

THE AFRO-EUROPEAN WARS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1780 - 1880

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

1976

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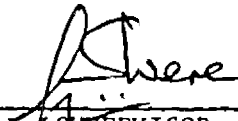
DECLARATION

I, Lucas Rammonaseswa Molomo, hereby
declare that this thesis is my own work and has not
been submitted for a degree to any other University.



LUCAS RAMMONASESWA MOLOMO

This thesis has been submitted for
Examination with my approval as University supervisor.



SUPERVISOR

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A B S T R A C T

The study presented in this document is about African-European wars in South Africa in the period 1780-1880. Active military resistance to European intrusion in this part of Africa began in 1659, seven years after the establishment by the Dutch of a half-way station at the Cape of Good Hope. For one and a quarter century from that date the resistance was limited to the Khoikhoi and San, who were closer to the Dutch Cape settlement. By about 1780 the Khoikhoi and San social cohesion had, to all intents and purposes, broken down under the pressure of the expanding Dutch Cape settlement. What conflict there was between them and Europeans after 1780 was for accommodation rather than for any hopes to expel the latter from the area. This study is therefore concerned with the resistance of the Bantu, who, in 1780, were only just coming under the pressure of the advancing white colonists.

In spite of the spirited resistance that the Bantu offered during the period covered by this study, by 1881 they had practically been conquered and subjected to white rule. That the conquest was a central event in the history of South Africa cannot be overstated. Neither Mfecane nor the Great Trek nor the so-called mineral revolution has had more far-reaching consequences. The social problems that afflict South Africa today are at bottom an attempt to readjust, modify or reverse the consequences and implications of that conquest. Yet the event has attracted little or no scholarly attention. No straight and major study

has been made as to why and how Africans, in spite of the apparent spiritedness of their resistance, were eventually conquered and subjected to white rule.

The extant records of this conquest theme were compiled by non-historians who were by and large concerned to record the history (heroic exploits) of Europeans in South Africa. The records are fragmentary and severely biased against Africans. I have identified these records in the Introduction to this study. Professional historians on the other hand have tended to concern themselves with this conquest theme to the extent only that it had a direct bearing on their fields of study, which were often either aspects or general histories of South Africa. The result is that the African - European conflict has been no more than brief allusions scattered in passim fashion in their historical works.

My view is that the conflict is so crucial to the understanding of South African history that there is an obvious need to devote a major study to it. There is need to identify the fundamental issues which lay at its roots; to study its actual mechanics: the tactical and logistic situations, weaponry deployment and man-power resources. Such a study, in my opinion, would go a long way to explain the all important question of why and how African military resistance to European colonisation of South Africa collapsed. This study, therefore, is an attempt to provide such explanation. If the attempt succeeds, then, an important gap

in the history of South Africa, I feel, shall have been filled in. The study would not only be a significant contribution within the context of South African history but also in the general and wider continental context of African history.

My thesis in this study is that a combination of three factors explain the collapse of the South African resistance. The first of these is lack of unity and co-operation within and among African communities. The result was that the resistance groups found it difficult to co-ordinate their resistance efforts. The second factor is the impact of Western civilisation on the African societies. The heavy economic and cultural onslaughts which that civilisation launched on African societies severely sapped their strength and made it difficult for them to sustain drawn-out war. Finally, the resistance groups had to content with the problem of disparity in military technology between them and the white invading forces. Throughout the resistance Africans made impressive effort to acquire firearms and, as will become evident in this study, by the end of the 1870's they had, at any rate from the point of view of quantity, gone a long way to narrow the gap. What they could not, however, master in a short space of hundred years was effective skill to maintain and use the firearms. This, as the study clearly shows, remained their major weakness throughout the resistance and, indeed, may have been crucial in their final defeat. All these points are highlighted in the chapters that follow.

Yet in spite of all these difficulties it can be said that African resistance to colonial rule in South Africa was impressive. Africans often won resounding victories and, although they were finally conquered and subjected to white rule, they nevertheless effectively prevented Europeans from repeating what they did in Australia and New Zealand where they virtually exterminated the Aborigines and Maoris respectively.

INTRODUCTION

The study presented in this document is about African resistance to white rule in South Africa during the period 1780-1880. The fact that the conquest and subjection of Africans to white rule was a central event in the history of South Africa cannot be overstated. Neither Mfecane nor the 'Boer Trek' nor the so-called mineral revolution has had more far-reaching consequences. The social problems that afflict the country to-day stem from the efforts by the people of South Africa to readjust, modify or even reverse the consequences of that conquest. Yet, like in many other aspects of South African history, no straight and major study has been made on the process whereby the country was colonised and the native peoples subjected to white rule.

The extant records on this theme were made by non-historians who were by and large concerned to record the history (heroic exploits) of Europeans in South Africa. The records are fragmentary and severely biased against Africans. The major documents which deal with Amaxosa resistance are A Narrative of Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope, 1834 - 1835, Struik, (Facsimile reprint), Cape Town, 1965, and Narrative of the Kaffir War, 1850 - 53, London 1851. Both these documents were compiled by Robert Godlonton and are severely biased against the Amaxosa. The only published document that gives nearly a complete picture of

Amazulu resistance is The Washing of the Spears, by D. R. Morris. G. Tylden's The Rise of the Basuto is a general history of the Basotho, but it contains useful material on their resistance to white rule. No printed book on the Bapedi resistance exists. What information there is on this section of African resistance is in the form of articles in periodicals and sections or chapters in the general histories.

All these materials I have cited, it will have been noticed, are regional in coverage. The piecemeal approach, of course, fails to convey a total picture of the resistance. The resistance began with the Khoisan in the southern tip of South Africa and gradually spread to the Bantu territories on the east coast and on the Highveld. By the beginning of the 1850's practically all the native groups of South Africa were involved. It seems to me that one cannot grasp the dynamics of that resistance unless one adopts a total view approach. The only documentary that attempts this approach is D.F.C. Moodie's A History of the Battles and Adventures of the British, the Boers and the Zulus in Southern Africa (2 vols.) Frank Cass, Cape Town, 1968. Although its title mentions only the British, the Boers and Amazulu, in fact the work covers substantial sections of the Basotho, Bapedi and Amaxosa resistance. Apart from the fragmentary nature of its contents, however, Moodie's work is marred by his uncontrolled bias against the natives. Apart from the fact that it furnishes the researcher with a record of the battles fought between Africans and Europeans the work gives neither balanced nor complete historical view of the South African resistance.

What I have attempted here is to synthesise the material of this conflict - theme and to present it in such a way that it gives a total or overall view of the resistance. In trying to do this I have had to contend with immense problems, some of which proved to be insurmountable. A 'holistic' approach in a pioneering study such as is attempted here meant that I have had to go through a vast literature in order to glean the information that is scattered in passim fashion in that literature. Needless to state that the immensity of the period covered by the study did not make my task any easier in this respect. The approach also raised a methodological problem of synthesising the material of various parts of the resistance into a whole that can be shown to be more illuminating than the regional and ethnic approach.

These problems were made even more serious by my personal status and lack of funds. Being in exile I could not go on field trips to South Africa. Consequently I have had no access to primary sources which, I believe, would have made my task a lot easier. My efforts to travel to London, where I would have had access to British Parliamentary Papers and Official Correspondence of the period I am studying, were checked by lack of funds. This study is therefore based entirely on what published material I could obtain in East Africa and on my personal knowledge of some of the historical cultural aspects of South African societies. What originality there is, perhaps, is in the approach I have adopted and in the interpretation of the material I have used.

As has been pointed out earlier on, I have attempted to look at the material of the conflict as a whole. It seems to me that only from this stand-point can an attempt be made, with any hope of success, to highlight the fundamental issue that lay at the root of the conflict and the actual mechanics of the resistance that Africans offered to the invading white forces. If the attempt succeeds it will, I hope, become clear as to what the conflict was about and how and why Africans were finally conquered and subjected to white rule.

The study is divided into seven chapters, with subtitles where necessary. Chapter one is an introductory material dealing with the distribution and settlement of the Southern Bantu at about the time of contact with Europeans. It should be noted that first contacts between the Bantu and Europeans occurred much earlier, in about 1700 in the region of the Gamtoos River. The pattern of distribution and settlement outlined in this chapter, therefore, relates only to the beginning of regular contact and interaction between the two races. It has no relationship whatsoever with the controvertial issue of which racial group occupied which area of South Africa when the constant interaction began. That, as I have pointed out elsewhere, is a matter that must await further research.

Chapter two is concerned with social and economic interaction between Africans and Europeans on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. It outlines the steady

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deterioration of relations between the two racial groups and attempts an analysis of the first military encounters in the period 1780-1820. Although Europeans, in these early breaches of the peace, often accused Africans of plunderous activities these allegations, in fact, reveal a fundamental misunderstanding by Europeans of African traditional mode of warfare. In reality land issues were at the root of the conflict. Africans mounted incursions on what Europeans claimed to be their farms, killed herdsmen and seized stock. To them this was a kind of warfare aimed, as Makana stated in 1819, at driving the whiteman into the sea. The chapter also highlights the modernisation of Amaxosa system of warfare which was made necessary by the introduction of the horse and firearms on the South African scene.

Chapter three traces the expansion of Europeans into the interior and in the east coast of South Africa in the period 1820 - 1840. By the latter date Europeans were established on the Highveld, in Natal and on the east coast. Operating from their Trans-Orangia base the Voortrekkers had destroyed Matebele Kingdom in the Transvaal and Dingane's power in Zululand. On the Eastern frontier the Cape Colony had, except in the most theoretical sense, pushed its boundary to the Kei River. This white expansion was stoutly contested by Africans, notably the Matebele in the period 1836-1837 and Amazulu in 1836-40. Although Africans did not succeed in halting the expansion the invading white forces were by no means firmly established during this period.

Chapter four deals with African reactions to the 'white peril' on their lands and independence. Failure to halt the movement of Europeans into the interior meant that Africans had now even greater task of dislodging them from their territories. Weaker communities and leaders who lived in fear (whether real or imagined) of their stronger African neighbours or who felt too weak to resist with any hope of success co-operated with the white new-comers and became faithful collaborators. Nonetheless the stronger cheifdoms and Kingdoms offered spirited military resistance. The only strong state that stayed aloof during the period (1841-1870) was Mpande's Zulu Kingdom. The collaborators (Amafengu on the Eastern Frontier, Batlokwa and Barolong in Trans-Orangia and Amaswazi on the eastern Transvaal) played a crucial role in the hostilities of this period. But the military resisters showed a remarkable degree of flexibility and resourcefulness in adapting their traditional military structures to the new situation. On the Eastern Frontier the Amaxosa though visibly weakened were, in 1870, not conquered. In Trans-Orangia the Basotho had, by a brilliant combination of military force and statecraft, managed to maintain themselves. In the Transvaal the Bapedi resilience was threatening to liquidate the new Boer state there. In Zululand, Mpande's pusillanimity notwithstanding, the Zulu military might was by and large still in tact. Before 1870, therefore, although African reaction to the invading white forces shows lamentable lack of unity, the survival of the white states in South Africa was anything but assured. This is the major point which emerges from the materials of this chapter.

Chapter five, Change in the Power Structure, is an analysis of non-military factors which operated against African societies before and after 1870 and which severely undermined Africans' capacity to resist the invading white forces. The factors (they may be grouped under the rubric: 'Western Civilisation') operated with disastrous effects in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the Africans and thus gave leverage to white military onslaughts on their communities. This effect of 'Western Civilisation', I have contended in the concluding chapter, was one of the major reasons why African resistance eventually collapsed.

Chapter Six, 'Pacification' and Imposition of White Rule, deals with the final phase of the resistance in the period 1870 - 1880. Although Africans put up impressive military show in this final round, the odds were heavily against them. The British 'imperial factor' was on the ascendancy in South Africa following the discovery of mineral wealth there. This meant that the resisters had to contend with a Great World Power which could deploy its vast resources against their semi-primitive military structures and methods. Inside South Africa itself the new wealth provided a strong economic base for the white colonists who monopolised it. This meant that the colonists could now buy improved versions of firearms such as the Maxims and Gatlings and percussion rifles then being produced in Europe. It was with forlorn hope therefore, that Africans entered this final phase of the contest. Their states fell in quick succession and by 1881 the resistance had, to all intents and purposes, collapsed.

Chapter seven, the conclusion, is a statement of what seems to me to flow from the entire study. Contrary to the traditional view that 'stock-thefts' and 'plunderous habits' of the Africans were the cause of friction what seems to emerge is that sovereign independence was central to the conflict. From the actual mechanics of the resistance itself it would appear that three major factors were crucial in the final conquest of the natives. The first of these was the disruptive effects of 'Western Civilisation' on African societies. The second was lack of unity within and among African communities. The third was technological gap between Africans and Europeans. This disparity existed initially in the weapons the two combatants possessed. Even after some of the Africans had acquired firearms the disparity continued to reflect itself in the quality of these weapons and in their use by Africans.

Finally, this study is based entirely on library research. The reasons for this have been pointed out above. My bibliography therefore is a list of secondary sources. I have, however, classified it as follows: Published books and articles in periodicals which I consider crucial to this study are listed under 'Basic Sources'. Published books and periodical articles which were useful but not crucial to the study are listed under 'Other Sources'.

BANTU CONTACTS AND RELATIONS WITH EUROPEANS

I. BANTU DISTRIBUTION AND SETTLEMENTS

The question as to who occupied which areas of South Africa and at what dates is a matter that must await further research. There is still much uncertainty in this area of South African history. The demographic distribution at about the time of first contacts with Europeans used here is based on the existing unsatisfactory knowledge¹ and should be regarded as no more than a working basis.

At about the beginning of the 18th century the Southern Nguni (Amaxosa)² inhabited the coastal belt between the Drakensberg and Indian Ocean. Their domain, it would appear, stretched from Mtavuna River in the east to westward of the Gamtoos.³ Amaxosa like the rest of Southern Bantu, were agriculturists as well as graziers and hunters. They cultivated crops on a shifting basis and grazed their cattle wherever there was plentiful grass.

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1. See Inskeep, R.R. The Archaeological Background, in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L.M. (Edited) Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.I pp.1 and 39. Also S.D. Neumark, Economic influences on the South African Frontier, p.97.
 2. Broadly speaking Southern Nguni included Amangqika, Amagcaleka, Abatembu, Amampondo, Amampondomise, Amefengu, Amabhaca, Amaxesibe appear to have entered Xosaland much later when they were pushed down by Shakan wars.
 3. Hunter, M. Reaction to conquest, p.2, states: "Dutch settlers spreading eastward from the Cape first encountered the Bantu, west of the Gamtoos River, at the beginning of the eighteenth century". She gives no sources. Wilson, M. Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.I, p.236 states: "Xhosa, Khoikhoi, San and White have mingled between the Kei and the Gamtoos for nearly three centuries".

Since they depended on animal skins for clothing the presence of game was one of the important factors in their choice of settlement areas. This type of economy encouraged semi-nomadic life. Exhaustion of pasturage or game meant they had to shift to a fresh locality, or extend their grazing or hunting activities farther afield. But the eastern sea-board becomes poorer and colder as one moves from east to west. This fact appears to have limited Amaxosa settlement to the Zwartkops River region⁴. Nevertheless there seems to be little doubt that during some seasons, at least, the western - most Amaxosa must have grazed their cattle in the area between that river and the Gamtoos, or, at any rate, hunted there. The fact that they were met with on the western side of the latter river seems to leave little doubt that the area was their grazing and hunting ground.

4. J.S. Marais, Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.5-6, makes rather contradictory argument regarding Amaxosa settlement in about 1778. The two pages just cited leave no doubt that he believes Amaxosa settlements were limited to the Bushman's River region. In support of this belief he cites a number of evidences including Adriaan Van Jaarsveld's statement to Graaf-Reinet Heemraden and Militia Officers in May 1794. The statement reads: He, Van Jaarsveld, "Was of the opinion that, in order to get a lasting peace with Kafirs, it would be best to give them back the Zuurveld, which had formerly been their own land". Then, in a footnote at page 6 Marais, giving neither source nor reason, states: "I shall use the term "Zuurveld" to denote the land between the lower Fish and the Bushman's River, though the Boers of the late 18th century often used the word to cover a larger territory - as far west as the Sunday, or even Zwartkops River". Obviously, if the late 18th century Boers used the word to cover territory westward of the Sunday River, it follows that Van Jaarsveld had in mind the area between the Fish and Zwartkops rivers, which is in agreement with my view that Amaxosa settlements were limited by relative weather inclemency and soil aridity to the Zwartkops River region.

To the north of Amaxosa, in the same coastal strip, were the Northern Nguni, organised in numerous political units. Chief among these were the Abathethwa, Amandwandwe, Amangwane, Amagwabe. Before Shaka came to power Amazulu were one of the many minor political units scattered in the area. Each of these communities had its own chief who was assisted by a hierarchy of indunas and counsellors. Limited space soon produced overcrowding conditions which contributed to Shakan upheavals in the first two decades of the 19th century. Economically the Northern Nguni were crop and stock farmers.

The Highveld was inhabited by three linguistically related clusters, namely, the Batswana, Southern and Northern Basotho. The physical limits of the Highveld are: the Drakensberg on the east, Khalahari Desert on the west, Limpopo River on the north and Orange River on the south. The central and eastern parts of this region were inhabited by Northern Basotho who comprised Bapedi, Ba-Mokapane, Ba-Mapela, Ba-Matlala, etc. To the west of Northern Basotho, on the eastern fringes of the Khalahari Desert, was the Batswana cluster. In it are included the Bangwato, Bakwena, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla, Balete, etc. The south and south-west of the Highveld, roughly bounded by Drakensberg on the east, Molopo River on the west, Vaal River on the north, and Orange River on the south, was inhabited by Southern Basotho cluster who included Bashoeshoe, Barolong, Batlhaping, Batlharo,⁵ etc.

5 For purposes of clarity and convenient treatment the Batlhaping, Barolong, Batlharo, are henceforth referred to collectively as Southern Batswana.

Broadly, this was the distribution pattern of the Southern Bantu shortly before contacts with Europeans occurred. But the picture is not as simple and cut and dried as it appears. Within the Bantu group there had been so much criss-cross migrations that during the period we are discussing Nguni - speaking communities were settled among the Basotho and vice versa. The present -day Transvaal Matebele appear to have entered the northern part of the Highveld long before Difecane revolution and Mzilikaze's exploits.⁶ Further south, the southern Basotho had settled side by side with communities of Nguni origin.⁷ The presence of clicks in Southern Sesotho may be traced to this early mingling. Similarly, there were Bapedi who had moved across the Lebombo mountains and settled among the Nguni communities in the present day Swaziland long before Sobhuza and his Amangwane came to establish a Shaken type nation-state there.⁸

6. Thompson, L. (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa, pp.104-106.

7. Hugh Ashton, The Basuto, p.2., lists the Nguni communities in the Caledon Valley as the Phetla, the Polane, and Phuthi. Ashton considers these communities to have been the first settlers in the Caledon Valley. He next writes: "Some years later they were joined by the "First Basuto" who were the Peli, Phutting, Sia and Tlokwa". Note the distinction between Basotho Phuthing and Nguni Phuthi. It seems to me that further research is needed to reveal true identity of these people, 'Phuti' is Sesotho word meaning 'buck'. I have found no evidence of it in any Nguni dialect. People whose totem derives from 'Phuti' are called 'Baphuting'. As far as I know such people are found among the Batswana, Southern and Northern Basotho.

8. See Wilson, M. and Thompson, L.(ed) Oxford History of South Africa, I, p.346. "Sobhuza, who ruled from about 1815 to about 1836, retreated to defensible positions in the mountains north of the Pongola River, absorbed Sotho as well as Nguni Cheifdoms, created an army on Zulu lines and laid the foundations of what later became known as the Swazi Kingdom". Also Thompson, L. (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa, p.118.

Nor were the Bantu alone in occupation of all these areas. Since late 17th century groups of Khoikhoi and San had been moving northwards, away from the Dutch colonists who were disrupting their communities and driving them off the land. Involved in this northwards movement were also half-caste groups (Griquas) whose population had been growing rapidly. By the beginning of the 19th century some of these groups were settled across the Orange River, among the Basotho communities. Some, notably the Griquas, were living in organised polities under their own chiefs. But others were leading a precarious life of brigandage, recognising no established authority other than a gang leader. A larger number of the Khoikhoi and San had retreated into the desert recesses of the Kalahari Desert and what is to-day South-West Africa.

On the extreme north of the present-day Transvaal, that is, in the Zoutpansberg area, there were several Venda communities, which, though Bantu, were neither Nguni nor Sesotho speaking. Available evidence suggests that they were an off-shoot from the Mashona, across the Limpopo River.

II. WHITE ENCROACHMENT

The first section of the Bantu to come into contact with Europeans were Amaxosa. As was indicated earlier, during the last quarter of the 18th century the western - most sections of these people were occupying the area between the lower Fish and the Zwartkops rivers. It was in this area where continuous contacts and interaction between them and the Dutch colonists began in the mid 1770's.

At first the two races lived side by side amicably. There were many and good reasons why the Amaxosa were not particularly apprehensive of any danger at this time. First, the numbers of Boer families that moved into their territories were few¹¹ and peaceable.¹² Second, the Amaxosa valued the barter trade from which they obtained the much needed iron, copper, knives, tinder-boxes, cloth, etc. and luxury items such as beads, tobacco, tobacco-pipes, brandy, etc. Third, it is possible that Amaxosa regarded the Boers in the light of previous trading parties that came and went. From this stand-point they presumed that the Boer sojourners would sooner or later return to their own 'country'.

11. Exact figures are not available. But a rough idea of the numbers of Boer families in the area during this time is given by J.S. Marais, Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.6. N. He writes: "Of the 500-odd farms granted in loan by the Company between 14th November 1778 and 30th April, 1782, not more than three lay beyond the Bushman's River." Assuming that each farm represented one Boer family (Some Boers often had more than one farm) these figures lead us to conclude that as late as 1782 there were at most three Boer families east of the Bushman's River. Since some Boer families held more than one farm it is possible that the remaining 497 farms west of the Bushman's River belonged to less than 300 families scattered throughout the rest of the 'colony'.

12. Thompson, G. Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, p.440.

The Boers, on the other hand, may have been restrained from acts of provocation by the very slenderness of their numbers in the area. The most important restraining factor, however, appears to have been economic. Trade with the Amaxosa had practically become the Boers' only source of wealth. From it they obtained cattle¹³ with which they supplied the ever insatiable meat market at the Cape.¹⁴ Since the Amaxosa, in these early stages of contacts, still had numerous herds and were willing to exchange some for European goods, the Boers were careful to do nothing that was likely to disrupt the flow of that trade. For these reasons the Boers "avoided any direct acts of oppression, or other measures that might provoke their (Amaxosa's) hostility!"¹⁵

This seemingly happy state of affairs did not, however, last much longer. As more and more Boers trickled in and picked up 'farms' from which they sought to exclude Amaxosa, tension began to appear. Now, appropriation of land by the Dutch colonists meant the destruction of Amaxosa independent existence. For one thing, the Amaxosa who knew only usufructuary system of land tenure could not understand how an individual could claim permanent exclusive rights to 6000 acres of land or more.¹⁶

13. Other articles of trade were ivory, skins, horns, etc.

14. Neumark, S.D., Economic Influences on the South African Frontier, chapters 5 and 10, *passim*.

15. Thompson, G. Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, p.440.

16. The Boers always maintained that a farm to be a farm must be 3000 morgen. This figure has usually been rendered in acres. 1 morgen = $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 3000 morgen yields 6333 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

In accordance with Bantu system of land tenure only land on which one had built and resided or which was being actually cultivated could be claimed on individual terms. And even this kind of claim was valid as long as the occupier continued to be the subject of the chief and continued to use the land. Land which was not occupied in any of these senses was considered grazing or hunting ground and any members of the community could use it as such.¹⁷ The Dutch colonists on the other hand laid claim to vast tracts of land of which the 'opstal' (actual residence or homestead) occupied an insignificant portion. The rest was pasturage or hunting ground from which the Amaxosa were told to keep away.

As is to be expected, the Boers chose the best portions of land, whether in terms of soil fertility, pasturage, game or water supply, for their 'farms'. From the point of view of the sizes of 'farms' it soon became evident that all Amaxosa lands would sooner or later fall into the hands of the colonists. Meanwhile the very acquisition of 'farms' by Boers on exclusive individual basis deprived Amaxosa of residential, agricultural, grazing and hunting land. Yet the independent existence of the Amaxosa was premised on land in all the four utilities. Once they had grasped the implications of the Europeans' concept of land tenure the Amaxosa resolved to resist or ignore Boer claims.

17. W.M. MacMillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.44 throws some light on the Bantu concept of land use. Further details given here are based on my own knowledge of the Bantu system of land tenure.

These developments soon became matters of grave concern at Cape Town. Officials of Colonial Government feared that continued unregulated interaction between Bantu and Boer would, sooner than later, overflow into warfare. Early in October 1778 Governor Van Plettenberg left Cape Town "not only to inspect personally the remotest farms and the recently appointed boundary between the districts of Stellenbosch and Swellendam, but to give the necessary directions in various matters which require to be redressed in the said remote districts."¹⁸ Arriving on the frontier in mid-October the Governor found the Boers and Amaxosa locked up together in the Bruntjies Hoogte-Zuurveld area. He came to a conclusion that the only way to regulate intercourse in this fast developing imbroglio was to establish dividing line between the two races. Accordingly some Xosa petty chiefs or headmen were sent for. In a meeting that followed Governor Van Plettenberg dictated what came to be known as Van Plettenberg Treaty, imposing the Fish River¹⁹ as the boundary between Bantu and Boer.

With reference to Van Plettenberg's visit and subsequent proclamation of the Fish River boundary in 1778, J.S. Marais states that - "one of the Government's main object in laying down an

18. Moodie, D. The Record, part III, P.76.N

19. M.F. Katzen, 'White Settlers and Origins of a New Society', 1652-1778, in Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.I. p.212. states, that in 1778 the eastern frontier was extended to the "Upper Fish - Bushman's River". Katzen is merely taking his cue after J.S. Marais (Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.5-6) who convincingly argues that Governor Van Plettenberg had Upper Fish - Bushmans rivers line in mind when he proclaimed the boundary in 1778. In fact Van Plettenberg's proclamation was not so clear. See below pp. 18-19.

eastern frontier was to prevent intercourse (and particularly cattle - bartering)(sic)between its subjects and the Bantu - an intercourse which had been going on intermittently throughout the 18th century and which, the Government feared, might lead to hostilities."²⁰ The view that successive Cape Governments strove but failed to put a stop to Boer expansion and intercourse with the natives has been accepted without question. Various placats prohibiting the intercourse have been cited as evidence of Government opposition to it.²¹ But a handful of Boers without adequate means to maintain themselves against overwhelming numbers of interior natives could not have defied Government authority for any length of time. The truth of the matter appears to be that Colonial Governments wanted to regulate rather than stop intercourse between Bantu and Boer. And there are many circumstances which give point to this view.

Firstly, the argument, generally accepted by historians, that Cape governments had no adequate law-enforcement agents to check expansion into the interior and to prevent illicit cattle batering is unconvincing. As early as 1659 a burgher corps was formed at the Cape. As the force increased in strength it was divided into several companies of infantry and cavalry.

20. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.4.

21. These 'placaaten' are listed by Eric A. Walker: A History of Southern Africa, p.119 as follows:"placaaten of 1677, 1727, 1774, 1786 and the General Placaat of 1739 against the cattle barter and intercourse with the tribes".

The force, especially the cavalry, had quasi-military and quasi-police duties. In addition to this regular force each district had its own militia, commanded by a local officer in conjunction with the Landdrost (Magistrate) and Heemraden (local council).²² Although these armed forces were intended for defence against foreign and indigenous attack, nothing prevented them from being used for maintenance of law and order within the colony.

The military resources of the government were demonstrated in August 1795 when the British invaded the colony. Governor Sluysken on that occasion fielded about 1500 men against a 1600-strong British force; and the British were hard-put to it to capture the Settlement until after September 3, when 5000-man strong reinforcements arrived from Brazil.²³ All good judges would agree that it required far less than thousand men to overawe a handful of ill-equipped and ill-organised Boers on the frontier.

Secondly, the Cape governments, in point of fact, encouraged Boer advance into the interior, first, by giving recognition to 'farms' beyond existing frontiers,²⁴ and second,

22. M.F. Katzen, White Settlers and the origin of a New Society 1652-1778 in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L (edited) Oxford History of South Africa Vol. I.p.226.

23. General Craig, Commander of the British force admitted that 'he was getting the worst of it'. Even after the arrival of reinforcements the British officers still found it necessary to bribe the officer commanding the German mercenaries fighting on the Dutch side to desert with his force: V.T. Harlow, British Occupations, in Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. VIII, p.176.

24. Acquisition of farms by Boers was one of the sources of Government revenue. The Boers had to pay 'recognitiegeld' (recognition fee) to have their claims recognised by the Government. The value of this source increased in proportion as more claims were made.

by continually extending the boundaries to include 'placaaten' (ordinances) offenders. The result of this practice was that the boundaries tended to follow rather than curb the eastward movement of the Boers. Once the Boers realised that they could always draw the boundaries behind them, even the most 'fearsome placaaten' became no more than Governments' announcement that the boundary would be extended. In the period of ten years from 1770 - 1780 the eastern boundary was extended three times: to the Gamtoos River in 1770, to the middle of Fish River in 1778, and to the entire Fish River in 1780. Similarly, in a short space of four years the north east frontier was extended three times: to the Bruintjies Hoogte in 1774, Upper Fish in 1775 and to Calesberg in 1778.²⁵ It is impossible that the Government was not aware of the expansionist effect of this practice. It has already been shown that if there was any serious intention on the part of the Government to check Boer dispersal and intercourse with the natives adequate means were available. In the circumstances one cannot but conclude that there was no such intention on the part of the colonial Government.

Thirdly, it can hardly be denied that eastward advance and continued ability of the Boers to maintain themselves among hostile natives depended entirely on the constant supply of guns and ammunition from Government stores. From the time when colonisation of the interior began Government supplied the colonists with guns

25 M.F. Katzen, *supra* p.212

and ammunition.²⁶ Any government that seriously sought to halt Boer dispersal and 'illicit trade' with the natives could and would easily withhold these supplies. The dangers of moving beyond established frontiers would soon become apparent to the Boers. The validity of this point was demonstrated in 1799 when the frontier Boers rebelled against authority. The government placed an embargo on the supply of ammunition. Not only was the rebellion easily suppressed but the Boers, during the Amaxosa - Khokhoi war against the colony (1799), fled their farms in large numbers, pleading shortage of ammunition as the reason for their "dastardly conduct".²⁷ It is plausible to suggest that had the Government withheld the supply of ammunitions the Boers would have been forced to remain within the colonial frontiers or seek friendship and protection of the native rulers.

Fourthly, even if Government had wanted to check Boer dispersal and prevent intercourse with the Bantu it could not do so without cutting its own throat. The colonial authorities were aware that the Cape as a revictualling station and its fast growing population had become increasingly dependent on the frontier economy, especially for the supply of cattle for slaughter and draught purposes. Throughout the second half of the 17th century and much of the 18th the whites had not only decimated the Khoikhoi people but they had also depleted their

26. M.F. Katzen, White Settlers and the Origins of a New Society, 1652-1778 in Wilson, M and Thompson, L (ed.) Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.I. p.226.

27. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.110

cattle herds. It has already been shown that cattle-bartering with the Amaxosa had been going on intermittently throughout the 18th century. By the 1770's it had become the most important source of cattle to the colony. C. P. Thunberg states that before 1774 the Dutch East India Company obtained "a great number of cattle, fit for slaughter, in exchange for tobacco, brandy, glass-beads and bits of iron."²⁸ In 1774 the Company sent an official "to the Gamtoos River, and thereabouts, to barter cattle for the Company".²⁹

The force of the arguments just outlined compels one to reject the view that colonial government failed to prevent the expansion movement and cattle bartering on the frontier. I have already shown that colonial authorities had adequate resources to check both, had they so wished. It was not so much the failure as the reluctance on the part of the authorities to cut off the trade on which the success or failure of the Cape as revictualling station depended. The much misinterpreted 'placcaten' were in fact intended to regulate interaction between Boer and Bantu. It was in the interest of the Cape Settlement that cattle bartering took place in an orderly and peaceful manner. Violence and warfare would tend to estrange the native cattle owners, thus frightening away the goose that laid the golden egg. Governor Van Plettenberg's visit to the eastern frontier and his subsequent ramshackle boundary arrangement had nothing to do with the prevention of economic interaction between Bantu and Boer. The Governor's

28. Quoted by S.D. Neumark, Economic influences on the South African Frontier, p. 100.

29. Ibid.

measures were intended to bring about order in which the Bantu cattle resources could be tapped to the advantage of all concerned including the Company's refreshment station at Cape Town.

By November 16, 1778, Governor Van Plettenberg was at Swellendam, on his way back to Cape Town. Some doubt has been expressed as to whether the time allowed had been sufficient for him to do detailed inspection of every part of the frontier.³⁰

Be that as it may, from first to last the treaty which the Governor imposed on the frontier community had not the slightest chance of success. The boundary line that it proclaimed was vitiated by economic, legal and technical defects which were to afflict relations between black and white on the frontier and lead to a century of warfare.

To begin with, both Bantu and Boer were aware that any boundary would tend to reduce the volume of trade between them, or, at any rate, impose conditions under which cattle - bartering had to be undertaken. Hitherto the two races were mixed, and bartering took place in one or the other of the following ways: (1) The Amaxosa drove their cattle to the residences of individual Boers. The latter would then bring out their wares (beads, iron and copper pieces, packs of tobacco, bottles of brandy, tinder-boxes, knives etc.). After some heckling exchange would follow. Or, (2) the Boers would "wander about everywhere in the interior from one district to another, with goods and merchandise, conveyed on wagons,

30. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, page 44.

cars, horses, or pack-oxen"³¹ until they came to Bantu settlements where bartering would follow. A boundary would impose restrictions on these movements, and therewith, the free movement of trade- a prospect which the frontier community liked less.

Closely related to cattle-bartering was the question of pasturage. It has been indicated that the sea-board improved in quality as one moves from west to east. This meant that there was better agricultural and grazing land eastward of the Fish River. There is evidence that the frontier Boers were cherishing hopes that some day they would possess themselves of that part of the country.³² To the extent that Van Plettenberg line dashed these hopes the prospects for the success of his treaty were dim. As will be seen later, the Boers would continue to occupy farms beyond the boundary, or graze their cattle there, anyway.

These purely economic factors forebode ill on the efficacy of Van Plettenberg line. Their effects were reinforced by moral as well as legal defects of the Treaty. From the point of view of equity the boundary was grossly unjust to the Amaxosa. Even as the Governor was proclaiming the line there were numerous Amaxosa who lived far to the west of the Fish. Van Plettenberg line deprived them of the whole country between that river and the Gamtoos. It could hardly be expected that the Amaxosa who had inhabited the area for many years would vacate it without resistance. As will be seen later, they

31. Neumark, S.D. Economic Influences on the South Africa Frontier, pp 99-100.

32. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.100.

refused to recognise the existence of any treaty that obliged them to vacate their territories.

Van Plettenberg Treaty was defective in yet another way. The Governor, we are told, met some "eight Kaffir Chiefs"³³ who agreed to the Fish River line. The names of the 'chiefs' have not been given. Nor were the proceedings of the 'conference' committed to writing. While it may be granted that Van Plettenberg did in fact meet with some Amaxosa petty chiefs or headmen it is certain that he did not meet any of the Senior Chiefs.³⁴ Again while it is doubtful whether even the Senior Chiefs had any authority or power to bargain away communally held land it is certain that the "eight Kaffir Chiefs" that Van Plettenberg met had none. Their agreement with the colonial Governor, therefore, could bind none but themselves. To the rest of the Amaxosa, if they knew anything about its existence at all, the treaty was of no force and effect.

Furthermore, it would appear that neither the Governor nor the "chiefs" took any trouble to define their terms. The treaty appears to have rested on confounded misunderstanding. The concept of a boundary in Southern Bantu system of land tenure does not carry with it permanent rights of exclusive ownership. Land is regarded as community property and the chief mere custodian of that property. An individual is granted no more than usufructuary

33. Moodie, D. The Record, Part III pt.v.p.9. Note

34. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.44

rights, that is, the use of the land so long as he remains the chief's subject and continues to occupy it. Demarcations of land held on this basis were marked off by stones or some natural feature and sometimes, even by ordinary usage.³⁵ Europeans on the other hand are apt to read into any boundary arrangements the assumptions of annexation or permanent exclusive individual rights. It is possible that the "eight Kaffir chiefs" who met with Van Plettenberg and readily 'agreed' to his Fish River line had unsufruct in mind. To that extent, it is less surprising that they "did not perform their promises"³⁶ it was claimed they made to the Governor.

Even more serious was the vagueness and ambiguity that attached to the alleged boundary line. When the Governor proclaimed the line he was, it would appear, on the western banks of Fish River, probably in the vicinity of the present site of Cookhouse village. From this point the river runs due south for about 22 miles down to Sheldon village. It then turns abruptly eastwards and for well over 50 miles runs parrallel to the coast at right angles to any conceivable dividing line between the 'colony' and 'Amaxosa territories'. Then from its confluence with the Kat River the Fish turns south again, covering nearly 40 miles before it finally enters the sea. The vagueness as to what the Governor meant by the Fish River line is obvious.

35. Personal observation among the Bapedi.

36. See page 20 below.

Evidence suggests that when he proclaimed the boundary he had in mind a line along the upper and middle course of the Fish down to Sheldon; thence straight on through the upper reaches of the Bushman's River and along the right banks of that river down to the sea.³⁷ This line would have left the whole area between the lower Fish and the Bushman's rivers (the present district of Albany) in the hands of Amaxosa. The frontier Boers on the other hand tended to assume that the Governor must have intended his line to run along the straight north-south line along the course of the Kat River down to its confluence with the Fish, and, thence along the right banks of the latter down to the sea.³⁸ This interpretation of Van Plettenberg's line would have excluded Amaxosa not only from the Zuurveld but from their rich Koonap lands, between the Kat and Great Fish River. Two years later, in 1780, the Cape Government proclaimed the entire length of the Fish River as the boundary, thus depriving Amaxosa of all their Zuurveld lands.³⁹ Whether or not the frontier communities accepted this later proclamation is of little consequence. The ambiguity and vagueness of the 1778 line had already generated endless disputes between Amaxosa and Boers.

Finally, the circumstances and the atmosphere in which the alleged treaty was made were anything but conducive to free and honest discussion. To begin with, the "eight Kaffir chiefs"

37. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.5-7

38. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.45

39. The Amaxosa were not consulted.

had not been informed before -hand of the Governor's impending visit and of his intention to confer with them. Colonel Gordon was sent on the spur of the moment to go and bring them from their homes; and the meeting was held on the same day.⁴⁰ The "chiefs" were obviously not prepared for the meeting. As the Governor shook hands with them, "having covered his hand with a black silk handkerchief"⁴¹ they least expected that soon they would be called upon to take a decision on an issue that involved the future of their country and that of their fellow-country men. Secondly, it would appear that the "chiefs" were not free agents. As they sat in conference with the Governor colonial troops were standing-by. "In 1777 or 1778 when the Governor met the chiefs the commando was assembled, and therefore the Kaffirs made some promises which they did not perform."⁴² It is indeed doubtful whether the "chiefs" participated actively in the discussion and freely expressed their own views. In all probability they listened and nodded their heads as the formidable visitor dictated the terms of the supposed treaty. The chiefs did not mean to perform and did not perform their promises.

Thus, far from curing the ills of the frontier Van Plettenberg Treaty exacerbated disputes and friction which soon had their sequel in war. The all important question of who in fact owned the land in which Amaxosa and Boers were now locked together assumed crucial proportions.. Europeans pressed their

40. Moodie, D. The Record, V p.9 Note

41. Ibid, p.10

42. Moodie, D. The Record, Pt.III, p.112 Note

claims "in a new spirit of assertive ownership."⁴³ Dangling the treaty before the Amaxosa they arrogantly claimed that all land west of the Fish River was now colonial territory, and demanded that the 'Kafirs' should remove to 'their own country'. To the Amaxosa these claims and demands must have been as incomprehensible as they were ridiculous. Most of them knew nothing of the existence of any treaty that obliged them to remove from their lands. Even those (assuming there were any, other than 'eight Kafir Chiefs') who knew something of the existence of such a treaty either did not recognise it or they did not understand it in the European sense of annexation. As was to be expected the Amaxosa resisted the pretensions, whereupon resort was made to "a number of irregularities committed by certain Boers against the Xhosa".⁴⁴

In concluding this section on the Amaxosa contacts and relations with the Europeans it may be said that despite their initial peaceful interaction disputes over land soon produced tensions between the two races. The Company Government was anxious to avoid hostilities. But it was reluctant to cut off all forms of intercourse with Amaxosa cattle-resources as this would undermine its ability to provide fresh meat and related products to the Company ships and to the Cape population. In order to regulate interaction between Bantu and Boer Governor Van Plettenberg visited the frontier in 1778 and imposed a dividing line between the two races. But economic realities and the defective nature of

43. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton p.46.

44. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic p.7.

the line itself destroyed any chances of its success. Rather, the line tended to exarcebate disputes which increasingly issued in violence. By the end of 1779 it was clear that war was inevitable and unavoidable.

C H A P T E R 2 =====

THE FIRST MILITARY CLASHES

I. THE DUTCH PERIOD : 1780 - 1795

By the end of the year 1779 war between Amaxosa and frontier Boers was imminent. It has already been shown that the fundamental cause of war was land, a factor on which alone rested the Amaxosa independent existence. The immediate occasion for the fighting, however, was Amaxosa's rejection of Van Plettenberg's boundary line and the manner in which the Boers attempted to press their claims. The injustice and technical defects of that line have been discussed. It remains now to consider its effects on the frontier communities.

It has been indicated that at the time when Governor Van Plettenberg proclaimed the Fish River boundary there were many Amaxosa who lived far to the west of that river. Up to that time the Boers had no governmental backing to drive Amaxosa across the Fish. They had therefore limited their action to extirpating them from what they (the Boers) considered their farms. And the Amaxosa had steadfastly resisted these claims.

In their attempt to identify the causes of this first breach of the peace both Walker⁴⁵ and MacMillan⁴⁶ mention the fact that some Boers had driven one of the Xosa chiefs across the Fish

45. Walker, E.A. A History of Southern Africa p.115

46. MacMillan W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.46

with unnecessary violence. Landdrost De Wet⁴⁷ on receiving reports of the fighting in March 1779 passed them to Government and Council at Cape Town with the following comment: "From the first letter the Council will perceive that these hostilities are chiefly caused by the violence and annoyances committed against the Kaffirs by inhabitants, with respect to which they had complained to the Field Sergeant, that Willem Prinsloo, sen., had taken possession of some of their cattle, and, also of Marthinus Prinsloo, by whom or by some of his companions, during a journey into kaffir-land, one of the subjects of Captain Gaggabie was killed. It is by no means improbable that their complaints and accusation are more or less founded in fact, for the natural disposition of the Kaffirs, however revengeful it may on the one hand be, is, on the other, not so cruel as to provoke them to such daring attempts without just cause. It is meanwhile certain that most of the family of W. Prinsloo, sen., are mischievous inhabitants of that country, who cause disquiet, and will not fail to do all that is possible to have the Kaffirs removed thence, in order to enlarge the extent of their own farms".⁴⁸

Landdrost Woeke (Graaff-Reimet) makes the same point in his letter of November 1786. While reporting a friendly message from one of the Xosa chiefs, he observed: "but, Sir, this friendship will not be of long continuance, for, I regret to have to report that on the 4th October last, on the farm of R. Carelse,

47. De Wet was Landdrost at Swellendam. The reports he had received were from Field Sergeant Josua Joubert, who had led the Commando attack on Amaxosa.

48. Moodie, D. The Record, III p.93.

during his absence at Cape Town, one of his Hottentots, by order of the Bastard Jacobus, shot a Kaffir who was attempting to steal a sheep -----which event has given much alarm to the Kaffir chief Langa, whose subject the deceased was, and who de facto demands that the perpetrator may be given up to him, or that he may have satisfaction." The Landdrost, then, in an apparent reference to the causes of the 1779 war proceeds: "This occurrence resembles that which happened in the year 17-- , and when, as the undersigned well remembers, Willem Prinsloo, under the pretext that Kaffirs had stolen a sheep from him, shot one of them, on which the Kaffirs rose and made an attack upon the inhabitants, the result of which was a fearful slaughter of the Kaffirs, and the ruin of many of the inhabitants, and what now is expected from the Kaffirs?"⁴⁹

These extracts seem to leave no doubt that among the Boers there were some, at least, who not only took cattle from Amaxosa by force but actually shot some of them (Amaxosa) " to have the Kaffirs remove from thence (that is, Bruintjies Hoogte) in order to enlarge the extent of their farms." Now, seizure of cattle and shedding of blood to the Bantu mind was an act of war. And the Amaxosa were not long in responding to the challenge. In December 1779 they banded themselves into a war party, raided Boer farms and seized cattle. This action was described by Boers as an act of stealing. In fact the raid was retaliatory military measure. In view of widespread misunderstanding of cattle-raids and other Bantu military measures among South African historians a

49. Moodie, D. The Record, p.93. N.

brief description of Bantu system of warfare appears necessary.⁵⁰

Before Difecane revolution total warfare was unknown among the Southern Bantu. Devastating wars involving movements of great masses of people and large scale destruction of human life and property were of much later development. Traditional warfare was a limited operation, whether in terms of objectives, conduct or damage.

Occasions for war were many and varied. Wars were either premeditated or accidental. Among the former may be included wars which arose from a desire by one chiefdom to impose its overlordship on another; from a desire by a weaker chiefdom to throw off its vassalage relationship with the stronger one; from succession disputes which more often than not led to splits within chiefdom and to break-aways and factional fighting; from the refusal by one community to give up refugees from another; from sheer desire by one community to extirpate its neighbour in order to extend its territory; or from a desire by a famished community to help itself to the cattle and grainstores of another.

50. For much of the information contained in this account I have depended on my own recollections of elders' stories during my boyhood. My village 'Ga Laka', was a small one and the validity of the accounts cannot empirically be shown to be representative of the entire Southern Bantu. But if it is accepted that the Southern Bantu, broadly speaking, had similar social institutions it could be reasonably inferred that other Southern Bantu groups had similar social practices. As for 'Letsholo' and circumcision practices I have had personal experience both as an initiate and official. Between 1947 and 1954 I participated in many 'Letsholo' parties. In 1947 I was an initiate in a circumcision school. In 1951 I was an official in another session of circumcision school.

Sometimes ambitious individuals, usually princes and influential personalities who aspired to the throne, called out their followers and led them on cattle raid missions against neighbouring communities in order to enhance their positions in their own communities. On all these occasions war was premeditated and attack carefully prepared.

Among wars which were accidental may be included occasions when a migrating community might unexpectedly stumble into another's territory. Here the intruding group might overrun the local community in order to seize cattle or grain stores. Or, the intruders might overrun the local inhabitants in order to extirpate them and settle in the area themselves. On the other hand the 'indigenous' community might attack the wanderers purely from defensive considerations.

When a war had been premeditated and attack prepared before hand mobilisation was a simple matter. Since there were no standing armies and communities were normally small, royal heralds went round the districts or wards calling out all able-bodied men to muster at a specific spot, usually the Royal Residence. Thereupon each and every man grabbed his weapons and rushed out. In a matter of hours respective age-regiments would be gathered at the Royal Court where a special doctor performed war rituals to 'nerve' them for battle. This would be followed by a brief address from the Chief who was also the Commander-in-Chief. The troops would then commence their march to the battle-field. The chief assumed over-all command, though

he might entrust the actual conduct of operations to a trusted son or distinguished and reputed war lord. In the event of sudden attack mobilisation was much the same except that warriors rushed out of their houses straight to battle and that every member of the community played the role of a herald, relaying news of the attack from district to district.

Bantu strategy and tactics were simple. They consisted of surprise dawn attack in what among Basotho was known as 'Lenaka' horn formation. The attacking troops mustered in great mass at some distance from the enemy camp or settlement. At an order to advance one or two regiments, usually comprising of the younger bloods, darted out in right and left flanking movements in the shape of cows' horns, while the older regiments brought the rear. Meanwhile the left and right 'horns' stopped short of meeting, thus leaving a retreat line for the enemy. Depending on the odds between victory and defeat the enemy would fight or retreat. If the latter course was adopted the attackers would then limit their operations to rounding up cattle, looting and distroying property. This explains why pre-Shakan wars entailed less bloodshed. Weaker combatants could always escape. Their severest losses were in cattle and other forms of property.

There is a tendency to attribute the origins of the cows' horn formation to Shakan military revolution. Omer-Cooper, one of the first European historians to attempt a break with the Eurocentric tradition of South African historiography, writes: "As this formation was also employed by the Ngoni who fled to the

north after defeat by Shaka, it is reasonable to assume that it was employed in his time". I have found no grounds for this assumption. On the contrary there are indications that the method was widely in use long before Shakan upheavals in the first two decades of the 19th century. The method was used by hunting parties both at 'Letsholo' and circumcision schools. Unlike in war, however, during hunting the two 'horns' met, resulting in complete encirclement of a defined area or bush. The circle would then gradually converge towards the centre, killing any game that might be trapped in it. When Shaka introduced the new military system one of his first acts was to abolish circumcision among Amazulu. Now, both 'Letsholo' and circumcision were ancient institutions of the Southern Bantu, and if they used 'the cows' horn' formation it stands to reason that the system was older than Shaka. Could the method, as the present researcher saw it, have crept into Basotho hunting practices after Shakan revolution? In view of the fact that both the Basotho and Amaxosa never adopted any of Shakan tactics it is difficult to see how they could have adopted the 'cow's horn' formation in their hunting practices. The truth of the matter appears to be that the method was as ancient as the hunting practices of the Southern Bantu. It was applied, in a modified form, to warfare, where it took the form of a semi-circle to allow the enemy retreat line. What Shaka did was to adopt the hunting version of the method and to apply it to warfare in its perfected form. This was in line with his new system of 'total war' in which all men, women and children were killed and property destroyed or carried off as booty.

The basic weapon of the Southern Bantu was the assegai, a long javellin-like spear which was hurled at the enemy from a distance of up to fifty yards. Each soldier when going to war carried up to five assegais and cow-hide shield. It is obvious that after throwing all his assegais at the enemy the soldier would find himself disarmed. At this juncture he depended on those which had been hurled at him by the enemy, which he picked and in turn hurled back. This mode of warfare reduced battles to no more than assegai exchanging exercises with limited if any bloodshed. The exchange of assegais usually went on until one side felt exhausted and broke battle.

In addition to the assegai the warriors carried a Knobkerrie and (in the case of Basotho) a battle-axe. These were used in close combat situations or hand to hand fighting. Also assegais were often broken short and used as stabbing weapons in similar situations. While battles seldomly lasted for more than few hours long wars seldomly lasted for more than a few weeks.

From this brief outline it is evident that the 'thieving and plundering' charges which Europeans freely levelled against Amaxosa derived from a lamentable lack of understanding of the Bantu mode of warfare. Seizure of cattle, destruction or looting of property, burning down of homesteads and shedding blood where resistance was encountered, were accepted methods of warfare. It was a cardinal principle of Bantu warfare that women and children were never molested. Had European officials (and their historians who recorded their epics in the wilds of Africa) understood this principle they would have realised that

the Amaxosa raids were not just predatory acts of 'theft, plunder and murder' but determined acts of war. They would also have known that the Amaxosa did not spare the lives of European women, children and missionaries because of their idiotic kindness but because they respected their own sense of the morality of war. Europeans often attributed the safety of their women and children to 'miraculous escape'. They could not bring themselves up to accept the fact that the 'treacherous and irreclaimable savage' could show such 'civilised behaviour'.

Soon after the Amaxosa raid of December 1779 the Boers from Brintjies Hoogte and Swellendam districts banded themselves into a commando and attacked them.⁵¹ Figures for the relative strengths of the combatants are not available, but it may be assumed that the Boers were outnumbered. An additional advantage on the side of Amaxosa was that they fought on familiar terrain. But these military advantages were more than neutralised by Europeans' firearms and horses. The flint-locks gave the Boers a longer killing range while the horses gave them swifter mobility. The Amaxosa, who are entirely infantry and armed with assegais, were by far less than a match for the Boers.

The war itself was a series of skirmishes the last of which was in 1781. Exact casualty figures are not available, but it appears that the Amaxosa had the worst of the war. Many Amaxosa were killed and a large number of their cattle captured.

51. Moodie, D. The Record, pt III., p.97.

On July 20, 1781, Van Jaarsveld, Commandant and leader of the Boer commando reported to Government: "Dismissed the commando as this expedition is so far executed".⁵² The object of the commando had been to enforce Van Plettenberg Treaty, that is, to expel the Amaxosa across the Fish River. Whether or not that object was achieved has been a matter for debate. Van Jaarsveld himself has never claimed that he had expelled all the Western Amaxosa beyond the Fish. At any rate, from his report there is no conclusive evidence that the 'colony' had been cleared of all Amaxosa.⁵³ The truth seems to be that having suffered reverses the Amaxosa retreated into inaccessible recesses of the country and avoided any contact with Van Jaarsveld's commando. Thereupon, it was assumed that they had crossed the Fish River into 'their own country'. This assumption was tempting, in view of the smallness of the commando; and it is plausible that some of the Amaxosa, in the face of troubled conditions, did in fact retire beyond the river for security. But it can hardly be said that the 'colony' was cleared completely. As MacMillan says "in a wide, almost trackless bush country, with a very sparse and scattered population no expulsion could have been so thorough as to necessitate any stealthy creeping back. It is obvious that, while in this first war the Xosa were sharply punished, the Zuurveld must have been only temporarily and very partially cleared of its Xosa population".⁵⁴ The 1779-1781 war therefore was anything but conclusive. It left many Amaxosa still

52. Ibid, pt.III, p.111

53. Moodie D. The Record, Pt.III pp.110-112 (Van Jaarsveld Report).

54. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.46

established in what was considered 'colonial territory'. And only eleven years later, in 1793, the second war was fought far to the west of the Fish River.

The 1779-81 war not only left Amaxosa still established on 'colonial' territory, but it destroyed any chances for future improvement of black-white relations on the frontier. In the decade following the war interaction between Amaxosa and the Boers appears to have been limited. The Amaxosa appear to have maintained some aloofness, though a few were in the habit of "visiting their Boer 'friends' and begging - or demanding - hospitality and presents from them."⁵⁵ The result of that aloofness was a cut-down in the volume of barter trade. The Amaxosa enthusiasm to barter away cattle might have slackened because of the ill-will generated by the war that had just ended or because many of them were being impoverished and rapidly becoming cattleless. Be that as it may, the slump in trade pushed the Boers to resort to 'Faust Recht' to obtain cattle from Amaxosa.

The chief Boer complaint during this period was that some of their cattle were still in the possession of Amaxosa. Presumably the Boers were referring to cattle which were supposed to have been captured by Amaxosa during the last war. On June 14, 1783 Adriaan Van Jaarsveld, the principal Government representative and Commandant on the frontier, wrote to the Landdrost and Krygsraad, Stellenbosch, reporting that the Prinsloo brothers had told him in

55. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.15

the presence of witnesses that "they must have back their cattle which were still in Kaffirland."⁵⁶ On July 30, 1784, C. Botma wrote and circulated a letter "by order of the Commandant" (that is, Van Jaarsveld) in which he ordered the Boers to go out on a commando on September 15. All who had been plundered by the Kaffirs had to turn out. When the expedition had arrived in Tambookieland (that is, Amaxosa country) "everyone will be permitted to hire that nation and to barter cattle."⁵⁷ (Van Jaarsveld denied that he had given this order). In 1788 a Graaff-Reinet official wrote to Cape Town stating that "some of the inhabitants here have already for a long time wished to pick a quarrel with this nation (the Amaxosa) in order that, were it possible, they might make a good loot, since they are always casting covetous eyes on the cattle the Kaffirs possess."⁵⁸ It is evident from these extracts that the belligerent insistence by the Boers to "have back our cattle" was no more than a pretext to attack Amaxosa in order to make a good loot of their cattle.

The reasons given by the Boers for their desire to attack Amaxosa are unconvincing. It is true that in December 1779 the latter had raided Europeans' farms and seized cattle. The actual number involved is not known. Between December 1779 and March or April 1780, however, the Boers called out a commando and attacked the Amaxosa. They captured "a considerable

56. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.12

57. Ibid. p.12

58. Ibid. p.10

quantity of horned cattle which, they had divided among themselves."⁵⁹ Again, in May 1781, Commandant Van Jaarsveld, in a series of commando attacks captured 5,500 cattle from Amaxosa. On the other hand there is nothing to indicate that after their initial raid in December 1779 the Amaxosa had captured any more cattle from the Boers. If the Amaxosa were still in possession of Boer cattle in 1783 the numbers could not have been large enough to justify the Boer belligerent insistence to "have back our cattle".

Although Boer reports of 'stock-thefts' and hostile intentions of the Amaxosa in the period 1781-1790 tended to be regarded by officials as 'not very reliable',⁶⁰ from the latter date the Amaxosa appear to have intensified their attacks on Boer farms. Boer complaints about stock-lifting became more numerous and articulate: "The Kaffirs steal our cattle by tens and twenties;" "The Kaffirs daily steal our cattle".⁶¹ The majority of the reports, however, were more precise. The Boers alleged that in the period January 1, 1790 - May 1793, they suffered a total loss of 493 cattle stolen, 2 sheep stolen or 'Assegaied' and 8 Khoikhoi herdsmen killed by the Amaxosa.

Whether these statistical returns represent an honest approximation to the truth it is difficult to say. But, even allowing for the possibility that some of the losses might not have been reported, or that some of the reports may have got lost, the figures as they stand are not alarming. Spread over the whole

59. Moodie, D. The Record, Pt.III p.95 (Extract Resolution)

60. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.22-23

61. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.18

period of three-and-half years they represent the annual loss of about twelve heads of cattle, though the impact could be greater if the cattle were seized in one or two months.

Assuming that the returns were an honest approximation to the Boer losses, was the responsibility entirely imputable to the Amaxosa? As Mr. Barker of Theopolis, with reference to a later period, warned, "the sins of jackals, wolves and tigers were often laid on the backs of the Kaffirs."⁶² And also the sins of the Khokhoi, Mr. Barker might well have added. There is evidence that some of the 'depredations and murders' which tradition has invariably laid at the door of the Amaxosa were in fact committed by the Khoikhoi people. On July 5, 1789, J.J.F. Wagener, a government official, wrote to the Landdrost, Heemraden and Militia officers, Graaff-Reinet, stating that the trouble in the Zuurveld, in his opinion, "was mainly due to the Boers' Hottentot servants who had taken refuge in large numbers with Chief Shaka and were seeking to avenge themselves on the Boers for real or imagined injuries."⁶³ On July 28, 1790, Lucas Meyer reported to the Landdrost a theft and suggested that it was probably "perpetrated by the rascally Gonaquas"⁶⁴ (a Khoikhoi clan). On December 18, 1792, C. Van Rooyen reported on a commando operation "against certain Hottentots who lived in the bush west of the lower Fish and had committed murders and depredations."⁶⁵

62. MacMillan, W.M. The Cape Colour Question, p.239

63. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.22

64. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.22

65. Ibid.

It is not argued here that the Amaxosa were completely innocent of the charges levelled against them. The figures cited above testify to the fact that in the period 1790 - May 1793 the Amaxosa intensified their raids and attacks on Boer farms. Nonetheless the extracts just cited leave no doubt that they (Amaxosa) were not entirely responsible for all the Boer losses during this period. Seen in this light the statistical returns for the Boer losses are even less impressive to justify the Boer attack that took place in May, 1793.

In addition to complaints about stock-lifting, the Boers accused Amaxosa of letting their cattle eat up pasturage. "They are overrunning our farms,"⁶⁶ "they lie with their cattle on and around our farms so that they are grazed bare and there remain no pasture for our stock."⁶⁷ After his 1792 visit to some of Amaxosa chiefs, Hurter noted in his diary that he told them (chiefs) that the Boers had to pay for their farms and that "the Kaffirs let the grass be eaten up by their herds."⁶⁸ That the Amaxosa grazed their cattle on what the Boers considered 'our farms' there can be little room for doubt. What is certainly doubtful is the legitimacy or legal basis on which the Boer complaints were based. In view of the differing standards in concepts of land-holding and use between the two races it is

66. Petition signed C. Van Rooyen & others to Landdrost and Krygsraad, G.R., Jan.19, 1792 (cited by Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p. 23)

67. Ibid. pp.23-24

68. Hurter's Diary, 14th - 29th, 1792 (G.R.1/9). Quoted by Marais, J.S. Ibid.p.23.

doubtful whether the Amaxosa recognised any Boer claims to exclusive rights to land. Indeed the Amaxosa must have listened to Boer complaints with flabbergasted amazement, for, they knew nothing of exclusive individual rights in matters of land. They knew only unsufruct, and according to that, cattle could be grazed and watered anywhere where there was grass and water. The Boer complaints must have been even more puzzling to them since in those days the alleged Boer 'farms' were not fenced. The Amaxosa must have wondered where a 'Boer farm' started and ended. The 1793 war, provided always that the Boer grievances regarding grazing rights can be shown to have been serious enough to justify war, was due partly, at least, to the conflicting concepts about land. Nor can the war be blamed on the Amaxosa who were behaving in accordance with their established law and custom. The Europeans' complaints were tantamount to a demand that Amaxosa remove from their lands. Evidently the Boers also intended to use these bickerings as a pretext for an attack on Amaxosa.

Another Boer complaint was that Amaxosa were destroying or scaring away the game. This seemingly naïve accusation often led to violent out-rages perpetrated by some of the Europeans against Amaxosa hunters. Towards the end of the 1793 war two of Chief Langa's sons told Landdrost Faure of Swellendam that "the burgher, R. Campfer, on a certain day before the outbreak of the war, when chief Langa had come to him from hunting, locked him up in the house and would force him to barter cattle."⁶⁹

69. All these citations are found in Faure's Diary. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.24.

On a certain day while they were hunting Lucas Meyer fired among them but hit no one. Noeka, Chief Mazera's messenger, declared that "J. Bezuidenhout, on a certain day when the Kaffirs of Mazera were hunting, and had found a buffalo, fired among them with ball and took two of them prisoners, being Tjouka, son of Mazera and H. Noeka, son of the messenger, and in order to release them Mazera and Noeka were each obliged to give two oxen".⁷⁰

Here again the Boers were acting on the doubtful assumptions that they had exclusive rights to the hunting grounds in question. The charge that Amaxosa were destroying or scaring away the game appears, however, to have been justified. There is evidence that they sometimes killed more than they could eat or skin.⁷¹ But the fact that the Amaxosa hunted and killed game on ill-defined 'farms' whose possession by Boers could not be proved before any law⁷² does not appear to have been the real issue. The evidence just cited would seem to indicate that some of the Boers used the hunting issue either to seize cattle, as the incidents involving Campfer, Meyer and Bezuidenhout testify, or to justify an attack on Amaxosa with the same object in view.

Finally, there were several Boers who accused Amaxosa of enticing their slaves and Khoikhoi servants to leave their service. There can be little doubt that many slaves and Khoikhoi servants

70. Marais, J.S. Maynier and First Boer Republic, p.24, N.39

71. Wilson, M. Thompson, L. (ed.) Oxford History of South Africa, p.235

72. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.16
Note.1 : "It may be assumed that several Boers had entered the Zuurveld without having farms registered."

absconded from their European masters and took refuge among the Amaxosa. But that the Amaxosa were enticing them to leave their masters' services was denied with ruthless logic by Chief Cungwa before Lucas Mayer in June 1790. The latter was demanding that the Chief hands over the fugitives. The intractable Chief retorted "Seeing that I have not enticed them away I need not return them".⁷³ Cungwa refused to surrender the runaways who he was keeping in his capital, Bucknas. Apart from moral considerations by which Amaxosa leaders felt themselves compelled to give protection to the runaway slaves and Khoikhoi there was material benefit to be derived from such a course of action. The fugitives often brought with them guns and the much needed knowledge of how to use these weapons of war. Europeans were probably worried more by this happening than the inconvenience of being without servants. Once seen in terms of Europeans' security, the absconding of slaves and Khoikhoi servants with guns in their hands and their being harboured by Amaxosa enemies, easily became 'casus belli' in the eyes of the Boers. I have found no evidence to support the charge that Amaxosa enticed Boer slaves and Khoikhoi servants.

I have dealt in some detail with the developments which led to the 1793 war as given by the Boers. I will now proceed to examine the Amaxosa view point. But before this it is necessary to point out briefly the state of mind of an average Boer on the frontier. Apart from what the Amaxosa were alleged to have been actually doing, Europeans on the frontier had fears as to what they might do. These imagined fears were often exacerbated by

73. Lucas Mayer to Landdrost & Heemraden, G.R. July 1, 1790 (G.R. 1/9) (cited by Marais, J.S. : Maynier and the First Boer Republic p.26

frequent rumours and scares for which the frontier was apparently highly susceptible. Towards the end of 1779 a number of Europeans fled from the vicinity of the Bushman's River because they feared an attack from Amaxosa.⁷⁴ No attack took place. In 1789, a Government official ordered Europeans most exposed to attack to draw together for mutual protection.⁷⁵ Again no attack took place. The significance of this general state of mind among the frontier Boers is that sometimes it led to rash measures against Amaxosa, thus giving the latter a deeper sense of grievance.

Now, the Amaxosa evidence! J.S. Marais has suggested that the Boer fears just outlined might have been stimulated by the knowledge that among them there were persons who had given provocation to Amaxosa.⁷⁶ We have already seen some of the alleged provocations by R. Campfer, Lucas Meyer and J. Bezuidenhout.⁷⁷ Other alleged acts of provocation were noted by Landdrost Faure on the same occasion. The two sons of Langa alleged that "W. Grobbelaar shot a young Kaffir of Langa's. Wynand Bezuidenhout shot a sister of the Kaffir, Malegas, for which offence he paid Langa an Ox." C. Botha was said to have shot "a Kaffir of the Captain Congo (Cungwa) named Makilo". "C. Bezuidenhout locked Captain Congo (Cungwa) in the mill, and under severe threats ordered him to turn it in person."⁷⁸ Soon after the war Maynier, the Landdrost

74. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.26

75. Ibid

76. Ibid, p.28

77. See above pp. 38-39

78. All these citations are found in Faure's Dairy (translated and reprinted by Moodie, D. in *Afschriften*.) It is quoted by J.S. Marais, Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.24 N

at Graaff-Reinet, gave a report on the causes of the conflict. He stated that during an attack on the Amaxosa, certain Boers, among whom were three Veldwachtmeesters, had heard the Amaxosa call out "that if the burghers Coenraad de Buys, Coenraad Bezuidenhout, and Christoffel Botha (who were the chief causes of the war, having taken thier women and used them as their concubines) were banished from the colony, then hostilities would cease".⁷⁹ During the latter half of 1793 Chief Langa told Landdrost Maynier that as far as he was concerned "the hostilities against the Christians (i.e. Europeans) were due entirely to the malpractices of Coenraad de Buys, who had taken forcible possession of his wife and used her as his concubine."⁸⁰ Maynier was also told by "two other chiefs how de Buys withheld the Kaffir wives and cattle."⁸¹ "When he was in Kaffirland de Buys took such cattle as he fancied out of the Kaffir Kraals and had them driven to his farm, and when the Kaffirs complained, he made them lie on the ground and beat them almost to death. He had ordered the Hottentots Piqueur and Plaatjie to shoot among the Kaffirs, of whom the former killed five and the latter four".⁸²

Now, like the Boer evidence, already noted, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which these accusations were an honest approximation to the truth. They, nevertheless testify to the existence of habits of violence among some of the Boers.

79. Resolutions, May 9, 1794, (C.106, p.191)

80. Ibid, p.190

81. Ibid, p.188

82. Annexure No.6 to Report on Causes of 1793 war, being declaration by Bastard G. Coetzee, dated May 25, 1793 (cited by Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.30-31

The fact that Amaxosa could single out some of them by name and report unfavourably against them is an indication that there was intimate but unhappy interaction between the two racial groups. Yet, except in time of war, physical violence against the persons of Europeans by Amaxosa was a rare occurrence in the frontier history. In the period July 1781 to April 1793 no European was reported killed by Amaxosa on the eastern frontier. The evidence given by Amaxosa points to the fact that Boers engaged in acts of violence for one or the other of the following reasons. Some of the Boers, it would appear, used force to make Amaxosa barter cattle. The incident involving Chief Langa and R. Campfer (above pp.38-39) clearly illustrates this point. Others framed up triffling charges against the Amaxosa and then threatened violence to make Amaxosa pay them in cattle. J. Bezuidenhout's seizure of Chief Mazera's and Naeka's children is the case in point. The chief and his messenger were "each obliged to give two oxen" to have their sons released. After accusing Lucas Meyer of shooting among a group of Amaxosa hunters, the two sons of Chief Langa alleged that "whenever they said he gave them too few beads for cattle, he took them (the cattle) by force."⁸³ In the extreme cases the Boers, it would appear, simply drove away Amaxosa cattle without paying or compensating the owners. According to a declaration made by the christianised Bastard, G. Coetzee on May 25, 1793, whenever he was in 'Kaffirland' Coenraad de Buys, a ruffian of Herculean strength and undoubted abilities, "took such cattle as he fancied out of the Xosa

83. Moodie, D.: Afschriften (quoted by Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the first Boer Republic, p.24)

Kraals, had them driven to his farm, and when the Kaffirs complained, he made them lie on the ground and beat them almost to death."⁸⁴ It is noteworthy that in all the three instances just cited the Boers involved obtained or attempted to obtain cattle from the Amaxosa. This seems to give added weight to my suggestion that the Boers wanted war with Amaxosa in order to seize cattle. Colonel Collins, writing sixteen years later, stated that "some connoisseurs prefer the Kaffir breed of cattle to the Colonial."⁸⁵ The seizing and withholding of Amaxosa women as well as shooting Amaxosa and manhandling their chiefs (Langa and Cungwa) were all acts of criminals whose intentions were to provoke hostilities "in order that, were it possible, they might make a good loot, since they are always casting covetous eyes on the cattle the Kaffirs possess."⁸⁶ And also on the lands the Amaxosa possessed, the Graaff-Reinet official just quoted might well have added. I have stated (supra p.16) that the Boers were cherishing hopes that some day they would possess themselves of the richer and well-watered lands across the Fish River. In the years immediately preceding the 1779-81 war and during the course of that war nearly all Boer farms were to the west of the Bushman's River in the south, around Brintjies Hoogte in the north. Most of the clashes

84. Annexure No.6 to Maynier's Report on the causes of 1793 war. (quoted by Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.31)

85. Records of the Cape Colony. Vol. VII p.68 (quoted by Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.23 Note. 29)

86. Letter quoted by Vander Merwe, P.J. Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaap-kolonie, pp.293-294.

with Amaxosa occurred in these areas, though there were occasional clashes as far west as the Sunday's, or even the Zwartkops rivers. Between 1790 and May 1793, however, the area of greatest friction was between the lower Fish and Bushman's rivers, especially in the region of Kowie-Kariga rivers. The shift in the scene of conflict attests to the fact that in the years 1781-90 the Boers had been penetrating farther east in the Amaxosa territories. Boer eastward expansion was continuing.

In March 1792 a number of Boers asked for permission to cross the Fish River boundary and spend the winter in 'Kaffirland' with their stock "on account of the severe drought". At first Landdrost Woeke refused this request "because it was against the law."⁸⁷ In July, however, Woeke allowed some of them to cross over. In September 1792 Veldwachtmeester P.M. Bester asked for permission for himself and his neighbours to cross the boundary "since many of their cattle had already died as a result of drought."⁸⁸ In January, 1793 Acting Landdrost Van Baalen reported that "some of the Boers were continually but in vain pestering him to allow them to cross the Fish", adding that Bester had informed him that "some of his (Bester's) people had crossed over."⁸⁹ In his official report on the 1793 war Maynier submitted a list of 28 Boers "who had crossed the boundary into Kaffirland and stayed there a long time with their cattle".⁹⁰ In about July 1796 the Boers petitioned the new British administration at the Cape to allow

87. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.32-33.

88. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.33

89. Ibid

90. Ibid

them to occupy farms beyond the boundary "unto the Koonab, or it may be even unto the Kat."⁹¹ Governor Craig's reply was firm but not without humour, at least from the point of view of the Boers who must have been amused to hear that 'Kaffir' rights to property were worthy of any respect: "With what face can you ask me to allow you to occupy lands which belong to other people? What right can I have to give you the property of others, and what blessing or protection could I expect from God were I to cause or even to encourage such a gross and glaring act of injustice? Reflect for a moment on what would be your own sensations were you to hear that I was even debating on a proposal -- to turn you out of your farms, and to give them to others."⁹²

From what has been said so far the essential features of the frontier situation in the period 1781-93 are as follows:

1. In the ten years following the 1779-81 war the Amaxosa either because of progressive impoverishment or because of the ill-will generated by that war or both, were reluctant to barter away cattle;
2. The Boers who could scarcely survive without cattle determined to obtain them from the Amaxosa by war and rapine whilst at the same time extirpating the latter from their lands;

91. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VIII, p.179

92. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VIII, p.179

3. From 1790 the Amaxosa, threatened with poverty and loss of independence, reacted by intensifying their raids and attacks on Boer farms and homes partly to recoup themselves for lost cattle and partly to compel the Boers to move away from their territories.

Then on May 18, 1793, a Boer, Barend Lindeque, led a commando attack on Amaxosa villages in the vicinity of the Bushman's River. War duly began. Lindeque's commando was joined by Ndlambe, a prominent chief from across the Fish River. Ndlambe's action was extraordinary if not puzzling. As will be seen later, his later political career shows that he was the most bitter opponent of Europeans on the frontier. Why did he ally himself with the Boers against fellow Amaxosa? According to J.S. Marais, "Since 1780 Rarabe, the Paramount Chief of the western Xhosa, and his successor, Ndlambe, had held periodical communication with Boer Veldwachtmeesters on the subject of an attack on the Colonial Xhosa, whom these chiefs professed to regard as their revolted subjects."⁹³ In support of this statement Marais cites Van Jaarsveld's letter written in June or July 1780 and addressed to the Landdrost, Heemraden and Militia Officers, Stellenbosch. Allusion to this letter is made in Extract Records of Landdrost, Heemraden, and Militia Court, Stellenbosch: "and how the furthest distant Chief of that nation (Amaxosa) named Gagabie (Rarabe) had requested the aid of inhabitants, (Boers) to attack the said hostile captains, (western Amaxosa chiefs on "colonial" territory)

93. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.40

who are properly his subjects and in rebellion against him, with a combined force, and compel them to submit to him, offering friendship and peace upon a permanent footing".⁹⁴ This evidence seems to leave no doubt that Rarabe and Ndlambe did entertain plans to attack the Western Amaxosa cheifdoms, and probably explains Ndlambe's alliance with Lindeque in May 1793. What is not so certain, however, is the extent to which those plans represented the original thinking of the two chiefs. Segmentation and fission was a recognised political process among Southern Nguni. Once a section of the community had successfully broken away and established a separate chiefdom hardly any effort was made on the part of the parent community to bring it back into the fold, least by force of arms. The usual procedure was to recognise the new polity and to rank its political status and seniority vis-a-vis the parent community.⁹⁵ This practice would seem to make it unlikely that Rarabe or Ndlambe could have contemplated an attack on the Western chiefdoms without some 'engineering' by external interests. Moreover, the two chiefs must have known that the return of "their revolted subjects" was certain to revive the old feuds and shake the stability of their governments.

94. Moodie, D. The Record, Pt.III, p.96 (Extract Records)

95. The segmentary and Fissionary nature of Amaxosa society is analysed by W.D. Hammond-Tooke in Africa, Vol.35, No.2, 1965 and by Gerrit Harinck in L.M. Thompson (edited) African Societies in Southern Africa, p.144.

The argument that there was external 'engineering' is all the more cogent when one takes into account the character of Commandant Adriaan Van Jaarsveld, the principal Government representative and most experienced fighter on the frontier. In August 1775 while on a commando against the San in the Sneeuwberg district, Van Jaarsveld, after failing to establish contact with the elusive enemy, had 12 hippopotamuses killed and left on the banks of the Zeekoe River as bait. Soon after, a large number of the San gathered to feast on the carcasses. Van Jaarsveld's commando fell upon the party and killed at least 122 and took 18 prisoner. Only 8 escaped.⁹⁶ In June 1781 while on a commando against Amaxosa his party was surrounded and menaced by a strong Amaxosa armed force. He hastily collected all the tobacco from members of his commando, cut it into small pieces which he scattered on the ground some twelve yards away, inviting the Amaxosa to help themselves to this. As the latter rushed to pick it he ordered his commando to open fire, "killing the three chiefs and all their followers".⁹⁷ Van Jaarsveld's cunning character is evident! And the fact that Rarabe and Ndlambe began to contemplate on attacking the Western Chiefdoms in 1780 when he was in power on the frontier lends more weight to my view that his hand was behind the chief's 'plans'.

G. Thompson is more explicit on the matter: "The only thing worthy of notice that occurred during Gaika's minority

96. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.8.

97. Ibid. p.9.

(that is, during Ndlambe's regency) was an attack on the clan of Congo (Cungwa) at the instigation of the Dutch colonists. Congo was assailed on one side by 'S'lhambi, and on the other by the Boers at the same time, yet, though many of his followers were destroyed, he kept his ground in spite of his enemies".⁹⁸

In the circumstances it is plausible to suggest that Rarabe and Ndlambe had been duped into accepting the flattery that the Western Amaxosa were their subjects and as such should be compelled to return and submit to them (Rarabe or Ndlambe). Thus by artifice the Boers would have accomplished what they could not accomplish by their own arms.

Ndlambe's two-day alliance with the Boer commando marks the first instance of Bantu collaboration with Europeans in the history of the resistance. The commando killed several Amaxosa and captured about 800 cattle. The attackers also took prisoner one Khoikhoi, one adult Mxosa and six children.⁹⁹ The second attack, apparently in the same vicinity, took place on the 19th. The attacking force this time, however, consisted of Ndlambe's officers and men. The only Europeans who accompanied the force were Veldwachtmeester "C. Van Rooyen and four other Christians.¹⁰⁰ Again the attackers killed unspecified number of Amaxosa and captured 1,000 cattle. But apparently Ndlambe was attacked by the Western Amaxosa and forced to retreat. Barkhuyzen states that "This Cheif was attacked by the Colonial Xhosa, and thereupon

98. Thompson, G. Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, p. 441.

99. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.41.

100. Ibid.

retreated to his own country".¹⁰² It was apparently during this retreat that the Boer debacle occurred. The Boers seeing "Ndlambe's great force" retreat before the infuriated Western Amaxosa realised the danger, and instead of coming to their allies' assistance, they stampeded in disarray and left Lindeque, "so that the hostile Kaffirs may now murder and rob as they please".¹⁰³ As for Ndlambe when he saw that "the Dutch would not help him to fight" he returned "to his place beyond the Great Fish River".¹⁰⁴ Thus Barend Lindeque's commando collapsed "leaving the country as far as the Zwartkops River to the pleasure of the infuriated enemy".¹⁰⁵

The Boers now began to flee from the Zuurveld. Over 50 wagon loads of Boers fled beyond the Zwartkops River. Others went north to the upper Fish and the Bruintjies Hoogte region. Meanwhile the Amaxosa swept the whole country between the Fish and Zwartkops rivers killing at least six Europeans and an unknown number of their Khoikhoi retainers. Many homesteads (farm-houses) were raided and burnt down; the amount of stock captured is unknown.¹⁰⁶

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102. This statement is found in Moodie, D. Afschriften (quoted by Marais)
103. J. du Plessis to Landdrost, May 30, 1793 (Moodie, Afschriften, Quoted by Marais)
104. Ibid.
105. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.41
106. Theal gives captured stock as: 65,327 cattle, 11,000 sheep, 200 horses. But Monica Wilson (Oxford History, p.242) quotes the same figures with reference to the 1779-81 war. J.S. Marais (Maynier and the First Boer Republic) says these figures actually represent losses sustained by Boers throughout the 1793 war, page 4. Campagne puts number of cattle lost by Boers at about 50,000, (V.C. 76, pp.222-224) Quoted by Marais.

In the second half of May 1793, the Landdrost at Graaff-Reinet learned of the outbreak of hostilities and of the flight of the Boers. He hastily formed a four-man Commission led by himself to visit the Zuurveld, the scene of trouble. The Commission left Graaff-Reinet about the 18th June, taking with it presents to appease the Amaxosa leaders. The Amaxosa chiefs, however, refused to meet the Commission despite the latter's effort to get in touch with them. Thereupon the Commissioners sent their trusted Khoikhoi, Willem Haasbek to offer the Chiefs peace. Haasbek carried out his mission but the chiefs rejected the offer. Towards the end of July the Commission, still in the Zuurveld, was told that Amaxosa soldiers were attacking more Boer settlements, killing Boers and destroying property. The Commissioners hastily called out a commando, but could collect only 117 men - 80 Boers and 37 Khoikhoi. The 117-men force crossed the Fish and met Amaxosa force on the left bank of that river. Although the Amaxosa, we are told, lost 40 men killed,¹⁰⁷ they successfully prevented the enemy from driving away 2,000 cattle in their possession. The Amaxosa, who had 16 guns in their possession, "had occupied the fords in such strength that the (Boer) officers of the commando decided that it was not advisable to drive the recaptured cattle¹⁰⁸ through the river".¹⁰⁹ On capitulating Maynier, the Landdrost, and the Boer officers agreed that another and stronger commando should be called to commence operations in August 1793. Landdrost Maynier and his fellow

107. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.44
Neither Marais nor any other historian of this period has given us European casualty figures on this occasion.

108. Apparently the cattle in question were Boer cattle captured by Amaxosa soldiers in the early stages of the fighting.

109. Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic. p.44

Commissioners dismissed the demoralised Boers and returned to Graaf-Reinet.

Why, it should be asked, did the Amaxosa not turn the Boer retreat into a rout and disaster? This would appear to be an instance of one of those failings of Amaxosa mode of warfare. Although their exact numerical strength is not known we may assume that it was overwhelmingly superior to that of the enemy. Yet, this way of reasoning entirely misses the point. Numerical superiority alone could not guarantee success against the discipline, speed and fire-power that training, horses and guns conferred upon the Europeans. The Amaxosa were aware of this purely military advantage in favour of the enemy. Hence they adopted a strategy that was a combination of both defensive and guerrilla warfare. The Europeans were to be attacked in isolated incidents and when they least expected. When they were on the offensive the Amaxosa would fight on the defensive, avoiding open confrontation as much as the laws of self-preservation dictated.

Meanwhile the central Government at Cape Town had heard about the fighting on the eastern frontier and had instructed Landdrost Faure of Swellendam to rush to the assistance of Graaff-Reinetters with as many men as he could collect. The Amaxosa were to be driven across the Fish. Compensation was to be obtained for the cattle and for any other losses that had been inflicted on the Boers. If the cattle captured on the western side of the boundary were not sufficient

to compensate the Boers the Amaxosa were to be followed across the Fish. An attempt was then to be made to obtain what was wanting by negotiation; and if it failed, the Amaxosa were to be attacked once more.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, on August 19, 1793, the Graaff-Reint Heemraden (Local Council) and Militia officers met and decided to call out a commando, with Maynier, the Landdrost, as the supreme Commander.¹¹¹ Maynier's force took the field on August 22, 1793. At about the same time a force of Swellendamers under L. de Jager marched from Zwartkops River to join Maynier. The combined commando with about 200 wagons crossed the Fish River and advanced as far east as the Buffalo River. There the Boers were met by an Amaxosa force of unknown strength and a bloody battle took place. According to Campagne "who was present at the battle"¹¹² a "large number"¹¹³ of Amaxosa were killed. Theal states that only 40 Amaxosa were killed. The Boer casualties were not given. The Europeans, according to J.S. Marais, captured about 8,000 cattle. The central Government had given instructions that there was to be as little bloodshed as possible and, in order to encourage the taking of prisoners, had promised a reward of ten rixdollars for every prisoner delivered at Cape Town.¹¹⁴ Maynier however fearing that

110. Resolutions, C.103, pp.225-235. Aug.12, 1793. (Quoted by J.S. Marais, Maynier p.455.

111. Minutes, Landdrost, Heemraden & Militia officers, G.R.1/1 pp.238-242, Aug.19, 1793.

112. Marais, J.S. Maynier & the First Boer Republic, p.46.Note.42

113. Campagne: Berigt, (Vic.76, pp.241-243 (Quoted by Marais, Maynier, p.46, Note.42.

114. Official Report on the War of 1793, (Quoted by J.S. Marais, Maynier, p.47.

the Amaxosa may be given cause "to wreak their vengeance on European women and children, who had up to the present not suffered from the fury of the Kaffirs" let the prisoners go, "with recommendations to keep the peace".¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, on October 11, 1793, Landdrost Faure's commando from Swellendam arrived in the vicinity of the Fish River where it was attacked and halted by Amaxosa detachments. Faure sent three Khoikhoi aides through the forests to inform Maynier of his arrival and to ask for assistance. Maynier, still in the Buffalo region, responded by ordering his commando to hurry back to Faure's assistance. J. S. Marais states that Maynier ordered his commando to retrace its steps "partly because the horses were in bad condition".¹¹⁶

Maynier's and Faure's commandoes effected a junction on October 23, 1793. They attacked Amaxosa in the region of the Fish-Keiskamma rivers. The casualties on both sides are not known. But J.S. Marais states that the Boears recaptured 2,000 Boer cattle and took prisoner "60 Kaffir women and children ---- as well as four Hottentots with guns who had absconded from their masters."¹¹⁷

115. Ibid

116. Marais, J.S. Maynier, p.47

117. Ibid. p.48

It will have been noticed that, with the exception of Barend Lindeque's attack on 18th May, all the engagements with the Boers took place on the eastern side of the Fish, the supposed official boundary between Amaxosa country and the colony. The Boers had left behind, within the colony, the main body of Amaxosa who were at war with them, and gone to attack the peaceful and unsuspecting Amaxosa of the east. On November 4, 1793, shortly before the cessation of hostilities, Landdrost Faure noted in his diary that "according to letters received from the Boers, the Xhosa were still plundering and murdering along the Bushman's, the Sunday and Zwartkops rivers, and that Hottentots were daily absconding and joining them".¹¹⁸ The commando had been given instructions by Central Government to drive Amaxosa beyond the Fish River.¹¹⁹ Who, it may be asked, were they driving across the Fish now? There is no evidence that the eastern Amaxosa were at war with the Europeans. I am inclined to think that the whole campaign to the Buffalo and back was a cattle-raid and not a war to drive the 'plundering and murdering' Amaxosa. Monica Wilson seems to confirm this view when she says: "The Xhosa raided cattle and horses from the farmers (Boers), and the farmers retaliated, not troubling greatly whether the cattle recovered were all originally their own or not. In 1793 Maynier from Graaff-Reinet raided as far east as the Buffalo".¹²⁰

118. Faure's Dairy (Vic. 68, pp.503, 509-11) Quoted by J.S. Marais: Maynier, p.48 N.54

119. Resolutions: C.103 pp.225-35. Aug. 12, 1793)

120. Wilson, M. & Thompson L (ed.) Oxford History of South Africa, p.237.

After the operation of their joint commands in the region of the Fish-Keiskamma rivers, Maynier and Faure suddenly decided to come to terms with the Amaxosa. As a token of good will they released the women and children that they had taken prisoner, "giving them presents to take to their chiefs, whom they were to invite to a conference with the Landdrosts".¹²¹ This time the Amaxosa accepted the offer, and peace negotiations followed. There was no full dressed conference of all the chiefs on one hand and the Boer leaders on the other. Peace talks were held and concluded with each individual chief separately. Between November 8, and November 25, 1793, peace was concluded with five chiefs: Thuli, Mazeram Kokatie, Nogora and Cungwa (the latter did not meet the Boer negotiators, but sent representatives). The Amaxosa leaders promised to recall all their troops from the various fighting zones and agreed, in future, to return any cattle lifted by their people from Europeans. They, however, refused to return Boer cattle captured during the war. They also agreed to "hand over runaway Hottentots with their guns".¹²² There is no indication that the Amaxosa leaders made any demands. Amaxosa did not, basically, object to Europeans living side by side with them, provided the latter did not occupy land and claim any exclusive individual rights. As regards other points of conflict they must have assumed that Europeans would now mend their ways. They could live in Bantu territories as sojourners, or permanently as subjects of the chiefs.¹²³

121. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the first Boer Republic, p.48

122. Ibid, p.49

123. This is the essence of usufruct practised in Bantu land tenure system.

On November 26, 1793, the two Landdrosts, Maynier and Faure, dismissed the Boer commando which had been encamped in the Assegai Bush, thus marking the end of the war.

Relatively the 1793 war was more severe than the previous one. But its abiding significance lies in the emergence of certain features which foreshadowed the nature of the conflict in the future. First, the issues involved begin to emerge in a more definitive and precise form. From the point of view of the Dutch colonists they were cattle and grazing land, both of which could be obtained from the 'Kaffirs'. "We must have back our cattle which are still in Kaffirland"¹²⁴ was the pretext given to attack Amaxosa and seize more and more cattle. "That we may be allowed to occupy farms "unto the Konap, or, it may be, even unto the Kat," the Boers requested Governor Craig in 1796. These demands were made on particular occasions, but they represented the basic needs which were being persistently sought, and for the acquisition of which the Boers were prepared to go to war.

For the Amaxosa the issue was equally simple: Independent existence defined in terms of land. "This tract of country is life to us, and if we were to be deprived of it we would lose our life,"¹²⁶ Chief Cungwa told a colonial Government Official in 1792. In later years other African leaders were to hub on

124. Marairs, J.S. Maynier and the first Boer Republic, p.12

125. MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton p.47

126. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.15

this same issue. "This land is mine. I won it in war, and I intend to keep it,"¹²⁷ Ndlambe's voice was heard in the Sunday River region in 1811. "Maqoma's heart was very sore about the land, the subject always set him on fire".¹²⁸ Sandile was more precise: "The patrimony of a chief is not cattle. It is land and men."¹²⁹ The point was made even more forcefully by Moshoeshe: "Cattle and horses are nothing; land is everything."¹³⁰ Thus, from the first Bantu leaders correctly diagnosed the problems of their new situation. Land was the prime condition of their independence.

From the point of view of military dynamics the 1793 war had none of the novelties of a modern war. The Amaxosa still mobilised and operated in poorly co-ordinated bands which were incapable of effectively occupying defined territory and maintaining a stand. Nevertheless there are indications that they were beginning to appreciate the military potential of guerrilla approach. Throughout the war they were everywhere and elusive. While the commandos were actively engaged in the Buffalo and Fish River regions we hear of reports that they were "plundering and murdering along the Bushman's and the Sunday's and Zwartkops rivers".¹³¹ Landdrost Faure, one of the Boer commanders during this war noted in his diary that forest terrain was their ally. Landdrost Maynier's commando had to abandon the 2,000 Boer cattle which it had recovered because it could not dislodge Amaxosa

129 Cory, G. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II p.451

130 Germond, R.C. Chronicles of Basutoland, p.19 (Introduction)

131 Above p. 56

from depths of the Fish River forest whence they made it impossible for Boers to drive the recovered cattle across the fords. After the war Landdrost Maynier stated in his official report that he had failed to carry out his instructions, namely, to drive Amaxosa across the Fish, "because these Kaffirs have scattered themselves almost throughout the entire land, and as soon as they are chased from one corner of this district they take refuge in another".¹³²

From the point of view of mobility and equipment the Amaxosa were entirely infantry and still relied on the assegai. From the returns of Boer losses already noted it is evident that the Amaxosa had not started 'stealing' horses. On the other hand the Amaxosa at the Fish River drifts, we are told, had 16 guns with them. Admittedly the guns were too few and it is doubtful whether the Amaxosa could fire them with any real accuracy. For the meantime, therefore, the Boer commandoes, entirely mounted and armed with guns, were by far more than a match in any open engagements. Amaxosa losses at the hands of the Boers at Buffalo testify to this point. But indications that Amaxosa were flexible and would sooner than later adapt their mode of warfare to the needs of the new military situation are unmistakable.

Like the previous one the 1793 war left the Amaxosa still firmly established on 'colonial' territory, but this time, with a proud sense of victory. After concluding what

132. Marais J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.50

"at the moment must appear an onerous peace" Maynier exclaimed: what was the good of continuing the "ruinous war".¹³³ What the Landdrost failed to grasp, however, was the significance of his Buffalo River expedition. The expedition was as politically disastrous as it was militarily inglorious. There is no evidence that the Eastern Amaxosa were initially actively engaged in the war against the Boers. Why were they attacked and their cattle taken away? To punish them for the 'sins' of their brothers, Maynier might have answered. But a further question as to what impression the punitive expedition left on Amaxosa minds of European intentions cannot be so easily disposed of. A conviction took root that Europeans intended to take away their cattle and drive them (Amaxosa) from their lands. Therein, as will be seen later, lay the seeds of the third war.

133 Marais, J.S.: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.50

II. THE FIRST BRITISH PERIOD : 1795 - 1803

The period November 1793 - April 1799 saw the occurrence of three major events which were to lead to the third outbreak of hostilities on the frontier. The first was the collapse of Maynier's 1793 Peace Settlement with the Amaxosa. The second was the Graaff-Reinet Boer rebellion, first in 1795 and again in 1799. As will be seen these two developments, though not causally related, were closely associated. The third event was the first British occupation of the Cape Colony, 1795. The decision by the British to invade and occupy the Cape was taken as a result of political and military developments in Europe. The wider significance of the occupation lay in the fact that it introduced a new and powerful factor in the black-white contest in South Africa. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to note that it marked the end of Company Government and a change of governmental setting against which the contest on the frontier would henceforth take place.

Considered from the point of view of the frontier community, black and white alike, Maynier's 1793 Settlement solved nothing. While it did not assure the Amaxosa of their continued and undisturbed occupation of their territories it spelt no guide-lines as to how the Boers would continue to obtain cattle and land. In other words, Maynier Settlement did not touch the heart of the problem. The best that could be expected from it was a partial lull.

In the event even a lull proved difficult to maintain. The Amaxosa kept up their sporadic raids and attacks on the Boers. Only a few days after the conclusion of the peace one Solomon Erasmus, a Boer, was killed by Amaxosa.¹³⁴ On December 18, 1793, scarcely a month after the conclusion of the peace, H. J. Van Rensburg reported that Cungwa's men were still "plundering and stealing".¹³⁵ By mid-February 1794 the Amaxosa had killed 3 Khoikhoi herdsmen and wounded one, lifted 531 Boer cattle, 9 sheep, 3 horses and assegaied 140 sheep and some horses.¹³⁶ In January 1794 Maynier himself had to authorise cammando operations "against the Kaffirs and Hottentots who have collected in the mountains of Gamtoos and Zwartkops rivers".¹³⁷ In the period February 16, 1794 - February 6, 1795 the Amaxosa killed 8 Khoikhoi herdsmen, overran 5 Boer farms, lifted 581 cattle, 2 sheep, and inflicted many more unspecified losses on the Boers.¹³⁸ From February 1794, scarcely three months after the conclusion of the peace, the Zuurveld Boers began to flee their farms. On August 10, 1794 Van Jaarsveld and one A.P. Burger wrote to the Central Government stating that "the whole of the so-called Zuurveld from the Great Fish River up to the Zwartkops River must now remain deserted and lost".¹³⁹ Evidently the Amaxosa never thought or expected that Maynier's Settlement would ameliorate their situation by way of easing Boer pressure on their territories. Hence their harassment of the Boers. Indeed, it could be said that by the first half of 1795, Maynier's Peace Settlement with them had broken down.

134 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.54

135 Ibid

136 Ibid

137 Ibid, p.55

138 Ibid, p.58

139 Ibid, p.59

The frontier Boers were similarly dissatisfied with the manner in which Maynier concluded the 1793 war. In mid-December 1793, hardly three weeks after the conclusion of the war, the Landdrost was confronted by Van Jaarsveld and the two Tregard brothers (Karel and Jacobus) who said they had been sent by the Boers to speak on their behalf. The Boers, the delegation told Maynier, were dissatisfied because "the commandos against the Xhosa had not carried out their task properly, since the enemy had not been sufficiently beaten and Boers' cattle had not been recovered". Some Boers, the delegation further declared, were threatening to "ride into Kaffirland to fetch their cattle and then abandon the country".¹⁴⁰ On June 16, 1794 four Boers forced their way into the Krygsraad meeting and told Maynier that "they wanted back their property that the Kaffirs had taken from them". J. Tregard, a member of the Krygsraad, burst in support of the protesters that the property "must be fetched with the sword".¹⁴¹ In June 1795 the same Jacobus Tregard was asked why the Boers were so restive. He replied that "it was all due to Maynier's conduct of the war against the Kaffirs; that he had made peace before the stolen cattle had been recaptured".¹⁴² What exactly did the Boers want? The evidence just adduced seems to leave no room for doubt that they wanted a commando attack on Amaxosa - to recover their cattle. The evidence also makes it clear that Maynier's Peace Settlement never meant anything to the Boers.

140. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.52

141. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.60

142. Ibid, p.61

The Boer discontent soon had its sequel in rebellion. Early in February Boer insurgents marched on Graaff-Reinet and drove Maynier from the drostdy. In the second week of June 1795 the Graaff-Reinet rebels set up a republican type of government and declared themselves loyal to the Estate General in Holland. In that same week Great Britain invaded the Cape. By mid-September the British had captured the Settlement. At first the Graaf-Reinent rebels refused to take oath of allegiance to new British government. It was not until July 1796 that the rebels submitted to the new administration, petitioning Governor Craig to allow them to occupy farms "unto the Konap, or, it may be, even unto the Kat".¹⁴³ This, of course, Craig refused to permit.

Meanwhile the Amaxosa suddenly slackened their raids and attacks on the Boers. This appears to have been the case during the period July 1795 to July 1797. Why, it should be asked, did they not take advantage of the divisions within the enemy's camp by intensifying attacks? At first this would appear to be one of those occasions where the Amaxosa failed to appreciate military situations that were in their favour. The Amaxosa apparently were aware that the Boer rebellion was about Government policy towards themselves. Interference on their part would therefore tend to unite the enemy. It is also possible that they had heard of the change of Government in Cape Town and that they thought it unwise to antagonise the new government which might adopt more sympathetic policies towards them. The two-year lull might also have been due to the fact that the Boers, preoccupied as they were

143. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.47

with the rebellion, caused Amaxosa less annoyances and provocation.

From July 1797, however, the Amaxosa appear to have resumed their attacks on the Boers. The Boer rebellion was over and the Amaxosa had probably realised that the British were pursuing the policies of their predecessors. Their fears must have been accentuated by the diplomatic pressure which the new Government exerted in an effort to persuade the Amaxosa to leave the 'colony'. In September 1797 two colonial Government envoys visited Chiefs Umlawo and Cungwa with the same object in view. They told the two chiefs that Landdrost Bresler had negotiated peace with Paramount Ngqika on their behalf, and that the Paramount had agreed to resettle them should they leave the colony and present themselves to him. The two envoys apparently thought a threat of force would produce the desired effect. They further told the two chiefs that should they refuse to comply the Government would "employ quite another force" (not commandos) against them", in which case they shall preserve not one single head of cattle". This apparently upset Chief Cungwa who angrily retorted: "No Landdrost knows to make peace among the Caffres and it is none of his business. The Caffres know one another, but the Landdrost does not know the Caffers". He brought the negotiations to an abrupt end by declaring that "he won't retreat but would continue to reside here in the Bucknas Wood, and that he won't speak any more about it".¹⁴⁴ Happenings such as this might well have given Amaxosa reason to suspect the new government's intentions.

144 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.98

In the period July 30, 1797 - March 30, 1799 the Amaxosa killed 2 Khoikhoi herdsmen and seized 441 Boer cattle.¹⁴⁵

Compared to the losses in the previous period, that is, 1794 - 1795, these figures indicate that the Amaxosa were relenting in their attacks. The reason for this might be that they received less provocation from the Boers. Towards the end of 1798 the latter appear to have been once more preoccupied with rebellious ideas.

Although there were deeper grievances the occasion for the 1799 Boer rebellion was the arrest of Van Jaarsveld on January 17, for forgery. A three-man guard escorting the criminal to Cape Town was intercepted by a party of 30 armed Boers under Marthinus Prinsloo. The Boers released Van Jaarsveld and took him to Prinsloo's farm. The rebellion which thus commenced lasted for scarcely three months. By March, 1799 the rebels had laid down their arms and surrendered to Brigadier-General Vandeleur, the British officer commanding Government troops. A few of the insurgent leaders fled across the Fish and took refuge with Chief Ngqika, the Xosa Paramount.

The Amaxosa, as has been pointed out, were relatively calm throughout the period of the Boer rebellion. Apart from John Barrow's report that "parties of this nation (i.e. Amaxosa) with vagabond Hottentots have taken the opportunity of the present disturbances to plunder several houses", there is no indication

145. Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.97

that the Amaxosa had in any serious sense intensified their attacks on the Boers. Yet scarcely a month after the suppression of the Boers the Amaxosa were at war with the colony.

Actual hostilities were provoked by Brigadier Vandeleur. Soon after the surrender of Boer insurgents near Algoa Bay, the Brigadier, accompanied by Government Secretary John Barrow and a detachment of troops, started on his march from Algoa Bay to the Bruintjies Hoogte/Boschberg area where he intended to collect units of his troops which had been engaged in the suppression of the rebellious Boers. They had not gone far when they "fell in with a large party" of Khoikhoi (men, women and children) under their leader, Klaas Stuurman. The Khoikhoi, we are told by Barrow, had deserted their Boer masters and were looting Boer homes and arming themselves. "They informed us" says Barrow, "that some of their countrymen, not willing to throw themselves on the protection of strangers (i.e. the British) had fled among the Kaffirs". Vandeleur and Barrow persuaded the Khoikhoi to give up their arms and follow the troops. Some of them, it was stated later, were enlisted in the "Hottentot Regiment".

Vandeleur and his entourage continued on their march to the north. In the vicinity of the Sunday River he found a section of the Amaxosa (Amagqunukwebe) under their Chief, Cungwa. The Brigadier and Barrow had some discussion with the Chief. "The conversation with Congo (Cungwa) ended by (our) recommending him to withdraw his people and their cattle from the banks of the

Sunday River, to which he gave a kind of reluctant assent".¹⁴⁷

On the return of the troops from the Eruintjies Hoogte Vandeleur and Barrow found Amagqunukwebe still settled where they had left them. The injunction to withdraw was repeated. "So far from obeying this 'message' Cungwa's people assumed such a hostile attitude that Vandeleur ordered two of his field-pieces to open fire. Two or three rounds of grape-shot proved sufficient to disperse them".¹⁴⁸

Soon after this incident the Brigadier led his troops eastward in the direction of the region between the Bushman's and the lower Fish rivers where he intended to pick up another detachment of troops that had been stationed there. He was ambushed and attacked by a force of Amaxosa soldiers¹⁴⁹ who killed 17 of his troops. Vandeleur retired to Algoa Bay where he called out a commando to deal with the Amaxosa. When Vandeleur led the troops towards the Bushman's River Barrow had taken charge of the Khoikhoi who had been following them and brought them to Algoa Bay. There he found a group of Boer families, about 150 in all, who had been 'plundered' by the Khoikhoi. Barrow says that the Boers told the newly arrived Khoikhoi that "it was the intention of the English to put them on board ship, and to send them to Cape Town".¹⁵⁰ Be this as it may, shortly after his arrival at the Bay "a great number" of the Khoikhoi left Barrow and joined the Amaxosa. The Khoikhoi-Amaxosa alliance which Government officials had sought to avoid became an accomplished fact.

147 Barrow, J. Travels into the interior of South Africa
Vol. II, pp.111-113, 126-127, 129-130.

148 Ibid

149 J.S. Marais: Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.106

150 Barrow, J: Travels, Vol.II pp.127-130

On May 24, 1799, Vandeleur placed Commandant H.J. Van Rensburg in command of a Boer commando with instructions first to clear the Sundry River region of the Amaxosa and then to drive them beyond the Fish. The 300 man strong commando under Van Rensburg met a force of 150 Khoikhoi-Amaxosa troops on the eastern banks of the Sunday River. There the Boers were routed with a loss of 5 men killed and 104 horses captured.¹⁵¹ For some months after this engagement there was no organised Boer resistance. By August 1799 the whole country from the Fish River to the present town of George was in the possession of the Amaxosa-Khoikhoi forces. A straight east-west line from Zwagers Hook to the present town of Oudtsoorn marks the northern limit of the territory under African control by the end of August 1799. The Boer losses were severe. Nearly all the Boers had fled their farms. Many houses had been set on fire and large numbers of cattle and sheep captured. By July 31, 1799, 29 Boers including some women had been killed.

Why did the Boers put up such a feeble resistance? Their flight was due partly to the shortage of ammunition. During their insurrection in March the Central Government had placed an embargo on the supply of ammunition to the districts of Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet. Landdrost Bresler, Brigadier-General Vandeleur and the Acting-Governor, General Dundas however, thought that the Boers "could and should have done better". Bresler did his best to stop their flight and to get them to act in concert. Vandeleur censured the "dastardly conduct" of the "panic struck Boers whom the desertion of their Hottentots had completely unmanned". On his

151 The figures are quoted from J.S. Marais: Maynier and the first Boer Republic, p.108

way to the frontier General Dundas "observed the extraordinary timidity of the Dutch people to an extent beyond all example". He spoke of them as being "terrified at even a single shot from a Hottentot".¹⁵² Be that as it may, all organised Boer resistance had been broken up. The pressing question now was could the Cape Colony (and there-with the Whiteman) on the southern tip of Africa survive this "very alarming progress of the Savages"!¹⁵³ Something had to be done, and done quickly.

On August 6, 1799, General Dundas, the Acting-Governor, left the Cape for the frontier. He took with him reinforcements which raised the number of troops on the frontier to at least 800 men. Brigadier Vandeleur estimated that to drive the Amaxosa out of the colony at least 1000 men would be required, excluding the Boers. And even if the Boer commandos were to be used "a strong military force" would still have to be employed. As for the British troops the Acting Governor had concluded that it was "almost impossible" for them to operate with success against "Savages or Gangs of Plunderers through fastness and over a wide and mountaineous country".¹⁵⁴ He had accordingly made up his mind even before reaching the frontier to fight "only should the amicable measures which it is my intention first to try prove ineffectual".¹⁵⁵ By October 16, 1799, General Dundas had ordered ceasation of all hostilities and started peace negotiations with

152. For the opinions of these three officials on the Boer performance see J.S. Marais: Maynier and the First Boer Republic p.110.

153 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic p. 148

154 Theal, G.M. (compiled) Records of the Cape Colony Vol.III p.52

155 Ibid II, p.463

the Khoikhoi and Amaxosa leaders. Largely through the efforts of H.C. Maynier peace was concluded between the native leaders and the Acting-Governor, General Dundas. By it the colonial Government promised to introduce reforms which spelt out definite improvements on the working conditions of the Khoikhoi : humane treatment and satisfactory wages. As will be shown below, this was hardly a solution to the Khoikhoi problem, which was essentially one of land. As for the Amaxosa, they were to "remain at their Kraals (villages) on the banks of the Sunday River and the Bushman's River, or in other words, in the situaion in which we found them".¹⁵⁶ A further clause provided that they (as well as the Khoikhoi) would restore at any rate part of the cattle they had captured. Soon after this peace treaty was ratified by both sides General Dundas returned to the Cape believing that tranquility was gradually returning to the east. He left Maynier, whom he appointed Resident-Commissioner for the eastern districts, with a small number of dragoons and "Hottentots soldiers" at the Graaff-Reinet drostdty to deal as best he could with the problem of resettling the displaced Khoikhoi and Boers.

Maynier tackled the problem of the displaced Khoikhoi by introducing a Government Register in which he recorded labour contracts between the Boer employers and Khoikhoi employees. The contracts stipulated terms of service; period of service, wages (usually stated in rix-dollars but sometimes expressed in kind:

156 Maynier's Provisional Justification, April 1892
(Records of the Cape Colony, Vol. IV, pp 290-2)

sheep, heifers, clothes, brandy, trinkets, etc). Both parties to the contract could bring their disputes or complaints to the Commissioner at the drostdy. Maynier had hoped that all the Khoikhoi would agree to return to the Boer Service. Indeed, a considerable number of them entered the service, but many preferred to remain in the woody fastnesses of the Sunday River where they were still assembled under principal leadership of Klaas Stuurman.

As for the Boers, most of them had returned to their farms by the time Dundas left the frontier in January, 1800. Maynier ordered those that had not returned to do so immediately. By the middle of 1800 most of the deserted regions had been re-occupied, except the regions around the Bushman's and lower Sunday Rivers to which the Boers "persistently refused to return".¹⁵⁷ In March 1800 Maynier reported to the Acting-Governor, General Dundas, that things were "going extremely well".¹⁵⁸

In reality Maynier's statement misrepresented the facts. The Boers were deeply discontented with the Amaxosa-Khoikhoi policy, which neither permitted them to attack the Amaxosa to recover 'stolen cattle' nor to treat their Khoikhoi servants as they wished. Towards the end of 1800 Commandant Van Rensburg visited Cape Town and handed in to the Central Government a petition stating "that they were not allowed to go on Commandos against the Hottentots and Caffres".¹⁵⁹ On or about July 6, 1801 Van Rensburg and P.Erasmus,

157 Minutes of the Commission of Inquiry. Dundas answers Questions (C.J. 3232)

158 Theal, G.M.: (compiled) Records of the Cape Colony, Vol. III pp. 108, 111.

159 Ibid Vol. Iv, pp.296, 319-320

followed by some 200 Boers, marched on the Graaff-Reinet drostdy and "demanded for permission to attack the Kaffirs".¹⁶⁰ The two leaders demanded on the same occasion that "the Commandants and field Cornets (instead of the Commissioner) should deal with the registration of contracts of service and the Hottentots differences with their masters".¹⁶¹ On the 23rd October, 1801, Van Rensburg with an armed force of 400 Boers surrounded the drostdy and threatened that if the Khoikhoi who had taken refuge there were not delivered up to him he would destroy them. Meanwhile rumour went round among the Khoikhoi that the "Combined Rebellious Boers had said that after they should have subdued the drostdy they would murder all the Hottentots".¹⁶²

Although there had been some stock-lifting mainly by the Khoikhoi, in the period January 1800 to July 1801, matters did not come to a head until after the latter date when the Boer insurgents marched on Graaff-Reinet and issued the threats just noted. The Boer insurrectionary movement with its unsettling effect on the frontier peace soon had its sequel. African-European relations in the east rapidly deteriorated. Stock-lifting and other forms of depredations increased. Boers abandoned their farms "in considerable numbers". In November 1801 S. Naude and his wife were killed by Amaxosa in the vicinity of Graaff-Reinet. Soon after this C. Van Rooyen was shot dead by a band of Khoikhoi at his house in the Zwartkops River area.

160 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p. 126
 161 Ibid
 162 Ibid, p. 307

On December 17, 1801, Landdrost Faure of Swellendam was instructed to assemble a commando in order to "oppose the encroachments of these savages".¹⁶³ The commando, led by Commandant Tjaart Van der Walt, took the field towards the end of January 1802. Although 200 Boers had been ordered to turn up only 88 responded. The object of the commando was to attack the Khoikhoi who had assembled in the woody fastnesses of the Sunday River. In the Rooiwal area, on the eastern banks of the Sunday River, Van der Walt's commando was met by a combined force of the Khoikhoi and Amaxosa under the supreme command of the Khoikhoi leader, Klaas Stuurman. Van der Walt was defeated after an engagement lasting 36 hours.¹⁶⁴

After this failure of Van der Walt's commando the Government requested Missionary Van der Kemp to approach Khoikhoi leaders and propose peace terms. The Khoikhoi were to restore the cattle in their possession, surrender their arms and ammunition and quit the Sunday River Bush. Klaas Stuurman alone, we are told, accepted these terms. The other leaders - Boesak, Boulland and Trompetter - rejected them.¹⁶⁵ The Government, thereupon, decided to call a second and larger commando. Only the "plundering hordes of Hottentots"¹⁶⁶ were to be attacked in this operation. The Amaxosa were "not to be molested, since it was desirable to avoid a new combination between Xhosa and Hottentots".¹⁶⁷

163 Ross to Faure, Dec. 17, 1801 (B.O.54, pp.331-332)

164 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.136

165 Bannister, appendix, CLXXVI, pp.23-24 (Quoted by J.S. Marais Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.138)

166 Ross to Faure, April 2, 1802 (B.O.55 pp46-7)

167 Ibid

But Van der Walt objected to this differentiation, stating that "the Xhosa were already co-operating with the Hottentots".¹⁶⁸

Accordingly the Government modified its strategy and authorised Van der Walt to "act as the situation might demand".¹⁶⁹

On May 31, 1802 Van der Walt, now the Commander-in-Chief of the European forces, reported from the Winterhook mountains: "We are, God be thanked, on our march with the (Swellendam) Commando".¹⁷⁰ The Graaff-Reinet commando under commandant Van Rensburg and Cornet P. Erasmus was approaching from the east. The two commandos effected a junction on June 14, 1802 near the Sunday River. The 700-man strong commando with 182 wagons proceeded to attack Amaxosa settlements "killing many of their inhabitants and capturing large numbers of cattle",¹⁷¹ in the vicinities of the Sunday and Bushman's Rivers. Meanwhile a detachment of 43 Amaxosa-Khoikhoi soldiers had worked their way round to the rear and were operating behind the enemy lines in the eastern portions of Swellendam district. By July 25, 1802, they had killed 4 male and 2 women Boers, 3 Khoikhoi servants and 1 slave," and driven off a number of cattle and sheep".¹⁷² On receiving reports about the activities of this detachment Van der Walt hastily divided his commando, taking a section of it with him to the eastern parts of Swellendam, and leaving the rest to continue operations against the Amaxosa in the Sunday and Bushman's river

168 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.140

169 Ibid .

170 Van der Walt to Dundas, May 31, 1802 (B.O.28, p.67)

171 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.141

172 Faure to Dundas. Aug.14, 1802, P.R. Botha to Dundas Aug.4, 1802 (B.O.24, pp.905-914, 733-735).

regions. On August 2, 1802, he fell in with "27 of the 'robbers' who had 5 guns with them, and killed them all".¹⁷³ Six days later Van der Walt attacked a nearby Khoikhoi village in which he believed "the rest of the gang had esconced themselves".¹⁷⁴ In the engagement that followed Commandant Van der Walt was killed. The fall of Van der Walt threw the Boer camps into confusion. "Dissention broke out among the Boers, every person wishing to direct but no one to obey".¹⁷⁵ The commando dispersed in August 1802 without having achieved anything.

The failure of Van der Walt's commando left the situation very much worse for the Boers. Nearly the whole of Graaff-Reinet district and large tracts of territory in eastern Swellendam were once more overrun by Amaxosa-Khoikhoi forces. By October 1802 six Europeans, five Khoikhoi aides had been killed in the district of Swellendam. Many cattle were captured, number of farm-houses "laid in ashes",¹⁷⁶ and three women and some children taken prisoner. The pressing question during the months of September and October was how much of the colony would have to be abandoned in the face of the 'very alarming progress of the savages'.¹⁷⁷ When the Acting-Governor, General Dundas, heard of the death of Van der Walt and of the subsequent collapse of the commando he hurried to Algoa Bay² whither he summoned Landdrosts Faure and Sherlock of Swellendam and

173 Botha to Dundas, Aug.4, 1802 (B.O. 24 pp.925-928)

174 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.142

175 Sherlock to Dundas, Aug.27, 1802 (B.O. 28, pp.197-200)

176 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.144

177 Ibid p. 148

Graaff-Reinet respectively "in order to discuss what was to be done in view of the imminent withdrawal of the British troops".¹⁷⁸ Three centres of Boer resistance were set up - one at Fort Frederick, near Algoa Bay, and two at Van Plettenberg Bay. But the resistance centres effected little or nothing due to poor response of the Boers. At Fort Frederick, however, T. I. Ferreira, with 16 Boers, stuck to his post whence he wrote: "We are stationed here, the last outpost of the Christian Empire".¹⁷⁹ In the middle of November 1802, General Dundas decided to call another General Commando in which all the three Districts of Stellenbosch, Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet were to take part. Its Commander-in-Chief, P. R. Botha, was instructed to clear the mountains of the Koaga, Winterhook, Baavians Kloof and Gamtoos River (all of which were eastern portions of Swellendam district) and then, if possible, to conclude peace. The General Commando took the field in the middle of December 1802. Information regarding its strength and operations is scanty. But it is known that not a single man from Graaff-Reinet took part in it. When the British, in accordance with the Treaty of Amiens, handed over the Cape to the representatives of the Batavian Republic in February 1803, the Boer commanders had just concluded peace negotiations with the Amaxosa-Khoikhoi leaders, following a letter from the Batavian commissioner - General, J.A. de Mist, ordering cessation of all hostilities!¹⁸⁰ The Peace Settlement was ratified soon after by the new Governor, General Janssens, and the Amaxosa Chiefs.

178 Sherlock to Graaff Reinet Heemraden, Sept.1, 1802 (Moodie, Afschriften)

179 Ferreira to Dundas, Nov.4 1802 (B.O. 24, pp 869-882)

180 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, p.149

Thus ended the 1799-1802 war. It was the longest and, to the Europeans, undoubtedly the most disastrous of all the preceding wars. The war was also of special significance in the military history of South Africa. First, it marked the beginning of active military intervention by a great World Power, namely, Great Britain, on the side of the Dutch colonists and against the native Africans. Secondly, it brought together in a united front, for the first time in their long-drawn struggle against Europeans, the Khoikhoi and the Amaxosa. Finally, the war, from the point of view of Africans, at any rate, was 'a turning point that refused to turn'. The above rather lengthy account of the war affords us the necessary framework for a closer analysis of these new features and their significance in the future course of the Afro-European conflict in South Africa.

I have suggested at page 65 that the Amaxosa expected a more sympathetic policy from the new British administration. The first intimation that the British intended to pursue the policy of their predecessors, the Dutch East India Company, was the diplomatic pressure which the new government exerted on the chiefs to leave the colony. This was confirmed by Brigadier Vandeleur's attempts in 1799 to remove Amaggunakwebe from the Sunday River region and the British role in the subsequent war. Why, it should be asked, did the British ally themselves with the Dutch colonists against Africans? In 1795 when they occupied the Cape Colony the Great Fish River, proclaimed in 1780, was the official eastern boundary. West of the river, and within the colony, lived several Amaxosa chiefdoms, the now servile Khoikhoi, groups of the San as

as well as the Dutch colonists. International practice required that the new British rulers recognise all these population groups as colonial citizens and British subjects. Why did the British commit themselves to the 'expulsion policy' which regarded the Amaxosa (and the Khoi-San) as "within the colony, but not of it"?¹⁸¹ A racialist conclusion is almost inescapable! Had the British been more imaginative and less racialistic they would have accepted the fact of Amaxosa right to be in the colony, and sought to adjust the relationship of these chiefdoms with the colonial administration. By refusing to recognise the Khoikhoi as equal members of the colonial community and by committing themselves to the policy of Amaxosa expulsion the British made themselves liable to a charge of racism which alone seems to account for their alignment with the Dutch colonists.

In military terms the British alignment with the Dutch colonists was even more momentous. Had the British not been involved in the 1799 war, it is doubtful whether the tottering Dutch East India Company could have contained the "alarming progress" of the allied Amaxosa-Khoikhoi. The British, of course, did not win the war; but their organisational experience in military matters and their more disciplined regular troops did much to defuse the situation. The fact that General Dundas, the Acting Governor, twice had to go to the scene of war to direct operations in person and the contempt he and Brigadier Vandeleur expressed of the Boer military capabilities are a measure of the brunt which the British took in the war. Whether in short or long term view it is evident

181 MacMillan, W.M. Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 7

that the coming of the British tipped the military balance in favour of the white colonists in South Africa.

The second new factor in the black-white contest in 1799 was the Amaxosa - Khoikhoi military alliance. Why did the Khoikhoi rise against Europeans and make common cause with the Amaxosa in 1799? In the past individual Khoikhoi had absconded from European service and taken refuge among the Amaxosa. To the Amaxosa such deserters were welcome since they often brought with them not only guns but also the much needed knowledge of the use of firearms. And, as Shula Marks points out "the (Amaxosa) raiders of the last three decades (i.e. before 1799) (and possibly, even the earlier bands) undoubtedly contained a good proportion of deserters, many of them armed with guns".¹⁸² The frontier history is full of instances where officials of the colonial Government made representations to the Amaxosa chiefs for the return of Khoikhoi, slave and even European deserters. But, as noted above, earlier desertions to the Amaxosa occurred mainly at individual level, and on a comparatively smaller scale. The whole sale desertion of Khoikhoi in 1799 cannot be so simply explained away. It was a mass protest which, though certainly occasioned by inhuman labour conditions, stemmed from a much deeper sense of grievance. That grievance was expressed with bitter clarity by the redoubtable Klaas Stuurman, the Khoikhoi leader who spent all his early life working for Europeans near Cape Town. He told John Barrow (in 1799), the missionaries Read and Van der Kemp (in 1802), and Governor Janssens (in 1803) "that he had taken up arms in order

182 Marks, S: Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch (Journal of African History, Vol. XIII, No.1, 1972, p.75.

to right the wrongs of his people". That wrong was the occupation of Khoikhoi lands by Europeans. It meant that the Khoikhoi could no longer keep cattle since they had no land on which they could graze them. It also meant that they had either to enter European service where they were subjected to inhuman treatment, or take to the life of vagrancy (offensive to Europeans) or starve!

"Nearly all the kraals possessed by the Hottentots have been occupied by the Colonists as loan-farms. This is the chief reason we have taken to roaming about". European occupation of Khoikhoi lands, Stuurman continued had "caused poverty among the Hottentots, who no longer had grazing land for their cattle and found themselves compelled to enter the service of the inhabitants(i.e. Europeans)".¹⁸³

At first it was usual for the Khoikhoi servants to bring along with them a few head of cattle they still possessed and to graze them on their master's farms. Now, Stuurman added, "all depended on whether they took service with people who were fair-minded enough to protect and respect their scanty property, or with folk who ... sought to appropriate the little still remaining to these creatures". This was the predicament of the Khoikhoi who had hired themselves to the Europeans. "If they were ill-treated they could not say 'I am going to another master who will treat me better, or back to my possessions' - they had to remain there. Thus was poverty riveted in chains".¹⁸⁴

183 Marais, J.S. Maynier and the First Boer Republic, pp.139-140

184. This is a paraphrase of Stuurman's interview with Governor Janssens's Diarists. It is quoted by J.S. Marais: Maynier and the First Boer Republic p.139 Note 31.

From this exposition of the Khoikhoi plight by Klaas Stuurman it is easy to see that Maynier's efforts to make the Khoikhoi service more bearable and attractive by introducing labour contract system did not touch the heart of the matter. The real problem was lack of land, and in this the Khoikhoi found common ground with the Amaxosa who fought not for booty but to retain their lands and independent existence. In 1803 when Stuurman met Governor Janssens he asked for a grant of land for himself and his followers. In later years the missionaries, who became unpopular with the colonists and colonial Government, hubbed on the need for the Khoikhoi to have their own lands. Land and not labour conditions, therefore, lay at the root of the Khoikhoi up-rising in 1799. This is the reason why many of them refused to return to European service despite Maynier's fangled system of contracts.

Why, it may be asked, did the Khoikhoi not go it alone? Why did they join hands with Amaxosa? Apart from the common objectives for which both fought and the purely military advantage to be gained by acting together there appears to have been a certain realisation among both the Khoikhoi and Amaxosa that they were closer to one another than either was to Europeans. It will be recalled that when Vandeleur, on his way from Algoa Bay to Bruintjies Hoogte, met 'a large party' of the Khoikhoi the latter told him and Barrow "that some of their countrymen not willing to throw themselves on the protection of strangers (i.e. the British) had fled among the Kaffirs".¹⁸⁵ Again, shortly after Cungwa-Vandeleur

185 See above p. 181

confrontation and 'grape-shot incident' on the banks of the Sunday River, Barrow led this same group of Khoikhoi to Algoa Bay where he found a group of Boer refugees assembled. No sooner had the Boers told the Khoikhoi that it was the intention of the British to put them on board the ship and send them to Cape Town than the Khoikhoi deserted Barrow and joined the Amaxosa. There was unmistakable belief among the Khoikhoi that the Amaxosa could and should protect them, a belief that can only be attributed to a feeling of oneness with the Amaxosa vis-a-vis the Europeans. As for the Amaxosa, we know that they were always ready to welcome the Khoikhoi amongst them.

What were the effects of the Amaxosa-Khoikhoi alliance on the frontier military situation in 1799? J.S. Marais, with reference to the traditional name "Third Kaffir War" argues with much point that "in reality the war, in its origin as well as throughout its course, was a Hottentot at least as much as Kaffir War".¹⁸⁶ It will be recalled that in one of the engagements where the Boer hero, commandant Tjaart Van der Walt was defeated, the Amaxosa-Khoikhoi forces were under supreme command of Klaas Stuurman, the principal Khoikhoi leader. There can be no doubt that the hitherto military imbalance between Amaxosa and Europeans was brought to more or less even level by the participation of the Khoikhoi in this war. It was for this reason that the war proved more disastrous to the Europeans than any of the preceeding wars.

186 Marais, J.S. Maynier p.107

The Khoikhoi not only brought guns and horses with them but they also knew the whiteman's manner of fighting better. Thus, in spite of the British participation in the conflict the colonists suffered severe losses and defeat.

From the point of view of Africans the 1799 War was a turning point that refused to turn. At the end of the War Africans were in a much more stronger position than their Dutch adversaries. The British who alone could have sustained the war by drawing from vast home resources had, in accordance with the Treaty of Amiens, left the Cape. The Netherlands Government which was still struggling to consolidate its Batavian authority in Holland could scarcely spare any men or money to prosecute a war on the southern tip of the African continent. W. M. Freund, commenting on the ambitious programme of J. A. de Mist for the Cape Colony states that "in fact the Netherlands Government could spare little for the Cape in the way of funds or men".¹⁸⁷ In the Cape Colony itself the Dutch colonists were exhausted by war and demoralised by defeat. The frontier economy on which Cape Town depended for meat and related animal products was paralysed. The frontier officials, observes Freund, "lacked money and ammunition".¹⁸⁸ In short "the Batavians (at the Cape) were less equipped to deal with any sort of confrontation on the frontier than had been the departing British".¹⁸⁹ Meanwhile Africans had not only struck a kind of unity,

187 Freund, W.M. The Eastern Frontier of Cape Colony. (Journal of African History, Vol. XII No. 4, 1972 p. 634)

188 Ibid, p. 635

189 Ibid pp 634-635

but their fighting men had emerged victorious from the war. Almost the whole of Graaff-Reinet district and large tracks of territory in north-eastern Swellendam were in their hands. There were official rumours of Colonial Government abandoning the entire frontier zone altogether.

But the Khoikhoi-Amxosa allies failed to seize the opportunity thus thrown before them. Had they followed up their victory by over-running what was left of the colony they might have permanently rid their territories of European manace. The plain fact appears to be that the allies lacked sufficient imaginative insight to realise that so long as the Europeans remained at the Cape their lands and their independence would continue to be in danger. Their vision was impaired by their traditional mode of warfare in which defence of communal land or seizing the enemies' cattle constituted the utmost objective. They also lacked a sense of racial identity that alone could have made the identification and definition of their problem easier and clearer and helped sustain their sense of unity. Finally, the economic interdependence that had been forged by barter trade between the two races militated against whole sale expulsion of Europeans. There were some Khoikhoi who continued to serve in the Boer commandos, while others remained loyal herdsmen and domestics under their European masters. At the same time there were Amxosa who for a variety of reasons had taken service under Europeans. Meanwhile many European traders, hunters and speculators, deserters and adventurers, missionaries and travellers continued to be active among both the Khoikhoi and Amxosa. This intermingling of various interests tended to cut across racial barriers and to cloud the dangers posed by European presence on the southern tip of the continent.

The over-all effect of these happenings was that the Khoikhoi-Amaxosa allies of 1799 limited their war objectives to capturing the enemy's livestock and destruction of his property and not to his total expulsion. When the representatives of the Batavian Republic arrived at Cape Town in 1802 they were struck by the military weakness of the colony and by the disruption of frontier economy. The Commissioner-General, J. A. de Mist, ordered immediate cessation of hostilities followed by peace negotiations. The Khoikhoi-Amaxosa allies accepted the peace terms and Cape Colony was given a lease of life until the return of the British in 1806. Meanwhile the Khoikhoi-Amaxosa alliance lapsed. The Dutch colonists gradually regained strength during the Batavian period (1802-1806). In 1806 the British re-occupied the Cape, this time with no intention of relinquishing it. Thus, any hopes that the Khoikhoi and Amaxosa could co-operate and remove the white menace from the southern tip of Africa were dashed. The turning point had refused to turn. Meanwhile the British had during their first occupation of the Cape (1795-1802), unequivocally demonstrated their belief in the common destiny of whitemen in the southern tip of Africa. Whatever differences might exist between Boer and British the two groups were bound together by indissoluble bond of race. They had much more in common than either the Dutch Colonists or the British singly had with the 'savages'. Similarly, the Khoikhoi and the Amaxosa had by their alliance demonstrated their awareness of their common interests vis-a-vis those of the Europeans.

Thus, it may be said in conclusion that while the 1799-1803 war was a crucial event in the history of South Africa the new allignments in the war foreshadowed the racial character of the future course of that history. The Khoikhoi-Amaxosa alliance had turned out to be a broken reed. Boer and Briton might occasionally quarrel over details of policy but the Africans would never again threaten the life of the white colony as they did during 1799-1803 war.

III. THE BATAVIAN PERIOD, 1803-06

The significance of the Batavian period in the Black-White conflict being studied here is in political rather than military terms. The period stands out as a monumental refutation of the claim that the Amaxosa were incorrigible thieves and irreclaimable savages who were not tutored in the arts of peace. The period is remarkable for its peace and tranquility on the eastern frontier. Why did the Amaxosa conduct themselves in such a quiet and peaceable manner? We know that they had just emerged victorious from a war with the Colony. Exhausted by war and demoralised by defeat the Boers had no stomach to fight at this time. The Colony as a whole was militarily weak and financially impoverished. The Amaxosa were, therefore, in a strong position to carry fire and sword into the Colony. The fact that they did not do this gives a lie to the much vaunted 'thieving instincts and murderous inclinations' of the Amaxosa.

This, however, does not tell us why they were quiet and peaceable during the Batavian period. It is possible that they were also war-weary. It is also possible that the Batavian authorities were more tactful in conducting their relations with the Amaxosa chiefdoms. Governor Janssens's Sunday River Conference with the chiefs in May 1803 and Commissioner de Mists' abortive attempt in the same year to meet the chiefs testify to the Batavian administration's desire to find a political, not military solution to the problems of their relations with the Amaxosa. Landdrost L. Alberti was probably as skillful as H. Maynier had been in dealing with the Amaxosa leaders. But the most compelling factor appears to be the fact that there was a sense of security among the

the Amaxosa regarding their territories. The Batavian authorities, it is true, never unequivocally renounced the 'Amaxosa expulsion policy'. But neither did they commit themselves to it. Indeed, there are indications that they were moving in the direction of accepting the Amaxosa as rightful citizens and subjects of the Colony. In June 1804 Governor Janssens wrote to Landdrost Stockenström as follows: "In the Nieuwe Veld, next to the large Leeuwen River, is to be found a Kaffir Kraal under its head Tsitsie, who lives quietly under the eye, as it were, of the Commandant de Klark, and, in a sense, they conduct themselves as natives subject to the Colony - one wishes to avoid unpleasantness towards these people and arrangements should eventually be made to look for an appropriate piece of land on which they should be granted the right of undisturbed domicile. They shall maintain themselves in accordance with that right".¹⁹⁰ In August 1805 Landdrost Alberti wrote to Governor Janssens in similar strain: "I have seen with pleasure how the Kaffirs busy themselves with the preparations of gardens, sowing and planting; in a stretch of land about five hours' passage in length, one has everywhere in view gardens surrounded by hedges, and although the huts found alongside assuredly betray the presence of great quantity of Kaffirs, this peaceful occupation yields no indication of hostile designs aimed at the Colony".¹⁹¹ A Government Ordinance issued during this period sought to prohibit all inter-actions between Amaxosa and Europeans; but it allowed adult Amaxosa already in white service to continue. At the Sunday River

190. Freund, W.M.: The Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony in The Journal of African History, Vol.13, No.4, 1972, p.634

191. Freund, W.M.: The Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, in the Journal of African History, Vol.13, No.4, 1972, p.635

Conference referred to above Governor Janssens attempted to persuade the chiefs to leave the Colony. When the latter refused no attempts were made to extirpate them by force. The Amaxosa were left in undisturbed occupation of their territories. It is this fact that accounts for the relative peace and tranquillity that prevailed in the eastern frontier during the Batavian period.

I have said at the beginning of this section that the Batavian period is a refutation of the claim that the Amaxosa were thieves, plunderers and murderers by inclination. It is now evident that when their territories and independence were not threatened the Amaxosa could and did live peacefully with the Boers. The Batavian period, therefore, briefly but effectively brings out more clearly the fundamental political issue that lay at the root of the whole Afro-European conflict in the 19th century - land on which alone their independence depended.

IV. THE SECOND BRITISH PERIOD TO 1820

The military clashes we have discussed so far were, from the point of view of the Amaxosa, attempts to establish a kind of *modus vivendi* with the Europeans without losing their territories and independence. Hopes for the success of these efforts were dashed in the year 1812 when the British expelled the Western Amaxosa from the Zuurveld lands. It is from this year that spirited resistance aimed at 'driving the Whiteman into the sea' may be dated. By then it had become clear to the Amaxosa that Europeans meant to take possession of their lands, and to destroy their independence and way of life. A nationalist fervour swept through the clans and presently threw up a visionary in the person of Nxele (Makana), at once a thinker and leader of undoubted abilities. In the wake of Makanaism the rightful but pro-European Paramount Chief Ngqika was overthrown (1818) and large tracts of colonial territory overrun. The invasion of the Colony culminated in the Battle of Grahamstown (1819) and the imprisonment and death of Makana (1820). A brief account and analysis of these events will enable us to appreciate the significance of this period in the history of the resistance movement.

When the British drove out the Batavians and reoccupied the Cape Colony in January 1806 they had no intention of relinquishing it once more to another Power. They had also made up their minds to expel Amaxosa from the Zuurveld, out of the Colony. The real reason behind the expulsion has never been officially stated. The only clue I was able to find is:

"Disputes were continually occurring".¹⁹² A rough idea of the conduct of Amaxosa during the five years following British occupation is given by G. Cory who was severely biased against Africans. "During the latter part of the Batavian rule, the Eastern Province farmers enjoyed a distinct lull in the worry and anxiety consequent upon Kaffir visitations".¹⁹³ During the year 1805 Bruintjies Hoogte Boers lost only 5 horses and 62 oxen. Taking into account the ever doubtful questions of imputability and accurate reporting these figures clearly indicate that the Amaxosa in this part of the frontier were peaceable. It may be assumed from Cory's silence regarding the Zuurveld Boers that they suffered no losses during this period. Cory who believed that Amaxosa could not abstain from stealing attributes this relatively peaceable conduct to quarrels between clans and to Alberti's vigilance. This, of course, is nonsense. There have been inter-clan quarrels long before 1805 and Alberti was no more vigilant than Maynier had been. The truth is that the chiefdoms had been left in undisturbed occupation of their lands. There was little or no cause for unrest.

Even during the period 1806-1811, the first five years of British administration and before the expulsion, there was no marked increase in 'Amaxosa depredations and murders'.

192. Moodie, D.: The Record, pt.V, p.60. Note

193. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. p.170

In the first three months of 1806 Bruntjies Hoogte Boers lost 12 horses and 89 oxen.¹⁹⁴ Compared with those of 1805 these losses were severe. They represent slightly over 16 percent increase. But viewed in the light of losses which colonists usually suffered when Amaxosa considered themselves at war with the colony the figures are hardly alarming.

In the Zuurveld there appears to have been no trouble until April 1806. According to Cory Christoffel Botha's farm was raided early in April and a number of cattle driven off. Botha went to recover the cattle, shooting 4 Amaxosa in the process.¹⁹⁵ Now, Christoffel Botha was one of the worst Boer scoundrels on the frontier. He belonged to a group of rascally characters prominent among whom were Coenraad de Buys, the Prinsloo and Bezuidenhout families. These were turbulent frontier Boers who believed in the use of force to get what they wanted from "the Kaffirs". Cory states that Christoffel Botha, without informing anyone, went and recovered the 'stolen' stock.¹⁹⁶ It is by no means suggested that no 'depredations' had been committed against him. But his reliability must always be suspect, especially in situations where he was in a position to be a judge in his own case. Be that as it may, the Amaxosa, on April 8, retaliated by attacking an adjacent farm, killing one Nicholaas Grobbelaar and seizing 48 cattle.¹⁹⁷

194. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol.I. pp.170-173

195. Ibid

196. Ibid

197. Ibid. pp.170-172

Meanwhile Amaxosa continued to graze their cattle where they wished, not minding Boer claims to 'farms'. Landdrosts began to send alarming reports to central Government. Landdrost Cuyler's abortive attempts to assemble a commando merely served to annoy Amaxosa. But even under what must have seemed unwarranted provocation the Amaxosa reaction was not excessively harsh. Between May and December 1808 the Zuurveld Boers lost only 125 cattle and some horses 'stolen', 3 Khoikhoi herdsmen, 1 slave and one Boer killed. Landdrost Cuyler attempted to persuade Ndlambe and Cungwa to desist from settling and grazing their cattle on Boer farms. Cungwa characteristically declared: "I was in these parts before the Christians (i.e.) Europeans) and I will not withdraw".¹⁹⁸

The events just outlined indicate some degree of deterioration in the relations between Amaxosa and the colonists. From the insignificance of the alleged Boer losses cited in the preceeding paragraphs it does not appear that the Amaxosa were on a war path; but they were undoubtedly restive. The main, if not the only, reason behind that restiveness appears to be fresh pressures which frontier officials exerted on the chiefdoms regarding settlements and grazing rights. This contrasted sharply with the Batavian policy which left Amaxosa to settle and graze their cattle where they wished.

198. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol.I, P.178

The deteriorating relations between Amaxosa and colonists disturbed the chiefs, who took the diplomatic initiative to ease the situation. In September 1807 Chief Cungwa personally visited Landdrost Cuyler and reassured him of "his wishes to live peaceably with the Dutchmen and the English".¹⁹⁹ Slightly over a year later Governor Caledon commissioned one Colonel R. Collins on a fact-finding tour of the frontier districts. In the vicinity of the Little Fish River Collins was met by two Amaxosa envoys who said they had been sent by Chief Ndlambe "to enquire the cause of the warlike preparations which he (Ndlambe) understood that the colonists were making against him". They informed us, says Collins, "among other things, that Ndlambe and Kassa were on bad terms in consequence of the latter robbing Christians,"²⁰⁰ i.e. Europeans. Ndlambe and Cungwa were, at this time, the principal and most powerful chiefs west of the Fish River, and their diplomatic offensive attests to their concern about the frontier peace. The ordinary Amaxosa themselves did not consider themselves at war with the Europeans. In 1808 some of them told Landdrost Stockenstrom that they could not understand why Europeans objected to their moving about freely "the more as they are at peace with us". They told the Landdrost that they intended going to Cape Town "to know from the Governor himself, whether any of his orders prohibited them from strolling about as friends".²⁰¹

199. Moodie, D.: The Record, (Cuyter to Barnard) pt.V. p.59

200. Moodie, D.: The Record, Pt.V. p.49 (Colling Report)

201. Moodie, D.: The Record, Pt.V. p.60 (Stockenstrom to Bird)

The defectiveness of the reason for the expulsion of Amaxosa or, indeed, lack of it, leads one to suggest racial aggression on the part of the British. If the British wanted to clear the Zuurveld in preparation for the settlement of the British immigrants who came eight years later the Boers would have been expelled too. If imperial designs were involved none would have been expelled. The new rulers would have imposed their overlordship on all the vanguished. Racial aggression alone seems to account for the British expulsion of Amaxosa in 1811.

I have indicated above that in 1809 Governor Caledon sent Colonel Collins on a fact-finding tour of the eastern districts. Collins recommended, in the same year, that Western Amaxosa be expelled across the Fish River, into their "own country".²⁰² The recommendation was implemented two years later (in 1811) by Governor Cradock, "within a month of his assumption of office".²⁰³ "It has fallen to my lot", Cradock declared, "to give effect to the apparent intentions of my predecessors in the Government of this Settlement to free the Territories of His Majesty from the incursions of the Caffre Nation or any other tribe that may molest His Majesty's subjects in the peaceable possession of their habitations and property. As the measures of passive conciliation have proved ineffectual, it is necessary to adopt another mode of proceedings, and their complete expulsion from our Territory must be accomplished.

202. Collins' exact words were as follows: "It appears to me that the steps necessary to be taken for the permanent tranquility of the eastern districts, are, to oblige all the Caffres to withdraw to their own country..." Moodie D. The Record pt.V.p.17.

203. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Col.III, p.209

I experience much satisfaction, while entering upon a measure of this description, from the general information that His Majesty's subjects have not in any of the late proceedings been the aggressors, but that the Caffre Nation have been constantly the depredators and offenders It would be my desire that you take the most effectual measures to clear his Majesty's territories of the Caffre Nation or marauders of any description and that they be repelled permanently within their own boundaries".²⁰⁴ Governor Cradock announced the expulsion decision on October 18, 1811. By that date preparations for the expulsion had been completed. A large force of British regulars, Boer Commandos and Khoikhoi levies had been mustered and the instruction just cited given to Colonel Graham, the Commander-in-Chief. The total strength of the force was 1033 men with 194 horses, the largest contingent ever assembled against Amaxosa.

Instead of preparing for war the Amaxosa leaders, it would appear, devoted their energies to persuading the Governor, through the Landdrosts, to rescind the expulsion order, or at least postpone its execution.²⁰⁵ Normally the Bantu preferred to go to war after the crops had been harvested and grain brought safely home. The expulsion order came just before the harvest. Hence their attempts to avoid war. It is possible that they did not believe that Cradock could order, let alone carry out, such an unjust a measure.

204. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol.I. pp.236-237.

205. Thompson, G.: Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, p.442.

They were, probably not aware also that preparations had been completed and instructions for the expulsion issued. Be this as it may, the iron-Governor refused to listen to their pleas. When Colonial troops invaded their territories towards the end of December 1811 the Amaxosa were ill-prepared for war.

The Colonial troops were deployed in three divisions: the right column under Landdrost Cuyler; the left under Landdrost Stockenstrom and the centre under Captain Fraser. The Commander-in-Chief, Colonel Graham, was with the centre column. On December 28, 1811, Stockenstrom, accompanied by a detachment of 40 soldiers, left his camp to confer with the Commander-in-Chief, Colonel Graham. In the vicinity of Doorn Nek he fell in with a division of Amaxosa troops whose commanders he knew and he was known to them. The Landdrost rode in among the enemy troops and dismounted, hoping to persuade the Amaxosa commanders to leave the colony without fighting. "This frank conduct seemed to have the effect of securing the good will of the Kaffirs and a friendly intercourse followed".²⁰⁶ While the negotiations were still in progress news was received to the effect that the right and centre columns of the colonial force, (in the Addo River region) had commenced operations, and that a number of Amaxosa troops had already been killed. Thereupon the Amaxosa Commanders broke up the negotiations and ordered the killing of Stockenstrom and his party. Fourteen men including the Landdrost were killed on the spot. The rest "owed their escape to the

206. Moodie, D.F.C.: The History of the Battles and Adventures of the British, the Boers and the Zulus in Southern Africa, vol. I. p.187

fleetness of their horses."²⁰⁷ In the counter attack that followed the colonists killed 16 Amaxosa troops and recovered the 3 horses belonging to their dead comrades.

But the colonial military leaders were not unaware of the difficulties and hazards involved in their 'Operation Expulsion'. Landdrost Stockenstrom's ill-fated attempt to persuade Amaxosa to leave the Zuurveld without fighting was aimed at avoiding as much of these hazards and difficulties as possible. Soon after the Doorn Nek massacre Major Cuyler visited Chief Ndlambe with similar intention. The Chief who was found east of the Sunday River was in a war mood, apparently annoyed by the injustice of the expulsion. After listening to what Cuyler had to say he declared: "Here is no honey, I will eat honey and to procure it shall cross the Rivers Sunday, Coega and Zwartkops. This country is mine, (stamping his foot violently on the ground) I won it in war, and I shall maintain it".²⁰⁸ With these words he wielded his spear in the air and blew his war clarion. His troops advanced on the enemy who barely managed to escape. Fighting now became stabilised, mainly in the Addo Bush Area. For the next five days beginning from January 1, 1812, the two sides grappled with each other in Addo Bush. Surprisingly enough very little loss in killed was sustained by both sides. The Amaxosa lost 12 men killed, including the aged and sick Chief Gungwa. The colonial troops lost one man killed, (Field Cornet Nortjie) but captured 2,500 head of cattle from the enemy.²⁰⁹ From this point

207. Ibid.

208. Cary, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I. p.242

209. Cary, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I. p.243-44

the war degenerated into running skirmishes with little tangible results. Although the Amaxosa did not score flashing victories their elusive resistance was fairly stiff and Colonel Graham was compelled to send for reinforcements. On February 3, 1812 a detachment of 200 regulars arrived from Cape Town and tipped the balance in favour of the colony. By the end of the month Colonel Graham felt confident enough to report: "hardly a Kaffir now remains".²¹⁰

Tradition has since held that all the Amaxosa (20,000 in all) west of the Fish River were expelled. But it would appear that they retreated to the east of the river in order to establish a base there from which they continued their struggle against the colony. Colonel Graham had established a line of military posts along the entire length of the Fish River boundary and it was hoped that this and continual patrols would prevent Amaxosa from returning. "Almost before the burghers (Boer irregulars) had returned to their homes, parties of Kaffirs were again in the Colony".²¹¹ Colonel Graham had to give "order that all Kaffirs found within the Colony should be shot at sight".²¹² Small parties of Amaxosa broke the boundary line at numerous points and carried out successful raids on European farms, killing herdsmen and capturing stock. Military posts and continual patrols proved inadequate to prevent incursions. It became evident that Amaxosa still considered themselves at war with the Colony. The table²¹³ below represents losses suffered by the

210. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol.VIII, p.209

211. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. 1 pp.276-277

212. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I p.247

213. Based on figures given by George Cory: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I.

PERIOD		STOCK CAPTURED		COLONISTS KILLED	
MONTH to MONTH	YEAR	CATTLE	HORSES	SLAVES/KHOI HERDSMEN	EUROPEANS
+October - December	1812	42	13	-	-
January - March	1813	172	19	1	-
April - June	1813	101	35	3	-
July September	1813	64	21	-	-
October - November	1813	1000 +	-	5	-
October - December	1815	676	54	-	1
January - March	1816	278	-	*1	2
TOTAL		2,333 +	142	10	3

* This was a Khokhoi woman

+ Theal states that on November 20, 1813 Amaxosa swept off over 1000 heads of cattle and killed 5 herdsman.

Colony at the hands of the Amaxosa in the period October 1812 to March 1816. The significance of the table lies in the fact that it is an index of the state of the Eastern Frontier during this period and seems to confirm my view that the much vaunted 'expulsion' was in fact a tactical withdrawal on the part of Amaxosa. Hostilities never ceased.

Charles Somerset, the new Colonial Governor, grasped this fact and in April 1817, he took the initiative to seek a political solution. He visited Paramount Chief Ngqika from whose territory the Western Amaxosa were operating and concluded the Kat River Agreement. Governor Somerset was escorted by a large force of British regulars and about 350 mounted Boers supported by two artillery guns. When news of the gubernatorial visit reached Ngqika's Court Chief Ndlambe, the leader of Western Amaxosa advised the Paramount to refuse to meet the Governor. Ngqika, was not only a weak ruler but he had always hoped for European support to maintain his position of Paramount Chief. Acting against Ndlambe's advice he agreed to meet the Colonial Governor and the meeting took place on April 2, 1817, on the banks of the Kat River.

Ngqika, escorted by a 300-man body guard, was accompanied by nearly all important chiefs: Ndlambe, Botumane, Ngqeno, Maqoma and Jalusa. The conference was opened by Governor Somerset who told the delegates that he had "come to renew the friendship which formerly existed between the colonists and Kaffir Nation".²¹⁴ He then complained of depredations committed by Amaxosa against the colony and appealed to Ngqika to use his influence to prevent his people

214. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I. pp. 303-306

from raiding the Colony. Ngqika's reply was that incursions into the colony went on without his knowledge or consent, and that even if he knew he had not the power to prevent them as the people were under different chiefs who considered themselves independent and did not acknowledge his authority. This was a fundamental constitutional issue within Amaxosa political system to which a more intelligent governor would have attached the greatest importance. Far from addressing himself to the issue Somerset told Ngqika that Colonial Governors had always regarded him as Great Chief, that they had never treated with any others and that it was his intention to continue to act in that manner. Apart from promising to do all he could to prevent further incursions into the colony and to return all lifted colonial cattle Ngqika also committed himself to the 'Spoor Policy' proposed by the Governor. Finally the conference dealt with trade matters. A trade fair would be held twice a year at Grahamstown. Amaxosa traders could come and sell ivory, skins and other produce. They would have to carry passes issued by Ngqika who would be responsible for their conduct while at the fair and also on their way to and from there. Once more "for himself Gaika assented, but could not answer for other chiefs".²¹⁵

Several features of this conference call for comment. First, the Governor as it will have been noted, was accompanied by a large force of colonial troops. Cory states that the aim of the visit was "to overawe Gaika and other chiefs with a sense of the power of the white nation".²¹⁶ This objective, it would appear,

215. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. I. p.306

216. Ibid, p.203.

was achieved; for the conference appears to have been a monologue in which the Governor dictated terms to the Xosa Paramount. Ngqika, it is true, looked to the colony for personal protection, but the circumstances under which the Kat River conference was held were anything but conducive to free and honest discussion. In the presence of a strong colonial force and two artillery guns the Paramount was constrained to agree to anything that the formidable visitor had to say. Most of the junior chiefs such as Ndlambe, Maqoma and Ngqeno, we know, were opposed to all that Governor Somerset said. But they preferred to say nothing. Second, the conference did not address itself to the crucial issue of the expulsion of Ndlambe and his followers who were directly involved in the raids and seizure of colonial cattle. These people neither accepted their expulsion nor recognised the Fish River line as a boundary between Xosaland and the colony. Exclusion of this issue from the agenda made nonsense of the entire conference exercise. Western Amaxosa were certain to escalate their raids on the colony. Third, Governor Somerset's insistence on investing Ngqika with political powers which the Paramount did not constitutionally possess showed that he was either arrogant or utterly devoid of political acumen. He not only failed to appreciate the rickety position of Ngqika in his paramountcy but he also failed to realise that his protegee could not control any but his immediate followers. The result was as might be expected. Raids followed by patrols and punitive expeditions continued and issued in full scale war two years later.

The effects of the Kat River Agreement were immediate: while bands of Amaxosa continued to raid the colony hard-headed chiefs such as Ndlambe resisted colonial enforcement of 'Spoor Law' to which Ngqika had committed himself. At the same time Ngqika's pro-European policies grew increasingly unpopular with large sections of Amaxosa population. The Western Amaxosa were still chafing under a deep sense of grievance at the loss of their territories to the west of the Fish River. This was aggravated by shortage of land and subsequent overcrowding in the region east of the Fish. As might be expected increasing numbers of Amaxosa, even those who had never lived in the west, identified themselves with western Amaxosa's cause. Ndlambe's popularity increased in proportion as Ngqika's declined. Presently something of a nationalist fervor swept through the clans and threw up a visionary in the person of Nxele (Makana).

At once a soldier and a charismatic leader of undoubted abilities Makana aimed at unifying all Amaxosa and then driving the whiteman into the sea whence they had come. Blending and dove-tailing his political ideas with African traditional religion Makana called upon his countrymen to reject Tixo, the god of the white people, and worship Dalidipu, the god of the black people, who was superior to Tixo. He told Amaxosa that he was Dalidipo's agent to destroy all Europeans. He pointed at the British expulsion of Western Amaxosa as an example of the whiteman's "many and great sins".²¹⁷ Makana soon realised that he could not

217 Roux, E.: Time Longer than Rope, p.12

succeed in his drive for national unity so long as Ngqika, who continued to co-operate with the Europeans, remained the Paramount Chief. Consequently he threw the weight of his great following on the side of Chief Ndlambe, a reputed frontier fighter and a rival of Ngqika's for Amaxosa leadership. The two leaders agreed that no meaningful unity and expulsion of Europeans could be effected unless and until Ngqika was removed from the Paramouncy. General Dushani, son of Ndlambe and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, was accordingly instructed to prepare an attack on Ngqika. The attack took place in 1818 at Amalinde Flats where Ngqika's forces were routed and Ngqika overthrown. Ngqika, who had been sitting on a nearby hill to watch the progress of the battle, fled to the Winterburg mountains, in the direction of the colony. There he sent to the colonial Government for assistance. White troops under Colonel Brereton were rushed post-haste across the Fish where they joined hands with Ngqika's defeated forces and restored their ally, burning down all Ndlambe's settlements they could find and seizing large number of cattle (December 1818). But without continued White support Ngqika proved a broken reed. He was soon defeated and overthrown by Ndlambe-Makana forces.

Makana now directed his war-machine towards the Colony. First, his forces over-ran the whole country between the Fish and Zwartkops Rivers. The military posts which had been established to hold the line had to be abandoned. Many European soldiers and adult male civilians lost their lives. The Zuurveld Boers fled westward of Uitenhage, taking their cattle with them.

Next, General Dushani mustered his army near Graham's Town, in readiness to attack that last and strongest of the newly established frontier posts. As the troops massed in their camps they chanted a war song, saying that they had come:-

To chase the White men from the country
And drive them to the sea;
The sea that cast them up at first
For Amaxosa's curse and bane
Howls for the progeny she nursed
to swallow them up again.²¹⁸

On the morning of the battle, April 22, 1819, Makana addressed the troops. In his fiery speech he told the 10,000 officers and men to be courageous and brave as the ancestral spirits would aid their cause. With their morale thus boosted the troops attacked Graham's Town. They were on the point of subduing the town when a detachment of 130 Khoikhoi marksmen under Captain Boesak suddenly appeared from their flank and opened heavy enfilade fire, taking a heavy toll of Amaxosa's best soldiers. The attack collapsed and the Amaxosa were put to rout, leaving behind about 2,000 dead and wounded. Some months later Makana, who was declared 'a wanted man' and ordered to be brought dead or alive, gave himself up to the colonial authorities, declaring: "If I have occasioned the war let me see whether my delivering myself up to the conquerors will restore peace to my country".²¹⁹ He was sentenced to life imprisonment and placed on Roben Island, about 5 miles off the Cape Peninsular coast.

218. Roux, E. Time Longer than Rope, p.13.

219. Roux, E. Time longer than Rope, p.14

Meanwhile colonial troops had once more crossed the Fish River and attacked Ndlambe's followers, killing women and children and seizing large numbers of cattle. At the same time the White commanders once more restored Ngqika and forced on other chiefs his acknowledgement as Paramount Chief. In return for this assistance and protection Ngqika was forced to give up 3000 square miles of Amaxosa's best land, which was later distributed among Europeans. Ngqika later remarked. "When I look at the large piece of country which has been taken from me, I must say that, though protected, I am rather oppressed by my protectors". In the meantime Makana organised an escape for himself and his fellow prisoners. Overpowering the guards and taking their guns, they got into a small boat and made for the nearest point on the mainland. Unfortunately the overloaded boat capsised shortly before it reached the shore. The men had to swim for their lives and for a time Makana clung to a rock to encourage his fellow escapees with his deep voice. He was caught in a tide and swept off. He drowned.

Makanaism put the conflict between Amaxosa and Europeans in its proper perspective. It became clear that, in spite of tendencies amongst Amaxosa to collaborate with the colony, the conflict was essentially one between Black and White. The fundamental issues involved were also more clearly defined. The conflict was over land which was inextricably bound with Amaxosa independence. Once the conflict was seen in these terms spirited resistance began aimed, as Makana had taught, at "driving the white men into the sea".²²⁰ It is in this context that I said,

220. See above page 108

at the beginning of this subsection that earlier military clashes with Europeans were an attempt to work out a modus vivendi between the two races and that with the British expulsion of the Amaxosa from the Zuurveld began active and purposeful resistance. Makanaism also marks the beginning of White penetration into the interior - the theme of the next chapter.

C H A P T E R 3
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WHITE INVASION OF THE INTERIOR

I. THE EASTERN FRONTIER

The heralds of white penetration into the interior of South Africa were travellers (explorers) traders (hunters) and missionaries. The profound cultural impact of these early agents of Western civilisation cannot be overstated. Their guns, their clothing and their accoutrements such as medical kits and food provisions were strange and, more importantly, made their possessors appear invincible. African rulers often requested their visitors to demonstrate the effectiveness of their-firearms, an agreeable request, one would have thought, since it gave the visitors opportunity to prove their invincibility. To the chiefs and their warriors, who knew only the assegai and knobkerry, the killing range and destructive power of the gun must have inspired perplexed awe. When opportunity offered, these adventurers also demonstrated the healing power of European medicines to folks who put all their faith in the hazardous prescriptions of their traditional doctors. Christian missionaries who spoke of heavenly God condemned traditional institutions and beliefs such as polygamy, lobola, witchcraft, rain-making, ancestors as mediators between man and God etc. At economic level traders introduced new European manufactured goods and set in motion a process which was to lead to the decline of native industries and skills.

Initially these cultural onslaughts were not on a scale that could be considered massive. Nevertheless they spread ideas which would not always be consistent with the norms and values of traditional African society. In Chapter 5 we shall see how traders and missionary activities were an aspect of European wars of conquest. For the moment these forerunners may be seen as heralding the coming of Europeans into the interior.

The expansion of white frontiers from the Cape to the Bantu territories occurred on three different fronts. First, as we have already seen, the greatest pressure point was along the Amaxosa frontier. The Amaxosa presented an impregnable line of defence which yielded too slowly and too little at too much cost in life and money to the Europeans. The result was that the course of white expansion was diverted to the Basotho-Griqua frontier along the Orange River. There, commencing as a steady trickle at the beginning of the 1820's, white emigration onto the Highveld became a flood in the mid 1830's. Basotho and Griqua communities inhabiting the area north of the Orange did next to nothing to head-off the invasion until it was too late to do so with any hope of success. It is plausible to suggest that had Basotho put a term to white expansion along the Orange River as the Amaxosa did along the Fish the history of South Africa might be different. In the event Europeans were permitted to establish a base in Trans-Orangia from which they were able to menace and eventually destroy Mzilikaze's State in the Transvaal and Dingane's power in Zululand.

Encroachment on Zululand began in 1823 when a small party of European traders established itself at Port Natal and secured protection from King Shaka. Although these traders (initially Boers and Britons, but later entirely Britons, the Boers having returned to the Cape) repeatedly requested the Cape and British Governments to honour their 'achievements' by annexing the Port and its hinterland the two governments consistently refused to do so. Meanwhile Shaka, up to 1828 when he was assassinated, had complete control over the traders, practically treating them as his subjects. Soon after Dingane, Shaka's half-brother and assassin, had taken over, the traders attempted to wrest political autonomy for Natal settlement, using local Africans over whom they had virtually become overlords. Dingane ruthlessly put down the rebellion. Up to the beginning of 1838 Zululand southern frontier was fairly secure. It was the Boers who, operating from the Trans-Orangia and Transvaal bases brought about the process of effective White settlement in Zululand. Thus, by the end of 1838 Europeans were established in all the present four provinces of South Africa. In this chapter we shall attempt to examine the process whereby this was achieved.

For nearly a decade after the Battle of Grahamstown and death of Makana there was no organised and active resistance, Ndlambe, the most wanted man, was in hiding. His supporters' homes had been burned down by commandos and their cattle seized. Ngqika had been restored to his position as the Paramount Chief. As a price for colonial protection and restoration he was now forced to give up the whole country between the Fish and

Keiskamma rivers. The area, he was told by Governor Somerset, would be declared a 'Neutral Belt' where neither blacks nor whites would be allowed to settle. Only military posts manned by white soldiers would be established to patrol the area. Ngqika having agreed to this arrangement the Amaxosa were cleared out of the 'Neutral Territory'. Ngqika remarked: "When I look at the large extent of fine country which has been taken from me, I am compelled to say, that though protected, I am rather oppressed by my benefactors".²²¹

Governor Somerset gave security reasons for establishing the 'Neutral Belt'. The Neutral territory would serve as a buffer between the colony and 'Kaffirland'. In fact the Governor wanted to clear the area for white settlement. On the same day of the agreement October 15, 1819, he reported to London: "The country thus ceded is as fine a portion of ground as is to be found, and, together with the still unappropriated lands in the Zuurveld, it might perhaps be worthy of consideration with a view to systematic colonisation".²²² This he had not said to Ngqika. Superficially the Governor's duplicity appears to be inexplicable. He was in a position to declare the annexation of the territory with or without Ngqika's consent. But Somerset knew that that procedure would almost certainly provoke violent reaction which Ngqika (and the colony) would not be able to contain. Ndlambe was still at large and although his supporters had been driven away from their homes and reduced to poverty, he had not lost their loyalty.

221. Above page 109

222. Quoted by W. M. MacMillan : Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.82

Confirmation of Governor Somerset's intentions was not long in coming. In 1825 the colonial district of Somerset was extended to include Bedford district, an area to the west of the Koonap River and far into the 'Neutral Territory'. Four years later the Government settled a colony of 900 Khoikhoi in the Kat River lands from which Amaxosa had been removed. This embittered the Amaxosa, particularly Chief Maqoma whose territory the area had been. The myth of the 'Neutral Belt' lapsed in the same year, 1829, when colonial boundaries were extended to the Chumie heights. By then many colonists had been given farms in the 'Ceded Territory', as the 'Neutral Territory' gradually came to be called.

Now, any sensible and sincerely intended buffer should have involved neutralisation of proportionate parts on either side of the official boundary. The military posts established to patrol the area should have been manned by a mixed force of Amaxosa and Europeans. The very fact of neutralising only Amaxosa side of the boundary and of military posts manned exclusively by white soldiers made the buffer theory of the 'Neutral Belt' nonsensical. The Amaxosa not only lost materially but were denied means of constantly verifying that the neutrality was in fact being observed and maintained. While the Amaxosa lost, in effect, all rights and influence in the territory Europeans whose innocence the terms of neutralisation had presupposed could hunt and graze their cattle in the areas, and it was but a short step from hunting and grazing to full occupation in farms and settlement. Seen in this light and taking into account Governor Somerset's statement to London on October 15 the mischief of the buffer theory becomes evident.

The neutralisation of the area between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers was nothing else but a subtle form of farther penetration of Europeans into Amaxosa territories.

What was the Amaxosa response to this? During the first decade following their defeat at Grahamstown and neutralisation of the Fish-Keiskamma region there appears to have been no organised and active resistance. Three factors may account for this. First, the resistance forces had been thrown into disarray, following the Grahamstown defeat, the burning down of their homes and seizure of their cattle. Makana had drowned while attempting to escape from prison and Ndlambe who had been declared a 'wanted man' was in hiding. Hence there was something of leadership vacuum. Second, the continued presence of Ngqika, the colonial government ally, tended to defuse the otherwise explosive situation. Moreover, his alliance with the recently victorious colonial Government and the fact that his opponents had been removed from Amaxosa political scene restored some of his respectability. Finally, the white penetration into the area was not, at first, too obvious to the Amaxosa. Indeed some of the chiefs who were considered 'well behaved' were allowed to graze their cattle in the 'Ceded Territory'. And as will be seen presently, even the return of some of the 'irreconcillables' into the 'Ceded territory' was sometimes connived at by colonial officials. This tended to serve as a safety-valve, albeit a temporary one.

Towards the end of the 1820's, however, events on the Amaxosa frontier took a sharp turn for the worse for Europeans.

Ndlambe and Ngqika died within months of each other: the former, late in 1828 and the latter, early in 1829. Since Sandile, Ngqika's son and heir, was still a minor, Maqoma officially acceded to the paramouncy. But in effect the Amaxosa leadership fell into the hands of what was virtually a triumvirate consisting of Maqoma, Tyali and Ngqeno, 'the greatest scoundrel in Kaffirland'. These were young hardliners who had no sympathy with the collaborating policy of their father, Ngqika. Other notable chiefs at this time were Habana, 'one of the worst robbers',²²³ Mdushane of Grahamstown fame and now chief of Amandlambe, Xogomesh (Harmanus) who had recently been dismissed from colonial Government service as an interpreter and spy. With this impressive scenario in the forefront of Amaxosa leadership spirited resistance to white expansion could be expected. There were, of course, chiefs such as Pato, Kama, Cobose, etc. who were willing to co-operate or even collaborate with the colonists. But the majority of the chiefs were determined to regain their lost territories.

The lull that had prevailed following the defeat at Grahamstown and the neutralisation of the Fish-Keiskamma region was in effect more apparent than real. The Amaxosa resented their expulsion from the 'Neutral territory' and but for Ngqika's restraining influence they would have invaded the colony. From 1829 Maqoma, Tyali and Ngqeno became the leaders of that resentment

223. Ngqeno and Habana were the most uncompromising opponents of white expansion. Ngqeno's description as "the greatest scoundrel" may be found in Cory, G. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II P.455

As early as 1824 they had asked the colonial Government to permit them to return to the 'Neutral Territory'. Governor Somerset had rejected the request. But as it became clear that Europeans were being given farms in the area the chiefs also returned to their former lands. Maqoma settled on the upper reaches of Kat River, Tyali on the banks of Mancazana and Batumane on the western banks of the Chumie. Ngqeno was lower down on the right banks of Keiskamma, to the north-west of Amagqunukwebe. Xogomesh who was up to 1828 in the employ of colonial Government as an interpreter and spy was at Blinkwater higher up on the Kat, north of Fort Beaufort.

To all intents and purposes by 1829 the 'Neutral Belt' had ceased to exist. The Amaxosa resumed their attacks on the colonists. According to Cory in the period November 1828 - September 1829 5,560 cattle and 300 horses belonging to the colonists were lifted.²²⁴ Soon punitive commandos were once more on the move. Colonial authorities adopted 'divide and conquer' strategem. On May 4, 1829 Chief Maqoma and his people were attacked and driven beyond the Keiskamma, while his firebrand brother, Tyali was left in peace. This, it was hoped, would minimise the risk of a combined resistance from the chiefs. But Tyali kept up the attacks on the colonists. Within just over a year of the expulsion of Maqoma it was decided that Tyali should be punished for depredations which his people had been committing against the colonists. On June 16, 1830 the commando

224. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II, p.342

duly took the field; but shrewd Tyali was able to defuse the impact of the attack, though he lost several lives, including sub-chief and some cattle. He was left in occupation of his Mancazana territory but never relented his attacks on the colonists.

In 1832 the colonial Government permitted Maqoma and his people to return to his former lands in the 'Neutral Territory'. No sooner had he arrived than his people joined Tyali's in the attacks on the colonists. Thereupon the colonial authorities decided that both Tyali and Maqoma should be attacked and driven across the Keiskamma, out of the 'Neutral Territory'. The expulsion was effected in September 1833. Meanwhile it was discovered that Xogomesh of Blinkiwater had been spying for the Amaxosa. He was also removed from his lands to the district of Albany, within the colonial borders. As for Ngqeno, "the greatest scoundrel in Kaffirland", the colonial authorities would fain let sleeping dogs lie. He and his people were left in occupation of their lands in the "Neutral Territory". The "scoundrel" was reported to have censured Tyali for his "tame submission" to the commandos, and to have promised him assistance to regain his Mancazana territory.

While these events were happening the chiefs were planning a large scale invasion of the colony. Chief Maqoma was in constant touch with the Khoikhoi leader Klaas Dirk, in an effort to involve the Khoikhoi in the planned invasion. Military alliance with the Khoikhoi had much to recommend it. The latter not only possessed

firearms and horses but they also knew the whiteman's manner of fighting better. It was also observed that of late 'horse stealing' had been on the increase, an indication that the chiefs intended to build up their own cavalries. They had realised the military advantage which horses conferred upon their adversaries. They were determined to neutralise it.

The Amaxosa were, no doubt, embittered by continual harassment by patrols and commandos in search of 'stolen' cattle and horses. In some cases these punitive expeditions attacked innocent communities which had no connection whatsoever with alleged thefts, burning down their homes and seizing their cattle. Any attempts on the part of Amaxosa to resist these plundering commandos often resulted in their being shot. What rankled most in the minds of Amaxosa, however, was their progressive loss of land to Europeans. "If any circumstance more than another", says Cory, "can be regarded as the chief cause of the war (i.e. 1834-35 war) it was the expulsion and exclusion of Maqoma and his thieving hordes from the neutral territory in 1829".²²⁵ While this is true it does not, however, give a complete picture. Resentment was widespread and a deep sense of grievance over the loss of the Zuurveld territories persisted. At the commencement of hostilities (December 20, 1834) a large number of Amaxosa requested the Missionary Mr. Chalmers to "take charge of their wives and children,

225. Cory, G. The Rise of South Africa, Vol. III, p.51. Cory quotes Chief Botumane as later having said that "Maqoma's heart was always sore about the land; the subject always set him on fire". The Rise, Vol. III p.52.

while they proceeded to the Salt Pans, near Pot Elizabeth, where they are determined to construct their cattle kraals and erect their huts".²²⁶

Shortly before the out-break of hostilities Magoma had directed that no missionary should be molested, but that all traders must be killed. Although there is no indication at this time that any of them had been converted to the Christian faith, the chiefs treated the missionaries with great reverence. It is possible that the missionaries were equated with Bantu religious leaders whose persons were regarded as inviolable. But the persuasive view appears to be that missionaries and their stations were used as communication links with Europeans. The chiefs were reluctant to hold parleys with colonial officials at military posts. Mission stations, they maintained, were places of peace where God's word was preached, but military posts were places of war; and, as Tyali's counsellors put it "no faith was to be placed in the white people".²²⁷ Furthermore, the missionaries themselves, apart from serving as chiefs' scribes, sometimes furnished good advice.

The traders on the other hand were unscrupulous men whose only reason for living among the Amaxosa was profitable trade. And some of them had been known to use high-handed methods in their dealings with Amaxosa. Moreover, the traders often appealed for military intervention or annexation of native territories by

226. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes into the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope 1834-35, p.14.

227. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p.13

their governments²²⁸ in order to establish 'favourable' trade conditions. It has been observed that in the hostility that the Amaxosa directed towards them in 1834, "the traders themselves were not entirely blameless".²²⁹ It is probably in the light of these factors that Maqoma's ire towards the traders should be seen.

Active hostilities broke out early in December 1834 when colonial troops on two successive occasions attacked chief Ngqeno's people and eventually drove them from the 'Neutral Territory' for alleged theft of three horses. Maqoma and Tyali who chafed at their expulsion reacted by reoccupying their Kat-Chumie basins in the 'Neutral Territory'. Colonial authorities promptly detailed Lt. Sutton at the head of a small commando to drive them back. In the skirmish that followed Amaxosa lost two men killed and two wounded. This was on December 11, 1834. The chiefs ordered mobilisation and while messengers helter-skeltered in every direction Tyali engaged colonel Somerset, the colonial frontier commander, in fruitless diplomatic exchanges. Maqoma occupied the key route leading to the camp where Amaxosa troops had mustered. On December 22, 1834 Tyali announced that the country was in a state of war, and next day the invasion of the colony duly began.

The numerical strength of Amaxosa troops is difficult to ascertain. Eric Walker gives 12,000; but this is almost certainly a conjecture as no accurate approximation could be possible on

228. Most missionaries were equally guilty in this respect.

229. Cory, G.: The Rise of South Africa, Vol. II. p.455

the resistance forces which were flung across a wide area of bush country and operating in small bands. In working out their strategy and tactics the Amaxosa military leaders had not forgotten the harsh experiences of 1819, at Grahamstown. Their approach in 1834 was guerilla in the classical sense. First, the colony was attacked along the whole extent of the frontier line from the sea to the Winterburg Mountains. This gave Amaxosa troops the military advantage of stretching the enemy forces thin over a wide area. They operated in small bands, avoiding pitched battles with concentrated enemy forces and strongly fortified positions. Isolated individuals and weak enemy units were attacked, homesteads burned down and stock seized. Effective use was made of the forest and mountain terrain. Colonel Somerset's few troops on the frontier found it impossible to check the invasion. Within days the resistance forces were operating deep in the colony.

Initially the Amaxosa troops were entirely infantry and equipped only with the traditional assegais. But apparently the many horses they had been lifting from the colonists were used for practice in horse riding. For, as will be seen, only a few days after the invasion of the colony many Amaxosa detachments were mounted and armed with guns. Both the horses and guns had been captured from the enemy. These, however, could not have been many enough to counter-balance the colonists' weapon - superiority, mobility and speed. Moreover, ill-practised and lacking ammunition, the Amaxosa could not fire the guns with any real accuracy. By and large, therefore, the Amaxosa troops remained essentially infantry and dependent on their traditional weapon, the assegai.

The most spectacular thing in this war was the manner in which the Amaxosa succeeded in concealing their preparations. This gained them the vital military advantage of surprise attack. Although patrols and commandos had been active against Amaxosa, white military leaders did not expect a large scale invasion of the colony. Consequently they were unprepared and completely nonplussed when it took place on the 22nd December, 1834. The colonial forces found it difficult to adjust to the situation and to defend military posts, trading stations and farm out-posts strewn widely over the entire frontier districts from the Winterburg mountains to the sea. The result was that the Amaxosa troops carried all before them.

The first targets were farmers, traders and military personnel in the 'Neutral Territory'. Most of the military posts were overrun and destroyed. Colonial patrols manning these posts retreated to Fort Beaufort or Fort Adelaide where they could form larger garrisons capable of withstanding Amaxosa attacks. Farmers and traders who could make it fled to these posts with their families. But many were surprise-attacked and killed before they could reach any places of refuge. Colonel Somerset, frontier commander, strove in vain to establish contact with the elusive and ubiquitous enemy. While he was groping in the fastnesses of the 'Neutral Territory' the Amaxosa forces were overrunning the second line of military posts along the Fish River and 'pouring into the colony'. Weakly defended villagers and farm - outposts were attacked and cattle and horses seized. Colonists fleeing their farms to places of refuge or to Grahamstown were intercepted and killed. What was most alarming to the colonial authorities was that in all these

operations the Amaxosa not only seized cattle and horses but arms and ammunition. On December 28, 1834 an Amaxosa detachment of unknown strength attacked 60 colonists and eventually captured several guns as well as 800 cattle and 70 horses. Next day, December 29, a convoy of 8 wagons escorted by 12 men was attacked shortly after it left Grahamstown for 'Kaffir Drift'. Again the strength of the attackers was not known: but " fifty, who were in advance were clothed, mounted, and armed with guns".²³⁰ After a short engagement the escort abandoned the wagons and fled to Grahamstown, leaving one man dead. Other villages and outposts in Albany which were similarly attacked were Bathurst, Theopolis, Hermanus Kraal, Howson Poort. Bathurst and its environs were eventually abandoned and the inhabitants brought to Grahamstown. At the battle of Fort Brown, near Hermanus Kraal, many of the Amaxosa troops were mounted on good horses and armed with guns; one, it is said, with a double-barrelled gun.²³¹

Acquisition of firearms by Amaxosa presented a knotty problem to the colonial authorities. The ability of the widely scattered colonists to defend themselves depended on the continued supply of ammunition from headquarters, namely, Grahamstown. But, as was already happening, there was the very real danger of the ammunition falling into the hands of the enemy. Owing to slenderness of the frontier force and the reluctance of the men to leave their families undefended and go on commando duties, no strong wagon-escorts could be mustered to ensure that

230. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes, p. 33

231. Ibid, p.57

ammunition deliveries reached the intended destinations. Yet, without adequate ammunition colonists in the out-lying areas were in danger of being utterly wiped out. In the circumstances, colonial authorities decided to concentrate the military forces at one or two defensible posts and then to evacuate the civilians to those centres. Many of the refugees were attacked on the way and killed or barely reached concentration centres. Thus, by the end of the year 1834 the Amaxosa were in occupation of the whole of the neutral territory, Albany and vast tracts of territory in Uitenhage and Somerset districts. Only Grahamstown and Fort Beaufort and Fort Adelaide remained firmly in control of the European forces.

So far the Amaxosa forces had proved irresistible. Several factors account for this. The first was the surprise element. Colonial military leaders failed to assess the depth of Amaxosa grievance at the progressive loss of their lands. They equally failed to appreciate the degree of bitterness which their patrols and commandos generated by destroying Amaxosa crops, burning down their homes, seizing their cattle and shooting down some of their number. These failings were dangerous. But the third, namely, colonial authorities' inability to penetrate Amaxosa security system, was fatal. At the very moment when Amaxosa invasion plans were near maturing Colonel Somerset stepped up punitive expeditions, thus unwittingly providing the occasion for an out-break for which he was ill-prepared. Governor D'Urban's complaint in January 1835 of "a well organised invasion which was

the product of long planning"²³² was no more than a hind-sight which, though legitimate, could not reverse the events of the last week of 1834. Amaxosa military leaders had completely out-witted the colonists on a point of military intelligence.

The second factor was purely logistical. Maqoma, the most brilliant military strategist at this time, was aware of the slenderness of the colonial frontier force. From the first he resolved to spread it thin over wide expanse of country by deploying his troops along a 90-mile line from Winterburg mountains to the sea. The troops advanced in small bands, avoiding collision with large enemy columns, but attacking isolated and weakly defended villages, military posts, wagon convoys and individuals. Within few days of these operations Amaxosa troops had captured many horses and arms and ammunition from the enemy. This, as has already been pointed out, not only made them more formidable but it made enemy distribution of arms and ammunition from Grahamstown difficult. The subsequent shortage of ammunition further weakened colonists in the remote areas. Consequently the colonial forces found it difficult to cope with the Amaxosa troops, some of whom were now mounted and armed with guns.

The third factor was the nature of Amaxosa strategy and tactics. While avoiding open and pitched battles with concentrated enemy forces they made effective use of thickly forested and mountainous terrain. Colonial cavalries could not penetrate these fastnesses in pursuit of small bands and with all the risks involved.²³³

232. Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire p.

233. The 'escaping' band could be leading the pursuers into a prepared ambush.

Attacks on villages and military posts were launched at night, under the cover of darkness. This had the psychological advantage of the enemy being unable to assess the numerical strength of the attackers as well as being unable to make effective use of his firearms. In some cases Amaxosa stampeded droves of cattle over enemy positions, and in the subsequent confusion attacked the defenders who were thus deprived of effective use of their firearms.

The fourth factor was political. Maqoma, level-headed strategist that he was had, long before the commencement of hostilities, negotiated with Klaas Derik, the principal Khoikhoi leader at Kat River, and had been promised that the Khoikhoi would join the war on Amaxosa side. Although the alliance never materialised the Kat River Khoikhoi never participated in this first phase of the war. And the shrewd Amaxosa refrained from attacking the 'Kat River Settlement'. To the Europeans the Khoikhoi neutrality was a serious blow since the latter knew Amaxosa manner of fighting better and could often penetrate the woody and precipitous fastnesses where white colonists dared not go. The Amaxosa leaders also demonstrated their political astuteness with regard to Amagqunukwebe. The latter's chiefs, Kama, Cobose and Pato, had professed a kind of neutrality in spite of pressure from their people to join the war against the colony. Consequently, throughout this first phase of the war they did not participate. Nevertheless the belligerent chiefs were careful not to attack them. These diplomatic manoeuvres deprived the colonists of possible effective allies and

contributed partly to the military success of Amaxosa in the first phase of the war.

Because of all these factors the Amaxosa advance proved irresistible. By the end of the year 1834 they were in occupation of the whole neutral territory, the whole of Albany district and extensive parts of Uitenhage and Somerset. In short they had re-occupied almost the whole of the Zuurveld from which they were expelled in 1812. Why, it should be asked, did they not consolidate their hold on these territorial gains? The answer to this crucial question will be attempted below. The question is raised here so that it should be borne in mind as we move into the second phase of the war.

The latter was ushered in by the arrival on the frontier of Colonel Harry Smith and Governor Benjamin D'Urban within a fortnight of each other. Colonel Smith arrived at Grahamstown on January 6, 1834, armed with full powers to reorganise frontier defences. Governor D'Urban left Cape Town on January 8, and reached Grahamstown on the 20th. Up to this date, and much later, Amaxosa troops were still in occupation of the country from the Keiskamma to the Sunday Rivers, with the exception of two or three resistance centres where colonists had collected for mutual defence. 7,000 whites, of whom 2,000 were at Grahamstown alone, were dependent on Government relief supplies.

The first act of Colonel Smith was to place the frontier districts of Albany, Uitenhage and Somerset under martial law.

Meanwhile troop reinforcements arrived from Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet. Colonel Smith decided to carry the war into the enemy's camp while at the same time clearing the colony of his (enemy) troops. The move was an ingenious one. The Amaxosa troops who were still occupying extensive parts of the colony were unlikely to fight effectively while their rear was in flames and their families in danger. Their duty, they were bound to feel, lay more at home than in the colony. Towards the end of the second week of January Colonel Smith dispatched two expeditions: one under Major Cox to attack Amaxosa settlements in the 'neutral territory and the other, under Colonel Somerset, to scour the Albany and Uitenhage districts with a view to dislodging the enemy from those parts of the colony. Major Cox 400-man force failed to establish contact with the enemy, but burned down Ngqeno's and Tyali's settlements, and returned to Grahamstown on the 18th. Colonel Somerset's 100-man force had a series of skirmishes with Amaxosa troops in the Bushman's River region. The Amaxosa were estimated at 1,000 to 1,500 men, but they were operating in detached small bands, some of them mounted and armed with guns. By the first week of February he had reoccupied most of the villages and farm settlements, including Bathurst, Salem, etc. which had been abandoned in the first phase of the war.

While these operations were going on Colonel Smith at headquarters, Grahamstown, was working on a master-plan designed for offensive operations. The entire frontier force was divided into Left, Right and Centre columns, commanded by Colonel England, Colonel Somerset and Captain Armstrong, with Colonel

Harry Smith as the Chief of staff. Clearly, the colonial military leaders intended to seize the initiative from the Amaxosa. This determination was emphasised by the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief of the colonial forces and Governor of the Cape Colony, Major-General Sir Benjamin D'Urban, at Grahamstown on January 20, 1835. D'Urban had left all gubernatorial duties in the hands of hurriedly decreed Provisional Government and come to assume command in person.

The Amaxosa were aware of these martial preparations being undertaken at Grahamstown. They decided to meet the enemy on the ground of their own choice, namely, the Fish River Drifts, known to the colonists as 'Trompetter' and 'Kaffir Drifts'. Apart from the conviction that the enemy in carrying the war into Amaxosa territories would cross the Fish at these points the Drifts had much to recommend them. The Fish River in this area flows through a hilly and rugged terrain dissected by deep ravines and narrow and precipitous defiles. The river banks are densely forested and covered with a thick tangle of undergrowth. The terrain was practically impenetrable to enemy cavalry and artillery guns. This suited the Amaxosa well. Several companies of their troops were ordered to occupy the fords from Comitjies to 'Kaffir' Drifts and await the enemy. Many of the troops were armed with firearms.

About February 6, 1835 information reached Grahamstown that the Amaxosa had occupied the Drifts in great force.

Next day almost the whole frontier force, officered by colonels England, Somerset, Majors Gregory, Bagot, McLean, Captains Sutton, Hallifax and commanded by the Chief of Staff Colonel Smith, began its march to the Drifts. The force, armed with howitzers and six-pounders, was partly cavalry and partly infantry.

The success of Amaxosa in The Battle of the Fish River Drifts, as the pending contest may be termed, clearly depended on the ability to hold the Drifts and thus prevent the enemy from crossing the Fish and menacing their flanks and rear, and on whether conditions were in favour of this strategy. Heavy rains had just fallen up-country and the river was swollen and difficult to ford except at the Drifts. It was not until February 11 that colonial troops crossed the river. Although the Amaxosa had taken positions all along the Drifts they made no attempt to contest the enemy crossing. By the end of the day the entire colonial force had crossed the river and virtually encircled the Amaxosa troops who remained in the adjoining bushes and ravines. At first the Amaxosa inertness appears incomprehensible. But in reality they had no answer to the enemy weaponry deployment. The enemy was armed with heavy and long range guns - the howitzers and six-pounders. Although few of the Amaxosa had fire-locks any exchanges across the river would have meant certain decimation of their number. Prudence dictated that they stand-fast in the bushes and ravines, where neither the cavalry nor artillery could be used.

The Battle of the Fish River Drifts began on February 12, 1835. Early in the morning the enemy infantry consisting mainly of the Khokhoi sharpshooters opened heavy fire on Amaxosa positions. Several Amaxosa were killed and a large number of cattle captured; but attempts to dislodge them failed. On the 14th, the third day of the Battle, the Amaxosa began to retreat, and, their encirclement notwithstanding, found their way towards the Keiskamma. Accurate casualty figures are difficult to ascertain in jungle fighting of this nature. But it is unlikely that the Amaxosa suffered severely in killed as only infantry operations were possible in the Fish River Bush. According to Robert Godlonton the Amaxosa suffered 100 men killed, many wounded and 2,500 cattle captured, on the first day of the Battle. Total losses on the colonial side were 12 killed and 12 wounded.²³⁴

From the Battle of the Fish River Drifts the Amaxosa were put on the defensive. The rest of the war was fought on their territory, that is, east of the Fish River. Although up to the end of February straggling parties were still operating within the colony, the bulk of Amaxosa troops had fallen back to Keiskamma line of defence. At page 129 I raised the question as to why Amaxosa did not hold onto the territory they had conquered. Examination of this question reveals the basic weakness in Bantu mode of warfare in the 19th century. The practice of overrunning enemy territory, destroying his property, capturing cattle and

234. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.p.102-105.

then retreating, was one of the major reasons for their final defeat. That the wars they waged were about the land is undoubted. But they failed to realise that any victory to be meaningful must be followed by physical occupation of ground. No amount of losses in property could compel the enemy to decamp as long as he was left in control of the battle-ground. It is true that the call early in February to the Amaxosa troops to muster at the Fish River Drifts led to the general withdrawal from the colony. It is also true that Smith's tactics of carrying the war into their rear had the same effect. But it was unlikely that Smith could have pursued this strategy much longer had the Amaxosa stood firm and intensified their operations within the colony. Even after reinforcements from Cape Town and other districts had arrived the colonial forces remained comparatively slender. They could not be deployed in the whole region from the Kei to the Sunday or Zwartkops rivers with any hope of success. And the guerrilla type of warfare that the Amaxosa were waging made the chances of dislodging them from the colony even slender. Eventually the colonial authorities would have been forced to a negotiated settlement. Needless to say, they would have then been in a strong bargaining position.

Be that as it might, the Amaxosa withdrew from the territory they had conquered and were soon hard put to it to defend the 'Neutral Territory'. After the Battle of the Fish River (February 11-14) Colonel Smith reoccupied Fort Willshire, on the Keiskamma, in Ngqeno's territory, while Captain Armstrong menaced Tyali's and Maqoma's territories from the Kat River Post.

Indecisive fighting now became general throughout the 'Neutral Territory', the Amandlambe and Amangqeno operating mainly from the 'Fish River Bush' (Fish River Drifts) and Amangqika under Tyali and Maqoma, from the Amatole mountain fastnesses. By mid-February it had become clear to Maqoma that the alliance with the Khoikhoi of the Kat River Settlement he had been led to expect was not forthcoming. He therefore authorised an attack on the Settlement and on the 19th Captain Armstrong lost 2 men killed defending it. Lower down at the Drifts Amandlambe and Amangqeno attacked a 40-man detachment under Cornet Nel and Captain Jervis and killed 8 enemy troops at the loss of 9 men to themselves. They siezed tents, 4 wagons which they burned down, and seized ammunitions and supplies (March 6, 1835). On March 9, commandant Rademeyer was lured into an ambush and suffered 6 men killed and 5 wounded. The Amaxosa lost 50 men killed.

Meanwhile Governor D'Urban had decided on an attack on Amagcaleka under Hintsa, the recognised Paramount of all Amaxosa. The Amagcaleka lived to the eastward in the region between the Kei and Mbashee Rivers. From the beginning of the war up to the time when he was taken hostage and murdered by colonial soldiers Hintsa had taken a strategic attitude that he was not involved. This was an ingeniously conceived tactic. It was intended to keep the enemy out of Gcaleka country where captured cattle and horses could be driven and safely kept. The non-involvement policy served as a cover up for Amagcaleka soldiers who could safely cross the Kei and join their fellow Amarrarabe in the war against the colony. The scheme worked out smoothly until April 24, 1835

when Governor D'Urban declared war on and attacked Amagcaleka in their own country.

D'Urban's first move was to isolate the belligerent Amagcaleka and Amarrarabe. He sent an expeditionary force under Commandant Van Wyk to Tembuland ostensibly to protect the missionaries and traders who had taken refuge there under Mapasa. In reality Van Wyk had been instructed to persuade Abatembu to the effect that they were in danger of Gcaleka attack and that he had come to protect them. Next D'Urban sent H. Fynn to Faku, Amampondo chief, to secure his neutrality or co-operation in the impending struggle with Hintsa's Amagcaleka. Faku was known to be the strongest chief to the immediate east of Amagcaleka. Having secured the neutrality of both Mapasa and Faku the Governor swiftly moved against Hintsa. It is astounding how Europeans easily won allies or collaborators among Africans. Africans were so pre-occupied with clanish and tribal power politics that they failed to develop a sense of racial identity. Consequently the chiefs were prepared to be used against their fellow Africans by any outsiders who could flatter them and appear to enhance their personal authority and power vis-a-vis other clans or tribes. Often collaborators were weak communities or chiefdoms who knew that they could not survive the onslaughts of the new-comers. Looked at from this stand-point collaboration could be seen as a form of resistance; so that survival and self-preservation became uppermost where violent resistance appears to be hopeless.

In 1835 Mapasa and Faku were aware of the military superiority of the Europeans. Their co-operation with the invading forces appears to have derived from the fear of white power rather than any aggressive intentions on the part of the Amagcaleka. I have found no evidence of such intentions on the part of Amagcaleka. Indeed the only aggression which occurred during this time came from Amabhaca who lived adjacent to Faku's chieftdom, who led a mixed force of Amabhaca and Amapondo against sections of Abatembu and entirely destroyed them. Fuku's and Diko's villages were burned down and over 2,000 head of cattle captured. One of the European renegades who joined the Abatembu in the fighting was killed. Amagcaleka showed no intention to attack Tembuland and they never did.

Meanwhile Rev. J. Ayliff of the Wesleyan Missionary Society had, since 1828, been inciting Amafengu to rebellion against Hintsa's authority. Much has been written about Amafengu oppression under Hintsa and Amagcaleka. Some writers have even suggested that Amafengu were Amagcaleka slaves. The 'Oppression View' overlooks most of the circumstances, some of them deriving from age-old conventions and traditional usage. In Southern Bantu polity any clan or community stands in some clearly defined relationship with the ruling family or clan. Those who deserted their chiefdoms and attached themselves to another were given specific status. The degree of respectability varied with the amount of wealth, usually in form of cattle, they could boast. Now, Amafengu, as the term implies, had nothing

of their own to boost their respectability. They were landless and cattless starving refugees when they arrived in Gcalekaland. They were given protection and left under the authority of their various chiefs. Economically they had to start from scratch; and this could not be done otherwise than taking up jobs among Amagcaleka as herdsmen, land-tillers, milkmen, hunters, tanners etc. In all cases they were remunerated with part of their produce. Socially they were regarded with contempt. They had not entered Gcalekaland as conquerors or as traders and merchants. They were impoverished fugitives and beggars. It would take some time before they could ingratiate themselves into Gcaleka society. But the conditions under which they lived were anything but slavery. They were not sold at the Gcaleka markets. They were allowed to travel long distances to sell their produce to foreign traders. Indeed the conditions under which Amafengu lived in Gcalekaland were incomparably superior to those under which the Khoikhoi and ex-slaves in the colony were held, even after Emancipation.

Ayliff's and D'Urban's claim that Amafengu were oppressed or enslaved should be seen in the light of other known facts. The establishment of Wesleyan Mission Station in Gcalekaland in 1827 was an illegal affair and against the wishes of Hintsa; and although the Paramount later accorded it recognition he was not keen that Amagcaleka should be converted to the Christian faith. "This word may suit my dogs, the Fingoes, but I and my people will not have it."²³⁵ The result was that without official

235. Ayliff, J. & Whiteside, J. History of the Abambo, p.20

support the Mission was finding it difficult to operate. Some of the Christian doctrines were bound to collide with Gcaleka traditions and customs. It would be better if the Amafengu were given land of their own with Ayliff himself as their spiritual Father. Obviously the scheme would require military protection as well. Yet Ayliff had neither land nor military protection to offer. But the Colonial Government could provide both. Ayliff at once got in touch with Governor D'Urban while at the same time preparing Amafengu to defect en masse at the arrival of colonial troops.

Governor B. D'Urban, at the head of a strong colonial force, invaded Gcalekaland on April 15, 1835. On April 17, he arrived at the Wesleyan Mission Station of Butterworth whence Rev. Ayliff had been operating. The missionary had fled the station and taken refuge at Clarkbury, 45 miles to the north east, in Tembuland. Everything went according to plan. Amafengu chiefs approached Governor D'Urban and told him of their resolve to desert Hintsa and to accompany the troops on their way back to the colony. The chiefs gave credence to what Ayliff had told D'Urban and to the sincerity of their request by offering to provide nearly 1,000 men to fight side by side with the colonial troops against Amagcaleka.

The question as to what exactly led Governor D'Urban to attack Gcalekaland is a matter of great difficulty to decide. The official explanation was that Paramount Hintsa was giving encouragement to Amarrarabe chiefs to wage war against the colony;

that he received and harboured cattle and horses which those chiefs 'stole' from the colonists; and that he actually provided reinforcements to the belligerent Amarrarabe. These charges might well be founded, taking into account the cunning type of warfare the Amaxosa adopted in 1834. But the colonial authorities were acting on information that was supplied by Rev. Ayliff who, as has already been shown, had his own axe to grind. It is possible that Governor D'Urban was a catspaw in the hands of an unscrupulous missionary bent on playing a Biblical Moses without the latter's magic wand.

The Amafengu cause had the rare distinction of having something to offer for everyone. D'Urban had little or nothing to do with the souls of Amafengu or the morality of Hintsa's conduct towards them. The Governor was a soldier and any alliance with the Saint was welcome to the extent that it contributed to the defeat of his enemy. To D'Urban, therefore, the importance of the 'liberation' of Amafengu lay in hard military realities rather than any moral or spiritual considerations. The Governor, at this time, was faced with a formidable enemy who he was determined to isolate and to deprive of as much external support as possible. He had already been guaranteed Abatembu and Amampondo neutrality or co-operation by Vusani and Faku respectively. Now, defection of close to 17,000 Amafengu would not only weaken Hintsa but would swell D'Urban's ranks by nearly a 1,000 men, equipped with knowledge of local terrain and Amaxosa military secrets. And at the end of hostilities these 'Liberated' Amafengu could be given land between the colony and 'Kaffirland',

there to continue their military role, this time as a buffer against further 'Kaffir' attacks while Rev. Ayliff would ensure the reception of their souls in heaven. Thus, D'Urban representing imperial interests which were in the final analysis economic, and Ayliff, representing humanitarianism which derived from Christian principles of High God, the two men, God and Mammon, courted the cause of Amafengu for entirely different reasons.

Soon after the defection of Amafengu to the colonist side Governor D'Urban launched a series of attacks against Amagcaleka. By April 29 his forces had captured nearly 20,000 head of cattle. There appears to have been little or no resistance on the part of Amagcaleka. The reason for this may be that the men had gone westward to join Amarrarabe chiefs who were actively engaged. It is also possible that Paramount Hintsa did not believe that Governor D'Urban would attack him as the Paramount was not openly at war with the colony. Be this as it may, Hintsa, finding himself without men and time to mobilise, was compelled to negotiate. On April 29, 1835 he accordingly met Governor D'Urban and asked for terms. D'Urban treating the chief as the vanquished, imposed terms some of which were impossible for Hintsa to comply with. The Governor demanded 50,000 cattle and 1,000 horses; that Hintsa "lay his imperative commands" upon the Amarrarabe chiefs to instantly "cease hostilities and send in, and give up to me, or to one of the divisions of my forces, all the firearms which they may possess", that Hintsa

"deliver into my hands here, on the spot, and immediately, two hostages, to be chosen by me from among the chief persons about me".²³⁶ Now, the 51600 animals demanded by the Governor were obviously excessive considering the fact that colonial troops had in the past five days captured almost 20,000 cattle. The second demand that Hintsa order cessation of hostilities and surrender of all firearms was a physical impossibility. True, Hintsa was an acknowledged Paramount of all Amaxosa, but he had neither the authority nor power to order Amarrarabe chiefs.

Hintsa was aware of these constitutional limitations and he knew that he could not raise the required number of cattle. In order to give the firebrand Governor some confidence and to restrain him from continuing his military attacks the Paramount offered to remain in the British camp. His presence produced the desired effect. The Governor not only ordered cessation of hostilities against Amagcaleka but ordered withdrawal from Gcalekaland. It was during that withdrawal that events which led to the murder of Hintsa were set in motion. Amagcaleka had been annoyed by Amafengu's ungrateful act of defection; but their actual fighting on the enemy side embittered them. As they were abandoning their homes and joining departing colonial troops some of Amafengu stragglers were molested by angry Amagcaleka. D'Urban held Hintsa responsible for these lawless acts and ordered Colonel Smith to hold him hostage until the last Mfengu had left Gcalekaland. In issuing these orders

the Governor used strong words accompanied by a threat to hang the chief, his son Sarrili and Buku, the councilor, on a tree under which they were sitting.²³⁷

From then on Hintsa felt insecure, and that feeling was accentuated by the knowledge that he was now a hostage. Makana's fate must have flashed through his mind. Hintsa began to plan his escape. He told Colonel Smith to accompany him, with a small detachment of troops, to one or two places in the country with a view to collect reparation cattle and horses that Governor D'Urban had demanded as one of the conditions of peace. The Colonel having agreed to this and Governor D'Urban having approved, the party set out in the direction of Mbashee River. In the vicinity of Xabecca River Hintsa was shot and killed by one of Colonel Smith's men while attempting to escape. Colonel Smith deposited Hintsa's body at a nearby village, launched several raids during which he captured over 3,000 cattle and commenced his march to the colony. Thus ended Governor D'urban's Gcalekaland expedition; successful beyond all expectations. Hintsa, Paramount of all Amaxosa had been killed, the Amafengu had been 'liberated' and about 25,000 head of cattle had been captured.

On May 10, 1835, shortly before Paramount Hintsa left the British camp with his assassins, Governor D'Urban had proclaimed River Kei as the new colonial boundary. He named the

237 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p. 156

region between Keiskamma and Kei thus annexed Queen Adelaide Province, describing its Amaxosa owners as "irreclaimable savages forever expelled across the Kei".²³⁸ But neither the 'liberation' of Amafengu nor the murder of Hintsu nor the proclamation of Queen Adelaide Province ended Governor D'Urban's troubles. In the region between Keiskamma and Fish Rivers, the old 'Neutral Territory', Amarrarabe chiefs Maqoma, Tyali, Ngqeno, Botumane, Mdushane etc. were still holding out and hitting the colonists with even greater fury. Commandant Van Wyk and Major Cox who the Governor had left to deal as best they could with these roistering fighters simply could not cope. Indeed, up to mid-September 1835 when a peace treaty was signed and hostilities ended Amaxosa were still operating with relentless severity deep in the colony.

The message sent by Hintsu on April 30²³⁹ reached Amarrarabe chiefs about May 10, 1835. It stated that the Paramount had accepted Governor D'Urban's peace terms and that "war was to cease" But the message, as we have seen, had virtually been sent under duress. Maqoma received it on the 11th May and immediately ordered a cease fire in order to study the communication. Next day it was decided that Maqoma and Tyali should meet with Major Cox to consider prospects of peace. The meeting was to be held at Tabindoda, known to the Europeans as 'Ndlambe's Kop'. On the 13th, while Maqoma and Tyali were awaiting the arrival of Major Cox's delegation, a second message from Hintsu was received.

238 Macmillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.135

239 Above page 141

The message had apparently been sent secretly and independent of Governor D'Urban. The Paramount informed Amarrarabe leaders that "he was a prisoner with the English" and advised them "to take care of themselves".²⁴⁰ Maqoma and Tyali felt so indignant at the outrage that they declined any further peace moves of Major Cox. In the evening of the same day hostilities were resumed.

Meanwhile, Hintsa having been killed, Governor D'Urban decided to commit Sarrili, Hintsa's son and heir, to the Treaty of April 30, 1835. On May 19 he met Sarrili at his Mpotshana Camp, in the new Queen Adelaide Province and reaffirmed the Kei River as the new colonial boundary; guaranteeing safe passage of Amarrarabe clans into Gcalekaland, and warning Sarrili against any attack on the Abatembu who, he said, were colonial allies and under colonial protection. At the end of the meeting the Governor took Buku, Gcaleka principal royal Councillor, hostage until, as he said, the terms of the Treaty he had concluded on April 30, with the late Chief Hintsa had been fulfilled. The Councillor was sent to Grahamstown and kept there for two months.

Colonel Somerset who had been entrusted with the care of Amafengu eventually brought them to the region between Fish and Keiskamma rivers, an area which the Governor himself had earlier on described as "uninhabited and worse than useless".²⁴¹

240 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.180

241 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.249 (Appendix)

The service they would render the colony there was entirely in the interests of the Europeans. They would soon convert the area, Governor D'Urban assured the colonists, "into a country abounding in cattle and corn, - will furnish the best of all barriers against the entrance of the Kaffirs into the Fish River Bush, (so long a source of mortal apprehension and injury to the colony) and will, besides, afford the colonists a plentiful supply of excellent hired servants".²⁴² If indeed the Amafengu had been 'enslaved' or oppressed by Amagcaleka a better example of 'jumping from the frying pan into the fire' cannot be imagined. Many of the Amafengu seem to have soon realised this. On March 22, 1836 Stretch is reported to have written to Fairbairn as follows: "Ayliff (a Wesleyan missionary) is returning to Hintsa's country to collect more Fingos seeing that many have gone back to their Oppressors".²⁴³ Two things emerge from this communication:

- (a) Despite all the outcry against Amafengu 'slavery or oppression' some at least of the Amafengu did not feel enslaved or oppressed. Hence they declined Governor D'Urban's 'liberation' offers.
- (b) Some at least of those who were credulous enough to accept Rev. Ayliff's persuasion that they were enslaved or oppressed soon realised their mistake and returned "to their oppressors".

242 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.249 (Appendix)

243 Macmillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.134 n

These revelations seem to leave no room for doubt that Amafengu had been victims of political mischief in the garb of humanitarianism. Whatever social disabilities Amafengu might have suffered, surely, could not outweigh the larger issue of political and military protection that the Gcaleka leaders afforded them. Moreover, the refugees were scarcely a year in Gcalekaland when Rev. Ayliff began preaching to them that they were being oppressed and less than seven years when D'Urban decided that they should be 'liberated'. Social scientists would agree that it takes a lot more than seven years for an alien community to be homogeneously absorbed into any society. The fact that some of the Amafengu chose to remain in Gcalekaland while others were being 'liberated' indicates that the process of absorption was well under way. Rev. Ayliff himself makes clear that the Amafengu were allowed to retain their chiefs, to cultivate crops, to carry out distant trade with foreign merchants and to hunt. Certainly there were those who took service under wealthy Amagcaleka as hunters, milkmen, cattle-herds, cultivators, domestics and so forth.

My knowledge of the system as it worked among the Southern Bantu is as follows: the herdsman was given complete charge of the cattle. He and his family were allowed some amount of milk and at the end of each year the owner gave him a hieffer or two. In this way the herdsman was gradually put on his own feet. The domestics were virtually part of the employer's family, eating of whatever the family head provided for the family.

And since they were free to leave service any time they wished they were anything but slaves. Those who were employed as cultivators received part of the produce as wages. The system was much more than just labour - wage relationship. It had its own morality and the objective of putting the labourer on his own feet was never lost sight of. The Amafengu who came to Gcaleka-land with nothing but their own souls had to take up these types of jobs to make a start at all.

The charge of enslavement or oppression existed only in the minds of those who wanted to use Amafengu for their own ends. Nor can the Amafengu chiefs be blamed. They were chiefs in their own right. All they needed was land which they could look upon as their own and in which they could exercise complete jurisdiction and authority. To the ordinary Mfengu the 'Abelungu' were leading him to 'Cannan, the land of milk and honey'. To this extent both the Amafengu, leaders and followers can hardly be censured. What is not so pardonable is their failure to realise that they had been duped and their continued role throughout the 19th century resistance wars as Europeans allies. Nor were the Amaxosa who appear to have made little or no effort to win back into the fold these 'prodigal sons' entirely blameless in that military commitment. Had they substituted some political shrewdness for their choler they might have been able to win back many of those they must have justifiably thought of as traitors.

Soon after the abortive attempts of Major Cox to arrange a truce with the Amaxosa the latter intensified their attacks on the colonists and Amafengu. Governor D'Urban who was now anxious

to end the war and had given Cox's peace moves his blessings was thoroughly disappointed. And what was even more disheartening was the fact that the Amaxosa were now ubiquitous and elusive than ever before. Their operations extended from the Sunday River (deep inside colonial territory) through the old neutral territory to the New Province of Queen Adelaide. As late as end of May 1835 Amaxosa detachments were making attacks on several homesteads and farms in the vicinity of Bathurst and Grahamstown. Between 18th and 30th May at least six colonists were killed in the area.

Meanwhile colonel Smith now operating from the newly established military post of Kingwilliamstown (Queen Adelaide Province) was engaged in running battles with Amaxosa with indecisive results. The Amaxosa were operating from the Amatole Mountains and from forest fastnesses where colonists' cavalry could not be used with effect. They cut off enemy stragglers and isolated units and inflicted losses. Colonial troops on the other hand occasionally came up with and intercepted Amaxosa stragglers and shot some of their number. But the Amaxosa soldiers killed in this manner were often so few in number as to be insignificant vis-a-vis their overall numerical strength. The most severe losses they suffered were in property. The colonial troops burned down their homes, destroyed their crops and captured large numbers of their cattle. Nevertheless "no disposition was manifested by him (Amaxosa enemy) to submit to the British power".²⁴⁴

244 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.196

Urban instructed officers in the Cape colony, offering in exchange retention by the British of the territories. Two factors completely nullified the May decision to expel the Amaxosa, however, and the adamant resistance which was maintained throughout June and July, 1835. Even the most severe colonial adversary was treated with (at the times, greater) severity. A colonial official of the state of the war during the July-August period in the Cape colony terms: "perhaps at no period since the commencement of the war did affairs wear a more unsettled and unsatisfactory character than at this particular juncture. The enemy, though nominally subdued. From his mountain fastnesses he watched the movements of the colonial forces and was enabled to take advantage of every circumstance to harass and afflict the foe. Some loss was experienced in this way. Independent of this, several successful forays were made far within the colonial boundary, and which could not fail to keep the inhabitants in a state of continual alarm and excitement."²⁴⁵ The second factor, and which the Amaxosa were aware, was a growing public opinion both in the Cape colony and Great Britain. This opinion was led by individuals such as missionaries, writers and even Government officials.

Following the peace moves Captain Warden and Major Cox were ordered to leave the Cape colony at Tamaque on August 15, 1835.

But the meeting was no more than talks about peace talks. The two sides, however, agreed to a cease-fire pending the details of peace terms which D'Urban had spelt out to his officers. It was agreed that Captain Warden be expressly dispatched to Grahamstown for consultations with the Governor. Warden returned on or about August 22, and the second meeting was convened. Maqoma, it would appear, had expected to meet the Governor in person. The elaborate military preparations which he made seem to leave no room for doubt that they were intended for the benefit of an important personality, either as a mark of honour or to overawe him. The Chief had mustered over 4,000 men, cavalry and infantry. At least 400 were armed with muskets. Both the infantry and cavalry took up their respective grounds (previously allotted them) with regularity and order that astounded the colonial delegation. But Maqoma was disappointed not only by the absence of the Governor but also by the fact that Major Cox and Captain Warden were junior officers who by virtue of their rank lacked negotiating and bargaining flexibility. What the officers could do was to repeat instructions from their superiors that the Amaxosa should stop fighting and surrender whatever firearms they had to the colonial military authorities. The promise that they would retain their territories was still too vaguely stated and made at too low a level for the Amaxosa to act on. Godlonton states that "the general deportment and tone of the chiefs was much more confident than at the former meeting, and the terms insisted on far less moderate",²⁴⁶ and implies that this was the reason for the collapse of the talks.

246 Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p. 219

The truth is rather that Cox and Warden had not come to negotiate but to state the terms which Governor D'Urban had to offer. The colonists still held the supercilious attitudes that they could impose terms on their undefeated foe. Maqoma immediately terminated discussions and ordered resumption of hostilities.

This decision to terminate the talks and resume the fighting has been taken as a glaring example of Amaxosa faithlessness.²⁴⁷ It is often not realised that from the point of view of Maqoma the importance of the negotiations required that the Governor himself or a highly placed officer who not only could take decisions on the spot but could give detailed and dependable interpretation of the terms offered be present. The low ranking position of Major Cox deprived the colonial delegation of any bargaining authority which alone could make the talks appear like negotiations. Governor D'Urban was not in Cape Town but on the frontier during this time. His failure to lead the colonial delegation in person or to accredit Colonel Smith, his second in command, to the negotiations gave credence to Amaxosa suspicions that the colonists were not sincere in their peace professions. These suspicions were implied in Amaxosa remarks on two separate occasions. On August 14 Amaxosa officers warned Dirk, a colonial functionary carrying messages of peace offer: "This is the second flag you have brought, Dirk, you must not bring a third".²⁴⁸ Next day Maqoma on meeting Major Cox,

247. Ibid pp.223-224

248. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p.217

extended his hand to greet, and observed: "I see you are sincere, otherwise you would not come in such a defenceless state to us".²⁴⁹ But the Xosa leader was soon undeceived. Governor D'Urban's attempt to impose peace settlement from Grahamstown convinced him that he (D'Urban) still required a few more blows to bring him to the conference table.

When D'Urban heard that the Amatole talks had broken down and that Am-xosa had returned to the battle-field he at once realised the gravity of the situation. He sent peremptory orders to Colonel Smith at King Williamstown to take over from Major Cox and resume negotiations with Maqoma. Smith was second in command and his substitution for Major Cox was a step in the right direction, albeit, a belated one. Maqoma apparently now bent on a military solution refused to meet Colonel Smith and continued to batter the colonists. With all contacts severed there appeared to be no alternative for D'Urban but the military prosecution of this seemingly unwinnable war.

But the Governor suddenly remembered that at the beginning of the war Chief Maqoma had given a directive that no missionary should be molested. Working on the theory that the Chief might agree to listen to them he approached the Wesleyan missionaries and requested them to persuade Maqoma to meet him. The missionaries accepted the Governor's request; but it was a matter of considerable doubt whether Maqoma would agree to be persuaded by the Wesleyans. Throughout the war these missionaries

had displayed some bias for the colonists and against Amaxosa cause. It was therefore necessary that the Chief should be tricked into accepting D'Urban's peace offer. Accordingly, early in August 1835 a three man mission consisting of Reverends W. Shenstone, S. Palmer and W. Boyce left Grahamstown for Chief Pato's²⁵⁰ residence. After explaining their peace mission to him Pato advised the missionaries to send their message to Maqoma through four women, one of whom had married into Amangqika clan and had just returned from Amatole mountain camp. The message the missionaries asked the women to present to Maqoma was as ingenious as it was fraudulent. "Maqoma had been a friend of the missionaries, and now they sought to repay his kindness by warning him that a storm was growing which would soon overwhelm his people unless he sued for peace immediately. Already a large body of troops had arrived and another was expected momentarily. The Boers had finished ploughing and were ready again to ride into Kaffirland. The Governor had said that if he entered Kaffirland again, he would sweep the country clean, but the missionaries knew that he was merciful and that if the chiefs asked for forgiveness and told him they were tired of war, he would give them land for their tribes".²⁵¹

250 This Chief Pato was one of Amangqunukwebe chiefs who early in the war had professed to be neutral, but later actively collaborated with the colonists. Others were Cobose and Umkayi.

251 Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p. 117

The fraud succeeded beyond all expectations. When the women returned they reported that Maqoma was willing to meet Governor D'Urban only on one condition: the latter must abandon his May expulsion policy and recognise Amaxosa right to remain in their territories. On receiving these happy tidings Governor D'Urban left Grahamstown and arrived at Fort Willshire on September 8th. He immediately invited Maqoma to talks at the Fort. Maqoma arrived on the evening of the 11th September at the head of huge delegation. Next morning, on September 12 Governor D'Urban led the colonial delegation to the talks. Maqoma spoke first. The war, he made clear, was about the land. Peace could be had only on one condition: that the Amaxosa were left in undisturbed occupation of their territories, which included the old neutral territory.²⁵² Now the Amaxosa claim to the neutral territory raised an intreaguing problem for the Governor. In May he had instructed Colonel Somerset to settle Amafengu in Fort Peddie, the coastal regaion between Keiskamma and Fish rivers, an area which had been Amaxosa land. The Amafengu had been declared British subjects and settled at Ford Peddie to form a barrier between Xosaland and Cape Colony. In reply Governor D'Urban began by declaring that in view of Amaxosa request to be accepted as British subjects he would abandon his May Expulsion Policy and leave them in occupation of their territories, "subject to such reservations as it might be necessary to make".²⁵³ He further stated that the Amaxosa would have to surrender any fire-arms which they had in their possession. Soon after this conference Chief Maqoma, whose troops were still in the field, ordered ceasation of hostilities. Thus ended the eleven months war.

252. Galbraith, J.S.: Reluctant Empire, p.117

253. Godlonton, R.: Narrative of the Irruption, p. 222

Five days later, on September 17, 1835 the two sides ratified what was virtually a dictated peace treaty. The document was drawn up entirely by the colonial delegation and reflected none of the Amaxosa views. It was based on the assumption that the region between Keiskamma and Kei rivers had been annexed to the colony and that the latter river was now the eastern colonial boundary. The essential features of the Peace Treaty were:

- (1) The subjection of Amaxosa west of the Kei to the colonial rule. Although certain Amaxosa customs and traditions would not be interfered with, provided they did not clash with colonial laws, the chiefs would be supervised by Government appointed magistrates or residents. Also missionaries would be appointed to carry out the work of civilisation among Amaxosa by means of churches and schools. And arts of industry would be fostered.
- (2) The Amaxosa would be assigned locations for which each chief had to pay "one fat ox in the course of the first month of every year".
- (3) The reaffirmation of the Amafengu settlement in Fort Peddie, a region which had formerly belonged to the Amaxosa and which they now demanded should be returned to them.

- (4) The bulk of the Treaty dealt with restrictive rules relating to attack on colonists, crimes of murder, stealing, etc. with punishments to be meted to offenders.²⁵⁴

Superficially it would seem grotesque that the Amaxosa who, technically speaking, had not been vanguished in the battle-field should accept such a onerous peace. Their acceptance of the extension of the colonial boundary to the Kei and their submission to European rule clearly made nonsense of the ordous struggle they had been waging for eleven months. In reality mutual understanding had got bogged down in the bombastic verbiage of the colonists and picturesque expression of S'Xosa idiom. In May 1835 Governor D'Urban claimed that he had "defeated, chastised and dispersed" Amangqika and Amandlambe and that he had conquered their country, a claim that had no relevance whatever to the facts of the situation. D'Urban announced on the same occasion that he had extended the colonial boundary to the Kei River and that he had condemned these Amaxosa as "treacherous and irreclaimable savages"²⁵⁵, "forever expelled"²⁵⁶ across the Kei.

The effect of this proclamation was to create more difficulties for D'Urban himself. First, it strengthened the anti-war opinion both in Cape Colony and in Great Britain.

254. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, pp 224-228

255. Godlonton, R. Narrative of the Irruption, p. 252
(appendix 16)

256. *Ibdi*, p.253

Now, does any part of this statement express Maqoma's desire "to become the subject of the King of England"? In May when he was held hostage in the colonial camp Hintsa often referred to colonel Smith as his father. Maqoma's reference to Amaxosa desire to be called the children of the Governor was simply an acknowledgement of the fact that the colonists were militarily superior and that the Governor should adopt peaceful policies. Governor D'Urban, however, assumed the convenient interpretation that the chiefs had requested to become British subjects. This suited him well since he was hard put to it to justify his extension of the colonial territory. But the Amaxosa continued fighting embarrassed him. Even after he had successfully deceived them to the peace talks Maqoma and Tyali told the women peace messengers: "We will say mercy, great chief, but we will not at first ask for a place to sit in, nor will we mention our not going over the Kei, we will merely ask for mercy".²⁵⁹ In other words the ownership of their territories was not negotiable, and they would not go beyond the Kei River. They were going to the peace talks only to negotiate a cessation of hostilities.

When Governor D'Urban told the chiefs in September that he would leave them in occupation of their territories and that their customs and traditions would not be interfered with they were satisfied. As for the details and legal technicalities contained in the peace treaty the chiefs showed least concern. Moreover, the document had been drawn up, interpreted and translated to them by the colonial delegation. It is possible that

259. Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p. 117

in doing so Governor D'Urban who, as we have seen, was desperately anxious to end the war laid less stress on the harsher and alarming aspects of the Treaty. Be that as it might, the Amaxosa leaders accepted the Treaty on the understanding that they would be left in occupation of their territories; that their way of life would not be interfered with, and in the hope that as the "children of the Governor" they would no longer be subjected to the harassing patrols and commandos.

From this discussion of the period 1820-35 two new features emerge, namely, the improved quality of Amaxosa resistance and white penetration farther into Amaxosa territories. To begin with the first. Since the Battle of Grahamstown in 1819 Amaxosa military leaders appear to have learned much and forgotten nothing. Throughout the 1834-35 war radical modifications in their mode of warfare are in evidence. From the first they made it a point never to provide the enemy with mass targets of the Grahamstown type. Their approach was entirely guerrilla: based on the effective use of local terrain as sanctuary; operation in small detached units which were highly mobile and ready to coalesce but ever elusive and ubiquitous. The Amaxosa also showed a remarkable grasp of military dynamics. Since 1779 they had been involved in an unequal contest with an enemy who was mounted and armed with firearms. By the 1820s they had come to appreciate the military advantage which these two factors conferred upon their possessors. In the 1834-35 war they were determined to neutralise that advantage by equipping themselves with guns and horses. Some of these they purchased from the white traders and blackmarketeers. But by far the largest quantities were captured from the enemy during the war. So it was that when the

war ended Maqoma had built up a large cavalry force, a considerable portion of which, as well as sections of the infantry, were armed with guns. The acquisition of firearms by Amaxosa did not, however, bring about parity with Europeans. In quantitative terms the number which fell into their hands was a trickle. Their effective use was made nugatory by lack of ammunition and practice in marksmanship. Amaxosa soldiers were therefore bad shots. The assegai remained their basic weapon. Nevertheless the adoption of guerrilla strategy and acquisition of firearms and horses represented a break with the past and demonstrated Amaxosa flexibility and adaptability in military matters. It was precisely this adaptability that made their resistance in the 1834-35 war more formidable than in any of the previous wars.

The second feature of the period we are discussing is the penetration of Europeans farther into the heart of Xosaland. In 1819 Governor Somerset had duped Paramount Chief Ngqika into accepting the proclamation of the region between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers as a neutral territory. Soon thereafter the area was referred to as the 'Ceded Terrirory' and apportioned into farms for white settlement. The territory was never returned to its Amaxosa owners. In the middle of the 1834-35 war Governor D'Urban extended colonial boundary to the Kei River, and declared the Amaxosa owners of the country thus annexed "treacherous and irreclaimable savages" forever expelled across the Kei.

The annexation was subsequently reversed by D'Urban's superiors in London and the country given back to the 'savages'. But a thrust once made could hardly be completely withdrawn. European influence in the form of Christian missionaries, Government Agents and white traders remained and would sooner or latter be transformed into military and political occupation.

II. THE HIGHVELD

The invasion of the Highveld by Europeans was heralded by groups of mixed breeds (the Griquas) and sections of the Khoi-Khoi and San known as the Koras (Koranas), Nama (Namaqua). The Griquas, known to the late 18th century Europeans as 'Bastards', were a cross-breed between whites, slaves, Khoikhoi and San. At the turn of the 18th century they and large sections of the Khoikhoi and San whose social systems had collapsed under white pressure found conditions in the colony increasingly unbearable. Gradually they edged away from the colony and roamed the northern and north-eastern fringes of the colonial borders. Most of the Namas and Koras and San eventually moved into the present south South West Africa (Namibia). But the Griquas and a few bands of Koras, Namas and San were, in the first two decades of the 19th century, collected by missionaries of the L.M.S. and settled across the Orange River in villages and under chiefs of sorts. By the early 1820s three such village towns had been established - Griquatown, Campbell and Philippolis under Andries Waterboer, Cornelius Kok and Adam Kok respectively.²⁶⁰

Although these Griqua settlements, soon referred to as Griqua states, were beyond the Cape Colony and were averse to any colonial control, they carried on lucrative trade with the white colonists. Mounted bands armed with guns raided for cattle among the southern Batswana and Basotho at will. The cattle and other

260. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 53

commodities thus obtained were sold to the colonists in exchange for more guns, ammunition, wagons, cloth, liquor - brandy etc. To the southern Batswana and Basotho communities the Griquas were undoubtedly awkward neighbours. But there was little or nothing they could do to reduce these mounted and firearmed brigands to order. Moreover these communities were not only weak and divided but they were threatened with annihilation from Difecane refuges such as Batlokwa of 'Manthatise, Amahlubi of Mpagasita, Amangwane of Matiwane and Matebele of Mzilikaze from across the Vaal River. It was small wonder, therefore, that the galloping and gun-slinging Griquas, notably the Bergenaars, raided the Batswana-Basotho communities with impunity.

It was into this palpably confounded situation that the white colonists were gradually siphoned. South African historians, while paying glowing tribute to its nation-building process, have roundly condemned Shakan military revolution as having depopulated wide areas and cleared the way for white penetration into the interior.²⁶¹ It is a matter of considerable doubt whether had there been no Difecane the scattered and often feebly organised interior communities could and would have performed better than they did against the invading white forces. The 19th century South African resistance amply demonstrates that numbers per se could not put a term to white encroachment. That Difecane put the interior communities in a state of alertness and

261. See for example D. Denoon: Southern Africa Since 1800, p.15, G. S. Were: A History of South Africa, p.80

military preparedness, capable of innovation and self-defence, is undoubted. It was during these hard times that the famous mountain strategy that served Moshoeshoe and Sekhukhuni so well evolved. When the whites eventually invaded the interior these communities collapsed, not because their numbers had been depleted by Difecane but because of the superior technology of the enemy.

At first white encroachment on the Highveld occurred in trickles. Since the last quarter of the 18th century European nomads from the Cape colony had been pushing across the north-eastern frontier with their cattle. By the early 1820s the nomads had begun to depasture their cattle across the Orange River, in an area inhabited by Batswana, Basotho, the Griquas and San. At first they crossed over during dry seasons and returned to the colonial side of the border. As was to be expected, however, a number of these Boer nomads soon began to occupy farms sold or leased to them by Griquas. In October 1832 "there are 1,500 Boers across that boundary,"²⁶² (i.e. Orange River). Within the space of two years the number had risen to 1,600. Then what began as a trickle in the early 1820s suddenly became a torrent in 1836. Large numbers of Boers who had rebelled against British authority but found their way blocked by Amaxosa on the eastern frontier poured over the Orange and reinforced the Boer nomads who, as we have already noted, had settled there.

What was the reaction of the Basotho-Batswana Bantu communities to this invasion? At this stage they were not in a

262. Macmillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.62

position to do anything. They had committed a tactical blunder in the early 1810s when they permitted the L.M.S. missionaries to settle the Griquas on the southern part of their domain. By 1836 these mixed breeds were too entrenched to be dislodged. They were now claiming the area as of right and leasing or selling land to the Boers who thus established a firm foothold on the Highveld. Although the Griquas were leasing or selling land to the Boers their chiefs and their missionary mentors opposed the practice and tried in vain to prevent it. The chiefs and missionaries sent repeated appeals to the colonial Government to prevent colonial subjects from encroaching on Griqua states. The Colonial authorities turned a deaf ear to the appeals. The only sensible thing for both Bantu and Griqua to do was to forge an alliance against the Boers and drive them back over the Orange. But the Bantu-Griqua relations were too strained to admit of an alliance even for common defence. The other possible step to rid the Highveld of the white menace was unilateral action by the Bantu: to drive both Boer and Griqua back over the Orange. But their military weakness vis-a-vis the enemy and their mutual quarrels made that kind of approach unthinkable. Moshoeshoe, Moroka and Sekonyela were ever at each other's throat. Indeed, the weaker Moroka and Sekonyela were prepared to seek protection under the white new comers against Moshoeshoe. This already confused and confusing situation was further confounded by the ever present external threat posed by Mzilikatse's Matebele over the Vaal River.

These blinding forces precluded any chances of effective African resistance to white expansion in Trans-Orangeia for one and half decade. Voortrekkers poured into the area in successive

waves and established effective operational base from which they menaced and eventually destroyed Mzilikaze's Kingdom across the Vaal and Dingane's power to the east of the Drakensberg. History should not be written backwards and it is all too easy to be wise after the event. Nevertheless the historian has his own privileges for which the makers of history should not grudge him. Had the Batswana-Basotho in Trans-Orangia done on the Orange River what the Amaxosa did on the Fish River the history of South Africa might be different. The Amaxosa were as small and often as divided as the Trans-Orangia chiefdoms. Like the latter the Amaxosa chiefdoms had no standing and regular armies. The only important difference, perhaps was the terrain. The bushy and trackless nature of the Fish River region while providing ample cover for Amaxosa soldiers made the use of cavalry difficult. The Highveld on the other hand was open and neither provided cover nor hindered cavalry movements. Nevertheless the Trans-Orangia chiefdoms could and should have done better than they did during this period. In the 1870s Moorosi defied British troops armed with a mortar and other more sophisticated weapons for eight months, on the banks of the Orange. Few months later, in 1880, Lerothodi's forces beat British troops in a harassing guerrilla warfare in the Caledon valley. The truth of the matter appears to be that in early 19th century the Trans-Orangia chiefdoms failed to appreciate correctly the dangers that the arrival of the whites on the Highveld portended. The result was that they continued to be preoccupied with their clanish feuds while the Europeans were establishing themselves firmly in the area.

In the course of those feuds the weaker chieftains such as Moroka, Sekonyela, Makwana etc sought the assistance or protection of the white new comers and thus became allies or collaborators.

From their Trans-Orangia base the Voortrekkers directed their commando operations against Mzilikaze, then the most powerful potentate on the Highveld. Mzilikaze had been a powerful General under King Shaka. In about 1823 he had deserted with a section of the Zulu army and moved into the area between the Vaal and Limpopo Rivers, the present Transvaal province. There he had dispersed Bapedi and other northern Basotho communities and driven some of the Batswana farther west, into the eastern fringes of the Khabahari Desert. At every stage of his conquests Mzilikaze drafted young men from the conquered communities into his army. In this way he became stronger with every conquest, and by 1836 when Europeans invaded his domains he could field at least 10,000 men.

The army (Impi) was organised along Zulu traditional lines and equipped with the stabbing spear and large oval-shaped ox-hide shield. The logistics remained strictly Shakan and discipline and valour the military values of Matebele army. In the impending contest with the Boers the struggle would not be merely for the mastery of the Highveld. The efficacy of Zulu strategy and tactics would be put to a test vis-a-vis the commando system. As against the traditional mode of warfare the Impi had proved to be invincible and had amply demonstrated the worth of the Shakan system. But now, the system was to be applied against a numerically tiny but technologically superior enemy. The contest

would also provide a measure of the Amazulu resourcefulness, flexibility and adaptability in new situations.

Mzilikaze's struggle with Europeans began in August 1836 when a party of Voortrekkers from Trans-Orangia under Hendrik Potgieter crossed the Vaal River and camped on the southern border lands of his dominion. Soon after this Potgieter, accompanied by eleven chosen horsemen, left the main body and without Mzilikaze's knowledge and permission, explored the country as far north as the Zoutpansberg and then eastward on their return trip. Meanwhile the Matebele monarch was informed that a large party of 'Abelungu' (white people) had camped on his southern border lands and that they behaved as if they intended to stay. Mzilikaze, naturally annoyed and perhaps alarmed too, sent General Mkalipi at the head of a 600-man patrol to destroy the encampments. Shortly before the arrival of the patrol, however, some of the camps were alerted and they quickly formed laagers. At these camps Mkalipi's patrol was repulsed with loss. Those that he surprised, however, were entirely wiped out. Mkalipi then took two young girls prisoner, drove off a large number of Boer cattle and returned to Mosega, having failed to destroy the laagered camps.

Soon after his return Potgieter, anticipating another Matebele attack, recrossed the Vaal and formed a laager on the southern banks of that river, within Trans-Orangia territory. On October 15, 1836 General Mkalipi at the head of 6,000 man Impi advanced and bivouacked within sight of Potgieter's laager.

The laager was defended by less than 40 Boers, each armed with two muzzle-loaders. Women, boys and girls assisted in re-loading and making the guns ready after every firing. The laager itself was made of wagons, lashed together end to end and reinforced by thorn-bush. Outside the laager, and completely unguarded, were Boer cattle, horses and sheep. Fighting began some distance away from the laager on the morning of the 19th. The Boers who were mounted retreated to the laager as they fired, drawing the Impi with them. As the Matebele closed in on the laager the Boers poured out furious fusillade into their ranks from within the laager.

Now there were several approaches by which Matebele could have won the battle without risking the dissipation of their strength. The first was to drive off all the cattle, horses, sheep and goats to Mosega, invest the little camp and starve the enemy to submission. Although there were Boers farther south and Gerrit Maritz had just arrived at Thaba Nchu, it would take a week or two before news of the siege could reach that quarter. It would take another week for the relief force to be prepared and probably another to break the siege. It is unlikely that the 40 Boers could have survived the siege, and, at any rate, would not have time to bring up reinforcements. The second approach was to set the laager ablaze and force the enemy out; having driven off his horses and exposed his women and children it would be easier to subdue him.

Far from adopting any of these tactics the Matebele attempted to seize the laager by storm. This was in conformity with Shaka's canons of war and prowess. As the troops attempted

to remove the thorn bush and to disengage the wagons the Boer defenders took a heavy toll of them. Within an hour General Mkalipi was compelled to call off the attack, having lost over 400 men killed and many wounded. The Boers suffered only two killed and several wounded. As the Matebele retreated to Mosega they drove off all the cattle, horses, sheep and goats belonging to the enemy. Finding themselves immobilised and short of food the Boers made known their plight at Thaba-Nchu, the Wesleyan mission station and Moroka's royal capital. Chief Moroka and Rev. Archbell made available draught oxen and food which were speedily dispatched to Vecht Kop. Gerrit Maritz, a Voortrekker leader who had recently arrived at Thaba Nchu, provided military escort. The victors of Vecht Kop were thus brought back to Moroka's capital where they joined with Maritz's party.

The first clash between Matebele and Boers had taken place within Mzilikaze's territory, just to the north of the Vaal. Soon thereafter the Boers had re-crossed the Vaal and pitched camp at Vecht Kop, within Trans-Orangia. It was there that the second Matebele attack was repulsed with heavy loss. Although Matebele had lost the battle they had, nevertheless attained their objective. They had driven out the enemy from their territory. What was needed now was to station a strong military force along the southern border and to maintain efficient scouting parties to report on all enemy movements. The Matebele military leaders did neither. During November and December of 1836 Potgieter and Gerrit Maritz prepared themselves to carry the war into Mzilikaze's country. On January 2, 1837 a mixed force of 107 Boers, 40 Griquas and 60 Barolong

set out for Mosega.²⁶³ For two weeks the expeditionary force marched through the southern province and on the 16th bivouacked within sight of Mosega without Matebele knowing. It was a gross security negligence that cost dearly. Next day at dawn the Mosega regiments were woken up by a loud report from Potgieter's heavy elephant gun. General Mkalipi was absent but it was unlikely that his presence would have made any difference. As the panic-stricken soldiers grabbed their shields and spears and rushed out of their houses the enemy had gained tactical advantage. He galloped round the houses, picking the soldiers one after another with disastrous effect. "By mid-morning the entire population of Mosega was in flight to the north"²⁶⁴ and later Mosega went up in flames. The Boers claimed that they killed 400 Matebele troops with no loss to themselves. Soon after the Battle of Mosega they returned to Thaba Nchu, driving off over 6,000 head of cattle.

It was as if Mzilikaze's troubles were not already alarming. At a time when he most needed time and quietude to reorganise his tottering state and mend his defences his old enemies reappeared. In June 1837 Dingane's army invaded Matebele Kingdom. Mzilikaze eventually drove the Zulu army back, but not before he had suffered heavy losses in killed and cattle. Meanwhile the Kora (Korans) were raiding Matebele settlements and seizing cattle. These happenings further weakened Matebele State already badly battered by Boer Commandos. Despite all these

263. Walker, E.A.: The Great Trek, p.127

264. Becker, P.: Path of Blood, p. 172

alarming developments Mzilikaze appears to have taken no decisive measures to ensure the security of the State. The fact that the second and final Boer attack in November 1837 also took the Matebele by surprise²⁶⁵ is a measure of the inefficiency of his security apparatus. In November Hendrik Potgieter and Piet Uys, at the head of 260-man commando and convoy of wagons, attacked his last stronghold, Gabeni, killed over 3,000 Matebele defenders and destroyed the Royal Residence. The Commando had again marched hundreds of miles through his territory and surprise-attacked Tshwenyane, the first military village south of Gabeni. Nor did the Matebele military leaders make any serious attempts to change their tactics to meet the new military situation thus presented by firearms and horses. In the defence of Gabeni the Matebele continued to attack in their traditional ox-horn formation. But the Boers countered this encircling manoeuvre by advancing in a long line with the flanks harrying the Matebele 'horns' and preventing them from meeting on their rear. Only in the final stand did the Matebele attempt a different strategy. They took positions behind a drove of cattle with a view to stampeding them over the enemy lines.²⁶⁶ But the galloping Boers avoided the stampede, shooting all the while at the cattle until the herd broke up and scattered in different directions. Matebele troops now exposed to the enemy fire power withdrew from the battlefield and from the South African history, crossing the Limpopo River and establishing themselves in what is to-day Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

265. Becker, P.: Path of Blood, p. 171, 174-175

266. Ibid. p. 177

Despite the imposing regiments and martial appearance of Mzilikaze's State apparatus the Matebele military resistance has been relatively the least impressive. The fact that they had immense problems to cope with is not denied. The Matebele had to defend themselves in a country that was essentially foreign to them. Their knowledge of the nature and extent of the country must have been limited. The inefficiency of state spies and scouts may be traced to this fact. Nor could the loyalty of the subjugated communities, on whom the continuance of Matebele hegemony depended, be taken for granted. While, therefore, the internal situation required constant vigilance external blows such as Amazulu and the Kora occasionally delivered were more than the Matebele state could take. Finally, the open nature of the Highveld facilitated cavalry and wagon movements. This meant that the Boers could deploy their cavalry force in an area that provided little or no cover for the Matebele warriors.

But when this has been said the fact remains that Matebele could and should have done better. The Highveld, generally, is an open and flat country; but there are more defensible areas whence Mzilikaze could have hoped to resist the Boers with some degree of success. The indigenous Mavenda and Bapedi Kingdoms whose fighting capacity the Matebele had done much to undermine put up better military performance against the Boers and British in the same area. Nor did Mzilikaze attempt to combine his military resistance with any diplomacy.

On March 3rd, 1835 Mzilikaze had concluded a friendship treaty with Governor D'Urban. The colonial authorities were anxious to control the Voortrekker movement though they did not have the military means or the will to do so. It is plausible to suggest that had Mzilikaze invoked this treaty and appealed to the colonial Government Matebele state might have been preserved. An official "hands off Matebeleland" might have been enough to restrain Boer aggression. But Mzilikaze never tapped this source. It is possible that Matebele indifference stemmed from the fact that they had not developed any real attachment to the country of their adoption. They had been on the Highveld for only little over a decade. Moreover, moving out of harms way appears to have been something of a tradition for the Matebele monarch. Soon after he had fallen out with his master, Shaka, he led his followers across the Drakensberg and settled in eastern Transvaal. When in 1825 Shaka's armies caught up with him he moved farther west and established himself in the Marico district. His abandonment of the Transvaal to the Boers after what was undoubtedly the most feeble resistance by the second strongest African military power in South Africa was a disappointment but not a surprise.

III ZULULAND

After the expulsion of Mzilikaze across the Limpopo River the Boers claimed the whole country between that river and the Vaal and from the Drakensberg to the eastern fringes of the Khalahari by right of conquest. The numerous native communities which had been scattered by Matebele were beginning to re-form but it never occurred to the Boers that these were in fact the legitimate owners of the land and therefore worthy of notice. The Boers saw them only in terms of their own labour requirements and of auxilliary levies in commandos. The natives on the other hand were grateful that their Matebele oppressors had been driven away but they had no intention of substituting Boer oppression for Matebele oppression. As the Boers would soon discover, between these two positions 'lekker lewe' was hard to find and difficult to maintain.

While Henderik Potgieter and Piet Uys led the punitive commando against Mzilikaze Gerrit Maritz and Piet Retief had led the hulk of the Voortrekkers eastwards, towards the Drakensberg with a view to cross those mountains and settle in Natal, the southern part of Zululand. The Voortrekkers had vague ideas of the political and military situation there. But they knew that the land was beautiful and vacant, save a handful of English traders and few Amazulu around Port Natal. They had also been made to believe that Dingane, the Zulu Monarch, had no objection to white people settling in this part of his domain. As the wagons lumbered through the Drakensberg passes Retief, accompanied

by 15 chosen horsemen, rode ahead to confer with the English traders at Port Natal and then with the Zulu king himself at Mgungundlovu, the Royal Capital.

The Amazulu had probably been familiar with Abelungu (White people) since the 15th century or earlier. But determined effort by the latter to settle in their country was not made until the early 1820's. In April 1824 a group of white traders landed at what soon became known as Port Natal (site of present Durban) to tap the expected lucrative trade in ivory from Zululand. King Shaka, the Zulu ruler, hoping to use the traders to enhance his own power, granted them permission to settle at the Port. From his dealings with them it would appear that Shaka regarded the white traders as his subjects. He allowed them to build personal followings from among local natives and to virtually act as chieftains at Port Natal Settlement. He levied them into his military campaigns and sent them on diplomatic missions. Up to the time of his assassination Shaka doubted the superiority of the firearms over the stabbing spear. Indeed he made little or no effort to use the traders to obtain guns for his army. Apart from the political roles that they played Shaka valued the Port Natal Settlers for the trade in European goods such as cloth, knives, beads and metals. The settlers also provided agreeable and refreshing company since they often engaged him on disputations over political and military matters. Such discourses gave him an insight into the workings of European politics. For all these reasons Shaka was prepared to keep the traders, and even to overlook some of their conduct which seemed to undermine his authority.

The traders for their part, though they sometimes faltered, made effort not to abuse the King's generosity. Nevertheless ingrates such as John Cane repeatedly irritated the Zulu ruler. By 1828 when Shaka was assassinated his relations with the traders had begun to deteriorate.

Dingane, Shaka's assassin and successor, attempted to patch a *modus vivendi* of sorts with the Natal traders. One of his first acts after the bloody coup d'état was to dispatch a messenger to Port Natal to reassure the traders. But Dingane's relations with the Natal settlers were destined to be unhappy and to culminate in a rebellion and alliance with the Amazulu's enemies.²⁶⁷ The decade 1830-1840 was one of the most critical periods in Amazulu history. Big scares and misinterpretations of Amazulu motives and intentions had an unsettling effect on the Zulu kingdom. Numbers of traders increased rapidly; travellers came and went, giving reports in favour of occupation either by the Boers or Cape Colonial government or even by the British Crown itself.²⁶⁸ Missionaries began to trickle in and to pester Dingane about permission to teach the 'Word'. These developments seemed to confirm the warnings given to the Zulu monarch that the white people would come at first in ones and twos, then more would follow and eventually an army would come to drive him from his Kingdom. Dingane came to the conclusion that only overall strengthening would save his Kingdom. This meant he had to take

267. Morris, D.R.: The Washing of the Spears, p. 142

268. Ibid, p. 118.

diplomatic initiatives to ensure friendly relations with the only State he had reason to fear - Cape Colony. It also meant that the Zulu monarch had to tighten his control over the State and its vassal outposts at Port Natal and in the Delagoa Bay region. Efficient administration would ensure strong economic base which alone could enable the State to withstand both internal and external pressures. Finally, Dingane had to maintain something of Shakan glory. Military campaigns against the still unsubjugated neighbours would therefore be undertaken. This would not only boost up his image and prestige at home but it would have the desired effect of inspiring awe in the enemies of the state.

This impressive programme was initiated within two years of Dingane's usurpation of the throne. In November 1830 he sent an embassy to the Cape Colony, offering trade and friendship. John Cane, a Natal Settler of doubtful loyalty, was entrusted with the headship of the mission and the diplomatic pouch. Cane dutifully delivered Dingane's correspondence and, without waiting for the reponse from the Colonial authorities, returned to Port Natal.²⁶⁹ This conduct of the mission was likely to annoy the Zulu Monarch. Cane now added fuel to the fire. Back at Port Natal he never even went to Mgungundlovu to personally give a report of his mission. The few presents he had brought for Dingane he committed to the care of Msimbiti, the interpreter. Dingane, understandably infuriated by the failure of the mission, and Cane's dereliction of duty, sent troops to Port Natal to wipe out Cane's settlement. At the appearance of troops at the Port all

269. Morris, D.R. The Washing of the Spears, pp.118-119

the traders fled, under the impression that the Kings choler was directed against every white trader. Dingane, thoroughly embarrassed by the traders' misunderstanding of his motive, speedily dispatched a messenger to inform them that his quarrel was with Cane alone, and that others could return to the Port if they so wished. This lowered the tension and the traders began to arrive back at the Port. They had hardly settled when another scare was circulated to the effect that Dingane was about to attack the Port to destroy all the white settlers there. Once more the traders went packing and helter-skettered onto boats and into the bush. General Sotobe who had since the time of Shaka been placed in the vicinity of Port Natal to watch the activities of the traders was intrigued by this sudden stampede. He soon came to a conclusion that the traders were absconding with the royal cattle and sent troops to recover them. The traders barely escaped with their lives. It took Dingane's messengers several months to persuade the scattered traders (Cane included) to return to Port Natal. By the beginning of 1832, however, the situation had eased and the traders comfortably settled at the port.

Why were the English traders of Port Natal restive? The repeated guarantees of security by both Shaka and Dingane seem to leave no room for doubt that the Amazulu had no evil motives towards them. It seems to me that the white traders were chafing under frustrated and disappointed hopes. We know that for the last seven years they had been attempting to persuade the Cape governors and the British Crown to occupy Natal.

The Union Jack would not only guarantee to them security against "the rude and savage hospitality" of the 'barbarians' but, more importantly, it would establish 'law and order' which are the prerequisites of 'regular commerce and profitable trade'. The traders also saw themselves as pioneers of a great Empire and expected His Britannic Majesty to honour their heroic and patriotic labours. When the British Government appeared to be reluctant the traders resorted to alarmist approach. Attempts were made to give an impression of a dangerously chaotic situation in Zululand. But, like the glowing reports about opportunities the traders and other white travellers had been spreading, recurrent scares failed to move the Britannic Majesty's government.

In April 1832 Dingane sent a military expedition against Amampondo with instructions to skirt Port Natal Settlement and attack the former from the direction of the Drakensberg. On the foothills of the mountain the expedition fell in with eight coloured hunters, killed seven and took one prisoner. When the news of the massacre reached Port Natal the traders assumed that the victims were a party of traders who had recently left the Port on a hunting mission. On its return march Dingane's expedition was attacked by the Natal traders who killed at least 200 of the unresisting troops. Soon after the traders realised their inadvertent act and, fearing possible reprisal by Dingane, they again fled the Settlement. But Zulu monarch as usual took a conciliatory attitude and the traders were allowed to return to the Port.

Between the years 1832 and 1837 relations between Dingane and the Natal Settlers steadily worsened. One thing that worried Dingane was the influx of Europeans into his Kingdom. Hunters, missionaries and ivory traders trickled into the Kingdom. Even American whalers began to appear from the Indian Ocean and landed parties along the Coast. Of the missionaries who came was one Rev. A. F. Gardiner, an ex-naval officer in the British army turned priest. After continuous but unsuccessful attempt to convert Amazulu to the Christian faith Rev. Gardiner established himself at Port Natal and attempted to organise the traders there into a political community.²⁷⁰ Soon he was on his way to the Cape Colony to persuade Governor D'Urban to occupy Natal. When this failed he proceeded to London with the same objective and, as it turned out, with the same result. On his return he was rejected by the traders. But the increase of Europeans and their clamour for occupation alarmed the Zulu monarch. For, although he had forgiven the traders for their attack on his army and the killing of 200 men in 1832 he had not forgotten the incident.

The other knotty problem which bedevilled Dingane's relations with the traders stemmed from the refugees who fled from Zulu justice and took refuge at Port Natal. Individuals and sometimes whole clans continually crossed the Tugela River and Dingane's efforts to have them handed back to him were often resisted by the Natal Settlers. Indeed, some of the fugitives were enticed by the Settlers. On several occasions he entered

270. Morris, D.R. The Washing of the Spears, p.134

into agreements with the leaders of the white Settlers who undertook to return these refugees. Failure of the settlers to fulfill their part of the agreement was a constant source of irritation to the Zulu ruler, more so that the settlers were arming the fugitives with firearms while they were refusing to sell same to him. On one occasion Dingane threatened to destroy Port Natal unless the settlers surrendered two clans which had recently defected. The settlers banded themselves into an army and prepared to resist the King's demand. Dingane's back-down on this occasion is a measure of his fear of the firearms.

Finally, the relations between Dingane and the English traders at Port Natal came to be very much influenced by events on the Highveld. Dingane was aware that the white colonists had invaded the Trans-Orangia and that, in a series of commandos, they had chastised Mzilikaze's Matebele in the Transvaal. What connections those white colonists had with his Natal traders was a matter of constant worry. The one thing he knew was that they were mounted and armed with firearms. Dingane's strenuous effort to secure firearms and to find instructors in their use should be seen against this background. But, for the meantime, there was little or no connection between the Boers on the Highveld and the Britons at Port Natal. The latter's attempt to establish what might have been a city-state had come to nothing. But by the end of 1837 the Highveld Boers were negotiating the Drakensberg passes that led into Natal; Piet Retief who was well ahead would soon be at the Port.

From the point of view of traditional Bantu system of warfare Dingane's military strength at the beginning of 1833 was adequate. Though there had been some relaxation in discipline and harshness of drill, the system remained strictly Shakan. Valour and prowess remained the basic virtues of a Zulu warrior. Unlike the Amaxosa, to the south, and the Basotho, on the Highveld, the Amazulu had, since the time of Dingizwayo, had the practice of regimented standing army. The system was perfected by Shaka who replaced the traditional assegai with a short stabbing spear and introduced the large oval ox-hide shield which could cover nearly the whole body. The regiments lived in military barracks and were subjected to fierce discipline and regular drill.

Strategy and tactics consisted in surprise dawn attack. The army advanced in a large body to within sight of the enemy. Then at a signal one or two regiments raced out from the main body in an ox-horn formation. Unless the enemy prevented them, the right and the left 'horns' eventually met in his rear, thus completely encircling him. While this encircling manoeuvre was in progress the main body (chest) moved forward. The battle was decided in a close hand to hand combat in which the enemy was seized by the body and stabbed to death. It is evident that the success or efficacy of Shakan strategy depended on numerical strength and courage. Ranged against an enemy who is armed with fire-arms this strategy could prove dissipative. Massive attack spurred on by raw courage could make the attackers easy targets of the guns. In traditional warfare the Shakan strategy had made the impis invincible. But the glorious military tradition that the Amazulu had thus built soon ossified into military

conservatism and inflexibility. The Amazulu therefore found it difficult to adapt their strategies and tactics to new military situations.

Piet Retief rode into Durban (the former Port Natal) on October 20, 1837. He was warmly received by the English traders who immediately promised him support and co-operation. In little over a fortnight Retief left for Mgungundlovu to obtain Dingane's permission for the Boers to enter and settle in Natal. Retief's mission could not have come at a more unpropitious time. The Zulu monarch was worried or even alarmed by the growing white pressure. His relations with the English traders at Port Natal had deteriorated to a breaking point. The number of Europeans at the Settlement was growing rapidly. Hunters sometimes 'strayed' into restricted areas. Missionaries clamoured for permission to preach the gospel. His efforts to obtain firearms for his army had been thwarted. He could not find instructors and powder for the few guns he had obtained from the Natal traders. Then there was the news of Boer invasion of the Highveld and destruction of Mzilikaze's kingdom. The arrival of Retief and his 15 men mounted and armed with guns must have accentuated these fears. It is inconceivable that Dingane could have entertained, even for a moment, the idea of granting Natal to the Boers.

Retief's visit, however, had not been expected and the Zulu monarch needed time to confer with his councillors to work out the method whereby he could make the short work of the Boers. The 16 Boers were mounted on horses and armed with guns.

Dingane knew that their boast about the superiority of their weapons was not an empty one; and he could not know what their reaction would be if he turned down their request off-hand. Nor could he be sure that his attempts to kill 'the wizards' while they still had their horses and guns would be successful. He therefore had to temporize until he had made assurance doubly sure that his plan would not fall through. The fact that soon after the departure of Retief's party from Mgungundlovu Dingane gave a peremptory order to chief Silwebana to kill them before they could reach Durban²⁷¹ is doubly instructive. First, it testifies to Dingane's predetermination to annihilate the Boers. Second, it attests to his fear to engage in risky undertakings at the royal capital. Far away from the Mgungundlovu and, at any rate, undertaken by minor chiefs, such attempts could be made and if they failed the King could always deny his knowledge and involvement. But there can be little doubt that from the first the Zulu monarch never had any intention of ceding any part of his Kingdom to the Boers and that he had decided to annihilate Retief's party. The latter's cattle mission to Sekonyela was intended to allow him the necessary time to work out the method which involved minimum of risk. While Retief and his followers were away on the mission to Sekonyela Dingane and councillors hit upon the disarmament plan. When Retief, this time

271. Morris, D.R. The Washing of the spears p.139

accompanied by 69 men, returned with the 300 cattle the King induced them to enter his court without their guns and then had them all killed. He followed up this by dispatching three regiments to wipe out all the Boer encampments which were already spread on the eastern foothills of the Drakensberg. The expedition was only partially successful. Dingane had clearly underestimated the number of Boers and had not undertaken reconnaissance to furnish the expedition with accurate enemy disposition. In fact the Boers were scattered over a wide area and however much they could be surprised the rear encampments were bound to be alerted. The 3000 men, which was about the most three regiments could mean, managed to surprise only the advanced parties of the Boers, killing 282 of them and their servants. The rest threw up laagers and repelled the Amazulu, who retreated with about 35,000 cattle and sheep. The date was February 7, 1838. The Boers were in disarray and there was a strong opinion among them of abandoning Natal. It is possible that had Dingane sent a stronger force to maintain the pressure they would have returned to the Highveld; but Dingane procrastinated and the initiative quickly passed to the whites. The British traders at Durban having earlier promised Piet Retief co-operation now made good their word. Between February and April they made two attacks on Amazulu. It was probably these attacks which diverted Dingane's attention from the Boer encampments in upper Natal. The Traders were, however, beaten back with heavy loss. Port Natal was razed to the ground.

Of the 17 Europeans who participated in the April attack 13, including John Cane, were killed along with over 600 Natal Africans. In the same month, April, the Boers in upper Natal banded themselves into a commando under the leadership of Andries Potgieter and Piet Uys with the express intention of avenging the death of Piet Retief and other Boers. General Ndlela led the 350 man commando into a prepared ambush and in a straight fight that followed beat back the Boers, Killing Piet Uys. Andries Potgieter led his faction across the Drakensberg back to the Highveld, leaving Gerrit Maritz, the only surviving leader and virtually stranded Boers, to the mercy of the Zulu power.

Thus, for the next six months, from April to November 1838, all the Europeans in Zululand were at the mercy of the Amazulu. The British traders at Port Natal had been scattered. The Boer "morale was low and their lack of leadership was accentuated by the death of Gerrit Maritz in September". The Boers were cramped in two camps containing altogether 640 men, 3,200 women and children and some 1,200 native servants. This was a strong fighting force and, taking into account their strong laager fortifications and their superior weaponry, there can be little doubt that they could annihilate any attempts to take the laagers by storm. But neither their fortifications nor their firearms would have saved the Boers had the Zulu military leaders been more flexible and less conservative. The wagons which were drawn into laagers were largely made of wood and

canvas with iron railings here and there. The wagons could easily be set ablaze, especially under cover of darkness. Had Dingane invested the two camps, kept up night attacks and where opportunity availed itself, fired the laagers he might have rid his country of the white peril. But the Zulu military leaders, wedded as they were to the Shakan strategy of bravado and mass frontal attack, would attempt none of this; and since they could not storm the laagers they did nothing else. Months passed without any serious attempt to dislodge the Boers from Zululand. Dingane's half-hearted attack in August achieved nothing substantial and the only real threat to the laagers remained sickness which "struck at man and beast" and shortage of food.

While Dingane thus vacillated Andries Pretorius, at once a soldier and leader of undoubted abilities, arrived with reinforcements and food supplies (November 22, 1838); two days later he was appointed Commandant-General. Within 20 days of his appointment Pretorius had raised a Boer force of about 470 men. On December 15 he drew up a laager between the Ncome²⁷² River and its tributary which entered the main stream in a deep gorge. This meant that access to the laager could only be gained from two fronts which the defenders could easily cover with their firearms. Any attackers from other fronts would have to cross the deep tributary and the Boers could easily

272. The Boers later named the river Blood River

pick them one by one. Zulu scouts were around and saw the Boers take up this strong position and laager it. The position was obviously unassailable. A laager and two deep streams defended by nearly 500 men armed with guns and two small cannons were more than a match for any number of Amazulu equipped with spears. On the morning of December 16, 1838 over 12,000 - strong Zulu army attacked the laager. In a battle that lasted a little over two hours the Boers killed about 3,000 Zulu troops with no loss to themselves.

Blood River, as this battle was later called, was the first Amazulu major clash with European firearms. But it was the second triumph of European weapons over the Zulu strategy. Only 18 months ago Mzilikaze's military power based on similar tactics had crumbled before Hendrik Potgieter's guns. The Matebele had been too rigid and conservative to change their tactics and adapt themselves to the new military situation. In 1818 the Amaxosa who thought they could overwhelm the small garrison that defended Grahamstown were given a harsh lesson which they never forgot. Henceforth they made it a point never to provide the enemy with easy targets. It remained to be seen whether the Amazulu would learn anything from what happened at the Battle of Blood River.

Soon after the defeat of the Zulu army at Blood River Pretorius led his commando to Mgungundlovu, the Zulu Royal capital and Dingane's residence. From thence the Boers

traversed parts of northern Zululand in search of cattle, skirmishing with pockets of unco-ordinated Zulu resisters. The invaders captured about 5,000 head of cattle and returned to Natal. Dingane who had gone into hiding later returned to Mgungundlovu and began to rebuild the capital. Despite the heavy loss he had suffered at Blood River Dingane's army was still in tact and the chances of ridding his country of the white peril were by no means sealed off. Had he at this stage adopted a guerrilla strategy, embarked on a secret programme of collecting firearms and harrying the Boers, he might still have prevented them from settling in his Kingdom. Instead of doing this Dingane now mobilised the army to attack the Amaswazi, to the north-east. General Mpande, one of the senior commanders, obviously shocked by the King's decision, defected to the Boer side, taking with him 17,000 followers. In Natal the Boers proclaimed Mpande King over all Natal natives who he was to rule in accordance with the Boer law. In return Mpande promised to participate in all commandos against Dingane. Having received succour from Mpande the Boers now made impossible demands on Dingane and when the latter attempted to negotiate they invaded Zululand, killing General Dambuza, Dingane's envoy. Mpande's army, commanded by General Nongalaza and reinforced by Pretorius's commando, put Dingane's force to rout, the King himself fleeing into Swaziland, where he was subsequently murdered. Back at Mgungundlovu the Boers now proclaimed Mpande King of Zululand, and then returned to Natal

driving over 36,000 head of cattle before them. They proclaimed the Republic of Natal and spread themselves over the face of the land.

With the conquest of Natal white penetration of the interior of South Africa was to all intents and purposes completed. The whites were now in control of Trans-Orangia, Trans-vaal and Natal. On the Eastern frontier the colonists had flushed the Amaxosa across the Kei River and then proclaimed Queen Adelaide Province. To the already important Khoikhoi native support they had added that of Amafengu. In Trans-Orangia mutual feuds had driven some of the weaker chiefdoms into the colonists' camp. Chiefs Moroka (Barolong), Sekonyela (Batlokwa), Makwana (Bataung), etc. had turned collaborators from the time the Europeans invaded the Highveld. In Zululand a large population of natives had grown around Port Natal Settlement under the tutelage of the British traders there. This population was constantly swelled by fugitives from Zulu justice. In the long drawn struggle that commenced in the 1830's these 'Natal Natives' as they came to be called, proved faithful collaborators and contributed not in an insignificant manner to the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom. In the Transvaal the white colonists had not as yet firmly established themselves and the indigenous communities that had been dispersed by Mzilikaze were only beginning to re-form. But even in later times the Boers were never successful in making native allies there. White efforts to 'pacify' the

Transvaal were significantly aided by the Amaswazi who used collaboration with the invaders as a form of resistance. The total demographic picture in South Africa in 1840 is one of entirely white controlled Cape Colony extending to the Orange River in the north and to the Keiskamma in the east with a streak of white establishment piercing through a congeries of small and weak native chiefdoms in Trans-Orangia into a black formless mass of the Transvaal natives and ending in Southern Zululand. Outside the Cape Colony the whites were weak and owed their survival to their firearms and lack of unity among Africans.

The significance of white penetration however, lay in the fact that they brought about a new military situation into the interior. Interior communities hitherto familiar only with their own modes of warfare which were little more than cattle-raids, would have to initiate radical changes to be able to contain white expansion. At ideological level they would need to develop a sufficient sense of race which alone could enable them to grasp the nature of the problem that confronted them. Much of the problem of lack of unity throughout the South African resistance stemmed from their lack of racial consciousness. The new military situation also called for new ideas. For an instance, it was imperative that African resistance armies be geared to the system of total warfare.

Finally, African traditional strategies and tactics would have to be adapted to the new situation. Mass attacks on an enemy armed with guns would obviously be dissipative. While the resisters still depended on traditional weapons guerrilla type of war was the only sensible approach. But it was imperative that firearms be progressively substituted for the knobkerrie and the assegai. The programme of adaptation would necessarily be a difficult one to communities which were basically fragmentary and egalitarian. The Amaxosa, as we have already seen, had gone a long way towards adapting their system of warfare to the new situation by 1835. Nevertheless their resistance continued to be vitiated by internal divisions. When they were finally 'pacified', however, it was not because of failure on their part to adapt their military structures to the new situation. It was because of improvements in military technology which occurred in Europe and to which they had no direct access. Whether the interior communities could be similarly flexible and adaptable the next thirty years would show.

C H A P T E R 4 =====

RESISTANCE AND COLLABORATION

1. ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER

After defeating the Gcaleka clan near Butterworth in May 1835 Governor D'Urban had extended the colonial boundary to the Kei River and proclaimed all Amaxosa west of the river 'treacherous and irreclaimable savages, forever expelled across the Kei'. It was not until September that the impetuous Governor discovered that he did not have the necessary military resources to make both his annexation and expulsion a reality. The Amaxosa had called his bluff and, although he did not rescind the annexation proclamation, in September 1835 he had been compelled to abandon his expulsion policy and assure them continued occupation of their territories and their way of life. The annexation of 'Queen Adelaide Province' was subsequently reversed by the British Government on the grounds that the war which led to it was unjust in its origin, cruel in its progress and expensive in its result. By the beginning of 1836 all land to the east of Keiskamma River had reverted to Amaxosa ownership.

In the great debate that arose over the legitimacy and morality of D'Urban's Queen Adelaide Province and expulsion of Amaxosa from it the original cause of the 1834-35 war was forgotten. In December 1834 the Amaxosa had taken up arms against the Colony to assert their right to the territory between Keiskamma and Fish Rivers; which territory had been declared 'Neutral' in

1819 and which the colonists now regarded as 'Ceded Territory' and settled in it. Far from righting this wrong the reversal of Governor D'Urban's expansionist policy brought the colonial boundary back to the Keiskamma. The 'Neutral Territory' between that river and the Fish, was "made over as a loan in perpetuity to certain Bantu Chiefs - *quamdiu se bene gesserint*".²⁷³ This, as well as the Suurveld from which sections of the Amaxosa had been expelled only twelve years ago, was bound to produce endless trouble which would eventually lead to another war. Lower down, in the region of Fort Peddie, the Amafengu whom the Amaxosa had good reasons to regard as traitors and thieves, were settled on land which had belonged to the latter. Higher up, in the Kat River region, the Khoikhoi had been settled on Maqoma's lands at the suggestion of Stockenström who was now imposing 'good behaviour' as a condition of Amaxosa occupation of the 'Neutral Territory'. Although Stockenström withdrew most of the military posts from the territory, one or two were maintained in the 'Neutral' territory. It was preposterous, in the circumstances, to expect 'good behaviour' from the Amaxosa. The presence within their territories of military posts, colonial government agents and continued occupation of some of their lands by colonial subjects made nonsense of any intentions on the part of the Whites to rule the Cape on principles of 'Peace, Humanity and impartial justice'. It was to be expected, therefore, that the Amaxosa would keep up pressure, first, to drive all colonial

273 MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 184

subjects (including Amafengu at Fort Peddie and the Khoikhoi at the Kat River Settlement) out of the 'Neutral Territory' and, second, to try to recapture the Suurveld.

Soon after the abandonment of the Queen Adelaide Province Lieutenant -Governor Stockenstrom, an official who was specially appointed to take charge of the Cape Colony's eastern frontier districts, entered into treaties with the Amaxosa chiefs. The treaties were intended by the British and colonial authorities to prevent the Amaxosa from attacking the Amefengu at Fort Peddie and the Khoikhoi at the Kat River Settlement. Even more important, it was hoped that they would prevent 'depredators' from crossing the border to 'plunder and murder' the colonists. Many attempts had been made in the past with similar objective in view but without producing any satisfactory results. The novelty with 'Stockenstrom Treaties' was that they placed the entire burden of enforcing them on the chiefs. As in the past the treaties rested on the assumption that the Amaxosa mounted incursions into the colony because they wanted cattle and other colonists' property. This, of course, was a silly assumption. As early as 1819 the Amaxosa had made their intentions abundantly clear, namely, "To drive the white men into the sea". There can be little doubt that the chiefs were at the head of that crusade and that their concern was not cattle but land. Had Stockenstrom and his superiors been brave enough to face this truth they would have known that their treaties were no more than scraps of paper which would sooner than later be torn and cast to the winds.

During the first few years following the signing of 'Stockenstrom Treaties' the Amaxosa were relatively quiet, not because of the efficacy of the treaties or any respect for Stockenstrom. The Amaxosa had just emerged from an exhaustive war and they needed a period of rest and of fresh preparations for renewal of the struggle. The Amaxosa politics were also undergoing major changes of leadership. Across the Kei, in Gcaleka-land, Sarrili had just acceded to the Paramountcy, following the murder of his father, Hintsa, by colonial troops in 1835. Farther west, in Ngqika's country, Sandile had attained his majority and was taking over from Chief Maqoma who had been regent since the death of Ngqika in 1829. The young leaders undoubtedly needed time to get themselves firmly in the saddle and to work out their own policies towards the Europeans. The Amandlambe were also under a young man, Mhala, who had assumed the chieftaincy in 1828, following the death of Ndlambe.

Events in the early 1840's indicated that policy was in the hands of hard-liners. Seizure of the colonists' cattle and horses was intensified. The hardest-hit in these attacks were, Amafengu at Fort Peddie, and the Khoikhoi and white farmers in the Koonap-Kat River regions. Tension was kept up by Lieutenant-Governor Hare, Stockenstrom's successor, who repeatedly berated the chiefs and threatened them with eviction. In October 1843 he actually attempted to remove the Amaxosa from the old 'Neutral Territory'. Having failed to effect the eviction he succeeded in persuading Chief Sandile to permit the establishment of a military

post, Post Victoria, in the heart of the 'Territory'. The post was intended by Hare to control "the horse thief" Tola, a roistering minor chieftain under Sandile.

Far from intimidating the Chiefs Hare's threats and scoldings had the effect of aggravating the situation. In July 1844 one De Lange was fatally wounded in an exchange of fire with Amaxosa near the Fish River. Lieutenant Governor Hare ordered military occupation of the 'Neutral Territory'. In September Governor Maitland, then on the frontier, unilaterally abrogated the modified 'Stockenstrom's Treaties' and imposed new ones on the chiefs. While they did not remove the burden of enforcement from the chiefs 'Maitland Treaties' strengthened the hand of the Colonists to pursue the 'stock thieves' into their 'own country' and to punish them. Indeed the treaties went a long way to deprive the chiefs of much of their authority over their subjects. Alleged criminals who, in Stockenstrom Treaties, were tried and punished by Amaxosa traditional courts were now to be tried in the colonial courts. A clause pressed in by the missionaries required the chiefs to refrain from 'interfering' with the 'mission natives' and to stop 'the sin of buying wives'. Finally, the new treaties provided for the colonial Governments' right to establish military posts in the 'Neutral Territory'.²⁷⁸

As already pointed out treaties, military posts, government agents and punitive expeditions as a remedy to the eastern frontier problem were completely irrelevant. What the Amaxosa wanted was their land which they had progressively lost to the

278. Galbraith, J.S.: Reluctant Empire, pp.168-170

Europeans since 1812, and they had reiterated this before or after every clash with the colonists. A few of their views before the 1846-47 war were recorded or expressed by missionaries and government agents. After many conversations with Amaxosa leaders, especially Maqoma, Rev. Calderwood wrote: "Amongst all the vexatious questions between the colonial Government and the Caffres the most vexatious is what may be styled the land question. The Caffres are evidently so sensitive on this point that they cannot and will not consider any question calmly when that is mixed up with it". "The Caffres can understand", Calderwood further stated, "what it is to be punished for stealing and murder - but no argument will ever convince them that it is either just or reasonable to take their land from them".²⁷⁹

Stock-lifting and the killing of herdsmen were as much an outward expression of resentment on the land issue as they were a form of warfare. Colonial military posts and punitive expeditions were seen by the chiefs as attempts to alienate more Xosa land rather than as measures intended to prevent 'depredations'. By the end of 1845 tension was high on the frontier. Even the hitherto friendly chief Pato was estranged. In November 1845 a German missionary Scholtz was murdered in his country. Pato, having sought and obtained promise of assistance from Sandile (Ngqika chief) and Mhala (Ndlambe chief) refused to surrender the killers to the colonial authorities. In December 1845 Sandile's troops clashed with a colonial patrol near the unwanted Post Victoria.

279. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, pp.288-289

In January 1846 Sandile led a small squad to a nearby trader's store and ordered confiscation of its contents, slapping the white owner who attempted to protest. On further inquiry the Resident Agent, Stretch, was told: "We are only taking what belongs to the Kaffirs and Hottentots".²⁸⁰ By February 1846 traders and missionaries had begun to leave Amaxosa territories feeling insecure "under the present excited state of the country".²⁸¹

At the height of this tension the colonial Government took a highly provocative step. In 1844 Chief Sandile might have agreed to the erection of a fort in the 'Neutral Territory', an area which in effect was colonial-controlled. But when in 1846 Governor Maitland, without Sandile's permission decided to move the fort, Post Victoria, to the east of Keiskamma (to the present site of Fort Hare University College) where Europeans had no rights whatever, the chief demurred. There was an important and strategic difference between a fort at Post Victoria and a fort at Block Drift. The latter not only commanded all the communication lines and routes between the various clans but between all the clans and the Amatole mountains. A colonial garrison at Block Drift would be in a position to observe all military manoeuvres or movements by the Amaxosa, especially by the more important chiefs Sandile, Maqoma, Botumane, etc. Indeed, it was precisely because of these strategic advantages that Governor Maitland was induced to plant a fort at Block Drift. But Block Drift was to

280 MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 287

281 Ibid

the eastward of the Keiskamma, in the area where by their own professions the Europeans had no rights or authority whatever. Technically, therefore, Maitland's decision to move Post Victoria to Block Drift without Sandile's permission and prior notice constituted not simply a slight or trespass but a major-violation of Amaxosa sovereignty.

Soon after the arrival of the Royal Engineers at Block Drift to carry out the survey Sandile presented C.L. Stretch with an ultimatum demanding their removal in one day. The chief stated in the same ultimatum that all Europeans, missionaries, traders and others, were "under his feet" and that he could do what he liked with them.²⁸² He concluded by saying that if the Governor was not satisfied with this policy he could come and see him (Sandile) in person. This was a bellicose language and one which the presumptuous Europeans were unlikely to accept tamely. But it was also a statement of the assertion of Amaxosa sovereignty and independence. As was to be expected Lieutenant-Governor Hare sent a detachment of troops to Block Drift to protect the surveyors. Meanwhile, On January 29, 1846 Hare, escorted by a detachment of cavalry and infantry, met Sandile. The Chief was supported by over 4,000 men. While Sandile denied that the language he had used in his ultimatum was offensive he insisted that the British leave his territory.²⁸³ Few days later the troops and the Engineers at Block Drift were withdrawn.

282. Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p.172

283. Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p. 173

For a month it seemed as if war would be averted. In reality the incident had shattered any prospects of peace on the frontier. The Amaxosa, still chafing at the progressive loss of their territories in recent years, were roused into suspicions that Europeans intended to appropriate more of their lands. The colonists on the other hand saw Hare's withdrawal from Block Drift at the behest of an African potentate as a blow to Cape Colony's (and British) prestige. Sandile had to be humbled. The war that broke out in April 1846, traditionally known as "The War of the Axe", was not occasioned by the pilfering of an axe but by the manner in which the case was handled. The 'theft' had occurred at Fort Beaufort, a military post in the 'Neutral Territory'. The frontier commissioner insisted on sending the pilferer to Grahamstown for trial against Chiefs Tola's and Sandile's suggestion that the case was too trivial and that the 'thief' could be punished where he was. Some distance from Fort Beaufort a four-man Khoikhoi escort was attacked and overpowered by a detachment of Amaxosa troops. The prisoner's brother and one of the Khoikhoi were killed in the affray. The colonial authorities now demanded the restitution for the dead Khoikhoi and the surrender of the killers for punishment. Sandile and Tola rejected both demands, stating that one man was killed on both sides and that the matter should be dropped.

The refusal of the frontier commission to heed the recommendation of Sandile was a slight on the status of the chief. Sandile was a ruler of a nation and felt concerned that fair trial and appropriate punishment be accorded to his people.

True, the 1844 Maitland Treaties imposed on the chiefs, at any rate, required that offenders who committed crimes whether in Xosaland or Cape Colony be tried and punished by colonial courts. But to ignore Sandile's views in a matter in which he, as a ruler of the Amaxosa, felt he was vitally interested was nothing less than a direct invitation to trouble.

Actual hostilities commenced in April 1846 when colonial troops invaded Xosaland. Sandile could field about 70,000 men, 600 of whom were mounted and armed with muskets. The total strength of the colonial force at this time was about 2,770 men. Of these less than 1,600 were available at short notice on the frontier. A mixed force of British regulars, colonial volunteers, the Khoikhoi from the Kat River Settlement, entered Xosaland with a convoy of about 120 supply wagons. The Amaxosa withdrew from their villages and took positions in the Amatole mountains. The terrain here was such that cavalry operations were near impossible. Even infantry movements had to be made in single files through narrow defiles hemmed by deep ravines and precipitous cliffs. Taking positions behind these inaccessible features the Amaxosa allowed the enemy to enter the narrow tracks in single lines until as they said, the enemy was "like a mouse in the calabash". Then they fired on the middle and the rear portions of the line, throwing the entire line into utter confusion. The only thing which saved the Europeans from a major disaster in this first battle in the Amatole mountains was that the Amaxosa soldiers were bad shots and the fact that their bullets, made from iron removed from European houses and wagons or from legs of iron pots, were often less effective than those

used by the enemy. Nonetheless within the first day of the fighting the invading colonial force was driven out of the Amatole basin. The colonists had suffered many casualties in men as well as in horses. The Amaxosa followed this up by attacking the enemy camps which had been pitched at Burn's Hill and on the Chumie. A large convoy of wagons moving from the former to the latter camp was cut to pieces. Draught oxen were cut loose and driven off. Over 50 wagons with baggage were captured, looted and then burned down. Fortunately for the colonists only one of the captured wagons, it would appear, contained ammunition. But a few good guns were seized from other wagons as well. From the Chumie heights the enemy was pursued in great force, straggling parties being cut off and annihilated. The retreating colonists eventually reached Block Drift mission station where they pitched camp and threw up fortifications. Peregrine Maitland, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor of the Cape Colony, had arrived from Cape Town and was there.

It was at this stage that Amaxosa military leaders committed their most serious tactical blunder of the war. Instead of concentrating all their forces on Block Drift where the Governor and much of the frontier force were encamped they marched their troops into the colony. It is not suggested that they should have hurled their might against the camp and attempted to take it by storm. Grahamstown, Vecht Kop and Blood River had shown that such attempts could prove disastrous.

On the other hand Block Drift could have been besieged and the small enemy force encamped there harassed day and night. This was quite feasible since the Amaxosa had the advantage of superior numbers, of familiarity with the terrain and a large number of them were mounted and armed with muskets. The enemy would have been forced to decamp and beat a retreat. His unwieldy and extended convoys could then be attacked and detached units and stragglers annihilated.

Far from adopting this approach the Amaxosa poured into the colony, spoiling the impact of their initial successes. Although they wrought considerable damage in the colony, burning down homes and seizing stock and other property, the colonists were save in laagered camps. Meanwhile the colonial force at Block Drift returned to Grahamstown whence it was re-deployed to clear the Albany and Uitenhage districts (the former Suurveld). Only one major battle was fought on colonial territory - The Battle of the Kowie River. A detachment of Amaxosa troops had taken position at the river bed protected by surrounding bush and river banks. There they resisted an attack by a colonial force which was forced to retreat before their steady fire. It was not until reinforcements had arrived from Grahamstown that the Amaxosa were dislodged from their 'parapets'. Some of them were killed while others retreated into the bush. A few took cover in pools of water, attaching hollow stems of grass to their nostrils for breathing.

The rest of the war was fought in the 'Neutral Territory' and in Amaxosa territories east of the Keiskamma. Five major battles were fought at the Fish River Bush, the Guana River,

Mount Sohota, the Coolah Heights and at the Beka River. At the Guanga General Seyolo was surprised while he camped and suffered heavy losses. In the other encounters the Amaxosa stuck to their guerrilla approach, inflicting loss on the enemy. At Sohota a scouting party of five officers of the enemy force was ambushed and wiped out. At the Goolah Heights a detachment of Amaxosa troops ambushed and attacked the enemy convoy columns on two separate occasions.. On the first occasion three enemy troops were killed. The second ambush was not so successful. The colonial force killed about eight Amaxosa with no loss to themselves. Apart from these battles the later stages of the war degenerated into running skirmishes which were little more than cattle raids. Early in January 1847 Governor Maitland led a colonial force across the Kei and attacked Amagcaleka under the Paramount Chief Sarrili. In April Chief Pato who in the previous war had been 'friendly' to the colony was attacked and driven to the area around the mouth of the Kei River. By this time there was little or no organised resistance on the part of the Amaxosa. In September 1846 Chief Sandile, the principal resistance leader, was forced to surrender. It remained now for the colonial troops to perform a coup de Grace on Pato, still holding out in the vicinity of lower Kei (October 1847).

It has often been said that the Cape Colonial Governors, military men most of them, were concerned with the security of the frontier - the prevention of the recurrence of war! The measures they took after every conflict

have been said to be dictated by this single desire. There can be but little doubt that land issue lay at the root of the conflict and that no measure which did not restore Amaxosa territories could prevent the recurrence of war. Yet at the conclusion of every war Governors appropriated more land thus giving Amaxosa further cause to go to war. This policy, supported and financed by the British Government in London, casts serious doubts as to the sincerity of the Governors in their professions of concern with the peace and security of the frontier. Either the Cape Colonial Governors were deliberate territorial aggressors or idiots who could not realise that the measures they devised to deal with the problems of peace on the frontier were the very causes of Amaxosa discontent. Thus, at the conclusion of the 1846-47 war Governor Harry Smith annexed what was left of the old 'Neutral Territory' to the colony and 'Christianised' it Victoria East. He settled the upper part of it with the Khokhoi, Amafengu and other 'friendly' natives, all of whom, it was hoped would act as a buffer against the incursions of the hostile Amaxosa. The remainder he sold out in farms to Europeans. The country to the east of the Keiskamma (D'Urban's erstwhile Queen Adelaide Province) was declared a British dependency under the name 'British Kaffraria'. There the Amaxosa chiefs would continue to rule their people but under the supervisions and guidance of the white commissioners and magistrates. The Amaxosa were warned "to acknowledge no chief but the Queen of England". The civil commissioners had authority to review and to declare null and void any judicial decision taken by the Chief if in their opinion the decision was inconsistent

with "justice and humanity". The Amaxosa were also required to abandon witch-craft and 'the sin of buying wives', (i.e. Lobola).

In essentials Governor Smith's settlement resembled that of Benjamin D'Urban in September 1835. The Amaxosa not only lost the country between the Fish and the Kei Rivers but their independence as well. Even the Amagcaleka across the Kei, theoretically still independent, were forced to recognise the colonial road that led to Butterworth mission station and thence through their country to Clarkebury, another Mission Station in Tembuland. In 1835 D'Urban and Smith had conceived a scheme whereby the authority and power of the chiefs would be stealthily drained away from them. The process was to be long, gradual and gentle. It "must be so subtle in its working that the power of the chiefs would be drained away before they were aware of the implications of the new order. They must not "be startled at the outset, - or their eyes be opened to the future consequences of the process, - until by its advancing force, - when they do, at length, discover all its influence, - they shall have no longer any power to be effectually restive."²⁸⁴ Durban-Smith political theft went down the drain with the reversal of D'Urban's annexation of Queen Adelaide Province in 1836.

Smith's settlement of December 1847 made no pretence to sophisticated break-up of chiefly authority. The Amaxosa in Kaffraria were to be ruled indirectly through their own chiefs.

284 Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p. 118

Kaffraria was the Queen's property and he (Smith) as Her representative was the 'Great Chief' and final authority.

"I make no treaty," Smith told the assembled chiefs in December 1847, "I say this land is mine".²⁸⁵ Governor Smith's ability to maintain that claim was to be tested in less than three years. For the meantime however the Amaxosa had to content themselves with the locations in the over-crowded Kaffraria. The chiefs continued to bear the responsibility of controlling their people and of preventing them from 'committing depredations' although they had been stripped of their traditional authority.

The 1846-47 war was important not only because it was the most severe the Europeans had had to fight on the Cape's eastern frontier but because during and after it new features emerged which were to play a key role in the future course of the resistance struggle. The first and, perhaps, the most important of these was loss of independence by Amaxosa west of the Kei. Hitherto the lull between one war and another had lasted an average period of nine years. Total loss of independence in 1847 brought that figure down to three years, from December 1847 to December 1850. This duration of the lull is an index of the Amaxosa resentment toward Smith's settlement and of the importance which they attached to land and independent existence. The second feature was the involvement of a larger number of the Amaxosa chiefdoms in the resistance effort.

285 MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.301

Since the collapse of the Makana-Ndlambe Movement in 1820 the Amagqunukwebe under Chief Pato had been 'friendly' to the colony. And since 1829 when the colonial government chastised Maqoma for attacking Abatembu the colonists had been regarding Mapasa as a 'friendly and protected' chief. Although there was no real united and co-ordinated action between them, in the 1846-47 war all the Amaxosa chiefdoms, the Amagcaleka, Amangqika, Amandlambe, Amagqunukwebe and Abatembu, fought side by side against the colony. This represented a growing awareness among them that Colonial onslaughts were aimed at their independence and their way of life. "We must stand by the House of Ngqika", Abatembu and Amandlambe chiefs told C. L. Stretch in July 1845, "lest we be broke up as the Hottentots were".²⁸⁶ This conclusion on the Khoikhoi history was strengthened by Smith's post-war settlement and it was a significant factor in the widespread response of both the Amaxosa and the Khoikhoi to Sandile's and Mlanjeni's call to arms in 1850. The third feature which emerged from Smith's settlement was the chiefs' resentment towards the system of indirect rule. The system deprived the chiefs of what they considered their hereditary rights over their own people and territories. Furthermore, Indirect Rule burdened the chiefs with the responsibility of controlling their people without the traditional sanctions and authority. This had the effect of undermining the dignity and respect which attached to their office. As will be seen later this issue was destined to become one of the rallying cries in the period immediately preceding the 1850-3 war. The fourth feature was what may be called 'de-clanisation' of the Amaxosa chiefdoms. The various chiefdoms now crowded in British Kaffraria found it increasingly difficult to keep their people completely separate. There was increased mobility within

286 MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p. 272

and between 'locations' of groups and individuals in search of the means of subsistence. Larger numbers of Amaxosa went into the colony and took paid employment. Missionaries made converts, cutting across traditional clan boundaries. At the military level Smith expanded the Amaxosa Police Force which had been established by Governor Pottinger to two divisions totalling 400 men. These developments did not lead to a total break up of clan divisions between the chiefdoms. The traditional genealogical divisions remained largely intact. Nevertheless they provided a base for greater mobility and mingling which made it easier for Sandile and Mlanjeni to mobilise a formidable force against the colony in 1850. An over-crowded and impoverished mass of the Amaxosa was likely to give a ready ear to nationalist appeals by their chiefs who chafed under a deep sense of grievance at the loss of their authority and revenue.

From the first Smith's Settlement of 1847 had not the slightest chance of success. In August 1849, slightly over a year after Smith's settlement, Maqoma told missionary Read: " I did not fight in the last War (i.e. 1846-47). I fear not death, as I would rather die than have Smith's foot on my neck. But I fear God".²⁸⁷ By this time fresh preparations for the resumption of hostilities were under way. But they were undertaken in such strict secrecy that it was not until mid 1850 that the colonists got an inkling of them. In the same year, 1849, chief Sandile toured the 'locations' assigned to various chiefdoms and conferred with respective chiefs on the loss of their territories and their independence.

287. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.230

Soon thereafter Maqoma made personal visits to the chiefs Pato (Amagqunukwebe), Mhala (Amandlambe), Sarrili (Amagcaleka, and Paramount chief of all Amaxosa), Mapasa (Abatembu) on the same subject. Maqoma showed the chiefs the necessity of a combined action against the Europeans and invited them to attend a secret War council where they would be addressed by the religious leader, Mlanjeni. All the chiefs sent their top military officers (chiefs of staff or commanders). After careful deliberations the Council presented the problem in a form of question to Mlanjeni: "The English have taken our land, and are treating us as dogs, What are we to do in the circumstances?" The religious leader pronounced: "War is in the land".²⁸⁸ He ordered military leaders to prepare for war, investing Maqoma and Mhala as Supreme Commanders. The Amaxosa troops were to overrun and occupy the country as far as the Sunday River.

The secrecy in which these preparations were undertaken is emphasised by Godlonton and Irving: "To all appearances the greatest contentment prevailed throughout British Kaffraria; and yet, amidst this outward calm, there was, as is now known, a secret conspiracy at work. The notorious Sandile was instigating his chieftains and followers to unite in driving the colonists out of the country".²⁸⁹ Soon after the military council with Mlanjeni secret messages were sent throughout British Kaffraria and in the colony. In June 1850 Chief Sandile circulated the

288. Godlonton, R. & Irving, E. Narrative of the Kaffir War 1850-53 pp 14-15

289 Godlonton, R. & Irving, E. Narrative of the Kaffir War p.11.

following appeal to all the chiefs: "Arise, clans of the Kaffir nation! The whiteman has wearied us; let us fight for our country. They are depriving us of our rights which we inherited from our forefathers; we are deprived of our chieftainship, and the whiteman is the chief to whom we are obliged to submit; Sandile will die fighting for the rights of his forefathers".²⁹⁰ All the chiefs, except Pato who raised objections, expressed their readiness to participate in what must have appeared to them a liberation struggle.

During September 1850 rumours of war began to circulate among the border Europeans. Some employers claimed that their servants had advised them to 'flee as fast and as far as they could',²⁹¹ as war was coming. As some of these Europeans began to flee their farms the civil commissioners, resident in Kaffraria and relying on information collected and given by their network of spies, discounted the possibility of war. In fact the commissioners' spies had failed to penetrate the Amaxosa security. The chiefs had long been ready for war. Maqoma was in touch with men of the Amaxosa Police Force and men of the Cape Mounted Rifles as well as W. Uithaalder, the principal Khoikhoi leader during this time. Both the Amaxosa Police and the Cape Mounted Rifles had promised to desert the enemy and join the Amaxosa. Uithaalder had also promised to mobilise the entire Khoikhoi force behind the resistance. By the end of September the chiefs were therefore merely waiting for a spark to set the entire frontier ablaze.

290. Ibid

291 Godlonton, R. & Irving, E. The Narrative of the Kaffir War, p.13

As fears of war strengthened and panic seized the colonists Governor Smith rushed post-haste from Cape Town, arriving in Kaffraria on October 17, 1850. He hurriedly called the chiefs to Kingwilliamstown to reassure him of their allegiance and loyalty. Chief Sandile refused to attend the meeting. The other chiefs turned up and kissed "the stick of peace". At the end of the meeting Smith 'deposed' Sandile, replacing him with Rev. C. Brownlee, hitherto a civil commissioner at Sandile's court. A more infuriating silliness could hardly be imagined. Smith's deposition of Sandile without consulting the Amaxosa chiefs and peoples was in itself a sufficient affront to precipitate war. But to impose Brownlee, a whiteman who had been an agent of occupation and who knew nothing of their mores and ethos was more than the Amaxosa could take. What hereditary rights had this whiteman to the Amaxosa Royal office? What guarantee did the rest of the chiefs have that they would not be treated in like manner? As Godlonton pointed out although Sandile was deposed "and his name struck off the nominal list of chiefs he was still as paramountly as ever the true chief of the Gaika in Gaikas' minds".²⁹²

It was as if the Amaxosa had not been sufficiently provoked. During November Mackinnon, frontier commandant and chief Commissioner, dispatched the Amaxosa Police to Fort Cox, near Burns Hill and Sandile's residence, to collect a fine for alleged theft. The Amaxosa resisted the Police and drove them back.

292. Godlonton, R. & Irving, E. Narrative of the Kaffir War, p.21

On December 9, 1850 Governor Smith ordered general mobilisation. On the 15th he proclaimed Chief Sandile an outlaw, placing the sum of £200 over his head. Two days later the colonial troops took the field. As usual the principal leaders of resistance were the Amangqika under Sandile and Maqoma. Soon after Governor Smith had declared Sandile an out-law and placed a price on his head the chief and a section of his army had taken positions in the Amatole mountains. This was the same area where a colonial force was cut to pieces in 1846. The military advantage given by the terrain in this area has already been pointed out (supra p.204).

The 700-man colonial force that had to scour the Amatole and, if possible, capture Chief Sandile had to enter the mountains through the Boomah Pass. This was a long and narrow defile which passed through a densely wooded and rocky ground and led to an open space some half to three quarter mile. Behind the wooded cliffs and ravines that skirted the Pass the Amaxosa troops, mainly armed with muskets, had taken positions. The enemy entered the Pass in the following order: first the Amaxosa Police, numbering 400. Next came the Cape Mounted Rifles, a Khoikhoi levy. After the Cape Mounted Rifles came the 'red soldiers' (i.e. Europeans). Unlike in 1846 the invading colonists had their supplies on pack horses. They had realised the military disadvantage of the unwieldy and cumbrous wagon convoys. But while the use of pack-horses enabled the troops to move light it also meant reduced supplies of ammunition and rations. This could make sieges more dangerous.

On entering the Boomah Pass in the order just indicated the Amaxosa and Cape Mounted Rifles were allowed to pass unmolested. Maqoma had given orders to the effect that the Police and the Cape Mounted Rifles men should not be fired at, it being understood that at a critical stage they would desert the enemy. When the 'red soldiers' were about to gain the open space where the Amaxosa Police and Cape Mounted Rifles had mustered hell burst upon Boomah Pass. The Amaxosa troops opened such raking fire that the whole line was thrown into utter confusion. The unenviable situation of the 'red soldiers' was further confounded by the fact that the fusillade came from both left and right, but from an enemy they could not see. When the column gained the open space and reformed 23 'red soldiers' had been killed and a similar number wounded.

The big question now was how colonel Mackinnon would extricate his force from the maw in which they now were. The force was huddled in a small open space and they could see the surrounding hills literally covered with Amaxosa soldiers. Had the Amaxosa Police and the Cape Mounted Rifles deserted at this stage the little white force would probably have been annihilated. But as this was the first engagement (on the first day) of the war the desertion would not have produced the desired effect of demoralising the enemy. It is also possible that the Police feared for their families who were held hostages at Fort Cox on Governor Smith's orders. Care was taken that the situation of their families was communicated to the men of the Amaxosa Police soon after the Battle of Boomah Pass.

The retreat to Fort Cox was a matter of considerable difficulty for the colonial troops. The country through which they had to march was bushy and hilly. They were ambushed and harried all the way until they reached Fort White where they bivouacked for the night. Meanwhile Governor Smith was beleaguered at Fort Cox. Next day Colonel Mackinnon left the wounded at Fort White defended by a small garrison of the Cape Mounted Rifles and white soldiers. He then marched to Fort Cox, shooting his way through the surprised Amaxosa lines. Despite Mackinnon's reinforcements Governor Smith could not break the siege. On the same day when Mackinnon entered Fort Cox the whole Amaxosa Police deserted, carrying their arms and ammunition to their fellow countrymen. A day later Chief Sandile in person led an attack on Fort White. As his force was closing on the Fort three of the Cape Mounted Rifles men deserted the enemy and joined the Amaxosa. The rest, about 12 in number, were speedily disarmed and taken prisoner. Sandile's attempts to take Fort White by storm were beaten off with heavy loss, at least 25 men killed and many wounded. But the Amaxosa besieged the Fort for the next six weeks.

Meanwhile colonel Somerset at Fort Hare was preparing a force to relieve Governor Smith, still beleaguered at Fort Cox. Half-way between Fort Hare and Fort Cox his column was attacked and beaten back with heavy loss, at least two officers and 22 men killed, and a large number wounded. After ten days of siege, on December 31, 1850, Governor Smith shot his way through Amaxosa lines to freedom, barely reaching Kingwilliamstown.

By this time the fighting had become general. Governor Smith's white military villages set up after the 1846-47 war had been wiped out. In January 1851 Uithaolder's Khoikhoi followers at the Kat River Settlement, and at Theopolis and Shiloh Mission Stations joined the war against the colony. The strategy of the resisters, as usual, was to spread the enemy thin over a wide and difficult country. While Sandile occupied the central and northern parts of British Kaffraria, Maqoma controlled the Kromme area where he conducted a brilliant guerrilla warfare against the colonists. The northern region of Cradock-Queens-town was occupied by the Abatembu under chiefs Mapasa and Vadana. Their troops had destroyed nearly all the military posts in that area. In the southern sector chiefs Siyolo and Tola controlled the lower part of the 'Neutral Territory' including the Fish River Bush region whence they launched repeated attacks on Albany and Uitenhage districts. In all the three sectors the Amaxosa were reinforced by Uithaolder's disciplined and ubiquitous Khoikhoi detachments. From the resumption of hostilities in December 1850 through 1851 the Amagcaleka had been acting as custodians of the cattle belonging to the Amaxosa who were actively involved in the war. These of course, included colonial cattle captured in the war. In January 1852 General Somerset, at the head of a strong colonial force, invaded Gcalekaland partly to recover the 'stolen' colonial cattle and partly to punish Paramount Sarrili for 'aiding and abetting' the hostile chiefs. When Somerset failed to establish contact with the ever elusive enemy he resorted to a scorched-earth policy aimed at depriving the Amaxosa of their sources of supply. He burned down their

homes, destroyed their crops and returned to the colony driving 45,000 head of cattle, 14,000 goats and some horses, and followed by 7,000 Amafengu.

Yet after about fifteen months of fighting the Colonial troops appeared helpless. They "were worn out by fifteen months of harassing guerrilla warfare, and needed some repose". Since the commencement of the war in December 1850 the colonial troops had suffered 12 officers killed and 18 wounded; 195 soldiers killed and 364 wounded. When Governor Cathcart arrived in South Africa and at the scene of hostilities in March 1852 something of a stalemate existed in all the sectors of resistance. The Amaxosa troops had the whole country east of the Fish River, and from the sea to the Cradock-Queenstown line in the north, and were inflicting considerable losses within the colony itself.

Soon after his arrival on the Frontier Governor Cathcart led another punitive expedition against Sarrili (April 1852). He captured 10,000 head of cattle and returned to Kaffraria where he awaited reinforcements from England. By August, 1852 when he resumed operations the Amaxosa were exhausted and famished. They had been in the field for nearly two years and had not been able to sow crops. The destruction of their homes and seizure of their cattle meant that they had to sue for peace or starve. Cathcart's operations, therefore, met little if any organised resistance. By October 2, 1853 Chief Sandile accepted Cathcart's dictated peace terms at Yellow Woods, thus bringing to an end the longest and most disastrous war Cape Colony had had to fight on the frontier.

The Amaxosa had fought well and lost the war. Despite Sandile's appeal, the chiefs had not acted together. Mhala, the prominent Anandlambe chief and one of the two Mlanjeni's appointee commanders, had not participated in the war. Chief Pato of Amagqunukwebe had taken his stand even before the commencement of the war. Replying to Sandile's call to arms in June 1850 the last ditcher of the previous war stated: "I was instigated to join you in the last war; but it shall be the last; it shall never more be said that Pato had joined in a war against the colony".²⁹³ These chiefdoms did not, however, turn active collaborators with the European invaders. 'Neutral' is, perhaps, the appropriate term to describe their positions. Only the Amafengu, the protegies of the colonial Government, continued to collaborate with the enemy. The Southern Nguni were lamentably disunited in the war. Even the succour that they received from the Khoikhoi could only make the resistance stiffer but could not redress the balance which was decidedly in favour of the colonists.

From the point of view of military performance in the battlefield it can hardly be denied that the Amaxosa performed supremely well. Their strategy of avoiding head-on collision with concentrated enemy forces made them a more formidable foe than the militarised Zulu state. The nature of the terrain, especially the Amatole mountains, placed them in good stead for these kind of tactics and the Amaxosa military leaders made effective use of it.

Their basic weakness vis-a-vis the colonists was partly lack of ammunition and partly inadequate gun technology. For the former they depended on two precarious sources, namely, gun smugglers and capture from the enemy himself. Either way the supplies always fell far short of the actual amounts needed. Hence the attempts to make bullets from iron that they removed from Europeans' houses and wagons and from legs of iron pots. Lack of ammunition meant that the Amaxosa had to use what little supplies they had obtained from the enemy or blackmarketeers sparingly. They were, consequently, poor shots since they lacked practice in marksmanship. Meanwhile the very fact that they carried muskets gave them deceptive confidence that they were equally equipped as the Europeans were. The result was that the Amaxosa combatants at times exposed themselves dangerously while they often missed their targets. Thus even in engagements where they inflicted heavy losses they often suffered more losses than the enemy.

The weakness of the Amaxosa resulting from lack of ammunition was reinforced by the wide technological gap that existed between them and their adversaries. The efficiency of the few guns in their possession was reduced by poor keeping and maintenance. Furthermore, the colonists were in direct contact with the technological base in Europe whence they could always obtain new and superior guns. Indeed by the end of the 18th century the colonists were already in possession of the artillery field guns. By the mid-19th century breech-loaders and rifled guns were beginning to make their appearance in South Africa. Yet Africans had only an indirect, if any, access to this ever-improving military technology.

At the end of the 1850-53 war the important question was whether the colonial authorities and British Government in London were prepared to redress the Amaxosa grievance that they knew lay at the root of the conflict, namely, land and independence. The recognition of this fact would, of course, be reflected in Governor Cathcart's post-war settlement. There is no gainsaying the fact that both Colonial Governors and colonial secretaries in London wanted peace on the Cape's eastern frontier. What is often not realised (or conveniently overlooked) by historians is that the Europeans wanted peace at the expense of the yet unconquered people. It was ridiculous, if not indeed silly, to deprive the Amaxosa of their land and independence and then expect them to remain docile.

Even before Governor Cathcart dictated peace terms the Chiefs asked him, "When will you give us back our lands?".²⁹⁴ Yet, like D'Urban's in 1835 and Smith's in 1847, Cathcart's post-war settlement reflected the usual territorial aggression or imbecility of the Cape Governor's and the British Government officials. What remained of the Amaxosa lands in the 'Neutral Territory' was given to the Europeans, the Khoikhoi and Amafengu. A large portion of Tembuland, around Queenstown, was annexed to the colony and given in farms to Europeans. As for the 'rebel' Amangqika Cathcart would have expelled them beyond the Kei River as D'Urban had wished to in 1835. But realising that he had in fact no military resources to keep them there, he decided to assign them locations in the open parts of British Kaffraria (D'Urban's erstwhile Queen

294. Galbraith, J.S. Reluctant Empire, p. 265

Adelaide Province). The wooded and mountainous Amatole region (the whites' Waterloo in South Africa) was taken away from Amangqika and settled with white military villages. The land area assigned for Amaxosa settlement was further reduced by the planting of military posts in the heart of Kaffraria.

Next to loss of land the Amaxosa resented Europeans' pressure on their way of life. One of the factors which occasioned the 1850-53 war had been Smith's system of Indirect Rule which deprived the chiefs of traditional authority and tampered with the mores of African society. In his post-war settlement Cathcart left the chiefs in their positions. But the Governor's protestation that "the Kaffirs should be governed by tribal law and custom" notwithstanding, no meaningful authority and power could be restored to the chiefs. Whatever administrative and juridical power they were allowed was on the proviso that it was consistent with 'colonial law and justice', this last as defined by colonial courts. Thus far from answering the question put to him by the chiefs: "When will you give us back our lands?" Governor Cathcart intensified the cause of discontent by annexing more land and further subjecting the Amaxosa to an alien rule. Even the Amafengu, the proteges of the colonial Government who were given "some of the choicest lands in the country the best portions of the Tyumie and upper Keiskama valleys, as well as extensive locations farther north",²⁹⁵ protested against the Europeans' interference with their customs and traditions and

295. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.339

threatened to join the "former oppressors" (the Amaxosa) against the colony. The least that can be said of Cathcart's post-war settlement is that it made another war inevitable.

II. IN TRANS-ORANGIA

The course of African resistance in Trans-Orangia was determined by the interplay of indigenous and external factors. The former set of factors comprised the old feuds among the Basotho communities who lived there - Bashoeshoe²⁹⁶ under Chief Moshoeshoe, Batlokwa under Chief Sekonyela, Barolong under Chief Moroka, Bataung under Chief Makwana, etc. Essentially the struggle between these Bantu communities was for the mastery of the Caledon valley. By the beginning of the 1830's Moshoeshoe had emerged as the strongest chief in the area, whether in terms of military power or statesmanship. And the Basotho showed great potential for further growth. The other communities on the other hand, lacking strong leadership, tended to be decadent. Indeed they owed their continued existence to the missionaries and white colonists who arrived in the area in early and mid-1830's²⁹⁷ and became partisans in the chiefdoms' struggle for ascendancy. It is plausible to suggest that had there been no Missionary interference Moshoeshoe might have absorbed these communities and formed a much larger and stronger state in the Caledon valley. Conditions for such a process existed. The peoples of the valley were menaced by Dingane's Amazulu from across the Drakensburg in the east, by Mzilikase's Matebele from across the Vaal in the north and by the lawless mixed breeds, notably the Bergnaar

296 Henceforth Basotho

297 One of these groups, namely Barolong under Moroka arrived in the area at about the same time through the help of Wesleyan missionaries.

Koras, in the south. During the height of Difecane Moshoeshoe had distinguished himself as a capable military leader, statesman and protector. The Wesleyan missionaries, however propped up Moshoeshoe's rivals and thus hindered a process which might have produced a larger and stronger nation capable of withstanding later pressures. Consequently, when the white colonists (Voortrekkers) entered the area in 1836, Trans-Orangia was inhabited by a congeries of weak and, in some cases lawless communities. The weaker chiefs, probably encouraged by their missionary mentors, looked to the new-comers for protection against the stronger Basotho. The Voortrekkers on the other hand saw in these 'friendly' chiefs potential allies who could assist them against the hostile natives.

The movement of the Boers onto the Highveld and their subsequent jostling with the natives for land were anxiously watched by British authorities at Cape Town and in London. It has been suggested that the British authorities could have stopped the movement had they so wished. Be this as it may, the British took no immediate action, contenting themselves with the passage of The Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act of 1836. Their later involvement with the doings and happenings beyond the colonial borders has been given several explanations by the British themselves. The first was that Great Britain as a Christian and civilised Power could not stand-by and watch the Boers exterminate or enslave the aborigines. The other explanation was that the chaos that was certain to follow

the uprooting of interior and other native communities was bound to have disturbing effects on or within the colonial borders. These were strong arguments pushed forward by no less strong and far-sighted personality than Dr. John Philip. But the arguments were embraced by imperial authorities for a third and different reason. Although in the first half of the 19th century the British were reluctant to incur expenses in the defence and administration of 'Primeval regions of Africa' they nevertheless regarded the southern tip of the continent as their sphere of influence. The imperial factor more than any humanitarian considerations accounts for British intervention in the interior and in Zululand. The abandonment and the convention policies in the early 1850's amply demonstrate the validity of this view. While Smith's Orange River Sovereignty and Transvaal could be abandoned on the force of economy argument Natal which had a coastline and a port was not so treated. It was retained not because the British could incur less expenses in its defence and administration or that the natives there faced more dangers of extermination or enslavement by the Boers, but solely because the coast could make Boer independence meaningful and, even worse, provide a gateway to another foreign and Great Power. Similarly the abandonment of the Transvaal and Orange River Sovereignty in 1852 and 1854 respectively was carried out not because the British would incur more expenses in their defence and administration or that the aborigines there faced less dangers of extermination or enslavement by the Boers but simply because the abandonment could be carried out without jeopardising the larger imperial interests. The rights and welfare of the aborigines counted for nothing in the wider imperial schemes and

world strategy. Indeed the conventions policy made it a point that the aborigines were deprived of any means of defending themselves and their rights against the Boers. The arms and ammunition clauses of the two conventions guaranteed the Boer regular supply of these instruments of violence while the aborigines would be prevented from acquiring them. Thus, the Boers were catspaws used by the British to destroy African independence without being independent themselves. From this brief analysis it is easy to see that the much vaunted concern of the British with the preservation and welfare of the aborigines was, to say the least, a farce. Imperial factor lay at the root of British intervention in the interior and in Natal. Once the Boers were confined to the interior their autonomy could only be harmful to the natives. And the 'pacification' of the 'savages' was not inimical to imperial interests.

Even before the immigration of the Boers into the interior got under way the basis for British intervention there had been laid. On December 11, 1834 Cape Colony had entered into a treaty of friendship with the Griqua chief, Andries Waterboer. Similar treaties were signed with Mzilikaze (March 3, 1836) and with Moshoeshoe and Mpande on October 5, 1843. Soon after the Voortrek began the British Parliament passed the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act of 1836 stipulating that all British subjects residing south of latitude 25 degrees south were justiciable in Cape colonial courts. The title of the Act is rather misleading. The British Parliament knew that the Cape Government had no means to apprehend criminals on foreign soil and herd them to colonial

courts for trial. The Act was intended to reinforce the undeclared British claim to South Africa as their sphere of influence and to enable them to intervene should the need arise.

In accordance with these arrangements the magistracy at Colesberg, a village just south of the Orange River, was authorised to keep an eye on the doings and happenings in Trans-Orangia. The efficacy of the treaties into which the British had entered with the native chiefs was put under severe test in the mid-1840's. Ever since the white colonists immigrated into Trans-Orangia they had been settling on Griqua and Basotho territory but consistently rejecting any Adam Kok's or Moshoeshoe's jurisdiction over them. Meanwhile they were committing acts of violence for which the chiefs, in accordance with the treaties, could arrest and send them to the colony for trial. In April 1845 Adam, in what was undoubtedly legitimate assertion of his authority, ordered the arrest of one Krynauw for assaulting two natives. The Boers in the area retreated to Touwfontein where they left their families and rode out to War. The relative strengths of the two sides to the conflict are not available, but it may be assumed that the Griquas were numerically stronger. Both sides were mounted and armed with guns. The first engagement went in favour of the Griquas though they lost about 300 horses and 3,600 cattle to the enemy. The Griquas killed five Boers with the loss of only one killed to themselves. The British magistrate at Colesberg then occupied Philippolis and ordered a cease-fire. While the Boers were still negotiating the terms of surrender with the magistrate British reinforcements under Captain Henry Warden arrived from Fort Beaufort.

When the Boers rejected the Magistrate's demand for unconditional surrender and the return of Griqua captured cattle, hostilities were resumed. The Boers who had occupied Zwartkopies, a hillock between Philippolis and Touwfontein, were put to rout and Touwfontein itself captured on April 30, 1845.

The Battle of Zwartkopies did not resolve the fundamental issues that lay at the root of conflict. The situation in Trans-Orangia remained confused and confusing. Here, as on the Amaxosa front, the problem was land. The Bantu and Griqua were intermingled with the Boers who seemed to be subject to no authority. While some of the Boers professed allegiance to the Maatschappij²⁹⁸ others claimed British citizenship. Still many others drifted between these extremes. But one thing they shared in common, namely, refusal to acknowledge either Bantu or Griqua jurisdiction over them. The native chiefs on the other hand insisted that while the Boers remained on their territories they were subject to their jurisdiction, and that in accordance with their treaties and the provisions of the Punishment Act they (the chiefs) could apprehend and send them to the colony for trial.

Disputations about jurisdiction were compounded by land issues. Some Boers held land leased or sold to them by Griquas. Others, especially in Basotho and Barolong territories, occupied farms with or without the permission of the chief concerned.

298. Maatschappij was a steering committee of sorts apparently set up to co-ordinate the movements of the Voortrekkers and to generally maintain discipline.

As the Boers were generally moving towards the north those who eventually left sold their holdings, whether purchased, held on lease or occupied without any authority, to friends. The native rulers, naturally, were disturbed by these transactions and disorders; and they were hoping that the Cape Governor, Peregrine Maitland, would come out with measures that would effectively order the situation.

Governor Maitland arrived in Trans-Orangia in June 1845, exactly one and half months after the cessation of Boer-Griqua hostilities. The significance of the Battle of Zwartkopies lay in the fact that the British arms, had for the first time, intervened in Trans-Orangia (and on the Highveld). But what had been the objective of the intervention? Ostensibly the British had come in fulfilment of their treaty obligations; in particular, to protect the authority of Adam Kok and Griqua sovereignty and in general, to check Boer encroachment on the lands and independence of Trans-Orangia native chiefs. In actual fact the Governor's problem was much more complex. Trans-Orangia Boers, by the stipulation of the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Act, were still British subjects. Juridically therefore, he could not subject them to the authority of the native rulers. Yet if they were to remain in Trans-Orangia the chiefs must, in all fairness, have a means of controlling them. Nor could he, even if they had all acknowledged British authority, evacuate them back into the colony.

Maitland's settlement when it came reflected these contradictions. He divided Kok's territory into two sections: the "inalienable" and "alienable" areas. The Griquas were forbidden to grant any more leases in the "inalienable" area. Land in the "alienable" area could be leased to white persons for a maximum period of forty years. Leases which were already in force in the "inalienable" area were to continue until date of expiry. While the boundaries of the "inalienable" area were clearly defined the remaining areas where leases might continue to be made were left undefined. Politically Adam Kok's sovereignty over his territory was reaffirmed. But the chief was to accept appointed British Resident in his country. Henceforth all leases would require the approval of the Resident. He was to preside over all litigations involving British subjects. Quit-rent payments were to be made to the Resident who would retain one half and remit the other to Adam Kok.

The disputes involving Moshoeshoe, Sekonyela, Moroka, Taaibosch, Baatjie and the Boers were even more complex. In 1833 Moshoeshoe had permitted Moroka who had been brought to Thaba Nchu area by Wesleyan missionaries to settle there on the understanding that he (Moroka) was his vassal.²⁹⁹ Supported or advised by his missionary mentors this worthy now not only claimed land as of right but denied that Moshoeshoe was his overlord. Granting that Moroka was independent of Moshoeshoe Maitland's task was to define territorial boundaries between these two chiefdoms as well as with others such as Sekonyela, Taaibosch and Baaitjie.

299. Orpen, J.M.: History of the Basutus of South Africa, pp 9-10.

The Governor was also called upon to deal with the problem of Boers who had settled on Bantu lands. Some of these Boers had been permitted to settle on the land because they needed to "rest for a season" and then proceed on their journeys northward. Others had settled in clear defiance of the chiefs and were not paying anything for the use of the land. It was urgent that Governor Maitland defined conditions under which they could hold and use native lands.

Far from attempting any adjustment of boundaries or pronouncing on the status of the 'British subjects' in the Bantu territories Maitland would fain let sleeping dogs lie. He ignored Moshoeshoe's suggestion that the British Crown annex the whole area south of latitude 25 degrees south but instructed the chiefs to provide native troops for use by Resident should they be required. As far as the Bantu chiefdoms were concerned, therefore, Maitland's visit to Trans-Orangia was worse than useless. Even on the comparatively simpler Griqua question Maitland's settlement solved nothing. Indeed it left the Griquas in a worse position than before. While he reaffirmed the sovereignty of Adama Kok, the chief was in effect subjected to the authority of the British Resident. He had virtually been stripped off any authority over his people. The white leasee who held long-term leases continued to reside in the "inalienable" section of Griqualand. The Boers on the other hand resented the British intervention and the prospect that black troops might be used against them.

They had left the colony, Retief had written, "under the full assurance that the English Government has nothing more to require of us, and will allow us to govern ourselves without interference in future".³⁰⁰ The most that can be said of Maitland settlement is that it turned the nebulous British influence in Trans-Orangia into physical imperial presence as represented by the Resident, Henry Warden, and a Cape Mounted Rifle trooper with a six-pounder. As for the problems which faced Trans-Orangians, black and white alike, Maitland solved nothing. If anything he had compounded them. The Bantu, Griqua and Boers continued to jostle one another for land in an area where there was no overall authority and loyalties and allegiances were disaffected or uncertain.

During the two-and-half years that followed developments in Trans-Orangia took definite shape and entrenched themselves. The Boers continued to occupy farms in defiance of the native chiefs. Disputes over the relationship and tenure of lesser chiefs with Moshoeshoe continued to deteriorate, occasionally over-flowing into violence. The Wesleyan and French missionaries continued to support the chiefdoms' conflicting claims. Watching or presiding over these doings and happenings was the British Resident, Captain Henry Douglas Warden.

The position and role of Warden in the Trans-Orangia imbroglio have been seen in different lights by historians. Some have condemned him for violating basic principles of Statecraft

300 Walker, E.A.: The Great Trek, p.105

by supporting weaker chiefs against the undeniably superior and most powerful chief in the Caledon Valley. Others, judging by the problems which he had to deal with and by the means at his disposal, have taken the sympathetic view that Warden was like workman without tools or a man of war without guns. In fact Warden's problems were more apparent than real. The seeming contradictions of his office stemmed not from the man himself or from the inadequacy of military force at his disposal. Warden's problems flowed from the ambiguity or vagueness of British objectives in Trans-Orangia. By the treaties and by the force of natural right the British were obliged to support the native chiefdoms. But strengthening the chiefdoms' sovereignty and independence would have the effect of checking not only the Boer independence but the British influence as well. And strengthening the Boers was to enable them not only to destroy the power of the native chiefdoms but to make their rebellion against the British authority or influence a reality. Some way had to be found to weaken the Boers vis-a-vis the British without strengthening the native chiefdoms vis-a-vis the Boers. The Boers had to be strong enough to check the growth of native power but not strong enough to challenge British authority or influence. This could be achieved by upholding but not strengthening the native chiefdoms dangerously against the Boers.

Warden's importance in this imperial scheme lay more in his presence than in what he did. He was not told about these checks and balances and the purpose they served. All he knew was that he had to keep the peace. As to how he was to achieve this was left to his own devices. His office was valued to the extent

that it symbolised British imperial presence in Trans-Orangia (and if it may be, Trans-Vaal). The problem of Warden, therefore, was that he had no set and clearly defined policy to pursue. And since his superiors knew he had no policy to enforce they saw no need to bestow him with adequate military force.

When Sir Harry Smith, the newly appointed Governor and High Commissioner, arrived at Winburg in January 1848, he told the assembled Basotho and Boers to live together in peace. He reassured Boers that they would never be placed under the jurisdiction of native chiefs. He cojoked the native chiefs to allow the Boers to remain on their territories though they (Boers) would pay their quit-rent to the Resident, Major Warden. At the same time he assured the chiefs that there would be no further Boer encroachment on their lands. Having made these assurances Smith dashed across the Drakensberg into Natal. There he found a party of enraged Boers under Pretorius preparing to leave Natal to settle on the Highveld. He persuaded them to stay, promising them farms under easy conditions which included the removal of Amazulu and other natives from the vicinity. He then dispatched Pretorius to persuade other Boers on the Highveld (including Transvaal hardliners) to accept British authority. While Pretorius toured the Highveld to sound out opinion Governor Smith annexed Trans-Orangia to the British Crown, naming it Orange River Sovereignty (March 3, 1848). The proclamation of Orange River Sovereignty triggered Boer revolt led by Pretorius and which Governor Smith suppressed at Boomplaats (August 1848).

Neither the meeting with the Bantu and Boer Leaders at Winburg in January 1848 nor the proclamation of the Orange River Sovereignty in March solved any of the problems facing the Sovereignty. Indeed, the governor's arrangements compounded the problems. The anomaly of permitting the Boers to settle on native lands while the chiefs had no means of controlling them was bound to lead to trouble. Moreover, Smith's words that there would be no further Boer encroachment on native territories could not be effective without adequate force placed at the disposal of either the chiefs or the Resident. Among the native chiefs themselves there were serious land disputes which required the Governor's urgent attention. It was a mark of irresponsibility on the part of Smith to proclaim "the Queen's sovereignty" over Trans-Orangia, command mutually hostile chiefdoms to be peaceful without removing the sources of disputes.

The upshot was as might be expected. Moshoeshoe, the most powerful chief in the area and by all accounts, the most peaceable, had accepted Smith's annexation of Trans-Orangia to the British Crown in the hope that it would protect the Basotho territories from the Boers. Far from this happening, Boer pressure on his lands continued unabated. Towards the end of 1848 and at the beginning of 1849 Basotho and Batlokwa under Sekonyela (the latter joined by Taaibosch's Koras) took their quarrels to the battle-field. In the course of the fighting Moletsane, one of Moshoeshoe's junior chiefs, appealed to the British Resident to intervene. When Major Warden refused to intervene Moshoeshoe could not suppress his indignation. What was the use of a British garrison, he asked,

if it failed to keep law and order, and "if its guns remained silent while innocent people were butchered? You bound our hands behind our backs", he wrote to Warden, "and strangers cut our throats".³⁰¹

Meanwhile Governor Smith had set up a Land Commission to delimit and fix a boundary between Basotho and the Boers. To the Basotho any boundary between them and Boers was unacceptable. The Boers had settled in Basotho territory. Any boundary was bound to deprive the Basotho of a vast tract of land. To avoid this Moshoeshoe had, as early as 1845, offered to set aside a piece of land between the Caledon and Orange rivers where all white people could be settled. In return, he had asked, the whites should vacate all other areas and go to settle there. Neither Governor Maitland nor the white people involved availed themselves of that offer. Now he was being asked to agree to the partition of Basotho country, an act which the Basotho saw as converting irregular occupation into legal ownership,

Despite their friendly professions to him, Moshoeshoe was acutely aware that the British regarded him as threat to their imperial interests in Trans-Orangia. He was also aware that the Boers, although they had recently approached him on the possibility of alliance against the British, would fain see the Basotho power in Trans-Orangia destroyed. The lesser chiefs such as Sekonyela, Moroka, and the Griqua brigand leaders, Taaibosch, Baatjie, Davids, etc. would not only rejoice at seeing their old enemy humbled but would actively assist the whites to destroy Basotho. After appreciating

the total military as well as the political situation in Trans-Orangia Moshoeshoe realised that it made very little difference whether or not he offered military resistance. The Basotho, it appeared, would lose their lands anyway. He decided to fight.

It was a two-prong battle. While his sons and junior chiefs took up arms and waged irregular warfare against Basotho enemies Moshoeshoe himself carried on a lone diplomatic battle. He declared that for the purpose of preserving peace in Trans-Orangia he was prepared to accept the new boundary line. He argued successfully that his sons and junior chiefs who were now harrying Boers and other enemies of Lesotho were disobeying his orders and that he himself wished to remain a 'friend' of the Queen. In actual fact the Basotho commanders, Moorosi, Poshuli, Moletsane, Letsie, Masupa, Molapo, etc were carrying out what had been decided by the Pitso and sanctioned by Moshoeshoe himself.

By the second half of 1850 the Basotho appeared poised for military resistance. What was the state of their military preparedness? In other words, to what extent had they adapted or revolutionised their traditional mode of warfare to put up meaningful challenge to the invading white forces? Traditionally the Basotho like the Amaxosa and unlike Amazulu had no standing armies. All male adults capable of bearing arms were liable to military service during war-time. These were often mobilised in age-regiments under regimental commanders, with the chief as Commander-in-Chief. Thus, chiefs Moletsane, Poshuli, Moorosi, etc. were commanders-in-Chief of their respective armies, receiving only broad and general

direction from Moshoeshoe the overall Commander-in-Chief at Thaba Bosiu. There was, thus, a high degree of flexibility and delegated authority which Europeans were apt to regard as evidence of weak control Moshoeshoe had over his junior chiefs, brothers and sons. It was that flexibility and autonomous authority which generated the will to fight and made the Basotho resistance the most formidable in South Africa. For, no amount of external pressure can make a more successful fighter than the individual will to fight. The decision to go to war was taken at the 'Pitso'. And once it was taken mobilisation was a simple matter. Court messengers were sent to different chiefs throughout the land. Each chief would, following a short but grave emergency 'Pitso' order a call-up. Within hours respective regiments would be mustered at a given spot (usually unknown to women, children and uncircumcised men). The chief or his trusted son or reputed war-lord then led the regiments to the scene of fighting. This aspect of Basotho military organisation remained practically the same throughout the wars of resistance. The Zulu ideas of standing armies and militarised state never became part of Basotho concept of a happy life. The traditional equipment of a Mosotho soldier was the assegai, the battle-axe, the knobkerrie and the ox-hide shield. But, as other Basotho communities were similarly armed and the Amazulu and Matebele were armed with different (and more effective) versions of the assegai and the shield, this equipment did not make the Basotho any more invincible than, say, the Barolong or Batlokwa were. The difference between victory and defeat therefore depended on other factors such as effective military leadership. Complemented by good strategy and in a purely traditional African setting this weaponry was adequate for the safety of the Basotho.

The armament situation in Trans-Orangia was changed by the introduction of firearms into the area towards the end of 1820's. The assegai and the knobkerrie proved hopelessly inadequate against the mounted and gun-slinging Griquas - the Bergenaars and Koras. These half-breeds raided Bantu communities almost at will, seizing cattle and other forms of spoil. It was then that Moshoeshoe determined to secure firearms for his army. He first strove to have a missionary stationed near Thaba Bosiu, not so much for the preaching of the 'word' as for the instruction of Basotho in the use of firearms. The missionary would also advise Moshoeshoe on the increasingly complex political situation in South Africa. But even more important, he would become Moshoeshoe's scribe in his communication with Europeans. By 1834 Moshoeshoe had got the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society representatives at Morija, two or three miles from Thaba Bosiu. Meanwhile the Basotho were making rapid progress in the acquisition of firearms and horses. By the end of the first half of the 19th century a large portion of Basotho army was mounted and armed with guns. Most of both were bought from the Griquas while some horses were seized from the white farmers. To augment the supplies from the Griqua Basotho bought arms and ammunition from white traders. Also many Basotho young men went to work on the Cape farms and received guns and ammunition in proportionate quantities for their wages. By the beginning of 1850's Basotho had so modified and modernised their military structures that they alone of the African States which offered military resistance were able to retain their land, albeit attenuated, and to win a British Protectorate.

The Basotho held to any military doctrine so long as it served them well. Since the early 1820's and as a direct result of Difecane they had evolved a mountain strategy, that is, using the mountain as a fortress. The mountain chosen for this purpose usually had a flat-top area which could accommodate the nucleus or the core of the chieftdom and to provide pasturage and water for the Royal cattle. The flat-top area on Thaba Bosiu measured about one mile long, half a mile wide and 400 feet high. Ideally the flat top had to be as little approachable as possible. This would make its defence easy and secure. Thaba Bosiu was accessible by six passes. The strategy of mountain fortresses was that at the approach of the enemy the passes and other tracks leading to the top could be blocked by the defenders. Before the introduction of firearms in the area Basotho who manned these passes supplemented their assegais with stones which they hurled at the enemy or boulders which, if rolled down the narrow defiles or tracks, could mow down whole lines of the enemy. Sometimes even cattle were stampeded against the enemy.

It was this method of defence which enabled the Basotho to survive the Difecane onslaughts. When Europeans and firearms came into Trans-Orangia Moshoeshoe did not abandon his mountain strategy. As will be seen later he reinforced its efficacy by the acquisition of firearms and horses. This meant that the Basotho manning the passes could subject the attackers to deathly fire without exposing themselves to danger. It also meant that mounted Basotho could gallop down the plains and menace the enemy rear. Thus despite the new enemies and the new weapons Basotho clung to their mountain

strategy and applied it with admirable success, at least for a time. When the Europeans discovered that they could invest the mountain fortress and starve Basotho to death or submission the latter abandoned the strategy and adopted elusive guerrilla approach in open country.

In answer to the question whether at the beginning of 1850's when they decided to take up arms the Basotho were prepared it may be said that they were. This must not, however, be stretched too far. While they had acquired firearms and horses they had obviously not obtained enough to equip every Mosotho soldier. In the early battles, therefore, a greater proportion of Basotho would remain infantry and continue to depend on the traditional weapons. Even those who had guns could not fire them with any real accuracy. When all has been said, therefore, the Europeans, who were well supplied and well practised, had a technological edge over the Basotho. This was a crucial factor since it made one white soldier equivalent to at least five natives mounted and armed with guns or ten native infantrymen armed with guns, or fifteen to twenty native infantry-men armed with assegais and knobkerries. It thus compensated the whites' numerical weakness and restored a degree of evenness on the two sides.

Since September 1850 there had been sporadic clashes between Major Warden's 'peace-keeping force' and Moshoeshoe's people. The clashes were an outward expression of the state of tension that had been reached over land issues. On September 20, 1850 Warden instructed Major Donovan to attack the Bataung of

Chief Moletsane whom he accused of having killed some Amafengu and taken their cattle. Moletsane was attacked at Mekwatleng and forced to retreat in the face of superior fire power, losing 15 men killed and many cattle captured. In January 1851 Charles Smith Halse attacked the Abatembu, Moshoeshoe's subjects living near the border with Cape Colony. Warden had accused these villagers of aiding the Amaxosa against the British or of smuggling firearms and ammunitions into Lesotho, and had ordered Charles Smith to remove them forcibly from that locality. In the event the villagers resisted and Smith opened fire, killing 12 men and capturing over 800 herd of cattle. In the counter-attack, mounted soon after and led by Chief Moorosi, nine British troops were killed while the Boers who were assisting them took to their heels.

Warden was in fact playing with fire. It could not be expected that Moshoeshoe would stand-by and watch his people being killed for asserting what they considered to be their legitimate right. When intelligence reports reached Thaba Bosiu in June 1851 to the effect that Warden had mustered over 2000 men at Platberg, ready to move against the Basotho, Moshoeshoe ordered mobilisation. But he knew that despite their numerical superiority Basotho could not win the war by engaging the enemy in the open. Warden's force had two artillery guns which could decide the battle in favour of the invaders. Moshoeshoe therefore resolved to fight Warden on ground not of Warden's but of his own choosing. Viervoet, a flat-topped hill in Bataung country, was chosen for the purpose. Preparations were then made to entice the enemy onto that hill. Few Basotho herdsmen and a large number of cattle were placed on the flat hill-top in plain view of the enemy spies. On receiving

this information Major Donovan who commanded Warden's force marched from Platberg and pitched camp on the western base of Viervoet. The western and southern slopes of the hill are rather steep and difficult to ascend. The flat hill-top where the herdsmen and cattle could be seen is easily accessible from the north, over a low neck of Mekuatleng. Over 500-men strong Bataung force under Chief Moletsane held this position in anticipation of the enemy offensive. From Thaba Bosiu Moshoeshoe had dispatched another strong force under commanders Letsie and Molapo to hold the eastern approaches to the hill.

On the morning of June 30, 1851 Donovan's force ascended Viervoet from the north amidst a hail of slugs from Bataung snipers. But Moletsane decided not to make a determined stand. The strategy was to let the enemy reach the hill-top and attack him while he was trying to round up the cattle. Basotho would then take advantage of the enemy's ignorance of the hill terrain and also of throwing him into confusion by stampeding cattle over his lines. While Donovan was working his way to the top Moletsane moved eastward along the base of the hill and effected a junction with Letsie and Molapo. The combined Basotho force moved round the southern base of the hill and presently swung north to cutoff Donovan's descent back to camp. But the manoeuvre was only partially successful; for Major Donovan, accompanied by a detachment of British regulars, had already descended and was back in the camp. The Basotho troops, however, intercepted over a thousand native levies who had been left behind to round up the cattle and drive them to Bloemfontein. Basotho cut the levies to pieces, killing at least 150 of them. The

remainder owed their escape to a Boer detachment that came to their rescue. The Basotho now turned onto the headquarters where Majors Warden and Donovan were in camp, defended by a small garrison of Cape Mounted Rifles, regulars and Griquas. The two artillery guns which the invaders had hitherto not been able to use were now mounted. But as the mounted Basotho rushed the Camp they poured out such fusillade that the defenders, including Warden and Donovan, abandoned their positions and fled into the nearby bush. After a short chase the Basotho, realising the bush would render their cavalry movements difficult, returned to their base, eastward of Viervoet. Next morning Warden retreated to Thaba-Nchu where he disbanded his force and returned to Bloemfontein.

Viervoet was the first major engagement in which the Basotho challenged and beat off a British attempt to undermine their independence. While their victory did not remove the white menace in Trans-Orangia it presented Moshoeshoe with an intricate diplomatic problem. Hitherto his strategy had been to keep the British away by appearing to be friendly to them whilst he pursued the policy of incorporating the Barolong and Batlokwa into his chiefdom. To accomplish this programme Moshoeshoe needed time and non-interference from, as he thought, the mighty British. The Basotho victory at Viervoet was likely to bring the full force of British vengeance upon the Basotho. This would not only interrupt his nation-building programme but also threaten the very existence of Lesotho. Alternatively, the Basotho victory at Viervoet could lead to the British withdrawal from Trans-Orangia. This, Moshoeshoe feared, could lead to premature confrontation between Basotho and the Boers the outcome of which he could not

predict. Hence his repeated professions that he wanted to remain a British friend and ally.

While the Basotho-British clash at Viervoet thus threatened to destroy Moshoeshoe's diplomatic schemes, and while it did not remove the fundamental problem afflicting peace in Trans-Orangia, it nevertheless left Basotho in a much stronger position than they had ever been. The Boers were weak and divided. The British were tied down by the Amaxosa on the eastern frontier and Governor Smith confessed to Warden that he could not spare a single man for service in Trans-Orangia. As for the weaker chiefs, (Moroka, Sekonyela and the half-breed brigand leaders such as Taibasch and Baaitsjie) they trembled to the realisation that neither the Boers nor the British were capable of protecting them against the Basotho. Thus, after the victory at Viervoet, the entire Trans-Orangia lay prostrate before the Basotho. But what was uppermost in the mind of the Basotho ruler was unification and consolidation of the Trans-Orangian native communities under Basotho hegemony. He was acutely conscious of the fact that in the final analysis the conflict in Trans-Orangia was one between Africans and Europeans. Now that the Basotho were in an unusually powerful position Moshoeshoe availed himself of the opportunity to push on his unification programme. Between January and December 1852 he launched sporadic attacks on the Barolong and Batlokwa as well as on Boers and Koras who had allied themselves with Warden at Viervoet. Rather than surrender their independence to Moshoeshoe Chief Moroka and his followers fled Thaba Nchu and took refuge at Bloemfontein. Batlokwa's

Sekonyela barely managed to maintain himself until the arrival of Cathcart's punitive expedition in December. Taaibosch and his followers, too, edged farther west, out of Basotho's reach. Thus, when Governor Cathcart at the head of 500 cavalry and 200 infantry arrived in December 1852 Moshoeshoe had achieved nothing. Governor Cathcart who had inflated estimation of himself as a soldier dismissed Moshoeshoe's protestations of friendship to the British as "political frauds" and presented the chief with an ultimatum demanding payment of 10,000 herd of cattle and 1,000 horses within three days. The Governor's demands were impossible to meet in the stipulated time. For one thing, it would require more than three days to collect 10,000 cattle from the reluctant Basotho. For another, horses were 'animals of war' and it required more than mere threat of words to make Basotho part with them. In any event, the Governor's rejection of requests for extension of time and last minute gesture by Moshoeshoe made it clear that Cathcart was bent on humbling the Basotho and restoring the British prestige sunk in 1851 at Viervoet.

On the morning of December 20, 1852 Cathcart crossed the Caledon River and invaded Lesotho. Like Warden's in 1851, Cathcart's troops were a mixed force of regulars and native levies. from Barolong, Batlokwa, Amafengu and Coloured groups. His total strength was well over 2,000 men. A greater proportion of the regulars carried rifled guns which out-ranged Basotho flint-lock muskets. The rest of the force was armed with 'percussion smooth bores', also superior to the flint-lock. The force was in addition, supported by two six-pounders, two howitzer guns and several rocket tubes as well as 150 transport and supply wagons.

Soon after Cathcart's rejection of Moshoeshoe's request for extension of the ultimatum's dead-line the chief ordered mobilisation. He could field 9,000 cavalry, about 6,000 of whom were armed with flint-lock muskets. The remaining 3,000 were equipped with assegais, battle axes and knobkerries. Their horses were the hardy pony type that could gallop along the rocky mountain tracks which the heavier horses of the British could scarcely follow.

From the two preceding paragraphs it is clear both sides to the conflict had military advantages as well as disadvantages. The British force was numerically weak vis-a-vis the 9,000-man Basotho contingent. If we put the Basotho strength at 10,000, which is by no means improbable since counting in those days can have been no more than an estimation to accuracy, the figures yield a ratio of almost one to five in favour of Basotho. This meant that each soldier in Cathcart's force was opposed by five Basotho. This Basotho advantage was, however, neutralised by the quality of Cathcart's force. Admittedly, from the point of view of marksmanship and general military training most of the native levies were no better than Basotho. But the greater proportion of Cathcart's force consisted of seasoned British soldiers who had seen service in many parts of the world. And the entire force was equipped with superior weaponry and could therefore deploy greater fire-power than the Basotho could hope to match. Basotho, of course, had no answer to the enemy's artillery guns - the six pounders, howitzers and rocket-tubes.

Almost the entire Basotho force was armed with flint-lock muskets and two-thirds of it was mounted on horses better suited for the mountain terrain. There is no doubt that Basotho were accomplished horsemen during this time. But their flint-lock muskets were dangerously inferior to the enemy's rifles and artillery guns. This weakness was made even more serious by the fact that the unpractised Basotho could not fire their muskets with any real accuracy. Lack of ammunition dictated that they use their stores sparingly, often at the cost of practice in marksmanship. Yet the fact that they were carrying 'guns' was likely to give the Basotho a delusive confidence that they were equal to the enemy and thus expose themselves unduly to the enemy gun-fire.

The most significant advantage the Basotho had over their adversaries was the mountain terrain. Apart from their familiarity with the topography Basotho could rely on the mountain system of warfare developed since the time of Difecane. The pony type of horses they used were admirably suited for that kind of warfare. In addition to their unfamiliarity with the terrain and the unsuitability of their horses in mountain warfare the British could not make effective use of their heavy guns which were either horsed or ox-drawn. These guns could only be used effectively in open and pitched battles such as were offered by Amazulu. The Basotho mode of warfare therefore placed them in a perculiarly strong position vis-a-vis the British who were used to rigid and ordered formations.

Even before Cathcart's force moved from Platberg Moshoeshoe knew that it would cross the Caledon at the Drifts opposite Berea hill. All non-combatants (women and children) in the vicinity were hustled to the flat hill-top. As usual a large herd of cattle were placed on the hill in plain view of the enemy. There were strategic as well as tactical reasons for doing this. First the cattle, which the enemy would normally want to capture, were placed out of his reach. This would entice him to attempt to scale the mountain, thus bringing him within ground chosen by the Basotho for battle. Second, the cattle were trained to respond to certain sounds or signals and once the enemy had reached the top, often difficult of movement, they could be stampeded on the enemy and throw his lines of advance into confusion. The cattle were placed in charge of few herdsmen while Basotho troops took positions behind rocks on the slopes and along the precipitous tracks and defiles which led up to the top.

Cathcart's force crossed the Caledon on the morning of December 20, and on seeing cattle on Berea hill the Governor decided to capture them and then proceed to Thaba Bosiu. The plan of operations was simple. From the camp on the western base of the hill Colonel Napier was to skirt the northern base of the hill to prevent the escape of the enemy or cattle in that direction. Colonel Eyre, from the same point, was to launch a direct attack on the hill and drive the cattle. Governor Cathcart himself would move round the southern base of the hill with similar objective as Napier's. The three columns were to

effect a junction on the eastern side of Berea and march on Thaba Bosiu, to the south-east. Meanwhile commander Malapo had taken position on the northern slopes of Berea with a strong Basotho force. On reaching this point Colonel Napier saw some cattle higher up the hill and decided to round them up. Half-way up the slope his column was attacked and knocked out of action for the rest of the war. Malapo seized the arms and uniforms of the slain soldiers and distributed them among his men. He then proceeded to the top of the hill to meet Colonel Eyre's column. With his front line dressed in British uniform, Malapo's advancing troops were mistaken by Eyre for British soldiers. By the time the colonel discovered his mistake many of his men had fallen, including a high ranking officer. Colonel Eyre's force was slowly pushed down the hill in a hand to hand fighting in which the British barely escaped annihilation. Meanwhile the Governor's division had also been attacked and harried all the way round the south-western base by Basotho snipers, reaching the appointed rendezvous only with difficulty. He was joined there by the broken and hard-pressed column of Colonel Eyre. A strong force of over 7,000 mounted Basotho now beleaguered the combined columns of Governor Cathcart and Colonel Eyre encamped three or four miles from Thaba Bosiu. The camp was in a comparatively open ground and Cathcart could bring his heavy artillery guns into action. Two successive Basotho attempts to take the camp by storm were repelled. The Basotho commanders called off the attacks and took a strong position between the camp and Thaba Bosiu. It was late in the afternoon and it was raining. At five O'clock that afternoon the British force retreated to Phutiatsana River where

it camped for the night. The same night Cathcart received what has been described as the most diplomatic document in the South African resistance from Moshoeshoe: "Your Excellency this day you have fought against my people, and have taken much cattle .. I beg you will be satisfied with what you have taken. I entreat peace from you - you have shown your power - you have chastised - let it be enough I pray you; and let me be no longer considered an enemy of the Queen".³⁰² The Governor who had been looking for an honourable way out of this undoubtedly embarrassing situation at once accepted Moshoshoe's 'plea'. Next morning, December 21, 1852, he recrossed the Caledon and disbanded his force.

Thus ended the Battle of Berea. A resounding victory for Basotho! The British lost 38 men killed and 14 wounded. The Basotho gave their losses as 20 killed and 20 wounded. The repercussions of Berea victory were more far-reaching than is often realised. In Trans-Orangia itself it shattered any British hopes that Sir Harry Smith's Orange River Sovereignty would be maintained. The British would have to find different means of maintaining their influence without being physically present in the area. Already they had signed the Sand River Convention (January 17, 1852) with Transvaal Boers disclaiming any authority there. The Basotho victory at Berea strengthened views already current in Great Britain that Smith's Orange River Sovereignty should be abandoned. On February 23, 1854, the British signed Bloemfontein Convention with Trans-Orangia Boers also renouncing authority in the area.³⁰³

302. Orpen, J.M.: History of the Basutus of South Africa, p.101

303. Moshoeshoe was clearly the strongest power in Trans-Orangia during this time. The Convention with the then stateless Boers is undoubtedly inexplicable.

That the Conventions removed the physical presence of the British from the interior is undoubted. What is often not realised is the fact that they in effect amounted to an alliance between the Boers and the British. First, the Boers who were legally British subjects were given independence on lands which clearly belonged to the natives. This was particularly infuriating in the case of the Basotho when the signatories of the Bloemfontein Convention kept criminal silence over the contentious boundary that had been drawn by a British official and persistently rejected by Basotho. The refusal of Sir George Clerk to pay any attention to Moshoeshoe's protest that there was no place for whiteman in Trans-Orangia and that henceforth the boundary between Basotho and Europeans would have to be the Orange River is indicative of the extent to which the British were committed to the Boer side. Second, the provision in the Conventions that the British would continue to supply arms and ammunitions to the Boers while denying the same to the Africans destroys any British claim to non-involvement in the affairs of Trans-Orangia and Transvaal. Having given their erstwhile subjects 'Carte blanche' the British were aware that violent contest over the unresolved land issues was certain to follow. The arms clauses in the Conventions were intended to give the Boers a military edge over the natives in that contest. Finally, the interior of South Africa was nevertheless to remain a British 'sphere of influence'. Boer independence had to be controlled lest it became dangerous to that influence. This was secured in the 'slavery clauses' providing that Boers should not carry out slavery practices against the natives. This would enable the imperial factor to intervene should Boer independence

at any time become menacing. Other devices for controlling Boer independence were the latter's inevitable trade dependence on the coastal colonies of the Cape and Natal. It may be said, in conclusion on this point, that the abiding significance of Berea victory is that it drove the Boer and Briton closer together than they had ever been.

There were other factors within and outside Trans-Orangia which reinforced the necessity of this alignment. In Trans-Orangia the Battle of Berea had further strengthened the military position of the Basotho vis-a-vis Moroka and Sekonyela chiefdoms as well as the half-breed brigands of Taaibosch and Baatjie. The Boers, although they were to have an independent government, were still weak and terrified at the prospect of having to organise their own defence against the mighty Basotho. Moshoeshoe was thus left in a strong position to complete his unification programme. He lost no time. In 1853 he attacked Batlokwa, drove Sekonyela from his capital and incorporated most of his followers into the Basotho chiefdom. Of all the Bantu communities in the Caledon Valley only Moroka's Barolong now remained outside Moshoeshoe's suzerainty. And with the British leaving and the Boer republican government still in its embryonic stage it was clear that Barolong would be next to be gobbled. Once the unification could be completed the Basotho would undoubtedly turn to the infant Orange Free State Boer Republic. It was to guard against this inevitability that the arms clauses were written into the Conventions.

Outside Trans-Orangia the future of the Europeans was not secure either. Since December 1850 the Cape Colony had been involved in a most disastrous war it had had to fight on the eastern frontier. And, although by early 1853 the war had ended in favour of the colony there was nothing to indicate that the Amaxosa were finally 'pacified'. The situation was made even more alarming by the fact that African leaders maintained communications of sorts. Diplomatic envoys were constantly on the move between various royal courts. Basotho were reported to have responded favourably to Mlanjeni's call to arms against Europeans; and in 1851 Moshoeshoe is said to have sent gun powder loaded on pack-horses to the Amaxosa then engaged in an arduous struggle with the Colony. Across the Vaal River, in the North-eastern Transvaal, Sekwati had just checked Boer attempt to intrude into the Bapedi Kingdom he had recently reconstituted following the expulsion of Mzilikaze's Matebele. In 1854 Chief Mokopane massacred a Boer hunting party and although Boer retribution was swift and severe, it was clear that the future of the Europeans in the interior was anything but secure. To the west of the Transvaal several Batswana cheifdoms were resisting Boer pressure with a measure of success. In Zululand Mpande's reign was pusillanimous following defeat at Blood River, but Zulu militarism had not been destroyed and might fall into more militant hands at any time. The total picture throughout South Africa was far from reassuring. There were dissensions within the Boer community and disaffection between the Boer and Briton which were often serious enough to overflow into warfare. Nevertheless some kind of co-operation had to be achieved if the future of the Whiteman in South Africa was to be assured. The Conventions of 1852

and 1854 represented that spirit of white co-operation.

Moshoeshoe never had time to bring the Barolong into the orbit of the Basotho. The independence of Trans-Orangia Boers, tacitly based as it was on the so-called Warden line, sharpened the issue of boundary than ever before. The question as to where the boundary between Lesotho and the newly-created Orange Free State was to be could no longer be postponed. Yet the opposing positions held by the two sides made it clear that war was inevitable and unavoidable. While the Boers held onto the assumption that Warden line was the boundary Basotho maintained that the boundary between themselves and Boers was the Orange River. During the three years following the signing of the Bloemfontein Convention Basotho not only refused to accept the Boer assumptions but asserted their ownership by harrying the Boers, raiding farms and sometimes shedding blood. British diplomatic attempts to defuse the situation came to nothing.

By February 1858 some of the Boers, notably those living in the Smithfield district, were living in Laagers. Others, especially among those who lived in the north, crossed the Vaal River and joined their fellow-Boers in the Transvaal. On March 11, 1858 J. Boshof, President of Orange Free State, declared war on Lesotho claiming Warden Line as the official boundary between his country and Lesotho. Both sides appear to have been prepared for war. In the three years following the Bloemfontein Convention more and more Boers had acquired the new breech-loading rifles and the Orange Free State

government, with the co-operation of the British, had acquired some artillery guns. From the point of view of weapons, therefore, the Boers were more than a match to the Basotho. They were, however, faced with the usual limitation of numbers. In the 1858 War Boshof could muster about 1,500 men, all mounted and supported with some artillery. But the men were hardly disciplined and united.

The Basotho had been harassing Boers since the signing of the Bloemfontein Convention. They were therefore prepared for war though they were comparatively ill-equipped. The flint-lock in 1858 had certainly become out-moded. Although percussion-lock muskets and breech-loaders had become basic weapons of the Boers Basotho continued to depend on the old and defective flint-locks or even their traditional weapons. In January 1851 an Ordinance was passed prohibiting the 'selling, bartering or otherwise disposing of Fire Arms or Gun-powder to any Native Chief within the Orange River Sovereignty, or to any subject of such chief'.³⁰⁴ This restriction was completed by the Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions which between them prohibited any sale of arms and ammunition to Africans while at the same time they bound the British to continue to supply these commodities to the Boers. The result was that Basotho were starved of fire arms. Whatever purchases were made during this period had come from smugglers who sold at prohibitive prices. By far the largest quantities of guns so obtained were the old and defective flint-locks. As for gun-powder indications are that there was a serious shortage. Basotho had to manufacture their own gun-powder to

304. Atmore, A and Sanders, P. Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol.12, 1971. p.538

augment the limited stores at Thaba Bosiu. It was however discovered, after tests at Cape Town, that bullets fired with Lesotho powder had a shorter range than those fired with colonial one.³⁰⁵ While shortage of gun-powder seriously limited Basotho practice in marksmanship and therefore made them bad shots, the shorter range of their bullets meant that they could suffer heavy losses before they themselves could inflict loss on the enemy. Basotho, of course, had no answer to Boer artillery. Their only salvation was that these heavy guns could not be used with maximum effect in a mountain warfare. Even this tenuous advantage depended on Basotho strategy and tactics. Given the opportunity the Boers could invest and shell the mountain fortresses and starve Basotho to submission.

Finally, the only advantage Basotho enjoyed was numerical superiority. In the 1858 War Moshoeshoe could field 10,000, all mounted and armed with guns, some with rifles. This seemingly impressive array could be misleading. The essential factor in the situation was effective fire-power rather than any number of horsemen wildly firing obsolete flint-lock muskets. From this it is clear that even numerical superiority could not guarantee Basotho victory. In the final analysis victory or defeat depended on how Basotho would deploy their strategies and tactics and their troops. This will emerge from the battlefield itself.

The Boers invaded Lesotho on two fronts: the northern column, commanded by commandant Senekal, marched from Winburg while

305. Ibid pp.539-540

the second column, under Commandant Weber, marched from Smithfield in the south. Both commandants were not distinguished military leaders. Weber commenced hostilities by destroying the French missionary station at Beersheba (March 23), a diplomatic blunder since the missionaries had a wide hearing in Europe and could thus mobilise public opinion there against Orange Free State. In the northern front Senekal committed a tactical blunder by attempting to invade Lesotho by crossing Caledon River at 'Cathcart's Drift', a point heavily guarded by Bataung troops under Moletsane. At this time Moletsane had been re'nforced by Molapo and Mopeli from Thaba Bosiu. Senekal was repulsed with the loss of seven men killed. He then marched southwards along the right banks of the Caledon to meet Weber's column. Meanwhile Moshoeshoe had dispatched commander Letsie at the head of a strong division of Lesotho troops with instructions "to fight the enemy at every point of advantage, but, when close pressed, to fall back and draw the Boer commandos after him".³⁰⁶ On April 3, 1858, Letsie's force came up with an isolated Boer detachment which had just crossed the Caledon and cut it to pieces, killing 16 and wounding 30 of its number. Ten days later Letsie's force had a skirmish with Senekal's commando near Phutiatsana River. After making two unsuccessful attacks on the encircled commando the Basotho retreated in the direction of Thaba Bosiu. Commandant Senekal decamped and continued his march southward. Meanwhile, soon after destroying Beersheba Mission Station Commandant Weber had attacked Sekonyana and Poshuli at Vechtkop, which he looted and burnt down. Lesotho commanders adhered strictly to Moshoeshoe's

306. Moodie, D.F.C. History of the Battles and Adventures in Southern Africa. Vol. II. p.87

instructions, namely, "to fight the enemy at every point of advantage, but, when close pressed to fall back and draw the enemy after them".³⁰⁷ The strategy was not only to draw the Boers to the heavily fortified Thaba Bosiu, but to over-extend their rear so that while they struggled to storm Thaba Bosiu Lesotho horsemen could hit at undefended targets within the Free State. As will be seen below superior strategy and tactics more than any other military factors account for Basotho victory in this war.

On April 25, 1858 Senekal's and Weber's columns effected a junction at Jannmerberg Drift. The combined force under the over-all command of General Weber now marched north-east, in the direction of Thaba Bosiu. Little or no resistance was offered until the commandos reached Matsieng, Letsie's residence near Morija. There information was 'leaked' to the Boer commanders to the effect that Poshuli and Letsie were camped with 4,000 troops at Matsieng. Commandant Senekal thereupon ordered his troops to quietly and quickly surround Letsie's capital. But the Boer encircling manoeuvre was slowed down by Basotho snipers who harried their lines until late in the afternoon. When the snipers melted away Letsie and the 4,000 men had withdrawn to Thaba Bosiu. On entering Matsieng the Boers found nothing but mutilated bodies of Boers killed in the Caledon Valley three weeks ago. The Boers angrily fired the settlement, sacked Morija Mission Station and proceeded to Thaba Bosiu.

307. Supra p.261

Meanwhile Lesotho troops had taken positions along the passes and cattle tracks leading to the flat top of Thaba Bosiu. Others manned rock boulders ready to roll them down the passes should the enemy attempt to force up his way. The Boer commanders arrived at the base of Thaba Bosiu late in the afternoon of May 5 and bivouacked for the night at the lower end of Khubelu Pass, leading direct to Moshoeshoe's Residence. Next morning at eleven O'clock Thaba Bosiu was rocked by cannon shell. The Boers were seen crawling up Khubelu Pass along water courses and cattle-tracks. Some were seen attempting to scale the Krantzes and cliffs overlooking the base of Thaba Bosiu. Others hesitated and never got anywhere up the Pass. As soon as the 'braves' were within 'killing ground' Lesotho commanders gave orders to fire. Those of the Boers who were not killed instantly found both advance and retreat impossible. Others were crushed by rock-boulders rolled down by Basotho units under Masupha and Molapo from the upper end of the passes.

While the Boers were thus held down on the slopes of Thaba Bosiu Moshoeshoe dispatched cavalry columns across the Caledon where they raided Boer farms and homes, killing any who fell into their hands and capturing stock. Information regarding these rear operations was again 'leaked out' to the commandos now struggling for their lives on the slopes of Thaba Bosiu. This intelligence had the most demoralising effect on the Boers. Already weakened by desertion and unnerved by initial disaster on the slopes of Thaba Bosiu the Boers now felt that their duty

lay at home. At dusk the surviving Boers crept down the Khubelu Pass to camp. In their war council that night the commanders decided to call off the invasion and return home to protect their families and property. Moreover there was the very real danger that the Boer expeditionary force could be cut off and annihilated. Next day the commando dispersed and the Boers returned home without achieving anything.

Thus ended the 1858 Lesotho-Orange Free State War. Complete victory for Basotho strategy! But unlike the British the Boers did not leave Trans-Orangia. On the contrary more Europeans were coming into the new State and it was clear that in any future war Basotho would be hard put to it to maintain themselves. With new inventions coming into the military technology in Europe the Boers could acquire heavier and more efficient guns which could shell mountain fortresses at great distances. But the era of maxims and Gatlings was still in the future. For the meantime Basotho had defeated their enemies. The question now was what would the Basotho do with the Boers or how they would use their glittering victory. Would they expel all whites from Trans-Orangia! Or, would they impose a boundary of their own between the Free State and themselves! Moshoeshoe did neither and said nothing. He had no wish to talk or think about boundaries between the Basotho and white people. The whole Orangia belonged to Basotho as far as he was concerned.³⁰⁸ But if pressed hard

308. In January 1854 Moshoeshoe had told a conference of Basotho, Boers, and British representatives that white men had no right in Trans-Orangia; that the entire country belonged to Basotho and that henceforth the boundary between them and white people was to be Orange River. See Peter Becker, Hill of Destiny, p. 194

he was prepared to bargain on the basis of his 1843 Treaty with Governor Napier, not on that of Warden Line.

It was the Boers who broke the silence. President Boshof sent to Moshoeshoe suing for peace and asking the latter to accept mediation by Governor Grey. Mediation here really meant fixing a boundary line that was acceptable to both Basotho and Boers, and, as I have just pointed out, such a line was hard to find and difficult to maintain. In September 1858 Governor Grey confirmed and upheld the Warden Line as the boundary between Lesotho and Orange Free State. No surer way of bringing about another war can be imagined. Basotho were furious. They continued to harry the Boers and to seize stock in the disputed districts, especially in the Winburg-Harrismith area in the north and in the Smithfield-Vechtkop area in the south.

But for the meantime attention was focussed on an area soon to be known as Griqualand East, on the upper reaches of the Mzimvubu River. The area was not inhabited but it was part of Chief Faku's sphere of influence. In 1850 Moshoeshoe had obtained permission from the Amampondo chief to occupy the area. By the end of the 1850's it was clear to Moshoeshoe that expansion westward would be difficult. He therefore decided to avail himself of Faku's offer. In 1859 he sent his son, Nehemiah with some 70 people to occupy the ceded territory. Governor Grey who was informed by Moshoeshoe of this move had his own secret schemes for the same area. He wanted to move Adam Kok's Griquas from Griqualand West and Chief Letele's unwanted Banaheng from the

Free State to the area. He also wanted to move the Batlokwa refugees, then settled in Herschel district, to the same area. Batlokwa and Panaheng both of whom feared to live near Nehemiah refused to move. But the Griquas arrived in the area at the beginning of 1863 and established Griqualand East, with Kokstad as the capital.

While these developments were taking place on the eastern base of Drakensberg, the Boers who had lacked effective leadership since the founding of their republic elected John Brand president. Weakened by internal divisions and demoralised by defeat the Boers could now say: 'the man of the hour had arrived'. Brand had much to recommend him for his new post. He had been a practising lawyer in the Cape Colony. For the untutored Boer Community of the Free State he brought intellectual insight into the problems of the new State. His Cape origins could improve the relations between the Free State and Cape Colony and ensure continued supply of arms and ammunition to the commandos. Finally, Brand had personality drive that was likely to infuse new confidence and unity into the Boer community.

As if by design Brand assumed the leadership of Orange Free State at a time when Basotho were threatened by leadership crisis. Moshoeshoe was aging and finding it increasingly difficult to exercise effective control over his vassal chiefs, brothers and sons. Nevertheless the Grand old Man was still firmly in the saddle and Brand quickly recognised that in him he had a hard nut to crack, both at military as well as at diplomatic levels.

In his diagnosis of the Free State problems President Brand reached the conclusion that Lesotho represented the greatest danger and that the Free State could not sustain a war against this African giant unless and until the republican economy had been strengthened. The measures that he proposed to adopt to remedy the economic weakness of his State seriously jeopardised the chances of complete victory over the Basotho. First he would destroy Lesotho. He would then be in a position to occupy Griqualand East which would give Orange Free State control of the upper reaches of the Mzimvubu River. From there the Free State could cut a corridor along the river to the sea through Port St. John. With this access to the sea Orange Free State would be relieved of its dependence on colonial ports for her trade and supply of arms and ammunition.

This was a grandiose and ill-conceived scheme. First, it underestimated Basotho's and Amampondo's capacity to resist such attempts. In point of fact Amampondo who controlled the middle and lower sections of Mzimvubu were in alliance with Cape Colony. Second, and, perhaps, most important, Boer independence entailed in this access to the sea was inimical to British imperial interests. Third, the Cape Government had just recognised Sekhonyana's Basotho and Adam Kok's Griquas in Griqualand East and it was unlikely that Governor Wadehouse would stand-by and watch Orange Free State overrun the area.

Meanwhile Basotho kept up their raids against Free State farmers. In some cases Lesotho raiders shed blood; but generally

they had the Boer farmers flogged and then released with warnings that should they be found again on Lesotho territory they would be killed. The raiders also destroyed property and seized stock. After repeated appeals for the preservation of peace Brand invited Governor Wodehouse to mediate. The source of trouble was drill land which the Basotho maintained belonged to them but was being occupied by Boers on the strength of a boundary line to which they were not a party and which they had never accepted. In October 1864 Governor Wodehouse, like Cathcart and Grey before him, upheld the Warden Line. That was the last straw. While it infuriated the Basotho it strengthened Boer determination to hold onto Lesotho territory. Basotho intensified their attacks and early in June 1865 President Brand formerly declared war. But before we discuss the course of that war one more question remains to be examined: Why did the British refuse to make substantial revision of the Warden Line since it was so obvious that it was the only source of trouble?

It has already been pointed out elsewhere that although the British had rescinded direct rule from the interior they nevertheless continued to regard that part of South Africa as their sphere of influence. This attitude or policy was reflected in the position of the Cape governors (from Sir Harry Smith in 1848) who in addition to being Cape governors were also High Commissioners to South Africa. Consequently the British had no wish to see a strong and independent State, be it black or white, emerge in the area. Warden Line set Lesotho and Orange Free State at each others' throat and kept both weak vis-a-vis

the Imperial Factor. As the Free State was, at least initially, weaker than Lesotho she had to be supplied with arms to check Lesotho power. But, as will be seen in the course of the war we are now discussing, when Orange Free State appeared to be gaining ascendancy over Lesotho the British intervened by annexing the latter to the Cape Colony. Warden Line, therefore was an effective instrument of checking and balancing power structure in Trans-Orangia and thereby upholding Imperial Factor in South Africa.

The war that broke out between Lesotho and Orange Free State on May 29, 1865 was the longest and most exhaustive the two states had ever fought. Moshoeshoe could field between 10,000 and 20,000 men, all mounted and armed with muskets. In recent years a few Basotho had acquired, through smuggling, some percussion rifles. But these were no more than a trickle. By far the largest portion of Lesotho army carried flint-locks. Even before the 1858 Lesotho-Free State War Basotho had begun manufacturing their own gun-powder. In 1865 Lesotho had six cannon purchased from smugglers and one 3-pounder cast locally by Basotho gunsmiths with the assistance of white renegades.³⁰⁹

The Boers as usual were heavily out-numbered by their opponents. Throughout the war Orange Free State total strength never exceeded 4,000 men, including white volunteers from Cape Colony and Transvaal as well as Amafengu, Batlokwa, Barolong

309. Atmore, A. & Sanders, P. Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol.12, 1972, p.540.

and other native levies hostile to Moshoeshoe's regime. Although Basotho had made significant additions to their armouries since 1858 disparity in weapons between Orange Free State and Lesotho in fact widened during the same period. By 1865 almost every Boer in the commando had a double barrelled breech-loading rifle with effective range of about 600 yards. In addition to these modern weapons the Boers had, with the co-operation of Cape authorities, acquired several Whitworth and Armstrong cannon. From the point of view of weapons therefore Orange Free State was incomparably superior. J. M. Orpen summed up the situation to Wodehouse in November 1865 as follows: "an infinite superiority in weapons and ammunition is what makes the Boers victorious".³¹⁰ Moshoeshoe himself was not unaware of the fact: "If (Brand) says that my people have not been able to cope with his burghers in open field, no wonder since they have the best rifles, the best powder and cannon".³¹¹

Both sides to the conflict had no holding capacity for a long-drawn fighting. The subsistence economy of the Basotho could not permit them to skip a single ploughing season without sowing crops. The Free State economy was likewise weak and when the rain begin to fall the Boers would need to return home to work the fields. Moreover, the Free State force consisted mainly of conscripted burgers, less disciplined and not used to long-drawn wars which required stability and endurance. Failure

310. Orpen to Wodehouse, November 6, 1865, quoted by Atmore and Sanders, Journal of African History, Vol.12, 1971 p.541

311. Atmore, A. The Passing of Sotho Independence, in Thompson, L.M. ed. African Societies in Southern Africa, p.283

to achieve quick decisions in the battlefield easily led to frustration and desertion. Yet the scale of hostilities was such that quick decisions were not possible. At the outbreak of the war Lesotho troops occupied all the numerous hills that were studded throughout the country - Mabilela, Berea, Koesberg, Vechtkop, Matsieng, Mekwatleng, and Thaba Bosiu itself. Lesotho forces in the southern front were under the command of Poshuli and Moorosi. By far the largest force was concentrated around Mabilela in the north-west. The force was commanded by Molapo and officered by Masupha, Moletsane, Mopeli and Lerotholi.

On June 13, 1865 this force confronted a large Boer commando commanded by Jan Fick and officered by Commandants Roos, De Villiers, Malan, Joubert, Bester, Wesssels and Louw Wepener. After a brief skirmish in the neighbourhood of Mabilela, Mopeli's capital and fortress, Basotho retreated. Their firing was poor in aim and short in range. Next morning the Boers moved against Mabilela but were driven off by a Lesotho detachment under Mopeli himself. On the southern sector Poshuli and Moorosi attacked Boer settlements in the Free State borderlands, killed many Boers, captured stock and retreated into Lesotho. Sporadic fighting now became general throughout the Caledon Valley. For some weeks it seemed as if the Basotho would halt the invasion.

By mid-July 1865 the Free State commandos had been reinforced by volunteers from the Cape Colony and some 950 Boers under Paul Kruger from the Transvaal. Fick was thus able to resume hostilities on a much wider scale. He deployed a force of 2,000 Boers and 1,000 native auxiliaries in two directions. The first column under Louw Wepener advanced from the south while the second under Fick himself attacked from the north-west. The two columns were to converge at Thaba Bosiu and take it by storm. The commandos swept everything in their line of march. Many of the Basotho minor fortresses were found deserted, Lesotho troops, in accordance with their old strategy of drawing the enemy towards Thaba Bosiu, having retreated to the latter stronghold. Towards the end of July the two Boer commandos effected a junction on the south-western base of Thaba Bosiu and the commandants began to plan the intended attack.

Lesotho army as usual had taken positions on the slopes of Thaba Bosiu; and all the passes and tracks leading to the flat top were blocked. On the morning of August 8, 1865 Whitworth and Armstrong guns opened on Thaba Bosiu. As the artillery rocked the Mountain Boer troopers were seen crawling up the passes from the lower end of the slope. Lesotho commanders allowed them to come up to within 'killing ground' and then gave orders to fire. As the defenders poured out volleys of slugs on the enemy rock-boulders were rolled down the narrow defiles and tracks to complete the route. Even herds of cattle were driven down the passes to stampede on the enemy. Thus, the Boers were driven off with heavy loss.

Back in Camp that night the Boer officers held a Council of War and agreed that it was almost impossible to capture the Mountain. They decided to invest the fortress and to deploy flying columns to scour the surrounding hills and plains, partly to seize cattle and partly to prevent Lesotho farmers from working the corn-fields. The commandos would live off the land, rationing such cattle and grain as may be captured from the enemy. The object was to starve Basotho to submission. The Boers had hit on a plan to which Basotho had no answer. Co-ordinated action between the various Basotho units became difficult. Their artillery had been put out of action in the early stages of the war. Commandant Fick was able to put up small but strongly fortified laagers right round Thaba Bosiu without fear of bombardment. Meanwhile he kept up intermittent bombardment on Thaba Bosiu, thus making life on the flat top almost impossible. Within weeks the effects of thirst and hunger began to be felt on the Mountain. Cattle were dying in large numbers and panic was threatening further resistance. Out in the outlying districts Boer flying columns burnt down homes, destroyed crops, seized grain stores and drove off stock. Although the Boers had not captured Thaba Bosiu by beginning of 1866 it was clear that Basotho could not sustain the war much longer.

If the Basotho were hard-pressed in the battlefield there was still room for diplomatic manoeuvre. Leading Lesotho chiefs negotiated and entered into separate treaties with Orange Free State. On March 26, Molapo signed a separate treaty, the Treaty of Mperane, by which he became 'Free State subject'.³¹²

312. Thompson, L.M.:Ed. African Societies in Southern Africa p.284

On April 3, 1866 Moshoeshoe himself signed the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu, ceding much of southern Lesotho and all the territory west of Caledon River.³¹³ The Treaty of Thaba Bosiu was acceded to by Letsie, the eldest son and heir of Moshoeshoe, presently in charge of Matsieng, near Morija. Similarly Mopeli, Molapo's uncle, made a separate treaty with Free State on June 1, 1867. These treaties have, significantly, been termed 'corn treaties', implying that they were intended by Basotho to provide a breathing space during which they could sow and harvest corn. Several circumstances appear to corroborate this view. First, while Molapo was 'Orange Free State subject' he was 'flirting' with Theophilus Shepstone with a view to placing his Leribe district under the protection of Natal. Second, while Moshoeshoe himself refused to surrender Thaba Bosiu fortress to the Boers as the price of peace he appears to have connived at Molapo's becoming Free State 'subject'. The 'corn treaties' hoax did achieve the intended objectives. Between April 1866 and March 1867 there was some respite during which the Basotho were able to sow crops. But the truce (it was no more than that) was also used as a period of recuperation. During it Basotho replenished their armouries and re-formed. Once they had harvested and grain had safely been brought into the mountains the Basotho were once more ready to resume the struggle. Most of the cattle were driven into Leribe district where Molapo as Free State 'subject' would not participate in the renewed hostilities.

By March 1867 Basotho had defiantly returned to their lands west of the Caledon now regarded by Boers as part of the Free State territory. When President Brand ordered out the commandos in March the objective was to clear the 'conquered'

territory of the Basotho. In the early stages of this second offensive the commandos swept all before them. By December 1867 they had captured Maboloka, Mokwai's fortress. In February 1868 Mathebe and Qeme fortresses defended by Poshuli and Letsie respectively fell to the Free State forces. Poshuli, Moshoeshoe's brother and uncompromising opponent of the Free State, was killed in action in defence of Mathebe. At Qeme the Boers claimed to have captured "over 10,000 head of cattle, 8,000 sheep and 1,500 horses".³¹⁴ In spite of these successes the Boers never captured the main fortress of Thaba Bosiu. By the beginning of 1868 something of a stalemate existed in all the war zones. The Boers were exhausted and impoverished. The booty that was siezed from Lesotho "benefited only a certain number of Free Staters".³¹⁵ The commandos were now engaged in destroying crops and homes. In February 1868 Southey, Wodehouse's colonial secretary, wrote that the success of the Boers "has been very much exaggerated and in reality they are now making war on the standing crops, and making occasional capture of a few head of cattle. The people (i.e. Free Staters) are tired and weary of the thing, and feel that it is with them and the Basutos as it is with the two Kilkenny cats - they are eating each other up, exhausting their resources and doing no good, but ruining themselves and their fine country".³¹⁶

314. Atmore, A. The Passing of Sotho Independence in Thompson, L.M. (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa, p.285

315 Ibid. p.285

316. Ibid

The Basotho were equally exhausted, but they had to fight in order to survive. What fighting there was during this period was mainly on their soil, and many army units had been knocked out of the war. While Moshoeshoe held on to Thaba Bosiu he intensified his appeals to Cape and Natal Colonial authorities for assistance. The British who had since the 1840's been refusing to place Lesotho under Imperial protection were now willing to take over Lesotho. On January 13, 1868 Governor Wodehouse announced: "H.M. the Queen (had) been graciously pleased to accede" to Moshoeshoe's request that he and his "tribe should be received as subjects of the British Throne".³¹⁷ Why, it should be asked, did "the Queen" have to wait so long before she could be "graciously pleased to accede" to Moshoeshoe's request? What was new in the situation that now persuaded Her Majesty to extend her merciful hand?

The first new factor in the situation was that the Basotho power had been broken; at least so it appeared to the current British Imperial strategists. The weakened Lesotho could be administered without stationing British troops there for the maintenance of 'law and order', the necessity which had led to the withdrawal of the British physical presence from Trans-Orangia in 1854. The second new factor was President Brand's larger war aims of overrunning Lesotho and then capturing Griqualand East which Brand hoped would give Free State control of Mzimvubu and Port St. Johns. Clearly Brand's scheme could

317. Wodehouse to Moshoeshoe, 13 January, 1968; quoted by Anthony Atmore: The Passing of Sotho Independence in African Societies in Southern Africa, p. 286

reduce Free State's economic dependence on Cape Colony and lead to the development of a powerful independent and potentially hostile Boer State in what the British regarded as their sphere of influence. Only annexation of Lesotho could obviate that danger.

The British authorities could adduce several arguments to cover up their real motives and to justify the annexation. First, Moshoeshoe had repeatedly asked the British to take Lesotho under their protection. Second, Governor Wodehouse could invoke the argument that was advanced by Sir Harry Smith in 1848 for annexing Trans-Orangia. This was that chaos and warfare on Cape Colony's borders could easily overflow into the colony itself. And finally, of course, the British could plead the humanitarian intentions to protect the rights of aborigines. So it was that on March 12, 1868 Governor Wodehouse declared Lesotho British territory and sent colonial troops "to bring to a close the operations which the forces of the Free State are now carrying on".³¹⁸

At this stage it is necessary to pause and look at the end-product of the Lesotho - Free State hostilities and the British intervention. Essentially the war had been about land, centering on Warden Line. By the beginning of 1867 Basotho had lost large areas of land to the south of Lesotho and all land west of the Caledon. Moshoeshoe was left with a small area around Thaba Bosiu and Berea hill. By devious means,

318. Ibid. Wodehouse to Currie, 14 March, 1868.

mainly diplomatic, Moshoeshoe had averted complete destruction of his kingdom. The first duty of the British soon after their intervention was to call both sides to the conflict to work out concrete and acceptable solution to the land dispute. Far from doing this Governor Wodehouse took it upon himself to reach a settlement with the Boers. In February 1869 he met a Free State delegation at Aliwal North and accepted a settlement that was highly unfavourable to Lesotho. Wodehouse did not have the decency even of consulting Moshoeshoe and acquainting himself with his views before committing Basotho to the settlement. At worst Basotho would have settled on the pre-war boundaries, and there is reason to believe that the Boers would have compromised. With the British intervention and Free State economy in ruins the futility of recalcitrance would have been obvious to President Brand.

Be that as it may, Governor Wodehouse confirmed the Boers in possession of all land to the west of the Caledon and then proceeded to Thaba Bosiu to inform Moshoeshoe. The Basotho were furious. Moshoeshoe asked "Is that peace?" He questioned the right assumed by Wodehouse of "allocating land in Lesotho".³¹⁹ Basotho attempts to play off Natal against the Cape and the efforts of their deputation in London did not help matters. In 1870 Moshoeshoe died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Letsie. The following year Lesotho was incorporated in the Cape administration.

In this subsection I have attempted to present African resistance to European encroachment in Trans-Orangia in the period 1836-1868. The four engagements detailed here were major battles in a continuous war. Of the four Basotho won three and nearly reduced the fourth to a stalemate. One feature that emerges from this account is that Basotho took too long to wake up to the dangers of European intrusion. Although European encroachment commenced early in the 1820's picking up momentum in the mid-thirties, it was not until 1850 that spirited resistance was offered. By that time white colonists had sufficiently entrenched themselves to be easily dislodged. In this they were assisted by their infinite superiority in weapons and by a higher degree of understanding and co-operation within themselves.

Africans on the contrary suffered from internal divisions and inferior military technology or, at any rate, lack of access to it. Indeed when the white colonists entered Trans-Orangia African communities there were still divided and weak. Naturally the colonists perpetuated these divisions and exploited them to their own advantage. Weaker chiefdoms such as the Barolong, Batlokwa and Ba-Monaheng of Letele, turned collaborators of the Europeans. Their role was summed up by Moshoeshoe in February 1868: "(The Boers) have for servants and spies so many natives that they know all the roads and paths up to the mountains".³²⁰ In point of fact this was an understatement. We have seen that native levies from the above chiefdoms participated actively in hostilities against the Basotho.

320. Atmore, A. The Passing of Sotho Independence in Thompson, L. (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa, p.285, Note 12

In spite of these military disadvantages by a brilliant combination of military force and statesmanship the Basotho were able to hold their own, in most cases, as we have seen, with admirable success. The credit for this goes, perhaps, to the Basotho flexibility and adaptability in military matters. In the 1865-68 Lesotho -Free State War the entire army was mounted and armed with guns. By then Basotho gunsmiths had long learned how to manufacture their own gun-powder. At the beginning of the war Lesotho had several imported cannon and one 3-pounder cast locally. The quality of Lesotho firearms was incomparably inferior to that of Free State weaponry. Nevertheless the effort that the Basotho made to acquire (or even manufacture) them demonstrates their innovating minds and their determination to achieve parity with their enemies. That they did not obtain weapons of equal efficiency is a matter that was beyond their control.

The quality of their resistance was undoubtedly impressive. Apart from their grasp of the need to modernise their warfare they recognised the military potential of their terrain even in modern warfare. On the basis of the numerous mountains and hills studded throughout Lesotho they evolved strategies and tactics that baffled the white colonists for nearly two decades (1850-1868). As will be seen later, when the mountain strategy ceased to be effective because of heavier and long range artillery guns now in possession of the Europeans the Basotho readily abandoned it and adopted modern guerrilla strategy.

III. BEYOND THE VAAL RIVER

Unlike in other sectors of the South African resistance, when Hendrik Potgieter and his followers established themselves in central Transvaal towards the end of the 1830's there were no effectively organised chiefdoms in the area. The destruction of Mzilikaze's kingdom and subsequent expulsion of Matebele across the Limpopo by the Boers in 1837 had left something of a vacuum which the Boers, claiming the area by right of conquest, hoped to fill. In this assumption the Boers had overlooked one important factor, namely, the capacity of such indigenous communities as were there before Mzilikaze to coalesce and resist their (the Boers) pretensions. Soon after the expulsion of the Matebele all displaced peoples returned to their homelands and former chiefdoms and kingdoms began to re-form. To the east of the Transvaal were the Bapedi under King Sekwati, who had recently returned from exile in the Zoutpansberg region. In the extreme north, in the Zoutpansberg region, there were several Vanda communities under their respective chiefs. To the south of Mavenda, in the present district of Potgietersrus were Basotho chiefdoms of Mokopane and Mapela. These two chiefdoms were closely related and appear to have separated only recently. In the early 1850's they acted together against the Boers. To west, on the eastern fringes of the Khalahari Desert, was a congeries of Batswana chiefdoms, the most important of which were Bangwaketse under Gaseitsiwe, Bakwena under Sechele, Bangwato under Sekgoma. The sizes of these communities ranged from small chiefdoms of Makopane - Mapela type to large scale organisations such as the Batswana and Bapedi kingdoms.

The Boer assumption that these communities would readily accept their overlordship was typical of European arrogance but foolhardy. The communities, it is true, were only just reforming and were still weak and poorly armed. Nevertheless they were more attached to their lands than the Matebele had been and Mzilikaze's regiments had taught them something of military organisation and total warfare. While it would admittedly take some time before they could challenge the Boer claims their resistance, when it came, was likely to be more formidable. Moreover the Boers were vastly outnumbered and torn by internal divisions. Far removed from Cape Town and lacking economic base their future was anything but assured.

By the early 1940's the Bapedi under Sekwati were emerging as the most powerful and promising to become the hub of resistance in the Transvaal. Like Moshoeshoe in Trans-Orangia, Sekwati was incorporating displaced individuals and groups of people and rapidly expanding eastward and westward from his central fortress in the Lulu Mountains. Meanwhile the Boers, hoping to secure outlet to the sea through Delagoa Bay, were expanding eastward, establishing themselves at Ohrigstad in the Steelpoort River: The Ohrigstad-Lydenburg area belonged to Bapedi and with Sekwati gaining more adherents and increased population pressure on the land it was clear that sooner or later the two races would come to blows. Hendrik Potgieter, the Boer leader in the Transvaal, claimed that on July 5, 1845 he had signed a Vredenstraktaat (Friendship Treaty) with Sekwati and that the latter had on that occasion granted

the land east of Steelpoort River to the Boers.³²¹ No trace of the treaty has been found. Nonetheless the claim is significant in that it reflected Boer recognition of the fact that their claims to former Mzilikaze's empire faced serious opposition.

On the Batswana frontier the Boers were less respectful. Soon after they had signed the Sand River Convention (1852) with the British they sought to bring the Batswana chiefdoms under their overlordship. This took the form of imposed taxation in the form of military service or forced labour. Batswana chiefs were required to send units of troops to serve in the Boer commandos even if these might be operating against friendly neighbours or even subjects of the same chiefs. Chiefs who did not want their subjects to serve on commandos were required to provide men for public works such as construction of roads. Batswana reaction to these onslaughts on their independence was two-fold. Some of the Batswana rulers, notably Montshiwa and Sechele, attempted military resistance but were soon overcome and routed. Others such as the Bangwato, Bangwaketse and Bakwena simply edged farther into the desert and out of reach of the Boers. There they were able to maintain their tenuous independence until 1885 when they secured British Protectorate status. On the western Transvaal, therefore, the Boers could expect only limited military resistance.

321. Smith, K.W.: The fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History Vol.10, 1969, p.237

The central chiefdoms of Mokopane-Mapela had not as yet attained the level of large scale and sophisticated state organisation. From the military point of view, therefore they were weak and unlikely to be able to offer any effective resistance. They had neither firearms nor regimented standing armies of the Macebele type. Nevertheless the twin-chiefdoms were closely related and capable of a united action and they were aware of the superiority of the whitemen's guns over their own traditional weapons. In any military engagement their hope for success depended on their ability to out-wit their opponents rather than on straight fighting. But even in the best of their ingeniousness success could only be limited and short-lived. Their size, military organisation and weaponry were such that they could not turn any piece of military ingenuity into large scale and permanent enemy disaster.

These considerations were demonstrated in July 1854 when a party of Boers, led by Hermanus Potgieter, arrived at Chief Mokopane's residence and demanded 'tax' in the form of cattle and children. The chief, naturally, rejected the demands especially one for children whom he knew the Boers wanted to use as labourers on their farms. Thereupon the Boers attacked a nearby village, shot several people and captured cattle and children. Mokopane was placed in an embarrassingly difficult position. He knew he was too weak to challenge Hermanus's undoubted out-rage. Yet, he could not honourably stand-by and see a handful of Boers (there were about 23 in all, men, women and children) committing acts of violence against his authority.

He soon hit on a plan whereby he would deprive the Boers of the advantage of their firearms. The male Boers were invited to a spot where they were to collect a huge piece of ivory. And in much the same way as the Zulu King, Dingane, did with Retief, Makopane prevailed over Potgieter and his men to leave their guns in the wagons. Indeed the ivory was there and as the Boers stood around to examine it Makopane's men fell upon them, killing all but one who escaped and managed to reach the wagons. He was, however, pursued, overpowered and killed together with all the women and children who had been waiting in the wagons.

The significance of this incident is that it demonstrated the realisation by Africans of their helplessness in the face of even a handful of Europeans armed with firearms. Meanwhile Mokopane had sent to Chief Mapela for assistance to drive away all the whites who had carved farms in his territory. The combined Mokopane-Mapela troops scoured the outlying districts. The Boers flew into laagers and P.G. Potgieter, Hermanus's brother, hastily assembled a 135 man commando and led it against Mokopane. At the same time he sent urgent appeal to Potchefstroom for assistance. He was later joined by Commandant General M.W. Pretorius at the head of 400 men. On the 24th October, 1854 the two commandos effected a junction and moved against Mokopane's capital. Although Mokopane's troops had seized some arms and ammunition, the guns were worse than useless since only few could fire them. Moreover, the quantity must have been too small to be of any value to the resisters. Consequently many of

Mokopane's people took refuge in a nearby cavern (the well-known Europeans' 'Makapansgat'), measuring about 150 by 610 metres. The bulk of the fugitives must have been women and children with, perhaps, few armed men to defend the cavern. The rest of the fighting men took to the hills from where later Boer efforts failed to dislodge them. What the resisters could not foresee, however, was the possibility that the Boers might blockade the cavern and starve the inmates to death.

That was precisely what the Boers did. Arriving at the mouth of the cavern on October 25, 1854 they first attempted to enter it; but they were fired at and suffered several men killed, including Commandant P. G. Potgieter. Next, the Boers attempted to smoke the cavern but this also failed to dislodge the inmates. Thereupon the Boers blockaded the cavern with thorn-bush and stones and waited for thirst and hunger to do their work. After some days the resisters ran out of rations and some of them attempted to come out. They were shot one after another as they emerged at the mouth of the cavern. The rest starved to death in the cavern. Later Commandant-General M. W. Pretorius claimed that his men shot at least 900 people outside the cavern. Theal states that over 1800 died inside the cave. After this massacre the Boers scoured the territories of the two chiefdoms but the resisters refused to offer open battle. Pretorius dispersed the commando and returned to Potchefstroom. The significance of this incident is that two chiefdoms were knocked out of African resistance.

Although they were not entirely destroyed they ceased to exist as independent states and the Boers could henceforth appropriate land in their territories at will. Even more important, the 'pacification' of these chiefdoms in the centre of the Transvaal meant that the Boers could concentrate attention on the stronger Bapedi kingdom without any distraction in their rear. The fall of Mokopane-Mapela chiefdoms early in the resistance struggle weakened the Bapedi and the Venda chiefdoms vis-a-vis the Europeans.

The first consistent effort by Europeans to establish themselves in Venda territories began in 1848 when Hendrik Potgieter established the white village of Schoemansdaal there. A rabble of Boers, British, Portuguese and Russians took up residence in the settlement and began to engage in acts of violence and robbery against the Venda people. Some of the whites mounted raids against Venda settlements and seized cattle. Others exported Africans through Delagoa Bay as slaves while yet others forced Africans into 'caravans' of porters to convey ivory to the east coast. The overall effect of these European activities was to undermine the authority of the chiefs and independence of Venda states. The Venda retaliated by raiding European farms and forcing whites into laagers. This situation continued until 1867 when Paul Kruger, Commandant-General of the Transvaal Boer Republic, arrived in the area to restore order. In spite of the fact that much of the disorder was caused by whites Kruger's 400-men expeditionary force was intended to 'pacify' the Venda. In other words the Boer Republican Government wanted the Venda to submit themselves to the lawless activities of

the whites in their (Venda) territories. Kruger found that his commando was inadequate for the task and was short of ammunition. When he could not obtain reinforcements and more ammunition he decided to withdraw his force. There-upon the Venda troops under Chief Makgato attacked Schoemansdaal and destroyed it. Most of the white inhabitants followed Kruger's troops; but a few pledged loyalty to the Venda Chiefs and agreed to pay tribute in return for their immunity from attack.

For the next decade it seemed as if the Venda chiefdoms had survived European onslaughts on their independence. Had they thrown up a leader of Moshoeshoe's or Sekwati's calibre they might have contained European expansion in their territories and preserved their independence. But the Venda were torn by internal divisions and in the 1880's, after a spirited but unsuccessful resistance by some of the Venda chiefs, the Boers re-imposed their overlordship on the whole Zoutpansberg region.

By far the stiffest resistance to white expansion in the Transvaal came from the Bapedi. They, like the southern Basotho under Moshoeshoe, had had a full share of Difecane. Their country had, during these hard-times, been under frequent attacks by the Zulu and Swazi both of whom at one time or another, claimed that the Bapedi were their subjects. In early 1820's Mzilikaze dispersed their burgeoning Kingdom³²² and imposed his overlordship on the area. Many of Bapedi princes were

322. State formation among the Bapedi was begun by Chief Thulare who died in about 1824. He was succeeded by his son, Sekwati.

killed, excepting one, Sekwati, who with a band of followers fled to the north, in the Zoutpansberg region. During his dominion in the Transvaal Mzilikaze had recruited Bapedi and other young men into his armies. During their resistance to the Zulu, Swazi and Matebele, the Bapedi had, like the southern Basotho, developed the strategy of mountain fortresses. Consequently when their struggle against Boers began in the mid-forties they were familiar with the system of total warfare and had developed their own strategies and tactics. These involved surprise attacks: swift charges on the enemy and quick withdrawals to their mountain strongholds. Initially, as might be expected, the Bapedi were equipped only with traditional weapons, assegais and knobkerries. Although for nearly two decades they had been exposed to Zulu mode of warfare the Bapedi never adopted the ideas of short stabbing spear and regimented standing armies. Nor did they, like the southern Basotho, take to the horse as an animal of war. But, as will be seen later, when they fought the British armies in 1879 the Bapedi were armed to the teeth with firearms.

The confrontation between Bapedi and the Boers began when a delegation of Boers approached Sekwati and asked for a grant of land east of the Steelpoort River. The Boers were apparently aware of the Swazi claim of suzerainty over the Bapedi. On Sekwati's refusal to grant the requested land the delegation approached Mswati, the Swazi ruler, and asked for the same piece of land. Mswati not only granted the land but he also offered to clear the area of the Bapedi if they were recalcitrant.

Thereafter the Boers proceeded to occupy the land. Sekwati at once realised that full scale attack on the Boers would result in his defeat. The Boers were armed with superior weapons and his men could not win a pitched battle in the open. He therefore instructed his men to harry the Boers in small parties, killing the isolated ones and seizing cattle. The strategy was that the Boers would either have to decamp or assemble a commando to attack his Phiring fortress. If they chose to leave his territory that was welcome, but if they mounted an assault on Phiring he could reasonably hope to beat off the attack. In 1847 a Boer commando attacked Phiring but was beaten back. The Boers, however, captured a large number of goats and cattle in the out-lying districts. Undaunted by these losses and encouraged by Boer failure to capture Phiring Bapedi soon resumed their raids. Small parties of men roamed the farms, burning home steads, destroying crops and seizing cattle.

Meanwhile Sekwati embarked on a programme of collecting firearms for his troops. Alarmed by the prospect of being confronted by numerous Bapedi armed with guns the Boers decided that Sekwati must be defeated before he became too strong. In September, 1852 another commando attacked Phiring. The Boers swept all before them but failed to capture the fortress after 24 days's siege. Although the Bapedi had successfully withstood the siege Sekwati realised that Phiring was vulnerable to close attacks. He accordingly moved his capital to Mosega, a better fortified site in the Lulu Mountains, whence he encouraged his men to continue their raids against the Boers. But the Bapedi were still weak and Sekwati's progress in purchasing firearms was slow due to strict restrictions placed on the sale of these weapons to Africans.

Guns were obtained from smugglers at great risks to the dealer and great cost to the buyer. In order to gain more time Sekwati entered into a treaty (November 1857) recognising the Steelpoort River as the boundary between Bapedi and the Boers. Bapedi who were settled to the east of the river would remain there under Boer jurisdiction. To the Boers the natives were welcome. They would provide the much needed farm labour as well as assist in commando operations. To Sekwati they not only represented his claim to the area but they would also act as spies and when the time came they would challenge the Boers from within. Moreover territorial boundaries of the European type had little real significance to African rulers during this time. It is possible that he accepted the terms of the treaty in order to avoid large scale war for which in 1857 he was ill prepared. But Sekwati did not live long enough to complete his armament programme. He died on September 20, 1861 and was succeeded by his son, Sekhukhuni. The Bapedi resistance under the leadership of this Sekhukhuni is examined in chapter 6. For the meantime it is necessary to have a look at developments in Zululand and Natal.

IV. IN ZULULAND

The reign of King Mpande (1840-1872) presents an opportunity for a study in collaboration. Modern scholarship recognises some of the collaboration as forms of resistance to white colonialism. In the South African resistance there were many groups which collaborated with the white invaders. Among the Amaxosa, it will have been noted, Chief Ngqika was an ally of the colonial government against the rival Ndlambe and Makana, both of whom were uncompromising opponents of the white invaders. The Amafengu who were 'liberated' from the Amaqcaleka in 1835 remained faithful allies of the white colonists ever since. In Zululand several communities which had been dispersed by Shaka's armies and had taken refuge in the mountains and jungles south of the Tugela regrouped under the protective umbrella of the white traders who settled at Port Natal in the early 1820's. Ever since the 'Natal Natives', as these collaborators came to be called, fought side by side with the whites against the Zulu kingdom. In Trans-Orangia the weaker chiefdoms of Moroka and Sekonyela and loose groups such as the Koras joined every white expedition against Moshoeshoe's Basotho. In all these instances of collaboration the motive does not appear to have been resistance against the white invaders. The collaborators appear to have taken the view that Europeans were less dangerous to their freedom or independence than the stronger African neighbours or rivals. To this extent their collaboration should be seen as a 'protection seeking' one.

The most complex type of collaboration is presented by Amaswazi. We know that they lived in fear of Zulu attack from the south and their collaboration with Europeans against Amazulu is not difficult to understand. Indeed, it is plausible to suggest that their early collaboration with Transvaal Boers was to win Boer alliance against the Amazulu. In this respect the Swazi collaboration resembles that of the 'protection seeking' Collaborators just noted. What is not so clear is the Swazi collaboration with the Boers against the Bapedi Kingdom. The Bepedi appear to have had no aggressive motives towards the Swazi Kingdom. It is tempting to say that the Amaswazi wanted to win Boer goodwill, again as anti-Zulu strategy. But that is less than convincing. It would appear that the Swazi collaboration against the Bapedi was a form of resistance to Boer encroachment. In the early 1840's Mswati claimed that Bapedi were his subjects. He even sold a portion of their land to the Boers and offered to clear it of Bapedi inhabitants so that the Boers would move into an empty land.³²³ In these moves the Swazi rulers appear to have aimed at more than winning Boer friendship. Mswati was clearly 'throwing the Bapedi bone' in order to keep the 'white dogs' away from his own territories. This policy did not, however, produce the desired effect, for white concession-hunting parties continued to exert pressure on Swaziland. Consequently the Swazi leaders signed away nearly all their lands in concessions to the Europeans. Indeed, at one time the Boers of the Transvaal claimed that Amaswazi were their subjects. In the Bapedi-British War of 1879,

323. Smith, K.W.: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History, Vol. 10, 1969 p.238

several months after the Zulu Kingdom was destroyed, the Amaswazi fought side by side with the Europeans and tipped the balance against the Bapedi.

What did the Swazi rulers hope to achieve? Clearly their collaboration had passed from being a 'protection-seeking' one. And, at any rate, the Zulu Kingdom, the source of their fear, had just been destroyed by the British. The Bapedi had never manifested any aggressive intentions towards Swaziland. It seems compelling, in the circumstances, to conclude that the Swazi collaboration was a form of resistance to the whites, first against the Boers and, in its later stages, against the British. In the entire South African resistance during the period being studied here the Amaswazi appear to provide the only example of collaboration as a form of resistance. To the extent that it eventually won the Amaswazi British protectorate status without a shot being fired the policy was a success. But seen in the context of the whole resistance the Swazi collaboration ended, as did military resistance elsewhere in South Africa, in failure. Its negative aspect, of course, cannot be overstated. It gave Europeans succour, sometimes a crucial one, against the primary resistance of the Bapedi.

Even more difficult to classify is King Mpande's position in the South African resistance. Beginning as a fugitive from Zulu justice he allied himself with the Europeans against Dingane and was eventually proclaimed 'King of the Zulus' by the Europeans.

To this extent Mpande's collaboration could be seen as a 'protection-seeking' one. But after he had been proclaimed King of Zululand and it was known that Dingane had been deserted by virtually all his supporters and, eventually, that he had been murdered Mpande had little if anything to fear. Zululand was generally regarded as the strongest African state during this time. This meant that the only external threat to Mpande's position or to the Zulu state could come from the Europeans. But so long as Mpande, their protegee, remained on the Zulu throne the seriousness of white threat was minimal. Internally Mpande's inglorious accession was received with despairing apathy. The Amazulu were demoralised by recent defeat at Blood River (1838) and exhausted by subsequent upheavals which led to the overthrow and murder of Dingane. It was unlikely, therefore, that there could be any serious threat to the King's position within the Zulu state, at any rate, for some time to come.

It is clear from what has been said that Mpande's policy in the period 1841-1872 was not dictated by any fear from either Africans or Europeans and that the policy was ipso facto not the 'protection-seeking' type. Was it one of collaboration and if so what kind of collaboration? The answer to the second part of the question is subsumed in the one to the first part. Mpande's policy towards the Europeans does not lend itself to the interpretation that it was one of collaboration. There is no evidence that at any time during this long reign Mpande rendered assistance to Europeans against any of the resistance groups. It might be argued that

he was never approached and that had any of the white groups asked him Mpande would in all probability have agreed to help. But that is neither here nor there. History is not about what might have happened but about what actually happened. Technically therefore Mpande's policy towards the Europeans was not one of collaboration. Denoon calls it the policy of coexistence. But this is unsatisfactory since coexistence implies equality of status on the part of the two or more coexisting states. If its classical connotations are ignored and the term is used to refer to a 'dependent condition' or existence then 'vassalage' appears to approximate to the condition of Mpande's Kingdom in relation to the whites. In short Mpande was neither collaborating nor coexisting with the white states nor seeking protection from them. Nor was he resisting them. His policy towards the Europeans throughout his reign was one of passive subservience.

During his reign he did next to nothing to strengthen the Zulu army. And although the regiments were not disbanded some degree of laxity occurred within the army. The strict discipline and regimentation created by Shaka and maintained by Dingane laxed during Mpande's rule. The population as whole experienced some respite in contrast to the former regimes. But even here Mpande's reign was anything but recuperation.³²⁴ Some of the communities which had been incorporated into the Kingdom by Shaka seceded and crossed the Tugela River to settle in Natal, thus depleting the kingdom of man-power resources.

324. Dr. D. Denoon: Southern Africa Since 1800, p. 78 suggests that the value of Mpande's reign lay in the fact that it gave Zululand a period of recuperation.

One commendable aspect of Mpande's passive subservience is that there was no war. In economic terms this meant increase in cattle and material wealth. Had this been accompanied by quick and deliberate improvements in the army and other spheres of the State the Amazulu might have been able to withstand the shocks of the 1870's.

The abiding significance of Mpande's passive subservience in the South African resistance lies in the contribution it made to the success of Europeans' military efforts elsewhere. The period from the mid-1840 to 1870 was a turning-point in the history of Europeans' efforts to establish themselves in South Africa. Throughout this period they were engaged in wars of conquest in one or the other of the resistance sectors. On the Amaxosa frontier two bloody wars were fought between 1846 and 1853, the third one being barely averted in 1857. In Trans-Orangia five wars were fought with the whites and natives in the period 1845-1868. In the Transvaal there were no major wars before 1870's but there were skirmishes, sometimes bloody, in the years 1847, 1852, 1854 and 1867. As can be seen these military actions were spread over great expanse of territory and the white forces were dangerously spread thin. Had Zululand, then regarded as the strongest African State in South Africa, thrown its military might on any of the above frontiers a further strain would have been put on the invading forces. But Mpande remained passive and thus gave the Europeans the needed security to concentrate on the weaker states. Ultimately, whether one looks at it from the point of view of Zululand itself or from the point of view of the South African resistance in general, Mpande's

policy was a disaster. Internally it weakened the Zulu State and left it vulnerable to white forces which descended upon it in the 1870's. Externally the policy gave comfort to the white forces at a time when it was disastrous for the resistance cause to do so. When the Europeans turned their attention to Zululand Cetshwayo had had only six years to re-gear the Zulu military machine to war. In conclusion it may be said that collaboration, for whatever reason, represented a basic weakness on the part of the resistance forces, namely inability to transcend traditional feuds and to act together. Collaboration therefore furnishes one of the major explanations why the South African resistance collapsed and Africans were finally subjected to white rule. Collaborators were undoubtedly invaluable: whether in terms of swelling the ranks of the white forces or in providing valuable military information to the invading forces.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGE IN THE POWER STRUCTURE

Before the year 1870 African resistance in South Africa may be said to have been an attempt by Africans to prevent white settlement in the country. As late as 1857 the Amaxosa on the eastern frontier were still hoping to "drive the whitemen into the sea".³²⁵ In Trans-Orangia Moshoeshoe told a meeting (January 1854) of British and Boer officials at Jammersberg Drift that "there was no place for white men in central South Africa".³²⁶ He declared at the same meeting that the Europeans had settled on land that they had stolen from the natives and that henceforth the official boundary between black and white would have to be the Orange River. The message was clear: Moshoeshoe wanted all Europeans out of Trans-Orangia. In the Transvaal Sekhukhuni who ascended to Bapedi throne in 1861 claimed that the whole area between the Limpopo and Vaal rivers was Bapedi territory and that he intended to expand his kingdom to those limits.³²⁷ This meant that the Boers could remain in the Transvaal as his subjects or leave the country. The only area which seemed to give comfort to the Europeans during this period was Zululand under the pusillanimous Mpande. Pursuing his passive subservience policy

325. The cattle-killing of 1857 by the Amaxosa was an attempt to inspire re-dedication and discipline specifically to accomplish this task/purpose.

326. Becker, P. Hill of Destiny, p.194

327. Smith, K.W.: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History, Vol. 10, 1969, pp.240 and 245.

Mpande made no effort to regain the Zulu territory south of the Tsekela River, already, known as Natal. He even ignored the Boer intrusions into Zululand's north-western area which the Boers claimed to be their territory.

Thus, with the exception of Zululand rulers, African leaders before 1870 were still hoping to prevent white settlement in South Africa. The attempt was by no means a hopeless one. The only areas where Europeans appeared to be fairly firmly established were the Cape and Natal colonies. But even here the British imperial factor was still not on sureground. The Amaxosa in the Cape had by and large been conquered but not 'pacified'. The Zulu kingdom was restricted to Tsekela-Pongola rivers area and pusillanimous, but Zulu militarism had not been broken down and it could fall into militant hands at any time. The two British colonies, therefore, were still open to challenge in the period 1840-70. In the interior the Boers of the Orange Free State and Transvaal Republic were even weaker and divided. And within republics Boer communities were disunited and separated by great distances of country. Unlike the coastal colonies of Natal and Cape which had begun to export sugar and wine and wool the Boer republics lacked basic staples which alone could strengthen their political and military position. Their lack of access to the sea deprived them of the necessary contact with their European base and access to the world trade and ensured their continued dependence on the coastal colonies for basic needs such as arms and ammunitions, certain classes of foodstuff

and clothing. In military terms the Boers were vastly out-numbered and surrounded by African communities and, as it had already been noted, Africans were rapidly arming themselves with firearms.

By way of contrast African States had firmer economic base. Africans were experienced cultivators and graziers. They could work the land more efficiently and profitably than the Boers who not only lacked experience in the ecological conditions of the country but also shunned any physical exertion. Also, in spite of the disruptive effects of the missionary societies which had been active since the beginning of the century and several African collaborators, African communities in the 1850's and 60's were still by and large intact. Indeed, the idea of a larger and stronger state embracing all the related fragments appears to have been gaining momentum during this period. It manifested itself during the time of Sandile among the Amaxosa, during the reigns of Moshoeshe and Sekwati and Sekhukhuni among the Basotho. In the light of all these factors African leaders, before 1870, could have reasonably hoped to check white expansion and settlement in South Africa. To that extent their resistance before 1870 may be seen as an attempt to prevent the Europeans from colonising their country.

By 1870, however, the military situation had changed radically. In two of the major zones of resistance Africans had lost their independence. The Amaxosa, though far from being 'pacified' had been subjected to white rule since 1848 and were severely weakened by the 'cattle-killing' of 1857.

In Trans-Orangia the Basotho defeat at the hands of the Boers in 1868 was followed by the proclamation of British rule over Lesotho. The passing of Lesotho independence was accentuated by Moshoeshoe's death in 1870 and the accession to the throne of his less able son, Letsie. In the Transvaal Sekhukhuni had just mounted the throne of a Kingdom that was still in the early stages of formation. It would take a long time before he could be in a position to cope with the new military situation. Cetshwayo was in much the same position. Although the Zulu militarism had never been broken up its vigour had been sapped by thirty years of inactivity during Mpande's reign. The discipline and martial habits of the regiments had deteriorated to an all-time low. Moreover, Mpande had done next to nothing to equip the army with modern weapons and to adapt the Zulu mode of warfare to the changed military situation. All this meant that the new ruler had to reactivate the regiments and prepare them for war with an enemy armed with Gatlings and Maxim guns. As events will show, Cetshwayo had neither the time nor the ability to effect such vast changes. So it was that by 1879 African independence was on the verge of collapse and henceforth Africans would have to struggle to retain what territories they still had under their control in independence rather than to 'drive the white men into the sea'. In other words, henceforth resistance would be to white rule rather than to white intrusion.

The factors which led to this shift in the power structure were many and far-reaching. The most subtle and, perhaps the most destructive of these was the impact of Western Civilisation

on African communities. The first aspect of that civilisation which corroded the vitality of communities operated in the form of trade. It is by no means suggested here that trade in South Africa was introduced by Europeans. There was, and there had always been, trade among Africans long before the coming of Europeans. The point at issue is the quality of the trade in terms of the exchange-rates and the commodities exchanged. The most important commodities Europeans needed from Africans were cattle for beef as well as draught purposes. In addition, of course, the Europeans bought articles of trade such as ivory and ostrich feathers. Technically speaking Africans needed nothing from the Europeans, at least initially. They had learned the art of metallurgy and their blacksmiths could forge the needed tools and weapons. Africans could also provide for their clothing needs from traditional tanneries. Perhaps, and this much later, the only commodities which Africans needed from Europeans and could not manufacture were firearms.

From the first therefore Europeans took steps to convince Africans that their wares were superior and more convenient than local brands. To some extent this argument was valid but the Europeans used it with profit motives rather than any convenience their wares would confer on the African buyer. Nevertheless Africans found it easier and more convenient to buy from Europeans rather than from their own blacksmiths. So it was that the newcomers captured the African market. The effect of this, of course, was to undermine the traditional industries and skills in, for

example, metallurgy, tannery. Once this 'economic coup d'etat' had been accomplished Europeans took the next step that was aimed at widening the market they had thus captured. New needs were created among Africans which brought more and more people into the orbit of the white trader. Commodities such as metals, metal-goods and tools, tinder-boxes, cloth and blankets, were doubtless essential articles which Africans needed. But trifles such as glass-beads, mirrors and debauching liquor-brandy were not indispensable commodities. The important point here is that the commercial sphere dominated by the white trader was vastly expanded.

The seizure and control of the African market by white traders meant that Africans were now exposed to a wide variety of Western tastes and values. It also meant general decline of traditional industries and skills and that African communities could increasingly come to depend on Europeans. This process was speeded up by rates of exchange which were grossly unfavourable to Africans. Trade in those days, as we know, was by barter. For a few trinkets such as beads, mirrors or bangles the white trader could obtain several head of cattle. The readiness of Africans to part with their cattle so cheaply stemmed from the early days of exploration voyages when ship-wrecked sailors used to offer such trinkets for one or two beef animals. But in those days sales at such give-away prices did not hurt African economies since occasions for such sales came once in many years. What Africans failed to appreciate was that they were now dealing with a settler-community which wanted a market-oriented trade with them and that exchange on the old pattern would soon leave them cattleless.

Soon their herds were depleted and an increasing number of Africans entered European service as wage-earners. The push towards European service thus created by unbalanced trade was reinforced by the progressive alienation of African land. So it was that as men became cattleless they also became landless.

The social effects of this 'proletarianisation' of Africans were far-reaching. As men of different tribes, clans and families met in circumstances far-removed from the chiefly authority and the traditional sanctions new ideas and values which were often inimical to the African traditional society took root. Once men began to question the authority of the chief and of the 'witch-doctor' the respectful awe which traditional sanctions and chiefly authority hitherto inspired rapidly declined. By 1870, therefore not only were African economies in ruins but the entire social fabric had been damaged in many places. After 1870 Africans fought when they had to fight. In other words resistance became resistance against white rule rather than to white intrusion.

The second aspect of Western Civilisation which eroded the stability of African states was the work of Christian Missions in South Africa. Since 1800 various Missionary Societies had been active amongst several African communities. Doubtless most of the missionaries played important roles as advisors and scribes to African rulers. But as a general principle Christian Missionaries were not opposed to white rule over Africans. Rather,

while they opposed its harsher aspects the effect of their work was to prepare African communities for its inception. The whole range of African beliefs and practices which they tirelessly worked to abolish were inextricably bound up with political authority and loyalty. For an example, the chief was the political as well as religious head of the community. He was therefore the embodiment of all the social beliefs and the mores of society. Abolition of practices such as lobola or abandonment of beliefs in, for instance, witch-craft, witch-doctors, rain-making, role of ancestors as intermediaries between God and man, etc. had a disturbing effect on the equilibrium of the whole social fabric. For one thing, the respect and awe which attached to the traditional social sanctions tended to decline. For another, some of these institutions were sources of court revenue. Their abolition or abandonment not only deprived the chief of revenue but it also severely diminished his prestige and political authority. Indeed there are known cases where some of the missionaries urged Christian converts to defy the authority of the chief.³²⁸ As Christian Missions gained more and more adherents there was a proportionate loosening of loyalty ties between converts and their communities. By 1870 it could be said that the inside of African societies was worm-eaten and it only needed bold stroke from the outside to expose their hollowness.

The third factor which brought about the shift in power structure was political. This operated in the form of 'Friendship Treaties' with African rulers. Essentially these treaties were European guide-lines as to how the chiefs ought to govern their

328. Du Plessis, J. A History of Christian Missions in South African p.188 Also Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.1 pp.266-267.

people. The treaties were drawn by Europeans and invariably required African rulers to undertake to maintain law and order and to prevent their subjects from attacking white controlled states. More often than not, too, these treaties enjoined African rulers to abandon beliefs in witch-craft and 'the sin of buying wives'. Finally the treaties required African rulers to receive white Government Resident Agents as advisors in their territories.

Clearly the treaties were repugnant to the African way of life and tended to discredit the chiefs in the eyes of their subjects. It was ridiculous to expect the chiefs to support cultural onslaughts against their own societies or to keep their people in order when their lands were being progressively whittled away. In the 1810's Chief Ngqika lost popularity precisely because he attempted to enforce a treaty that was inimical to Amaxosa interests. In Lesotho Moshoeshe, though he never lost control of them, had constant trouble with militants who thought he was too tame with the Europeans. In Zululand Mpande consistently resisted popular pressure for a more militant policy towards the Europeans, especially the Boers who were intruding into the north-western part of the kingdom. These instances attest to the fact that white-conceived treaties and similar political arrangements often detracted from the respectability and authority of African rulers.³²⁹

329. In the case of Ngqika the treaty led to civil war in 1818-1819. In Lesotho chief Poshuli and to some extent Moorosi and Moletsane were often critical of Moshoeshe's policies towards Europeans.

This assault on the political authority of African rulers was reinforced by the system of Resident Agents who were appointed, ostensibly, to take charge of Europeans resident in African territories and to 'advise' African rulers in the arts of 'civilised' government. In effect the very principle underlying this arrangement tended to undermine the authority of African rulers. Offenders against African law and custom often sought the intervention of these political Agents. The system tended to undermine the authority of African rulers in yet another sense. Europeans (some of them of doubtful characters) who resided in African-controlled territories were not justiciable to the authority of the chiefs. Since the offences which they often committed were against the authority of the chief, the latter's disability to try and punish them in accordance with the law tended to diminish his authority and power in the eyes of his subjects. In due course some of the Resident Agents virtually assumed magisterial powers over and above the chief, overruling his judicial decisions. Commencing in the mid-1830's by 1870 the system had eroded much of the prestige and authority that the chiefs had hitherto enjoyed and substituted European ideas of government.

Finally, there was the less obvious aspect of Western Civilisation which involved travellers or explorers, hunters, adventurers or land speculators as well as renegades and deserters. Europeans of all these classes, of course, might not have sought to push forward any deliberately conceived system of Government.

But they were agents of a civilisation that could not coexist with traditional African social systems. Explorers, for example, often exchanged ideas with African rulers and in the course of such conversations they addressed the chiefs in a manner much less befitting to a chief, sometimes in the presence of the chiefs subjects. Sometimes the travellers talked to ordinary subjects of the chief about European ideas of government which tended to tamper with the age-old loyalties of such subjects to their chiefs and communities. At another level adventurers and deserters often looked at African social institutions with contempt and refused to conform. The cumulative effect of these seemingly insignificant occurrences was to 'open the eyes' of the chiefs' subjects to what may be called real or imagined social 'injustices' or 'oppressions'. By 1870 such inroads on the African social values had shaken patterns of loyalty and faith in African social institutions to a point where the chiefs could no longer count on hundred per cent loyalty of their people.

By the year 1870, therefore, African communities had been battered from all sides. Economically they had lost much of their wealth in cattle and land. Culturally they had been subjected to severe onslaughts of Western civilisation with the result that they had lost much of the substance in them. Politically much of the chiefly authority had been systematically drained away by military defeats and white political Agents who virtually established the system of indirect rule over some of the African communities. In short, by the beginning of the 1870's the whole

equilibrium of African societies had been disturbed. As the resistance entered the 1870's Africans were on the defensive and, as the next chapter will show, with little hope of success.

The already weak position of African states noted in the preceding paragraphs was made even weaker by economic and technological developments of the 1870's. The discovery of diamonds near the confluence of the Vaal and Orange rivers in 1867 was an event that in normal political atmosphere³³⁰ should have been a cause for happiness to all sections of the population in Trans-Orangia or even to South Africa as a whole. But in an atmosphere where two racial groups were contesting the ownership or control of the country the discovery assumed dimensions of unusual proportions. The question was not how much wealth the exploitation of the mineral would bring to the people of South Africa but rather which racial group would monopolise the benefits of the new wealth. Clearly, the group which could monopolise the benefits of the discovery would strengthen its position in the contest for the control of the country.

As has already been shown, in 1870, at the time when the full significance of the discovery was being felt, Africans were no longer in a position to effectively influence events and to assert their own claims against Europeans. In the

330. A tendency still persists that racial discrimination in South Africa began with mining industry. See. D. Denoon: Southern Africa Since 1800. p.138

competition for the control of the newly-found wealth they found themselves at particularly serious disadvantage. Although they had worked metals such as iron and copper before, diamond was entirely new to them and it took some time before they could appreciate the commercial and economic value of the metal. Meanwhile European fortune-seekers from both inside and outside South Africa grabbed all, establishing the 'Diggers Republic' amidst frantic claims by the Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, the South African Republic, the Batlhaping and the Griquas. Secondly, Africans were not familiar with the technological requirements involved in the exploitation of the new mineral. This meant that for some time they would have to depend on Europeans' technological skills. But in the cut-throat competition that ensued, and because of the racial discriminatory practices that had become a tradition in South Africa Africans were soon relegated to the position of menial workers. They were kept in this position partly by the fact that they were unfamiliar with conditions and practices in the large scale industrial organisations elsewhere in the world, and partly by the application of the whites' racial policies which in due course received legislative recognition. While Africans could not, therefore, organise themselves into something like a trade union movement, the unskilled and semi-skilled white workers, who had the experience and the techniques of pressurising employers in Europe, struck working relationships with the owning and management groups through industrial action. The total effect of this situation was to restrict the benefits of the mineral discoveries to few white owners and workers in particular and to the white

communities of South Africa in general. Africans remained on the periphery of immense wealth only as sources of cheap labour at starvation wages.

The military advantage which this wide economic disparity conferred on the white-controlled states cannot be over-emphasised. In terms of numbers the white population was tremendously increased by fortune-hunters who poured into South Africa in their thousands. Griqualand hitherto inhabited by a few hundred of Griquas had within few years a population of 45,000, 15,000 of whom were whites.³³¹ Financially the monopoly of the new mineral wealth gave the Europeans immense buying and borrowing power. They could now afford to buy larger quantities of arms and ammunitions. They could also provision and maintain larger numbers of fighting men in the battlefield for longer periods. Roads and railways could now be built or extended for speedy transport of men to resistance zones. From the point of view of African resistance to the Europeans, therefore, the white monopoly of the mineral wealth further tilted the military balance in favour of the Europeans. The already impoverished economies of African states were subjected to further onslaughts by 'big finance' and development of European industry and towns to which Africans increasingly flocked to work for wages. Legal restrictions apart, therefore, African states found it difficult to purchase firearms. The prohibitive prices at which gun-smugglers offered their outmoded and defective muskets further ruined African economies.

The second post-1870 development which finally sealed the fate of African states was developments in military technology

331. Wilson, M.& Thompson, L.M. (ed.) Oxford History of South Africa, Vol.2. p. 11

in Europe. During the 1860's and 1870's, due to improvements in the military technology that was taking place in Europe, more sophisticated weapons were being produced. White armies were being equipped with percussion rifles and heavier long-range artillery guns such as the howitzers, maxims, Gatlings, etc. By the mid-1860's the Orange Free State Boers were armed with breech-loading rifles as well as Whitworth and Armstrong cannon. At the beginning of the 1870's all white armies in South Africa were equipped with Enfield rifles, Snider Enfields, and Whitworth rifles, all of them breech-loaders.

Meanwhile Africans, who had no direct contact with the European base, continued to depend on the out-dated flint-lock muskets which smugglers sold to them at prohibitive prices. As Tylden has pointed out, while the armies of the world were being re-equipped with percussion-lock muskets their (European armies) old flint-locks were flooding the markets, that is, African markets.³³² As early as 1834 the traveler Andrew Smith remarked that the traders were taking advantage of the Africans' ignorance to sell them guns of very poor quality. "Throughout the whole country", he pointed out, "we observed that the firearms found in the hands of the natives were of the basest description and almost useless".³³³

332. Tylden, G.: The Rise of the Basuto p. 36

333. Atmore, A. and Sanders, P.: Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol. 12. 1971, p.537

Although in the 1870's a few of the African soldiers were in possession of percussion rifles and in some cases, a cannon or two, Smith's remark continued to be valid throughout the South African resistance. It was even more so in the late seventies when the white government tightened their regulations aimed at preventing Africans from acquiring firearms.³³⁴ What percussion rifles Africans obtained illegally from smugglers and white employers as wages could not have been sufficient to bridge the military gap that existed between them and the Europeans. In 1865, with reference to Free State - Lesotho War (1865-68) Joseph Orpen observed that "an infinite superiority in weapons and ammunition is what makes the Boers victorious".³³⁵

From what has been said above it is clear that in the 1870's military odds were heavily against Africans. It is true African states were making admirable effort to bring about parity in weapons between them and Europeans. But this effort was made nugatory by other factors, often overlooked by historians, whose total effect made Africans more vulnerable to European fire-power. First, the fact that the firearms were obtained under extremely difficult conditions meant that they could not have been in sufficient quantities to go round African troops. Second, by far the greatest quantity of such arms as reached them were out-moded and defective. These were dangerous since they gave Africans false confidence that they were as equally armed as the enemy

334. Atmore, A. & Sanders, P.: Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol. 12, 1971 pp 542 (Peace Preservation Act of 1878, Cape Colony).

335. Atmore, A. & Sanders, P.: Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol. 12, 1971, p.541

and led them to expose themselves to Europeans' long-range and more efficient rifles. Third the few breech-loaders which fell into the hands of Africans were often too sophisticated for the African soldier to fire with any real accuracy. Partly because of this and partly because of lack of practice Africans' firing was often wild. African armies suffered from chronic shortage of ammunition and gun-powder. This severely limited their opportunities for practice. Hence their limited understanding of the sophisticated weapons and bad marksmanship. Fourth, whites' acquisition of long-range artillery guns such as the howitzers and Gatlings and Maxims effectively destroyed the advantages of the mountain strategy hitherto used by Africans. Mountain fortresses could now be shelled and great destruction wrought at long distances.

From what has been said in this chapter it is evident that the change in the power structure against Africans resulted from three major factors, namely, the impact of Western civilisation, the Europeans monopoly of the newly discovered mineral wealth and improved military technology which occurred in Europe. The first factor, Western Civilisation, had been operating within African communities since the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the 1870's the entire social, economic and political life of African communities had been battered out of shape. Many Africans had been converted to the Christian faith and had become disaffected with the mores of their traditional society. Many more had been impoverished and drawn into the orbit of European economy where they became dependent on

wages for a living. Politically Europeans had been systematically 'stealing'³³⁶ or draining away the authority and power of the chiefs through the system of treaties and Resident Agents. This was particularly the case in Trans-Orangia and among the Amaxosa on the Cape eastern frontier. The second factor, the white monopoly of the newly-found mineral wealth, gave the Europeans strong economic base. The discovery attracted white immigrants and big finance from all over the world, thus boosting white numerical strength and increasing their borrowing and purchasing power. This enabled them to finance large scales military operations against Africans. Finally, improvements in military technology which occurred in Europe in the 'sixties and 'seventies led to the production of more sophisticated and efficient weapons. These speedily replaced the muzzle-loaders in the European markets. Since Europeans in South Africa had direct access to the European base their armies were soon equipped with breech-loading rifles and more powerful artillery guns such as the Maxims, howitzers, Gatlings and 24-pounders. Meanwhile the African states were 'fed' with the out-moded and defective flint-locks which made them easy targets of their adversaries. The arms restriction policies of white governments made it difficult for Africans to acquire the latest and more efficient models of firearms. Consequently, it was with forlorn hope that African resistance entered the 1870's. The next chapter makes this clear.

336. The method of this political theft is fully stated by J.S. Galbraith: Reluctant Empire, p.118. The process must be "gradual and gentle". The chiefs must not "be startled at the outset, - or their eyes be opened to the future consequences of the process, - until by its advancing force, - when they do, at length, discover all its influence, - they shall have no longer any power to be effectually restive".

CHAPTER 6'PACIFICATION' AND THE IMPOSITION OF WHITE RULE

The final drama of African resistance in South Africa was played under particularly difficult circumstances. In addition to the weakened position of the Africans outlined in the preceding chapter the resisters had to contend with a new and aggressive British imperial factor. The discovery of diamonds in Trans-Orangia in 1867 had changed the British attitude of the 1850's that the governance of extensive regions in South Africa was a profitless burden on the British tax-payer. South Africa was no longer regarded merely as a British sphere of influence. Strong economic motives argued for effective colonisation of the entire area under British rule. At the time of the discovery the British were effectively established in the Colony of Natal and in Cape Colony which included, in the north, the whole area south of the Orange River and, in the east, all Amaxosa territories up to the Kei River. By the beginning of the 1870's they were established in Griqualand West (through annexation) and in Lesotho (by 'invitation'). By the early 1870's the British were thinking of bringing all South African territories (colonies, republics and African states) into a political confederation under British imperial umbrella. From the point of view of African resistance this new development was anything but a blessing. It brought Africans face to face with a world power which could deploy greater resources on a scale the like of which they had never seen before against them.

The new British imperialism in South Africa therefore, made African resistance in the final phase hopeless.

Nevertheless imperial officials were aware that there were serious difficulties in the way of their confederation scheme. For one thing the republican Boers, jealous of their hard-won independence and by and large resentful of British rule, were unlikely to accept the idea of confederation with the British colonies, let alone the British imperial overlordship. For another, there were African states which though weak had not yet been conquered and which still regarded themselves as independent. It was a matter of considerable doubt whether they would willingly surrender their independence and be brought into a confederation dominated by whites without resistance. Moreover, at the time when the idea of confederation was being pushed forward African rulers were frantically equipping their armies with firearms. It was clear that they intended to defend their territories and their independence.

Two ways were open for the British to deal with African states. One was to treat their rulers as sovereign rulers on the same level as Boer leaders and negotiate the confederation with them as such. The other was to use military force to destroy their independence and then subject them to white rule. The first course raised political difficulties. Assuming that African rulers would agree to bring their territories into the proposed confederation they would naturally insist on being accorded the same statuses as the white colonies and republics. In a racial

atmosphere of South Africa this, of course, would have been unacceptable to both the British and Boers. The second course would kill two birds with one stone. While Africans would be brought into the confederation as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' their subjugation would tend to propitiate Boers who were determined to maintain 'proper relationship between Master and Servant'. Military conquest, therefore, seemed the best way of dealing with the African states.

Once imperial officials, both in South Africa and in London, were convinced of the necessity of this course preparations for the destruction of African states got under way. The first logical step, of course, was to enforce the existing arms restriction regulations concerning Africans more rigorously and to disarm them of any firearms already in their possession. The urgency of disarming Africans and of preventing them from further acquisition of firearms was pressed upon imperial officials and Boer leaders by the rate at which they (Africans) were arming themselves. But both disarmament and prevention of Africans from further acquisition of firearms were bound to encounter serious difficulties. For one thing, African leaders who still considered themselves as sovereign rulers of their own people and who were not parties to arms restriction laws being enforced, were certain to resist any attempts to disarm their people. Moreover the ascendancy of imperial factor and talk of white confederation excited fears that the white people were about to club against Africans.³³⁷ These fears made it

337. De Kiewiet, C.W.: The Imperial Factor

all the more necessary for Africans to cling to their weapons and to step up efforts to acquire more. For another, the new mining and railway construction industries were in desperate need of African cheap labour, and Africans insisted that they would only provide that labour on condition that they were paid their wages in firearms. The industrialists who were more interested in financial profits than in political issues had no alternative but to bow to the labour demands in defiance of the regulations of their own governments. Africans from all over South Africa flocked to the mining fields and returned to their homes carrying guns and gun-powder. Imperial officials and white governments also found it difficult to prevent smugglers from supplying Africans with firearms.

In spite of these difficulties and risks the British colonial authorities went ahead with their disarmament programme. Resistance to this measure was led by Amahlubi under the redoubtable leadership of Langalibalele. The occasion for the outbreak of hostilities was the Natal Government's attempts to disarm Langalibalele's army. Natal was a British Colony and the government presumed suzerainty over Amahlubi who were settled to the far-west, on the eastern slopes of the Drakensberg. Chief Langalibalele on the other hand did not consider the Amahlubi as the subjects of the colonial government or his position and authority as subordinate to anyone else. Accordingly when Natal authorities circulated orders to the effect that all firearms possessed by his people should be registered the Chief ignored them. Towards the end of 1873 Governor Pine sent

messengers to Langalibalele with instructions that the Chief should appear in person at Pietermaritzburg. Langalibalele berated the messengers and chased them back with no indication whether or not he would comply with the gubernatorial order. Governor Pine, taking the chief's treatment of his messengers as a slight on his authority, led a punitive expedition of about 6,500 men against the Amahlubi. Langalibalele retreated over the Drakensberg into Lesotho; but on the way his troops clashed with a detachment of Pine's expeditionary force, killing five of the Government troops. Thereupon Pine destroyed all Amahlubi settlements and appealed to the Cape authorities for assistance. Langalibalele and his followers were pursued across the mountains into Lesotho where he was betrayed by Molapo, Moshoeshe's son, and captured. The chief was returned to Natal where, after a sham trial in which Pine sat as a judge, he was convicted and sentenced to banishment on Roben Island.

The significance of Langalibalele episode in the South African resistance does not lie in its scandalous course nor in the injustice of the chief's subsequent trial. The issue was not whether the chief should have the firearms in possession of his people registered or not. Rather it was whether the British had authority to order him to do so. The British, of course, believed that they did. But Langalibalele maintained that he was a sovereign ruler of his people and that his authority was subordinate to no one else. In this he reflected the views of many other African rulers on the issue of their relationship

with white-controlled states, including the Basotho and partially subjected Amangqika and Amandlambe. Langalibalele episode was therefore something of an eye-opener to all of these rulers. Without exception they were either in possession of firearms or in the process of acquiring them. They saw no reason why Amahlubi should be required to have their weapons registered nor, if they refused, why they should be attacked and their homes burnt down and their land confiscated. To them Langalibalele's defiance was a legitimate defence of his political authority and Hlubi independence. Once they saw it in this light Langalibalele affair assumed alarming proportions. It seemed to confirm their suspicions that there was a white plot to destroy their independence and confiscate their territories. Though the opening years of the 1870's witnessed general rearming by African states there can be little doubt that Langalibalele affair made them redouble their efforts.

Even as Langalibalele drama was being played out Sekhukhuni whose Pedi Kingdom had been menaced by Boers since the reign of his father, Sekwati, was carrying out limited military operations against the Boers. He was determined to expel them out of the Transvaal before they could entrench themselves. He could not, however, launch full scale attack on them as this would involve his troops in pitched battles in the open. He was aware of the fact that although his troops vastly outnumbered the enemy they could not withstand concentrated white fire-power.

Consequently he stepped up sporadic raids on Boer farms in which his men destroyed crops, seized stock and burned down Boer homes. The object was that the Boers would be forced either to decamp or call out a commando to attack his fortress. It was his basic tactic to engage in defensive action on ground of his choosing, at this time, Mosega, in the inaccessible Lulu Mountains. As the Bapedi incursions escalated the Boers in the Lydenburg district were alarmed and they appealed to their government to give them protection. The Republican Government responded by declaring war on Bapedi on May 16, 1876. A commando was assembled and dispatched to Mosega. This was precisely what Sekhukhuni had wanted. He mustered his main force, well armed with muskets, at the Royal capital. At the same time loose detachments were sent to operate in small parties behind the enemy lines. Their instructions were to attack the undefended farms, destroy crops and homesteads and seize cattle. This, Sekhukhuni had calculated, would have a doubly demoralising effect: it would threaten to cut off the commando from the home base and at the same time make the Boers feel that their duty lay at home and not at Mosega. Meanwhile at the capital itself they would meet with the stiffest opposition.

The commando proceeded with little opposition, capturing minor Bapedi fortresses on its way. By the time it reached Mosega, news had been received that Boer farms had been attacked and that their families and properties were in serious danger. Some of the Boers deserted while others refused to obey

orders from their officers. Nonetheless commando operations continued and on August 3, 1876 the Boers attempted to storm Mosega, the main stronghold. They were subjected to such fusillade from well fortified Bapedi positions that many of them took cover and refused to advance. A small detachment, forty strong, advanced but was easily repulsed by well directed Bapedi fire. Next day the commando retreated, leaving Sekhukhuni's power intact. The Bapedi victory caused alarm throughout the white populations in South Africa and Britain. It was feared that it would inspire rebellions among the black populations throughout the country. Barkley, Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner to South Africa, dispatched a telegram to London which while undoubtedly exaggerated the gravity of the situation was nevertheless expressive of the mood of the Europeans in South Africa. Barkley reported that Republican forces had been completely routed and that Sekhukhuni was pursuing them in full force.³³⁸

In fact the Boers had merely retreated to some strategic points within Sekhukhuni's territory where they built forts to guard all the approaches from Mosega. The forts were manned by Boer volunteers and were intended to prevent Bapedi farmers from cultivating the fields and sowing crops. Barkley's exaggerated report was intended to persuade the British Government to give him 'Carte blanche' to annex Transvaal on the pretext that the Boers had lost control of the natives there. By the beginning of 1877 Bapedi were starving and Sekhukhuni was forced to agree to a peace treaty with President Burgers of the South African Republic.

338 Full text of the telegram is to be found in C.F. Goodfellow: Great Britain and South African Confederation p. 114.

According to the Boer version of the treaty Sekhukhuni agreed to become a subject of the Republican government and to pay a fine of 2,000 herd of cattle. Sekhukhuni on the other hand said that he had agreed to pay the said fine but denied that he had agreed to become subject of the Boer government.³³⁹ It would appear that neither the Pedi Monarch nor the Republican authorities took any trouble to define their terms. President Burgers we know, was in a hurry to have the treaty ratified so that he could confront the British with formidable evidence countering Barkley's claims that his (Burgers's) government had lost control of the situation in the Transvaal. Sekhukhuni on the other hand was equally in a hurry, but for a different reason. He wanted Burgers to remove the Boer volunteers from his territory so that his people might come down from their mountain fortresses and work the fields. In all probability the Boers who drafted the treaty explained the terms of the document without worrying whether Sekhukhuni grasped their implications or whether he accepted their provisions. Later one of the members of the Boer delegation to the peace treaty stated that Sekhukhuni had accepted all the articles but that he had raised objections to the one that sought to make him subject of the Republican government.³⁴⁰ As the King signed the treaty he was probably under the impression that the objectionable article had been removed.

The treaty between Sekhukhuni and the Boers was signed in February 1877. Two months later, in April, the British, in

339. Smith, K.W.: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History, Volume 10, 1969, p.243.

340. Ibid.

pursuance of the confederation scheme, annexed the Transvaal. Although Theophilus Shepstone who hoisted the Union Jack at Pretoria claimed that his action had been popularly approved, in fact there was a small but influential group led by Paul Kruger and A.P.J. Jorissen which opposed the annexation. The rest of the Boers were at best apathetic. Nevertheless the Republican Boers were too weak and impoverished to challenge Shepstone's 25-man military police that escorted him. So the annexation stood.

Bapedi opinion regarding the annexation was never sought. Sekhukhuni who had apparently been made to believe that Shepstone was in favour of his resistance to the South African Republic suddenly found himself on a collision course against the British. In actual fact the imperial officials wanted Bapedi to harass President Burgers government so that they could vindicate the claim that South African Republic was unable to control the natives and therefore dangerous to the security of the entire South Africa. This argument would provide them with the much needed pretext for annexing the Transvaal. The annexation not only destroyed the basis of Sekhukhuni's policy³⁴¹ but it also dashed what hopes there were of ridding the Transvaal of all white men. The British were by far greater foes than Boers whom Sekhukhuni had hoped to contain if not expel from the area. Consequently he began to fish for allies. Paradoxically enough he began to court Boer friendship. His calculations were not entirely wild. The Boers' traditional resentment towards

341. That policy was to play the Boers off against the British and vice versa. See below.

the 'Rooi Nekke' and their bitterness following the annexation appeared to make anti-British friendship or even alliance probable. President Burgers, however, was not the right man to negotiate such a detent with. He had strong leanings towards the Cape and to the British. Nonetheless Sekhukhuni proceeded with his good-will overtures. Henceforth, he instructed his men, the Boer farmers and their property were not to be molested. Only farmers of British origin were to be attacked and their property seized or destroyed. The Republican authorities noted the hint but refused to rally.

Meanwhile the new British Transvaal Administrator Theophilus Shepstone, who had inadequate military force at Pretoria, was aware of the possible combination of Bapedi and Boers against his authority. He quickly drove a wedge between them by inheriting the Boer quarrels against Sekhukhuni. He began by informing Sekhukhuni that Bapedi were now British subjects and that they would have to pay taxes. He further told the Bapedi Monarch that the 2,000 head of cattle he was required by the February treaty to pay to the Republican Government would have to be paid to the new Administration. There can be little doubt that this had the effect of placating the Boers who must have been pleased to see their apparently invincible enemy humbled. Sekhukhuni was not ready for war, but he had no intention to submit to the British without a struggle. He temporised. He told Shepstone that he would comply with all the terms imposed on him. Thus assured of peace Shepstone

disbanded the Boer volunteers at Forts Weber and Burgers and stationed Resident Agents at the posts (June 1877).

Transvaal was not the only area which troubled the Europeans during this period. While Sekhukhuni and Shepstone were assessing each other's strength and steadying themselves for the impending struggle the Amaxosa on the eastern frontier of the Cape colony were once more restive. As early as 1873 they were reported to have taken a lively interest in the proceedings against Langalibalele's Amahlubi, and that a force of F.A.M.P. had to be sent to keep them quiet. The traditional view that the 1877-78 War developed from a beer drinking quarrel is misleading. The Amaxosa were merely giving vent to their deep feeling of grievance over loss of land. The Amafengu who were attacked initially at a wedding ceremony were settled on Gcalekaland³⁴² on no justification other than the fact that they were proteges of the Cape colonial government. The Amagcaleka who regarded them as inheritable traitors did not recognise the land on which they (Amafengu) were settled as part of the colonial territory. The cause for the attack clearly lay in what the Amafengu represented rather than in the naive claim that Amagcaleka were refused beer.³⁴³

With the 1877-78 war the Amaxosa alone, of all the resistance groups in South Africa, had had a full century of

342. Ayliff, J.: History of the Abambo. p.51. Also Macmillan, W.M.: Bantu Boer and Briton, p.149 note 2.

343. Ayliff, J.: History of the Amambo, p.63.

conflict with the Europeans. During that period they had lost practically all their lands and independence. Theoretically the Amagcaleka were still independent and the official boundary between them and Cape Colony was the Kei River. The Amangqika of 'British Kaffraria' were 'British subjects'. In practice, however, the Kei formed no definitive boundary. As already hinted above, parts of Gcalekaland had been cut and allotted to Amafengu. Europeans, whether missionaries, traders or ordinary residents crossed the official boundary and settled freely in Gcalekaland. Cape government appointed white magistrates, ostensibly to supervise the white residents in the area. In actual fact these officials extended their authority to various native groups, including the supposedly independent Amagcaleka. The chiefs chafed at the loss of their authority. There was acute shortage of land. Poverty had become wide-spread and many Amaxosa were compelled to enter white service to earn a living. The cumulative effect of all these was to sharpen a sense of grievance and of injustice nursed by Amaxosa over the loss of their territories which once extended from the Gamtoos to Mbashee rivers. The 1877-78 uprising was but one of the many earlier attempts to "drive the white men into the sea". The attack at a wedding ceremony on the Amafengu by Amagcaleka was an opening offensive in a war primarily against the Europeans.

Initial hostilities broke out in the area around Butterworth. About a 1000-strong Gcaleka force commanded by Mapasa attacked a neighbouring Fengu settlement, destroyed property and seized cattle (August 1877). There-upon Governor Bartle

Frere dispatched 100 Frontier Armed & Mounted Police in support of Amafengu. The military police pitched camp on Guadana Hill where they were joined by detachments of Amafengu levies, bringing the total strength of the colonial force to about 2,000 men. The force was armed with Snider rifles and supported by one artillery gun. On September 26, 1877, a force of about 3,000 Amagcaleka troops under the command of Sigcau and Khiva advanced on the enemy camp. They were indifferently armed with flint-lock muzzle loaders and assegais. Within the first few rounds of the fighting the enemy's only field gun was knocked out of action. This unnerved colonial troops who turned and fled, leaving at least one officer and six white troops dead. Guadana Hill was within earshot of Ibeka, the main colonial camp where the routed F.A.M.P. and Amafengu levies fell back. The camp was weakly defended and had Sigcau and Khiva pursued the enemy it is possible that they might have carried all before them.³⁴⁵ In the event, however, Amagcaleka retired and thus gave the enemy a breathing space to regroup and to strengthen their defences at Ibeka. One of the major factors which led to Africans' final undoing was their failure to follow up their successes and to turn enemy defeats into disasters.

345. One of the British soldiers defending Ibeka camp states: "We were kept under arms all night, lying down by the guns. If the Kaffirs had only then advanced in numbers, as they did six days later, they would have taken guns, slaughter-cattle, ammunition, and everything else, but luckily they did not, or the writer would probably have not been alive to tell his tale," Moodie, D.F.C. The History of the Battles & Co. In Southern Africa Vol.2, pp.159-160

It was not until October 2 that Sarrili moved against Ibeka. The place was fortified with earth-works and defended by 2200 men supported by three Seven-pounders and several rocket tubes. The Gcaleka force, some 7000 infantry and 2000 cavalry, was still under the command of Sigcau. His instructions from Paramount Sarrili were explicit and reveal the extent and objective of the war: "Destroy all the Fingoes, and on your way drive those troublesome policemen (i.e. the British military police at Ibeka) away. I don't like the sight of their tents, it disturbs me. You can breakfast at Ibeka, have dinner at Butterworth, and you will be then well on your way for the Komgha (within the colony) and the colony where you will be joined by your friends"³⁴⁶ (i.e. the Amangqika, Amandlambe, Amagqumukwebe, etc). Two significant points emerge from these purely military orders. The first is that the Amaxosa who lived to the west of the Kei and were now regarded by the colonial authorities as British subjects were privy to the uprising and were prepared to participate actively. The second point is that the object of the uprising was the Colony. The Amaxosa had not abandoned the hope that they might still "drive the white men into the sea". These points make it clear that the war did not begin simply as a drunken brawl. It was premeditated and planned by the two sections of the Amaxosa.

At about 10, 0'clock on the morning of October 2 General Sigcau attacked Ibeka in great force. But the attack was destined to fail. The Europeans were to prove once more the futility of mass attempt to take their strongly fortified positions

346. Ibid. p. 163

by storm. When the Gcaleka cavalry appeared within 2000 yards of the Ibeka fort the defenders brought their artillery guns into action. For six hours Gcaleka troops tried to storm the fort, but they were repelled by steady European fire power.. Their flint-lock musket shots were wild in aim and short in range. At about 5.00 p.m. General Sigcau called off the attack, having suffered about 500 killed and wounded. Next day he made another attempt but soon realised that his antiquated flintlocks and assegais were no match to the enemy's Snider rifles and artillery guns. From this point the Amagcaleka fell on the defensive. Governor Frere rushed reinforcements of regulars and volunteers from Cape Town to the scene of fighting. The entire colonial force now moved against Sarrili's Royal residence. The capital was defended by few detachments of troops who fired few wild shots and fled. The main Gcaleka force had escorted the Paramount Chief towards the mouth of Mbashee River. After flushing out the Gcaleka stragglers colonial troops made a triumphal entry into the capital and burnt it down.

Meanwhile the main Gcaleka force had returned from the Mbashee and, on the second day after the burning of the Royal capital, had a light brush with the enemy in which they killed eleven of the enemy troops at the cost of seven men to themselves. From this point (December 2, 1877) the resisters adopted guerrilla strategy and became ubiquitous. A small unit commanded by Khiva even crossed the Kei into the Colony to link up with Sandile's troops who by this time had also

joined in the fighting. As usual the resisters vastly outnumbered the European force. But because the latter were better armed, in most engagements Amaxosa suffered heavier losses. Nonetheless the Amaxosa generalised the war and the British Government had to send reinforcements from London. A force of nearly 200 men equipped with a battery of seven-pounder guns and two Gatlings was landed at East London early in 1878. The colonists now strengthened their fort at Ibeka and established another at Quintana, some 22 miles away. Initially the colonial commanders did not know whether Amaxosa would attack Ibeka or Quintana. Hence they placed a mobile unit half-way between the two points, ready to rush to whichever of the posts was attacked.

One of the major problems the resistance leaders had to contend with was military intelligence. In all sectors of resistance Europeans had native allies or collaborators. Spies from these groups could easily infiltrate the resistance movements unidentified, secure valuable information and slip back to the colonial side where they passed on the information to European officers. This point was forcefully put forward by Moshoeshoe in February 1868 with reference to his war with the Free State: "The Boers have for servants and spies so many natives that they know all the roads and paths up the mountains,"³⁴⁷ and all his troops' movements, Moshoeshoe might well have added.

347. Atmore, A.: The Passing of Sotho Independence in L.M. Thompson (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa, p.285. note 12.

On the eastern frontier during the operations we are discussing the colonial officers soon obtained the intelligence from such spies that Amaxosa intended to attack Quintana. Some units from Ibeka and the mobile unit were now moved to Quintana to strengthen that post. Trenches were dug right round the hill on which the camp stood and ammunition dumped at short intervals round the trenches. The basic weapons of the colonists were breech-loaders, Sniders and Martini-Henrys. The artillery battery ranged from Seven to twenty-four - pounders, Armstrong cannon and Gatlings.

Clearly the camp was heavily fortified and strongly defended. But the Amaxosa found it extremely difficult to penetrate the military intelligence of their adversaries. All the collaborating or 'loyal' natives were issued with colonial passes and any native who was not in possession of such pass was apprehended as a spy.³⁴⁸ Consequently the resistance leaders, without the necessary information regarding the disposition of enemy, were unable to appreciate the military strength of the camp. They flung their whole might against the fort and were mowed by rifle and artillery fire (February 7 1878). After an hour of fighting the Amaxosa retreated, leaving about 300 killed and wounded. The colonists suffered only 3 killed and 7 wounded.³⁴⁹ Meanwhile another battle was being fought at Kentani, where about 5000 Amaxosa troops surrounded a British

348. Moodie, D.F.C. History of the Battles & Co. in Southern Africa, Vol. 2. p.178

349. Ibid. p.181

camp. There, as in other engagements elsewhere, the resistance forces were repulsed by heavy guns with loss.

After this battle the resisters retreated into the mountains and bushes and continued to harass the enemy. But they were short of food and ammunition. Some of the resisters surrendered themselves to the enemy in order to obtain passes which entitled them to the treatment given to 'loyal natives'. After some period of rest and good feeding they slipped out.³⁵⁰ It would appear that this kind of 'surrender' was carried out in turns. As for ammunition the resisters had to depend on what amounts they could seize from the enemy and such occasions were rare and the quantities insignificant. Nevertheless these make-shift efforts enabled the resisters to hold out and to engage the enemy at few more battles. In the last of these battles, at Pirie Bush near Kingwilliamstown, colonial troops failed to dislodge a small force of resisters that had occupied the Bush there under Chief Sandile. General Thesiger (later Lord Chelmsford) with a mixed force of 10,700 men had to besiege the Bush for several weeks in order to starve the resisters to submission. Even in this extremity Chief Sandile and one or two principal leaders refused to surrender and were shot by Thesiger's men in a cave where they had taken refuge. Chief Seyolo, the principal resistance leader of the Amandlambe, was also killed by Thesiger's troops in a separate engagement.

350. Ibid p.178

Other minor chiefs were captured by the enemy. Paramount Chief Sarrili who had been moved from the fighting zone to Mbashee River region was ordered to be brought dead or alive, with a reward of £1,000 on his head.³⁵¹ But all efforts to capture him failed. He subsequently gave himself up to the enemy. Thus ended the 1877-78 Anglo-Amaxosa War. It was the last 'battle' in the 'Hundred Years War' between the Amaxosa and Europeans and although the former were not pacified they were practically conquered and subjected to white rule.

Even before surrender by Amaxosa on the eastern frontier was completed Southern Batswana, supported by groups of Griquas and Koras, were up in arms against the British. Batlhaping and Barolong who occupied the area northward of Griqualand West (British Territory since 1871) were not British subjects. Keate's arbitration which awarded the disputed diamondiferous area to the Griquas in 1871 resulted not only in the rejection of their claims but also in the loss of parts of their territories. As if to add fuel to the fire the British having subsequently annexed Griqualand West now proceeded to meddle with the order of chieftancy and chiefly authority in southern Botswana. A minor Batlhaping chief, Mankurwane, was placed above his hereditary senior, Batlhasitse Gasebonwe, and described as Paramount chief of the Batlhapi Gasebonwe already nursing a grievance over the lost Batlhaping lands now came to a conclusion that the British intended to seize what remained of his territory and destroy Batlhaping

351. Ibid p. 182

independence. In a bid to assert his claim to ownership he mounted raids in northern parts of Griqualand West, destroying property and seizing cattle. When the British authorities in Griqualand West sent a punitive expedition against him Gasebonwe prepared for war. He toured the whole southern Botswana (including northern Griqualand) calling upon the native peoples to take up arms against the British. His rallying cry was the "extermination of all white people of British descent".³⁵² Cape colony was at war with Amaxosa on the eastern frontier during this time and it was widely believed by Southern Batswana and Griquas that the British had been defeated and killed or driven out of Xosaland. Consequently Gasebonwe's cry fell upon receptive ears. He was joined by minor Batlhaping and Batlharo chiefs as well as by groups of Griquas who resented British annexation and administration of Griqualand West.

About May 1878 Gasebonwe took the field. His exact strength is difficult to assess since his followers operated in detached and unco-ordinated units under different commanders and over wide expanse of country. Nevertheless the determined stand and the number of engagements lead one to believe that the resisters were fairly strong. At the commencement of hostilities Morwa, chief of the Batlharo, besieged white traders and missionaries at Kuruman. Luka at the head of Batlhaping detachment occupied the main road leading from Kimberley to Kuruman, thus making it difficult to send relief to the

352. Molema, S.M.: Montshiwa, p.99

beleaguered traders and missionaries. A small force under Surveyor-General Ford was ambushed and only reached Kuruman with difficulty. It failed to raise the siege. It was not until mid-July that Kuruman was relieved by Charles Warren with fresh troops from the Amaxosa frontier. He was presently joined by colonel Lanyon with another fresh contingent from Griqualand West. The combined force now moved against Gasebonwe's Batlhaping main force at Dithakong. After making a determined stand the Batlhaping retreated and Dithakong fell to the enemy. From then on fighting became sporadic. Running battles were fought at Gamopedi, Makgolokwa and Manyeding. In all these engagements the resistance forces suffered reverses. By November the British had killed about 200 of them and captured 2000 head of cattle and 67 wagons.³⁵³ The resistance leaders went into hiding, but were tracked and subsequently captured by Barolong chief Montshiwa who turned them over to the British authorities.³⁵⁴ By the end of the year all resistance had been broken up.

The subjection of Amaxosa to white rule and the defeat of Southern Batswana did not mark the end of the British troubles. Elsewhere in South Africa Africans were posed for even greater resistance than the one British troops had just overcome. In Lesotho where the British might have reasonably expected the least trouble Chief Moorosi and one or two others

353. Ibid. p. 100

354. Ibid.

were asserting their authority against white magistrates. Moorosi was completing fortifications of Mount Moorosi which he had begun nine years earlier. The fortress was stocked with arms and ammunition. Farther north Masupha defied the Cape Government Agent, Griffith, who wanted to remove him from Thaba Bosiu, the Basotho Royal Capital. In the Transvaal Sekhukhuni had convinced the British Administrator Theophilus Shepstone, that he intended to live peacefully with the Europeans. In fact he was collecting firearms and grain in preparation for the projected struggle. Fortification work around Mosega proceeded quietly along side the armament programme and collection of food stocks. In Zululand Cetshwayo was similarly arming the Impi with guns and the regiments were clamouring for war with the Boers who were infiltrating into the north-western borderlands of Zululand. If, therefore, the conquest of the Amaxosa represented initial success for the Imperial Factor it also stiffened resistance to its further expansion in other areas. Prospects for imperial expansion were further marred by the sulkiness of the Boers who had been incensed by British annexation of the Transvaal in 1877.

From the point of view of imperial officials in South Africa it became absolutely necessary to placate Boer opinion if the Imperial Factor were to make any headway. The British believed that they were fairly established in

Lesotho and Bopedi.³⁵⁵ The only African state where they did not have a foothold was Zululand. Defeat of Amazulu would not only complete the extension of British rule over all the natives of South Africa but, even more important, it would tend to propitiate the Boers and thus clear the way for the proposed confederation and imperial rule.

Once they had convinced themselves that the cause of the Empire in South Africa would be served in this way imperial officials lost no time. General Thesiger (later Lord Chelmsford)³⁵⁶ sent invasion plans to London and asked for more troops. Sir Bartle Frere, the Cape Governor and High Commissioner to South Africa, launched anti-Zulu propaganda aimed at winning support of British Government and of public opinion in Britain. His reports to the Colonial Office represented continued existence of the Zulu Kingdom as inimical to British interests in South Africa. He described Cetshwayo, the Zulu King, as a barbarous tyrant whose "celibate man-destroying gladiators" threatened the entire South Africa. In England the Zulu kingdom came to be seen as barbarous and savage power whose superstitious beliefs and "frightfully efficient man-slaying" machine stood in the way of civilization and the flow of labour as well as legitimate commerce.

355. Following the proclamation of Protectorate in Lesotho (1868) and Peace Treaty with Sekhukhuni (1878), defeat of Amaxosa and Southern Batswana (1878).

356. General Thesiger was the Commander of all British armed forces in South Africa during this time.

Thus god and mammon ranged themselves behind the bellicose imperial standard. So it was that as martial preparations got under way the lonely voice of caution from Bulwer was brushed aside in favour of that of Theophilus Shepstone whose 'masterly knowledge' of the natives was admitted by all to be second to none.

Bellicosity triumphed. Early in December 1878 Sir Bartle Frere presented Cetshwayo with an ultimatum the terms of which no responsible and self-respecting ruler could accept. The Zulu monarch was ordered to pay compensation to the Boers in Zululand's north-western borderlands who, Frere contended, had suffered losses at the hands of the Amazulu. Even more ridiculous was the demand by Frere that Cetshwayo disband the entire Zulu army, at the time numbering about 30,000 men. Even if Cetshwayo was willing to comply with other minor demands such as opening Zululand to the missionaries, receiving white Government Agent and ruling Zululand along his guidelines, the demands that he 'compensate the Boers and that he disband the Zulu army made Cetshwayo's rejection of the ultimatum a certainty and war inevitable.³⁵⁷ The Zululand Government could see neither logic nor equity in 'compensating' the Boers who had infiltrated into the lands which were clearly

357. A detailed paraphrase of the ultimatum is to be found in D. R. Morris: The Washing of the Spears, p. 287

parts of Zululand.³⁵⁸ Rather it seemed logical and just that Amazulu be compensated or the Boers be removed from the borderlands. As for the disbandment of the Zulu army, of course, there could be no question of even making it the subject of negotiation. From the point of view of the Amazulu, therefore, Frere's ultimatum amounted to the declaration of war. It was so by any stretch of imagination. The Amazulu were an independent nation with a glorious military tradition behind them. To ask them to disband their army at a time when white expansion had clearly assumed an aggressive form was tantamount to asking them to surrender their independence. They rejected the demand and prepared to fight.

Whether Zululand was prepared for a modern war at a gigantic scale is arguable. From the point of view of traditional warfare there can be no doubt that Zululand was the strongest African state in South Africa. Shortly before 1879 war Zululand had about 30,000 men equipped with the traditional stabbing spear and thoroughly trained in Zulu conventional tactics. In spite of Cetshwayo's efforts to equip the Impi with firearms the stabbing spear and the ox-hide shield remained the basic Zulu weapons. The reason was that Cetshwayo had had no time to collect sufficient quantities of firearms and to have the regiments

358. This fact was confirmed by Gallwey Boundary commission which had been set-up by Governor Frere to establish whether the territory in dispute had ever belonged to Zululand, and if so, whether it was properly ceded to the Boers who were claiming it.

trained in their use. Moreover the traditional mode of warfare had won the Amazulu such a place of glory in South Africa that it would require time to change their military values and to modernise their tactics and strategies. Cetshwayo who acceded to the Zulu throne in 1872 had neither the time nor sufficient authority to effect these changes before the war. Moreover the Amazulu, in general, displayed a certain degree of conservatism in military matters. In addition to clinging to their standard weapons and tactics they appeared to have failed to appreciate the military potential of their terrain. Little or no effort was made to use the bush as cover or to fortify mountain strongholds as the Amaxosa and Highveld resisters respectively did. Despite reverses they suffered in the 1830's at the hands of Europeans armed with firearms they never adopted the strategy of jungle and mountain warfare. As the Amazulu moved to the 1879 war they had undergone little or no change, whether in terms of armaments, strategy and tactics or social attitudes towards war. In the light of these facts it can hardly be said that the Zulu army was prepared. It could not take the strain of a modern war in which the adversaries were armed with repeater rifles and Maxim and Gatling guns.

Bartle Frere's ultimatum having expired the British army, about 15,000 strong, including some 7,000 native levies, invaded Zululand in three columns on January 11, 1879. General Chelmsford, the commander-in-Chief and Bartle Free hoped for quick successes and brief campaign. The invasion was well timed.

It was towards the end of the rainy season, so there would be plentiful grazing for draught cattle and horses. Moreover rivers would be relatively less flooded and wagon tracks less muddy. From the point of view of the Amazulu the timing was disastrous. It was just before the new harvest and too long after the previous one. This meant that their grain stores were running low, perhaps too low to sustain a war. It also meant that the Zulu soldiers would not be able to harvest or assist their families to harvest the new crop. This was dangerous as it could mean a year of famine in Zululand. Its military significance was that it could either encourage large scale desertion within the Zulu army or make it difficult for the soldiers to remain on the battlefields for long periods. Finally, the fact that the war was to be fought on Zululand soil was a blow on Zulu logistics. In all their traditional wars the regiments had always been inadequately provisioned. They were expected to live off the foreign lands where wars were invariably fought. Now that the war was to be fought in Zululand the prospect of the regiments looting their own people risked disaffection and desertion to the enemy at community level. Yet the army could not be expected to fight a war without adequate regular supplies. All these factors, unimportant as they seem and often overlooked by writers,³⁵⁹ precluded any chances of Zululand winning the war.

359. The only writer who had grasped the military significance of Zulu practice of not provisioning their armies is J.J. Guy. See A Note on Firearms in the Zulu Kingdom in Journal of African History, Vol. 12, 1971, p.563.

Even at the expiry of the ultimatum Cetshwayo still hoped that the invasion might not take place. He therefore did not send troops to guard Zululand southern borders. His spies were however active and the King was fully informed of the enemy movements. On the day of the invasion he mustered nearly the entire army at Ulundi to undergo war rituals and to receive final instructions. Zululand would fight in self-defence and the army was under any circumstances not to cross into the Colony of Natal. As will be shown later this restriction robbed the Zulu army of tactical manoeuvre that was purely military. Through his spies Cetshwayo knew that the British had crossed the border at three places and that the headquarter or main column had crossed at Rocke's Drift. He decided to throw nearly his entire strength against this column.

By January 17 it was known that General Chelmsford with the headquarter column was camped at Isandlwana. Earlier when Cetshwayo recalled the regiments to Ulundi for rituals and instructions he had ordered General Matyana to stay put in the Mageni Valley military village, few miles east of Isandlwana and South of the road leading from Ulundi to the British Camp. Matyana was instructed to act as a decoy by drawing a section of Chelmsford force away from the main camp. The plan worked. Scouting parties from Isandlwana located Matyana with few detachments of soldiers in Mageni Valley around Isipezi Hill. At first Matyana assured the British officers sent against him that he had no intention of fighting and he would surrender what firearms he and his people had to the invaders. But within a day or two the British discovered

that Matyana had about 2,000 men under him and that he was preparing to challenge them. Dartnell, the officer commanding, sent back to Isandlwana for reinforcements and supplies. General Chelmsford sent reinforcements, himself following a day or two later. By January 21 nearly half of the central column was in the Isipezi Hill area. By that time the main Zulu army was camped about eight miles north-east of Isandlwana. It had eluded all detection because the enemy's attention had been drawn by Matyana to the east and south-east whence it was believed the main Zulu army would come.

But even with the deception and surprise the Amazulu still required a great deal of ingenuity. There were about 1,800 men in the British camp, armed with Martini-Henry breech-loaders and supported by heavy artillery guns. Although a few of the Amazulu had muskets their firing, often wild and short-ranged, was more of a nuisance than danger. The Zulu commanders were aware of the enemy fire-power, and from the onset determined to deplete his ammunition supplies. They attacked with such speed and large numbers that the losses suffered while they were closing in on the camp were insignificant. Once the troops had closed in they thrust themselves onto the ground and crawled forward under the cover of their large cow-hide shields. Others lay still on the ground and waited for a slackening in the enemy firing. Meanwhile the flanking 'horns' completed their encircling movements and the British were hemmed in. At the

same time Generals Tshingwayo and Mavum'engwana held back two or three regiments in reserve until the enemy had exhausted his ammunition supplies. The entire strategy worked. Doubtless the British defenders took a heavy toll of the Zulu army but much of their firing went to waste. They were soon short of ammunition and the Amazulu took advantage of the slackening in their firing. The entire army, including the reserve units, rose to its feet and pushed into the enemy camp. British retreat lines had been cut off and for about three hours "the mightiest force that black Africa had ever fielded"³⁶⁰ washed its spears in British blood. The attack had begun at about 12.30 p.m. and by 4.00 p.m. Isandlwana was silent. About 1,600 troops, including Natal African levies, lay dead in and around the camp. The Amazulu captured 1,000 Martini-Henry rifles, 500,000 rounds of ammunition and several artillery guns.

Isandlwana was at best a qualified victory for the Amazulu. From the point of view of the entire war it was a tragedy. Zululand had lost about 2,000 men, probably the best soldiers in the army.³⁶¹ And while it weakened the nation's fighting power it strengthened British determination to avenge the death of their heroes and to restore British prestige.

360. Morris, D.R.: The Washing of the Spears, p.387

361. In conformity with the virtue Zululand attached to prowess the bravest and most reputed soldiers were the ones who led the attack and they took the fury of enemy fire.

Much now depended on what the Zulu army would do after Isandlwana. Numerically the troops were still strong and although they had suffered heavy losses at Isandlwana their victory must have boosted their morale tremendously. But two factors deprived them of total victory that was within their grasp. First, the practice of not provisioning the army long adopted in Zululand made it difficult for the troops to go on further campaigns. It was exactly six days since the army had left Ulundi and the personal rations that the soldiers might have carried had run out. There are indications that even before the battle of Isandlwana the men were starving.³⁶² This clearly made it impossible for them to remain on the battlefield. Second, it was something of a habit that after each battle the regiments returned home. Moreover, apart from the injunction that they should not cross the borders of Zululand, it would appear that Cetshwayo gave no clear directive as to what the troops should do after Isandlwana.

Consequently, after the battle of Isandlwana the Commander-in-Chief, General Tshingwayo, allowed the regiments to disperse and return to their respective villages. Only a small expeditionary force of about 4000 men under Dabulamanzi was dispatched to destroy a small enemy garrison stationed at Rorke's Drift. The remnants of Chelmsford central as well as the flanking columns were still on Zululand territory.

362. Morris, D.R.: The Washing of the Spears, p.417

In the south-east, along the coastal borderlands, General Matiya with a force of 6,000 men was finding it difficult to defeat Colonel Pearson who had about 4,000 men under his command. Similarly the Amaqulusi irregulars in the north-west were finding it difficult to contain Colonel Wood's column. Both fronts needed assistance and failure on the part of Zulu military authorities to send reinforcements deprived the Zulu army of the opportunity of turning enemy defeat at Isandlwana into total disaster.

At about 4.00 p.m. while the main force was carrying out mopping-up operations at Isandlwana Dabulamanzi with about 4,000 men advanced on Rorke's Drift on the Natal banks of the Buffalo River. The camp was defended by some 180 men but it had been alerted in good time by two survivors from Isandlwana. The men had therefore thrown up strong fortifications and these coupled with the fact that the surrounding terrain provided no cover for the attackers barely averted the repetition of Isandlwana. In a battle that lasted from about 5.00 p.m. on January 22 to 5.00 a.m. next morning Dabulamanzi stormed the camp. He failed to destroy it. While his troops struggled to remove or climb over the heavy bags of mealies and boxes of biscuits and earthen walls that made up the fortifications, the defenders were pouring destructive fusillade into their ranks. By 4.00 a.m. both sides were exhausted but just then Dabulamanzi called off the attack. The Amazulu retreated to some distance whence they kept a desulatory fire with little effect on the triumphant garrison. At about 5.0 O'clock the Zulu force marched away, leaving about 400 dead and many wounded. The British had lost only 17 killed and 8 severely wounded.

On the same day that Tshingwayo destroyed Isandlwana General Matiya laid an ambush against the British right column near Inyezane River. The column had problems of unwieldy convoys which were slowed down by muddy tracks and 'swollen' rivers. But as the advanced sections of Pearson's troops appeared one of Matiya's 'horns' attacked prematurely and thus exposed the ambush before the bulk of the enemy was within 'killing ground'. Matiya was now forced to give open battle. Colonel Pearson quickly formed the British troops into the usual hollow square and, supported by two seven-pounders and a Gatling, repelled the ill-organised attack. In a battle lasting nearly half an hour he killed 350 Zulu troops at the loss of 10 killed and 16 wounded to himself. Next day, January 23, Pearson's column reached Eshowe and pitched camp. There the column was beleaguered and for the next ten weeks Pearson could neither advance nor retreat. The camp was strongly fortified but not invulnerable. A closer siege and constant day and night light attacks could easily break the defences by making it impossible for the enemy to graze or water his draught and slaughter cattle. To achieve this, of course, Matiya would have to be reinforced to tighten the siege as well as beat any attempted relief. But Cetshwayo neither provided the reinforcements nor attempted to prevent Chelmsford who relieved the column on April 3, 1879.

The left column of the British army under Colonel Wood had crossed the Buffalo River into the north-western district of Zululand on January 11. This was a disputed area between Zululand and Transvaal. It was therefore liable to

sporadic clashes between Amazulu and Boers. Consequently the local chiefs had raised small armies which were under their personal command and used for local security. In their frequent clashes with Boer commandos the Amazulu in the area had developed guerrilla tactics of sorts and had learned something of mountain strategy. At the commencement of hostilities Cetshwayo had sent no troops against Colonel Wood's column. Apparently he believed that the local leaders there, who included his brother Hamu, were strong enough to repel the British. After light brushes with small parties of Amazulu Colonel Wood had established his camp at Kambula. The strongest community in the area was that led by Hamu. But Hamu who had no stomach to fight the British had fled the area and taken refuge in Swaziland. The defence of the area therefore devolved onto the Amaqulusi led by chiefs Mbilini and Manyobanyoba. These had settled on the defensible hills of the Zungi range of which Hlobane was the most populous.

Since Colonel Wood invaded the area on January 11, his troops had been plundering villagers and seizing cattle. By March 1879 Mbilini was ready to challenge the invaders. On March 11, he led about 800 Qulusi troops against a small detachment of British troops camped on the banks of Intombi River. Mbilini made full use of the weather conditions. By 4.00 a.m. on March 12, his troops had surrounded the enemy camp. It was drizzling and misty and the men were still sleeping. At 5 O'clock Amaqulusi fell on the camp and virtually wiped it out. By the time rescue troops arrived from Kambula the attackers had melted into

the foggy hills. The infuriated Colonel Wood ordered his officers to prepare an attack on Hlobane, the Amaqulusi stronghold.

On March 23 Wood attacked Hlobane from two points: one column under Colonel Buller attacked from the east while the other, commanded by Colonel Russel, advanced from the west. The two columns were to effect a junction on the flat hill-top, disperse the Amaqulusi and sweep down their cattle. Wood himself held the south-western base of Hlobane to prevent the enemy or his cattle from escaping in that direction. Meanwhile Mbilini's troops had taken positions on every part of the Hill. They were armed to the teeth with firearms. Colonel Buller, not aware of their presence, led his detachment up the winding and precipitous track. He was allowed to pass unmolested, but as he moved up Amaqulusi closed in on his rear to prevent his retreat. Colonel Russel advancing from the west was attacked and driven back before he could reach the top. This left Colonel Buller's column isolated and stranded on the flat hill-top. Just then Amaqulusi began to mushroom from every side and directed furious fire onto his force. As the stampede began some of his men tried to retrace their steps only to find the way blocked. The column was cut to pieces and almost wiped out. But the Colonel and a few survivors managed to shoot their way westward and barely linked with Russel and Wood who had also been attacked and suffered heavy losses. Wood pulled out his troops from Hlobane and rushed post haste to Kambula, there to await an even more serious attack by regular troops from Ulundi.

Nearly 200 men, 95 of whom were white had been killed at Hlobane. The Amaqulusi losses were not recorded, but they must have been slight.

In the final stages of the Battle of Hlobane the Amaqulusi had been reinforced by a detachment of troops from Ulundi. The reinforcements were part of a 20,000 man contingent sent by Cetshwayo against Colonel Wood's camp at Kambula. Soon after the battle the entire force, including Amaqulusi, advanced on Kambula where Colonel Wood was hurrying up preparations for the defence of the camp. At about 1.00 p.m. on March 29, 1879 the Zulu army came within view of the camp. The British were 'laagered' in. A short distance away from the camp General Mnyamana, the Commanding officer, ordered out the 'horns'. Within minutes the right 'horn' had taken position on the northern front of the camp. The 'chest' and the left 'horn', however were still manoeuvring themselves into position and before they could close in the right 'horn' had been drawn into action. The British were therefore enabled to deal with the 'horn' and almost knock it out of action before the 'chest' and the left 'horn' could begin the assault. This tactical blunder caused the Amazulu army the whole battle. By the time the left 'horn' and the 'chest' came into action the right 'horn' had retreated some distance and the defenders turned concentrated fire on the south and east flanks. Further Zulu attempts to rally proved dissipative. After storming the laager for four hours they had not made a break-through. Their losses were heavy. Nearly 2,000 men had been killed. Mnyamana was forced to sound a retreat, having killed only 28 and wounded 55 of the enemy troops. The Amazulu had lost the battle.

It is necessary at this stage to pause and have a closer look at what has or has not been happening. After the Battle of Isandlwana and the Battle of Rorke's Drift on January 22/23 the main Zulu army dispersed and the regiments returned to their respective military villages. On the same day a section of the Impi fought the right column of the invading British army near Inyezane River and lost. Then followed a period of over two months of inactivity. Except the light siege of Pearson's column at Eshowe and irregular skirmishing between Amaqulusi and Wood's troops in the north-western district the main Zulu army appears to have been completely inactive. It was not until March 28 that Cetshwayo sent Mnyamana at the head of 20,000-man force against Wood at Kambula. Why this inactivity when the enemy was still in the land? There are indications that the Zulu Monarch was attempting a political settlement with the British. Cetshwayo was neither a military strategist nor an accomplished diplomatist. While it was too late to seek a political settlement he still had a chance to drive out the remnants of Chelmsford forces from Zululand. Colonel Pearson's column, stranded at Eshowe, was fast running out of rations and ammunition. The Amaqulusi were effectively chipping off Colonel Wood's strength in the north-west. Had Cetshwayo reinforced these areas and harassed the enemy day and night it is plausible to suggest that he could have destroyed the camps. He had about seventeen weeks to accomplish this. But the Zulu monarch procrastinated and gave time to the enemy to bring in reinforcements from England and to reorganise himself for a fresh assault.

During March and April General Chelmsford received reinforcements from England. Local recruits from Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal totalled 1,654 men. No African state or community in South Africa came to the aid of Zululand.³⁶³ By end of May General Chelmsford was ready to mount a second invasion of Zululand. He had under his command about 25,000 men split into two divisions and one flying column under the old Colonel (now Major-General) Wood. The first Division commanded by General Crealock entered Zululand from the south, along the coast. The Second Division under the command of General Newdigate and to which Wood's flying column was attached invaded from upper Natal. The two divisions were to converge on Ulundi. Chelmsford, the Commander-in-Chief, was with the second Division and on May 31, 1879 he crossed the Natal/Zululand boundary and began his march to Ulundi.

Even at this stage Cetshwayo was still attempting to find a political settlement. Lacking understanding of European social organisation he continued to send his envoys after Chelmsford, a soldier whose prestige was sunk at Isandlwana and who even if he had the authority to call off the invasion (he had none) was bent on restoring his personal honour. The envoys were treated as spies and arrested. After repeated attempts Cetshwayo's envoys were finally conducted to Chelmsford but the ensuing negotiations came to nothing. Only thereafter did Cetshwayo

363. Cetshwayo had engaged the services of Basotho gunsmith experts to manufacture gun-powder and generally maintain what firearms the Zulu army possessed.

call the army to Ulundi. Chelmsford's force was almost approaching the Royal capital. It had traversed great distance of territory practically unopposed, occasionally meeting small parties of villagers who were flushed off without difficulty. On July 3, 1879 Chelmsford's division hovered within view of Ulundi. The capital was defended by 20,000-strong Zulu force. A section of it carried muskets and a greater portion of the troops were new recruits with little or no experience. The battle took place on the plains of Mahlabathini, a mile or so from the Royal Capital. The British who were armed with breech-loading Martini-Henrys and supported by Gatlings and Howitzers had formed a square with their backs to the centre. At the initial charge the Zulu troops fired their muskets but their aim was wild. But as they closed in on the enemy square they attempted to force a hand to hand fighting. They were mowed down by enemy rifles and artillery fire. In less than an hour they were routed. About a 1,000 of their number were killed. The British suffered only 10 killed and 69 wounded. On July 4, 1879 Ulundi, Cetshwayo's Royal Residence and Capital of Zululand, went up in flames. Cetshwayo had left the capital a day or two before the battle. He did not surrender himself but neither did he harry Chelmsford's retreating column. Instead he went into hiding and thus left the troops with no central command. He was eventually hunted out and arrested by General Wolseley who had sailed from London towards the end of the war to perform coup de grace on the Zulu kingdom.

While Garnet Wolseley was engaged in mopping up operations in Zululand Sekhukhuni's Bapedi were menacing Europeans in the Transvaal and Moorosi's Baphuting in Lesotho were holding Qoboshane Mountain and defying British attempts to dislodge them. Since February 1877 when he signed a peace treaty with South African Republican authorities and (two months later) assured Theophilus Shepstone of his loyalty to the new British administration in the Transvaal, Sekhukhuni had been quietly collecting firearms and foodstuffs. In his last clash with the Boers in 1877 it was shortage of food supplies that had forced him to sue for peace and to sign a onerous peace treaty. The British annexation of the Transvaal and Shepstone's declaration that Bapedi were henceforth British subjects had convinced Sekhukhuni that war with Britain was inevitable. Consequently he had set about purchasing grain from the surrounding areas and firearms from white traders and from the Portuguese at Lorenzo Marques. —

Sekhukhuni had given Shepstone assurances of peace in June 1877. By December he had collected sufficient stores of both grain and firearms at his stronghold, Mosega.³⁶⁴ Parties of Bapedi, mainly women, who had been engaged in the fortification work had completed their assignments. Parapets ran across the entire front of the town that was situated on a sloping ground.

364. As early as 1876 Sekhukhuni was reported to have had 'four or five huts filled with guns', K.W. Smith: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History, Vol. 10, 1969, p.240. Sekhukhuni was believed to have collected about 400,000 guns and his attempts to smuggle in a cannon were foiled by Transvaal Republican authorities; Ibid. p.241.

Behind was a series of caves which stood between the town and the top of the hill. These were also protected by schanzes. Because the Europeans were usually mounted the Bapedi assumed that they could only attack from the front. The top of the hill overlooking the town was too steep for the enemy to approach from that direction.

With these preparations Sekhukhuni felt strong enough to challenge the British. Armed parties of Bapedi began to cross Steelpoort River, harried British farmers and seized their cattle. (It was noted that cattle belonging to Boers grazed in the open unmolested.) The discrimination is note-worthy, as it represented Sekhukhuni's tactical attempt to drive a wedge between the British and Boers and possibly to win the latter onto his side. Minor chieftains who were friendly to the British were also attacked. In March 1878 the Bapedi Monarch sent a formal protest to Landdrost Roth, stationed at Fort Burgers, stating that groups of natives friendly to Europeans were living on his territory and that he intended to drive them away. He disclaimed on the same occasion any aggressive motives towards the Europeans. When he was warned that such a step would constitute a violation of the 1877 treaty the King retorted that the British were afraid to fight, that some Europeans were trespassing on his territory and that he was ready for war as the British would see.³⁶⁵

These bellicose statements were clearly intended to provoke the British attack. His tactics were never to fight pitched battles with Europeans in the open. Defensive action on

365. Smith, K.W.: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History Vol. 10, 1969, p.245

ground chosen and fortified by himself was the hall-mark of his strategy. When the British declined to accept the challenge Sekhukhuni sent parties of armed Bapedi in the same month, March, to raid British farms and homes in the Lydenburg district. One farmer was killed while others escaped into laagers. The Government at Pretoria sent troops to the area but the raiders had withdrawn. The Government then decided to build forts to be manned by European volunteers to protect the farmers. But Bapedi incursions continued to occur. On October 3, 1878 Colonel Rowlands assembled a 500-man commando and led it against the raiders. Bapedi 'assisted', no doubt by drought and seasonal horse sickness, repulsed the attack.

Sekhukhuni was now lionised. To the surrounding native groups or communities that had hitherto been loyal to Europeans he appeared to be in truth 'the Lion of the North'.³⁶⁶ To the Europeans it became clear that Colonel Rowlands, Commander of all British forces in the Transvaal, could not cope with Sekhukhuni. Sir Garnet Wolseley the newly appointed Governor of Natal and Transvaal and British High Commissioner in South Africa, arrived in Zululand shortly after the Battle of Ulundi, and was still dismantling the Zulu Kingdom. On hearing of Sekhukhuni's menacing activities he sent an express to W.O. Lanyon, the new Transvaal Administrator after Theophilus Shepstone, instructing him to remain on the defensive until he

366. South Africans today, when remembering their heroes such as Dingane, Moshoeshoe, Cetshwayo, etc. often refer to Sekhukhuni as 'The Lion of the North'.

(Wolseley) should have brought the British-Zulu War to a successful conclusion.

Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived in Pretoria on September 27, 1879. He spent the whole October and greater part of November raising the invasion force. He sent to King Mbandzeni for Swazi troops who he said he attached great importance in getting "on account of their fighting reputation".³⁶⁷ Mbandzeni sent 8,000 men armed with stabbing spears and guns. Meanwhile Wolseley dictated terms to Sekhukhuni: the King was to acknowledge British sovereignty and agree to payment of taxes by his people; he was to pay the treaty fine of 2000 head of cattle plus a further 500, being punishment for his previous conduct; finally, he was to agree to police posts being established among his people.³⁶⁸ As was to be expected, Sekhukhuni rejected the terms. At an emergency Pitso at Sekhukhuni's Court Bapedi decided unanimously to fight.

I have not been able to find the Bapedi numerical strength shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, but they must have vastly outnumbered the British force. What is not so in doubt is the fact that they were well armed. Since he succeeded his father in 1861 Sekhukhuni had been frantically collecting guns. Visitors to the Bapedi Kingdom during this

367. Moodie, D.F.C.: History of the Battles & Co. Vol. 2 p.558 (appendix E)

368. Smith, K.W.: The Fall of the Bapedi in Journal of African History, Vol. 10., 1969, p. 247.

period reported that Sekhukhuni had four or five huts filled with guns. It was estimated that more than half of his fighting men possessed guns. During the war the British captured 2,041 guns at Mosega and in January 1880, following their defeat, Bapedi soldiers surrendered 1,349 more to the British authorities. What is not so certain is the adequacy of ammunition. It would appear that this commodity was in short supply. During the war it was noted that although at some stages of the fighting they were shooting at point blank range the Bapedi soldiers proved to be poor shots. Poor marksmanship among African soldiers reflected lack of practice, a limitation which was imposed by the need to use their ammunition sparingly. As for the quality of the firearms in Bapedi's possession it is doubtful whether they were the modern breech-loading rifles with which the British were equipped. European traders during this time were known to be taking advantage of Africans' ignorance to dump antiquated guns in their territories³⁶⁹ at prohibitive prices. If Sekhukhuni had any percussion rifles in his stores they must have been few. Bapedi, of course, had no answer to the artillery guns which the British could deploy against their mountain fortresses. In 1876 Sekhukhuni's attempts to import cannon were foiled by South African Republican Officials. There are no indications that he later obtained any.

369. Guy, J.J. A Note of Firearms in the Zulu Kingdom in Journal of African History, Vol.12, 1971, p.559, states:"..... and traders found the sale of antiquated weapons to Africans highly profitable". Also Ibid. Note 15, G. Tylden, The Rise of the Basotho, p.36. In 1835 the Traveller Andrew Smith noted at Thaba Nchu that the traders were taking advantage of Africans' ignorance to sell them guns of very poor quality. "Throughout the whole country", he wrote, "we observed that the firearms found in the hands of the natives were of the basest description andalmost useless", quoted by Atmore, A. and Sanders, P. in Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African African Histroy, Vol.12. 1971, p.537.

From what has been said above it is clear that although the Bapedi were adequately equipped with muskets and although their stronghold was almost impregnable they were still vulnerable. By mid-November Garnet Wolseley had raised over 14,000 men - 3,400 white soldiers and 10,900 native levies, mainly from Swaziland. November to March are rainy months and Sekhukhuni had calculated that if the British meant to invade his territory they would wait until April or May 1880 when the rains should have subsided. Moreover these were the months during which the horse sickness was usually prevalent. Wolseley on the other hand, had decided to take advantage of the rainy season when water and grass for both horses and draught cattle would be plentiful. He therefore decided to attack before the end of November. The Bapedi were surprised but they were certainly not caught napping.

The invasion began on November 20, 1879. The attack was two-pronged: the main force numbering some 5,500 men and commanded by Wolseley himself marched from Fort Albert Edward, 26 miles north of Mosega. The second column consisting of 8,800 men marched from Lydenburg in the south-east. Both columns swept all minor Bapedi strongholds in their line of march. Sekhukhuni's main force was mustered at Mosega, the Capital and main fortress of the Kingdom. Sekhukhuni must have been happy, for the enemy was attacking exactly in the manner he had always wanted. The British were being drawn to his impregnable fortress and, he believed, to certain defeat. On November 27, 1879 the two columns converged on Mosega and the attack began next morning at about 4.00 O'clock.

While the main force attacked from the front Swazi detachments accompanied by several white soldiers moved round the mountain to the back and then worked their way to the top. Meanwhile heavy fighting broke out between Bapedi defenders who had taken positions in the trenches dug behind stone walls and the main British force. As usual Bapedi aim was wild and they were soon driven out of their trenches by the enemy who poured a roaring fire from his repeater rifles and artillery guns. The defenders moved to their second line of defence between the houses and the top of the mountain. Here there were many caves and boulders and low stone walls. Bapedi made a stand behind the large boulders and schanzes and opened such furious fire that the advancing enemy was compelled to halt and take cover. While Bapedi were thus holding the main enemy force Swazi troops appeared from the top of the mountain and descended upon them from the back. The defenders suddenly found themselves in an envil and hammer situation. As they turned round to face the Amaswazi the main force broke cover and attacked. For some minutes the battle degenerated into hand to hand fighting at the cave mouths. It was hopeless effort on the part of Bapedi. They were soon routed, and retreated to a nearby hill which was even more fortified than the main part of the capital. Vechtkop, as the hill came to be known, was then surrounded and attacked. It was mainly on this hill that Bapedi women and children had taken refuge in the caves. Since the early morning when the attack began the hill had been under heavy bombardment from the enemy artillery units, but with little effect.

After the capture of the main part of Mosega fortress Wolseley committed the entire force onto the attack of the hill. The fighting was necessarily heavy as the Bapedi knew it was their last stand. Firing from the caves, often at point-blank range, they withstood the attack from about 10.00 a.m. Friday November 28 to about the same time next morning. As the enemy gained the upper hand they retreated into the caves whence they continued fighting. General Wolseley thereupon ordered the Engineering Unit to blast the caves with dynamite. But this proved ineffective as most of the caves had natural shafts which were too deep to be affected by the blasting. Moreover Bapedi who had worked in the mines at Kimberley cut some of the fuses before they could explode. The British subsequently decided to invest the caves and starve the inmates to submission. On the afternoon of Saturday November 29 the Bapedi began to surrender. Soldiers, women and children came out in their hundreds and gave themselves up to their enemies. Two days later, on December 2, 1879 Sekhukhuni, King of the Bapedi, gave himself up and on the 9th he was led into Pretoria where he was imprisoned.

Thus collapsed Sekhukhuni's Kingdom and with it the Bapedi resistance. The soldiers had fought well. The numbers of their losses are not available but they must have been immense. The British lost 600 men (black and white) killed and over 35 wounded. The basic flaw in Sekhukhuni's strategy was that he became too wedded to defensive action. His belief that entire war with 'makgowa' (Europeans) could be decided by their defeat at his

Mosega fortress was tactically unsound, especially at a time when the Europeans had long-range artillery guns which could shell and destroy any mountain fortifications. While mountain strategy continued to be important in the overall strategy of resistance it could be utilised more effectively only if fortresses were regarded as final bastions to which the resistance troops could fall back when pressed too hard. Sekhukhuni's strategy made it possible for the enemy to concentrate all his strength on one target. Little effort was made to reduce the concentration of enemy strength by engaging him in running battles over wider area of country. He failed to appreciate the fact that deploying his troops to strategic points all over the country to engage the enemy in harassing skirmishes could dissipate the enemy strength, prolong the war and involve him in frustrating expenses.

There were other factors which led to the fall of the Bapedi and which they probably could do little or nothing to counter. One was the sheer enemy superiority in weapons. But it would appear that in this war the participation of 8000 Swazi troops was crucial. Amaswazi were familiar with jungle or mountain warfare and they could fight in rough and dangerous terrain. It was they who scaled the precipitous back of the mountain which Sekhukhuni had thought no 'makgowa' would dare climb and set the Bapedi rear ablaze. The actual assault apart, the psychological impact of this unexpected development, coming as it did, in the heat of the battle must have been shattering to the Bapedi defenders. European soldiers who fought in the

war later admitted that but for the Amaswazi the British could not have captured Sekhukhuni's stronghold.³⁷⁰ Be that as it may, the Bapedi were conquered and finally subjected to white rule.

Moorosi's 'rebellion'³⁷¹ in Lesotho was triggered by British magistrates' attempts to increase their political power at the expenses of the chiefs. In the face of expanding republican Boers and the threat they posed to Lesotho independence Moshoeshe had asked for British protection and that request had been granted in 1868. But neither Moshoeshe nor his junior chiefs understood that protection to mean diminution of any of their powers as rulers of their own people. To them protection meant no more than a defensive alliance with a great power that was capable of protecting Lesotho against Boer aggression.³⁷² The British on the other hand assumed political sovereignty in the European sense of 'protectorate'. The difference between these two concepts of what 'protection' meant became the source of constant friction between Lesotho leaders and British magistrates. In one of the several disputations that he had with Hamilton Hope Chief Moorosi insisted that he was the sole source of political authority in Quthing and that he would continue to act independently.

370. Moodie, D.F.C. History of the Battles & Co. Vol. 2 . p.559 (appendix E)

371. Supra p. 328

372. The term 'protection' in Sesotho mean 'tshireletso' which is a derivative from the verb 'tshireletsha'. 'Ho tshireletsa' means to 'shield' or to 'protect' one who is weak and cannot defend himself. The term has absolutely no connotations of control or confiscation of property belonging to the protected person. Indeed 'tshireletso' need not be permanent.

When Hope reminded him that Lesotho had been given over to the British Moorosi replied that he had never given his country to the British.³⁷³ The fundamental issue in what have been called 'Moorosi Rebellion' and 'The Gun War' was Lesotho independence.

From July 1868 when it was taken under British protection Lesotho was placed under direct authority of the British High Commissioner for South Africa. So long as that High Commissioner did not tamper with their land and their social order 'British Protectorate' was in accordance with Basotho concept of a 'protectorate'. Between July 1868 and November 1871 the High Commissioner was represented by J. H. Bowker who had his headquarters at Maseru. An observer noted during this period that Basotho loyalty to their chiefs was a reality while that to the British representative was an ideality.³⁷⁴

In November 1871, however, Lesotho was incorporated in the Cape Administration. The country was divided into four administrative districts, each administered by a magistrate under the overall control of C.D. Griffith, the Cape Government-appointed Agent. The four districts and their magistrates were Thaba Bosiu (C.D. Griffith, assisted by E. Rowland), Leribe (C.H. Bell) Berea (W. H. Surmon) and Cornet Spruit, including Quthing (J. Austen).

373. Atmore, A.: The Moorosi Rebellion in Rotberg, R.I. & Mazrui A.A. (ed.) Protest and Power in Black Africa, p. 8

374. Tylden, G. The Rise of the Basuto, p. 122

Considerable tact was needed on the part of these magistrates in dealing with individual chiefs in their magistracies. The chiefs who still regarded themselves as independent were suspicious of British intentions: first in transferring Lesotho administration to the Cape Colony, and, second, in stationing white magistrates in their territories. Moorosi in Quthing, Masupha in Thaba Bosiu and Molapo in Leribe were ready to take up arms against any British official who appeared to encroach on their authority and independence. Their suspicions were strengthened by imposition of hut-tax which the chiefs themselves were ordered to collect; an exercise which was likely to antagonise the people against their chiefs. The people, however, co-operated, and for a time it seemed as if the new administrative system would work smoothly.

Internal and external developments now combined to disturb the quiet. Internally some of the magistrates tactlessly attempted to increase their power at the expense of the chiefs. The first act of Griffith on becoming Government Agent in Lesotho was to ask Masupha to vacate Thaba Bosiu fortress and settle in the open lowlands. Masupha flatly refused.³⁷⁵ But Griffith was tactful enough to leave him alone. Hamilton Hope in the newly created fifth magistracy of Quthing was not so tactful with Moorosi. He was bent on asserting his authority against Moorosi, the most intractable of all Lesotho leaders during this time.

375. Ibid p.116

Unfortunately for Hope, almost every one of his acts offended either against a Basotho custom or against Basotho concept of law and justice. This brought him into frequent confrontations with Moorosi. One such confrontation came when Hope summoned one Raisa to the magisterial court to answer charges on a matter that involved deep 'Sesotho' custom. When Raisa refused to appear Hope fined him for contempt of court. Again Raisa refused to pay the fine, apparently after consultation with Moorosi. The latter now intervened by demanding a Pitso with the magistrate. On June 22, 1877 he led a large crowd of armed Baphuting to the magistracy where the Pitso was held. At the beginning of deliberations Moorosi stood up and asked the people: "Do you obey me or this man?" pointing at Hope. The Pitso roared: "We obey Moorosi". The Pitso ended in a menacing excitement in which a man was killed by a stray bullet.³⁷⁶

Next day (June 23) Moorosi visited the Magistrate and in the conversation that followed Hope warned the Chief about the consequences that would follow his continued defiance of Government authority. Moorosi replied: "You may kill me, but I will not submit or resign any of my privileges".³⁷⁷ He told Hope that he would never surrender his judicial powers to him (Hope) and that he would preserve his independence and continue to judicate in any case he chose.

376. Atmore, A.: The Moorosi Rebellion in Rotberg and Mazrui (ed) Protest and Power in Black Africa p.8.

377. Ibid p.

The second confrontation came at the beginning of December when Hope returned from Maseru where he had been attending a Pitso. Moorosi demanded a Pitso where Baphuting would have to be briefed on the Maseru deliberations. On his return Hope had found rumours circulating that Moorosi wanted to force him (Hope) to acknowledge in public that he (Moorosi) was supreme authority in Quthing and that Moorosi intended to expel Hope from Quthing.³⁷⁸ In the light of these rumours Hope told Moorosi that Baphuting could come to the Pitso but they would have to come unarmed. Moorosi wrote a letter clearly stating his position on the question of arms: "I will not leave my weapons at home when I go to a pitso to speak with a chief Eversince I was born it has been our custom A man does not leave his horns at home. I used to go and visit even Moshesh with my weapons....If the magistrate says I must leave my guns, then it is that he refuses to see me and we shall not meet. I do not want to walk stark naked I am coming to this pitso with a glad heart, as for arms, they are only the appendages of manhood".³⁷⁹ The pitso was subsequently cancelled by Rowland who was Acting Government Agent in Maseru. But before the announcement to this effect could reach Quthing Hamilton Hope had panicked and sent for troops from Palmietfontein across the Tele River. Thereupon Moorosi mobilised his troops and put them on a high state of alert. Fortunately for Hope (perhaps for Moorosi as well) Rowland countermanded the troops before they crossed the Tele. Tension was eased.

378. Ibid. p. 11

379. Ibid. p. 11

The last confrontation between Moorosi and Hamilton Hope was brought about by what may be called Maikela Affair. Early in January 1878 Hope ordered one Maikela and four other men to pay their widowed mothers' hut-tax within a stipulated period. At the expiry of the period the tax was not paid and Hope sent some policemen to arrest the men or seize cattle of equivalent value in lieu of tax owed. Lehana in whose district the four men resided joined the affair against the magistrate and mustered an armed force near the magistracy both to resist arrest of the men and police attempts to seize cattle. When the policemen asked Lehana why he had not appealed to the Government Agent at Maseru against Hope's decision Lehana said: 'I have nothing to do with 'Makhoa' (Europeans). I only know Moorosi'.³⁸⁰ When Moorosi was contacted he denied any knowledge of and responsibility in the affair. He also refused to be involved. As the case developed Bowker approached King Letsie and asked him to intervene. He also told the King that if Moorosi finally rebelled Basotho troops would have to be used against him. Letsie dispatched a high-powered delegation led by his son, Lerothodi, to persuade Moorosi to co-operate with Government, and to persuade Lehana, Maikela and others to pay the fines for defying Government authority. By this time Lehana and his men had retreated to the mountains and it took protracted negotiations between Lerothodi and Moorosi to get the men and Moorosi himself to agree to meet Bowker. In March 1878 Moorosi accompanied by Lehana, Maikela and others and escorted by heavily armed 700-man force met Bowker

at Patlalla Drift. Lehana, Maikela and others agreed to pay fines and for a time the crisis was over. Hamilton Hope was also dismissed from his post as Quthing magistrate and replaced by Austen.

These instances of Moorosi's relations with British officials bring out clearly the Basotho leaders' interpretation of protectorate. They also highlight the Basotho view that the protectorate did not necessarily subject them to British rule. The fundamental issue was whether Lesotho rulers could continue to act independently in spite of their acceptance of British 'protection'. Basotho maintained that they could, the position which shows that they had a different interpretation of the term 'protectorate'. But the British officials either did not grasp this difference or they conveniently ignored it.

The external factors which had unsettling effect on Lesotho emanated from political developments in neighbouring States and the labour market situation in South Africa during this period. The destruction of Langalibalele's chiefdom and that chief's subsequent mistreatment by British authorities in 1873, the arrest of Nehemiah (Moshoeshoe's son) in Griqualand East and his sham trial in 1877 at Kingwilliamstown, the killing of Chief Sandile and arrest of Paramount Sarrili, both Amaxosa chiefs in the eastern frontier; all these alarmed the already suspicious Lesotho leaders who considered themselves the watchdogs of Basotho lands and independence. Cetshwayo's victory over

the British army at Isandlwana early in January 1877 inspired Basotho with confidence. Similar encouragement came from Sekhukhuni who was successfully resisting both Boers and Britons in the Transvaal. Moreover, the Transvaal Boers were restive and most likely to revolt against the recent British annexation of that territory. This would be a welcome development since, some at least of the British troops could be pinned in the Transvaal. Lesotho traditional enemies, the Free Staters, were intensely taken up by events in the Transvaal and they were not overtly menacing to Lesotho during this time. These prospects of successful resistance, no doubt, encouraged recalcitrants such as Moorosi, Masupha and even the level-headed Lerothodi.

The catalyst, however, was provided by the labour market situation in South Africa at this time. Mining companies desperately needed native labour in the mining and railway construction industries. African labourers could be hired from all over South Africa only on one condition: that they were paid their wages in firearms. In spite of regulations promulgated by white governments to prevent Africans from acquiring these weapons the industrialists ^Cacceded to the African labour demand for purely economic reasons. Many African communities were soon armed with firearms, latest and sophisticated weapons in some cases. Some of the Basotho soldiers are said to have been in possession of better rifles than those in the possession of white armies.³⁸¹ Now, as Tylden correctly observed it is the

381. Tylden, G.: The Rise of the Basuto p.121

possession of a superior weapon even more than the skill in its use that nerves men to fight.³⁸² While Basotho rearming thus emboldened them it equally alarmed the Cape government authorities. Cape Colony had no control over all African communities in South Africa but she could at least control the spread of firearms among those African communities which were within her jurisdiction. Accordingly on August 2, 1878 the Cape Parliament passed The Peace Presevation Act providing for the surrender of all firearms by Africans within areas of its jurisdiction. Despite warnings by Griffith and other British officials in Lesotho to the effect that Basotho would resist the disarmament the Cape Government insisted that they must be disarmed.

At this very time, as it has already been shown, Chief Moorosi was jostling with British officials for power. He had also completed fortification work at Mount Qoboshane and large stores of ammunition and grain had been dumped in specially prepared huts and caves. His troops, known to be the best shots in Lesotho,³⁸³ were armed to the teeth with firearms. As news of the disarmament trickled into Lesotho old Moorosi must have known that he would be the first to be disarmed. Nor did the British officers in Lesotho make any attempt to alleviate his fears. Early in November 1878 Austen arrested his son, Lehana, and several other men on a charge of stock theft. It was alleged that during the

382. Tylden, G. The Rise of the Basuto, p. 121.

383. Moodie, D.F.C.: History of the Battles and Co. Vol. 2, p. 186. Also Atmore, A.: Sotho Arms and Ammunition in Journal of African History, Vol. 12. p. 542

Maikela Affair³⁸⁴ while they were in hiding in the nearby hills they stole some horses and cattle. The arrests generated much excitement and anxiety among the Baphuting. On November 10 the accused were tried in a crowded court-room and convicted. They were sentenced to banishment in the penal stations of Cape Town and East London. Moorosi was particularly aggrieved at the severity of the sentence on Lehana who was said to have been only an accomplice in the crime. While arrangements for their transportation to the penal stations were being made the convicts were locked up in ramshackle prison near Quthing magistracy. Meanwhile plans to rescue the prisoners, apparently with Moorosi's connivance, were under way. On the eve of the new year, 1879, a band of armed Baphuting overpowered the guards and freed the prisoners. Once more Lehana and his fellow fugitives took refuge in the mountains. When Moorosi was contacted he denied any involvement in the rescue operation. He also denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the fugitives and refused to assist in the investigations.

Moorosi's attitude towards the whole affair convinced British officials that he was privy to the rescue of the prisoners. Henceforth he was treated as a rebel and both Austen and Griffith began sending reports to Cape Town on the possibility of the use of force. On February 6 and 7, 1879 Griffith was at Matsieng to brief King Letsie on the developments in Quthing. He told Letsie that if Moorosi went into open rebellion he (Letsie) would have to provide Basotho troops, warning that if white troops alone

384. Supra. p.371

were used to suppress Baphuting at the end of the rebellion Quthing District would be confiscated and appropriated to white settlement. This was a blackmail that King Letsie as the custodian of Basotho lands was not likely to survive. Griffith also deceived Letsie in a manner unworthy of high British Official. He assured the King that if he assisted the Government to suppress the Buphuting the disarmament proclamation would be rescinded.³⁸⁵ Griffith knew fully well that Basotho loved their guns as much as they loved their lands and that by guaranteeing both he had dangled a carrot that Letsie could hardly resist. Weak in brain and limited in vision as well as uncircumspect in matters that called for diplomatic finesse, the King could not perceive that old Moorosi had taken up arms precisely in defence of both Basotho lands and arms. He duly committed Lesotho troops against Moorosi and the Baphuting people.

Moorosi either despised Letsie or he was over-confident that in the event of war all Basotho would rally to Baphuting cause. He appears to have made no effort to keep in touch with the King and to give him his own version of developments in Quthing.³⁸⁶ There are indications that many of the Lesotho commanders, notably Lerothodi, were sympathetic to his cause.³⁸⁷ But Moorosi failed to turn this into official policy by winning Letsie onto his own side.

385. Atmore, A. Moorosi Rebellion in Rotberg and Mazrui (ed.) Protest and Power in Black Africa, p. 27

386. It would appear that Moorosi made efforts to persuade the King's sons to join him. Ibid. Atmore, A. p. 29

387. Lerothodi had married into Moorosi's family.

However much individuals or groups of Basotho might have wished to support him they were in the final analysis obliged to obey the King's orders. In this respect Moorosi was out-smarted by Griffith who foresaw the possibility of the entire Lesotho army joining Moorosi. It was not so much the bringing of Basotho troops against Moorosi as the avoidance of their combination with him that Griffith sought to commit Letsie to the support of the British.

On February 27, Griffith officially informed King Letsie that Moorosi had 'rebelled' against authority and that he (Letsie) should send Lesotho troops to a concentration point near the Orange River where he (Griffith) would meet them. Molapo and Masupha, at the behest of the King, dispatched contingents under their sons, Jonathan and Lepoqo respectively. By mid-March all Lesotho troops had mustered on the northern bank of the Orange under the overall command of Lerothodi. At the same time white troops were camped at Palmietfontein on the Cape Colony's side of the Tele River. The plan was that the Lesotho contingent would cross the Orange and join the white troops at Palmietfontein whence the entire force would then cross the Tele and attack Moorosi. But a misunderstanding developed between Lerothodi and Jonathan. The issue in dispute seems to have arisen out of the very high principle of whether Basotho soldiers should be used to shed Basotho Blood. Lerothodi's conscience reeled. He finally refused to move to Palmietfontein. About 1,200 Lesotho troops presumably under the command of Jonathan, crossed the Orange River on March 16 and joined the colonial troops at

Palmietfontein. Next day, March 17, 1879 Griffith led the entire mixed force across the Tele and skirmished with Baphuting detachments which Moorosi had stationed on the borders to check enemy advance. Lerothodi with his 700-man force appears to have advanced no farther and never took part in the whole operation. Indeed, even the 1200 men who crossed the Tele with Griffith appear to have participated only in the periphery of the fighting.

Meanwhile Baphuting main force, commanded by Moorosi himself, had retreated to Mount Qoboshane where it took positions behind the almost impregnable fortification works. After skirmishing with the border detachments on the northern banks of the Tele River Griffith led his 2000 strong mixed force to the main fortress, arriving at its base on March 24, 1879. It was not the first time Griffith saw Mount Qoboshane. Early in 1877 he and Austen had visited the fortress and at that time the two visitors had agreed that it looked even more formidable than Thaba Bosiu. For the last ten years Moorosi had been fortifying this stronghold. The mountain was about 800 feet high. Three of its faces (the north, east and south) were steep cliffs rising perpendicularly to the top. Only the western face was a slope, rising gradually for about one mile and substanding an angle of about 30 degrees. The flat top measured about a mile long and half a mile broad. It was well supplied with springs of pure water and plentiful grazing. As the steep sides were virtually impregnable Moorosi had concentrated his fortification works on the gradual slope to the west.

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About nine stone-walls or schanzes measuring twelve feet high and spaced at intervals up ran across the slope. Crossing these and running down-slope was another system of schanzes. Each of these walls, whether running across or down the slope, had a double row of loop-holes so that an enemy attempting to go over any except the first of these walls was exposed to rifle fire from all directions. Special huts and caves had been prepared on the flat top and stocked with ammunition and food stores.³⁸⁸

On arrival at Mount Qoboshane Griffith pitched camp on the western base, facing the system of schanzes just described. He had two seven-pounders and some rocket tubes. On the morning of April 8, 1879 the British stormed the fortress. As the artillery gun shelled the fortifications troops rushed the first wall. They were repulsed within nine minutes by a well directed fire from the Baphuting, losing five men killed and 17 wounded. During the month of May Baphuting carried out successful raids against enemy pickets, often inflicting loss. On May 30, Griffith gave up his command and returned to Maseru. He was succeeded by Colonel Brabant who had recently joined the force. Brabant had brought with him some reinforcements and a more powerful artillery gun - a twelve-pounder Armstrong. On June 5, he launched a second attack on the Baphuting fortress; but it failed as ignominiously as the first. Between this June attack and mid-November there was little, if any, military activity around Mount Moorosi, as the British soldiers came to call Mount Qoboshane.

388. Moodie, D.F.C.: History of the Battles, Vol.12. pp.185-186

Something of a stalemate had been reached. There were, however, attempts between the Baphuting chief and Cape Colony's Premier Sprigg to force a diplomatic break-through. But negotiations collapsed when Sprigg insisted on unconditional surrender. Moorosi declared that he preferred death to such humiliating peace.

Sprigg does not appear to have appreciated the gravity of the situation in Lesotho. After failing to reach a political settlement with Moorosi he went to Maseru where he addressed a Pitso and told Basotho that they were to be disarmed and that Quthing District was to be opened to European occupation. It was a stroke of luck that Basotho did not rise instantly and join Moorosi who was still holding out on his mountain. Towards the end of October Sprigg replaced Brabant and his troops with Colonel Bayly's. The new commander had brought with him over 300 white regulars and about 500 native levies supported by more field guns and one mortar. Bayly began by surveying all the rock faces of Mount Moorosi. He came to a conclusion that the schanzed western face could not be successfully stormed. He decided to scale the eastern precipice whence the Baphuting least expected an attack. Since Colonel Bayly took command he had kept up mortar bombardment of Baphuting positions day and night. Now he had ladders made and on November 19, 1879 his troopers, using the ladders climbed up the flat top of Mount Moorosi. It was a dramatic affair. While Baphuting were concentrating their defences on the western slope, the only direction whence attack could possibly come, their rear went up in flames shortly after mid-night.

It took some time before Baphuting could reach the scene of attack from the schanzes lower down the slope. By the time they arrived the enemy had occupied the entire residential area in full force. Heavy fighting, some of it hand to hand, ensued but the surprise element had given the British a decided advantage. Many of the defenders, including Moorosi, were killed. By early morning all fighting had ceased. Mount Moorosi was captured, marking the end not only of 'Moorosi Rebellion' but of a career that was greatness itself.

Even before the Baphuting drama was finally played out Basotho were becoming increasingly anxious about the British intentions. Sprigg's announcement on October 16 that they were to be disarmed and that Quthing was to be opened for European settlement had accentuated fears that the British intended to destroy political authority of traditional rulers. There were rumours in the air that Lesotho was to be integrated into the Cape administration, a development which could lead to the appropriation of Basotho territories for white settlement. Basotho were also worried by Sprigg's announcement at the October 16 Pitso that their hut-tax was to be increased. These developments were seen by most of the Basotho as virtual loss of their independence and therewith their land.

When at the end of December 1879 Griffith called upon them to surrender their guns Basotho flatly refused. Early in January 1880 King Letsie petitioned both the Cape Parliament and British Government in London protesting against

disarmament.³⁸⁹ At the same time the King issued directives to all Lesotho chiefs, including those in Griqualand East, to the effect that they should make ready for any eventuality. Eventually both London and Cape Town rejected Letsie's petition and Lesotho and the British rapidly drifted to war. In spite of warnings from officials on the spot that Basotho meant to resist the disarmament by force of arms Cape authorities held to the view that they would surrender their guns without fighting. The guess was not far wide of the mark. A few chiefs including Jonathan Molapo and one Tukunya did co-operate with the white administration. But there could be no doubt that Masupha, Lerothodi and Joel Molapo were determined to take up arms. Masupha was quick to indicate this when on July 19 he attacked Tukunya and his followers and drove them across the border into the Free State. Griffith immediately abandoned his Berea Magistracy and moved to Maseru. Both Masupha and Lerothodi put their troops on a high state of alert and began to put fortification works on Thaba Bosiu and Masite in better order.

Meanwhile Cape Government sent arms and ammunition to Maseru, Leribe and Mafeteng. Troops were also dispatched to Orange Free State whence they marched towards Lesotho border. At the beginning of September 1880 Basotho troops besieged all British magisterial posts. Joel Molapo, operating in the Leribe sector, besieged over 200 men under magistrate Bell. Farther

389. Tylden, G.: The Rise of the Basuto, p. 138

south Griffith had long abandoned Berea magistracy. Masupha now besieged about 500 Government troops under Colonel Bayly at Maseru, the Government Agent's headquarters and Griffith's residence. In the Mafeteng-Marija sector Lerothodi beleaguered Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng where Surmon and Barkly respectively were rendered helpless.

But as was noted earlier not all Basotho took up arms against the British. Jonathan Molapo and George Moshoeshe, for an instance, fought actively on the side of the British throughout the war. But by far the greatest majority, including Basotho in Griqualand East and Abatembu from Herschel district, joined the resistance. By the middle of September the war was in full swing. Cape forces under General Clarke were on their way to relieve the beleaguered British posts in Lesotho. In the same month Lerothodi intercepted General Carrington's relief column, 212 strong, which was marching from Griqualand East to relieve Mafeteng. After a brief exchange of fire Lerothodi who did not want to offer pitched battles with concentrated enemy columns on unfavourable ground withdrew; Carrington reached Mafeteng, relieved Barkly and fortified the post. At about this same time Coloney Southey and Major Grant at the head of 423 men were marching from Herschel to Mohale's Hoek which they relieved on October 4.

Meanwhile on September 21, 1880 Lerothodi, in what was the first and last departure from his tactics, had attacked Mafeteng with a force of about 7,000 men. Mafeteng, as we have

just noted, had been fortified by Carrington. Lerothodi's attempt at Zulu-like tactics was severely punished. The attack was repulsed with heavy loss to Basotho. Thereafter he stuck to his tactics. He never attempted to hold any hill or mountain fortress in great force. He avoided mass attack on strongly fortified enemy positions as well as head-on collision with concentrated enemy columns. He maintained an elastic defence which gave way when attacked and easily coalesced and attacked when the opportunity offered itself. This meant that Basotho scouts had to keep constant watch over enemy movements. Lerothodi's intelligence net-work proved equal to the task in this respect. Basotho were thus able to hit at the weakest parts of the British columns without significant losses to themselves.

The success of Lerothodi's tactics was made easier by the fact that the British were moving in unwieldy wagon convoys in a wet and unfamiliar terrain. This slowed down their movements and deprived them of quick attacks and significant successes. The British commanders were faced with a curious logistical problem. In order to establish effective contact with their elusive enemy they had to deploy their troops over a wide expanse of unfamiliar country. This could not be done without dangerously thinning and over-extending their comparatively smaller numbers and exposing them to Basotho overwhelming attacks. This remained their problem throughout the war and eventually it proved to be their final undoing. Meanwhile Lerothodi was fully informed of public opinion in South Africa and in Great Britain.

regarding the War. He was aware that there were many individuals and groups in these quarters who opposed the war. He made it a point that every Mosotho soldier was informed of it. Basotho soldiers therefore came to believe that they were fighting a just war and that there were strong currents of public opinion in their favour all over the world. Lerothodi was also careful to maintain Moshoeshoe's tradition of 'friendship with the Queen' by telling his troops that they were not fighting against the 'Queen of England' but the Cape Colony. If there were any doubts in the Basotho's minds that Lerothodi might have been departing from Moshoeshoe's tradition they were effectively dispelled. On the battlefield itself Lerothodi upheld Basotho morale by publicising every engagement with the enemy as having ended in favour of Lesotho. Throughout the war therefore morale was high among the Basotho, confident that they were fighting a just war and that they were winning it.

Lerothodi was charged with a crucial responsibility of preventing the British forces from capturing Matsieng, the Royal residence of King Letsie and the nerve-centre of the entire resistance. King Letsie constituted a co-ordinating point with other Lesotho commanders such as Masupha and Joel Molapo as well as those in Griqualand East such as Makwai who were pinning down sections of the British forces in their areas. With a brilliant combination of guerrilla strategy and propaganda warfare Lerothodi measured up to his task. The British never reached Matsieng.

Basotho in Griqualand East rose against the British on October 4, 1880. Chief Makwai invited the Government Agent there, Charles Brownlee and Strachan to a Pitso at Matatiele where a detachment of Basotho had plotted to murder them. Brownlee and a few Europeans, however managed to escape. They fled to Kokstad. There they alerted all Europeans who quickly formed a laager defended by white volunteers. Meanwhile the rising spread like bush-fire. Large numbers of Griquas and Abatembu came out in full force and joined the resistance. Farther towards the coast Amampondomise under Chiefs Mhlonhlo and Mditshwa rose up and massacred a party of European soldiers, including Hamilton Hope who had been Resident Agent among them. They then besieged Europeans at Maclean and Tsolo and at once relayed messages to Pondoland; but the Amampondo whose leaders had been set at each other's throat by the British, failed to rally. Instead one of the chiefs in a bid to win British recognition and support against his rival placed a detachment of Pondo troops at the disposal of the British against Mpondomise resisters. On October 31, Tsolo was relieved. Meanwhile Charles Brownlee and Strachan based at Kokstad raised a volunteer corps and reinforced it with native levies recruited mainly from Amafengu, Amabhaca and 'Natal natives'. With these they were able to seize the initiative against the Basotho, Griquas and Batembu resisters. On December 18, 1880 Chief Mhlonhlo with 500 men was trapped in the Tsitsa River Gorge by a British force and cut to pieces. Mhlonhlo lost about 300 men. The defeat almost knocked Amampondomise out of the war, Mhlonhlo himself taking refuge in Lesotho.

In Lesotho fighting was only beginning to stabilise into a war. In Maseru sector where Masupha was in command there was limited active fighting. The sharp skirmishes on October 10 and 11 and again on the 28th brought no change in the relative positions of the antagonists. Masupha continued to pin down Griffiths troops which could have been invaluable against Lerothodi farther south. In Leribe district there were frequent and more active skirmishes. But here too Joel Molapo continued to invest Major Bell's troops. In November 1880 Bell was reinforced by 500 men, but still he could not force a break-through. There was a sharp skirmish on November 8, but Joel Molapo stuck to his guns and the siege continued. In January 1881 two Boer contingents were dispatched to the relief of Leribe and Maseru but both deserted and never reached their destinations.³⁹⁰

From the early stages of the war it was clear that the out-come would be decided in the south. Here Lerothodi was holding a road with 7,000 to 8,000 men and making the war too expensive in terms of life and money. While the British commanders could not strike a decisive blow at his elastic formations Lerothodi inflicted losses of the magnitude that white soldiers were not used to with annoying if not alarming frequency. The first major success of Lerothodi since he was repulsed by Carrington at Mafeteng came when he cut up

390. These Boer detachments had been recruited from the Transvaal; G. Tyden: The Rise of the Basotho pp 163-164

General Clarke's advanced party of 300 men at Qalabane. This hill is located half-way between Wepener and Mafeteng and along the road linking the two towns. Lerothodi had taken positions on the hill with only half his actual strength visible. General Clarke, marching from Wepener, saw only about 1,500 Lesotho troops and detailed 300 of his column to drive them off. Lerothodi attacked with his entire force. Clarke's advance party was routed and driven in on the main column, having lost 39 men. Undaunted Clarke proceeded to Mafeteng where he established his Headquarters. It was from there that on October 22 and again on November 1, 1880 Clarke attacked Lerothodi's own town, few miles west of Thaba Tshoeu, and burned it down. On both occasions Lerothodi retaliated with sharp strikes, inflicting loss and mutilating a few of Clarke's troops.

After these skirmishes Clarke left Lesotho to take command in the Griqua-Tembu sector where Basotho, Griquas, Abatembu and Amampondomise had risen against the Europeans. Carrington took over command in lesotho but proved to be as unequal to Lerothodi as Clarke had been. Light and undecisive brushes continued to occur and, to the annoyance of British officers, after every such skirmish Lerothodi told his officers and men that they had repulsed the enemy. These purely propaganda tactics seemed to be confirmed, at any rate in the eyes of Lerothodi's troops, when Chief Maama collided with Carrington's force near the town of Sepechele in mid-January, 1881.

Carrington was reconnoitring the surrounding country and had a burgher force of 400 men as his advance party. The force was attacked by Chief Maama and knocked out of action. Basotho killed 10 and wounded 5 of their number. The remainder fell back on the main force which was then surrounded by Basotho and attacked. Although the attack was repulsed Carrington retired without achieving anything in his reconnaissance plans, having suffered 16 men killed and 21 wounded.

Although hostilities in the Griqua-Tembu-Mpondomise sector were more active than in either Leribe or Maseru they dragged indecisively into the New Year. The Mpondomise were knocked out of the war in Mid-January 1881. Chief Mditshwa surrendered to the British on January 14. On the same day Mhlonhlo's troops were, for the second time, routed at Tsitsa Gorge and that seemed to leave only Abatembu in the field. Farther up in the Matatide area Basotho and some Griquas were still holding out. They had fortified caves and Brownlee found it difficult to dislodge them. One of his officers, Captain Usher, was shot and killed in front of one of these caves. Hit-and-run fighting continued until May 15, 1881.

Towards the end of January 1881 Quthing, for the first time since the death of Moorosi, rose against Europeans. Baphuting, Batlokwa and sections of Basotho banded themselves into a formidable force of about 600 men. It is not clear where their instructions came from. They may have come from Matsieng or they may have been conceived by their local officers.

Be this as it may their target was cutting the communication and supply lines along the road that led from Cape Colony through Herschel to the O.F.S. This would have struck a death-blow to the British forces operating in Lesotho. As they marched from around Mt. Moorosi towards the Orange they came up with Austen at the head of 300-man force, some distance south-west of Mt. Moorosi. In the fighting that followed on Mokojomela Plateau, Austen and eight others were killed (January 28, 1881). Ledingoana, chief of Batlokwa cut off Austen's head and sent it to Letsie, at Matsieng.³⁹¹

During February there was very little fighting in the southern sector. The only engagement to note occurred at Ramaphidikwe where Lerothodi charged colonel Brabant's 500-man force and suffered 25 men killed. Nevertheless Lerothodi had achieved his objective, namely to prevent the British from reaching Morija and Matsieng. Brabant was driven back to camp.

Since January 10, 1881 Lerothodi and Joel Molapo, the principal resistance leaders, had sent a petition to the Cape Government asking for terms, which they stated must include retention by Basotho of their arms. The petition was handed to the Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Hercules Robinson. The contents of the petition were sent to the Colonial office in London. The colonial office

391. It is not clear why Ledingoana did this. George Tylden suggests that the trophy was intended as a pledge of loyalty to the Lesotho monarch, thus marking the age-old hostility between Batlokwa and Basotho.

supported the petition and urged the desirability of ending the war on the Cape Government.³⁹² Cape Government however, insisted on unconditional surrender of Basotho arms and suggested that Quthing might be severed from Lesotho. Lerothodi and Joel rejected the terms and returned to their command posts.

The second phase of the war was even less active than the first. Fortunately it was also shorter. General Clarke, recently returned from Tembuland, tried to force open the Mafeteng-Morija Road but was, as in many similar attempts in the past, checked by Lerothodi. (March 1881). The latter had mustered his men in the hills along the road to contest Clarke's passage. On seeing Basotho pickets Clarke demonstrated with the hope that Lerothodi might be enticed to attack. As late as this Clarke had not grasped Lerothodi's tactics. Anyhow, Lerothodi declined the offer and contended himself with directing long-range fire. Clarke was forced to abandon his plans. Several of his men had been killed and others wounded, including Carrington, in this kind of firing. As Clarke retired Lerothodi despatched some 500 men to kill the guardsmen and seize the enemy cattle and horses. On March 24, 1881 Lerothodi's men killed 3, wounded 2 and captured 2 of the guardsmen and then drove off the stock. Lerothodi subsequently released the two captives and sent them to their camp.

From May 1881 strong factors began to militate against the continuance of the war. From the point of view of Basotho Lerothodi

392. Tylden, G.: The Rise of the Basuto, pp.165-166.

was worried over the approaching winter. This could make it difficult for him to keep men on the field. Winter is also harvest time and failure to bring grain home might result in a whole year of famine. From the point of the Cape Government the war was becoming too expensive. The Government was finding it difficult to raise more volunteers. Clarke had requisitioned for 8,000 men to make up a striking force and 2,000 more to perform garrison duties. The Government could not hope to raise that number. Meanwhile the anti-war party, both in England and Cape, was gaining strength and it was a question of time before Sprigg ministry collapsed. Both sides to the conflict were therefore responsive to diplomatic pressure. Father Lebian of the Catholic Mission in Lesotho seized the opportunity to bring the two sides to the conference table. On April 17, 1881 Griffith met Lerothodi near Maseru and discussed terms. Lerothodi had been authorised by his father King Letsie to accept any terms except the disarming of Basotho.

Robinson who attended the talks as a mediator announced the settlement on April 29, 1881. Basotho were to submit to the British authority. They could keep their guns provided they had them registered and paid £1 annual licence fee per gun. There was to be no confiscation of Lesotho territory. Basotho had to pay a fine of 5,000 head of cattle. There was to be no victimisation of Basotho who had remained 'loyal' to the Government during the war. Lesotho leaders were more than satisfied with the settlement. They could keep their weapons and no Lesotho territory was to be confiscated. This meant that Quthing would

continue to be part of Lesotho. Basotho had got all they wanted, the other provisions of the settlement being idle talk since Cape authorities had no means of enforcing their observance.

Thus ended what has since been called 'The Gun War'.

The Basotho had fought well. Theal has described the War as "the most formidable attempt ever made by any nation in South Africa
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to throw off European supremacy". Tactically Lerothodi exploded the myth that given a free hand European armies could always make a short work of the African peoples. In this war the British appeared like a dazed bull before a matador Lerothodi. In contrast to other resistance groups in South Africa Basotho amply demonstrated their ability to adapt themselves to the conditions of modern warfare. Lerothodi's appreciation of the importance of public opinion and propaganda in war was without parallel in the South African resistance. Even at the conference table with Griffith and Sir Hercules Robinson Lesotho leaders showed political acumen that Europeans had never seen in South Africa.

The Gun War marked the end of African attempts to prevent imposition of white rule in South Africa. By 1880 all the major African groups had been subjected to British rule: the Amaxosa in 1878, the Amazulu and Bapedi in quick succession in 1879. Basotho retained their Protectorate status in 1881.

Whatever risings were attempted after that date were what Dr. Denoon has called 'resistance from within', that is under the hegemony of the white rule. That kind of resistance, of course, has continued into our own day. But the primary resistance in which independent African states were attempting to resist imposition of white rule was broken up by the year 1880. Later operations against minor independent groups such as the Venda in northern Transvaal were no more than mopping up operations in the wake of a triumphant and expanding Imperial Factor.

CHAPTER 7
-----CONCLUSION

In this Chapter an attempt is made to synthesize the material presented in the foregoing study and to derive from it few statements of a general nature regarding the South African resistance. It is hoped that this will not only give a complete picture of the resistance but will also highlight its intrinsic features and the fundamental issues involved. The first question to ask is: What was the conflict about? What were the issues that lay at its roots? I have argued throughout this study that the real issue was African independence. This, of course, was inextricably tied up with possession of land. Land constituted an economic basis of that independence. And, of course, African polities then, as do modern societies of our own day, recognised the fact that no claim to statehood and sovereignty could be maintained without physical possession of territory. Land therefore was everything, as Moshoeshoe once pointed out. In economic terms the importance of land to the Southern Bantu cannot be overstated. They needed land for grazing, cultivation and for hunting. The latter was not only the source of proteinous addition to the diet but, even more important, it was the source of animal skins which were worked into blankets and other forms of clothing. When Chief Cungwa told Europeans: "To us this tract of land is life, and if we were to be deprived of it we would

lose our life"³⁹⁴ he was responding to a suggestion that he and his people return to their old territory which Cungwa thought provided neither grazing nor game. The political significance of land was expressed by Chief Sandile in the 1850's: "The patrimony of a chief is not cattle; it is land and men".³⁹⁵ Moshoeshoe was expressing the same point in a much broader sense when he said: "Cattle and horses are nothing, but land is everything".³⁹⁶ It is evident that African leaders saw their independent existence in terms of land. European encroachment on their territories, therefore, struck a blow at the very basis of that independence. The issue of independence and not land per se was central in the South African resistance.

The resistance itself took slightly different forms in different communities. Among the Amaxosa, southern Basotho and Bapedi it at first took the form of cattle raids and destruction of Europeans' property. The houses were often burnt down and their crops destroyed. There was some shedding of blood at times in the wake of these raids. Europeans regarded this traditional system of warfare as 'theft, plunder and murder' perpetrated by 'treacherous and irreclaimable savages'. The Amazulu who had since the time of Shaka developed the system of total warfare often fought pitched battles with the Europeans. But in either case the objective was to prevent the latter from occupying land.

394. Marais, J.S.: Maynier, p.15.

395. MacMillan, W.M.: Bantu, Boer and Briton, p.271

396. Germond: Chronicles of the Basutoland, Introduction.

To what extent were the Africans united in their resistance to European colonisation? The foregoing study shows that throughout the resistance they were never united except in the most local sense. Among the southern Nguni clans continued to act at the discretion and under the direction of their chiefs. The Amanqika, Amagcaleka, Amandlambe and Amaqunukwabe, even when they rose up simultaneously against Europeans, continued to operate under separate and independent commands of their respective chiefs. Participation in any operations against Europeans depended on the will of individual chiefs. A particular chief could choose to remain neutral or even collaborate with the Europeans in any such operations. This state of affairs made co-ordination difficult and effective resistance impossible. In Lesotho there was a higher degree of co-ordination with the King constituting more or less nerve-centre of the resistance operations. But even here the subordinate chiefs could act independently. In the early days of the Orange Free State Chief Poshuli often mounted unilateral attacks against the Boers without reference to Moshoeshoe. In the Lesotho-Free State War (1865-68) Molapo not only signed a separate peace treaty with the Boers but he actually became Orange Free State subject without Moshoeshoe's consent. When Moorosi challenged the British in 1879 he successfully defied King Letsie's counsel. The only major zones of resistance where there appears to have been centralised command were Zululand and Bapedi. But even there succession disputes tended to dissipate resistance energies in favour of Europeans. Mpande, for an instance, practically allied himself with the Europeans against Dingane and acceded to the Zulu

throne with their support. In the northern Transvaal Mampuru took away much of Sekhukhuni's following. All in all it is evident that all major resistance groups suffered from internal disunity and lack of co-ordination in their resistance, much to the advantage of the white forces.

Even more serious was the fact that the major resistance groups failed to see the need for unity or, at any rate, to co-ordinate the entire resistance, in the face of foreign invasion. No conscious effort was made to come to one another's aid. The Amazulu, Amaxosa, southern Basotho and Bapedi stayed aloof whenever anyone of them was at war with the Europeans. It is true that these African states were separated by great distances; but this is not sufficient explanation of their 'going it alone' policy. During the Difacane upheavals Zulu armies went nearly all over South Africa and even in central and parts of East Africa. A more persuasive explanation, perhaps, might be that in some cases the resistance wars were fought at about the same time in several states. While, for an example, Zululand was at war with the British in 1879 the Europeans in the Transvaal were pinning down the Bapedi. At about this same time the Cape Colonials were menacing Lesotho in Trans-Orangia, and war with the Amaxosa had just finished (1878). This, however, is still unsatisfactory explanation. In the thirties, forties and fifties the wars were more or less isolated and separate in terms of time and space. Even then Africans never came to one another's aid. The only gesture of co-operation on record was in 1851 when Moshoeshoe dispatched gun-powder 'packed on horseback' to the Amaxosa then fighting the British on the eastern

frontier. Any other form of co-operation took diplomatic form beyond which it never went.

Professor L. M. Thompson has attributed lack of unity among Africans to lack of racial consciousness. It is a matter of considerable doubt whether this explanation is sufficient. There is sufficient evidence that Africans were aware that they were confronted by a white race. The Amaxosa often spoke of 'driving the white men into the sea'. Moshoeshoe once said that there was no place for white men in Trans-Orangia. In the mid-1870's there was a general fear amongst Africans that white people were plotting to destroy their states and confiscate their territories. Nor is it the whole truth that Boers and Britons were united against Africans by purely racial considerations. The fact that the two white groups often quarrelled and sometimes fought bitter wars shows that race was not uppermost in their relationship. It was the differences on the procedure to be followed in dispossessing the African and who, between them, should have a bigger slice of the booty once it was wrested from the African that led to their quarrels. But they both agreed that Africans must be dispossessed. And that is what united them. It was the realisation that they had common interests rather than they had racial identity that united Boer and Briton against Bantu. Africans on the other hand were aware that they were being dispossessed as a race. But they did not see unified action as a logical means of defending their separate territories and 'independences'. So long as Lesotho retained

her territory and independence what happened in Zululand or Xosaland or Bapedi was not of immediate concern of Basotho and vice versa. In short defence of common interests against common enemy failed to bring Africans together. It may be said, in conclusion, that whereas Africans identified the enemy they lamentably failed to identify the most effective means of dealing with him.

Lack of unity within the resistance movement was exploited by Europeans to their own advantage. They were able to make allies from among weaker groups and chiefdoms who either thought Europeans were lesser evils than their African traditional enemies or that they were too weak to resist European encroachment with any hope of success. The most consistent collaborators of the first type were the Amafengu and the so-called 'Natal Kaffirs' among the Nguni and Barolong and Batlokwa in Trans-Orangia. The Amaswazi appear to have allied themselves with Europeans in order to secure protection against Zululand. But their collaboration with the Boers against Bapedi appears to have been actuated by fear of Boer encroachment on their own territories. To this extent their collaboration may be seen as a form of resistance against Europeans. Whether protection or resistance orientated, these collaborators contributed significantly to European military successes. For one thing they were familiar with the local terrain and often fought in dangerous fastnesses which Europeans would have found difficult to penetrate. For another, they were familiar with African traditional tactics and strategies. The first point was forcefully made by King Moshoeshoe when he complained that whites had numerous

African spies who knew every path and track in Lesotho. The second argument was demonstrated by Amaswazi in the Bapedi-British War of 1879. Several British soldiers who fought in that war, including the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley, admitted that victory would have been difficult or even impossible had Amaswazi troops not been there. African collaborators were, therefore, an important factor in the final defeat of the resisters by Europeans.

Another factor which led to the collapse of African resistance was the impact of Western civilisation. Operating more subtly and in all aspects of African social life Western influences soon undermined the stability of African States. Introduction of European commodities destroyed African traditional skills and industries. Disparity in trade impoverished Africans and eventually pushed them into European service at starvation wages. This economic strangulation was reinforced by African progressive loss of land. At social or cultural level Western influences, especially Christian Missions, wrought havoc on African traditional social values. Africans were told to stop 'the sin of buying wives', the practice of 'ancestor worship', the belief in 'witch-doctors' and 'witch-craft'. The harmful effects of these 'teachings' lay not so much in the stoppage of these traditional practices as in the effects that stoppage had on the entire fabric of African societies. For, at the centre of all these practices was the chief. Much of his political authority and his revenue flowed from these social institutions. It is clear that missionary 'teachings' against 'lobola', 'ancestor-worship',

'witch-craft', polygamy, etc. tampered with the peoples' loyalties to chiefly authority and to traditional social institutions. There is no gain-saying the fact that from the point of view of modernisation of and improvement in the quality of life Christian missions did much good. But from the point of view of the resistance it can hardly be denied that they crippled the stability of African societies and rendered them more vulnerable to European military onslaughts.

The impact of Western civilisation came to a head at the end of the 1860's when diamonds were discovered in Trans-Orangia. Fortune-seekers all over the world rushed to the diamond fields and swelled white population in South Africa. Politically the discovery of new wealth strengthened European determination to break up African States and establish their rule in the entire country. Economically the new wealth boosted up the financial power of the Europeans. This meant that they could now deploy greater resources against the resistance movement. Sophisticated and more efficient weapons which were being produced in Europe could now be purchased in larger quantities and at minimum financial inconvenience. Other agencies of Western civilisation such as churches, schools and money economy gained momentum and operated with even greater force among African societies. In short by mid-1870's African states were subjected to greater strain at social as well as at economic levels. Their military resistance was worse than hopeless.

A further weakness of Africans in the entire resistance lay in the slow adaptation of traditional methods of warfare to suit the new military situation. Looking at the rate of adaptation from the perspective of their own time and circumstances few would deny that Africans made impressive progress. But time factor was against them. White expansion was too rapid to allow African ideas of warfare to free themselves from the shackles of tradition that was overlain by primitive belief-systems. The consequence was that by the time the development of African tactics and strategies reached anything like modern guerrilla approach much of the vitality of African societies had been sapped down.

The process of adaptation progressed at different rates in different areas of resistance. Among the Amaxosa guerrilla strategy of sorts emerged early in the conflict. Avoidance of head on collision with concentrated enemy columns and mass attacks on strongly fortified enemy positions was generally adhered to. Jungle and mountaineous terrain was effectively used. And although the Amaxosa continued to depend on the assegai their effort to acquire firearms was impressive. By 1846 700 to 800 Amaxosa fighting men were mounted on good horses and armed with firearms. But unlike modern guerrilla approach Amaxosa resistance continued to suffer from lack of central or unified direction. This made effective co-ordination difficult. So the resistance on the eastern frontier, impressive as it was, never really reached the level of guerrilla warfare in the modern sense of that term.

Although they could easily have done so they made no attempt to establish a firm base, e.g. Gcalekaland, from which they could operate. Their military detachments made no effort to occupy ground even when they were successful.

The most impressive rate of adaption in the entire South African resistance was that of southern Basotho. Recent upheavals of Difecane had taught them to improvise and to adjust their mode of warfare to the needs of their military situation. During those upheavals they had adopted the strategy of mountain fortresses and they stuck to it as long as it served them well. At the same time they had learned, under the guidance of Moshoeshoe, the importance of statesmanship in warfare. It had been a combination of military ingenuity and statesmanship that had saved the Basotho from destruction by Shaka and Mzilikaze. Basotho were therefore highly flexible and ready to modify or even change their ideas to meet new military situations.

From the beginning of the 1830's when European mode of warfare was introduced in Trans-Orangia they made strenuous effort to acquire firearms and horses. They also saw the need to understand the thinking of the new enemy and of communication with him. To this end Moshoeshoe went out of his way to find missionaries to settle in Lesotho. With these apparatuses Basotho were able to continue their policy of combined military and diplomatic resistance. While they continued to profess friendship with the British Queen they at the same time continued to fight her subjects and her

representatives in South Africa. By the end of the 1870's the mountain strategy had ceased to be useful. The capture of Moorosi's stronghold, by far the strongest fortified position in the entire South African resistance, served a salutary lesson to Lesotho leaders. In the Gun War that followed within months of the collapse of Moorosi's resistance Basotho abandoned the fortress strategy in favour of guerrilla one. They won the war and retained their protectorate status under the British Crown.

In comparison with Amaxosa and southern Basotho the Amazulu were the most conservative in military matters. This is easy to understand. Shakan system had given Zululand the most glorious military history. Politically the Zulu state was more unified than any other African State in South Africa. Zulu militarism had only been dented in 1838 and 1839 but was not broken up until 1879. The Amazulu had established a glorious military tradition from which they found it difficult to depart. The Zulu military leaders failed to appreciate the fact that Shakan military system had been designed for war in a traditional African setting. In spite of the changes in the tactical and ordnance situation introduced by Europeans the Amazulu clung to their conventional tactics and to their basic weapons, the stabbing spear. They continued to apply the strategy of mass attacks on strongly fortified positions of the enemy. The result was that the Zulu army became easy targets of European rifles and artillery guns. At the Battle of Blood River (December 1838) the Boers killed about 3,000 Zulu troops with no loss to themselves. Even when the Zulu army won a particular battle against Europeans, as at

Isandlwana in 1879, their losses were often too heavy for Amazulu to rejoice. At Isandlwana, for an example, Britain lost 1,600 men killed while Zululand won the battle at the cost of over 2,000 killed. Cetshwayo summed the outcome of the battle as follows: "An assegai has been thrust into the belly of the nation".³⁹⁶

The inflexibility of the Zulu system is adequately demonstrated by their failure to realise that logistics change depending on whether an army is fighting defensive war at home or offensive war in foreign lands. In the past Shakan armies had always fought offensive wars in foreign territories. There was, perhaps, no need to provision them since they could live off the land. But with the Europeans Zulu armies were always fighting defensive battles on Zulu territory. As the soldiers were not expected to loot their own villages and families the only way to keep them long on the battlefield was to provision them. This is precisely what the Zulu military leaders did not do. The result was that after every battle the soldiers returned home, often leaving the enemy still on Zululand soil. This purely logistical point contributed significantly to Zulu defeat in 1879.

Bapedi of the north-eastern Transvaal showed a higher degree of adaptability than Amazulu. Like the Amaxosa and southern Basotho they eschewed head-on-collision with concentrated enemy columns and pitched battles in the open. Unlike the

396. Morris, D.R.: The Washing of the Spears, p.387.

Amaxosa and like the southern Basotho they adopted the fortress strategy. They made strenuous efforts to entice Europeans to attack them at fortified strongholds. Unlike both Amaxosa and southern Basotho and like the Amazulu they never took to the horse as an animal of war. Perhaps the reason for this was the fact that horse-sickness was prevalent for greater part of the year in their area. Like the Southern Basotho, and to some extent the Amaxosa but unlike Amazulu, Bapedi appreciated the importance of firearms in the modern war. But unlike southern Basotho the Bapedi became rather too wedded to fortress strategy, and this at a time when the enemy was in possession of long-range and heavier artillery guns that could effectively shell mountain fortifications at long distances.

All in all, Africans showed a remarkable degree of adaptability in the modernisation of their strategies and tactics. And there are indications that even among the Amazulu there were men whose thinking was moving in the direction of guerrilla approach. It is plausible to suggest that had Africans been able to withstand cultural and military onslaughts longer than they did they might have evolved more effective strategies and tactics against their white adversaries.

Perhaps, the most crucial factor in the entire conflict was that of firearms. No straight study has been made of the role of this factor in the South African resistance. Recently a series of articles on the theme has appeared in the Journal of African History published by the School of Oriental and African Studies,

University of London. In substance these articles constitute a refutation of assumptions made by earlier writers that Europeans' possession of firearms was crucial in the conquest of Africans in South Africa. There is a sense in which the refutation may be said to be valid. The foregoing study shows that for the greater part of their resistance Africans had firearms. It was not, however, so much the possession as the quality of firearms which Africans acquired and the skill to use them that was crucial in the situation.

It has been shown in this study that in the earlier and middle phases of the resistance the firearms that fell into the hands of Africans were often the antiquated models. Even at the beginning of the 1870's when mining and railway construction companies were compelled to pay African labourers' wages in firearms only a trickle of good guns, percussion cabs, reached Africans. The bulk of their stores continued to be antiquated models which had been replaced with more sophisticated repeater rifles in European armouries. Taking advantage of Africans' inability to evaluate the quality of their wares European traders flooded African markets with guns which were next to useless. Meanwhile the whites who had direct access to European markets were able to equip their troops with the latest and more effective versions of percussion rifles. From this it is evident that any suggestion of parity between Europeans and Africans in terms of firearms is, to say the least, a farce.

The disparity between black and white necessitated by the quality of their arms was further widened by African lack of technological skill in the maintenance and use of firearms. Whereas European soldiers were often given expert training in these aspects of their weapons Africans had to rely on their fortuitous intuition. Thus they were of necessity bad shots. And their level of marksmanship was further reduced by lack of ammunition. The need to use it sparingly deprived them of the necessary practice which they needed even more than their white adversaries. The seriousness of lack of ammunition may be measured by Basothos' attempt to provide their own gun-powder.

The military role of firearms in the South African resistance was that they gave Europeans double advantage. First, the type of firearms which Africans acquired were by and large inferior to those in the hands of European soldiers and therefore relatively ineffective. Second, while they were in fact next to useless, they gave their possessors false hopes that they (Africans) were as well armed as the enemy and thus exercised less caution. This made Africans easy targets. Third, Africans had practically no training in the use of firearms. And their skill to use them deteriorated inversely to improvements in the military technology and production of more sophisticated rifles. Fourth, Africans had absolutely no answer to artillery guns which white troops could deploy against them. It has been pointed out in this study that Basotho cast three 3-pounders from local resources but they were put out of action in the first stages of the war (1865-68).

Bapedi attempts to import some cannon were foiled by Transvaal Republican authorities in 1876. From the point of view of fire Power therefore Africans were nowhere near their white foes. It is in this sense that firearms were crucial in the conquest of Africans in South Africa.

In conclusion, then, it would appear that throughout the resistance Africans had to contend with immense problems. First, the resisters suffered from lack of unity within their respective communities. This made it easy for their European adversaries to find military allies among them. The resisters also suffered from lack of supra-communal co-operation and, as the study shows, this made the co-ordination of the resistance difficult. Second, the internal problem of unity and co-operation was complicated by Western influences which were brought to bear on African societies. These external influences severely undermined African economic and cultural bases and reduced the resisters' capacity to withstand sustained military onslaughts. Finally, the resisters had to cope with the problem of disparity in the possession of firearms. Nonetheless it is clear from this study that in spite of white official restrictions and financial costs involved Africans made impressive effort to bridge the gap. But the rapidity with which white expansion was progressing in South Africa made it difficult for Africans to appreciably narrow the gap in military technology. And it was this fact that led to their final undoing. All in all, it may be said that in spite of these difficulties, Africans, as the study clearly shows, performed supremely well. The fact that natives of South Africa were not exterminated as the Aborigines in Australia and the Maoris in New Zealand virtually were is a monumental measure of their achievements.

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