

sultation with the people of Peelton'.

East Peelton residents petitioned the then minister of Development Aid, Gerrit Viljoen, and demanded that instead of incorporating east Peelton into the Ciskei, west Peelton should be re-incorporated into South Africa.

In any event, the villagers of Nkqonkqweni, the largest of east Peelton's three villages, refused to have anything to do with the Ciskei administration. They did not recognise the tribal authority and its headman and refused to pay taxes which they had not formerly paid in South Africa.

Despite retaining their South African citizenship, residents stood to lose their South African pensions, which were double the amount received in the Ciskei, together with access to unemployment insurance. They would also become liable for 'voluntary' but arbitrary taxes, levies, and other forms of tribute in the Ciskei which they had never had to pay in South Africa.

Barely two weeks after the 1988 incorporation, police conducted a raid on Nkqonkqweni residents at night, demanding to see Ciskei tax receipts for taxes paid when the area was still under South Africa's control.

About 60 people were arrested and shunted through the courts the next morning, signalling the start of harassment and intimidation by Ciskeian authorities.

In the first 12 months under Ciskei rule, some 200 Nkqonkqweni residents were charged with various offences. Only one has been convicted so far - for unlawfully allocating a building site.

Elderly villagers have been detained or assaulted. On one occasion in June this year, police opened fire on a house where a party was taking place. In August police broke up a church service when they attacked the church with rubber bullets and teargas.

Residents were denied access to stock-dipping facilities and were barred from attending the clinic. South Africa also stopped pension payments to South African citizens in east Peelton.

In response to the harassment, the community sought protection from the Ciskei Supreme Court - so far it has



*All alone: Peelton residents insist they are South Africans*

won three interdicts restraining the police from further unlawful action.

The community has also sent several appeals to Van Aardt and to Foreign Affairs minister Pik Botha.

Since then, the struggle has spread to west Peelton where residents are also discontented with Ciskeian rule. Youths have been boycotting Peelton's only high school, demanding the release from detention of their Nkqonkqweni colleagues.

The demands of the vast majority of east Peelton residents are unequivocal - east Peelton must be returned to South Africa, and residents must be fully compensated for damage and loss suffered.

Although the community is unable to stay in churches indefinitely, it is determined to return to east Peelton where most people have lived all their lives. Some people there had freehold title while the majority had other forms of legal land tenure which they had held for decades. The majority of residents also had some livestock and access to agricultural land.

Now they are refusing to return while the area is under the Ciskei. They fear continual harassment by Ciskeian authorities.

The struggles of the people of Peelton are thus not simply motivated by a desire to remain resident in South Africa. They are struggles that attempt to challenge the relatively greater deprivation and poverty of places such as Bophuthatswana and the Ciskei.

# Tracing the roots of resistance

**SAMUEL MOTLOHI**, a high school pupil and youth activist in Botshabelo, traces the roots of resistance in one of South Africa's largest dumping grounds.

**A**t the foot of the mountains some 50 km from Bloemfontein, is one of South Africa's largest settlements: Botshabelo.

The people of Botshabelo - who number as many as 500 000 - were handed over to QwaQwa in late 1987. But this measure was reversed in 1988 as a result of a Supreme Court judgement. The people responded to this decision by dancing in the streets.

But the central government is reluctant to give up on its plan to rid itself of Botshabelo. Not only is it appealing against the Supreme Court judgement, but it is also preparing a law - the Alteration of Boundaries of Self-Governing Territories Bill - which will make the incorporation inevitable.

Residents are not passively awaiting their fate. Their determination to remain outside of bantustan structures was demonstrated just over a month ago when an estimated 50 000 marched on the magistrate's offices. They demanded that they be allowed to remain part of South Africa and that the administration of social services, which has been in the hands of QwaQwa since 1987, revert immediately to Pretoria.

The demonstration took outsiders by surprise; few were there to witness it and the press was caught napping.

This is what Motlohi and his partners in the Trio for Truth and Justice

have to say:

**On the origins of an anti-apartheid consciousness**

The social background of residents should be considered. Some came from Kromdraai, a squatter camp near the railway station at Thaba Nchu, the most southerly piece of Bophuthatswana, where (as non-Tswanas) they were oppressed and ill-treated by the Mangope government. Many lost parents and loved ones in violence there.

Others came from rural areas, especially white Free State farms, where many had been exposed to long working hours, starvation wages and other dehumanising treatment.

A third group came from townships around Bloemfontein, Bethlehem and other Free State towns where they were victims of high rents, petty apartheid laws and capitalism.

There were also those who were forced to move from Transkei and Ciskei and who had established their own squatter camp near Ntumediseng High School.

People's origins have contributed to the present situation of resistance. They had experienced and witnessed the brutalities of the Verwoerd system. In Thaba Nchu only those holding Bophuthatswana citizenship could register their children at schools and be helped at clinics and the hospital.

People had experienced labour exploitation and the bloodsucking apartheid laws. They also knew about the other aspects of the bantustans - corruption, bribery, oppression and high death rates.

**On how QwaQwa president TK Mopeli gained a foothold**

The present political climate in Botshabelo is partly due to the infiltration of QwaQwa's affairs into the area.

Early residents were told that it was Mopeli who had saved them from Kromdraai and had given them land at Botshabelo. When tents and food supplies were handed out, it was said that these were from their 'leader in QwaQwa'.

People were made to apply for QwaQwa citizenship cards — known as 'kikis' because of the photos re-

quired for them — and those who hesitated were told that they would be expelled from Botshabelo.

Taking advantage of the housing shortage, officials told those who wanted to buy houses to fill out certain forms. It emerged later that, by signing, they had stated that they were prepared to accept QwaQwa as their authority.

In 1980, when residents were told to pay R10 each to build a university and a college at Botshabelo, only members of the ruling QwaQwa party, Dikwankwetla, paid. The residents' general refusal to pay this amount might be the reason why school fees were increased to R15 a year and renamed 'development fund' contributions.

All this suggests that Mopeli's 'support' is based on falsehood. Only some of the old people really accept him as their leader.

(According to deputy minister of Constitutional Development Roelf Meyer, there were 64 000 Botshabelo residents registered as QwaQwa citizens in the last elections).

**On growing resistance among the youth**

The youths' resistance began in 1986 with boycotts at several schools. The grievances of pupils at high schools included sexual harassment of students; unfair disciplinary measures; and the refusal to allow democratic SRCs with constitutions adopted by the students.

To support these demands students all over Botshabelo embarked on a class boycott. Students were injured in clashes with police who were called to restore 'order'. A peaceful protest march drew more violence and Botshabelo became like the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with teargas everywhere and Hippos patrolling empty streets as people fled for fear of being beaten.

This was followed by the detention of many activists. They were released after 14 days following the intervention of parents, teachers and priests acting as the Botshabelo Crisis Committee.

Although the grievances of the students were not directly political, for the first time the government saw Botshabelo as a threat to 'law and order'. This might have contributed to

the decision to incorporate the Free State's largest township into QwaQwa.

**On incorporation and its impact on education**

(The threatened incorporation of Botshabelo into QwaQwa only served to intensify resistance during 1987. Students from three schools were allegedly sjambokked while marching against incorporation and some of them were detained for long periods. Many activists fled the area. When incorporation became a reality at the end of 1987, one of the first things the bantustan authority took control of was the schools.)

The 'stealing' of Botshabelo's education could be regarded as the turning point in the struggle against QwaQwa, causing the students to unite more strongly than before. Among strategies used by the Department of Education and Culture was the removal of some students to newly established schools in an apparent attempt to divide the 'radicals' from the 'students'. This was met with unexpectedly strong opposition, especially at Ntumediseng and Kgorathuto High Schools.

At Ntumediseng, police were called in to implement the education department's forced removals and students were removed to a former primary school, Thato. Students were escorted there by six Hippos. Those who remained at Ntumediseng were made to lie on the ground and some were sjambokked.

At Kgorathuto police broke up a sit-in of students in the second week of the protest. Students were warned that their sit-in would not be tolerated: they were either to enter classes or leave the school premises.

Since the incorporation into QwaQwa, conditions at schools have deteriorated. Although school fees went up from R10 to R15, schools are badly equipped.

Motlohi concludes that the resolution of Botshabelo's problems is partly dependent on 'the death of apartheid' and his group urges that 'residents of Bots should not isolate their struggle against QwaQwa from the broad one against Pretoria'.