

THE INCORPORATION OF BOTSHABELO INTO THE FORMER QWAQWA HOMELAND: A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM?

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1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa becoming a democratic country in 1994 saved Botshabelo², a township 55 kilometers from Bloemfontein, from incorporation into the former homeland of Qwaqwa. Qwaqwa was formerly the Witsieshoek reserve in the eastern part of the Free State Province. Two tribal authorities were established in the area while it was still a reserve in 1953, but later these tribal authorities became known as regional authorities in 1962. A territorial authority established in 1969 was replaced by a legislative assembly in 1971. In line with the South African government's homeland policy, Qwaqwa was proclaimed a self-governing territory for Africans of South Sotho origin on 25 October 1974. In the same year, a process began that was to bring upheaval in Qwaqwa as the first Basotho were relocated to the area from other locations of the then Orange Free State Province. In Qwaqwa, for example, before 1974, the Batlokoa tribe under the leadership of Chief Wessels Mota administered the area. After 1975 political and administrative power was taken by Dr TK Mopeli and his Dikwankwetla Party and the area from then became a contested political terrain as it became a homeland.³

With the introduction of the homeland system in South Africa, Botshabelo became a contested terrain between the Qwaqwa homeland government and the Thaba Nchu⁴ (Bophuthatswana) homeland government as the homelands tried to extend

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² Botshabelo is a South Sotho word meaning 'a place of refuge'. This area was initially known as Onverwacht because it was established on the farm called Onverwacht outside Bloemfontein in the Free State Province in the late 1970s.

³ C Twala, personal collection. Interview with Dr TK Mopeli, former Chief Minister of Qwaqwa, Qwaqwa, 21 June 2004.

⁴ Thaba Nchu was the stronghold of the Barolong Boo-Seleka tribe who migrated there in the 1830s from Phitsana. This tribe was led by Chief Moroka who negotiated with and was given permission to settle in Thaba Nchu by Chief Moshoeshoe. Tribal authorities continued to be recognized in the Thaba Nchu area. In 1961 the South African government instituted a process of

their territories. This article therefore attempts to highlight the resistance which existed in the newly established Botshabelo settlement in the late 1970s in as far as the incorporation into the Qwaqwa homeland government was concerned. To justify their arguments in this article, the authors use evidence in the form of oral testimonies from the life histories and experiences of the Qwaqwa, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu residents. The homeland governments of both Qwaqwa and Thaba Nchu wanted control over Botshabelo, although Qwaqwa had an upper hand because the majority of Botshabelo residents were South Sotho speakers; therefore, it was logical for the area to be administered by the Qwaqwa government. That is how the Qwaqwa government became interested in the incorporation of Botshabelo which would then become part and parcel of Qwaqwa as was the case with other homelands.⁵

On closer inspection, however, far from the establishment of Botshabelo as an instant solution to the crisis, it formed an integral part of the long-term apartheid plans for South Africa. The conceptual origins of places like Botshabelo certainly go back to the early seventies when the South African government decided to further freeze township development in response to the apartheid ideology of keeping cities as 'white' as possible. The controversy as to who should gain control over Botshabelo after its establishment perpetuated the problem of ethnicity and tribalism between the two homelands of the Free State. To fully understand the failure of Botshabelo's incorporation into Qwaqwa, the reasons behind its establishment will be scrutinized, the resistance towards incorporation highlighted and lastly the responses of both the Qwaqwa government of Dr TK Mopeli and the South African government looked at.

2. THE REASONS BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BOTSHABELO

Separate development stimulated and entrenched ethnic divisions in its attempt to 'retribalize African consciousness'.⁶ Differing historical experiences and traditions existed in many regions in South Africa. Through the implementation of separate development, tribal identities became apparent and Qwaqwa and Thaba

constitutional development by establishing the Tswana territorial authority. Self-governing status was conferred in June 1972 with the inauguration of the Bophuthatswana legislative assembly and gained independence in December 1977 under the leadership of Dr LM Mangope.

⁵ For example, the Bophuthatswana government with its headquarters in Mafikeng controlled some regions like Thaba Nchu in the Free State Province. To the Qwaqwa government taking control of Botshabelo was not something new. The key to understanding the emergence of Botshabelo lies in an analysis of the phenomenon of 'displaced urbanization'. This term describes the concentration of black South Africans, through the 1970s and 1980s in particular, in relocation sites politically within the homelands and geographically on the peripheries of the established metropolitan labour markets.

⁶ F Molteno, "The historical significance of the Bantustan strategy", *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 3, p. 23.

Nchu were no exceptions to this as these two areas were divided into South Sotho (Qwaqwa) and Tswana (Thaba Nchu). Nigel Worden, a historian from the University of Cape Town, confirmed this tribal division when he stated that separate development was thus a bold attempt to break down a broad African nationalism and to replace it with tribal identities.⁷

The 1970s and 1980s saw the influx of many people into Thaba Nchu and Qwaqwa who were forcibly removed from towns or dismissed from white-owned farms in the southern and eastern Free State. It should be noted that their forced removals were not in the sense that they were physically loaded onto government trucks and driven away from their homes but, in most cases, they were either fired and evicted from such farms or chose to leave when confronted by deteriorating conditions of employment on these farms. This in itself was a political matter. Some farmers decreased the size of their labour force, expelling squatters and the few remaining labour tenants, and refused to accommodate the families of farm workers whose sons had taken up contracts on the mines and elsewhere. It was in this context that farm labourers chose to move to Thaba Nchu and Qwaqwa where they could establish a base from which to search for migrant labour contracts.⁸ Although these two homelands were kilometers far from each other, the divisions on ethnic lines became visible.

The 1970 census recorded an ethnically mixed population in Thaba Nchu as follows: 24 300 Tswanas, 12 000 South Sothos and 3 600 Xhosas in a total population of 42 000, all politically subordinate to the Barolong Tribal Authority.⁹ The South Sotho speakers who resided in Thaba Nchu did not want to pay allegiance to this tribal authority as they maintained that they were not Tswanas. That stance created a rift between the Tswanas and the South Sotho speakers in the area. According to Napoleon Khomo who was the national organizer of the Dikwankwetla Party of Dr TK Mopeli, in the late 1970s many people, mainly the South Sotho speaking people, left white farms around Bloemfontein and small towns all over the province and drifted into the Thaba Nchu locations of Morolong, Mokwena, Moroka, Ratlou, Motlatla and to some privately owned farms in the territory. This influx of the South Sothos, therefore, according to Khomo, made

⁷ N Worden, *The making of modern South Africa: conquest, segregation and apartheid* (London, 1994), pp. 108-13.

⁸ C Murray, "Struggle from the margins: rural slums in the Orange Free State", cited in F Cooper (ed.), *Struggle for the city: Migrant labour, capital and the state in urban Africa* (London, 1983), pp. 287-91. See also E Unterhalter, *Forced removals: The division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa* (London, 1987), pp. 94-100. See also S Greenberg and H Giliomee, "Managing class structures in South Africa: Bantustans and the underbelly of privilege", cited in I Markovitz (ed.), *Studies in power and class in Africa* (New York, 1987), pp. 308-21.

⁹ **Central Statistical Services, Population Census 1970, Report 10 May 2002.**

them the majority in Thaba Nchu, hence they could not accept the Barolong Tribal Authority and later Dr LM Mangope's homeland government of Bophuthatswana.¹⁰

With the massive influx of the South Sotho speakers in Thaba Nchu, a large concentration of 'illegal squatters' could be found in a bend of the railway, east of Thaba Nchu station and west of Mokwena location, in an area that became known as Kromdraai.¹¹ Both South Sotho and Xhosa-speaking people moved to the Kromdraai area, apparently because plots had been frequently sold to them or because they had been led to believe that stands would be allocated to them free of charge. It is believed that the people who resided in Kromdraai were said to have been rejected by the Bophuthatswana government for reasons including not renewing their citizenship cards; not taking Bophuthatswana citizenship cards and not being in possession of valid documents in order to be considered for employment opportunities in Thaba Nchu.¹² This was disputed by KCV Sehume, former Minister of Education in Bophuthatswana. He indicated that people from different races had a chance to be accommodated in Thaba Nchu, irrespective of their tribal background.¹³

According to MJ Fokazi, representative of the Dikwankwetla Party in Kromdraai, the residents of Kromdraai who were mainly South Sotho speakers, were denied basic services by the Bophuthatswana government as their area was regarded as an illegal settlement area. When interviewed about the conditions in Kromdraai, Fokazi had the following to say:

Our children were denied access to schools in Thaba Nchu. As the Kromdraai community we established a school called Iketsetseng which was built out of stones and mud. This school was not recognized by the Bophuthatswana education authorities. It ended up to Standard 5 and the examinations for Standard 5 were written and controlled in Qwaqwa. Mr LH Teele, one of the community members, used his car to transport those Standard 5 learners to Qwaqwa without any remuneration from the parents. To deny learners access to education was very painful to us as parents.¹⁴

This stance by Fokazi was endorsed by JK Ngake, the then Minister of Education in Qwaqwa. He said that the South Sothos were discriminated against in Thaba

¹⁰ **Friend**, 13 July 1983; **Friend**, 25 July 1983.

¹¹ Murray, pp. 298-303.

¹² Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr MMB Likhi, resident of Thaba Nchu, Thaba Nchu, 12 June 2004.

¹³ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr KCV Sehume, former Minister of Education in Bophuthatswana, Thaba Nchu, 27 May 2004.

¹⁴ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr MJ Fokazi, former resident of Kromdraai, Botshabelo, 10 June 2004.

Nchu, particularly those who resided in Kromdraai. In the **Friend** dated 22 October 1976, Ngake stated that the South Sothos in Thaba Nchu were not given work permits or residential rights to own houses. The language of instruction in schools was Setswana and the authorities refused them business rights, minimum human needs like pensions and even identity documents while they were simultaneously being subjected to taxes and levies imposed by Thaba Nchu authorities and later the Bophuthatswana government.¹⁵ Ngake was challenged by his counterpart in the Bophuthatswana government, SOO Seate, a representative of Thaba Nchu in the Bophuthatswana Legislative Assembly, when he accused him of interfering in the domestic affairs of Bophuthatswana.¹⁶

In 1978 the population of Kromdraai was estimated to be 38 000 and the inhabitants were declared illegal squatters in the area (Kromdraai). The Bophuthatswana government suggested that because the majority of the people who resided in Kromdraai were South Sotho-speakers, they were to be relocated to Qwaqwa, but these residents rejected the offer. Owing to the exclusion and expulsion of Africans from 'white' towns in the Orange Free State, especially Bloemfontein, and funds for residential development in the townships, for example, Mangaung (Bloemfontein), were frozen and re-diverted for residential development in the Thaba Nchu and Qwaqwa areas, it became logical according to the homeland policy for these South Sotho-speakers to be resettled in Qwaqwa. The increase in the number of the South Sotho-speakers in Thaba Nchu, propelled TK Mopeli of Qwaqwa to claim that the whole of Thaba Nchu should to be incorporated under the Qwaqwa homeland.¹⁷ This plea by Mopeli worsened his relationship with LM Mangope of Bophuthatswana which was not good, because Mopeli was seen to be interfering in Thaba Nchu's affairs. This claim by Mopeli was perceived by Mangope's government as a major threat to its political grip on this isolated territorial enclave, distant as it was from the other territorial fragments that comprised Bophuthatswana.¹⁸ It was therefore in Kromdraai where the relationships between the Tswanas and the South Sotho-speakers soured.

The Qwaqwa government of TK Mopeli took exception to the treatment of the South Sothos in Thaba Nchu which fell under Bophuthatswana. The fact that the South Sothos were expected to relocate to Qwaqwa encouraged Mopeli to start a campaign of calling all the Sothos around the country to declare their allegiance to the Basotho run government of Qwaqwa and defy any influence by other tribes. Taking advantage of the situation in Kromdraai, Mopeli was seeking to articulate a

¹⁵ **Friend**, 22 October 1976.

¹⁶ **Ibid.**

¹⁷ **Friend**, 18 March 1982.

¹⁸ Murray, *Struggle from the margins*, p. 225.

wider political constituency as other homeland leaders were doing.¹⁹ Mopeli, therefore, took particular interest in the predicament of the South Sotho immigrants in the Thaba Nchu and Kromdraai areas. Agents from Qwaqwa carried out a clandestine survey and induced the South Sothos in Thaba Nchu to sign up as citizens of Qwaqwa to generate evidence in support of a campaign to establish Thaba Nchu as a South Sotho territory. Although Mopeli's approach was that of trying to help the South Sothos across the country, it was clear that he had a political motive, that of enlarging Qwaqwa as a homeland.²⁰ This call came at the right time for the Kromdraai people who were regarded as 'illegal foreigners' in the area which was perceived to be for the Tswanas. This move by Mopeli was rejected by the Tswanas in the area.

In May 1978, Mopeli appealed to his counterpart Mangope to leave South Sothos in Thaba Nchu alone until they could be resettled as it appeared that they were unwanted in Bophuthatswana.²¹ In an attempt to help the South Sotho in Kromdraai, Mopeli initially offered his government's services to deport them to Qwaqwa after the Tswanas had shown resistance in his attempt to take over Thaba Nchu. This exercise of deportation by Mopeli had little success because it proved to be too expensive for his government to relocate these people to Qwaqwa, therefore, an alternative means of solving this problem was necessary although mass immigration to Kromdraai continued.²²

Immediately after independence in December 1977, the Bophuthatswana government felt that it had to deal radically with the so-called 'illegal' people in Thaba Nchu in order to foster unity in the area. These 'illegal' people became a bone of contention between the Bophuthatswana government on the one hand and the Qwaqwa government on the other. Negotiations to solve this problem took place between the two homeland governments and the central government in 1977 and 1978 respectively. It was clear that the South Sotho were not wanted in Thaba Nchu which was by then a Bophuthatswana territory, therefore the negotiations dealt with the provision of land for the relocation of the South Sotho-speaking people from Thaba Nchu who were considered 'illegal' because in terms of the ethnic homeland policy, they belonged to Qwaqwa which was specifically designed for the South Sothos.²³ Emanating from the negotiations, an agreement was reached

¹⁹ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr T Ramabolu, former member of the Dikwankwetla Party in Botshabelo, Botshabelo, 8 June 2004.

²⁰ C Murray, "Land, power and class in the Thaba Nchu District Orange Free State", **Review of African Political Economy**, Vol. 11, No. 29, Summer, 1984, pp. 30-48.

²¹ **Friend**, 13 May 1978.

²² Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr J Pepenene, former member of the Dikwankwetla Party in Botshabelo, Botshabelo, 12 June 2004.

²³ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr M Khabuli, resident of Botshabelo, Botshabelo, 10 June 2004.

in which 25 000 hectares of land in the Bophuthatswana region of the Northern Cape would be excised in exchange for an additional 25 000 hectares of land in the Free State. Ten thousand hectares would be for the resettlement of the South Sotho from Thaba Nchu and elsewhere.²⁴ Critics of the Bophuthatswana administration alleged that anyone who was not a 'motswana' by birth or origin was regarded as an enemy by Mangope.

After consultation with the representatives of the Kromdraai people under the South Sotho Central Committee,²⁵ Mopeli took the initiative of relocating those people from Kromdraai to a neighbouring farm called Onverwacht and the area later became known as Botshabelo. Removal of the Kromdraai people to Botshabelo began late in May 1979 and was completed by December 1979. During the same period, some South Sothos were removed from villages in Thaba Nchu like Bultfontein, freehold farms like Meloendrift, trust villages, and Dipudungwaneng. During this period an estimated of 64 000 people were removed from these areas including Kromdraai and relocated to a new settlement called Botshabelo some 11 kilometers from Thaba Nchu.²⁶ Dr V Blakie, a medical doctor from Thaba Nchu, recalled the exodus of the people from Kromdraai to Botshabelo as follows:

It was cold in winter when these people were taken by government trucks to Botshabelo. In Botshabelo they settled in tents which also made them vulnerable to cold. Old people and young children died like flies. There were also sanitation problems. As a medical doctor, I treated people with diarrhea, malnutrition and other related illnesses. The refugees from Kromdraai were concentrated in one section of Botshabelo which was known as the A Section (initially known as the 'Singles').²⁷

After the evacuation of the South Sothos, the slum of Kromdraai was razed to the ground and the site reversed to bare land. Today the area has become part of an expansion of Bultfontein 4 informal settlement.²⁸

²⁴ **The World**, 22 May 1978.

²⁵ The South Sotho Central Committee was formed by the Kromdraai people with the aim of being the representative of the residents in negotiating with the Bophuthatswana government on their living conditions. The committee later was used by the Dikwankwela Party under the leadership of Mopeli to liaise with the Kromdraai citizens on behalf of the Qwaqwa government.

²⁶ I Kwaw, The impact of Bophuthatswana's independence on the geographical landscape of Thaba Nchu-Selosha (**Unpublished MA dissertation**, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein), 1994, p. 156.

²⁷ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Dr V Blakie, medical doctor in Thaba Nchu, Thaba Nchu, 21 May 2004.

²⁸ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Ms AC Bloem, member of the United Christian Democratic Party in Thaba Nchu, Thaba Nchu, 31 May 2004.

Although these South Sothos were relocated to Botshabelo, their problems were far from over in their new 'independent state'. In Botshabelo these people were still harassed by the Bophuthatswana police. The establishment of Botshabelo for the South Sothos further divided South Africa as this was the policy of the apartheid government. With the establishment of Botshabelo, Bophuthatswana's territory of Thaba Nchu maintained its ethnic purity. It was at this time that Mopeli and the Qwaqwa government appeared to be the staunch guardians of the South Sotho interests.

3. THE INCORPORATION OF BOTSHABELO INTO QWAQWA

After its establishment, Botshabelo was administrated by the Black Affairs Commissioner in Bloemfontein on behalf of the South African Development Trust (SADT) which owned the land. Representatives of the Dikwankwetla Party had an informal advisory function in the area and were said to represent the South Sotho political constituency in its dealings with the South Africa government.²⁹ From its inception, the Qwaqwa government officials envisaged that Botshabelo would eventually be politically integrated into Qwaqwa following the agreement which was signed in 1977 between the South African government, the Qwaqwa government and the Bophuthatswana government.³⁰ This was evident as early as 1978 when Mopeli rejected the option of independence but wanted the Qwaqwa territory to be enlarged. He had earlier been quoted as saying that the ultimate aim of the Qwaqwa government was to form a union with Lesotho and that would also include the South Sothos living in the Transkei and the whole of the Eastern Free State.³¹ In an interview conducted with Mopeli, he indicated that his rejection of independence was based on preserving South African citizenship for his subjects. To him independence warranted no international recognition of Qwaqwa as a sovereign state.³² This was the reason therefore that Mopeli eyed Botshabelo for enlarging his territory.

Accordingly, the Kromdraai refugees in the A Section of Botshabelo expressed profound relief that they were no longer subject to arbitrary arrest and intimidation by the Bophuthatswana police which were affectionately known as 'MaYB'.³³ These Sotho-speakers in Botshabelo felt obliged to vote for the Dikwankwetla Party in the Qwaqwa election of March 1980 because they believed that Mopeli

²⁹ Murray, *Struggle from the margins...*, p. 227.

³⁰ *Sowetan*, 13 May 1987.

³¹ *South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR)*, 1979, p. 295.

³² Twala, personal collection. Interview with Dr TK Mopeli.

³³ Bophuthatswana Police, who became known by the YB number plates of their vehicles.

had been instrumental in persuading the South African government to provide a refuge for them and had rescued them from Mangope's oppression.³⁴

Because of the relocation of these people to Botshabelo, Mopeli gained considerable political credit. As the erstwhile Kromdraai population was rapidly outnumbered by other refugees in Botshabelo who had no cause to be grateful to Mopeli and who had not come from Kromdraai, this political credit swiftly evaporated. Although Mopeli was acknowledged for the role he had played in helping the Kromdraai people, MNN Mofokeng, former leader of Setjhaba Party in Qwaqwa was adamant that Mopeli had never played any significant role in helping the Kromdraai people during their oppression by the Bophuthatswana government. He contended that Mopeli was just performing his duties as the Chief Minister of Qwaqwa - it was therefore his obligation to help all the South Sotho in the country. According to Mofokeng, Mopeli did not deserve all the accolades given to him. He cited S Ramabolu, representative of the Dikwankwetla Party in Bloemfontein, that he had been the one who had experienced the miseries which the Bophuthatswana government had caused the Kromdraai people and who had started the whole process of the relocation of these people to Botshabelo.³⁵

Although the people relocated to Botshabelo were happy that they had their own sites and were free from harassment by the Bophuthatswana police, living conditions in the area were appalling. Sanitation was rudimentary. Toilets operated on the bucket system and there were occasional taps that many families shared. In some sections of the area, there were no taps and people waited for water tankers to deliver water, something that often happened after a long period. People were provided with tents that offered no protection from the winter cold and provided no safety for the inhabitants of Botshabelo. The tents posed a dangerous fire hazard. Possessions could not be protected from theft or damage. These problems made the majority of the Botshabelo citizens to lose faith in the Qwaqwa government as the housing problem was not speedily resolved.³⁶

A main controversy surrounding Botshabelo was the central government's decision in December 1987 to endorse the incorporation of the area into Qwaqwa, which was some 250 km away.³⁷ A question which many people asked themselves was

³⁴ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Dr TK Mopeli.

³⁵ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr MNN Mofokeng, former leader of the Setjhaba Party in Qwaqwa, 26 June 2004.

³⁶ **Ibid.**

³⁷ On 3 February 1987 the Ministers of Constitutional Development and Planning, C Heunis; Education and Development Aid, G Viljoen and the Chief Minister of Qwaqwa, TK Mopeli, issued a press statement denying rumours in the Botshabelo area that Botshabelo would be incorporated into Qwaqwa on 18 February 1987. On 18 February it was however reported that Minister Heunis confirmed in parliament that Botshabelo would be incorporated into Qwaqwa.

why Mopeli would want to inherit Botshabelo, which was described as a sprawling social problem. When this process unfolded, approximately 70% of Botshabelo's population was under the age of 30 and almost 80% unemployed.³⁸ This was going to be a burden for the Qwaqwa government which was at that time also struggling to administer Qwaqwa properly in terms of the peoples' social needs. One theory that some of the senior officials in the Qwaqwa government never disputed was the fact that by inheriting Botshabelo to be part and parcel of Qwaqwa, their constituency would increase and that would give them a larger power base similar to that of other homelands. Certainly more funds would come their way when the central government allocated budgets for the homelands. It should be noted that the homelands depended on the central government for financial support, therefore the larger the number of inhabitants, the more funds would be allocated. The acquisition of Botshabelo by Qwaqwa would be a political as well as a financial gain to the Qwaqwa government. According to MNN Mofokeng, the majority of Botshabelo residents was sceptical about this move by the Qwaqwa government, and reasoned that Mopeli would use them as a power base later to push for independence.³⁹

Long before the central government's decision to incorporate Botshabelo into Qwaqwa, there existed divisions between Botshabelo's citizens. Eager to have the territory incorporated into Qwaqwa and to enlarge its boundaries, a petition was handed to the Qwaqwa government by the eleven members of the Qwaqwa Legislative Assembly (QLA) who were permanent residents of Botshabelo. What sparked the controversy was the fact that the petition stated the willingness of Botshabelo's residents to be incorporated into Qwaqwa.⁴⁰ It was however discovered by the Botshabelo Youth Congress (Boyco) that the signatories of the petition were mainly elderly residents of Botshabelo.⁴¹ Mopeli was adamant that Botshabelo was part of Qwaqwa, despite marches organized against the incorporation by Boyco and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in 1987. He insisted that his government had considerable support in the area. He further stated that his government was interested in protecting the law-abiding citizens of Botshabelo. He declared that following a proclamation issued on 2 December 1987, Botshabelo was part and parcel of Qwaqwa.⁴²

³⁸ **Financial Mail**, 1 April 1988.

³⁹ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Mr MNN Mofokeng.

⁴⁰ **City Press**, 19 July 1987; **City Press**, 6 December 1987.

⁴¹ **Ibid.**

⁴² **Business Day**, 3 October 1989; **Vrye Weekblad**, 18 August 1989.

Signs of the rejection of the incorporation mainly came from the youth sections. In August 1989, the majority of the people who were against the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa were forced into hiding. GL Lefuo⁴³ recalls that rumours were flying that the Qwaqwa government had moved to smash all opposition to the incorporation of Botshabelo. Threats of detention, police harassment and attacks by the homeland government were reported in the area. One other thing that worsened the situation was the fact that the Qwaqwa government planned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Botshabelo without the consultation of its opposition in the area. According to Chief G Mohale, local residents saw the preparations for the celebration as an attempt by the Qwaqwa government to woo the community into accepting incorporation.⁴⁴

Lefuo challenged the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa in the Supreme Court of South Africa. In his affidavit when applying for a Court Order, Lefuo stated that a declaration should be issued in the following terms: that the First Respondent (The State President of South Africa) in purporting to amend the area for which the Qwaqwa Legislative Assembly had been established, as proclaimed in Proclamation No. R169 of 1987, published in Government Gazette No. 11051, dated 2 December 1987, had acted beyond the powers vested in him. He further stated that the Proclamation had not been authorized by the statutory powers on which the First Respondent purported to rely when he had issued it. He also alluded to the fact that the First Respondent before issuing the said Proclamation had not complied with the form and method required by the National States Constitution Act, No. 21 of 1971.⁴⁵

⁴³ Gauta Lawrence Lefuo was a teacher at one of the high schools in Botshabelo and a permanent resident of Botshabelo.

⁴⁴ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Chief G Mohale, former Minister of Finance and Expenditure in the Qwaqwa government, Qwaqwa, 16 July 2004.

⁴⁵ File 2, AG 2918-1.1.6.2. Affidavit of Case No. 87/5338 by Mr GL Lefuo contesting the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa. It should be noted that on 2 December 1987 it was announced on the SABC that Botshabelo had been incorporated into Qwaqwa. A proclamation extending the area of authority of the Qwaqwa Legislative Assembly was published in an extraordinary government gazette and a joint statement by Ministers JC Heunis, Dr G van N Viljoen and Chief Minister TK Mopeli, was issued. Botshabelo residents had been alerted on 1 December to imminent state action when heavy security force patrols began in the area. The following morning undated pamphlets, announcing that "Botshabelo would finally be incorporated into Qwaqwa" were flung from helicopters. The pamphlet explained that many services would continue to be offered by the South African government, that residents need not fear that incorporation would mean loss of South African citizenship and ended with a threat that opposition would be dealt with severely. By the end of that day a majority of residents were confused by the pamphlet's ambiguous statements and remained unconvinced that Botshabelo had in fact been incorporated into Qwaqwa. Since 2 December repression in Botshabelo continued. Large road-blocks were set up on the roads into Botshabelo and security forces manned surveillance posts on the surrounding hills.

In his application to the Supreme Court, Lefuo further stated the following: "I in fact studied at a Teacher's Training College in Qwaqwa for a period of 4 years and therefore believe that I am very well acquainted with conditions in Botshabelo, where I have been resident since January 1986. I believe that incorporation will not be in the interests of myself, or the other people of Botshabelo. Qwaqwa developed through the stages as envisaged in Act No. 68 of 1951, namely, the establishment of an area within which resides a homogeneous community. The entire process evolved after proper consultation with Blacks in every way in which such authorities were established in accordance with Section 2 of the Black Authorities Act, No. 68 of 1951. Botshabelo in contrast, originated as a catchment area for Blacks in the Orange Free State region. The area was established as a township known as Botshabelo by Government Notice No. 2468, dated 19 October 1982. It was set apart as a township for the occupation, residence and reasonable requirements of Blacks. It, however, never developed through the stages envisaged by the Black Authorities Act, No. 68 of 1951."⁴⁶ Lefuo forwarded the following reasons as to why Botshabelo should not be incorporated into Qwaqwa. Firstly, the dissimilar and divergent characteristics of the two communities in question made their amalgamation most undesirable. He further stated that such forced and unnatural union would be to the detriment of the peoples in both areas. Secondly according to him, Qwaqwa did not have enough resources or manpower to administer a town the size of Botshabelo.⁴⁷

In support of Lefuo's application, the National Committee Against Removals (NCAR) mounted an immediate challenge to the validity of the proclamation, on the grounds that the State President had exceeded his power under the National States Constitution Act of 1971 to amend or modify the area for which a particular legislative assembly had been established, and that Botshabelo had not passed through any of the stages of the gradual evolutionary process envisaged by the Act. In an attempt to solve that problem, the central government rapidly tabled a new bill, the Alternative of Boundaries of Self-Governing Territories Bill, which appeared to extend the State President's powers to incorporate land into the homelands.⁴⁸ Some Botshabelo residents, led by the Southern Free State Council of Churches, sent a petition to the President's Council rejecting the bill. Although the petition was signed by only 260 residents, the signatories were confident that they spoke on behalf of the majority of residents.⁴⁹ While the bill was rejected by the majority of the residents, twelve members of the Qwaqwa Legislative Assembly

⁴⁶ File 2, AG 2918-1.1.6.2. Affidavit of Case No. 87/5338 by Mr GL Lefuo contesting the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa.

⁴⁷ **Ibid.**

⁴⁸ **Ibid.**

⁴⁹ **Business Day**, 15 June 1989.

who resided permanently in Botshabelo and who represented five regions for the ruling Dikwankwetla Party, expressed support for the bill.⁵⁰

On 26 August 1988, Justice JP Malherbe, with the concurrence of Justice GA Hattingsh, held that the purported alteration of the area of Qwaqwa by the proclamation did not accord with the intention of the legislative, as expressed in the enabling provision of the National State Constitution Act of 1971. Malherbe also indicated that the way of life and culture of Botshabelo's inhabitants differed from those of Qwaqwa. Therefore, Qwaqwa had no historic claim over Botshabelo.⁵¹ The Supreme Court invalidated the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa. It felt that the proclamation could not promote the political development of the inhabitants of Botshabelo in their national context.⁵² The court also ordered the State President and the government of Qwaqwa to pay the costs of an application brought by Lefuo although the respondents were granted leave to appeal against the Supreme Court's ruling.⁵³

The above-mentioned argument was further endorsed by an anthropologist, Piet Erasmus, from the University of the Free State who submitted a memorandum supporting the prevention of Botshabelo from being incorporated into Qwaqwa. According to Erasmus, Qwaqwa had a specific historical identity which was developed around traditional language and cultural practices.⁵⁴ Erasmus further indicated that Botshabelo's population which constituted mainly of youth under the age of 30, unlike Qwaqwa, had placed less emphasis on traditionalism. Based on the above argument, Erasmus contended that Botshabelo and Qwaqwa should be seen as two separate, not kindred, communities. He concluded that the fact that the central government undertook to continue providing educational, judicial and other services to Botshabelo residents for an unspecified period supported the belief that the incorporation was forced and not the result of a natural process.⁵⁵ Irrespective of its informal invalidity, the partial incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa caused a great deal of practical confusion. The land still belonged to the SADT. The police remained under the control of the central government but responsibility for schools in Botshabelo was transferred to the Qwaqwa government.

⁵⁰ **The Cape Times**, 26 April 1989.

⁵¹ File 2, AG 2918-1.1.6.2. Judgment of the Supreme Court of South Africa on the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa.

⁵² **Cross Times**, 31 January 1989.

⁵³ **The Star**, 10 August 1988; **Pretoria News**, 27 August 1988.

⁵⁴ Twala, personal collection. Interview with Professor P Erasmus, anthropologist, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 9 November 2004.

⁵⁵ **Ibid.**

JM Maseko, a Botshabelo resident stated the following about incorporation into Qwaqwa:

TK Mopeli did not ask us whether we wanted to be incorporated or not, he forced us. The incorporation of the township was declared invalid by the Bloemfontein Supreme Court, but Mopeli is still visiting our township. The residents of Botshabelo want jobs, better jobs, not exploitation. Our sisters, brothers and parents are exploited by bosses. They earn R33 a fortnight, and work 60 hours a week, excluding forced overtime work. How much are you earning daily Mopeli?⁵⁶

Maseko confirmed a long-time view held by L Bank who conducted an extensive research on the social conditions in the Qwaqwa homeland. Bank concluded that Qwaqwa as a homeland had no means of generating income on its own; it therefore depended on the central government for financial assistance.⁵⁷ This view of Bank was an indication that it would not be financial viable for the Qwaqwa government to sustain Botshabelo.

One other resident of Botshabelo, PM Malebola, wrote an article in **The New Nation** and stated that:

TK Mopeli knows very well that we don't want him and his cabinet. But he forces his rule on us. What really makes us dissatisfied is that people did not vote to see how many people support Mopeli and his Dikwankwetla Party. We want majority rule based on universal suffrage. Qwaqwa is so poor that it cannot respond to our demands. Where was the Qwaqwa government when Botshabelo was lashed by heavy floods? Only the South African government helped us. Among the ten national states Qwaqwa is the poorest of them all and we don't want to have anything to do with this homelands nonsense.⁵⁸

Another sector which unanimously rejected the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa was the teachers. Teachers in Botshabelo had received a circular from the Qwaqwa's Education Department stipulating three options that would determine their future. The options were: to agree to be seconded to Qwaqwa's Educational

⁵⁶ **The New Nation**, 6-12 October 1989; **Sowetan**, 3 October 1989.

⁵⁷ L Bank, "Angry men and working women: gender, violence and economic change in Qwaqwa in the 1980s", **African Studies**, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1994, pp. 89-113. See also IA Niehaus, 'Dis-harmonious spouses and harmonious siblings: Conceptualising household formation among urban residents in Qwaqwa', **African Studies**, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 115-35. See also J Sharp, "A world turned upside down: Households and differentiation in a South African Bantustan in the 1980s", **African Studies**, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1994, p. 75. See also H Moore, "Household and gender in a South African Bantustan: A comment", **African Studies**, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1994, pp. 137-42.

⁵⁸ **The New Nation**, 11-17 August 1988.

Department; to agree to be transferred to Qwaqwa Education Department or resign immediately. Many teachers resigned because they refused to be dragged into a homeland administration, while others chose one of the other two options. In a desperate attempt to cope with this sudden backlash, education officials were forced to appoint several unqualified people to posts left open by resigning teachers.⁵⁹

Botshabelo residents wanted to be adopted by the Bloemfontein City Council. According to the Bloemfontein Municipality Manager, Neels Booysen, the council was willing to accommodate Botshabelo provided the central government continued with its investment in infrastructure because it would be impossible for the city council to finance Botshabelo as well as providing services for other townships of Mangaung.⁶⁰ This was a predicament because the Qwaqwa government also wanted Botshabelo to be upgraded first by the central government before being incorporated into its administration.⁶¹ Botshabelo's establishment within commutable distance of Bloemfontein, and at a great distance from Qwaqwa itself, contradicted the ethno-national logic of the homeland strategy, since it was obvious that these two areas would never be territorially integrated.⁶²

According to C Murray, in Botshabelo, for example, the unemployment rate was very high, although it was impossible to quantify since the total population could only be guessed and many people experienced difficulty in registering as work-seekers.⁶³ Analyzing the situation in Botshabelo, Allister Sparks indicated that the residents of this area were a captive pool of unemployed labour and some people were taking advantage of the opportunity to exploit them. By 1987, there were 43 factories in the area, paying wages as low as R15 a week. Because no trade unions existed in the area, there were no industrial agreements with the workers. Those who rejected the incorporation of Qwaqwa into Botshabelo argued that Qwaqwa itself was failing to provide job opportunities for its people, how would it provide jobs and education for Botshabelo's people?⁶⁴

4. CONCLUSION

Although the National Party (NP) government saw separate development as a grand plan to rule over the country it, however, in some instances became a failure. The failures of such a plan can, to a certain extent, be attributed to the fact that people who were affected were not consulted. Only the leaders of the homelands knew

⁵⁹ **Cross Times**, 31 January 1989.

⁶⁰ **Business Day**, 15 May 1986.

⁶¹ **Ibid.**

⁶² Twala, personal collection. Interview with Professor P Erasmus.

⁶³ Murray, *Struggle from the margins*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ **Weekly Mail**, 27 November-3 December 1987.

what was happening. This could also be said about Botshabelo and Qwaqwa. Both the central government and the Qwaqwa government officials would neither confirm nor deny the rumours surrounding the incorporation of Botshabelo into Qwaqwa and that caused people to be sceptical about being part and parcel of the homeland system. It was also clear from the central government's position that they failed to treat the issue of incorporation as a most 'sensitive' issue, hence it was rejected.