

NONGQAUSE

1. Nongqause, niece of Mhlakaza, councillor of the Xhosa chief Sarili, at the age of fifteen, claimed in 1856 to have seen visions of departed chiefs - Ngqika, Hintsa, Ndlambe - eager to return to earth to rid the Xhosa of the yoke of the white conqueror. She saw one land of dead cattle and empty granaries, and another of sleek beasts and ripening fields, where there was no more crying or hunger or death, and a great wind had swept all the conquerors into the sea. But a great price had to be paid for this paradise - all cattle must be killed, all crops destroyed, and nothing sown.

Cartoon: Nongqause's vision of sleek cattle and ripening fields.

2. Nongqause's uncle Mhlakaza - a diviner - confirmed her vision. He took her to Paramount Chief Sarili, who was deeply disturbed. He too had a vision, and saw his father Hintsa in his dream. He urged his people to obey the terrible instructions.

Cartoon: Either Sarili listening to the fateful prophesy of of the girl Nongqause,
or Sarili's vision of his father Hintsa, urging him to obey.

3. The instructions were obeyed, but there was no paradise, only crying and hunger and death. The Xhosas were more than ever dependent on their white conquerors. One fifth of them died. Nongqause fled from the wrath and the destruction she had caused. For her safety she was sent to Robben Island. When hatred had died down, she returned, married, and had children. But she gave herself another name, Victoria Regina.

Cartoon: Death and famine in the land of the Xhosas