focus of the report was on stock limitation and villagisation. All the residents of Mbems were to be villagised;¹¹⁹ quitrenters would receive compensation for dwellings that were out of place and hence had to be

¹¹⁷See above, page 92.

¹¹⁸Part of the report is included in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices.

¹¹⁹1961 Ad Hoc Committee report, in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoeck magistrate's offices.

destroyed.¹²⁰ Within two years, implementation of the plan had begun. By the end of 1963, an extensive cull had been undertaken (culled stock had to be removed from the location by early January 1964)¹²¹ and ex-squatters' rights to keep stock had been suspended,¹²² many new residential sites had been demarcated and allocated, and "steady" progress with fencing had been made.¹²³ In early 1964 Leppan impressed upon headman Magadaza that "nobody will be allowed to continue living in the camp and they will perforce have to move into the new residential area".¹²⁴ By early 1967 everybody barring the people living in Madubela had moved into the approved and precisely demarcated areas of Rabe and Ngcamngeni.¹²⁵ That is to say by that time all Tsheshi inhabitants and people living on land that had been converted into grazing land had relocated. (The story of Madubela illustrates again that there is always a host of possible strategies

¹²⁰These 1965 arrangements are included in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹²¹Letter dated 08/10/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to headman, Mbems, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²²Letter dated 13/11/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²³Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/12/1963, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁴Letter dated 18/02/1964, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to headman, Mbems, in unboxed file N2/8/3/1(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹²⁵Letter dated 16/02/1967, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

available to resisters. Briefly, the protests of the people of Madubela concentrated on previous assurances given by government, and they pointed out that their location had zero potential as a grazing camp - it is situated on barren ground - and that the proposed residential area was conducive to the spread of disease because of its dampness:¹²⁶ Madubela turned rationality against government. In due course the administration accepted the arguments of the Madubela people).¹²⁷

As in Burnshill, the ex-squatters were forbidden from owning stock from the early 1960s.¹²⁸ When I asked an ex-headman about this, he claimed that the title holders had pleaded for the retention of squatter stock-keeping rights.¹²⁹ Yet in late 1963 Leppan wrote to his superior in Kingwilliamstown as follows: "The land is heavily overstocked, and at the request of the landowning public, the squatters are not being granted permits in terms of Proclamation No. 114 of 1949 to retain cattle in the location this year".¹³⁰ This landowner request was forwarded despite the fact that extra grazing

¹²⁶Letter dated December 1966, L Dukashe and other residents of Madubela to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹²⁷Letter dated 16/02/1967, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹²⁸See letter quoted below in the paragraph.

¹²⁹Interview with Mr Tsoli and three other residents of Ngcamngeni, in late April 1991.

¹³⁰Letter dated 13/11/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/8/5/1(2), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

areas had been opened up a couple of months earlier.¹³¹ The discrepancy between documentary and oral evidence should be addressed. The most reasonable explanation seems to be that what friction there was between quitrenters and non-quitrenters has been negated over time. (There were certainly no oral indications of division along these lines). It is thus likely that the ex-headman flavoured his recollections of the past with the present state of affairs.

The final task to be undertaken before concluding this chapter is to specify the factors that led to the existing tensions being negated. Again it seems that locality is of principal importance. Firstly, Mbems is only about seven kilometres from Dimbaza and is linked to it by the main road. Thus its people have been ideally situated (even better than those of Rabula) to benefit from the few opportunities that derived from decentralisation developments. Secondly, Mbems is the only location in the district that is in close proximity to a railway station. Thus its people are most likely more aware of the national economy, and certainly better placed to hear about and pursue job vacancies in the urban areas. These two aspects of Mbems's situation work together to incline its people towards extroversion. The people are not immersed in location affairs, but open and attentive to regional and national events. Thirdly, Mbems is situated on the southern edge of Keiskammahoek district; it is not only a peripheral location, it is the peripheral location most exposed to the densely populated East London/Kingwilliamstown hinterland. Consequently, many people expelled from the urban areas for lacking Section 10 rights¹³² have fled into the location as refugees. Both

¹³¹Letter dated 27/07/1963, Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Regional Forest Officer, in unboxed file N2/8/5/1(3), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

¹³²Section 10 of Act 25 of 1945 laid down strict criteria that had to be met for one to obtain the right to live in an urban area.

groups of interviewees that I spoke to noted a considerable recent influx of people into the location. The point is that the Mbems community is one in constant flux, and consequently rigid lines of intra-community division have not developed.¹³³

Conclusion

The outstanding theme running through this chapter has been that betterment affected the locations in which land is held under title variously. Whereas the men of the communal locations spoke with one voice about the importance and effects of betterment (confinement, the end of secrecy, etc.), interviewees from the freehold and quitrent locations had a host of different stories to tell. In Wolf River and Mbems for example, informants were far more anxious to discuss the resistance preceding the implementation of the plans than the post-betterment period. In Dontsa the people were keen to give expression to location unity and xenophobia. In Zanyokwe and to a lesser extent Burnshill, the men were intent on acting as spokesmen for the various intra-community groupings (e.g. title holders, new residential area inhabitants, Trust settlers) of which they were members, and make the case of that group. They wanted to win me over so that this history would favour their respective group.

Within the locations, betterment also affected the different groups

¹³³One would be quite justified at this point in questioning the consistency of the chapter: it has been argued that the peripherality of Dontsa has led to xenophobia, but that the peripherality of Mbems fostered the open-endedness of the community. The crucial issue to be grasped is that one must consider a host of factors in order to understand the various community reactions to betterment. The issue of proximity to Dimbaza/Kingwilliamstown (i.e. isolation vs accessibility) is of great significance in understanding the differences between Dontsa and Mbems.

variously. Squatters, backyard dwellers and quitrenters were villagised. Some Trust settlers were forced to relocate. Freeholders retained their residential and arable lands but their pastures decreased in size because of the establishment of new residential areas or the extension of existing ones.

It is interesting to ponder why those people who were villagised are not critical of closer settlement to the same extent that the communal villagers are. A part of the answer is the different histories and backgrounds of those villagised in the different types of location. Scattered settlement was a basic part of the way of life of people in communal areas, and they were consequently very aware of the effects of villagisation. Conversely, spatial details were not high on the squatters' list of priorities, and villagisation did offer them rights to a residential site. So although some of them were averse to being moved off the commonage, this aversion is better described as an irritation and inconvenience rather than a deep opposition. It must be noted however that one of the ex-squatters interviewed rued the loss of freedom involved in his move to the new settlement on the commonage - "I could build anywhere and anyhow",¹³⁴ he complained. The quitrenters of Burnshill were too involved in trying to prevent the squatters from attaining land rights to consider their own villagisation. Many of the quitrenters of Mbems were not required to relocate as their existing sites were within the boundaries of the approved area;¹³⁵ they were accustomed to living in fairly close proximity to other people. On the subject of attitudes towards closer settlement, it would be helpful if one had the benefit of a survey of the district. It would be interesting to check whether there is a

¹³⁴Interview with Mr Mnyaka in Zanyokwe, in late April 1991.

¹³⁵A list of compensations that did have to be made (to those quitrenters who were forced to relocate) is included in unboxed file N2/11/3(1), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

correlation between average site size (and thus average distance between dwellings on adjacent sites) and such attitudes. I certainly formed the impression that the residential areas in the communal locations were more compressed than in the other locations. (This impression may of course partially derive from the testimonies of the Mtwaku, Gwili-Gwili, Gxulu and Mnyameni men).

A similarity between pre-betterment freeholders and quitrenters is that they held that the commonages in their locations belonged to them. Some have thus resisted or at least lamented the various changes that have resulted in reduced pastures. However the intensity of this resistance - and the resulting tension between title holders and non-title holders - has varied very markedly from location to location. In the discussion on the freehold locations, locality and population ratios were identified as factors influencing the level of intra-community friction: locations having easy access to Dimbaza/Kingwilliamstown were and still are less embroiled in location affairs than isolated locations; tension was and remains likely in locations in which non-title holders outnumber title holders. In the case of the two quitrent locations, the importance of locality with regard to variant friction levels has emerged clearly. Although Burnshill borders on the back of Mbems it is considerably more isolated because of the specific layout of the road network.¹³⁶ As far as population ratios are concerned, figures for the two locations are not available and thus no conclusive comment can be made.

Because of the diversity of the locations discussed, and consequently the plethora of relevant detail, there have been more uncertainties and incomplete arguments in this chapter than in those preceding. There is a clear need for quantitative data to supplement the qualitative material in the case of the freehold and quitrent

¹³⁶See map 2 on page 3.

locations. Nevertheless, the available documents and collected testimonies have provided a good base for this preliminary analysis. If one thing is certain it is that the locations' experiences of betterment have been very different from one another. In an oblique way therefore, this chapter confirms the importance of local historical studies and rebuts hasty generalisation. Just like arguments intent on upholding narrow causal models, generalisation impoverishes rather than enriches our view of the past.

CHAPTER V

White spots, green spots, blue spots, relocated black spots and the enlarging social void:¹
a look at the contemporary picture of Keiskammahoek

In the economy, in politics, in science and in culture, today it is irresponsibility that is crucial. It is a revolt of those who have been pushed aside, who have never been able to speak or have their voices heard.

Baudrillard²

Indisputably, betterment had a more profound impact on Keiskammahoek district during the period 1945 to 1975 than any other government policy, economic shift or social phenomenon - in this I am in agreement with the district villagers and official documentation. Hence betterment has been the organising theme of the thesis up to this point. But interestingly, whereas there was a long precursory period and build-up to betterment, once implemented it quickly evaporated from the official mind. It disappears from the records soon after 1970. One of the reasons for this was that betterment was an obsession of whites, so the Africanisation of the top levels of local bureaucracies with the 1972 declaration of Ciskei as a self-governing territory³ implied that all possibilities of an elaboration

¹The phrase 'social void' was used by Baudrillard, J in The mirror of production (1975), Telos Press: St Louis, 133. Its meaning and relevance for this chapter will become apparent in due course.

²Baudrillard, The mirror, 137.

³For a brief political and legal history of Ciskei, see article by C Lalendle in Ciskei Commission Report (1980), Conference Associates: Silverton, 140-143.

of betterment initiatives terminated. Of course the debilitating effects of villagisation in the communal areas and the often divisive ramifications of the establishment of commonage residential areas in freehold and quitrent locations continue unabated, and some betterment principles still inform the regulations governing the reserves,⁴ but the life of betterment per se ended in about 1972. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the period that succeeded the betterment era. In order to perform this task successfully, it will be necessary to begin the analysis in the 1960s. Just as was the case with the earlier period, what one is dealing with is how policies developed at a central government level impacted on the district of Keiskammahoek. In the more recent period policies designed to enforce the segregation of people of different races had an enormous impact on the district. After a look at the relevant black and white spots, attention will be placed on contemporary developments in the national economy - especially the diminishing growth rate and increasing unemployment - and it will be pointed out how these tied in with apartheid policy. A theoretical perspective informed by the avant-garde writings of Baudrillard will be presented during this discussion. Finally, and in the light of the preceding arguments, the focus will shift onto the recently established capital-intensive development works in the district (irrigation schemes, dams and forest plantations).

Removals and influx control: apartheid in full swing

Keiskammahoek was very deeply affected by the Verwoerdian dream of racially distinct land units. More specifically, three aspects of full-blown territorial apartheid left their indelible mark on

⁴For example, rotational grazing was insisted upon after 1972 with as much vigour as in the preceding period (see Chapter IV, footnote 30).

Keiskammahoek: rigorous influx control and evictions of redundant⁵ Africans from urban areas; the removal of black spots from the enormous white landscape; and the corresponding buying out of the relatively few white farmers living on released lands.

(i) Evictions from urban areas

Stallardism - the idea that urban areas belonged to whites and that blacks' rights therein were thus limited to when they were serving whites - grew in popularity from its creation in the 1920s until the political party that embraced it, the National Party (N.P.), came into power some twenty five years later. But it was only from the late 1950s that the N.P. seriously began contemplating effecting it as a principle. (A corollary of Stallardism is that if an African overstays his permitted period in a town, he should be removed). In 1960, the headmen were instructed to inform workseekers that they had to follow correct procedures if they wanted to avoid "unnecessary expense and possibly even punishment".⁶ Evidence of individual Africans being expelled from urban areas and repatriated to "the land of their birth" dates back to October 1964.⁷ The documentation of subsequent expulsions is very patchy, but it is clear that the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed numerous evictions of people to Keiskammahoek. Over this period people from places as far afield as Cape Town, Springs, Benoni, Fordsburg, Roodepoort, Randburg and

⁵Redundant, that is, in relation to the urban economy.

⁶Bantu Affairs Commissioner's minutes of quarterly meeting with headmen, dated 31/03/1960, in unboxed file N1/15/4, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁷Two letters both dated 12/08/1964, Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/12/2, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Johannesburg were returned to Keiskammahoek.⁸

(ii) Released area 55⁹

It was noted in the previous chapter that soon after its creation in 1936 the S.A.N.T. bought many farms owned by whites in the rural locations surrounding Keiskammahoek village.¹⁰ But the Trust displayed no urgent desire to acquire the properties and businesses owned by whites within the village itself, and the white farms in its immediate vicinity. (The village and its environs made up what was called the Keiskammahoek Municipal Area; it was not included in either the North or South Tribal Authorities). Only in the late 1960s did the Trust become singleminded in its resolve to transform Keiskammahoek into a district to be inhabited exclusively by African peoples. That period suddenly saw a flurry of S.A.B.T. dealings; it moved hastily in buying up the remaining outlying farms, and those properties in and around the village.¹¹ The Trust had few problems in obtaining the outlying farms, but there were numerous delays in securing the acquisition of the more central properties.¹² Although the owners had agreed to - or, more accurately, requested - the sale of their properties as early as 1970, some had to wait until 1975

⁸See file 12/5, in box 12/1/1-12/6, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁹Keiskammahoek village and its environs were declared Released Area 55 by the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936.

¹⁰See above, page 161.

¹¹For example, see unboxed files 11/3/1(M), 11/4/1(x), N5/2/3(x) (where x is greater than zero), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹²See unboxed file 11/3/1(M) in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

until the sales were concluded.¹³ (Included among the reasons for some whites' eagerness to sell were the following: "We are against the zoning of the town and some of the white population living next door to Bantu. This will be most embarrassing and against our policy and also the Government's policy of apartheid ... "; and "We are aware that this Black Cloud hangs over us ... ".¹⁴ In the light of these excerpts from a 1970 letter, I was perplexed at an Eastern Cape Historical Organisation meeting when a white ex-resident of the village confronted me about having not made mention of the "forced removal" of whites from the district). But eventually, all the whites did manage to sell their properties to the Trust and departed from the district.

(iii) The place of gloom

There was considerable pressure on the S.A.B.T. to secure the hasty acquisition of the land surrounding the village because it had already been earmarked by the government for an African community settled in the Humansdorp/Tsitsikamma area. In 1968 a delegation from that community was taken to Keiskammahoek and informed of the government's plans for it.¹⁵ During the visit the delegation was promised that the relocated community would be granted adequate land, housing, financial support, school and church facilities, employment opportunities and

¹³1975 correspondence in unboxed file 11/3/1(M), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁴Declaration made by 15 white property owners, Keiskammahoek, dated February 1975, in unboxed file 11/3/1(M), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁵Statement made by Mr P Lindi, a Humansdorp relocatee, in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

water supplies.¹⁶ Despite these promises the delegation indicated that the community was opposed to relocating to Keiskammahoek.¹⁷ Eight years passed before the Humansdorp people were actually confronted with the issue, and then it was a direct, brutal confrontation. They were expected to number their homes and then obligingly board a 'G.G. truck' on which they would be carted away.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, few people complied. The fourteen families that comprised the first contingent were placed in two-roomed cement houses in Ngqudela (about three kilometres east of Keiskammahoek village) and Peter's Farm (two kilometres south of the village).¹⁹ Insufficient arable land was allocated to them.²⁰ A resident of Ngqudela, Mr. Mandla, told me that although the size of his present farming land is comparable to his previous holding, the respective soil conditions are

¹⁶Statement made by Mr T Matrose, a Humansdorp relocatee, in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁷Statement by T Matrose, in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

¹⁸Interviews with Mr Champion, a relocatee living in Elukhanyweni, and with Mrs Mbele and Mrs Koyo, relocatees living in Peter's Farm, both in early May 1991.

¹⁹Social worker's report on living conditions of relocatees, annexure C of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

²⁰Social worker's report, annexure C of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices; and interview with Mr Singata, ex-assistant chairman of Elukhanyweni residents' association, in early May 1991.

very different: Keiskammahoek is too dry.²¹ The first contingent of relocatees also complained of numerous cattle deaths shortly after arrival.²²

The South African authorities were more forceful with the remaining Humansdorp people; thenceforth, those who resisted were arrested.²³ By 1978, the entire community had been relocated - that is to say, at least 420 families were moved in the second contingent²⁴ - most of them to a residential area specifically founded for them,²⁵ called Elukhanyweni, meaning the place of light! The typical house into which a family was crammed was a three-roomed wooden structure.²⁶ The

²¹Interview with Mr Mandla, a relocatee living in Ngqudela, in early May 1991.

²²Statement made by Mr M Ndzengu, a relocatee living in Ngqudela, in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices; and interview with Mr Mandla in Ngqudela, in early May 1991.

²³Interview with Mr Champion in Elukhanyweni, in early May 1991.

²⁴Social worker's report, annexure C of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices. The reason why it is said that "at least" 420 families were moved is that the government claimed in April 1978 that 526 families had been relocated from Humansdorp in the preceding 6 months (letter dated 13/04/1978, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to secretary of Department of Chief Minister, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Northern Tribal Authority), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices).

²⁵People who had worked on whites' farms in the Municipal Area, and others residing there before the 1977/8 relocation were granted sites in Ngqudela and Peter's Farm (letter dated 01/11/1976, secretary for Agriculture and Forestry to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 7/3/5/4 (sub-titled Ngqudela), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices).

²⁶Social worker's report, annexure C of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

relocatees were informed that such houses were temporary, but they have never been replaced by more acceptable dwellings.²⁷ The houses today "are in a dilapidated state".²⁸ These latter relocatees - that is the vast majority of the Humansdorp people - were not allocated arable lands.²⁹ The list of broken promises is as long as the list of promises: the people were given no financial support, no churches, minimal employment opportunities (a sawmill factory and the irrigation scheme were the sole sources of employment), and inadequate water supplies and educational facilities.³⁰ Speaking to the relocatees, the overwhelming impression gained was one of a profoundly disillusioned people. After the ironically named Mr Champion had told me about his multiple arrests for protesting against the government action that has shattered his family, he declared lugubriously, "It's something that is going to kill me before time".³¹ Betterment relocations and villagisation had profound but hidden consequences,

²⁷Statement made by Mr P Lindi, in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

²⁸Social worker's report, annexure C of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

²⁹Interview with Mr Singata in Elukhanyweni, in early May 1991; and statement made by Mr Ndzengu in annexure A of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices. It is noteworthy that sections of the land promised to the relocatees were usurped by the Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme and the Ciskei military (statement made by Mr Ndzengu referred to above in the footnote).

³⁰Medical and social worker's reports, annexures B and C (respectively) of letter dated 29/06/1989, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to Director General, Bisho, in file 8/13/6/2 (sub-titled Masincedane), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

³¹Interview with Mr Champion in Elukhanyweni, in early May 1991.

and thus subtle analysis was required to grasp them; apartheid removals were heinous in a very explicit and obvious manner. These people's lives are filled with little other than tragedy. Yet remarkably they plod on tenaciously; "we just survive", one Elukhanyweni man told me.³²

With the post-1990 movement away from apartheid, one of the most controversial issues that has risen to prominence is that of land redistribution. The communities that are best placed to benefit from the compromise arrangements that are likely to eventuate are those who have been relocated recently. The Humansdorp people are one of the most widely publicised such groups: they have had delegations led by Archbishop Tutu and others received in the State President's office, they have been featured on prime-time television programmes and in many major newspapers. High and middle level negotiations concerning the Humansdorp people are currently underway.

(iv) Keiskammahoek - a microcosm of South Africa

In 1960, only 39,45% of Africans in South Africa lived in reserves; ten years later this percentage had risen by nearly 8 points, and by 1980 it stood at 54%.³³ In order to get a more complete picture one must remember that population growth is not reflected in these percentages. A considerably greater proportion of a much bigger population was living in the relatively fixed land areas of the reserves in 1980 than in 1960. So whereas the African homeland population stood at 4.7 million in 1960, by 1980 this figure had

³²Interview with Mr Singata in Elukhanyweni, in early May 1991.

³³Hendricks, The pillars, 145.

rocketed to 11,3 million.³⁴ Influx control, Section 10 expulsions and black spot eradications were certainly important factors contributing to the accumulation of people in the reserve areas generally. Just as some people were being expelled or relocated into Keiskammahoek, so many others were being sent into all other reserve districts. The period 1965-1980 featured a general enforced exodus into the reserves.

Economic change and the expanding void

It would be foolhardy to isolate a single factor as the distinctive feature of the South African economy over the last thirty years, but it is evident that an increasing unemployment level has characterised recent economic history. If there was one decade that signalled the beginning of this social dilemma, then it was the 1960s.³⁵ During that period the economy became increasingly mechanised,³⁶ and this resulted in fewer and fewer available jobs, especially for unskilled labourers.³⁷ The 1960s boom opened new doors exclusively for skilled workers.³⁸ The 1970s and 80s recessions have exacerbated the baleful unemployment statistics; as it stands today, unemployment is a major

³⁴Hendricks, The pillars, 145.

³⁵Yawitch, Betterment, 44.

³⁶Davenport, T South Africa A modern history (3rd edn) (1987), Macmillan: Johannesburg, 528.

³⁷Davenport, South Africa, 528. The post-1970 period stands in stark contrast to the period spanning the discovery of minerals and the marked development of secondary industry in the early 1940s, when multitudes of unskilled peoples were incorporated into the economy as workers.

³⁸Davenport, South Africa, 525, 526.

problem facing the country.³⁹

Before introducing the ideas of Baudrillard it is necessary to consider briefly how scholars have conceptualised the place of the reserves in the South African economy generally, and more specifically how they have modified or spiced their arguments to accommodate the worsening unemployment scenario. The argument that held sway until the 1970s was that the South African economy had a dual nature: the urban, capitalised (white) economy was regarded as relatively independent of the rural, subsistence (black) economy. This paternalistic, colonial-tinged argument was rightly severely criticised by the 'radical' scholars. They pointed out that the two economies were inextricably linked: the primary reason for the underdevelopment of the reserves was the way in which African workers had been incorporated into the capitalist economy. In this regard, the system of migrant labour was obviously crucially important.

Few political economy thinkers⁴⁰ have pondered how recent economic events relate to traditional marxian concepts. Only two of the academics who have analysed betterment have devoted attention to this issue. After noting the 1960s rise in unemployment, Yawitch wrote in 1981 that the "South African working class is being divided in a fundamental way into an urban-privileged group, and a poor and unemployed rural group".⁴¹ Hendricks does not mention any

³⁹Since 1981, a further 3,1 million people have become un(der)employed ('Continued decrease in employment growth, and rising unemployment' in Midland Chamber of Industries Bulletin, No 34 (1992), 7).

⁴⁰This term was used by de Wet ('Betterment planning in South Africa', 108) to refer to a very broad range of academics, one that includes all those who are responsive - even if only vaguely so - to basic marxian tenets.

⁴¹Yawitch, Betterment, 44.

unemployment details, but he is interested in the economic dimensions of post-1960 relocations. He argues that the essence of relocation is the expulsion of proletarianisation to the reserves, which was necessary to stem African urban opposition.⁴² (Earlier he had put a 'last instance' addendum in place: political stability is a necessary condition for capital accumulation).⁴³ Although the emphases of Yawitch and Hendricks differ considerably - the former stresses divisions in the working class, while the latter is interested in the relocation of that class - both agree that the basic division in South Africa remains that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

One of the most profound systematic critiques of Marx in recent times was formulated by Baudrillard in The mirror of production. Because some of his ideas form the core of this chapter, a brief summary of them is required. Baudrillard is interested in modern monopoly capitalism, and the way it differs from competitive capitalism.⁴⁴ These two stages of capitalism are usually seen as being very similar; the change from one to the other is regarded as having been smooth, gradual and (in analytic terms) slight.⁴⁵ So Marxists have assumed that Marx, ably assisted by Lenin, Luxemborg and a few other 1910s and 1920s theorists, can explain the 1990s economy. Baudrillard sees modern capitalism as radically different from its predecessor. "The monopoly stage signifies much more than an extension of the competitive phase of capitalism. It signifies a complete restructuring and different logic".⁴⁶ Baudrillard does not perceive

⁴²Hendricks, The pillars, 146.

⁴³Hendricks, The pillars, 138.

⁴⁴Baudrillard, The mirror, 119-129.

⁴⁵Baudrillard, The mirror, 119.

⁴⁶Baudrillard, The mirror, 124.

monopolistic ownership as the necessary condition for an economy to be classified as monopolistic; rather the existence of a dominant "code" of consumption is all important in this regard.⁴⁷ He never presents a rigorous definition of the term code - he does however mention that advertising and style are "glaring examples" of it⁴⁸ - but it is clear that it refers to a sprawling system that predetermines people's needs and thus consumption patterns.

The monopolistic stage signifies less the monopoly of the means of production (which is never total) than the monopoly of the code ... [consequently] there is no longer any dialectic of supply and demand; this dialectic is short-circuited by a calculation of foreseeable equilibrium ... Needs lose all their autonomy; they are coded.⁴⁹

With the predetermination of needs and demand, over-production can often be avoided. Not only that, but the means of production also become increasingly sophisticated and modernised. This streamlining and rationalisation of the economy has inevitably resulted in, amongst other things, soaring unemployment levels. Or as Baudrillard puts it: "This leads to the paradox of social groups who are compelled to fight for a place in the circuit of work and of productivity, the paradox of generations who are left out or placed off limits by the very development of the productive forces".⁵⁰ Whereas nascent capitalism required the mass transformation of people into workers, latter-day capitalism requires the exclusion of an ever-increasing number of potential workers. Competitive capitalism integrated people (albeit

⁴⁷Baudrillard, The mirror, 121.

⁴⁸Baudrillard, The mirror, 126.

⁴⁹Baudrillard, The mirror, 127, 125, 128.

⁵⁰Baudrillard, The mirror, 132.

violently), but monopolistic capitalism marginalises them.⁵¹ Thus Baudrillard speaks of "a social void", "a disaffected zone", "an elsewhere", "a non-place"⁵² - this is the region inhabited by the permanently unemployed.

He argues that the central marxian notions of dialectic and contradiction - which operate on the interior of the system - are no longer appropriate because the period of integration has ended and been replaced by one of exclusion.⁵³ Baudrillard believes that whereas contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie was a centrally important characteristic of competitive capitalism, a more serious threat to monopolistic capitalism is posed by the burgeoning group of unemployed people.⁵⁴ Thus in his picture, workers, unions, management and owners stand together unified in their common commitment to the economy (that derives from their integration therein); this group is faced by a conglomerate of disaffected, demobilised peoples who are outside the system, in the social void. As access to the economy becomes more protected so co-operation between management and unions improves. "There is no longer savage exploitation but ... exile".⁵⁵

Not all analysts of the South African situation assume that the unemployed and employed form a single class. The most notable post-Marxist in this regard is Adam. In a 1990 article published in Telos journal he laid out a number of long-overdue ideas about the

⁵¹Baudrillard, The mirror, 132, 133.

⁵²Baudrillard, The mirror, 133.

⁵³Baudrillard, The mirror, 133, 134.

⁵⁴Baudrillard, The mirror, 140.

⁵⁵Baudrillard, The mirror, footnote 11, 133.

inappropriateness of and danger in using umbrella terms to classify people.⁵⁶ Of all the divisions in the mass of people monolithically referred to as 'the people' or 'the working class', Adam is most interested in that between employed and permanently unemployed.⁵⁷ Indeed, a recognition of the permanence of many people's unemployment is the key to a realisation that an unbreachable chasm separates them from the employed. Adam goes on to point out that the unemployed are sadly neglected by the dominant political organisations.

The liberation movements have yet to organise these permanently marginalised outsiders, unions have yet to address the relation between employed and unemployed workers. With the ranks of the unemployed swelling, the state finds ready recruits for its various police forces; local war-lords organise vigilante groups from a vast pool of resentment; puritan, fundamentalist church cults vie with drug peddlers and petty criminals for the souls and pockets of the downtrodden.⁵⁸

In retrospect it is clear that the political agenda of the National Party was complemented by the post-1960 economic developments. The politicians demanded and orchestrated the removal of hundreds of thousands of people to the reserves, many of whom were unemployed, at exactly the moment when an increasing number of unskilled people became redundant in the national economy. The metaphors of Baudrillard have taken actual physical expression in South Africa - the social void is the reserves (many of the demobilised people are confined there). Section 10 expulsions and forced removals were not the expulsion of proletarianisation to the reserves but the removal of people who could not be integrated into the economy, their removal

⁵⁶Adam, H 'Transition to democracy: South Africa and eastern Europe' in Telos, No 85 (Fall 1990), 33-55.

⁵⁷Adam, 'Transition', 47, 48.

⁵⁸Adam, 'Transition', 48.

from areas of economic activity to an elsewhere. (It should be stressed that this is not how the apartheid thinkers saw it. Also it is not being argued that economic changes resulted in grand apartheid. Rather what one has is a case of complementary agendas: employers had less room for people, and politicians wanted racial zones. If economic change had required the sudden incorporation of extra labourers, then the removals would probably not have occurred, and if the social engineers had not been in office, then they would definitely not have occurred). Because they represent employed people, Cosatu and the A.N.C. do not call the system into question; they merely want to see it slightly adjusted. Today, contradiction in the workplace is of little import. Rather it is the unemployed groups that pose the threat to South African capitalism. The social void is increasing in size all the time; as it moves into the urban areas in the form of mushrooming squatter camps, the challenge to capitalism grows.

The spectacle as ideology

In Baudrillard's schema of things, all that is required of the marginalised peoples is that they "play the game".⁵⁹ Basically, they must sit on the sidelines and not cause a stir; they must be neither seen nor heard. Apart from predetermining people's consumption patterns, the code can also be seen as having a role in keeping the marginalised quiet (television sets can be singled out in this regard). After having finished his discussion about consumption, Baudrillard mentions an idea of greater relevance for our look at devices serving to demoralise the unemployed people of Keiskammahoek. His comments warrant lengthy quotation:

⁵⁹Baudrillard, The mirror, 132.

[I]f capitalism has, through the centuries, played on all the "superstructural" ideologies in order to let the steam out of economic contradictions today the strategy is reversed. The system now plays on the economic reference (well-being, consumption, but also working conditions, salaries, productivity, growth) as an alibi ... It is the economic sphere, with its partial contradictions that today acts as an ideological factor of integration.⁶⁰

It is in the context of these remarks that the post-betterment development projects will be discussed. As the reader will recall, betterment was a broad-based policy; it was implemented in most of the land areas comprising the reserves. The official trend away from sweeping projects to more specific undertakings dates from the 1960s.⁶¹ By that stage, all that remained of betterment was for the authorities to implement the already drafted plans in the unaffected locations. Thereafter officials could concentrate their energies on selecting suitable specific areas in which high capital projects would be launched. Examples of such initiatives are irrigation schemes and forest plantations. Haines and Cross summarise the outcome of homeland development strategy as "a concatenation of scattered show projects".⁶² The question of why the idea of preferenced areas (and the twin notion of capital-intensive works) suddenly emerged strongly onto the government's agenda is very interesting. Two suggestions have recently been made. Roodt argues that the government was anxious to demonstrate to the outside world that the reserve economies were

⁶⁰Baudrillard, The mirror, 138, 139.

⁶¹Hendricks, 'Loose planning', 323.

⁶²Haines, R and Cross, C 'An historical overview of land policy and tenure in South Africa's black areas' in Haines, R and Cross C (eds) Towards Freehold (1988), Juta: Cape Town, 89.

viable.⁶³ Hendricks argues that the high-technology projects were designed to have a more local effect. Extrapolating from a 1960 government policy document, he writes as follows:

Those districts chosen for planning would then enjoy priority above other areas ... The chosen districts thus reclaimed would serve as exhibition points ('uitstalvensters') for the region at large and enhance the legitimacy of the existing order. It was a means of providing substantive evidence of the good intentions of the government, hence, it would be worthy of the consent and support of any responsible and sensible resident.⁶⁴

What one has here is an argument closely related to that expounded by Baudrillard. Aspects of the economy serve as factors of integration, as reasons for people to be compliant. The ideological message transmitted by impressive developmental structures is quite simply that modern capitalism works, and for that reason ought to be respected. The other half of this message is that if one is unemployed or marginalised, then it is not the fault of the system but rather of that person. One's exclusion should not therefore lead one to undermine the system but rather calls for one to try harder. In sum: the spectacle tends to demoralise and grind the peripheral people.

Although there is no direct evidence that the capital-intensive development works in Keiskammahoek district were established primarily for ideological purposes, it is clear that the government had long

⁶³Roodt, M 'Bophuthatswana's state farming projects: is failure inevitable?' in Haines R and Cross C (eds) Towards Freehold (1988), Juta: Cape Town, 246.

⁶⁴Hendricks, 'Loose planning', 323.

been aware of the propagandistic advantages of economic exhibitions.⁶⁵ Before looking at the post-1975 projects it will be useful to present a brief history of 'the show' in Keiskammahoek. The most long-standing versions of using the economy as exhibition are the demonstration plot and the agricultural show. In the late 1930s the Department of Native Affairs impressed upon local administrators that proper attention should be given to the plots in order to inspire the confidence and co-operation of the people,⁶⁶ while in the early 1950s it was at pains to stress the propaganda value of agricultural shows.⁶⁷ The first example of a more costly government economic project in Keiskammahoek district was the early 1950s dairy settlement established on a portion of Trust land in Upper Rabula location, called Ngudle. Native Commissioner Schaffer was quite open in recognising that one of the objects of the settlement was that it should demonstrate to the district that science works.⁶⁸ He was later

⁶⁵An interesting case of official concern with extra-economic appearance occurred in the late 1960s in relation to the construction of buildings for the north Tribal Authority. Writing in October 1966, the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner advised his subordinate in Keiskammahoek that "only those Tribal Authorities which have proper offices ... are making any progress and evincing a sense of pride in their accomplishments" (letter dated 04/10/1966, Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N1/1/3/1(15), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University).

⁶⁶Letter dated 03/11/1939, Secretary for Native Affairs to Native Commissioners, Ciskei, in unboxed file N8/1/5, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁶⁷Letter dated 28/04/1953, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N8/3/3, in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁶⁸Letter dated 30/11/1953, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/3(17), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

very enthusiastic about its early success.

The Trust [betterment] has not been popular in this area which has not been unaffected by anti-administration agitation. When the Ngudle Settlement was first launched, the twenty (20) settlers were the object of Anti-Trust jibes - they were referred to as "things of the Trust". The main location road passes through the Settlement. To-day the settlers are proud of what they have achieved and a considerable number of Natives in the same area (who presumably originally came to mock) have now asked whether they could not be accommodated at Ngudle. From the propaganda point of view alone, the Settlement has been worth while.⁶⁹

But the central government was not favourably disposed to Ngudle because its priority was still the broad-scale implementation of betterment plans. According to the department, "Toespitsing op stabilisasiedienste is m.i. op hierdie stadium veelbelangriker as die fynere intensifikasie op enkele geïsoleerde plekke. [Focusing attention on stabilisation works/services is in my opinion at this point much more important than the detailed improvement of works in isolated places]."⁷⁰ By the following decade the government's policies had changed, but it was only in the 1970s that the serious planning of high capital development works for Keiskammahoek district occurred.

(i) Irrigation schemes

⁶⁹Letter dated 24/10/1955, Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown, in unboxed file N2/11/3(17), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

⁷⁰Letter dated 29/03/1956, Chief Native Commissioner, Kingwilliamstown to Native Commissioner, Keiskammahoek, in unboxed file N2/11/3(17), in transit from Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices to Cory Library, Rhodes University.

Two schemes, the Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme and the Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme, were launched in the late 1970s. Despite its name, the former is situated in Burnshill location and is an agricultural project,⁷¹ whereas the latter is located just east of the village of Keiskammahoek and is a dairy scheme. Because more information on the latter scheme has been collected, the focus will now be directed to it. When the dairy scheme was launched in 1977, nineteen farmers were incorporated, and placed on four hectare plots.⁷² They were given one year leases. After the year's probation the leases were either cancelled or prolonged for three years by the scheme's management.⁷³ Many farmers had their leases nullified; for example, in 1983 only eight of the twenty-seven leases reconsidered were renewed.⁷⁴ Approved farmers were moved to a different portion of the scheme (and those whose leases were cancelled were obviously expelled from the scheme altogether) and new settlers were accommodated on the vacated plots.⁷⁵ An initial aim of the project was to eventually serve some 250 families.⁷⁶ But what actually occurred was vastly different. By 1984 it had been decided that four hectare plots were unviable, and

⁷¹Information on the basic operation of the Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme can be found in file 9/2/6/2 (sub-titled Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷²Interview with Mr Amani, the business manager of the Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme (K.I.S.), and Mr Mbose, an extension officer on the scheme, in mid April 1991.

⁷³See letters to those granted leases, in file 9/2/6/2 (sub-titled Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁴See file 9/12/6/2 (sub-titled Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁵Interview with Messrs Amani and Mbose of the K.I.S., in mid April 1991.

⁷⁶Ciskei Commission Report, 74, 75.

that the plot size per family would be increased to twelve hectares.⁷⁷ This began the era of so-called 'Nkqubela' (progress) farming.⁷⁸ Since not all the people already settled on the scheme could be accommodated on the enlarged plots, a period of dismissals followed. There is documentation of twenty settlers being dismissed in 1984.⁷⁹ By the end of the following year, only twenty six families remained on the scheme; this figure has remained constant until now.⁸⁰ In other words, the scheme now serves a mere 10% of the intended number of families. It is clear that a logic different from that of helping a considerable number of Keiskammahoek people currently operates.⁸¹ The notion of viability is so indeterminate⁸² - anyone who has studied

⁷⁷Interview with Messrs Amani and Mboso of the K.I.S., in mid April 1991.

⁷⁸Minutes of Executive Committee of Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme meeting dated 16/08/1984, in file 9/2/6/2 (sub-titled Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁷⁹Minutes of Executive Committee of Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme meeting dated 07/08/1984, in file 9/2/6/2 (sub-titled Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

⁸⁰Interview with Messrs Amani and Mboso of the K.I.S., in mid April 1991.

⁸¹It was mentioned above in footnote 29 (this chapter) that one portion of the land utilised by the scheme had earlier been set aside for the Humansdorp relocatees. Another portion thereof was expropriated from Gxulu residents (interviews with a retired teacher, Mr Gulwa, and with an ex-headman, Mr Mpangeva, both in Gxulu, in mid May 1991). Furthermore, 200 squatters were cleared from what was the Municipal Area in 1976 in anticipation of the full-blown implementation of the scheme (letter dated 01/11/1976, Secretary for Agriculture and Forestry to magistrate, Keiskammahoek, in file 7/3/5/4 (sub-titled Ngqudela), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices).

⁸²And, if a 'bread line income' is R1000 per family per month, how much more 'viable' is a salary of R750 p.m. than one of R650 p.m.? Also, the underlying notion of a 'bread line income' does not seem of much relevance to the people on the ground. Rather it is a device

the Tomlinson Commission Report is patently aware of this - that it cannot be bandied about as the reason for the 1984 decision. Isolating valid reasons and uncovering the operational logic is no easy task, but it seems that the issue of appearance or spectacle is of some relevance. From when it was launched it was destined to look modern, lush and a success. So when it came to the crunch - the possibility of there being too many farmers on the land for it to retain its veneer of fecundity - its appearance took pride of place above the interests of the community. (A favourite official myth about Keiskammahoek is that it is one of the most fertile parts of the world. Gwili-Gwili residents told me that the district is the first or second richest water area in the world,⁸³ while the Director of Rural Development told a group of Burnshill farmers in 1987 that "through dedication and co-operation" they would "be able to feed the entire Republic of Ciskei".)⁸⁴ The Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme stands in the centre of the district, claiming to be an accurate indication of the result of applying science to a reasonable nature.

(ii) Dams and forest plantations

These works are very different from irrigation schemes in that they do not accommodate (rather they exclude) people. They are not farmed or nurtured by man. For this reason their propaganda value is far less than that of the schemes. Nevertheless, large dams and plantations can be impressive testimonies to modernity. Thus we have a quick perusal of dams recently constructed and plantations recently

used mainly to justify policies of various kinds.

⁸³Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

⁸⁴Minutes of meeting in Burnshill dated 15/08/1987, in file 9/P, in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices.

extended. By far the most impressive dam in the district is the Sandile Dam, situated some seven kilometres west-south-west of Keiskammahoek village, which was built in the early 1980s. Other dams recently completed are those in Cata and Mnyameni. There have been comprehensive extensions to forest plantations in Upper Ngqumeya and on the eastern boundary of the district (bordering Stutterheim) in the last ten years. It is important to note however that the land required for these dams and forest extensions has been expropriated from local people.⁸⁵ In a few cases individuals were compensated,⁸⁶ but the norm has been blunt seizure. The expropriation that has caused the most outrage and resentment was that of the land on the eastern fringe, known locally as Kali.⁸⁷ This land, despite being situated in Dontsa location, had been used for generations by residents of Mtwaku and Gwili-Gwili locations as grazing land.⁸⁸ Although they have a few other camps, Kali was where most of the grazing occurred.⁸⁹ When the South African government commandeered the land in 1988, it gave lands near Zwelitsha and Whittlesea to the

⁸⁵Oral interviews have revealed this in relation to the 3 dams and the north-eastern forest extension (Sandile - a freeholder, Mr Mdladlana of Lower Wolf River in early May 1991; Cata and Mnyameni - Mr Mashologu and Messrs Z and S Mdledle of Mnyameni, in mid May 1991; Cata - Mr Mnyandeni of Mnyameni in mid May 1991; forest extension - groups from Gwili-Gwili, Ngobozana and Ndlovini, all in early May 1991). For confirmation of Upper Ngqumeya expropriation, see letter dated 10/05/1982, magistrate, Keiskammahoek to senior agricultural officer, in file 7/3/5/4 (sub-titled Upper Ngqumeya), in Keiskammahoek magistrate's offices, and also return letter dated 21/06/1982.

⁸⁶Interviews with Mr Mdladlana of Wolf River, in early May 1991; and with Mr Mashologu and Messrs Z and S Mdledle of Mnyameni, in mid May 1991.

⁸⁷Apart from betterment, Kali was the topic that the group of Gwili-Gwili men (interviewed in early May 1991) were most anxious to talk about.

⁸⁸Group interview in Ngobozana village, in early May 1991.

⁸⁹Group interview in Ndlovini village, in early May 1991.

Ciskeian government in compensation.⁹⁰ The Gwili-Gwili/Mtwaku community got nothing, and it is now therefore radically short of grazing land. The anger resulting from the land expropriations generally has to some extent neutralised the propaganda value of dams and forests.

Conclusion: Reasserting the logic

The main aim of this chapter has been to develop a theoretical perspective that is appropriate for modern South Africa. Whereas the mass mobilisation and integration of people into the economy was required for the early development of capitalism, by the 1960s the situation began reversing. Substantial mechanisation occurred during that decade, and this obviously impacted on the shape of the labour market; there was less room for the semi- and unskilled labourers. Having been subjected to years of industrial and educational discrimination, this group of labourers was composed almost exclusively of Africans.

In the context of these economic developments, it is very interesting to note that the most extreme government attempts at engineering separate racial societies occurred from the 1960s. Areas of concentrated economic development (urban areas) were to be inhabited by whites and only those Africans who were indispensable to the economy. Likewise, boundary lines drawn by segregationists in the 1910s and 20s were now going to be rigidly enforced; most farm land was thenceforth to be owned exclusively by whites. Thus began the period of tight influx control, multiple Section 10 expulsions and mass forced removals. The recently unemployed were barred from living in areas of capital accumulation. Those that the system could no

⁹⁰Group interview in Gwili-Gwili, in early May 1991.

longer integrate were consigned to the social void; there is next to no meaningful economic activity in the reserves.⁹¹

This argument is post-Marxist on two crucial levels. Firstly, it revolves around an attempt at seeing the economy and the political scenario as relatively autonomous but interrelated aspects of life. What I have indicated is how economic and political agendas have complemented one another; this released the argument from having to force the economy and politics into a relationship of dominance/subservience. In the 1960s one has a case of considerable resonance between economic change and political policy. Secondly, the argument has been that analyses of modern South Africa can no longer assume exploitation and contradiction as the pivots of society; it is time that the enormous importance of the mass exclusion of people from the economy be carefully considered. The proletariat is certainly not the universal class; one aspect of its claim to universality that ought to be jettisoned is that the unemployed are its members. The unemployed are denied access to the economy, whereas the workers are anxious to defend their right to work within the capitalist system. As unemployment levels in South Africa continue to rise, the breach between the workers and the unemployed grows ever wider.

The comments above about the relative autonomy of the various aspects of life (economic, political, social, etc) need to be modified in a subtle way. Although the 1960s saw relatively independent economic and political agendas complementing one another, this is not to say that they are always either relatively independent or complementary. At different times in the past, different spheres of society have been dominant. For example the discovery of minerals in the late

⁹¹What is meant here is that the economic activity has very little economic worth; its meaning lies elsewhere.

nineteenth century had a profound and formative impact on most levels of South African society. Similarly, sometimes mechanisms at work in different spheres do not complement but instead contradict or block one another. The point is that it is both dangerous and fallacious to insist that society works according to any formula. This brings us to the final point of the chapter that requires reassertion. The Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme represents a neat inversion of the archetypal Marxist model. Keiskammahoek, as part of the social void in South Africa, is an economic wasteland. People are not allowed to work there (they are excluded from capitalist activity); rather what is required of them is that they stay put and behave themselves. The irrigation scheme was established in the district ostensibly for the sake of the community, but only a small handful of people has benefited from it. Instead, it seems that a main purpose of the scheme (an economic work) is that it plays an ideological role. The villagers ought to look at the scheme, get depressed about their lack of ability, and wonder at modernity.

This chapter then has been an experiment in post-Marxism. Although it is fairly speculative and suggestive, it is hoped that the reader has been excited by the novelty and playfulness of the ideas presented. What is clear is that the unemployed group in South Africa is mushrooming; it can no longer be regarded as an insignificant, backward section of the proletariat, but should rather be studied with imagination as a matter of urgency. There are millions who want to speak.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the introductory chapter to his Discipline and Punish, Foucault asked himself why he wanted to write a history of the prison. His answer was as follows: "Simply because I am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing a history of the present".¹ Foucault was in effect writing a history of the multiple prison revolts of the 1970s. In similar vein, this thesis has been an attempt to write a history of present-day Keiskammahoek.

I have been mulling over the question of why so little in the district has changed since February 1990. Fundamental changes at state level show no indication of influencing life in Keiskammahoek. The answer that I have developed to this question is that many fundamental unequal relationships (or power relations) in the district operate relatively independently of the state. The key relationships recognised in this regard are those between neighbours in communal locations and those between land owners and non-landowners in the freehold and quitrent locations. Another important relationship that exists independently of the government, but this time one that functions on a national level, is that between the urban employed and the rural unemployed. So what I have been attempting to do is to find "traces"² of these relationships in the past.

An irony is that all these non-state power relations originated in the decade that witnessed the greatest attempt by the apartheid state at

¹Foucault, Discipline, 31.

²Weeks, J 'Uses and abuses of Michel Foucault' in Appignanesi, L (ed) Ideas from France: legacy of French theory (1989), Free Association Books: London, 21.

social engineering, namely the 1960s. It was the state that developed the policies (betterment and territorial separation) that resulted in the formulation of the modern power configurations. But it is clear that the state did not envisage the intra-district conflict that would arise from the implementation of betterment, and also that it did not perceive the 1960s and 1970s forced removals as an expulsion of the unemployed into economic wastelands.³ The state was not aware of the full implications of policies that it embraced so single-mindedly. And it is equally clear that the state is inconsequential to the day-to-day operation of the intra-district power relations. In the communal locations, village layout and the derivative principle of visibility are alone responsible for differentiating the relationships between neighbours. These power relations operate relentlessly, tending to produce inert and normalised people. In locations in which land is held under title, shortage of land is the key to understanding the intensity of the conflict between title-deed holders and non title-deed holders (where such conflict exists). I subtitled the case study of Zanyokwe in Chapter IV "Bitterness as a way of life" for no small reason; the power relations between landed and landless have produced a sharp schism between these groups. In sum, power relations have tended to produce normalised people in the communal villages, and deeply divided communities in some locations in which land is held under title. So although it is clear that the state's task of administering Keiskammahoek is facilitated by the out workings of these two intra-community power relations, it must be reiterated that the state is superfluous to their functioning.

The third extra-state power relation discussed, namely that between employed and unemployed people, is different from the other two in

³The government perceived the removals simply as routine steps designed to consolidate the desired racial compositions of the various land areas comprising South Africa.

that it is more abstract. Unlike the two intra-district power relations, that between the employed and unemployed operates on a broad national level and is not experienced by the people of Keiskammahoek with the same degree of immediacy as the other two. In some respects, Chapter V was more a macro perspective than anything else. But in differential access to the economy, one has sufficient reason to consider the relation between the employed and unemployed as a power relation. And this is how I wanted to analyse it so that I could convey the sense of a further area of struggle that is barely encroached upon by the state.

In 1990s South Africa unemployment is one of the most daunting facts of life, and since the formal political arena is the playground of those who have some leverage within the economy, this shows no sign of changing. As previously mentioned, what I sought were traces of the current crisis in the past. Again the watershed decade proved to be the 1960s, when increased mechanisation meant that the size of the workforce had to be decreased. It was the unskilled (mainly African) labourers who were suddenly redundant. Simultaneously the state embarked on its policy of removals, and one can assume with a high degree of confidence that it was mainly unemployed Africans who were expelled from the economically active urban areas to the uneconomic rural areas. And so in South Africa one has a unique situation of vast spaces of the country, namely the homelands, having developed into non-places inhabited mainly by the unemployed.

Apart from the prominent theme of extra-state power relations, there are many subsidiary ideas which occur at various points in the thesis. With the exception of one such idea I am content to leave them tucked away in unhighlighted paragraphs in the belief that the reader who is prepared to wrestle with the text will discern them, and will be motivated to extend or transform them. The one idea which I do want to emphasise concerns the metaphor of light and darkness. The final

comments of the last person I interviewed during April/May 1991, Mr Mnyandeni of Mnyameni, were very interesting. He spoke of two conflicting eras, darkness against enlightenment, and how the era of enlightenment has gradually overtaken the era of darkness.

The theme of light was prominent in Chapters I and III. In the first chapter we noted that conservationist science demands exhaustive research: it brings communities into the light. In the third chapter, a major part of the analysis of villagisation emphasised that reduced space between neighbours meant fewer secrets, less darkness and therefore less freedom. This thesis has been a celebration of pre-betterment darkness and the variety of lives that it allowed, and a critique of rationality, dogma and science⁴ - all those squeaky clean purveyors of light.

Finally, I would like to make a few brief comments of my vision for a new South African historiography. One of the most appealing aspects of postmodern thought is that it is non-prescriptive: dogma has no place in postmodernity. Although some people would want to elevate Foucault or Baudrillard⁵ into a new Marx, this inclination is a betrayal of the spirit of postmodernity, which thrives on new perspectives and interesting angles. I hope that openness and vigour come to characterise South African historiography to a much greater extent than in the past, that without sacrificing rigour we can rediscover the exhilaration of history, that history will become more an exploration and less a boring battle fought over arbitrary ground.

⁴It was after all science that demanded villagisation and hence proximity.

⁵Or Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, etc.

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Archives of the magistrate of Keiskammahoek, not yet ready for transfer to a depository.
- (iii) Cory Library, Rhodes University
A series of Keiskammahoek magistrate's files seen by me while being prepared for transit to the Cory Library. Now there in unsorted condition.

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(e) Oral testimonies

(Note: the interviews are listed chronologically)

Interview with Dr Backs of the S.S. Gida hospital, Keiskammahoek village in mid April 1991.

Interview with Mr Amani, business manager of the Keiskammahoek Irrigation Scheme, and with Mr Mbose, an extension officer on the scheme, in mid April 1991.

The following interviews were conducted in Zanyokwe location in late April 1991:

with Mr Mnyaka (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a new residential area resident, and Mr Kini (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), the ex-chairman of the residents' association;

with Mr Ndabeni (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a freeholder ex-headman;

with Mr Poyo (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a freeholder ex-headman, Mr Tabata (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a prominent freeholder spokesman, and Mrs Skenjana (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a close friend of a knowledgeable old man, Mr Ntsohi (pseudonym, used for personal reasons).

The followings interviews were conducted in Burnhill location in late April 1991:

(Burnshill village) with Mr Mobo (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a quitreter ex-teacher;

(Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme) with Mr Mawisa, the manager of the scheme and the ex-chairman of the residents' association;

(Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme) with Mr Kewana (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), a non-quitrenter ex-headman;

(Mangweni settlement, Burnshill village) with Mr Ngena (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), chief of the region and the founder of Mangweni;

(Lenye village) with Messrs B Dingiswayo and S Dingiswayo, both freeholders;

(Lenye village) with Mr Mtaba, a freeholder.

The following interviews were conducted in Mbems location in late April 1991:

(Madubela village) with a group of old men comprising 4 quitrenters, Messrs Mayikiso, Cebo, Dukase and Kota, 1 freeholder, Mr Macaula, and 1 landless resident, Mr Figlam;

(Ngcamngeni village) with Mr Tsoli (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), an ex-headman, and 3 residents, Messrs Notshe, Mbehle and Qaba.

The following interviews were conducted in Wolf River location in late April 1991:

(Upper Wolf River) with Mr Mekuto, an ex-headman and -chairman of the residents' association, and Mr Mekuto's mother;

(Upper Wolf River) with Mr Fonte, a new residential area resident;

(Lower Wolf River) with Mr Mdladlana, a freeholder.

The following interviews were conducted with Humansdorp relocatees in late April/early May 1991:

(Elukhanyweni) with Mr Singata, the ex-chairman of the resident's association;

(Elukhanyweni) with Mr Champion, a prominent anti-relocation activist;

(Nqudela) with Mr Mandla;

(Peters Farm) with Mrs Mbele and Mrs Koyo.

The following interviews were conducted in the Tshoxa/Redhill area in early May 1991:

(Tshoxa) with Mr Manto, a former sub-headman;

(Redhill) with Mr Nongongo, a freeholder.

The following interviews were conducted in Dontsa location in early May 1991:

with Mr and Mrs Manentsa and Mrs Lunguza, all freeholders, and Mrs Mbane, a new residential area resident;

with Mr Mdledle, an ex-headman and -chairman of the residents' association.

The following interviews were conducted in Mtwaku location in early May 1991:

(Ngobozana village) with Mr and Mrs Njobe, Mr Jumba and Mr Bunyele;

(Ndlovini village) a group meeting, featuring Mr Sotaka, a son of an ex-headman, Mr Sotcishe, an ex-headman and Messrs Mgcweba, Gwexa, Mtshakaza and Mewayi;

(Ndlovini village) with Mr Ngamile, an ex-detainee who was exiled to Keiskammahoek district;

(Mtwaku village) with Mr Kebeni.

The following interviews were conducted in Gwili-Gwili location in early May 1991:

a group meeting was organised by Mr Booi, the ex-chairman of the residents' association;

with Mr Myeki (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), chief of the region;

with Mr Phela (pseudonym, used for personal reasons), an ex-headman.

The following interviews were conducted in Lower Gxulu (in Gxulu location) in mid May 1991:

with Mr Mbona;

with Mr Gulwa, a retired teacher;

with Mr Mluma, the brother of an ex-member of the rehabilitation committee;

with Mr Mpangeva, an ex-headman;

with Mr Nkangala, a former speaker of the Inkundla.

The following interviews were conducted in Mnyameni location in mid May 1991:

(Upper Mnyameni) with Mr Mashologu, the ex-chairman of the residents' association, and Messrs Z and S Mdledle;

(Lower Mnyameni) with Mr Mnyandeni.

The following interviews were conducted in September 1991 (with the exception of Mr Malusi, I had interviewed all these informants once before in May):

with Mr Booi in Gwili-Gwili;

with Mr Malusi in Gwili-Gwili;

with Mr Kebeni in Mtwaku;

with Mr Sotsiche in Ndlovini village, Mtwaku location;

with Mr and Mrs Njobe in Ngobozana village, Mtwaku location;

with Mr Phela in Gwili-Gwili.