

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE ABAKWAMZIMELA TRIBE OF THE MTUNZINI DISTRICT

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Nouni-African People - Nalal

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the past a historical survey of an African society was a very rare endeavour, because this field of historical research was erroneously regarded as being out of the scope of the historians. At the moment historians have no excuse, for there is an enormous amount of primary source materials waiting to be explored. These sources have been available, but they were not utilised due to the lack of knowledge. Due to the slowness of the South African historians in responding to the challenging demand of writing about the history of African societies, non-academic writers pioneered the process.

With particular reference to this research, works of earlier historians like A.T. Bryant cannot be overlooked. In reviewing Bryant's work, "Olden Times in Zululand and Natal", Shula Marks pointed out that it is full of "unscientific assumptions and strong prejudices"² As a result of this discovery Bryant's work had to be used with caution. It however remains the most valuable written source on early Zulu history.

This piece of work can be regarded as a contribution to historical writing because it sheds light on dearth of data concerning local African societies. Its purpose is purely academic and historical

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1. L. Thompson (Ed.): African Societies in Southern Africa, pp.2-3.
 2. Ibid, p.11.

in nature. In surveying the history of the AbakwaMzimela, one will aim at showing the process of change and development in this tribe.

Some terms used in this work might be confusing to the reader and it will be worthwhile clarifying them beforehand. They are:

Tribe - this term has been used to refer to a particular group of people occupying a piece of land under a chief, but constituting, together with other groups, part of a greater whole, nation. The contemporary equivalent of the term is ethnic group. The Mzimela tribe and the AbakwaMzimela will be used alternately.

Native - this term denotes a person who is of a particular area by origin. This term has been misused by the colonial governments to segregated Africans or anyone who was not of European descent. In this work the term like the word 'Bantoe', is used to refer to institutions or portfolios as named by them and no derogatory meaning is implied.

1.1 The Geographical Location of the Mzimela Tribe

Geographically the AbakwaMzimela fall under the Mtunzini district of Natal. Prior to 1904 the district was known as Umlalazi, but sometime between 1904 and 1907 the name was changed to Mtunzini.

This change is deduced from the Mtunzini magistrial documents wherein a petition dated 5/9/1907 referred to the area as Mtunzini.³ In accordance with the map showing the tribes and chief of Mtunzini, the Mzimela territory is composed of the area bordered by the Mhlathuze river in the north-east, the Mkhwanazi and the Mpungose tribes in the south-east and south-west, respectively. In the north-western direction the Mzimela territory is demarcated by the district boundary. The area outlined above does not wholly belong to the AbakwaMzimela because almost in the centre of the territory there is the Ongoye forest reserve which is regarded as "Kroongrond"⁴ (crown lands).

The Mzimela tribe is situated close to the University of Zululand. According to an informant the Mzimela area is commonly known as Mashananandane.⁵ Bryant states that the Mzimela territory comprised of Ongoye hills between the Mhlathuze and Mlalazi rivers.⁶ Today, the common man regards it as ranging from the Mlalazi river to the KwaMaqoqa area.⁷ These boundaries have changed frequently, but the significant factor is that the AbakwaMzimela share borders with other tribes, therefore boundary disputes were inevitable.

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3. NAD, SNA 2639, 207/1907: Henry John Dunn - Minister for Native Affairs, 5.9.1907.
 4. CAD, NTS 8987:Map 208/362.
 5. Zeblon Yimba, Mashananandana, 12.10.1988.
 6. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.281.
 7. Zeblon Yimba, Mashananandana, 12.10.1988.

1.2 A brief early history of the tribe

In tracing the origin of a particular Zulu tribe, one has to deal with Zulu totality. Like many tribes which today form the Zulu whole, the AbakwaMzimela originates from the coming together of different groups (sibs).⁸ This pattern of fusing was common to most Zulu tribes. Basically this pattern was the result of the emergence of strong leaders. In the earliest times, according to Bryant, the "emaNzimeleni" existed as a brother-clan to the Msanes.⁹ During the era of Dingiswayo, the Mthethwa chief, this Mzimela sub-clan was led by prince Konjwayo son of Ntama. After some divisions and emigration under Mgidla son of Konjwayo, those who remained were amalgamated into Shaka's army, but still retaining their tribal unity. The latter assertion can be verified by the fact that later the group could recuperate into a fully constituted tribe.

Apparently one Sihubela distinguished himself as the leader of the AbakwaMzimela under Shaka. The same leader is the predecessor of Zimema "a conspicuous star in the clan" who rebuilt the tribe to great heights.¹⁰ The Mzimela tribe could then regroup by amassing respect from the other tribal groups. The tendency of encompassing other tribes was easier for the AbakwaMzimela,

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8. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na proses - regtelike Aspekte, p.34.
9. A.T. Bryant: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, p.281.
10. Ibid.

because Shaka had left some tribes leaderless.¹¹ For instance, parts of some tribes like the Ndwandwes, who were attacked by Shaka in avenging the death of his uncle Dingiswayo, joined the AbakwaMzimela. Thereafter, the AbakwaMzimela ceased to be just an insignificant clan and became one of the compelte tribes in the Zulu Kingdom until it was officially annexed by Britain in 1887¹² and ceded to the self-governing Britain colony of Natal in 1897.¹²

2. A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE TRIBE

While the main emphasis of this research is on the 20th century history of the Mzimela tribe, it will be worthwhile to highlight the key events during the second half of the 19th century. During this period the limelight was on the activities of the Whites in Zululand, particularly those of John Dunn. As an adventurer in Zululand, he got involved in the local Zulu Affairs. His active participation in the 1856 civil war between King Mpande's sons, princes Mbuyazi and Cetshwayo, won him favour of the latter due to his expertise in the use of guns. Probably the sudden friendship between King Cetshwayo and John Dunn originated from the latter's political and military strength. Dunn was, therefore, practically put in charge of the district between Thukela and Mhlathuze¹³ rivers, which included the Mzimela territory. Apparently, the Mzimela leader at that time was Sigodo.

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11. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na proses - regtelike Aspekte, p.34.
12. C. Ballard: John Dunn - The White Chief of Zululand, p.243.
13. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na proses - regtelike Aspekte, p.38.

After the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War, Dunn was called in by the British colonial government to serve in the administration of the district as an assistant magistrate. To facilitate his administration, Dunn followed the Zulu political structure by appointing izinduna (chiefs) to different groups in the district. Manjanja Mzimela was put in charge of Dunn's Qwayinduku homestead and also as the chief of the AbakwaMzimela. After Manjanja had lost Dunn's favour his position went to Zimema Mzimela who held the position until the death of John Dunn in 1895. Zimema was particularly appointed by John Dunn as an overseer over the Mzimela, Mangodeni, Nzuza, Mangungabeni, Magwabeni, Njakabu and Ngokwane tribes. All these tribes formed John Dunn's Zwandatu Section. Such a responsibility implies that Zimema was a senior chief in the district.

2.1 Focus on John Dunn's succession

The death of John Dunn in 1895 created a gap in the administration of the Mtunzini district. Various chiefs who were under him started to rule their subjects individually. This practice did not deter a claim to Dunn's succession. For instance, in 1907 one

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14. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na proses - regtelike Aspekte, p.39.
15. NAD, 1MTU 3/1/2: Assistant Resident Magistrate - Secretary to Zululand Lands Commissioner, 24.02.1904.

of John Dunn's sons, Henry John Dunn, submitted a petition to the Mtunzini magistrate wherein he requested to be appointed chief over the people who used to be under his father's chieftainship. ¹⁶

How did this succession issue concern the AbakwaMzimela? Chief Zimema Mzimela was one of the chiefs who supervised the Mtunzini division which was a strip of territory "extending from the Lower Thukela right on to the Lower Umhlathuze River". ¹⁷ Other chiefs in this division were Ngokwane of the Mkhwanazi, Sisimane of the Ntuli, Ngwenya of the Nzuza and Lokotwayo of the Macambeni. If H.J. Dunn's claim were to be acceded to it would mean that the uplifted status of the above-mentioned chiefs would end, because before John Dunn's death they were merely headmen.

In his petition Harty J. Dunn furnished about ten points in support of his claim. Inter alia, he stated that he was the legitimate heir to John Dunn, because the supposed heir, Robert Dunn, had died and that there was no other son born of the head wife. He further claimed that people of all classes in the district, including various prominent Zulus, were looking forward for his appointment over them. ¹⁸ The latter assertion may be a fabrication because chiefs like Zimema would not opt for a move which would deprive them of their new positions as supervisors of

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16. NAD, SAN 1/1/377, 1907/2639: Under Secretary for Native Affairs - Minister for Native Affairs, 5.09.1907.
 17. NAD, SNA 1/3/377, 1907/2639: Harry John Dunn - Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Matthew Nathan, Natal Governor, 5.09.1907.
 18. Ibid.

the whole district. Seemingly, it was realised that there was no person who was of John Dunn's standing to administer the whole district, hence decision of the colonial government to recognise the headman of each tribe as chief.

After carefully considering the position, status and claims of the petitioner H.J. Dunn, the Native Affairs office turned down the latter's request. Investigation into his claim revealed that he was disinherited from taking part in the estate by his late father, John Dunn. It also came to the attention of the government officials that no mention was made in John Dunn's will that the petitioner was declared an heir in the place of his deceased half-brother, Robert.¹⁹ The arrangements made in 1895 and modified in 1903 were recommended as being satisfactory by the Zululand Commissioner of Native Affairs. The various Zulu chiefs were left in charge of individual tribes. It was then the responsibility of the Governor, as the supreme chief, to make amendments as deemed necessary by the government for the sound administration of the tribes.

Thereafter, Harry Dunn was told to stop stirring up an agitation²⁰ be in an attempt to validate his claim of becoming a chief.

Contained in the warning letter was the response that his request for appointment as chief over Mtunzini had been refused. He then

19. NAD, SNA 1/1/377, 1907/2638: Under Secretary for Native Affairs - Harry John Dunn, 1.10.1907.

20. Ibid.

threatened to present his claim before the king in England because he felt that his case was justified.²¹ It seems that he ultimately decided to bury the hatchet because there is no documentary proof that he ever pursued the matter further. The colonial government's refusal to consider Harry's claim favourably was a right step. Harry J. Dunn could not just be installed as chief without considering the prospective subjects, because that could have resulted into a revolt.

2.2 The post Dunn era: Boundary disputes

From 1897 Zululand was directly under the Natal colony ruler. Seeing that tribal territories were not clearly demarcated, the government appointed the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission (1902-4) to define boundaries and set land for White settlement. In its report, cited by De Clercq, the Commission gave approximate boundaries, but further stated that although no tribal boundaries were set, chiefs "exercised jurisdiction up to certain recognised limits".²² The commission allocated land according to racial criteria. For example, it reserved fertile lands for European development and granted the barren parts to Africans, the Dunns included.²³ The result of this unfair practice can be deduced from the fact that even within certain tribal territories there

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21. NAD, SNA 1/1/377, 1907/2639: H.J. Dunn Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 16.10.1907.
22. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na proses - regtelike Aspekte, p.44.
23. C. Ballard: John Dunn - The White Chief of Zululand, p.245.

are reserved areas which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the chief concerned. The ultimate report of the commission which was accepted by the Natal parliament on 7 June 1905, provided 1 573 047 hectares of land for the Black tribes and reserved 1 057 466 hectares for White settlement.²⁴

It so happened that in 1904 that questions arose regarding tribal boundaries, particularly in the wards of chiefs Zimema of the AbakwaMzimela and Ngokwane of the AbakwaMkhwanazi. The Eshowe Civil Commissioner was requested to redefine the boundaries between the various chiefs in the Mtunzini division. Although people were given the option of remaining under the chief in whose ward they would fall or to move into the area assigned to their present chiefs, chief Zimema was disadvantaged because his ward was to be decreased.²⁵ The colonial office tried by all means to prevent the escalation of hostilities caused by boundary disputes between the tribes. For instance, chief Zimema's action of placing Mvumbi kaMajozi on the land recommended to fall within Chief Ngokwane's ward, without consulting the latter, was attended to immediately before it could develop into a serious conflict.²⁶

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24. A. de V. Minnaar: Empangeni, A historical review to 1983, p.11.
25. NAD, CNC 265A, 1916/2046: Umlalazi magistrate - Eshowe Civil Commissioner, 9.08.1904.
26. NAD, CNC 265A, 1916/2046: Umlalazi Magistrate - Eshowe Civil Commissioner, 13.10.1904.

The magistrate personally visited the area to get first hand information about the disputed territory. The two chiefs, Zimema and Ngokwane, were disputing over the territory neighbouring the Ngoye Norwegian Mission Station lands. Feeling threatened by this hostility, Rev. Braadvedt of the Norwegian Church showed concern by writing to the magistrate about the issue.²⁷ The Mtunzini magistrate gave a warning that should any trouble occur both chiefs would be held responsible.

The proposed boundary was explicitly set. Among others, it was stated that chief Zimema's wards ranged "South of the Ngoye mission passes, thence along the foot of the mountain to the nearest point of the Gugutshe stream ...".²⁸ Probably chief Zimema defied these proposals on the grounds that they infringed his original lands or because they were just recommendations and were not definite. The issue of defining tribal boundary lines was still pending in 1910 when the Union of South Africa was established.

The AbakwaMzimela were ranking high in these disputes. Apart from the Zimema-Ngokwana boundary dispute, there was still a need to settle the Zimema-Mbango boundary dispute.

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27. Today Braadvedt descendants own the Washesha Bus Service.
28. NAD, CNC 265A, 1916/2046: Umlalazi boundary proposals, 7.08.1904.

3. THE HISTORY OF THE TRIBE DURING THE POST - 1910 PERIOD

3.1 An example of internal authority problems

The establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 did not bring any substantial change to the administration of the tribes. One induna (headman), Sungubala of the Macambini tribe, even declared that "we know nothing about Botha ..." but only recognised their original administrators like A.J. Shepstone, the Natal Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, and C.C. Foxon, the then Mtunzini magistrate.²⁹ The AbakwaMzimela, particularly under Chief Zimema, had some internal authority problems which necessitated intervention by the government. One example shall suffice to illustrate this assertion.

A certain Stefana ka Mtshogodo in Chief Zimema's ward was deemed undesirable by the authorities. The reason behind this undesirability was that he disobeyed orders from his chief. He disobeyed the chief by refusing to move his homestead from its original site in the vicinity of his father-in-law, Mgidhlana ka Mpande Zulu.³⁰ Chief Zimeme was removing Stefana from the area because he was suspected to be a wizard, who had caused several deaths in Mgidhlana's family. In this endeavour, Zimema was

29. NAD, CNC 29, 1911/1253: Notes of a meeting between Native Chiefs of Mtunzini with the Acting Under Secretary for Native Affairs, 9.12.1920.

30. NAD, CNC 29, 1911/1253: Zululand District Native Commissioner - Acting Chief Native Commissioner, Natal, 22.08.1911.

enjoying the support of the government officials in Zululand, because he was referred to as "one of our best chiefs".³¹ Due to his resistance, Stefana was ultimately removed to Natal under arrest, despite the fact that the Chief went beyond his jurisdiction in ordering him to leave his ward.³²

Later in 1913 the same Stefana lodged a complaint with the Chief Native Commissioner against chief Zimema for having refused to renew his medical licence. In response to his complaint, Stefana was referred to Section 4 of the Zululand Proclamation number 7 of 1895. This section stated that no medicine person or herbalist could receive a licence unless the application was approved by the applicant's chief.³³ This proclamation did not make any distinction between the first and subsequent renewal licences. So, Stefana's argument that chief Zimema's refusal was unlawful because his issue was a renewal application, could not materialise.

3.2 The post 1910 boundary disputes.

As it has been stated that the AbakwaMzimela were bordered by numerous tribes, disputes concerning boundaries were recurring and endless. Apart from the pre-1910 ones other disputes occurred

31. Ibid.

32. NAD, CNC 29, 1911/1253: Acting Chief Native Commissioner, Natal, - Zululand District Native Commissioner, 6.09.1911.

33. NAD, CNC 29, 1911/1253: Acting Chief Native Commissioner - Messrs Hullet and Hunter, Eshowe, 21.02.1913.

after 1910, particularly with chiefs Mbango of Eshowe division and Ngokwena of the AbakwaMkhwanazi. The whole boundary issue was not a new phenomenon, but can be traced as far back as 1895 after John Dunn's death. The then five izinduna, namely Lokotwayo, Nqondo, Sisimane, Zimema and Malambu, who controlled portions of Dunn's territory were in 1897 appointed as chiefs.³⁴ Therefore, clearly defined wards had to be established.

3.2.1 The Mbango-Zimema boundary dispute

After the determination of Chief Zimema's territory was recommended, Chief Mbango complained that 49 homesteads belonging to his tribe were being incorporated into the Mtunzini district. He then requested that his jurisdiction³⁵ be extended to embrace the homesteads which were located between the Umlalazi and Mkukuzi rivers. Mbango's request was acceded to, thus delimiting Zimema's area in the South, because the new arrangement excluded the land between Umlalazi and Mkukuzi rivers from his territory. The AbakwaMzimela could not leave this matter unchallenged.

Being obsessed about the loss of his predecessors' land, Zimema decided to take action. In 1916 he raised the issue at the Chief Native Commissioner. He questioned the recommendation that

34. NAD, CNC 26, 337/15: Natal Chief Native Commissioner - Mtunzini magistrate, 26.08.1916.

35. Ibid.

Umlalazi river should be a boundary between himself and Chief Mbango, for it deprived him of a portion of his old tribal lands. He claimed that his homesteads had been in that territory since the battle of Ndongakusuka (December 1856) and that his boundary has the Mbambangwe stream south of Umlalazi river.³⁶ He further stated that Mbango only started to claim the area in 1904. The chief Native Commissioner informed Zimema that his representation would be submitted to Pretoria but gave no promise that the government would alter the decision already taken. He reiterated that Umlalazi was the recognised boundary and that Zimema should move his homesteads across the river within two years, lest they should become subject to Mbango. Due to the failure of the latter to present his case, the Mtunzini magistrate urged the Chief Commissioner to submit Zimema's report to Pretoria.³⁷

The Chief Commissioner was aware that the 1904 boundary recommendations were throwing some portion of Zimema's land into Mbango's and vice-versa. He then informed the Secretary of Native Affairs in Pretoria accordingly, including the fact that out of Zimema's 14 homesteads situated South of the Umlalazi river ten have been there since 1856 and others since 1903. Chief Mbango

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36. NAD, CNC 26, 337/15: Interview of the Zimema delegation with the Chief Native Commissioner, Pietermaritzburg, 28.08.1916.
37. NAD, CNC 26, 1337/15: Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 31.10.1916.

was portrayed as having "no real ground for complaint". In 1917 the Mtunzini magistrates pointed out the boundary lines between chiefs Zimema and Mbango as determined by the central government in Pretoria on 14th December 1916.

Regarding the troublesome southern border it was decided that the limits of jurisdiction of chief Zimema should be bounded by:

"The Umlalazi river to its junction with the Mkukuzi River ... to its junction with the Matenteni stream to its source in the Hlatikulu Bush, ... to the Mpagana stream, thence down that stream to its junction with the Umlalazi river; and up the Umlalazi River to where it crosses the Eshowe-Mtunzini divisional boundary". 39

Although this boundary, as determined in Pretoria, was not in accordance with the wishes of neither Zimema nor Mbango, the decision was regarded as final.

3.2.2 The Zimema-Ngokwana boundary dispute

In 1916 the magistrate of the Mtunzini division realised that the ambiguous tribal boundary between chiefs Zimema and Ngokwana of the Mkhwanazi tribe was the cause of the faction fights between

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38. CAD, NTS 369, 2000/1915: Chief Native Commissioner, Natal, - Secretary for Native Affairs, 7.11.1916.
39. NAD, CNC 110, 1913/330: Secretary for Native Affairs - Chief Native Commissioner, Natal, 20.12.1916.

the adherents of the two chiefs. As a precise boundary was required, the attention of the Chief Native Commissioner was drawn to this issue. After inspecting the boundary line between the two warring chiefs in company of Zimema and Ngokwane delegations, the magistrate forwarded his proposals to the Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg.⁴⁰ Chief Zimema did not accept the boundary proposals en toto. He objected to the line running from a point near the Ngoye Mission station to the Umhlathuze river, because some of his gardens were put into Chief Ngokwana's ward.⁴¹

Apart from the unacceptable boundary line, Zimema also complained about his counterpart Ngokwana who was placing a certain Madumbuluzane near their boundary "to cause trouble".⁴² The magistrate also believed that this man was the cause of the trouble between the two chiefs. He was even prepared to instruct chief Ngokwane to place this man in another part of his ward. The Commissioner promised to consider the matter, overlooking the urgency of the whole issue. There was an ensuing trouble over garden lands and Madumbuluzane was regarded as an "evil doer".⁴³ There is no documentary proof that this boundary dispute was even given any immediate attention, let alone solving it.

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40. NAD, CNC 265A, 1916/2046: Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 22.12.1919.
41. NAD, CNC 347, 1919/109: Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 22.12.1919.
42. Ibid.
43. NAD, CNC 347, 1919/109: Mtunzini Magistrate - Native Commissioner, 28.01.1920.

4. MZIMELA SUCCESSION ISSUES

Succession disputes were the order of the day among the Zulu tribes and the AbakwaMzimela were no exception. In 1910 being aware of such disputes, A.J. Shepstone, the Acting under Secretary for Native Affairs (A.U.S.N.A.). In Natal, advised the chiefs each to point his senior wife and proper heir to avoid succession problems.⁴⁴ In this case neither the tradition nor the customs of the Zulu were fully comprehend by Shepstone. Customarily the eldest son of the indlunkulu (main house) was exclusively to succeed to "the property and status of the kraal head".⁴⁵ In a case where there were no male issue or there were some other problems alternatives were provided. For instance, failing all heirs of the indhlunkulu, the succession devolved to the affiliated house.⁴⁶

Chief Zimema had already appointed Ntshidi as his heir prior to Shepstone's 'advise'. Ntshidi was only installed on 20 August 1937 succeeding his father who had died on 26 February 1937. Although Ntshidi was duly appointed by his father as heir, his installation was not wholly acceptable to all the sons of Chief Zimema. The Governor-General re-appointed him a successor.

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44. NAD, SNA 479, 3699/1920: Meeting of chiefs and headmen of Mtunzini division with the A.U.S.N.A. at Mtunzini Court House, 21.11.1910.
45. E.J. Krige: The Social System of the Zulus, p.180.
46. Ibid.

4.1 Disputes over Ntshidi's appointment

One of chief Zimema's sons, Makwicela Mzimela objected vigorously to the Ntshidi's appointment by stating that he was the rightful successor. He claimed that he, Makwicela, was supposed to be the chief because Ntshidi was just acting as a regent for he was still young.⁴⁷ The argument was based on the fact that, as the eldest surviving son in the Indhlunkulu section of his father and also the general heir, Makwicela was supposed to succeed his father. Unfortunately the objection against Ntshidi's appointment could not be considered because the Governor-General, as the supreme chief was "not bound by the ordinary rules of succession to make the appointment dependent upon the position of being the eldest son of the Indhlunkulu".⁴⁸ This meant to say that a person appointed as chief by the Governor-General was not necessarily to be the eldest surviving son in the indhlunkulu.

Makwicela did not just bury the hatchet silently. He objected to a document produced by Ntshidi to motivate that in 1910 the late Chief Zimema sent a delegation of headmen to Mtunzini Commissioner's office to report that he had been appointed as heir and successor. He argued that Ntshidi's appointment was wrong because his father sent that delegation to report that Ntshidi was

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47. NAD, CNC 389/53: Makwicela Mzimela - secretary for Native Affairs, 16.11.1938.
48. NAD, CNC 389/53: Makwicela Mzimela vs Ntshidi Mzimela case, 23.8.1938.

to be his induna and not his heir nor successor. Despite these sound motivations Makwicela's appeal was dismissed to Ntshidi's advantage. Ntshidi was then recognised as chief.

It was learnt that succession issues were therefore to be decided by the Governor-General and not by the law. Apart from being legally unfair, this practice was in clear controvention of the traditional and royal practices among the Zulu tribes. Later Makwicela attempted to claim only the inheritance of his father's property, but also to no avail.⁵⁰ The appointment and installation of Ntshidi "Mnguni" as chief of the AbakwaMzimela was reported to be satisfactory, not only to the leading elders of the tribe but also to the neighbouring chiefs. The report further stated that these "neighbouring chiefs" knew for many years that Zimema recognised Ntshidi as his successor.⁵¹

4.2 Disputes over Ntshidi's succession

Succession disputes were also encountered after the death of Chief Ntshidi in 1944. Induna Mpindelwa Dindi was appointed by the magistrate to take a temporary charge of the affairs of the tribe,

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49. NAD, CNC 389/53: Makwicela Mzimela - Secretary for Native Affairs, 16.11.1938.
50. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Chief Native Commissioner - Secretary Native Affairs, 20.09.1940.
51. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: H.C. Lugg (CNC) - Secretary for Native Affairs, 30.08.1937.
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until a successor was appointed. But the authority to try cases
was not vested on this regent.⁵² The magistrate appointed Dindi
because he was the head tribal induna since chief Zimema's time
and also took charge of the tribe during chief Ntshidi's
absence.⁵³ It was stated that people were satisfied with Dindi's
appointment as the acting chief. Thereafter, the two sons of
Ntshidi, Lindelihle and Pambangayo, started to contest for the
right to succeed their father. Lindelihle was the son of
Giqambele Zibane while Pambangayo was the son of Ngobeni Kubiso,
both being the wires of Chief Ntshidi.

Lindelihle claimed to be rightful successor mainly on the grounds
that he was appointed by his late father Ntshidi. He claimed that
his father had announced before the tribe's gathering that he
(Lindelihle) was his general heir as well as his successor
(inkosana - indhlalifa").⁵⁴ This claim by Lindelihle was a bit
confusing because the Native Commissioner at Mtunzini was under
the impression that Mngunikacandwa was the heir. This assumption
originated from the fact that on 22 December 1944 Mngunikacandwa
Mzimela and 19 Mzimela indunas reported that Chief Ntshidi had
called a gathering wherein he declared that his 23 year old son

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52. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Native Commissioner - Chief Native Commissioner, 5.01.1945.
53. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Native Commissioner - Chief Native Commissioner, 10.01.1945.
54. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Enquiry Report on Ntshidi's succession by W.J.F. Rosster, Native Commissioner, 8.08.1945.

Mngunikacandwa was his general heir.⁵⁵ This account tends to be contrary to what really happened at the magistrate court meeting. In that meeting wherein Lindelihle was appointed, there were 20 indunas, including Mngunikacandwa and the other 102 Mzimelas.⁵⁶ The delegation of Mngunikacandwa tends to be a fabricated story by some indunas to have him as chief. Mngunikacandwa, himself, did not claim any chieftaincy but only confirmed that his father appointed Lindelihle as successor.

The other claimant, Pambampayo, laid his claim on the grounds that he was the son of the indhlunkulu and that his father Ntshidi had no right to appoint anyone else but the indhlunkulu heir. He motivated his claim by asserting that his mother Ngobeni Kubisa was affiliated to Bozi Mgenge, the senior wife of his late father. He regarded himself as the rightful successor because Bozi had no male issue and furthermore his maternal grand-father was a man of standing unlike Bozi who was a daughter of a commoner.⁵⁷ Although the two claimants presented their versions convincingly, Lindelihle's occupied the upperhand because people interviewed gave evidence to his favour. The acting chief Mpindelwa Dindi confirmed that Lindelihle was appointed by Ntshidi as successor and that the appointment was recorded at the Native Commissioner's office.⁵⁸

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55. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Native Commissioner - Chief Native Commissioner, 10.01.1945.
56. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Meeting at Mtunzini Magistrate Court, 22.12.1944.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.

One Mntwanamuntu Mhluziwempi, son of the late Ntshidi by his wife Nohebeza, stated that at the burial of chief Ntshidi the assegai was handed by Mciteni to Lindelihle in Pambampayo's presence and the latter did not object.⁵⁹ The handing of an assegai during the burial of a royal person was a customary way of indicating who his successor would be. If Pambampayo had any claim he could have rightfully objected to the handing of the assegai to Lindelihle. The whole problem of succession originated from the fact that Ntshidi's homesteads were not classified to the seniority of the wives, i.e. all were equal in status.⁶⁰ The request by A.J. Shepstone in 1910 that chiefs should appoint their chief wives and proper heirs was not given any heed by Chief Ntshidi.

There could have been numerous reasons for not adhering to Shepstone's request. Apparently it was not the responsibility of the chief to appoint his successor, because the elders of the tribe were well-vested with succession issues. It could have been also feared that early appointment could encourage witchcraft due to jealousy from the other chief's wives towards the appointed son or wife. This idea tallies with Pambampayo's statement in his claim for the chieftainship that "according to tribal custom he (chief Ntshidi) had no right to nominate a successor, but had the

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59. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Enquiry into the succession of the Mzimela tribe chieftainship, 9.08.1945.
60. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na prosesregtelike Aspekte, p.34.

right only to declare his chief wife. Chief Ntshidi did the
opposite; he appointed his successor but did not allocate his
wives accordingly to the indhlunkulu (main house), ikolo (second
house) and to the iqadi (third house).⁶¹
⁶²

After the central government had scrutinized the facts from the
enquiry held to determine Ntshidi's succession including
recommendations from the Mtunzini Native Commissioner, Lindelihle
was appointed chief of the AbakwaMzimela tribe on 29 December
1945.⁶³ He only assumed duty duly on 15 February 1946 when he was
given a letter of appointment before the Mzimela indunas and +300
members of the tribe.⁶⁴ Thereafter the tribe accepted him as
their chief and the contender Pambampayo tended to have no chance
of succeeding. The information regarding Lindelihle's acceptance
as the rightful chief is not readily available. One induna even
stated that there had never been any succession disputes.⁶⁴
Another version of the story is that Lindelihle became chief
because the rightful succession had committed murder. Although it
is said that he was released after serving his sentence, he could
not take over because the Zulu custom does not allow someone who
has committed murder to rule.⁶⁵

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61. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Native Commissioner - Chief Native
Commissioner, 3.09.1945.
62. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Naive Commissioner - Chief Native
Commissioner, 11.09.1944.
63. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Secretary for Native Affairs - Chief
Lindelihle Mzimela, 29.12.1945.
64. Zeblon Yimba, Mashananandana, 2.10.1988.
65. Alson Mtshali, Ntuze, 2.10.1988.

4.3 A brief look into Lindelihle's early reign

Although he enjoyed the support of the majority of the tribe, Chief Lindelihle was faced with numerous problems in the early period of his reign. As expected, Pambampayo was not contented about Lindelihle's installation as chief. There were also boundary clashes between the AbakwaMzimela and the AbakwaMkhwanazi. Pambampayo pursued his case through F.H. Brookes, a parliamentary representative, who submitted "papers" which motivated the claimant's case.⁶⁶ The central government rejected the given motivations. This rejection of Brookes' appeal was centred on the fact that Ntshidi indicated on several occasions that his son Lindelihle was his successor. Ntshidi's desire was communicated repeatedly to the government; on 16 May 1941, on 19 February 1943, on 5 March 1943 and gain on 21 June 1944.⁶⁷ Thereafter the succession issue of the Mzimela chieftainship was closed.

Like his predecessors, Lindelihle had to be faced with the problem of boundaries with the neighbouring tribes. The government officials were more concerned about the AbakwaMzimela boundary dispute with the AbakwaMkhwanazi. The Mtunzini magistrate convened a meeting to seek a solution to the dispute. Lindelihle

66. CAD, NTS 296, 389/563: Sen. E.H. Brookes - Secretary for Native Affairs, Cape Town, 10.06.1943.

67. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: G Mears (SNA) - E.H. Brookes, 25.07.1946.

led the Mzimela representation, while Muntukanakudla led the Mkhwanazi representation. The main purpose of the meeting was to determine the "exact nature of the dispute in a historical context".⁶⁸ After some deliberations at that meeting the magistrate learnt from the two young chiefs that the dispute was an old issue which did not affect the relations between the two tribes. The inspection of the boundary revealed that dissatisfaction only concerned the Mhlathuze river line which was in a "zig-zag manner" cutting across garden lands.⁶⁹ This irregular line was then substituted by a straight one. The sensible settlement of the boundary clash indicates that the two young chiefs were able to settle issues quickly and easier.

The amicable and speedy solutions to disputes reduced the expenditure of the Native Affairs Department. For instance, Mr H.C. Lugg was appointed as the "grens-hoofman naewelle komiseris" to determine the boundary between Mzimela and Mkhwanazi tribes at £2.10 per day.⁷⁰ The government was not pleased about Lindelihle's conduct during the early period of his rule. The gradual improvement of relations between him and the central government can be deduced from the regular 'bonus' which was paid to the chiefs. His 1945/49 was £6.00 per annum and was also warned that unless his attitude was changed, it was to be reduced

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68. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: H.C. Lugg, Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 16.03.1950.
69. Ibid.
70. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Secretary for Native Affairs - Staatsdiens-konkussie, 22.09.1949.

further.⁷¹ Due to his helpful contribution to the magistrial office by controlling his tribe "well", Lindelihle's yearly bonus was increased to £54.⁷² In this way the central government was using the remuneration of the chiefs as a measure of maintaining their allegiance. Initially Lindelihle was appointed senior chief of the district, but presently chief Mkhwanazi⁷³ is occupying the position because of his higher standard of education.

5. A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

To get a clear historical picture of the Mzimela tribe, attention must be given to its present situation in historical retrospection. Although the AbakwaMzimela territory has been frequently delimited since the 1940s, the physical set-up has developed greatly. This development has been effected by numerous factors ranging from education to economy, let alone the succession of the chiefs who pioneered the progress.

5.1 Educational, denominational and economic development

The fact that the AbakwaMzimela are not far from the University of Zululand contributed greatly to their educational development.

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71. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: R.P. Campbell (CNC) - Mtunzini Magistrate, 24.03.1948.
72. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 31.03.1949.
73. Alson Mtshali, Ntuze, 2.10.1988.

The Mzimela tribe has been interested in education from long ago. For instance, in 1939 during chief Ntshidi's era application was made requesting for the erection of the Zimema Memorial school. The application was turned down on the grounds that this school was to be too close to the missionary school, namely Ntenetshana of the Scandanavian Baptist Union Church which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away.⁷⁴ It was further alleged that the Zimema Memorial School was linked to the Nazareth religion led by Shembe. In 1940 Chief Ntshidi made a reapplication promising to accommodate both heathens and christians, but was also rejected because "the site of this school (was) nearer than five mile radius to missionary schools".⁷⁵

Living under such administration the tribe could not develop their education at their own initiative. The government tended to be interested only in missionary-oriented schools. Later the situation improved, especially when the so-called homelands were given greater powers. In February 1975 the AbakwaMzimela had four primary schools, three higher primary schools and one secondary school,⁷⁶ altogether accommodating 2 908 pupils. Since then there has been an increase in the number of schools built.

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74. CAD, NTS 649, 727/108: Mtunzini Magistrate - Chief Native Commissioner, 20.12.1939.
75. NAD, 1MTU 3/4/3/2: Ntshidi Zimema - Mtunzini Magistrate, 01.03.1940.

What could be collected is that at the moment there are 13 schools, that is, ten primary schools and three secondary schools.

They are:

Ncekwane Lower Primary
Ntenetshana Lower Primary
Macekane Lower Primary
Manzamyama Higher Primary
Thondo Higher Primary
Endlovini Higher Primary
Lindelihle Higher Primary
Ebuhleni Higher Primary
Oyemeni Higher Primary
Ntshidi Higher Primary
Njingili Junior Secondary School
Mtunzini High School and
Mashananandana Senior Secondary.

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Although the Mzimela tribe has done a great deal in their educational upliftment, the contribution of the missionaries cannot be overlooked. Missionary schools were erected after consultation with chiefs and it is not stated anywhere that a chief has ever objected to the erection of such schools. For

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76. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na prosesregtelike Aspekte, p.48.
77. Zeblon Yimba, Mashananandana, 2.10.1988.

example, in 1913 chiefs Zimema, Ngokwane and Ntungelezana agreed to the granting of land to the schools to be erected by the Norwegian Mission Society.⁷⁸

The existence of the missionary societies put an impact on the culture of the tribe through religion and education. There are seven church institutions among the AbakwaMzimela which originated mostly from the works of the missionaries in the area. They are the:

Evangelical Lutheran church in South Africa,

Full Gospel Tabernacle

Scandanavian Independent Baptist Union

New Church of South Africa

Engonyameni Apostoliese Kerk

South African Baptist Missionary Society and

⁷⁹

Roman Catholic Church.

Apart from the above-mentioned church institutions, there are other two church groups which are more Africanized. These groups are the Zionists and the Nazareths led by Shembe. The two churches enjoy a reasonable following in the tribe due to their

78. NAD, CNC 122, 793/1913: Secretary to Deputy Native Commissioner, Zululand, - Chief Native Commissioner, 26.09.1913.

79. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na prosesregte- like Aspekte, p.48.

adherence to the Zulu customs, but a general belief is that the
Lutheran Church is the most dominant.⁸⁰ The Shembe sect in the
Mzimela area can be traced as far back as 1940. It^{was} alleged in
1940 that chief Ntshidi failed to report the presence of "a
strange native" Shembe from the Inanda district. When questioned,
chief Ntshidi admitted to be a follower of Shembe's denomination.⁸¹
A fine of £10 was recommended for Ntshidi's conduct. There is
no documentary proof as to whether this fine was approved or not.

The income of the tribe is mostly depended on the sugar
plantations and livestock farming which is greatly practised in
the area. Although the tribe did not get any substantial
assistance from the government for its agricultural endeavours,⁸² one
can point out that there has been some extent of concern. For
example, in 1916 the game conservator was instructed to kill a
number of rietbucks which were causing damage to the Mzimela
crops.⁸² The killing of this game was important because it was
believed that it was responsible for the spread of the nagana
disease caused by the tsetse-fly.⁸³ Other diseases like the East
Coast fever were controlled by using mandatory dipping which was

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80. Zebon Yimba, Mashananandana, 2.10.1988.
81. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: J.P. Rawlinson's report on the enquiry into the conduct of Chief Ntshidi, 20.06.1940.
82. NAD, CNC 262, 16/1918, Natal Chief Native Commissioner - Mtunzini Magistrate, 17.11.1916.
83. A. de V. Minnaar: Empangeni - A Historical Review to 1983, p.14.

introduced by White Zululand settlers. ⁸⁴ These dips were also open for Black use, otherwise the disease could not be controlled. Service was also rendered for the control of locusts. After difficulties in getting off the swamps in the Empangeni area, including Black reserves, methods were improved until in 1937 the locust-fighting campaign became victorious and ceased to operate. ⁸⁵ The services which were provided by White settlers were, therefore, beneficial to the Zulu farmers.

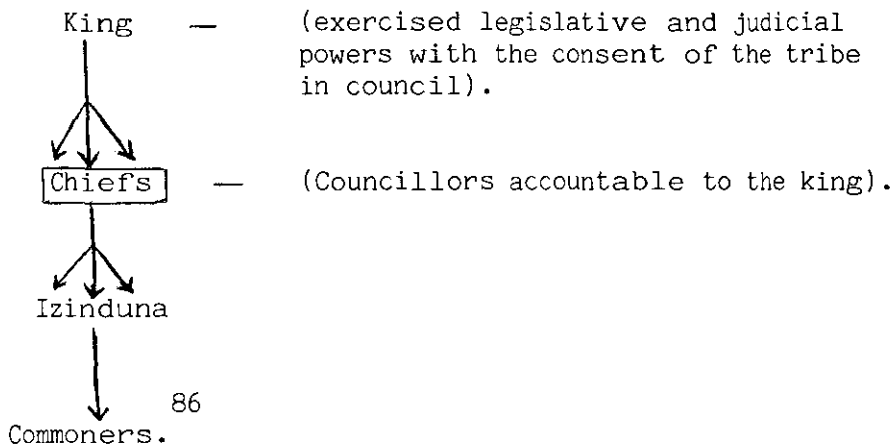
In addition to farming as their basic source of income, the AbakwaMzimela also work in the neighbouring towns and industrial areas like Mtunzini, Richards Bay and Empangeni or as far as Durban. Due to lack of employment other Zulu men migrated to the Witwatersrand leaving families behind. They usually stay there and send or bring money for their wives and children regularly. The danger of this migrant employment is that men can marry other wives and forget about their customary marriage at home.

5.2 The political hierarchy system of the past and the present

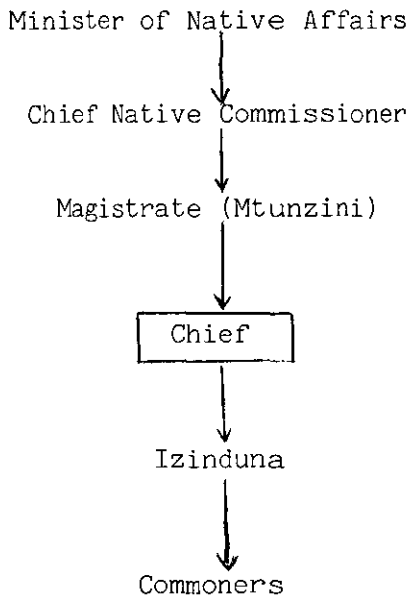
The political structure of the tribe during pre-conquest period was in accordance with Krige's description of the political organisation of the Zulus. The schematic representation of the political hierarchy was as follows:

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., p.18

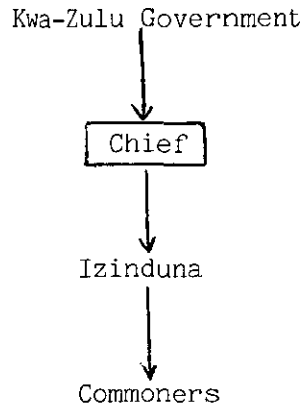


After the 1887 annexation by the British, the individual chiefs tended to have lost their allegiance to the king. They were put directly under various magistrates, for example, the Mzimela tribe under the Mtunzini magistrate. The political hierarchy was as follows:



86. E.J. Krige: The Social System of the Zulus, pp.219-220.

As the apartheid regime was modified regularly today's political and administrative system is totally different from that of the pre-conquest period and that of the colonial times. The chief is no longer wholly accountable to neither the King nor the Mtunzini magistrate, but to KwaZulu homeland government. The hierarchy is as follows:

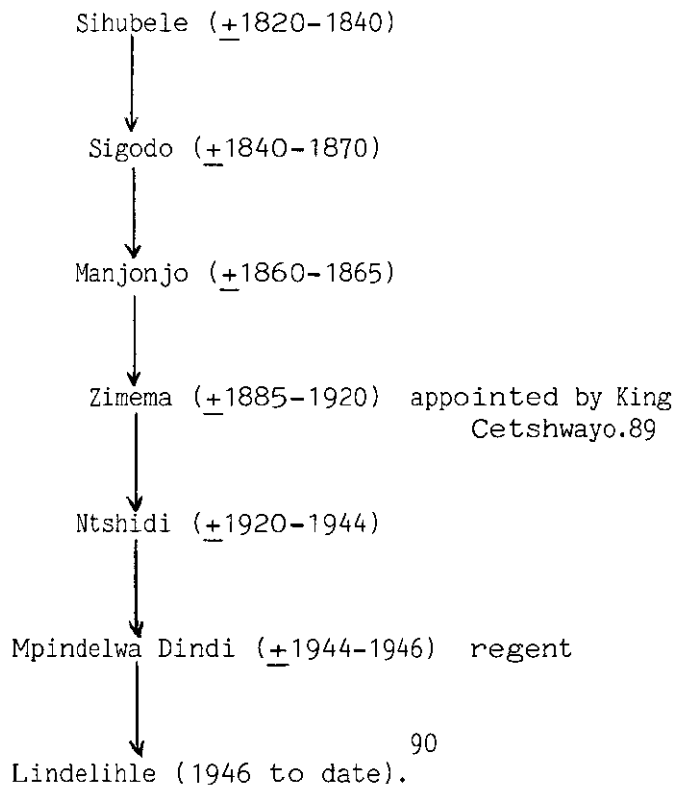


The present political structure is in line with the policy of separate development. This policy created the homeland system to lessen the pressure on the central government in regard to Blacks' demands for participation in the political decision making of the country. Another reason behind the creation of the homelands was an attempt by the central government to reconcile tradition with modern administrative requirements. Since 1951 "the traditional democratic forces" of the tribes were recognised and encouraged through the Bantu Authorities Act. But these recognised

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87. J.D. Comeroff: Chieftainship in a South African homeland (Journal of Southern African Studies, Volume 1, No.1, October 1974), p.45.
88. Ibid, p.42.

chieftainships were not left to themselves hence the appointment of chief ministers over the homelands. The administration of Black tribes which is based on apartheid principles have cut the links of co-operation between these tribes and their White neighbours. The two communities have been 'forced' through legislation to live in two separate worlds.

5.3 A Genealogical list of the Mzimela chieftainship



89. CAD, NTS 296, 389/53: Chief Native Commissioner - Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, 20.09.1940.

90. J.L.W. De Clercq: Die familie-, erf- en opvolgingsreg van die AbakwaMzimela, met verwysing na prosesregtelike Aspekte, p.43.

6. CONCLUSION

It is important to state at this stage that this survey has not tackled the whole history of the Mzimela tribe, but attempted to give a selective outline of the main occurrences. Despite all the hindrances the AbakwaMzimela succeeded in maintaining their integrity as a tribe. The tribe has been under numerous authorities, namely, Dingiswayo's, Shaka's, the British colonial government and the South African Union and Republican governments. Despite retrogression in regard to race relations in South Africa, the tribe has developed greatly. For instance, boundary disputes which were recurrent in the past are no longer prevalent and further succession disputes are not expected.

Although there are numerous factors which contributed to the development of the Mzimela tribe, the succession of chiefs tends to be the outstanding one. It was noted in the above paragraphs that the Mzimela chieftainship became progressive as the years went by. Despite the chiefs' progressiveness the government's policy of separate development isolated the tribe from its neighbours. At the moment the tribe is indirectly ruled by the central government because it is under the KwaZulu homeland government which is the product of the apartheid policy. It should be pointed out, as a conclusion, that the numerous political authorities which have reigned over the AbakwaMzimela leaves much to be desired, especially when one projects the post-apartheid South Africa.

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