

THE EUROPEAN IMPACT UPON NORTHERN TSWANA CHIEFDOMS, 1850-1910.

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ABSTRACT

Recent works on Tswana history have tended to be preoccupied with political history, with the result that the gamut of forces that have shaped the history of Botswana (until 1966 known as Bechuanaland Protectorate) have only been partially revealed. This thesis seeks to shed more light on the history of northern Bechuanaland by taking into account some of the social and economic processes that beset that region in the nineteenth century.

From about the middle of the nineteenth century up to the turn of the twentieth century a host of external factors, in varying degrees, impinged upon social and economic institutions of the Tswana. And of these factors the advent of Europeans was the most significant; Europeans brought new ideas that interacted with those of the Tswana. The white newcomers also had tendencies to expand the British sphere of influence throughout southern Africa, a trend that resulted in the annexation of northern Bechuanaland in 1885. By 1910 British rule in Bechuanaland had become firmly entrenched.

A special feature of the interaction between the Tswana and the Europeans was that the latter group introduced its religious and secular ideas to the Tswana with an enthusiasm that was matched by Tswana reticence to abandon their traditional way of life in favour of an alien culture. Yet, in spite of their conservatism, the Tswana felt the impact of European ideas.

Even in a study that tries to reconstruct a social and economic history of northern Bechuanaland, it has been found necessary to include Chapter Four, which deals with the creation of the Protectorate and indicates government intervention in some aspects of Tswana life and how the latter group responded to some measures introduced by the new rulers. It is hoped that Chapter Four, though largely dealing with political history, should enhance an understanding of Tswana history as too often Tswana responses to government intervention mirrored the kind of responses that were evinced by the new social and economic ideas.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- L.M.S. - London Missionary Society
- P.R.O. - Public Record Office
- C.O. - Colonial Office
- B.D.C. - Bechuanaland District Committee of the L.M.S.
- B.N.A. - Botswana National Archives
- U.D.C. - United District Committee, comprising of the B.D.C. and Matebeleland District Committee of the L.M.S.
- M.D.C. - Matebeleland District Committee of the L.M.S.
- B.S.A. Co. - British South Africa Company
- J.R.A.I. - Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
- J.R.G.S. - Journal of the Royal Geographical Society
- N.R.L.T.U.C. - Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee
- S.A.N.A.C. - South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903-5
- C.M.M. - Cape Monthly Magazine

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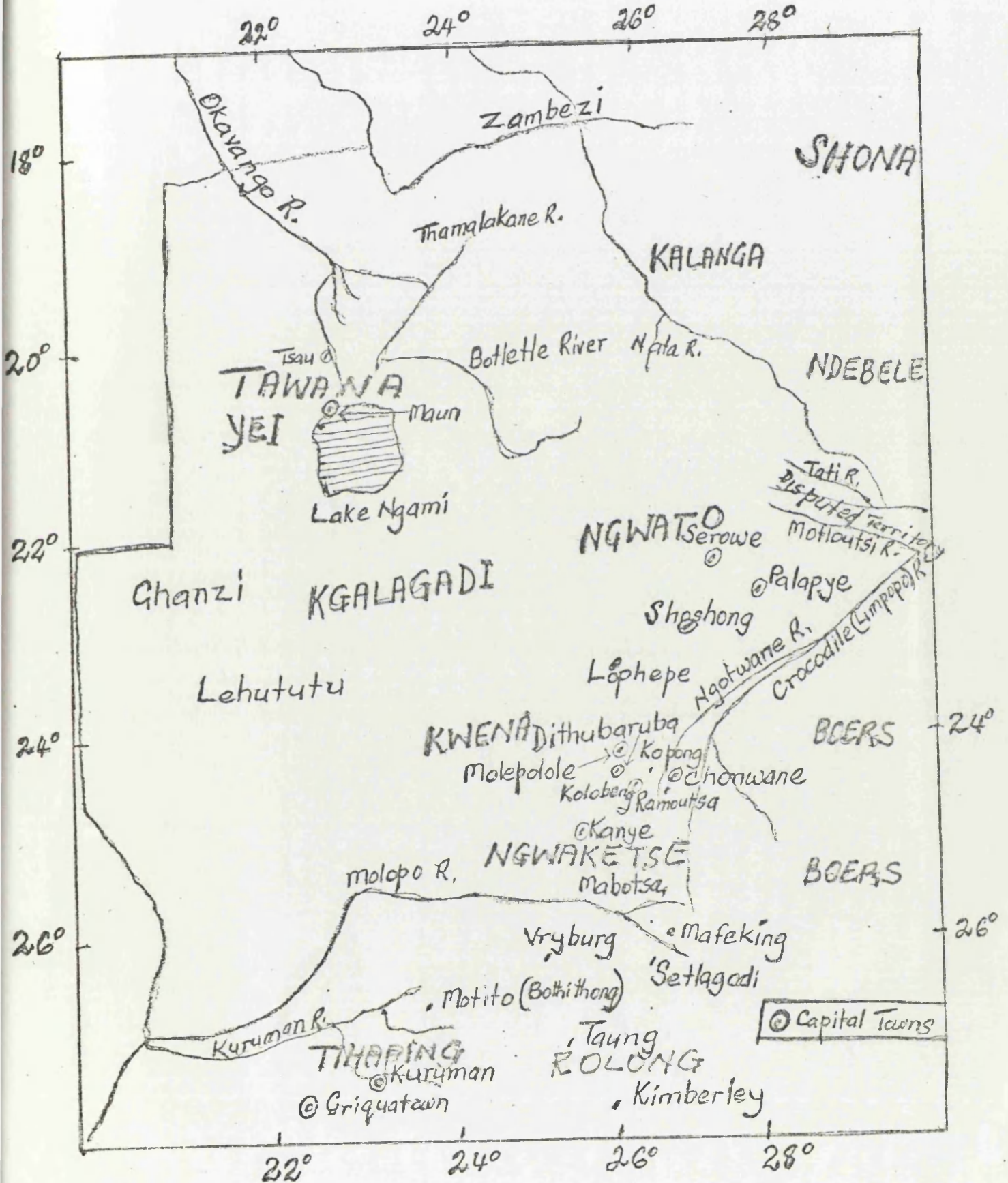
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CHAPTER ONE

Early Tswana Contacts with White Travellers and
Agents of the London Missionary Society,
1800 - 1852.

-8-
TSWANA SETTLEMENTS, C1800-1902



In 1849, when David Livingstone, the London Missionary Society's adventurous agent, toured the northwest portion of Tswana chiefdoms,¹ he had crossed a region that was slowly recovering from the pangs of over a half century of strife. Even before the Difaqane had made itself felt, it appears that political stability evaded both the larger and smaller Tswana chiefdoms.² Examples of the breaking up of tribes, either premeditated or spontaneous, far exceeded tendencies to unite, even when the Tswana were threatened by a common enemy. Oral traditions and written accounts alike provide evidence for the fissiparous tendencies within Tswana society. It was among these strife-torn communities that white missionaries and laymen made their appearance.

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1. David Livingstone, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (London, 1857), pp. 61-87; David Livingstone, Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1856, edited by Isaac Schapera (London, 1961), pp. 131-166.
 2. The four principal tribes with which this thesis concerns itself are the Kwena, Ngwaketse, Ngwato, and the Tawana; all have a common origin. For the traditional history of Tswana tribes and their customs, see Isaac Schapera, The Tswana (London, 1952); The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes (L.S.E. Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 11, 1952); A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom (London, 1938, reprinted 1955, 1970); Anthony Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate (London, 1952), pp. 104-194; J. Tom Brown, Among the Bantu Nomads, a record of forty years spent among the Bechuana (London, 1926); passim; George Stow, The Native Races of South Africa, edited by G.M. Theal (London, 1905), pp. 404-459; John Mackenzie, Austral Africa, Losing it or ruling it (London, 1887), Chapters I, II, and III; Isaac Schapera, editor, Ditirafalo tsa Merafe ya Batswana (Lovedale, 1940).

I

The early white travellers to southern Bechuanaland widely reported the ravages of war. One of the earliest of such travellers (Borchers, secretary to the Truter-Sommerville mission) was told in 1801 by Molehabangwe, the Thlaping Chief, how the Korana, aided by the fire arms of the mixed white-Khoikhoi under Jan Bloem, had defeated the Thlaping. According to Borchers, the Thlaping's numerical superiority proved ineffectual as the Korana forced them to "succumb, owing to the inferiority of their arms."³ The Thlaping were impressed by the effectiveness of fire arms⁴ and in due course sought them from any white traveller who visited their chiefdom; they also tended to impute all white newcomers from the south with hostile motives. In 1805 an embassy from the Cape which was accompanied by the German University

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3. Petrus Borchardus Borchers, An Autobiographical Memoir (Cape Town, 1861), p. 84; Robert Moffat, Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa (New York, 1850), p. 150. Tswana weapons of war (see George Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, London, 1827, p. 99) consisted of bows and arrows, assegais, battle axes, and shields made of skins.
 4. See for example the Thlaping response to a gun-trap that killed (see Borchers, op. cit., p. 83) a wolf that had terrorised them: "Great was the astonishment of these people to find that such destruction was effected without the presence of any human being. Such was their abhorrence of the animal that each visitor administered it a stroke with a stick or trap..." See also Henry Lichtenstein, Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806, translated by Anne Plumtre (London, 1815), Volume Two, pp. 399, 400, who reported that Molehabangwe "wanted to see some specimens of our dexterity in shooting. Accordingly, a mark being set up, some of our marksmen... took their aim in his presence, and hit it very happily. He expressed very great astonishment, but begged that the experiment might not be renewed, as the noise of the gun was very disagreeable to him."

professor Dr. Henry Lichtenstein, was accorded a grudging welcome, Molehabangwe stating that "he had not the least objection to strangers visiting his country provided they came with pacific views."⁵

Between the Truter-Sommerville mission of 1801 and Lichtenstein's visit in 1805, the Thlaping had separated from the Rolong.⁶ Both groups sought assistance from the Cape white visitors so that they could attack neighbouring communities.⁷ These early visitors described the elaborate system of military awards and the prestige attached to these honours, which were indicative of the high value attached by the Tswana to warlike activities.⁸ In 1813 Campbell reported that the Thlaping

5. Henry Lichtenstein, Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806 (London, 1815), Volume One, p. 368.
6. Ibid., p. 379; however the major split between the Rolong and the Thlaping must have occurred before 1800: see Campbell, op. cit., pp. 258, 283-284; W.C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Becwana," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Volume XXXV (1905), p. 303, in which he observed that the Thlaping were an offshoot of the Rolong.
7. Lichtenstein, op. cit., p. 400.
8. Ibid., p. 416. See also Borchers, op. cit., p. 204; George Thompson, op. cit., pp. 106-107, in which he recorded Thlaping preparations for war: "...the warriors sprung up to re-commence the war dance, in which the whole multitude occasionally joined, the women frequently snatching the weapons from the men, and brandishing them in the air, and people of all ages displaying the most extravagant and frantic gesticulations for a space of nearly two hours. Towards the conclusion, a messenger from the King delivered to each headman a sprig of the camel-thorn tree, which conveyed an intimation that a private meeting of the warriors would be held next day in the mountains, in order to discuss some topics not fit to be made public in the presence of women and children and the lower class."

referred to cattle raids "as if it were a fortunate and commendable enterprise, that [the Thlaping] came to a people who had no instruments of defence, killed many of them, and carried off a great many cattle."⁹ Northern Tswana tribes, too, had their share of fissions.

At about the turn of the century (c. 1790-1800) the Tawana hived off from the Ngwato and went to live in Ngamiland. While the Ngwato-Tawana separation was not accompanied by fighting, the first few years of Tawana's followers' stay at the Lake were marred by internal disputes. Tawana quarrelled with his father Mathiba shortly after getting to Ngamiland, with the result that Mathiba returned to Shoshong, where he was turned away by his elder son, Kgama I, who was consolidating his position as chief of the Ngwato. Mathiba then found refuge among the Kwena, with whom he lived for the rest of his life. But the removal of Mathiba from Ngamiland did not bring the Tawana any lasting peace because Tawana's son Moremi assassinated his father and took over the chieftainship.¹⁰

9. Campbell, op. cit., p. 204.

10. For the probable date when the Tawana hived off from the Ngwato, see Sillery, op. cit., pp. 117-144; Schapera, Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes, pp. 8-27. Various reasons are given for the rift between the two sons of Mathiba, Kgama and Tawana. One version states that relations between Tawana and Kgama were strained because Mathiba was fonder of Tawana's mother (Mahuditsane) than Kgama's; another relates "that one day, as Khama and Tawana were eating some of the fruit of a Mokhadu tree, Tawana drew downwards a branch of the tree and as he let it go after eating the fruit which was on it accidentally struck his brother Khama, one of its thorns actually tearing one of Khama's eyelids"; that they quarrelled and Tawana decided to leave, in Number 9, Folder 796, Willoughby Papers, Selly Oak Colleges Library, Birmingham.

This unstable situation, partly the result of a general scarcity of economic resources in Bechuanaland, and partly owing to dynastic intrigues within the chiefdoms themselves was greatly aggravated by the impact of the Difaqane upon the Tswana groups. Accounts of the destruction caused by the migrations of the Kololo and other Sotho groups were amply recorded by white missionaries and other travellers, though these reports tended to exaggerate the ravages of war. Nevertheless, all the principal Tswana chiefdoms went to war with the Kololo at one time or the other.¹¹ The Tswana were caught at a time when they were suffering from grave internal weaknesses. In about 1820 the Kwena Chief, Motswasele II, was assassinated following allegations of immoral conduct, and one of the arch conspirators, Morwakgomo, usurped the chieftaincy. Another contender, Segokotlo, was driven away by Morwakgomo and went to live with the Ngwato in the north at Seruli; he took with him the minor heir

11. In South African historiography, the forays of the Kololo have been erroneously associated with the so-called "Mantatees." For accounts that identify more accurately the different ethnic groups involved in the "Difaqane," see Thornley Smith, editor, Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Laidman Hodgson, Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa, (London, 1854), p. 70, where the "Mantatees" are identified as the Tlokwa; D.F. Ellenberger, History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern (London, 1912), translated by J.C. Macgregor; Marion How, "An Alibi for Mantatise," African Studies, Volume 3, No. 2 (1955); E.M. Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland (London, 1957), pp. 367-410; W.F. Lye, "The Difaqane: the Mfecane in Southern Sotho area, 1822-24," The Journal of African History, VIII, 1 (1967), pp. 124-6. For scarcity of food James Read's account (20th May, 1817, loc. cit.) is revealing.

apparent, Sechele, and the heir's half-brother, Kgositintsi, two figures who were destined to play prominent roles in Kwena politics for over half a century.¹²

When the Thlaping were threatened in 1823 by the Kololo and other Sotho migrant groups, their Chief, Mothibi, who had succeeded his father in 1812,¹³ did not hesitate to turn to Robert Moffat, the L.M.S. missionary at Kuruman, and the traveler George Thompson, for help. Both Moffat and Thompson persuaded the Griquas, who were mounted and armed with guns, to reinforce the Thlaping, with the result that the Sotho groups were soundly defeated at Dithakong.¹³ Sebetwane's Kololo retreated into the Kgalagadi, regrouped and attacked the Kwena, forcing them to flee from Dithubaruba. The Kololo, however, did not remain long at Dithubaruba. In 1826 the Ngwaketse, whose Chief (Makabe) had been killed in an earlier fight with the

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12. E.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 379, *passim*; Willoughby, Folder 737, who observed: "I saw Mma-Kgama today (9th September, 1915) ... she said that Motswasele knew that his life was in danger, and had sent messengers to Sebitwane to come and avenge him after his death; and that he warned the Bakwena that Sebitwane would avenge his death... Sebitwane was then still in the South, but was coming North." While it is possible that Motswasele might have known about his impending death, it is very unlikely that Sebitwane could have undertaken the costly wars just to avenge the death of a remote Kwena kinsman of his.
13. Robert Moffat, Apprenticeship at Kuruman 1820-1828, edited by Isaac Schapera (London, 1951), pp. 73-77; Samuel Broadbent, A Narrative of the First Introduction of Christianity Amongst the Barolong Tribes of the Bechuanas, South Africa (London, 1865), pp. 96-115; E.M. Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland, pp. 371-372; George Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa (London, 1827, p. 90; Campbell, Travels in South Africa, p. 260; J.D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath (London, 1966), pp. 93-99.

Kololo, turned to two travellers, Bain and Biddulph, for assistance, and the Kololo were dislodged by the two whites merely firing blank cartridges in the air.¹⁴ But the Ngwaketse under their new chief, Sebego, were subsequently driven by the Ndebele to Lehututu on the fringes of the Kgalagadi desert. When shortage of food compelled the Ngwaketse to return to southern Bechuanaland in 1842 misfortune dogged their footsteps as they successively suffered military defeats at the hands of the Thlaping and the Kwena. For some time Sebego had to be sheltered by the Kgatla, who in the 1820's were certainly a poor match for the then powerful Kgwaketse.¹⁵

In northern Bechuanaland the Ngwato, too, felt the impact of the Difaqane. Kgositintsi Motswasele, who as we have seen above, had fled to the Ngwato for refuge after his father's assassination, gives an idea of how the Ngwato and some Kwena refugees bore the brunt of the Difaqane between 1823 and 1830:

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14. Margaret H. Lister, editor, Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain: Traveller, Explorer, Soldier, Road Engineer, Geologist (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1949), pp. 51-70. Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland, p. 382. When the two hunters wavered at first Sebego appealed to them on humanitarian grounds: "That cannot be, you have accepted of and given presents to us and we look upon you as our friends. If you are then what you pretend to be, you will join us against the common enemy of mankind," in Lister, op. cit., p. 53.
15. See David Livingstone to Mr. and Mrs. N. Livingstone, 26th September, 1842, in David Livingstone Family Letters 1841-1856, edited by Isaac Schapera (London, 1959), Volume One, pp. 64-65; Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland, p. 384; Isaac Schapera, "A Short History of the Bangwaketse," African Studies, Volume One (1942), pp. 9-10.

...and while there [with the Ngwato] a tribe of Basutos...came to disturb us. We then went across to the Makalakas where the Matebele are today [1886]. The Basutos followed us, then we fled to another portion of the Makalaka's country... Then Kgari made war on the Makalakas to try and take their corn, but our chief Khari was killed, and the tribe returned to [Ngwatoland] ... Sechele and myself then left the Bamangwato. We had a good number of Bakwena and were joined by the Bakaa. We settled in the present Bamangwato Hills. The Basutos again molested us. We left the hills with a large lot of cattle and came and settled at Lopepe.¹⁶

These disturbances during the first quarter of the nineteenth century considerably disrupted Tswana economic activities and severely undermined their political stability. Previously, the Tswana chiefdoms were in a position to trade among themselves in weapons and manufactured iron ware. Accounts of early white travellers show that Tswana communities obtained from them various commodities including beads, tobacco, mirrors, buttons, knives, brass ware, and some food (especially bread and tea).¹⁷

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16. Parliamentary Papers, 1887, LIX, C.4890, p. 12; Smith, op. cit., p. 386; John Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 358; Sillery, Bechuanaland Protectorate, p. 118. The Tswana were attacked (c. 1827) and the young heir, Lecholathebe was taken prisoner and grew up among Sebetwane's Kololo; he was subsequently released. See Lekoma's "History of the Mambukushu People" in Public Record Office, C.O. 879/79, African (South) Confidential, No. 717, p. 17, Milner to Chamberlain, 2 of 15th December, 1902.
17. Borchers recorded (see Borchers, Memoir, pp. 77, 78) the Thlaping response to the white visitors' wares as being that of "wonder and astonishment"; he also reported Chief Molehabangwe to have asked them to shave him and "when about half the face was cleared, he begged that his eyebrows might be also shaved." An eighteenth century account suggests that the Thlaping trade with their southern neighbors had been well established by 1779, see The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1799) with an English translation by A.W. van der Horst..., edited by E.E. Mossop (Cape Town, 1935), p. 149.

After 1840 there is evidence to show that Tswana chiefdoms concentrated on the acquisition of firearms and ammunition.¹⁸

II

The history of nineteenth century Bechuanaland is linked with the agonising adaptation of Tswana rulers to the changing circumstances that beset their chiefdoms. On whatever other topics they differed, early white visitors to Bechuanaland were unanimous in their estimation of the power of the Tswana Chief; he was a force to be reckoned with in his own territory. Those traders and missionaries who defied the chief's authority often paid heavily for their intransigence. A group whose chief could accommodate himself to, and cope with, the external pressures impinging upon tribal life, was saved. It could employ diplomatic skills to ward off external aggression, or blend the new ideas and institutions of aliens (more particularly whites) with its own traditional customs and laws. But a chief who did not adapt to the ever changing social and political situations was a liability to his tribe, and invariably led to the unretrieved loss of political independence and to tribal fragmentation.

Traditionally, the Tswana chief was associated with various attributes that sustained tribal life as a whole. Accounts left

18. However, in 1812 the Thlaping Chief Mothibi obtained a gun from a white man (see William Burchell, Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa, Volume II (London, 1824), p. 287).

by early travellers and missionaries suggest the chief's authority to have been divided into three main categories. The first category was his political role, which entailed convening meetings whenever the need for them arose and presiding over them in the chief's kgotla. The most important of these gatherings was the pitso, at which serious issues of the tribe were discussed; the other was the phutego, which was held to discuss minor issues.

Next to the chief's political role was his conduct of diplomatic and external affairs of the chiefdom. In that capacity he was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, declared war after consulting the tribe at a meeting held in the veld called the Lechulo; he sued for peace, and negotiated treaties and alliances. Only men were eligible to attend the pitso, phutego, and lechulo meetings.

Thirdly, in the social and economic realms the chief tried cases, redressed social injustices; he determined when his people should hunt, plough the fields, and eat the first fruits of the harvests; his homestead was a hostel to strangers, whose persons were inviolate.

The chief was also the religious leader of the tribe, in which capacity he made rain or invited more veritable rainmakers to do so; he sanctioned circumcision ceremonies, and performed piacular rites. He intimately supervised the safekeeping of hereditary charms that were used in anointing and sustaining chiefs. The range of his responsibilities was wide, as is shown in the information given by the woman Thatalhone to Rev. W. C. Willoughby in 1901:

I have said that the chief is the centre of everything done in the Bechwana [Tswana] tribe. They called the chief their God. If the chief spoke to a person, he assented by saying "Yes, my God." This is the assent of a mo[Tswana]. Their expression "my God" does not mean that the chief is really God, it means that he is their superior ... He is the one who can pray for them to God, because he is the first born.¹⁹

Although some early white observers portrayed the Tswana chief's powers as absolute, the weight of the evidence suggests that however great an influence he wielded over the tribe, there were mechanisms that restrained his power. The tribal councils (pitso, lechulo, and phuthego) were in many respects supreme over the chief, and they could overrule some of his proclamations, censure him, and even depose him. An indication of the power of the tribal council was given by George Thompson who attended a lechulo in 1823 at which the Thlaping Chief Mothibi said to the soldiers: "I now wait to hear what is the general opinion. Let every one speak his mind freely."²⁰ This is confirmed by John Philip, who observed: "The most remarkable feature in the pitso is the existence of two things hitherto deemed incompatible in

19. Folder 798, Willoughby Papers, Selly Oak. The range of duties is confirmed by Isaac Schapera, see A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom, p. 62: the chief is "the symbol of tribal unity, the central figure round whom the tribal life revolves. He is at once ruler, judge, maker and guardian of the law, repository of wealth, dispenser of gifts, leader in war, priest and magician of the people."

20. Thompson, Travels and Adventures, p. 101.

many civilised countries, the exercise of arbitrary power in the head of the government, with a perfect freedom of debate."²¹

Yet another restraining influence on the chief were his mother and uncles. In "Kaga Mma Kgosi" ("concerning the mother of the chief"), Thatalhona observed: "She, also, has her own station. If a person has been beaten, or perhaps his cattle have been seized, if he takes refuge with the mother of the chief, he will be free even if he is in fault, and he will not be molested."²² It is certainly the strong voice of a mother that can sway a chief by charging him with "treating the people of so-and-so with levity," when "the chief may cease to hamper the people because of this word of his mother."²³

Many of the London Missionary Society missionaries who arrived in Bechuanaland after the Difaqane too readily concluded that Tswana institutions, including the chieftainship, were not deeply rooted. This was the result of misinterpreting the

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21. John Philip, Researches in South Africa (London, 1828), Volume One, p. 131. See also Lichtenstein, Travels, I, p. 416; Smith, Memoir of Hodgson, p. 62; Moffat, Missionary Labours, p. 171: the chief's power is "...controlled by the minor chiefs, who in their ... pitshos, their parliament ... use the greatest plainness of speech in exposing what they consider culpable or lax in his government."
22. "Kaga Mma Kgosi," Folder 798, Selly Oak.
23. Ibid.

institution, or of being misinformed about it. More perceptive observers realised that such institutions had evolved over a long period of time.²⁴

III

The Kwena, Ngwaketse, Ngwato, and Tawana received missionaries much later than their southern kinsmen the Thlaping. The first L.M.S. agents to work among the Thlaping, Edwards and Kok, went to southern Bechuanaland in 1800. However, that mission was shortlived because Kok was killed in a quarrel with his Thlaping servants; while Edwards, who seems to have paid little attention to evangelization, withdrew to the Cape shortly after Kok's death.²⁵ A second attempt to send a mission to the Thlaping

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24. For a missionary who underestimated the depth of Tswana custom, J.D. Hepburn was typical (in Hepburn to Whitehouse, 7th June, 1880, Box 40 - Jacket C - Folder 3): "We do not fight a system hoary with age and carrying its meaning down the stream of antiquity in elaborate and complicated symbolic imagery, or embodied and compacted in history ... striking deep roots and reaching far ... the South African knows nothing of it, to him it is but of yesterday ..." Cf. C.J. Anderson, "A Journey to Lake Ngami and an itinerary of the principal routes leading to it from the West Coast, with the latitudes of some of the chief stations," in The South African Commercial Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 22nd May, 1854, where he says of the Tawana chief: "Letcholathebe possesses great influence and power over his people, but I am inclined to think it arises more ... from the force of custom, than from real regard for his person," an observation that was more perceptive than Hepburn's.
25. Robert Moffat, who claimed to have failed to persuade Edwards to come back to the L.M.S. observed (see Moffat, Missionary Labours, p. 151): "...their residences were several miles from the town of /Chief Molehabangwe/. They visited the colony and Cape Town when they had realised a sufficient quantity of ivory and cattle to be disposed of to advantage... Edwards ... retired to the colony, purchased a farm and slaves ..."

was sanctioned by Mothibi Molehabangwe in 1813 hardly a year after he succeeded his father. This followed a persuasive discussion the chief had with a visiting L.M.S. delegation. Initially, the Campbell delegation had been informed that the Thlaping concerned themselves more with farming than with an alien religion. A little more effort on the part of the visitors persuaded Mothibi to allow missionaries to come and work in his chiefdom.²⁶

However, when Evans and Hamilton tried to take up Mothibi's offer early in 1815, Mothibi turned them away because he was more interested in trade than in Christianity.²⁷ A year later the chief was receptive to the idea of missionaries, and James Read was allowed to settle at Lattako (Dithakong).²⁸ His early reports to his Society are full of praise for the hospitality extended to him by that Tswana community. But the task of spreading the Christian gospel appears to have encountered many hurdles from the beginning. For example, an interpreter who was overwhelmed

26. Campbell, op. cit., p. 209.

27. Moffat, op. cit., p. 159, in which he observed that the headmen also opposed the L.M.S. mission.

28. The 1815 mission was turned down, on the grounds that "It would be with us as with the people of Griqua Town, 'who', they said once wore a 'Karon' [cloth made of skins], but now wear clothes; once had two wives, but now only one," in John Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 68; Journal of the Rev. James Read, 1816, incoming letters, the London Missionary Society Archives, hereafter called L.M.S.

by one of Read's first sermons seems to have caused adverse effects on the Thlaping congregation, for Read reported that they "knew not what to make of [that] proceeding, and particularly as they considered it disgraceful for a grown person to weep."²⁹

The lack of consistency in the reactions of the Tswana chiefs and their subjects to missionary endeavors, largely a result of diverse personalities and the influence of traditional religion, is a recurring phenomenon in nineteenth century Tswana history.³⁰ After the rains had failed in 1821, Robert Moffat and Robert Hamilton (Read had been transferred to a station in the Cape) were blamed, and "Mothibi himself came raging (influenced by his people), ordering the missionaries to get off [his] premises."³¹ The order was not enforced, and hardly five months later, Mothibi and his wife seemed overjoyed to see Moffat.³²

The first few years at Lattakoo were far from being a success story. In 1821 Rev. Robert Hamilton reported that preaching to the Thlaping was tantamount to addressing stones.³³

29. James Read, in Quarterly Chronicle of the Transactions of the L.M.S. (1815-1820), January 2nd, 1817, p. 307.

30. I. Schapera, Tribal Innovations, Tswana Chiefs and Social Change, 1795-1940 (London, 1970), pp. 119-123.

31. Robert Moffat, Apprenticeship at Kuruman, p. 12.

32. Ibid., p. 17.

33. Robert Hamilton to Foreign Secretary, George Burder, 12th February, 1821, Box 8 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

However, in 1833 Rev. Baillie of Kuruman reported that five women were baptised in 1832.³⁴ While his report did not say to which tribe those converts belonged, a joint report for the Kuruman district submitted by Hamilton, Moffat and Edwards in the same year showed that there were no Thlaping converts.

It is also worthy of remark that of all the members and candidates there are strictly speaking no Thlaping among them, their being composed of the following interior tribes: Kwena, Bashoota, Barolong, Batau, Bagathla and some Batlaru who were formerly in Mothibi's jurisdiction. The gospel was first sent to the Batlaping and to the palace of the king but Mothibi and his tribe are now in a hopeless condition and far removed from the means of grace ... and failing after repeated attempts to drive us from them, they have abandoned us themselves, and appear to be given over to a life of hardened impenitence.³⁵

Melville (the Cape Government agent at Griquatown), an external observer of missionary work at Kuruman and other stations in South Africa, remarked that missionary reports to their societies were not always factual; he wished they could "confine themselves in their publications to a simple relation of facts," adding: "I

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34. J. Baillie to Burder, 3rd January, 1833, Box 13 - Jacket E - Folder 4 (L.M.S.).
35. The Rev. Baillie to George Burder, 3rd January, 1833; Hamilton, Moffat, Edwards, in "Progress Report," 30th September, 1833, Box 13 - Jacket E - Folder 4 (L.M.S.). By 1836 Lattako had 111 converts (46 men and 65 women), Robert Moffat to William Ellis, 23rd November, 1836, in "Schedule for Returns to be made Annually by Missionaries in South Africa." The substantial increase in new numbers was probably due to more effort on the part of missionaries. However the Thlaping continued to be outnumbered, for out of 60 candidates for baptism in 1837 (Moffat to Ellis, 15th June, 1837) more than half were Thlaro.

am sorry to say this is not the case with many periodical publications - the attention of the world has been excited at the expense of truth and while people in England were rejoicing at what they supposed to be a great work going on in South Africa, we have been here mourning over desolation and the triumph of enemies."³⁶ In spite of Melville's pessimism, some missionary accounts indicate that some material gains were made, for instance in agriculture, when an irrigation scheme was started at Kuruman which seems to have benefited Tswana residents there. In 1826 Andrew Geddes Bain reported that Moffat and his colleagues had raised the waters of the Kuruman river for irrigation purposes but observed that very few Thlaping residents were taking advantage of the irrigation project.³⁷ However, in 1834 his report was laudatory, pointing out that "improvement at Kuruman since my last visit are truly astonishing!... What pleased me much, both here and Mateto [Motito], was to see large fields of yellow wheat belonging to the natives vieing with the crops of the missionaries, having been well cultivated and irrigated."³⁸ Nevertheless the impact of missionaries upon the Thlaping as a whole up to 1843 was slight.

36. Extract of letter from John Melville, Cape Colony Government surveyor and agent at Griquatown, to a friend in London, 24th July, 1821, Box 8 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). For Melville's appointment to the Griquatown, see Moffat, Apprenticeship, p. 62.

37. Bain, Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain, p. 12.

38. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

IV

In due course L.M.S. missionaries established stations in central and northern Tswana chiefdoms. David Livingstone, who arrived in South Africa in 1841, was one of the architects of L.M.S. expansion. From 1841 to 1843 he used Kuruman as a base while he visited Tswana communities to the north of that station. In 1844 he went to work among the Kgatla-Kga Mmanaana at Mabotsa, his residence lasting until 1845, when he moved on to the Kwena at Chonwane. His decision to leave the Kgatla was resented by the chief and commoners alike, in spite of the Kgatla disagreement with him in secular and religious matters. That the Kgatla alleged Livingstone was abandoning them ("Loa re latla"),³⁹ even when evangelist David Molehani remained at Mabotsa, is largely due to a sense of security the presence of a white missionary engendered. The precedent that Moffat had set by aiding the Thlaping during the Kololowar in 1823 and Andrew Bain's decisive aid to the Ngwaketse in 1826 had created a myth that white men's assistance was indispensable to victory;⁴⁰ the Kgatla, therefore, thought Livingstone's departure would deprive them of an effective deterrent and a regular source of fire arms.

39. David Livingstone, David Livingstone Family Letters, 1841-56, edited by Isaac Schapera (London, 1959), Volume One, p. 142.

40. See Andrew Steedman, Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa (London, 1835), p. 34, in which he observed that the Ndebele Chief Mzilikazi envied the Thlaping for having missionaries.

Unlike some missionaries who preferred to stay at one place in spite of meagre gains, Livingstone believed that the missionary should, after a short stay at one station, move on to more distant fields of labour in order to reach the maximum number of non-Christians.⁴¹ His expansionist policy was clearly stated when he informed L.M.S. Directors of his reasons for leaving the Kgatla: "To me those who never heard the gospel are greater objects of compassion than those who have heard it for ... years and rejected it."⁴²

The Kwena, among whom Livingstone worked, had earlier divided into two groups, one under Sechele and the other under Bubi.⁴³ Before he settled among Sechele's people, Livingstone, visited the two groups on several occasions, thereby preparing the ground for his mission. During one visit to Bubi's town, Livingstone was pleased to see the chief working on an irrigation project. Livingstone had earlier persuaded Bubi to cooperate in building an irrigation furrow. In one letter he said: "For

41. A view that was criticised by his colleagues, see for example, Walter Inglis, Memoirs and Remains of the Rev. Walter Inglis, African Missionary and Canadian Pastor, edited by William Cochrane (Toronto, 1887), pp. 206-223.

42. David Livingstone, Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence, 1841-56, edited by I. Schapera (London, 1961), p. 150.

43. Ibid., p. 15, n. 3, 36 n. 1, 90; Family Letters, Volume One, p. 138.

this purpose we have been obliged to raise a huge dam of earth and stones and dig a canal," a project in which the Kwena "were quite delighted with the idea that he could make rain." He hoped the irrigation project would discredit traditional rain-makers and enhance Christianity.⁴⁴

But success seems to have eluded Livingstone in that crucial issue of conversion. In one report he observed that part of the congregation readily laughed when Pomore, an L.M.S. evangelist, was preaching.⁴⁵ However, a year later, the prospects for his mission greatly improved when Sechele I's defeat at the hands of the Ndebele characteristically compelled Sechele to be more receptive to Christianity.⁴⁶

However, in deciding to receive Livingstone Sechele seems to have been influenced more by military considerations and less by religious motives: Sechele, like his neighbor Moseileli, wanted Livingstone to act as a deterrant against outside attacks. However, to Livingstone who had not yet had a convert, Sechele's overture augured well for his mission. If Sechele succeeded in concealing his motives to Livingstone, the chief was unable to

44. Livingstone to Agnes Livingstone, 4th April, 1842, Family Letters, Volume I, p. 53; Livingstone to Mrs. Sewell, 7th April, 1842, MS. 656, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

45. Livingstone, Family Letters, I, p. 55.

46. Ibid., p. 69.

convince his subjects about the utility of the white man's religion. Nor did Sechele succeed in persuading Kgosidintsi to accept his newly found pragmatism. Nevertheless Kgosidintsi assisted Sechele in ruling the Kwena.⁴⁷

Once Sechele had decided to become a Christian, his enthusiasm to learn and to assist Livingstone was considerable. He is reported to have acquired a perfect knowledge of the Tswana alphabet in two days. However, Sechele had difficulty in learning to speak English, the handicap probably stemming from his age.⁴⁸ In 1847 Livingstone noted that Sechele was a very reasonable man, a fluent reader in the vernacular, and fond of his Testament; that his wives, too, were giving a good account of themselves as some of his best students. In the cultural sphere, it appeared that Sechele was absorbing European habits of hygiene, being resourceful enough to look for local

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47. See for example, James Chapman, Travels in the Interior of South Africa (London, 1868), Volume I, p. 137: when Chapman arrived at Kolobeng in 1852 "Sechele the ... chief, was absent. His brother [Kgosidintsi] ... acted for him ...;" C.O. 879/30, African (South), Confidential, No. 369, p. 12, Shippard to High Commissioner, 7th August, 1888, enclosed in Robinson To Knutsford, 29th August, 1888.
48. Livingstone, Missionary Correspondence, p. 152; Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 5th September, 1845, Family Letters, One, p. 143; Cf. Mothibi's progress in reading, in Robert Moffat to Ellis, 23rd November, 1836, Box 15 - Jacket D - Folder 2 (L.M.S.); early Sarwa response to education, in John Campbell, Life of Kaboo, a wild Bushman by Himself (London, 1830), p. 32: "many of us held down our ears to the book, to listen if we could hear it speak; but we heard nothing, no, not a whisper; on which we shook our heads at him, concluding he was telling us a fib."

substitutes whenever he ran out of soap.⁴⁹ In an attempt to show his sincerity as a catechist, Sechele sometimes used his authority as chief to compel some of his subjects to conform to a Christian standard of behaviour. In this regard Sechele probably went far beyond what Livingstone expected, because in one instance he condemned a man to death whom he suspected of dabbling in witchcraft. Livingstone reported: "We of course had a great deal of conversation on the subject ... he asked me, if an individual acted justly, fairly avoided fighting, and treated both his own people and strangers kindly, killed witches, and prayed to God, would be saved."⁵⁰ Livingstone does not seem to have reprimanded Sechele for believing in witchcraft.

Sechele's misfortune in all his early relations with missionaries was his inability to persuade the Kwena to move with him; this was a major handicap in a chiefdom in which the chief was supposed to be a religious leader. The Kwena were slowly becoming disenchanted with their ruler. They opposed Livingstone's recommendation to move the town from Chonwane to Kolobeng in 1847. Sechele, however, sided with Livingstone and ordered the removal to the new site.⁵¹ Some members of the Kwena

49. Livingstone to Charles Livingstone, 16th March, 1847, Family Letters, I, p. 191.

50. Livingstone to Robert Moffat, 12th May, 1845, Ibid., p. 118.

51. Livingstone to Moffat, 13th August, 1847, Ibid., p. 203.

community did not approve of what appeared to be Sechele's unreserved acceptance of the new order. When a member of the Thlaro ruling clan visited Kolobeng, he questioned Sechele's wisdom in building a school in his town, and predicted that the Kwena would desert Sechele to lead their traditional life in his own town; Sechele retorted by equating the visitor with Judas Iscariot.⁵²

Among the Kgatla, little progress was being made. During one visit Livingstone was told how unimpressed the people were with Christianity, it merely going "in at one ear and out at the other"; that the Kgatla could retain only those lessons bearing on their mode of existence, that is, cattle-keeping and hunting.⁵³

V

At the core of relationships between the Tswana and the missionaries was the persistence of some traditional customs and laws, in spite of a chief's interest in Christianity and even his conversion to the new religion, and his renunciation of such practices. Rain-making, so vital to pastoral and agricultural pursuits in the semi-desert conditions of Bechuanaland, was one of the most contentious issues. Livingstone's report

52. Ibid., p. 220.

53. Ibid., p. 228. See also J.J. Freeman, A Tour of South Africa (London, 1851), p. 276, who observes that Tswana communities wondered that "so much pains are taken to make them understand what they do not value, and to appreciate what they do not understand."

to the L.M.S. early in 1847, that rain-making was on the wane, certainly overstated the position.⁵⁴ Although Sechele had once expelled a rain-maker from his town, a more popular one came and promised the Kwena some relief. This was the Bididi chief. In a letter to his father-in-law Livingstone reported, with a typical note of bias against Tswana religion: "The sly rogue" to have said rain was "in the chief's mouth, that he had only to give them leave to dig up a child which died [the previous] year. He opposed this for some time, but the people became very clamorous and he allowed them, but still no rain. They then had a meeting ... Sechele made a noble confession of his determination to depend on God alone. The people gave a shout of hu or hoo, in derision ... which might be heard a mile off."⁵⁵ The report reveals another factor militating against conversion to Christianity: the missionaries' belief that the Tswana Supreme Being was a lesser God, inelegantly embodied in the tribal and family spirits (Badimo), unlike the 'real' Christian God.

54. Livingstone to Tidman, 17th March, 1847, in Missionary Correspondence, pp. 102-103. For rain-makers and Tswana belief in them see Moffat, Apprenticeship at Kuruman, pp. 12, 23-25, 39, 41, 65.

55. Livingstone to Moffat, November, 1847, Family Letters, One, p. 231.

After Sechele conceded to the Lechulo⁵⁶ party, the Bididi chief was unable to make rain anyway. Nor did that shake the Kwena belief in rain-making. The confrontation with the Bididi (rain-maker) Chief mirrored a conflict that was to recur throughout the nineteenth century. However, while Kgositintsi consistently promoted rain-making ceremonies, Sechele equivocated, sometimes taking part in these ceremonies and at other times condemning rain-making. Another factor in the Bididi rain-maker encounter was the support commanded by the Lechulo party. Livingstone's account to Moffat noted that the rain-maker's intransigence was succoured by the support he mustered from the Kwena. After this disturbing event, Sechele is reported to have thought of going to England to study the Bible in peace.⁵⁷ The weight of custom, especially that relating

56. The use of "bantu balebuku" ("people of the book") for the Christian segment of Tswana communities, and "bantu balechulo" ("people of the hunt") for the non-Christian sector seems to have been fairly widespread; but Lechulo in this context must have been associated with the hunt that precedes rain-making ceremonies and not in the context of a 'war council' (its second meaning) as Christians attended the latter together with non-Christians. For references on the use of the two epithets, see Mackenzie to Tidman, 27th June, 1862, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 5 (L.M.S.); Emil Holub, Seven Years in South Africa Travels, Researches and Hunting Adventures Between the Diamond Fields and the Zambezi (London, 1881), Volume One, p. 339; Frederick S. Arnot, From Natal to the Upper Zambezi, Extracts from Letters and Diaries of F.S. Arnot (Glasgow, 1883), p. 22: Christians "...are called... 'The people of the Word of God' ... an enviable nickname."

57. Livingstone, Family Letters, I, p. 232.

to rain-making, was reinforced by Sechele's reminiscences later in life. He confided to Livingstone that giving up his rain-making role was the most difficult decision he had had to make.⁵⁸

In the middle of 1848, Sechele applied for baptism. Livingstone put him on probation to satisfy himself that the chief was a worthy candidate. Moshweshwe, the famous Sotho chief, learnt of Sechele's decision to become a Christian from some Kwena who had been sent to him to buy horses, arms and ammunition. Moshweshwe advised against baptism. As a gesture of goodwill, he sent his distant kinsman ten herd of cattle, two horses and some guns gratis. He promised Sechele unlimited supply of guns and ammunition if he refrained from baptism. According to Livingstone, the Sotho chief said:

Tell him to allow his people to believe if they like, but he /Sechele/ must never believe. 'I am a King', said Moshweshwe, 'and I won't put myself under the authority of another (viz. God); I have my kingdom as well as He, and people would laugh at me if I believed and put myself under the power of another. Tell Sechele that.' 59

Moshweshwe's advice went unheeded.

Kwena opposition to their chief's impending baptism was steadily mounting. On 7th August, 1848, Livingstone's journal

58. David Livingstone, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (London, 1857), p. 20.
59. Livingstone to Robert Moffat, November 1848, Family Letters, I, p. 260, in which Sechele also is reported to have confided in Livingstone that "Ki le Ka nyato, gone ga a itsa se ose buan, Ka a re Morimo Ki Khosi Ka ena" (I treated his message with disdain, because he did not know what he was saying, for he said God is a Chief like himself.)"

shows that there was so much commotion in Kolobeng that the chief was compelled to convene a pitso the following day. At the meeting, speaker after speaker condemned Sechele's decision, to no avail.⁶⁰

When, in October 1848, Sechele was baptised, Kwena reaction was unfavourable, and even hostile. Some men openly wept, a thing they seldom did, even at a funeral. The fact that a rumour, to the effect that candidates for baptism drank men's brains, had been circulating aggravated a bad situation.⁶¹ Some Kwena resented the fact that the chief had had to divorce four of his innocent wives to conform to Christian precepts of monogamy. Political considerations must have prompted the neighbouring Kgatla chief, Moseileli, to propose marriage to one of Sechele's former wives.⁶² When the proposal was rejected, the chief directed his vengeance at the doddering church in his territory, and summarily imposed an injunction against church attendance.

A few months after Sechele's baptism, Mokgokong, one of Sechele's former wives, became pregnant and the chief accepted responsibility. Livingstone immediately disciplined Sechele, the suspension lasting until 1889, when he was reinstated.⁶³

60. David Livingstone, Livingstone's Private Journals edited by I. Schapera (London, 1960), pp. 298-300.

61. Livingstone, Family Letters, Vol. I, pp. 260-261, Livingstone to Robert Moffat, November 1848.

62. Ibid., p. 256, Livingstone to Moffat, 2nd September, 1848.

63. Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 304. The story of Sechele's reinstatement is in Howard Williams' Annual Report for Molepolole, 1889, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

Bubi had died in 1845 and a large section of his followers joined Sechele. The L.M.S. mission to Bechuanaland had started expanding in the early 1840's and by 1859 a station had been set up at Inyati among the Ndebele; while an attempt to start one among the Kololo at the same time failed.⁶⁴ Among northern Tswana chiefdoms the Ngwaketse had a Kuruman evangelist sent to them in 1848; while the Ngwato in the north and Tawana in the Lake region had flying visits from Livingstone in the 1850's. In all cases, military strategy seems to have been the primary motive for these people's wanting missionaries. It was certainly for his military potential that Livingstone was warmly received by Chief Sekgoma I in Ngwato country in 1842. On that occasion, Sekgoma veiled his real intentions for persuading Livingstone to stay at Shoshong for a month, for it is difficult to believe that Sekgoma's reason, as he himself put it, was to enable him to watch Livingstone's figure for a whole month.⁶⁵ When he bypassed Sekgoma on another occasion, the chief's mother sent a message pleading with Livingstone to visit them at Shoshong again.⁶⁶ Livingstone's popularity among the Ngwato was enhanced when he cured Sekgoma of an ulcer in 1851.⁶⁷

64. B.N.A., Mss. 1., Holloway Helmore Journal; E.W. Smith, op. cit., pp. 411-425; Livingstone, Travels, p. 45; Ellenberger in File 796, "Willoughby Papers," op. cit.

65. L.M.S. Chronicle, March 1843, p. 37.

66. Livingstone, Travels, p. 57.

67. Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 194.

The Tawana in north-west Ngamiland region were visited by Livingstone in August 1849, but they were preoccupied with military matters, so that his preaching to them was of little consequence. There, as among other principal Tswana tribes, tradition and custom seem to have been well entrenched. For example, according to a layman's observation of Tawana institutions, the rain-maker there possessed, at least in a religious sense, "an influence over the minds of the people superior even to that of their king."⁶⁹ The Ngwato, too, had an influential rain-maker.⁷⁰

Livingstone's residence among the Kwena ended in 1851. The evangelist he left in charge of the station there, Paul Mebalwe, made little headway in the wake of another recurring theme in nineteenth century Tswana history; the conflict between church and state. Apparently Livingstone's departure rendered Sechele's suspension from the church ineffectual. The chief asserted his right to lead the Kwena church and did so with a measure of intellectual discipline and some flamboyance. The Ngwaketse-based evangelist, Sebobi, noticed certain flaws in the chief's conduct and recommended that he be stripped of his privilege to preach. According to Moffat, Sebobi was reported to have said in effect that "there was a strange and

69. Charles J. Anderson, Lake Ngami (London, 1856), p. 458.

70. James Chapman, Travels in the interior of South Africa; comprising fifteen years' hunting and trading (London; 1868), I, pp. 42-43.

unholy mixture in a chief sanctioning wicked, heathenish customs among his people with impunity (boomu) and then standing up with the Holy word in his hand and preaching repentance, faith and holiness." Sebobi enunciated a separation of 'church and state' theory in which he pointed out that, just as it was unbecoming "for the Christian teacher to interfere with the politics of the Chief, neither was it right for a chief to assume the teacher's office."⁷¹ On that occasion some comment from Moffat, who was then present, did not move Sechele. He asserted his right to preach on the grounds that he had studied the Bible exhaustively. Above all, if the Griqua chief, Andries Waterboer, could preach, Sechele deduced his right to preach as being logically tenable.

The quarrel between Sebobi and Sechele worsened when the evangelist equated Sechele's participation in ivory trade with sin. Sechele rejected such a theological inference and resolved "to do what he liked."⁷² Sechele's wife is reported to have supported her husband but Sechele's family soon felt the weight of Tswana custom when the chief's daughters defied him and participated in initiation ceremonies. However, his son Sebele, obeyed Sechele's command and stayed away from the Bogwera (boys' circumcision) ceremonies. On that occasion, Moffat happened to be at Sechele's residence. When he asked Ope, one of Sechele's daughters, what she preferred, she emphatically chose initiation,

71. Moffat, Matebele Journal, Vol. I, p. 156.

72. Ibid., p. 158.

and characterised her father's strictures as being oppressive ("Ra oa'mpathika").⁷³ Ope's defiance indicates the extent to which the majority of Sechele's subjects preferred traditional institutions to alien practices. To them the new order was a gamble; to conform to its demands was to accept a way of life whose utility was questionable.

A more eloquent plea for an understanding of Tswana customs was advanced by a Kwena rain-maker in an exchange of views with Livingstone. When Livingstone advised the rain-maker to abandon rain-making, he argued, *inter alia*, that his practice was religiously sound, its utility dating back to times immemorial. After Livingstone had put it to the rain-maker: "But God has told us that there is only one way by which we can pray to him acceptably: viz. by Jesus Christ," the rain-maker retorted:

Truly, and he has told us differently. God has been very good to both white and black. To the white he has given the knowledge of guns, gunpowder, horses and many other things which we know nothing about. He has given you wisdom too. We see it. To us blacks he has not been so liberal, but he has given us the knowledge of some things too, and the most important is that of certain trees and plants which we use to make rain. We have the knowledge of rain-making, you have it not. Now we don't despise those things God has given you, though we are ignorant of them. Nor should you despise what he has given us, though you don't know nor understand them.⁷⁴

73. Ibid., p. 173.

74. Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 240. See also, Livingstone, Travels, pp. 25-27.

The rain-maker's caution underscores a point, namely, a sympathetic understanding of Tswana institutions, which escaped the attention of some L.M.S. missionaries to Bechuanaland,⁷⁵ an omission which tended to minimise the effectiveness of their mission.

VI

The social and economic history of Northern Tswana chiefdoms was profoundly influenced by traders and hunters especially during the last half of the nineteenth century. To Livingstone and some L.M.S. missionaries, trade and evangelical work coexisted and were indispensable to African assimilation of western civilization. In Livingstone's estimation, the promotion of trade and commerce was to be encouraged as it "more speedily than anything else, demolishes that sense of isolation which heathenism engenders." He postulated that legitimate trade (in contradistinction to the slave trade) would make "the tribes feel themselves mutually dependent on and mutually beneficial to, each other."⁷⁶

This preliminary examination of the missionary impact on Tswana chiefdoms up to 1851 has revealed small achievement.

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75. Notable exceptions are Robert Moffat's son, John Smith Moffat, Albert Jennings and Alfred Wookey.
76. Livingstone, Travels, p. 28; Moffat and Livingstone actually encouraged hunters to come to Bechuanaland for big-game hunting, see Gordon Cumming, The Lion Hunter, pp. 181, 187, 250.

Although there was a marked decline in warlike activities amongst the African groups, sheer exhaustion from the wars of the Difaqane probably militated against aggressive warfare. The missionary role in this development of relative calm was minimal,⁷⁷ and was often offset by increased conflicts between the Tswana and the Boers. In these conflicts the missionary played a more definite part because Boers believed, however mistaken such a view might be, that missionaries armed and encouraged Tswana chiefs to attack them.⁷⁸ In any case Boers on the Highveld could readily expell from their territory any L.M.S. agents they thought to be accessory belligerents in their armed conflicts with the Tswana. A case in point was the expulsion of Rogers Edwards and Walter Inglis from Hurutsheland in 1852.⁷⁹

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77. Traders and hunters of long standing seem to have been equally capable of forestalling Tswana punitive actions against their neighbors, as for example in 1852, when Chapman (Travels in the Interior, I, pp. 105-106) successfully persuaded the Ngwato not to attack the Boers.
78. See for example, J. Du Plessis, A History of Christian Missions in South Africa (Edinburgh, 1911), pp. 443-446 where after the attack of the Kwená capital Dimawa, P.E. Scholtz, "forced entry into Livingstone's house at Kolobeng where he reportedly found a small cache of arms which in his view readily confirmed missionary complicity in Tswana armed clashes with the Boers. Thus he reported that they "found several half-finished guns and a gun maker's shop with abundance of tools. We here found more guns and tools than Bibles, so that the place had more the appearance of a gun maker's shop than a mission station, and more of a smuggling shop than of a school place." Nowhere in his writings does Livingstone show evidence to support what appears to have been a fully fledged enterprise in making fire arms; the few domestic tools he used to repair his own guns and those of prominent Tswana chiefs do not fit the Boer commander's description. See also I. Schapera, "Livingstone and the Boers," African Affairs, Vol. 59, No. 235 (1960) pp. 144-156.
79. See Cochrane, "Correspondence of Commandant P.E. Scholtz and Missionaries Edwards and Inglis," Memoirs of Walter Inglis, pp. 76-83.

Sechele's response to Christianity contains within itself a microcosm of the problems connected with chief-missionary relations in nineteenth century ^{Bechuanaland} Botswana. Contemporary accounts of Sechele differ in their characterisation of him. Robert Moffat depicted him as being an enigmatic ruler.⁸⁰ An L.M.S. delegation to Southern Africa (1849) was impressed to find that the Kwena chief was a monogamist, worshipped with his family regularly, and wore European clothes; Freeman, like most white visitors to Kwenaland, assessed Sechele to be very intelligent.⁸¹ In retrospect, Livingstone thought Sechele was initially well motivated when he chose Christianity. He did not then think that his relationship with his former wife (Mokgokong) was too serious a breach of the faith.⁸² A recent work has gone a long way to identify the conflict between custom and an intrusive culture; but the assertion that the Kwena chief's dilemma was due to a "double souled heart,"⁸³ has no foundation in metaphysics nor indeed in the philosophy of religion.

80. See for example, Moffat, The Matebele Journals of Robert Moffat, 1829-1860, edited by J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1945), Vol. II, pp. 20, 25.

81. J.J. Freeman, A Tour, p. 281.

82. Livingstone to J.S. Moffat, 29th November, 1860, in J.P.R. Wallis (editor), The Matebele Mission: A selection from the correspondence of John and Emily Moffat, David Livingstone and others, 1858-1878, (London, 1945), pp. 121-2.

83. Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland, pp. 149-173. For more views on Sechele's character, see accounts by Roger Price and Howard Williams in L.M.S. Chronicle, (February, 1893) pp. 39-40.

This account cannot pretend to have thus far reconstructed with any certainty the religious experiences which Sechele and other Tswana chiefs underwent as a result of interacting with Christian missionaries. An attempt will be made later to unfold this aspect of Sechele's life as well as that of other Tswana chiefs and their subjects. However any attempt to reconstruct nineteenth century Tswana history must take into account their economic life. In this respect a study of Tswana intercourse with white traders from the 1850's onwards suggests that white traders had profound influence on the economic as well as the social life of the Tswana.

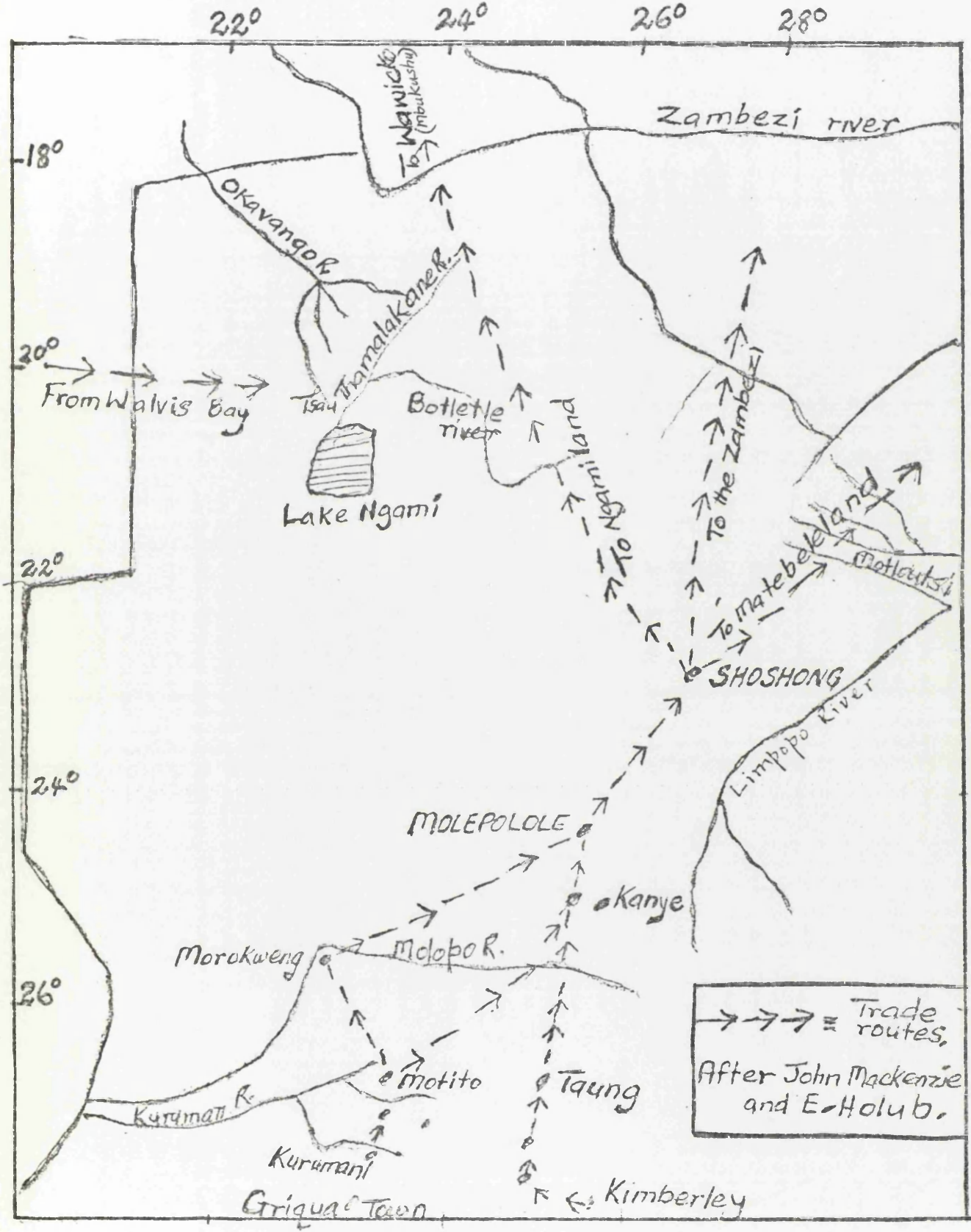
CHAPTER TWO

TSWANA INTERCOURSE WITH TRADERS;

GERMAN MISSIONARIES COME TO BECHUANALAND,

1850 - 1860.

LONG DISTANCE TRADE ROUTES IN THE TSWANA REGION 1840-1890.



The decade that intervened before the L.M.S. again sent a resident missionary to the Kwena after the departure of Livingstone, and also for the first time established permanent stations at capital towns in north and north-west of the Tswana region, was marked by increased intercourse with white traders (and some Griqua traders). For brief periods towards the end of the 1850's and early 1860's the Ngwato and the Kwena had German missionaries. Tswana contact with traders was gradually transforming their essentially subsistence economies into ones which were structured to meet external demands. Karosses, ivory and other produce from Bechuanaland found their way to European markets,¹ via Cape traders and merchants, and Livingstone conjectured even a Chinese destination² for some of their produce.

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1. See, for example, E. Mohr, To the Victoria Falls of the Zambezi (London, 1876), p. 139; "I have seen specimens of them [Karosses] at a furriers 'Unter den Linden' in Berlin." Mohr visited Bechuanaland in 1869.
 2. The Kaross was made by sewing skins of animals together, and according to Livingstone's estimates, 20-30,000 skins were made into karosses between 1840 and 1852. For destination of Tswana produce, see David Livingstone, Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (London, 1857), p. 50; Henry Methuen, Life in the Wilderness; or Wanderings in Southern Africa (London, 1846), p. 146, who suggested that the Tswana traded with the Portuguese in Mozambique. See also, Robert Moffat, in Wallis (ed.), Matebele Journals, Vol. I, p. 18.

I

Before this time the Tswana had relied upon a mixed agricultural and pastoral economy, and environmental conditions determined what staple crops were grown in the various chiefdoms. Most of Bechuanaland, especially the arid western regions, suffered from periodic droughts, and supplies of wild fruits and roots, and small game such as rodents were limited.³ In the more fertile eastern and north-western parts of the country the Tswana and their neighbours grew sorghum, millet, yams, mellons, pumpkins and tobacco,⁴ in spite of the unpredictable rainfall; this work was largely performed by the women. Boys and young men, or members of the subordinate groups, herded the cattle, sheep and goats,⁵ the numbers of

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3. For wild fruit and rodents that could be had in the more arid regions of Bechuanaland, see Livingstone, Missionary Travels, pp. 48-50; Joseph McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," in William C. Holden, (ed.), History of the Colony of Natal, South Africa (London, 1855); p. 432.
 4. Livingstone, Travels, p. 20: "they select with great judgment the varieties of soil best suited to different kinds of grain;" J.J. Freeman, A Tour, p. 270; McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," Holden, op. cit., pp. 418-421.
 5. Freeman, A Tour, p. 270; Livingstone, Travels, p. 20; R.G. Cumming, The Lion Hunter of South Africa (London, 1904), p. 7. Livingstone observed: "They are remarkably accurate in their knowledge of cattle, sheep, and goats, knowing exactly the kind of pasturage suited to each," in Travels, p. 22. Cattle were used for ritual purposes: the purification of warriors (Go alafsha dintee) and their dung was used in the reconciliation of estranged villages, when the headmen dipped their hands in the cow dung and chanted, "Re chwarang Ka moshwang" ("Our hands have met in the cow dung"), See W.C. Willoughby, J.R.A.I., XXXV (1905), p. 305.

which determined the wealth of the chiefdoms. The Tswana manufactured domestic utensils, ornaments, agricultural implements and fighting and hunting weapons from iron and copper ores. A traveller to Bechuanaland in 1844 observed:

The Ba [Kgatla] work a great deal in iron, manufacturing various articles, with which they supply the neighbouring tribes, and obtaining this ore from the surrounding mountains. This is smelted in crucibles, and a great deal of metal is wasted, only the best and purest being preserved.⁶

There is further evidence for domestic trade in iron ware and other commodities,⁷ though the extent to which this enterprise stimulated the economy in the various chiefdoms is subject to varying and even conflicting assessments.⁸ There was sufficient diversity in the Tswana economy to enable a small class of specialists and entrepreneurs to form corporate groups within the main body of society.⁹

6. Cumming, *op. cit.*, p. 187. See also, Thornley Smith, South Africa Delineated; Sketches, Historical and Descriptive of its Tribes and Missions, and of the British Colonies of the British Colonies of the Cape and Port Natal (London, 1850), p. 184; Mohr, To the Victoria Falls, p. 266; Solomon Plaatje, Mhudi (Lovedale, 1930), p. 1; Livingstone to James MacLehose, 8th December, 1841, MS. 656, National Library of Scotland.

7. Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 50.

8. For example, I. Schapera, The Tswana (London, 1952), p. 29, restricts it to the village: a man with surplus "inquired among his neighbours until he found a customer;" Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 48, observed: "The [Kwena] sent trading parties every year to the Lake Ngami."

9. See for example, John MacKenzie, Bechuanaland and the Land of Ophir, paper read to the British Association at Bath, September, 1888.

A vital item in the diet of the Tswana was meat, derived mainly from game rather than domestic stock. Thus hunting was an important part of Tswana life. The economic necessity of cattle herding and hunting were sanctified by religious rites and ceremonies, especially during initiation, when their mastery was stressed. Status was measured by success or failure in hunting. In 1854 James Chapman noted:

According to an old custom of the Bechuanas Tswana, after the ceremony of circumcision, they go out at times in a body and scour the country for this purpose, and it is considered a disgrace to return from such an expedition without having dipped the point of their spears in the blood of a victim of some sort. Failing this, they are held up to public scorn and execration in the songs and dances at the Khotla. All the opprobrious epithets that woman can muster are unmercifully heaped upon the heads of the unsuccessful candidates for manhood and glory, as well as upon those who begot them.¹⁰

Large-scale hunting expeditions, made up of members of age-set regiments, were sent out by the chiefs, but a steady flow of meat and hides (a source of revenue) to the Chiefdoms were ensured by the system of serfdom and taxation (Lekhetho).

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10. James Chapman, Travels in the Interior of South Africa (London, 1868), Vol. One, p. 264; John Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 377. For Tswana reluctance to dispense with their cattle, see: Howard Williams, Report of the Kanye Mission for Year ending December 31st, 1908: "His cattle are like Government stock which no holder will sell for the purpose of living on the capital unless he is forced to do so." See also, D. Livingstone, Private Journals, 1851-1853, (ed.) I. Schapera (London, 1960), pp. 154-5; "The great object of the Bogwera is to bind the bands so together that they must fight and hunt or be killed by their companions. If anyone fails in his duty he is insulted by his companions ..."; Plaatje, Mhudi, p. 1.

An agent of the chief was placed among the subject peoples or serfs, and collected dues or tribute from them. One form of tribute, Sehuba, was described by an informant in 'Melao ea Kgosi' ("Rights of the Chief"):

The breast of game is the chief's portion; and if killed far away, it must be taken, at least in theory, to the chief or his nearest representative. But the nearest representative to the chief and the hunter will probably eat it together. If the hunter is out of reach, he will sometimes compound for it by taking a whole animal to the chief from nearer home.¹¹

Part of the tribute was retained by the tax-collector, while the chief received about half of it. The chief used this meat to feed his subjects when they attended tribal meetings or court trials; he also fed them in times of famine, provided hospitality for strangers, and armed the chiefdom with proceeds from its sale or barter. Their system of taxation was, in theory at least, regulated according to a man's economic situation.¹²

This social and economic milieu was significantly affected by the advent of European (including some Tswana and Griqua)

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11. "W.C. Willoughby Papers," File 798, Selly Oak. See also, Burchell, Travels, p. 216; I. Schapera, Tribal Legislation Among the Tswana of the Bechuanaland Protectorate (London, 1943), p. 28.
 12. "W.C. Willoughby Papers," File 798: "... But he who has nothing that he can give is let alone, and has no fault. And the tax-gatherer takes half of these to the chief; and the chief takes half of them and gives the tax-gatherer the other half. And the chief takes weapons and dogs and gives them to a Mosarwa or Mokgalagadi who comes having killed something, some little profit out of the gains. And those people of ours Tswana who pay dues, something is due to them; they are given dogs, weapons, axe, tobacco that they may be contented. The saying is, they will become attached to their masters and bring them gain," observed Willoughby's informant.

hunters and traders, with their more aggressive and competitive practices, and their more technologically advanced arms and ammunition.¹³ The trickle of white travellers to Bechuanaland increased in volume after 1850. Hunting trips extended further into Bechuanaland, ivory and ostrich feathers being the special lure into the interior.

Traditionally, ivory does not seem to have constituted a prominent part of the Tswana economy, though a few ornaments were carved from it.¹⁴ As late as 1849 the Tswana were found piling rotting ivory;¹⁵ and elephant tusks had always been used for making cattle byres.¹⁶ Each Tswana tribe had hunting preserves within its own territory, but boundary lines were tenuous, often causing inter-tribal conflicts.

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13. There are references to Griqua and Tswana traders in missionary and travellers accounts: in Wallis (ed.), Matebele Mission, pp. 132, 149, J.S. Moffat shows that Frederick, a Griqua trader, delivered mail between Kuruman and Inyati in 1861; that in the same year Merupe's Tswana party of three traders was detained by Mzilikazi for three months. Roger Price and John Mackenzie (in a letter to Tidman, 17th December, 1862, Box 32 - Jacket B - Folder 5) mentioned one Griqua trader, Sebehwe, whom they said traded regularly across the Zambezi. For a synthesized account of Griqua and Tswana traders who plied between Kuruman and Matebeleland, Ngamiland and Barotseland, see Edward C. Tabler, "Non-Europeans as Interior men," Africana Notes and News, Volume 13, No. 8 (December, 1959), pp. 291-96. Henry Bryden, Gun and Camera in Southern Africa: a year of wanderings in Bechuanaland to Kalahari Desert, and the Lake River Country (London, 1893), pp. 343-4; McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," loc. cit., p. 416.
14. Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 69.
15. Livingstone, op. cit., p. 69. In Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Volume XXI, (1851), p. 23, Livingstone says: "previous to our first visit /1849/ the ivory was of no value; the tusks were left in the field with other bones...the Tswana would have preferred to sell a tusk for a few beads...they soon acquired a knowledge of the value of ivory."
16. Anthony Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate (London, 1952), p. 26.

If game was plentiful in the beginning of the century, accounts left by hunters in the 1850's suggest that the supply was becoming scarce--an understandable consequence of an economic system which consumed ever larger numbers of game without taking adequate measures for its preservation. The relative calm following Difegane encouraged population increase and dispersal,¹⁷ which inevitably led to a heavier consumption of game meat. By the middle of the century each Chiefdom was obliged to despatch regimental hunting expeditions, in many cases in convoys of wagons, deep into the northern lake region. The growing scarcity of game led to competition, which was often undeclared. This struggle for a limited economic resource became more acute when white ivory hunters entered the area in earnest. In the new circumstances, it is understandable that the routes used by each chiefdom became closely kept secrets, known to the Chief and his hunting regiments alone. Hence the Ngwato Chief, Sekgoma, was reputed to have been

acquainted with a route which he kept carefully to himself because the Lake country abounded in ivory, and he drew large quantities thence periodically at but small cost to himself.¹⁸

It was against this background that white hunters and traders intensified their search for ivory and ostrich feathers. Their

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17. William Lye, "The distribution of the Sotho peoples after the Difaqane," in L.M. Thompson (ed.), African Societies in Southern Africa (London, 1969), pp. 190-206.
18. C.J. Anderson, "A Journey," loc. cit.. See also McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," loc. cit., pp. 417-8.

encroachment upon the Tswana economy, in the form of ivory hunting had the effect of enhancing the value of ivory and of enticing big game hunting. But in the trade relationships that developed between white traders and Tswana Chiefs and their subjects, white traders had more obstacles to overcome than their Tswana counterparts. The oxen they used to pull wagons were ill-suited to travel and survive the long distances in semi-desert conditions.¹⁹ Horses--even salted ones--had an equally high mortality rate. The authorities of the Cape Colony and of the Boer Republics attempted to control the movements of the traders into the interior because of the arms and ammunition they took with them. Clashes between whites and Africans across the frontiers of the various polities were frequent, and the white governments feared that fire arms might be used against them by their African neighbours.

As a corollary to this fear--real or imagined--the Free State and Transvaal Boers considered the land between the Limpopo

19. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 170: "I have since often observed that cattle bred by Bechuanas can stand thirst better than all others which come into the country. This is accounted for by the manner in which they are reared by their owners at their cattle posts. While colonial farmers make sure that water shall at all times be within reach of their herds ...the Bechuanas teach their cattle to endure a certain amount of privation as to water;" H.A. Bryden, Gun and Camera in Southern Africa (London, 1893), p. 339; Henry Methuen anticipated: "The introduction of the camel into South Africa will, at some future day, form an important epoch in its history" (see Methuen, Life in the Wilderness; or Wanderings in Southern Africa (London, 1846), p. 297).

and Zambezi to be their own territory ('Onze Veld'),²⁰ and tried to regulate all travel to Bechuanaland and beyond. They were particularly sensitive to British subjects passing through their newly established republics. The Boers feared that British hunters and traders were the precursors of British annexation, as they had been in Natal before 1843. Like the Tswana rulers, the Boers veiled the long-distance routes into the interior in secrecy.

In 1850 Boers on the highveld were incensed by the activities of a British trader, Joseph McCabe. McCabe must have been naively ignorant of Boer feelings when, before he undertook another trip to Lake Ngami in 1850, he published the account of his journey to Ngamiland in 1849 together with a map showing the route he had used in a Cape newspaper. He was subsequently arrested, tried by a Potchefstroom Landroost and fined five hundred rix-dollars (about £112) for

having made known to the British government and its subjects the road through the 'Emegrante Grengebiet,' which they say they wished to keep secret as long as possible.²¹

When news of McCabe's imprisonment reached the Cape, the Grahams-town Journal condemned the action of the South African Confederacy ("Maatschappy") and appealed to the British Government to

20. Thomas Baines, Journal of Residence in Africa 1842-53, Edited by R.F. Kennedy (Cape Town, 1964), Vol. Two, p. 309. See also Livingstone to Moffat, 18th January, 1849, to Mary Livingstone, 14th January, 1853, in Family Letters, II, pp. 9, 200 for Boer claims to Tswana territory.

21. Baines, Journal of Residence, p. 309; For an alternative route to Ngamiland, see Tabler, "The Walvis Bay Road: Reitfontein to Lake Ngami," Africana Notes and News, Volume 12, No. 4 (Dec. 1956), p. 123.

remove this obstruction and convince the refractory parties that though distant they were not beyond the reach of that control which every civilized state is required to exercise over its own subjects.²²

It is tempting to correlate this Boer assertion of sovereignty with British diplomatic moves after the McCabe incident. In June 1850, Sir Harry Smith, Governor at the Cape, sent a letter to an English hunter, W.C. Oswell, then in the Lake region, conferring on him some diplomatic responsibility. Oswell was asked to explain to the chiefs that the British government rejected all acts of aggression over land, and was committed to a policy of establishing friendly relations with Tswana chiefdoms at the Lake.²³

Still another impediment on the activities of hunters and traders was that, although the Tswana chiefs resented the Boer restrictions, they themselves regulated the hunters and traders who operated in their chiefdoms. Even when traders had laboriously negotiated their passage by presenting 'gifts' or tolls to Tswana rulers, there were still obstacles put in their way by the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi.²⁴ Traders who used the alternative Walvish Bay route found local reticence to

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22. Baines, op. cit., p. 308: "For were they to conduct themselves with prudence, it is quite certain they would continue independent in their own way."
23. W.E. Oswell, William Cotton Oswell (London, 1900), Volume One, pp. 221-222.
24. Baldwin, African Hunting (London, 1894), pp. 304, 264; McCabe, "The Great Ngami," loc. cit., pp. 417-8.

guide them equally obstructive. A trader who used that route found that the Tawana were reluctant to guide him.²⁵ When Andersson visited the chief in his court, Lecholatebe gave him directions only after

"opportunely placing in his hand a double barrellled pistol, which I had previously been informed he coveted excessively, and which I begged him to accept as a memento of my visit"

when

"his visage soon beamed with delight and satisfaction, and we became excellent friends."²⁶

Tswana-Boer relations, which since the 1840's had maintained a delicate balance of petty land disputes and cattle lifting, worsened when the Transvaal Boers attacked the Kwena capital, Dimawe, in August 1852. The actual cassus belli is difficult to establish.²⁷ However, the attack is important

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25. Charles J. Andersson, Notes of Travel in South Africa, edited by J. Lloyd (London, 1875), p. 429.
26. Charles J. Andersson, "A Journey to Lake Ngami and an itinerary of the principal routes leading to it from the West Coast, with the Latitudes of some of the chief stations," in The South African Commercial Advertiser and Cape Town Mail, 22nd May, 1854. See also Alfred Dolman, In the Footsteps of Livingstone being the diaries and travel notes made by Alfred Dolman, edited by John Irving (London, 1924), p. 196.
27. J. Leyland, who was at Dimawe in 20th December, 1851 (see Leyland, Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa (London, 1866), pp. 111-116) observed that Sechele was attacked because he refused to expel Englishmen from his chiefdom and also to supply Boers with labourers. According to the account of Scholtz, commander of the Boers (see J. Du Plessis, A History of Christian Missions in South Africa, pp. 443-446) the Boers attacked Sechele after his refusal to surrender the Kgatla chief Moseileli with whom the Boers had quarrelled.

because it resulted in a display of Tswana unity that had been weakened by the catastrophes of early nineteenth century. In the wake of the Boer invasion the mercurial Sechele deployed Kwena envoys to all principal Tswana chiefs, urging them to avenge his losses by killing all Boers on sight. He coupled his diplomatic moves with an attempt to petition the British crown for protection, but his delegation to England abandoned the journey in Cape Town, when he ran short of money. Sechele's appeal to Tswana chiefs caught Boer hunters unawares. One of them, Jan Van Viljoen, himself a field cornet in the Transvaal, found the situation tense at Shoshong, where Sekgoma threatened to kill him. The Ngwaketse and the Tswana do not seem to have responded to Sechele's call. Viljoen's life was spared in spite of the chief's verbal assault. His long and intimate connections with the Ngwato probably militated against summary execution. Other extenuating circumstances were James Chapman's admonition against such a reprisal, and Sekgoma's calculation that Viljoen would serve him better by warning his fellow Transvaalers against further aggression.²⁸ Nor was that the end of hostilities between the Boers and the Kwena. The Boers again attacked and killed three Kwena merchants in the Transvaal, whereupon the Kwena retaliated by killing three Boers they found hunting on the Kwena-Transvaal border in 1853.²⁹

28. Chapman, Travels, I, pp. 100-101.

29. Chapman, Travels, I, pp. 136-7. See also Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 98, where Livingstone reported: "The very first cases of cattle stealing from the Boers by Bechuanas took place this month (December 1852). The Barolongs of Montshiwa were the people, and they stole five lots."

In 1854 two Kwena members of the ruling family gave Moffat their account of the state of race relations on the frontiers, an assessment which must have reflected Tswana sentiment on that issue. Sechele began the interview by complaining bitterly against the restrictions placed on the supply of gunpowder. He was reinforced by Kgosidintsi, who gave

a statement of facts about the native tribes, the Boers and the English and deduced from these most logically that the Boers and English were one, on one side, and the natives on the other, and asked most emphatically to whom they were to look, for the power and means of defence were with them only; that it was true what had been said, that if Sechele allowed traders and hunters to come, they the Bakwena, stood a chance to get some ammunition, but if they were entirely prohibited they would get none at all."³⁰

Thus even the arch traditionalist Kgosidintsi, who eschewed the white man's religion, was willing to associate with them for purposes of trade.

II

If Kgosidintsi overstated the tenuous bonds of the Anglo-Boer modus vivendi on the South African frontier, his statement was perceptive on one important point: the Tswana perennial quest for fire arms. Because of their newly discovered significance, it is difficult to exaggerate the role of fire arms in

30. J.P.R. Wallis (editor), The Matebele Journals of Robert Moffat (London, 1951), Volume One, p. 168. For restrictions on the sale of fire arms to the Tswana, see Anthony Atmore, "Notes on Fire Arms Among The Tswana and Ndebele," African History Seminar Paper, 22nd January, 1969, University of London. Sue Miers, "Notes on the arms trade and government policy in Southern Africa between 1870-1890," J.A.H., XII, 4 (1971), pp. 571-577.

business transactions in nineteenth century Tswana history. Initially the gun had been received with reservations;³¹ but once its effectiveness was demonstrated, Tswana demand for fire arms was insatiable. Although fire arms did not wholly revolutionise their military system, by the 1840's they became important in warfare; target shooting became an essential requirement of Tswana regiments. In 1844 Cumming noted Ngwato progress in marksmanship:

Since I first visited Bamangwato [1843], and taught the natives the use of fire arms, they have learnt to kill the elephant themselves; but previous to my arrival they were utterly incapable [sic] of subduing a full grown elephant, even by the united exertion of the whole tribe.³²

In Ngamiland the Tswana and their neighbours were in possession of fire arms by 1850.³³

The amount of ivory, feathers, and Korosses that left Bechuanaland between 1850 and 1860--some bought from the Tswana and some of it hunted by traders themselves--must have been considerable. Those traders who have left written accounts give an

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31. All early travellers to Bechuanaland show how sceptical the Tswana were at first. See for example, Dolman, op. cit., p. 157. See also Chapter One, pp. 10, 17.
32. Cumming, The Lion Hunter, p. 254.
33. Andersson, Notes of Travel, p. 194.

indication of the brisk traffic between Tswana chiefdoms and Cape Colony. In 1852 James Chapman, who estimated the Ngwato to number 12-15,000 counted 100 wagons at Shoshong belonging to Griqua and Tswana traders;³⁴ their destination was Matebeleland. During his visits to Northern Tswana chiefdoms between 1843 and 1847 Gordon Cumming bartered for ivory, ostrich feathers, and Karosses, with beads, brass, copper wire, knives, hatchets, clothing, guns, ammunition, young cows, and she-goats.³⁵ From 1850 to 1854 Andersson, a Scandinavian adventurer, presented Chief Lecholatebe of the Tawana with 'gifts' of beads, knives, tobacco, snuff, steel chains, rings, blue calico, red woollen caps, and trinkets of various kinds.³⁶ The Tawana chief is also reported to have purchased horses from passing traders.³⁷ In 1857 William Baldwin, who estimated the Kwena to number 20,000, thought that chiefdom had "no end of guns."³⁸ A year later Baldwin noted that Lecholatebe had an ample supply of guns

34. Chapman, Travels, Vol. I, pp. 42-43; McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," loc. cit., p. 416.

35. Cumming, The Lion Hunter, pp. 7, 254. For Ndebele monopoly on ivory trade, see R. Moffat to Sir George Grey, Cape Argus, 21st November, 1860: "...but it is to be regretted that there exists nothing like free trade. That of ivory and cattle is entirely in Moselekatse's own hands."

36. Andersson, Notes, p. 436.

37. McCabe, "The Great Lake Ngami," loc. cit., p. 427; Andersson, "A Journey to Lake Ngami," loc. cit.

38. Baldwin, Travels, p. 165. See also Dolman, op. cit., p. 196.

and ammunition, while a traveller to the same area in 1861 put the Tswana Chief's number of muskets at 500.³⁹

The demand for ivory led to the destruction of game in huge proportions. A sample of the hunters of the 1850's gives an idea of the number of game that was killed. Baldwin's diary entry for the 16th October, 1859 shows that he purchased 5,000 lbs. of ivory during a single trip. He was informed by Jan Van Viljoen and Pit Jacobs, both residents of the Transvaal, that during their trip to Ngamiland they had killed 93 elephants.⁴⁰ However, the phenomenal gains in percentages of capital outlay computed by hunters and traders are distorted as they do not show the traders' expenditure in time, labour, and the wear and tear of their wagons and hunting equipment.⁴¹

In retrospect the actual process of bargaining that went on between the Tswana and white traders was to prove a valuable diplomatic weapon after the 1880's, when the scramble for Africa entangled the Tswana chiefdoms. In this connection all written accounts of white traders depict the Tswana as developing or displaying shrewd business expertise. An early visitor to Ngwato country observed:

39. Thomas Baines, using estimates of William Baldwin, in Thomas Baines, Exploration in South West Africa (London, 1864), p. 432.

40. Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 343-44.

41. For example, Gordon Cumming (see Cumming, The Lion Hunter, p. 254) who calculated his gain to be 3,000%. In the 1840's (Ibid., p. 187) ivory was sold in the Cape at 4/6 a lb; Karosses at £1-£3 each, and ostrich feathers at £5-£6 per lb. See also, Methuen, Life in the Wilderness, p. 146.

They never conclude a bargain in a hurry, and always deem it necessary to ask the advice of nearly every one present before they can make up their minds; and should any one individual disapprove, barter is for the time at an end,

adding:

I have more than once been prevented from effecting a sale, which I had all but concluded, by some old wife, who happened to be passing at the moment, exclaiming that I was too high in my prices.⁴²

A Ngamiland experience shows Baldwin to have had more than an inkling of Tswana business acumen.⁴³ In all cases of hard bargaining, the consultations carried out by chiefs before they purchased goods were a reflection of Tswana customary law, as free speech and consensus were the hallmarks of Tswana council (pitso and phuthego) proceedings.

However, attempts by Tswana rulers to introduce monopoly practices failed due to the vastness of Bechuanaland. The Rev. John Mackenzie shows small scale trade to have been carried out even at a chief's capital town:

42. Cumming, op. cit., p. 251. See also, Dolman's diary for 26th May, 1849 (op. cit., p. 158): the Kwena "in bargaining ... are uncommonly sharp."

43. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 251: "We arrived here [Ngami] on Friday, the 11th [June, 1858], not until I had received messages from the Captain [chief] to make haste and be the first wagon at his state; since which time we have been haggling and wrangling about the price of two horses, till my interpreter and I were utterly exhausted, the former drinking half my cask of sherry to keep his throat moist, till today [15th June, 1858] I gave in and let the Captain have them for thirteen teeth of ivory and a saddle and bridle into the bargain."

While the chief or headman takes you in hand, and gets what he can as a 'present,' or for guides, his men are busy with your servants, doing the same thing on a smaller scale.⁴⁴

While the era of big game hunting lasted, the Kgalagadi and Sarwa enjoyed marginal gains. Although only a few of them conducted a clandestine trade with white hunters, large bands normally feasted on carcasses left by hunters. Baldwin observed:

There is no waste in the quantity of meat we have killed, as the poor Masa[rwa] light great fires by each animal, and cut and dry the last morsel. A whole batch of them moved their quarters to the three rhinoceros I shot ...⁴⁵

III

The Tswana were displaying their newly acquired goods as early as the 1830's and 1840's; and in some cases adjustments were made so that they could make full use of the new products. A traveller to Kwenaland found an innovation that was inspired by the advent of fire arms, as Sechele is reported to have built a stone wall round the city

with loopholes at intervals through which to fire upon the advancing enemy with muskets.⁴⁶

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44. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 179. See also, Mohr, To Victoria Falls, p. 157; Cumming, The Lion Hunter, p. 250.
45. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 191; J. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places (London, 1884), p. 59.
46. Cumming, op. cit., p. 336.

Other Tswana communities do not seem to have emulated the Kwena contrivance. But luxury goods--some locally manufactured some bartered--were widely used. In 1858 Baldwin commented upon the use of ornaments among the Tawana:

their legs, arms, necks, and waists are ornamented with beads of every variety, and ivory, brass, and copper bracelets.⁴⁷

In Ngwaketse country Gaseitsiwe was reported by Emily Moffat to have developed a fondness for coffee and tea, adding

The men are generally clothed with trousers and a Kaross. The women are but partially attired. Their beads are really pretty, and some of them are tastily arranged.⁴⁸

Kwena neighbours, the Kgatla, seem to have made a colourful blending of the old and new modes of dressing, the Christian members of that community displaying their clothes on Sundays.⁴⁹

47. Baldwin, op. cit., pp. 266-67: He assessed Lecholatebe to be living in great comfort, asserting that "They say perfect happiness does not exist in this world, but I should say a Kaffir Chief comes nearer to it than any other mortal."
48. J.P.R. Wallis (editor), The Matebele Mission: A selection from the correspondence of John and Emily Moffat, David Livingstone and others (London, 1945), p. 65. See also William Cornwallis Harris, Narrative of an Expedition into Southern Africa, during the years 1836 and 1837 (Bombay, 1838), p. 55, who noted that of the Thlaping men "little need be said, as they have generally adopted a rude imitation of the European costume. The females ... retain the garb of their ancestors."
49. Cumming, op. cit., p. 331: He found "sundry members of the congregation who entered the Church clad in the most unique apparel; some of them wore extraordinary old hats ornamented with fragments of women's clothes and ostrich feathers, and these they were very reluctant to take off ... one man sat with his beaver on immediately before the minister until the door keeper ordered him to remove it." See also Dolman, op. cit., p. 158.

The penal system of the Kwena had at least one innovation as a result of their chief's abortive trip to England. When he returned from Cape Town, Sechele adopted a mode of punishment he had found in vogue at the Cape, that is, making prisoners work on public roads.⁵⁰

Another social practice that was being significantly affected by intercourse with traders was Tswana hospitality. Whereas hospitality to strangers had always been a traditional virtue, the changing socio-economic circumstances partially vitiated that attribute. In Ngamiland a trader reported:

What ever civility he [Iecholatebe] might have shewn to strangers in former years, he is now anything but hospitable. During my whole stay at the Lake, I never received as much as a handful of corn, or a cup of milk from him. On the contrary he was in the habit of begging for food from me. The arrival of several wagons at the Lake at the same time puts him in the highest glee, when he never fails to make his rounds, for contributions of bread from one, sugar from another, coffee from a third, meat from a fourth, and so on.⁵¹

After Livingstone's departure from the Kwena in 1851 and before the L.M.S. could send resident missionaries to the Tswana in the 1860's, the traditional religion of the chiefdoms remained

50. Livingstone, Missionary Travels, p. 121.

51. Andersson, "A Journey to Lake Ngami," loc. cit.; see also Dolman, op. cit., p. 158.

essentially unaffected except for a few Kwena Christian converts (or 'inquirers') under the uncoordinated patronage of evangelist Mebalwe (i.e. Paul Molehane) and Chief Sechele; Sebobi was plodding on among the Ngwaketse.⁵² Mebalwe's attempt to evangelise the Tawana was no more successful than Livingstone's in 1849. When he preached there in 1850, a layman reported:

The service had not proceeded far, before they all burst out laughing; the chief amongst the rest endeavouring to ridicule the preacher for the strange doctrines, to them, that were being enunciated, terming it all nonsense.⁵³

Among the Kwena Christian morale is reported to have lapsed markedly after the Boer attack of 1852, and when Kgosidintsi was mauled by a lion, a witch was held responsible for the attack and executed. Only the desperate plea of evangelist Mebalwe saved the deceased man's wife and child, whose lives Kwena ~~retributive~~ justice demanded.⁵⁴

Not that Sechele relinquished his quest for an understanding of the Bible. But in this pursuit his studies deepened his doubts about the moral rightness of the injunction against polygamy. On a Sunday in 1854 he

52. For earlier reference to Sebobi, see Chapter One, pp.37-8. See also Livingstone to Moffat, July, 1847, Family Letters, I, p. 201.

53. J. Leyland, Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa, p. 169.

54. Ibid., pp. 200-201. See also, Veritas, "Secheli and the Boers," Cape Town Mail, 12th March, 1853.

gave Mr. Moffat a text, and asked him to preach upon it, as his people, to whom he had been reading, were puzzled to know why the missionaries had made him discard all but one of his wives, while Solomon and David had so many wives and concubines, and were still 'men after God's own heart.'⁵⁵

Moffat refused to take up the challenge and according to Chapman who was present, gave an unsatisfactory explanation. The Ngwato Chief, Sekgoma, seemed fearful of the implications of having a resident missionary at Shoshong. Although he persistently invited L.M.S. missionaries to come and stay at Shoshong, the marriage issue troubled Sekgoma all the time because he had six wives. Chapman reported Sekgoma to have said:

I should like to have a missionary, and to become a Christian, if I could be allowed to keep my wives. I don't want any more. I have transgressed, and nothing can ever undo that which has once been done; but I cannot turn my wives and children out. All men's hearts will be against me; I shall be alone on the earth. To have my wives disgraced, and my legitimate children branded with a false and ignominious name, would bring overwhelming ruin and trouble without end upon me.⁵⁶

Whatever quarrels Sechele might have had with the L.M.S. on religious affairs, it was his good fortune that white visitors to Bechuanaland were impressed with his display of European influences. J. Leyland thought Sechele was a very intelligent chief

55. Chapman, Travels, I, p. 220.

56. Ibid., pp. 220-221, 222.

and lived a truly Christian life.⁵⁷ And when Sechele was returning from a hunting trip to Matebeleland, he followed such a rigid Christian routine that the hunter Baldwin was frankly incredulous.⁵⁸

The presence of hunters and traders in Northern Tswana Chiefdoms had economic as well as social consequences. Their activities did not always conform to the accepted mores of Tswana society. Their ignorance of these mores led to the violation of taboos. Thus when Chapman brought a dead crocodile into a Ngwato village in 1853, ~~and~~ this caused resentment and some commotion as the animal was venerated there.⁵⁹ And traders' sexual relations with Tswana women brought all whites into disrepute. The non-Christian elements among the Tswana

57. Leyland, op. cit., p. 135: Leyland observed: "The people were married according to the rules of the land, to brand them as adulterers will turn all heathens against the faith which we are so anxious they should embrace. It is a pity that some middle course could not be found to remedy the evil [sic]."

58. Baldwin noted: "Sechele makes a great show of being very religious, saying a long grace before and after meat on every occasion; and he has been holding forth to his people and singing half [sic] the day. He will not allow a shot to be fired or any work to be done, and certainly sets a most praiseworthy example. He is most anxious to get home, but will not travel on Sunday on any account. I cannot tell whether he is sincere, or only does so through fear of Moffat, a Scotch missionary" (see Baldwin, op. cit., p. 295).

59. Chapman, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 230-231, see also, Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 282: "The old superstitions cannot be driven out of their minds by faith implanted by preaching."

always blamed the presence of whites for rain failure and any other misfortune which beset the tribe, and the traders' relations with Tswana women without undertaking marriage obligations provided non-Christians with ready ammunition to retort to missionary sermons:

Look at your brother, white man; your preaching must be all nonsense; they [traders] take our native women up into the country as wives and are not married to them.⁶⁰

IV

Sechele's early contacts with a variety of traders, Boers, and missionaries placed him in a better position than his northern kinsmen; Gaseitsiwe was equally at a disadvantage as his chiefdom did not lie on the main long-distance routes to the interior. Sechele had, therefore, a much more accurate perception of the South African political scene than the other three principal chiefs. It was the calculations of a shrewd statesman that persuaded Sechele to call upon the head of the South African Republic to play a part in the affairs of his chiefdom. This was made in 1857, when Sechele invited President Pretorius to find missionaries who could reside among

60. Leyland, *op. cit.*, p. 134. However, one of Sechele's daughters, Bitsang, was married (see Baldwin, *African Hunting*, p. 264) to the English trader, J.H. Wilson, but Baldwin recorded on 6th June, 1858 that Bitsang had deserted Wilson. The hunter, Gordon Cumming, was reported (see Livingstone, *Family Letters, I*, p. 217) to have kept a Khoikhoi concubine.

the Kwena.⁶¹ This overture is crucial for an understanding of nineteenth century Tswana history: it was made scarcely four years after the Kwena had suffered a decisive defeat in 1852 and subsequently lost three Kwena merchants at the hands of Boers in 1853. In spite of his oft repeated dislike (and even hatred) of the Boers,⁶² why did Sechele invite his arch enemy to have a say in an issue that touched the social and political life of the Kwena so deeply?

During the first half of the nineteenth century one external group after another had attacked or interfered with the Tswana communities: the Kololo, the Ndebele, Boers, white hunters and traders. Viewed against this background, Sechele's diplomacy was a move to forestall future Boer aggression, he no

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61. See account by Heinrich Schulenburg, in Folder 795, Willoughby Papers, Selly Oak; J. Du Plessis, Christian Missions in South Africa, p. 375; Thomas Morgan Thomas, Eleven Years in Central Africa (London, 1872), p. 47. In contrast to Sechele's acquaintance with white people, Chief Nangoro of Ovamboland "positively refused to believe [in 1851] in the existence of any country which was inhabited by whites alone. He seemed to consider them as rare migratory animals of unaccountable manners but considerable intelligence," in Francis Galton, Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa (London, 1853), p. 219.
62. There is ample evidence to suggest that Sechele and other Tswana rulers disliked the Boers (see for example, Sechele's letter to Livingstone in Leyland, Adventures, pp. 115-6). However British officials and L.M.S. missionaries were mistaken in believing that this strained relationship was irrevocable; the political realities of the nineteenth century seem to have dictated that the Kwena and their neighbours have permanent national interests, not permanent friends or enemies.

doubt arguing that the Republics would be less likely to attack a community to whom they had supplied missionaries of their own choice.⁶³

Pretorius first requested Moravian missionaries to answer Sechele's appeal, but when they failed to do so, he turned to the Hermannsburg Society, a German missionary society that had been operating in Natal since 1854. The Society sent Rev. Schroeder to the Kwena in July 1857. A year later he was joined by Ferdinand Zimmerman and Henrich C. Schullenburg. The latter moved to Shoshong in 1859.⁶⁴

The German missionaries found themselves dealing with a chief who had resolved to use any white men he could to the maximum advantage of the Kwena and not to regard them as personal friends; Sechele nevertheless allowed the Germans to proselytise as a prize for the protection they afforded him. And Sechele had a wealth of experience in dealing with whites. Like any visitors coming to the Kwena for the first time, the

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63. See H. Schulenburg, in Folder 795, Selly Oak, loc. cit.; Du Plesis, op. cit., p. 325; Rev. Karl Hohls to Mackenzie, 8th September, 1864, Box 33 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.), writing from Dinokane, a Hanoverian station in Hurutsheland, suggests that his Society's mission in Bechuanaland had the approval of Boer Republics: "...but it is a pity that the Boers will not have you." This is confirmed in the official history of the Hermannsburgers (see Georg Haccius, Hannoversche Missionsgeschichte, insbesondere die Geschichte der Hermannsburger Mission (Hermannsburg, 1910), pp. 321-5).
64. Willoughby Papers, loc. cit.; Moffat, Matebele Journals, pp. 30, 33; G. Haccius, Hannoversche Missionsgeschichte insbesondere die Geschichte der Hermannsburger Mission (Hermannsburg, 1910), p. 328).

German missionaries did not realise the complex character they were dealing with.

When Robert Moffat stopped at Dithubaruba on his way to Matebeleland in August 1857, Sechele implied that the Germans, whom he thought to be Boers, had come to his chiefdom without his knowledge and that he did not know what they were doing. To some visitors he acknowledged their presence, but implied they were not an important factor in the religious life of the Kwená, as he judged them to be no wiser than himself; Sechele asserted that he was even wiser than L.M.S. missionaries who had taught him to read and write; he maintained that his knowledge of scripture was as good as that of any missionary. When Moffat announced his intention to remove Mebalwe because of the presence of German missionaries, Sechele said he would expel the Germans instead. Before he left Dithubaruba Moffat had another brush with Sechele, when the latter prepared to preach to the youth in his town in spite of the suspension imposed on him.⁶⁶

By 1858 the Rev. Schroeder was aware of some of the facets of Sechele's character, as is shown in Moffat's observation:

Mr. Schroeder has had his troubles with Sechele. He said to me yesterday that, had they known all that they now know, they would certainly never have come.⁶⁷

66. Ibid., pp. 30, 33.

67. Moffat, Matebele Journals, Vol. 2, p. 148.

Sechele must have commended himself to the Germans sometime after Moffat's departure because a year later (1859), when Sechele dabbled in Ngwato politics and successfully conspired to oust Chief Macheng from office, Schroeder defended him as "not only faultless but an honourable man."⁶⁸

After Sechele had obtained German missionaries and by that token, warded off Boer aggression, he seems to have been desirous to maintain good relations with Mzilikazi, who no doubt had surprised him by releasing Macheng. Sechele is reported to have visited Mzilikazi in Matebeleland in 1858 and was handsomely rewarded;⁶⁹ Sechele visited Matebeleland again in 1859 and achieved both diplomatic and religious success. Not only were Kwena-Ndebele relations amicable for some time, but Sechele even impressed Mzilikazi with his sermons. On that count he scored better than the L.M.S. mission later that year, which Mzilikazi placed on a year's probation before he allowed the missionaries to preach to the Ndebele.⁷⁰

68. Ibid., pp. 179-80.

69. See Baldwin, African Hunting, p. 290, where Mzilikazi is reported to have given Sechele 40 oxen, 40 sheep, 40 goats and some ivory.

70. John Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River (London, 1871), p. 319. For Ndebele response to Christianity, see Thomas Morgan Thomas, Eleven Years in Central Africa (London, 1872), passim; Accounts in R. Moffat, Matebele Journals, J.S. Moffat, Matebele Mission, passim. In "The London Missionary Society in South Africa: a retrospective sketch," Tracts Relating to Foreign Missions, 1859-88 (Bound by the British Museum), J. Mackenzie says (1888): "In Matebeleland Christianity means revolution; and to be a Christian a man would be regarded as directly adjuring the chief."

Between 1857 and 1865 Hermannsburgers founded, among other stations, Liteyana, Shoshong, and Dinokana (1858) in Hurutseland.⁷¹ In trying to evangelize the Tswana German missionaries found a situation similar to that found by James Read among the Thlaping in 1816. Just as Read had found Chief Mothibi Molehabangwe to be reticent about conversion to Christianity, so did Rev. Jensen find the Hurutshe Chief Moilwe equally impregnable. Among the Ngwato Sekgoma refused to become a Christian even though he had invited Schullenburg. Sechele, true to his pragmatism, was more diplomatic for he accepted the new faith superficially. On the whole Tswana Chiefs were reluctant to become Christians. By 1865 German missionaries had realised the Tswana Chiefs' resistance to Christianity. In one report Behrens observed that a Tswana chief put little effort to learn Christian gospels.⁷²

German missionaries paid more attention to teaching scripture and less to formal education, believing as they did that evangelization was their most important duty. This aspect of mission work had something in common with the L.M.S. Thus, by 1865 superintendent Berhens could report that some Tswana children were

71. Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), p. 444. For L.

72. Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), p. 410.

"able to read quite well and know the Bible and catechism from the beginning up to the end by heart."⁷³

However when the Hermannsburgers withdrew their missions from Northern Tswana chiefdoms and settled in the Boer Republics, they started a few elementary schools there. Rev. Jensen started a school at Dinokana in 1865 where the ageing bespectacled Chief Mollwe had changed his previous stand against Christianity and now was one of the pupils; he was assisted by Moremi, himself a Hurutshe. Although the Chief cooperated with missionaries in their work, his eldest son was reported to be hostile to missionaries.⁷⁴

By 1861 Dinokana had twenty three converts,⁷⁵ while Shoshong had twenty;⁷⁶ Bethanie had 115 converts (1864), while Matlare had seven converts by 1865.⁷⁷ During the Hermannsburgers short stay in Kwenaland Sechele showed his characteristic traits: in 1857 he built two huts for the Germans and was paid for that labour in gun powder; and when the missionaries gave him a watch as a present, Sechele accepted it but returned it shortly afterwards demanding that he be given some money instead.⁷⁸

73. Ibid., p. 415. Cf. Chapter Five, pp.

74. Haccius, Hannoversche, (1910), p. 420.

75. Ferdinand Zimmerman to Robert Moffat, 10th January, 1861. Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3. By 1865 they had risen to 55.

76. Schullenburg, Folder 795, Selly Oak.

77. Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), p. 444.

78. Moffat, Matebele Journals, II, pp. 35-6.

Meanwhile the Lutheran missionaries quarreled with their Directors in Natal. Although it is difficult to establish the real cause of friction between the Tswana missionaries and their Natal headquarters owing to the partisan accounts given by both sides, superintendent Hardeland's account seems to be the more plausible. Hardeland dismissed them on the grounds that they were spending more time on trading than on mission work, a view that is supported by Robert Moffat.⁷⁹ On the other hand Zimmerman and Schullenburg alleged that their Society had assumed "dictatorial methods" but do not cite instances to substantiate their allegation.⁸⁰ Whatever reason there was for the breach between the Society and its missionaries, there is no doubt that by December 1860 Hardeland had dismissed all Lutherans in Tswana Chiefdoms from the Hermannsburg Missionary Society.⁸¹ The dismissal of the Lutherans was certainly a boon to L.M.S. agents, who regarded the Germans as interfering in their sphere of missionary influence.

79. Moffat to Tidman, 20th February, 1861, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.) where he deplores Lutherans for "trading with the natives to which the German missionaries seem ... attached salaried or not salaried."

80. Zimmerman and Schullenburg to Moffat, 10th January, 1861, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.)

81. See Hardeland's report, in Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), p. 413, where he calls them "renegades," "Merchant Jews."

CHAPTER THREE

The L.M.S. Takes Over German Stations in Bechuanaland;
Response to Missionary Work in Northern Bechuanaland, 1862-1880.

Relations between L.M.S. and Hermannsburg agents appear to have been cordial in spite of doctrinal differences on scripture between their societies. The seeds of friendship--thanks to his ignorance at the time--were planted by Robert Moffat, himself a less compromising adherent of Congregational creed than other L.M.S. missionaries. The occasion was Moffat's fourth visit to Mzilikazi in 1857, when informants told him that Sechele had received the Moravian missionaries at Dithubaruba. Knowing that Moravians were less doctrinaire than Lutherans, Moffat welcomed the arrival of Henrich Schroeder's party in Kwenaland, as he was aware of Sechele's requests for missionaries. Under the influence of this feeling of cordiality, Moffat seriously considered loaning evangelist Mebalwe--who was leaving Dithubaruba--to the new missionaries until they had learnt to speak Setswana.¹

By the time Moffat and his colleagues discovered the Hermannsburgers' real religious affiliation, friendly intercourse had been established between agents of the two Societies. This had been facilitated by typically solid German hospitality, which Moffat was the first to enjoy.² The treatment he received at Dithubaruba

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1. Robert Moffat, The Matebele Journals of Robert Moffat, 1829-1860, edited by J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1945), Volume Two, pp. 11-13, 203. For doctrinal differences, see Robert Moffat to Tidman, 20th February 1861, where Moffat says of the Hermannsburgers: "Our teaching in reference to baptism is also to them heretical," in Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).
 2. Ibid., p. 41; Thomas Morgan Thomas, in Eleven Years in Central Africa (London, 1872), p. 47: "...such a welcome, indeed, as the Dutch and Germans only seem able to give."

led J.S. Moffat³ to conclude that the Lutherans' [Hermannsburgers'] character was beyond reproach. Rev. Zimmermann, the Hurutshe based Hermannsburg agent, must have treated Mr. and Mrs. Price well for Mrs. Price was highly complimentary in her diary: "These people are extremely kind and hospitable--very homely and plodding."⁴

The cordial relations between the German and British did not succeed in curbing for any length of time the expansionist ambitions of their societies, and it was inevitable that they would come into conflict in the execution of their societies' policies. L.M.S. agents were alarmed to find that their Lutheran counterparts were sending twenty-four agents to South Africa annually, a figure they could hardly hope to match. But they must have watched with interest the dispute that developed within the Lutheran Society in South Africa which resulted in the dismissal of all Hermannsburgers in Bechuanaland in 1860.⁵

As a result of their dismissal the Hermannsburg agents were obliged to fend for themselves, which in the circumstances entailed trading with Tswana communities, an activity which interfered with their evangelical endeavours. Those Lutherans

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3. The Matebele Mission: a selection from the correspondence of John and Emily Moffat, David Livingstone and others, 1858-1878, edited by J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1945), p. 149: Inyati missionaries were "merry over the sacks of wheat [they had] been able to procure from the Hanovarian missionaries....."
 4. Elizabeth Price, The Journals of Elizabeth Lees Price, edited by Una Long (London, 1956), p. 113.
 5. J. Du Plessis, A History of Christian Missions in South Africa, (Edinburg, 1911), p. 376. Also, see Chapter Two, pp. 25-6.

who wished to continue to work as full time missionaries applied to the L.M.S. for vacancies, Zimmermann and Schulenburg being the first to do so in January 1861. Zimmermann sent his letter of application through Robert Moffat, whom he regarded as "an experienced and fatherly friend." He assumed that Moffat was already acquainted with the unhappy developments within the Hermannsburg Society and confided to him the difficulty of having "to furnish ourselves as good as we can;" he reported the difficulty he had faced to convert the Hurutshe as the latter were reluctant to abandon their traditional beliefs.⁶

Schulenburg was even more forthright than Zimmermann. In his letter addressed to Moffat, Price, and Mackenzie, he alleged that the dispute with Hardeland had led their society to take "many tyrannical steps against [them]." He noted that he was offering his services to the L.M.S. in defiance of a Hermannsburg order to return to Natal. He did not have as many converts as his Huruthse colleague, having baptised only eight people, including two of Sekgoma's sons, Kgama and Kgamane.⁷ Schulenburg decided to visit Germany, and asked Mackenzie, with whom he had stayed at Shoshong for two months, to take charge of Shoshong station. Moffat, Price and Mackenzie

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6. Ferdinand Zimmermann to Robert Moffat, 10th January, 1861, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.); Wallis, The Matebele Mission, p. 203.
7. Henrich Schulenburg to Moffat, Price, and Mackenzie, 10th January, 1861, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

did not take the Lutheran offers seriously. In their joint letter to the L.M.S. they did not even mention Zimmerman's application, but grudgingly recommended Schulenburg whom they hoped might "prove to be an efficient labourer if he were to renounce [fundamentalist] tenets and trading with the natives to which the German missionaries seem attached."⁸

According to Robert Moffat, their participation in trade had rendered them "not only unable to fulfil their duties as missionaries but lost caste with the people, who are keen enough to see the incompatibility of the two pursuits."⁹

The London directors had scarcely had time to consider Schulenburg's application when Moffat took the initiative in Bechuanaland. When it appeared to him that Schulenburg was not returning to Shoshong, he recommended that Mackenzie, then on a short visit to Kuruman, be appointed to the Shoshong post on a permanent basis; the L.M.S. Directors approved the appointment in February 1862.¹⁰ But when Mackenzie hurried back to Shoshong he found there not only Price, who had been turned away from Inyati by Mzilikazi,¹¹ but also Schulenburg who had not gone to Germany, but had decided to stay at Shoshong

8. Moffat, Price and Mackenzie to Tidman, 24th January, 1863, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

9. Wallis, The Matebele Mission, p. 203.

10. Mackenzie to Tidman, 14th May, 1962, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 5 (L.M.S.).

11. For ^{Ndebele} Lebengula's threat to kill Price, see Wallis, The Matebele Mission, p. 179.

as a free lance missionary. The three worked together until 1864, when Schulenburg again joined the Hermannsburg Society and went to work at Pata Le Tschopa in the South African Republic. Until the Lutheran left Shoshong in 1864, the three missionaries readily worked out a modus operandi:

"Mr. Schulenburg chose that we should cooperate with him, sharing the public services of the Sunday, and teaching certain classes in the school The arrangement, however, was carried out very harmoniously; and we all found scope and verge enough for our teaching in the cardinal truths of our religion, upon which we were truly agreed."¹²

The London directors were not as enthusiastic about the occupation of the Kwena mission. Their attitude was no doubt influenced by the number of adverse reports they had received for over twenty years (see Chapter ^{P. 72}Two) regarding Sechele's standing as a Christian. In addition, Kwenaland did not command the same strategic (see Chapter ^{P. 45}Two) importance as Shoshong. Nevertheless events that occurred in the early 1860's seemed to strengthen Sechele's leverage in his quest for agents. Rev. Schroeder and the lay worker Herbst both died in 1863.¹³

12. John Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 250.

13. Chief Sechele to R. Moffat, 31st October, 1865, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder 5 (L.M.S.); Thomas M. Thomas, op. cit., p. 48; Elizabeth Price, op. cit., p. 169.

If the surviving missionary (Bakeberg) had any illusions about his continued stay among the Kwena, they were soon dashed. In January 1863 Sechele and two of his brothers, Kgosidintsi and Basiamang, jointly appealed to the L.M.S. for a resident missionary at Molepolole:

"We being the chiefs of the country of Bakwena, in the presence of the teachers Bakeberg and Price make it known to them, that we do not desire the teaching of the Germans and will receive the teaching of the English alone. It is we who speak this and they Bakeberg and Price, have heard how we have spoken."¹⁴ Late in 1863 Price was given the discretion to choose between Molepolole and Shoshong, the Directors nevertheless pointing out that "Sechele's sincerity can be little depended on;"¹⁵ and Price chose to work at Shoshong.

Meanwhile, the Hermannsburgers mounted their demand to have Shoshong vacated by the L.M.S., a move that was strongly resisted by Mackenzie and Robert Moffat.¹⁶ Both men insisted that the Germans hand over all their mission stations to the L.M.S. since they did not have as long a connection with the Tswana as the L.M.S., who had worked among the Southern Tswana since 1816. In response to these requests, Karl Hohls, the

14. Price to Tidman, 10th March, 1863, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

15. Tidman to Price, 5th September, 1863 (L.M.S.).

16. Mackenzie to Hardeland, 23rd January, 1863, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

local superintendent of Hermannsburg stations in Bechuanaland, gave the Kwena station to the L.M.S. but demanded that Shoshong be vacated "with man and mouse."¹⁷ The demand seems to have been ignored, and L.M.S. agents instead mustered Ngwato support to let them remain in their town. When in 1864 Keyser and Zimmermann tried to reoccupy Shoshong for their society, they were turned away by the Ngwato who preferred to have the L.M.S.

In Kwenaland the years 1864-66 were decisive in Sechele's endless quest for a resident missionary, for not only did the Hermannsburg complete the formalities ceding the Kwena station to the L.M.S.¹⁸ that year, but Sechele expelled the remaining Germans from his country. In addition Karl Hohls assured Mackenzie that Dithubaruba was indeed vacant as their remaining agents had been expelled.¹⁹ Sechele, on the other hand, was covertly playing on the perennial rivalry between Boers and Britons to induce the latter to act quickly. By October 1865 he could write: "My soul's grieved that the German missionaries who came from the Boers should be the teachers

17. Karl Hohls to Mackenzie, 17th July, 1864, Box 33 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). In Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), p. 410, Hardeland says: "Our Christian love and prudence required us to leave the field for the London brothers."

18. A copy of the agreement between the L.M.S. and the Hermannsburgers on their spheres of missionary influence is in Mackenzie to Karl Hohls, 3rd September, 1864, Box 33 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

19. Karl Hohls to Mackenzie, 8th September, 1864, Box 33 - Jacket B - Folder 3. Writing from Dinokane, the Hurutshe centre, Hohls conceded: "It is certainly the case that Sechele will not have us now"

of my people; why then do you English refuse to give me teachers? As to them [the Germans] some died at my place, the rest I told to depart; for I said, I shall ask the English for missionaries because you do not teach."²⁰ Sechele's relentless struggle was rewarded only after another appeal, when Price was sent to Molepolole in 1866.

The Ngwaketse, the neighbours of the Kwena to the south, commanded even a less strategic geographical location than either of their northern kinsmen. Since the late 1840's they had had to be content with an African evangelist, Sebohi, as their chief's requests for a white missionary went unheeded. Sebohi (see Chapter One^{P.37}) had taught Chief Gaseitsiwe to read and write, the Ngwaketse ruler professing to Moffat in 1860 that he was "grateful for Sebohi's services, in visiting them every Sabbath preaching twice and teaching them."²¹ But in spite of this service, Sebohi could not be a substitute for the all-important white missionary and Gaseitsiwe, though not as persistent as Sechele, made his wishes known whenever the opportunity arose. In 1870 he invited the Inyati-based missionary, Thomas Morgan Thomas, to make Kanye his permanent station and not to proceed to Matebeleland. When that invitation was turned down, the Ngwaketse chief next turned to the

20. Sechele to Moshete (R. Moffat), 31st October, 1865, Box 33 - Folder 5 - Jacket A (L.M.S.).

21. Moffat to Tidman, 5th November, 1860, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

more pressing needs of his tribe, pleading that "he would be much obliged if [Thomas] would give a little gun powder I believed in his sincerity, and gave him what he wanted"²² Rev. James Good was subsequently sent to work at Kanye in 1871.

The mission to the Tawana was linked with the evangelical progress made at Shoshong, a station that had been founded to act as a channel for the society's expansion into the interior of Central Africa. Since Livingstone's first visit in 1849, the Tawana had had more intercourse with traders than with missionaries, the most significant contact with the latter group having been made with the ill-fated L.M.S. mission to the Kololo in 1859. Lechulatebe's humane treatment of the survivors of the Kololo mission in 1860 commended him to L.M.S. directors and agents alike;²³ and when Mackenzie arrived at the Lake to take the survivors of the Kololo expedition to Kuruman, Lechulatebe lost no time to put his case for a missionary: "I desire instructions for myself and my people; I should persecute no one for believing; at any rate I have shown that I would not eat the missionaries up in my own town, as Sekeletu has

22. Thomas M. Thomas, op. cit., p. 46.

23. See, "No. 9 Ngami. Notes made by J. Ellenberger at Tsau, Ngamiland, in 1906," in Folder 796, "W.C. Willoughby Papers," Selly Oak Colleges Library, Birmingham; E.W. Smith, The Great Lion of Bechuanaland, Appendix B, pp. 411-425; Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 180 ; Hugh Marshall Hole to David Chamberlain (Managing Editor of the L.M.S. Chronicle), 28th October, 1932, letter kept in a copy of Hole's book, The Passing of the Black Kings (London 1932) at L.M.S. Archives.

done."²⁴ To emphasize the importance of a resident missionary agent as against the infrequent visits of Livingstone and some Griqua and Thlaping traders, Lechulathebe observed: "We retained their instructions for a little time only; they soon faded from our memory. We should not so soon forget were a teacher living amongst us."²⁵ Even when Lechulathebe was presenting his case for a missionary agent, he, like all Tswana rulers in the nineteenth century, took some time off to barter with Mackenzie for arms and ammunition with the shrewdness of an experienced trader.

Lechulathebe did not live to see the first white missionary reside in Ngamiland. He died in 1874 and, after the regency of Meno and his son Dithapo, was succeeded by Moremi in 1876. The new Tswana chief had as much difficulty as Lechulathebe in persuading the L.M.S. to act in the matter. His efforts were rewarded only after he had appealed to Kgama to "obtain him missionaries like his own; also to teach his men to read, and to give them all information about the new teaching of the word of God."²⁶ In 1877 J.D. Hepburn and two Tswana evangelists,

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24. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, pp. 210-211. Lechulathebe was obviously under the impression that members of the L.M.S. Kololo mission were poisoned by Sekeletu, a view that was shared by some missionaries but was later refuted by Mackenzie, R. Moffat, Price, et al.
25. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 211.
26. J.D. Hepburn to Joseph Mullens, 28th October, 1875, Box 38 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.). See also, Thomas Tlou, "A Political History of North-western Botswana to 1906," University of Wisconsin, Ph.D. Thesis, 1972, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, p. 189.

Khukwi Mogodi and Diphukwe Yakwe, went to Moremi's chiefdom to evangelise; and after a short spell back at Shoshong the two African evangelists were again sent back to Ngamiland as permanent agents of the L.M.S. in 1878. This mission, like all attempts to work in areas where Tswana rulers had requested L.M.S. agents, had the full support of Chief Moremi. But the Ngami mission was destined to grapple with grave problems when Chief Moremi asserted his supremacy over the Church.

II

Tswana communities among whom L.M.S. agents worked in the 1860's and 1870's lived in fairly populous centers. The Ngwato at Shoshong numbered about 30,000, while Sechele's subjects around the Dithojwane hills numbered 60,000 of whom 35,000 were Kwena.²⁷ The first task of all L.M.S. agents to Bechuanaland, in the tradition of James Read at Dithakong earlier in the century, was to try to establish a cordial working relationship with each chief. In this regard agents who went to work among the Ngwato and the Kwena were initially inhibited, as they believed Tswana chiefs to be preoccupied with secular issues. The journal of Mrs. Price depicts the Ngwato

27. See Emil Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, Vol. 1, pp. 314-15, who gave the following population estimates: Ngwaketse, 30,000; Rolong, 65,000. See also, Wallis, The Matebele Mission, p. 70; Price to Tidman, 15th March, 1862, Box 32 - Jacket A - Folder 5; Price to Tidman, 11th July, 1867, Box 34 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

chief, Sekgoma, as being obsessed with the acquisition of fire arms: "It is all guns and ammunition with him ... and Roger [Price] having a little taste in the mechanical line, he is worried [sic] by Sekgoma for every broken gun which meets his eye. Roger mends one after the other and so earns most of our oxen, sheep and goats sometimes very quickly."²⁸

However, the Prices easily befriended themselves to two of Sekgoma's sons, Kgama and Kgamane. To the newly arrived missionaries, the two brothers seemed to compensate for their father's reluctance to adopt Christianity; whenever they were guests at Price's home their cleanliness, mode of dressing, and general deportment strengthened the ties of friendship with the new missionary family. Mrs. Price was only too happy to find that Kgama and Kgamane were eager to learn new ideas.²⁹

At Molepolole Sechele typically welcomed the Prices with a present of a fat ox.³⁰ However, in spite of the fine gesture, the missionaries' ignorance of Tswana customs, coupled with Sechele's trade practices marred chief-missionary relations from the very beginning. The general tone of misunderstanding is reflected in Mrs. Price's letter to her sister at Kuruman in 1866, when she complained that Sechele begged "disgracefully,

28. E. Price, The Journals, p. 135.

29. Ibid., p. 77.

30. Ibid., p. 180.

like the meanest of his subjects--and transacting business will try and squeeze his unfortunate customer into the very smallest space ere he is satisfied."³¹ But in due course there were some aspects of Sechele's life--notably his enthusiasm to teach in the Sunday School--which helped to reduce tensions between him and the missionaries. Sechele was eager to reassure Price that the Kwena field was a fertile ground for the planting of Christianity.

In July 1866 Sechele called a meeting at which he asked his brother, Kgosidintsi, to inform Kwena Christians and non-Christians alike what they were required to do for the missionaries. They were to build a house for the missionaries and a school where they might be taught to read and write. Kgosidintsi, who himself refused to become a Christian for the rest of his life, saw some good in the white man's school; he urged disgruntled elements at the meeting to perform the assigned tasks without flinching, as "no one could be sure that he would not one day be in great earnest in frequenting [the school] and getting its knowledge--nor still less could they be sure that their children one and all would not be its devoted frequenters."³² Nor was that the last of Sechele's gesture. In 1867 he paid

31. Ibid., p. 110. For Tswana views on begging see Ibid., p. 166, where Kgama's wife exclaims: "Ah, but you must not wonder at us doing it--for in our eyes it is an honour to be begged of--a token of our greatness and ability;" Mackenzie in Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 45 says: "To be begged from is one of the marks of chieftainship among the Bechuanas. A stranger will say that his chief is a great man; people come from all quarters to beg from him!"

32. E. Price, op. cit., p. 193.

builders generously to ensure the speedy completion of a church under construction at Molepolole.³³ The Ngwato, Tawana, and Ngwaketse rulers were just as eager to cooperate with missionaries during the incipient stage of evangelization. However, this initial cooperation between chiefs and missionaries was severely tested by demographic and political developments within the Tswana chiefdoms shortly after the missionaries' arrival.

III

Mackenzie had hardly established himself at Shoshong when catastrophe struck the Ngwato communities in north-east Bechuanaland. The advent of a small-pox epidemic (Sekoripane) there in 1862, which Mackenzie described in vivid if somewhat exaggerated terms, brought a head-on encounter between Ngwato traditions and the fledgling white man's ideas. Mackenzie soon discovered that administering the white man's medicine was much more difficult than Sekgoma's prompt grant of permission had suggested, because the majority of Ngwato preferred local medicine men (dingaka) to Mackenzie's exotic ministrations of vaccination.³⁴ The chief himself refused to

33. Ibid., p. 263.

34. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 252. Small pox seems to have spread from the Cape where in 1858 (see, "The small-pox epidemic of 1858," C.M.M., Vol. V., January 1859, pp. 14-19) it killed thirty-five people. According to Le Vaillant (see Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa (Perth, 1796) Volume I, p. 25) small-pox was introduced to South Africa by Dutch settlers.

be vaccinated, on the grounds that as he had previously suffered from the disease, the white man's treatment would be ineffectual.³⁵ However, Mackenzie was able to vaccinate members of the chief's family and a few commoners. Although his accounts do not show the actual number of patients he treated, his efforts seem to have been rewarded; only one patient out of those he treated was confined to bed for any length of time, and the rest rapidly recovered. Those patients who refused to be treated by Mackenzie and those who were treated by Ngwato medicinemen died in large numbers; others lost their eyesight. Mackenzie's account gives a terrifying idea of the heavy casualties claimed by the epidemic:

"At length the people seemed to weary of burying the dead; especially in the case of friendless dependants. A long thong was tied to the body of such, which was dragged by this means behind some rock or bush, or into the dry bed of a ravine, and left there. The hyenas and tigers battered by night, the gods and vultures and crows held carnival by day, on these exposed and putrefying corpses. Several times I stumbled over these hideous objects, and scattered the dogs from their revolting feast."³⁶ In the aftermath, Mackenzie's success as a medicine man enhanced his missionary work, and some Ngwato medicine

35. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 253.

36. Ibid.

men even came to consult him professionally. For some time after the epidemic more people attended church services than before.³⁷

Small-pox broke out among the Tawana (1862) when the trader, James Chapman, was in Ngamiland. He moved from village to village encouraging the Tawana and their neighbours to be vaccinated. But Ngamiland communities must have thought that the kind of treatment Chapman had in mind was similar to their own, for the response he got everywhere was very encouraging: he was greeted with flattering titles ranging from "son of my father," "sweetheart," to "mate of the chief;" all villagers expressed a willingness to be inoculated if their chief permitted Chapman to treat them.³⁸ But Lechulathebe was unimpressed with the visitor's brand of medicine, for "when he found that it was to be inoculation, the tables were completely turned, and [Chapman] was heartily laughed at for [his] pains, not alone by him but all his tribe, who take their cue from their chief."³⁹

At Molepolole Chief Sechele's approach to medical affairs seems to have been pragmatic, dictated by the efficacy of medicine, and not by the religious background of those people who

37. Ibid., p. 265. In 1869 Thomas Baines was invited by Kgamane to treat his eight year old son who had sore eyes, and in the process of applying an eye lotion was closely watched by the boy's old nurse (see Baines, The Northern Goldfields Dairies of Thomas Baines, edited by J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1946), Volume One, p. 38).

38. James Chapman, Travels in the Interior of South Africa (London, 1868), II, pp. 310, 312.

39. Ibid., p. 312.

supplied it. To accomplish this end Sechele tried to strike a delicate balance by straddling between the practice of Kwena Dingaka and that of the white man, a process that invariably strained his relations with missionaries. But the elusive Sechele could always put up some outward show which suggested that he had abandoned witch-craft, as for example, in September 1866 when he publicly condemned the use of charms in guns.⁴⁰ Not that this stricture received any universal approval, for Kgosidintsi offered a flat rebuttal. If the chief was embarrassed by his brother's outburst, he must have found consolation in the applause that was given Price, after the missionary had supported Sechele's speech.

If Price imagined that Sechele had finally abandoned Kwena traditional practices, he soon experienced Sechele's pragmatism. The year following his condemnation of the use of charms Sechele suffered from dropsy, and thought it necessary to consult Kwena medicine men. The Ngaka prescribed the liver of a black sheep mixed with that of a crocodile, and Sechele requested Price for a black sheep and explained why it was urgently needed. This prompted a reproof from Price; whereupon Sechele retorted that whites, too, had medicine men who made mysterious compounds which the laymen did not understand, but simply accepted in good faith. Sechele submitted that the Kwena, likewise, had

40. E. Price, op. cit., p. 225.

doctors "clever doctors, who could effect cures as well as [white doctors] that one of these he had employed to cure his disease--that he earnestly desired to use his prescriptions, but that this particular part being needed, why should he murmur at the man's notion for a black sheep."⁴¹ On that occasion Sechele sustained his defense of Kwena medicine and left unrepentent.

When L.M.S. agents embarked upon the crucial task of converting the Tswana to Christianity, the obstacles they encountered were reminiscent of those of the pioneering endeavours of James Read among the Thlaping in Mothibi's chiefdom.⁴² The fact that Lutherans had worked at Molepolole compounded Price's problems: Sechele had been admitted into the Lutheran Church and had once more become a full-fledged preacher on Sundays. Price dissolved the Hermannsburg church membership and enforced Sechele's previous suspension of 1848.⁴³ A few months after his arrival at Molepolole Price sent a rather pessimistic report on Molepolole Christians: "... Sechele and the few of his people who are nominally Christians--I am sorry to be unable to say anything favourable Sechele may yet be reclaimed, though he certainly has gone very far astray."⁴⁴

41. Ibid., p. 267.

42. See Chapter 1, pp. 22-25.

43. E. Price, op. cit., p. 220: "Roger [Price] said the Lutheran Church was dissolved--that those who sought to be received as members must come as entirely new"

44. Price to Tidman, 15th July, 1863, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

At Shoshong Sekgoma repeatedly informed Mackenzie that he could not be converted to Christianity, which was essentially a white man's religion. To Sekgoma conversion conjured up a host of uncertainties in his mind that only a military analogy could indicate as he explained to Mackenzie when the missionary insisted that he be converted:

"Monare [Sir] you don't know what you say. The word of God is far from me. When I think of 'entering the word of God,' I can compare it to nothing except going out to the plain and meeting single-handed all the forces of the Matebele."⁴⁵ While Sekgoma did not object to his children being taught by missionaries and would himself occasionally attend church services, Mackenzie concluded that "no new thing was so inviting to [Sekgoma] as the customs which had the sanctions of immemorial usage."⁴⁶

The response of Tswana laymen to Christianity varied from one station to the next and was largely influenced by the chief's attitude to the new faith. In due course the Tswana mission had to grapple with problems of teaching catechists ways of praying to God. For example, one of the missionaries' oft repeated requests, that catechists communicate directly with God in prayer, was a religious experience that often eluded beginners. A Molepolole youth confided in Price "how it was that whenever

45. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 409.

46. Ibid., p. 378.

he tried to pray, a mist gathered before his mind's eye and he could not catch any idea or form any request."⁴⁷ Because of the mystical nature of the problem, Price could not be very helpful.

The little formal education offered during the early days of missionary activity in Northern Tswana Chiefdoms was decidedly rudimentary, designed to enable young and adult students ('enquirers') to read and understand the scriptures.⁴⁸ Crude school buildings were constructed with labour provided by chiefs; wagons, trees, and the chief's Kgotla were improvised to serve as classrooms. Students used broken boxes, planks, and stone walls to write on.⁴⁹ Wives of missionaries conducted sewing lessons in their houses. Among Price's first students at Shoshong were Kgama and Kgamane; the latter proved to be a better student than his famous brother. In her assessment of the two brothers Mrs. Price observed that Kgama lacked "application and talent [in] both being quite behind the others in school but had the virtues of commonsense, firmness and decision of character."⁵⁰ Molepolole, too, had its share of educational problems.

A year after Price settled at Sechele's town, he reported that he was unable to have a day school but taught his students

47. E. Price, op. cit., p. 263.

48. Ibid., p. 255.

49. Ibid., p. 155.

50. Ibid., p. 145.

in his house; one of the pupils was a blind man of over forty years, who had been taught by Livingstone in the 1840's.⁵¹ By January 1868 Price had seventy-five students, and in March of that year he baptised four converts from the Ngwaketse chiefdom.⁵²

At Shoshong Sekgoma's somewhat cautious honeymoon with missionaries ended when he found that Christianity compelled his children to discard some of the tribe's cherished customs. Open conflict with the two sons developed after they had resolved to reject Sekgoma's authority "whenever it interfered with their duty as Christians."⁵³ In consequence Sekgoma's attitude suddenly changed, and in 1863 J.S. Moffat reported the Chief's opposition to Christianity.⁵⁴ Sekgoma's relations with Kgamane and Kgama worsened when they, unlike his other sons, refused to take part in initiation ceremonies. Tensions between father and sons built up until they culminated in the civil war of 1866.

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51. Price to Tidman, 11th July, 1867, Box 34 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).
 52. Price to Mullens, 15th December, 1868, Box 35 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).
 53. E. Price, *op. cit.*, p. 143. Mrs. Mackenzie to Mrs. Thompson, June, 1866, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder 5 (L.M.S.), in which Kgama is reported to have defied Sekgoma's order to divorce his wife.
 54. Wallis, The Matebele Mission, pp. 203-204; John Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, a Story of Wanderings and Work in Bechuanaland (London, 1884), pp. 227-230; "Notes from the Bamangwato," enclosed in Wookey to Hawkins, 26th December, 1914, Box 76 (L.M.S.).

IV

Although the post-Difaqane era was a relatively calm one, that quiescence only harboured old grudges inherited from the Difaqane and from tribal and family feuds. In this respect neither the northern Tswana communities nor their southern neighbours experienced unbroken peace. They engaged in sporadic skirmishes with their neighbours and among themselves. As Sekgoma's analogy suggests, relations between the Ndebele and the Ngwato were always tense.⁵⁵ The Tawana in Ngamiland, too, had their conflicts with the Ndebele, the Wawicko (or Mbukushu) and the Kololo of the Trans-Zambezi area in the north. In every Tswana community military preparedness and the acquisition of fire-arms continued to be an essential part of political life.

The traveller and prospector Thomas Baines gives an indication of Tswana responses to military demands. When he stopped at Lechulathebe's court in April, 1861, a call for a war council (lechulo) was readily answered by about 200 to 300 men.⁵⁶ A year

55. For Sekgoma's views on his Ndebele neighbours, see: Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 409.

56. Thomas Baines, Exploration in South West Africa, Being an Account of a Journey in the years 1861 and 1862 from Walvish Bay on the Western Coast to Lake Ngami and the Victoria Falls, (London, 1864), p. 432: "A speech worthy of applause it seemed had just been ended, for as we entered the chief rose, and at the head of a dozen or twenty young men brandishing their spears or muskets rushed forward till they nearly met us." In 1863 Sekgoma advised Lechulathebe (see Chapman, op. cit., II, p. 307) to "Buy guns, buy horses; do not let a gun go back from your town if you have a tusk to buy it with." Charles Anderson in A Journey to Lake Ngami, p. 11, shows Tawana neighbours to the north, Wawicko, to have abandoned rearing cattle because, "If we keep cattle in our possession, we are sure of being robbed by our avaricious neighbours, whilst having nothing to lose we have nothing to fear."

later, when Tswana spies warned Lechulathebe that the Ngwato were on the war path, elaborate lechulo proceedings were conducted at the chief's court. At that gathering Lechulathebe's uncle, Mokhalakgwe, among others, addressed the army on the Tawana imperative to defeat the enemy. He warned them against precipitate action on the battlefield, urging them to ascertain the strength of the enemy before they could make any moves. His address is reported to have been "greeted by cries of 'poola, poola' (rain, rain), a term synonymous in a dry country with refreshment or blessing."⁵⁷ However, the Kololo, and not the Ngwato, eventually attacked the Tawana, who in turn took full advantage of the swampy terrain and lured their enemy to unfamiliar environment and soundly defeated them. The Ngwato had their share of military troubles, too, in the 1860's. Ngwato conflicts with the Ndebele were largely inherited from the 1840's when the newly arrived Ndebele nucleus in Kalangaland contrived to gain control of Southern Zambezia largely by force of arms. By 1850 these clashes had resulted in the creation of an explosive no-mans-land area between the Shashi

57. For more exercises, see Baines, op. cit., pp. 434-36: "Then followed the sortie. A company of men, headed by its own petty chief, rushed forward with strange gesticulations, creeping along nearly on a level with the ground, and covered by the shield until the moment for a blow; then charging and curveting like a prancing horse, thrusting with the short spear (not throwing it like the Kafir assegai), sweeping with fantastically shaped battle axe, or poisoning the musket and returning victoriously to the main body ... One man, referring to the expected coming of the enemy, reminded them of the strength of [Kgwebe], their rask of refuge where they had before so successfully resisted the invaders." See also Thornley Smith, South Africa Delineated, p. 187.

and Matlotsi rivers, which both the Ndebele and the Ngwato sought to control.

In March 1862 Shoshong residents were roused one day when Ngwato sentinels reported the Ndebele to be advancing towards Shoshong. Sekgoma immediately ordered the evacuation of women and children to Shoshong hills and proceeded to issue arms and ammunition to his regiments. Kgama and Kgamane refused to observe some of the ritual that preceded war--for example the reading of a dice--which they believed to be incompatible with Christianity.⁵⁸ This incident marked the first serious estrangement between Sekgoma and his sons.

Although the Ndebele were driven away in the 1862 conflict the outbreak of that war presented Mackenzie with a new dimension of experience: was he to take sides or was he to steer a non-partisan course? He decided to take the latter course although it was difficult to sustain since his own life was in danger if the Ndebele should win the war. Mackenzie nevertheless prayed for a "blessing on those who fought for home and family and property; and that God would frustrate the councils of the nation delighting in war."⁵⁹ Also, when he

58. Mackenzie to Mullens, 2nd September 1872, Jacket A - Folder I, Box 37 (L.M.S.); Mrs. Mackenzie, Extract of Letter in Chronicle, June 1866; Wyndham Knight-Bruce, The Story of an African Chief, being the life of Khama (London, 1893), p. 13.

59. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 272; Mackenzie's belief in participating in the just war was again spelled out during the Thlaping uprising of 1878 when he asserted it to be "right in the highest sense for Christian husbands and fathers to defend those whom God had given them, and if need be, to die in their defence," in his book, Austral Africa: losing it or ruling it, Volume One (London, 1887), p. 86.

preached on a Sunday after the conclusion of the war, Mackenzie must have unwittingly absolved Sekgoma from any breaches of the right conduct of war. He defended the just war in the somewhat ambiguous tradition of Christian theologians and some international jurists. The theme of his sermon was that "God had given the man a stronger body than the woman, that he might work for her and defend her. A man's mother, or wife, or sister, ought to be reached by enemies only over his lifeless body."⁶⁰ Sekgoma must have, no doubt, concluded the Ndebele to be the aggressors, for he expressed his satisfaction in the sermon at the end of the service. When Mackenzie pleaded for the life of a Ndebele prisoner of war, Sekgoma readily rescinded the death penalty, but his message arrived too late to save the prisoner.⁶¹

In May 1863 the Ndebele were reported to have again raided Ngwato cattle posts in the Tati area, and, in the ensuing skirmishes with the Ngwato, one of Mzilikazi's sons

60. Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 279-80. For the Christian conception of the just war over the past 2,000 years, see J. Von Elbe, "The evolution of the Concept of Just War in International Law," The American Journal of International Law, Volume 33 (1939), pp. 665-688; A Nussbaum, "Just War - A Legal Concept?" Michigan Law Review, Volume 42 (1943-44), pp. 453-479. Even the most conservative of L.M.S. agents, R. Moffat sanctioned the just war provided the wronged party did not kill innocent civilians: see Moffat, Apprenticeship at Kuruman, pp. 51-52.

61. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 284.

was killed.⁶² When the Ngwato retaliated by raiding Ndebele cattle posts in July 1863, they were repulsed and brought back a meagre booty of goats.⁶³ Because of the tense atmosphere created by these forays, the Kwena raid on Ngwato cattle posts in 1864 was not seriously challenged, the Ngwato no doubt calculating the Ndebele threat to be imminently more serious than any damage the Kwena might inflict.⁶⁴

Perhaps the most serious conflict that occurred in Ngwatoland in the 1860's was the civil war of 1866. Although the immediate reasons for its outbreak were associated with missionary activities at Shoshong, the underlying causes had their roots in Ngwato and Kwena dynastic history.

When the Ngwato chief, Kgari, was killed in battle with the Kalanga (1826c.) he left two sons, Kgama and Sekgoma, both of junior wives and both too young to assume the chieftaincy. Kgari's nephew, Sedimo, became the regent and ruled until 1833, when he stepped down in favour of Kgama II. Meanwhile, Sedimo

62. Wallis, The Matebele Mission, pp. 196-97: In trying to pursue retreating Ndebele forces, the Ngwato "found themselves completely surrounded by the main body of the enemy. A few who were on horse back managed to break through the ring, and by their efforts a portion of their followers were left to the mercy of the Matebele and of course were all killed."

63. E. Price, op. cit., p. 129.

64. Thomas Leask, The Southern African Diaries of Thomas Leask, 1865-1870, edited by J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1954), p. LXI; Emil Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, Travels, Researches, and Hunting Adventures, between the diamond-fields and the Zambezi, (London, 1881), Volume 1, p. 384, translated by Ellen E. Frewer.

had exercised his prerogative as regent, and, in conformity with the law of the levirate, had taken for himself Kgari's chief wife (Mma-Kgama), who bore him Macheng. According to Tswana law and custom Macheng was the heir apparent.⁶⁵ Kgama II's death in 1835 was followed by a succession crisis in which the Ngwato polarised between Sekgoma and Mma-Kgama (i.e. Kgama II's mother). Sekgoma triumphed and assumed the chiefship, while the defeated Mma-Kgama and Macheng fled to the Kwena for refuge. Nor was Kwenaland a haven of peace: a few years after their arrival in Kalangaland from the Transvaal the Ndebele invaded the Kwena at Sokwane (c 1841) and captured several prisoners of war including Macheng, who was kept in Matebeleland for sixteen years. In 1857 Sechele requested Robert Moffat, who was visiting Mzilikazi, to persuade the Ndebele Chief to release Macheng. Moffat succeeded and brought Macheng, and the Ngwato heir stayed with Sechele at Dithubaruba briefly before he went to Shoshong, where he was installed as chief of the Ngwato in 1858.⁶⁶ Sekgoma went

65. Thus, Thomas Leask, who was at Shoshong in May 1866 (see Leask, The Southern Diaries, p. 50) observed: "I don't understand the laws of these people but, however it is, Macheng, tho much a younger man than Sekgomi, is considered the chief, because he is a son of the head wife." This is confirmed by Sekgoma Khama, in "Khama's Life," 28th March, 1925, B.N.A., S. 601/18. For the traditional history of principal Tswana tribes see works cited in footnote two, Chapter 1. See also, Baines, The Northern Goldfields Diaries of Thomas Baines, Vol. I (1946), pp. 242-39.

66. See Willoughby, "Macheng Kgosi ea Mangwato," Folder 795, Selly Oak; Moffat, Matebele Journals, Volume II, pp. 115, 142; Baines, Northern Goldfields, Volume II, p. 303.

to live with Sechele.

Sechele had thus started on the intriguing role as King-maker for the Ngwato. His motives in assuming this role are not as capricious as at first appears, and, Mackenzie who watched him closely ascribed them to social and economic considerations: "The Kwena taking precedence of the Ngwato as to rank, it [had] been the life-long endeavor of Sechele to obtain such influence in the town of the [Ngwato] as would enable him to secure some of the treasures of ivory and ostrich feathers and furs which are brought from its extensive hunting-grounds, extending northward to the Zambezi."⁶⁷ This observation is persuasive, for not only did Sechele receive some ivory for assisting Macheng to become chief, he successively received, as will be shown later in this chapter, money and ivory for assisting contenders for the Ngwato chiefship between 1859 and 1875.

Macheng's rule soon became unpopular, and in the meantime he had not treated Sechele with the deference commensurate with the efforts the Kwena chief had put in elevating him to the Ngwato chiefship. This so annoyed Sechele, that in 1859 he sent an army to Shoshong and deposed Macheng and reinstated Sekgoma. Macheng fled east and stayed with the Seleka-Rolong for some time before he was given asylum at Dithubaruba.⁶⁸

67. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 361; Bryden, Gun and Camera, p. 264.

68. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 363.

The Ngwato civil war of 1866 broke out against this background of dynastic intrigues. Once Sekgoma had been estranged from his sons, tensions between father and sons mounted until Shoshong was divided into two camps, one composed of non-Christians entirely supporting the chief; the other comprising of Christians and some non-Christians supported Sekgoma's sons. Fighting broke out in March 1866 and went on intermittently until May that year, when the besieged forces of Kgama and Kgamane in the Shoshong hills accepted Sekgoma's offer of a truce.⁶⁹

Meanwhile Sekgoma had invited Macheng to Shoshong so that, in the event of his forces becoming victorious, he would forestall Kgama's political ambitions by offering the chiefship to Macheng. Macheng arrived on 26th May accompanied by a Kwena force of one hundred and fifty men.⁷⁰ When, after the war, Kgamane and his father-in-law Chukudu accepted Sechele's offer to stay with them at Molepolole, Chukudu was killed on Sechele's orders soon after their arrival in the Kwena capital.⁷¹

69. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, p. 264; Mackenzie to Tidman, 3rd July, 1866, Box 34 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).

70. Leask, The Southern Diaries, p. 50; Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, Volume I, p. 384; Sillery, Bechuanaland Protectorate, pp. 120-122.

71. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, pp. 257-8. An Irish Trader and a Boer hunter (Piet Jacobs) were attacked during the civil war but escaped injury, see Wallis, The Southern Diaries, p. 51.

If Mackenzie's non-partisanship was difficult to sustain during the Ngwato war with the Ndebele in 1862, neutrality was even harder to maintain in a civil conflict where members of his young church were clearly facing more odds than their adversaries. But he seems to have stood by his principle, ostensibly to demonstrate to his pupils and church members what he conceived to be the proper role of a Christian minister in a civil disturbance. But white traders at Shoshong appear to have sympathised with Kgama and Kgamane: they foiled Sekgoma's plot to poison his adversaries' water wells by selling him marking ink instead of the lethal strychnine; and three traders are reported to have fought on Kgama's side for brief periods.⁷²

At the conclusion of the war Sekgoma forgave his sons but imposed slight fines on their followers. However, an attempt by Kgama to set up an exclusive section of the town for Christians was stopped by Sekgoma. For some time after the conflict, Sekgoma and Macheng shared the chiefship; the former then abdicated in favour of Macheng and, for the second time, Sekgoma readily found

72. Mackenzie to Tidman, 3rd July, 1866, loc. cit. For accounts on the civil war, see: Mrs. Mackenzie of the Mangwato Mission to Mrs. Thompson, Cape Town, loc. cit.; Price to Tidman, 13th April, 1866, Box 34 - Jacket A - Folder One. Mackenzie's neutrality was confirmed by Ngwato elders in 1914: see "Notes from the Bamangwato," enclosed in Wookey to Hawkins, 26th December, 1914, Box 76 (L.M.S.).

sanctuary at Molepolole. Mackenzie's relationship with Macheng was amiable for some time, but deteriorated when Macheng was found to be promoting circumcision openly.

Thus it can be seen that pioneer efforts of L.M.S. agents in evangelising northern Tswana chiefdoms, like their predecessors' attempts among the Thlaping early in the nineteenth century, yielded minimal results. Tswana chiefdoms went to war in spite of or even because of the presence of missionaries. Even when their role as diplomatic agents for the chiefs was in the ascendency during the 1870's, L.M.S. agents exerted little moral suasion to avert armed conflicts among Tswana polities.

v

The discovery of gold in the Tati in 1867 ushered in a host of problems for Tswana rulers. Hitherto they had had to deal with petty misdemeanours committed by transient traders and hunters and a handful of resident traders; now, the influx of white diggers created more complex interracial relationships. The Tswana chiefs do not seem to have attached any value to gold. Even a chief of Sechele's shrewdness had great difficulty in identifying ore, as for example in 1866, when he was obliged to seek the advice of a white trader. He withdrew the invitation only after Price warned him that he might be swindled, a warning that Kgosidintsi welcomed as "one of the benefits from having a

moruti [teacher] amongst us."⁷³ After Karl Mauch's discovery of gold (1867) in the Tati area, Mackenzie enticed more diggers by sending gold samples to Governor Wodehouse at the Cape and taking some samples himself to Potchefstroom in the Transvaal. On the strength of the gold samples, The Transvaal Argus of the 16th July, 1868 could report: "... we now declare, on the sacred word of our editor, that the said sample required but to be seen in order to dispel the strongest doubts of even the most sceptical. The 'myth,' as the gold discovery has been termed, has resolved itself into a stupendous fact."⁷⁴ By 1868 there were over sixty diggers.⁷⁵

Prospectors and diggers were quick to notice the 'no-mans-land' status of the Tati river district and could always foment trouble between the two contenders for the area, Macheng and Lobengula, in the hope of seizing the territory for themselves. Rival groups competed to dominate the goldfields, and

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73. E. Price, op. cit., p. 202.
74. W.D. Mackenzie, John Mackenzie South African Missionary and Statesman (London, 1902), p. 126. Mackenzie to Governor Wodehouse, Cape Town, 20th May and 3rd November, 1868, in "Mackenzie - Papers. Early Missionary Life Private. Tati Gold Papers Down to December 1875," on microfilm, Reel One, Rhodes House, Oxford; Moffat, Matebele Journals, Volume Two, p. 157.
75. Edward Tabler, "The Tati Gold Rush ...," Africana Notes and News, 12-13 (1956-59), p. 55. According to Edward Mohr (To the Victoria Falls of the Zambezi, London, 1876, p. 152) who visited the Tati in 1869 there were 30-40 diggers.

Mackenzie who was already adopting imperialist tendencies, settled some of their disputes.⁷⁶ Another element was added to the Tati scene when the Transvaal government asked Macheng to cede his country to them in return for protection. Macheng declined the deal but instead invited the British to protect his country. Mackenzie's advice undoubtedly influenced the chief's decision to turn to the British. However, Mackenzie's published account contradicts his report to his society. In Ten Years North of the Orange River, he says: "I may just mention that the Chief, Macheng, was not advised by me, either directly or indirectly, to write to the Governor at the Cape, offering to the English Government the possession of the goldfields."⁷⁷ Yet in his report to the Society he is unequivocal, asserting that he "had no hesitation in recommending, as one of two alternatives, that [Macheng] should seek the aid of the English Government rather than that of the Transvaal."⁷⁸ In retrospect this report shows the embryonic

76. For Mackenzie's role in settling disputes between miners, see: Mackenzie to Thomas M. Thomas and Sykes (undated); Mackenzie to Mr. Biles (also undated) whom he informed: "You will have the right to rule over your own party, but over none others," in Reel One, op. cit., Rhodes House; Francois Coillard, On the Threshold of Central Africa: A record of twenty years' pioneering among the Barotse of the Upper Zambezi (London, 1890), p. 49.

77. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 455.

78. Mackenzie to Joseph Mullens, 20th January, 1869, Box 35 - Jacket C - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

formation of Mackenzie's imperialist tendencies, which manifested themselves more fully after the first British occupation of South Bechuanaland (1878-81).⁷⁹ Macheng's request fell through.

The revenue accruing to the Ngwato chief from the miners must have been relatively small, because the Ndebele chief collected a portion of the miners' rent; and in any case Macheng did not attach much importance to gold as such. As Edward Tabler has shown, he charged ~~1~~ per head for a six-month license, not for the gold produced by miners in that period, but merely as "a compensation for water and grass consumed in his country."⁸⁰

The task of maintaining law and order among the white miners whose mores and legal systems differed from those of the Ngwato, soon became insuperable for Macheng. According to Mackenzie, Macheng "very seldom settled a dispute, and used to tell white men, when they came before him with a case that the matter was no business of his, and that they might

79. Mackenzie's letter to Thomas and Sykes at Inyati (April, 1868) shows his imperial interests, for he announced Macheng's decision to invite the British to have been his own idea, and equated his role in the affair with John the Baptist's influence on King Herod, in "Mackenzie's Papers," *op. cit.*, Rhodes House. See also, B.N.A., H.C. 48/1/2, Mackenzie to Sir Henry Barkly, 2nd May 1876.

80. Edward C. Tabler, "The Tati Gold Rush and the Diary of Alexander Hamp," Africana Notes and News, Volume 13, Number 2 (June, 1958), p. 54.

settle it as best they cared." This laxity on the part of Macheng might have been a result of his ignorance of customary law, for having spent sixteen years in Matebeleland, he succeeded Sekgoma before he had had the time to learn the duties of his office.⁸¹

In the meantime, Kgama, who had veiled his real political ambitions at the end of the civil war in 1866,⁸² had taken advantage of Macheng's unpopularity to engineer the latter's removal in order that he himself might become chief. Kgama was supported by Sechele, who demanded £1000 for the use of his troops. In the transactions that followed both Kgama and Sechele found willing supporters in Price and Mackenzie.

When hostilities commenced in August 1872 Kgama sent Sechele goods which he believed to be worth £1000; but Sechele and Price assessed them to be worth £700. In October 1872 Price informed Mackenzie: "I must tell you about the political business I had to transact. I took Kgama's letter up to Sechele should Kgama be willing to pay £300, his simplest way would be to get Francis and Clark [at Shoshong] to give him

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81. Mackenzie to Mullens, 2nd September, 1872, Box 37 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.). Richard Brown, in "External relations of the Nbele Kingdom," L.M. Thompson (ed.) African Societies in Southern Africa (London, 1969), p. 277, ascribes Macheng's fall to "attempting to rule in the Ndebele manner," "an observation which seems not to take into account Macheng's ignorance of Tswana law and custom.
82. After Kgama's defeat in 1866 (see Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, p. 259) he had declared: "I wish all the Bamangwato to know that I renounce all pretensions to the chieftainship of the Bamangwato."

a Bill for the amount, payable at Taylor's", a retail store at Molepolole.⁸³ Kgama must have yielded to Sechele's demands, for, according to his testimony to the Shippard Tribunal in 1887, he said he paid the balance of £300 "through Mr. Price and Mr. Mackenzie; he then demanded more. I sent him £30."⁸⁴

After Macheng's removal Kgama became chief but quarrelled with Kgamane shortly after taking office. In 1873 he abdicated in favour of Sekgoma and went to live at Serowe; he later moved with his followers to the Botletle river in Ngamiland. Kgama's exile ended in 1875, when he invaded Shoshong and defeated the forces of Sekgoma and Kgamane;⁸⁵ he became chief that year and ruled until his death in 1923.

VI

Although L.M.S. agents consolidated their positions by performing political and diplomatic tasks for northern Tswana chiefdoms, their evangelical work advanced at a very slow pace. At Shoshong Rev. Hepburn thought political bickering was largely

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83. Price to Mackenzie, 29th October, 1872, in "Mackenzie Papers. Africa. Personal. 2." (L.M.S.); Sillery, Bechuanaland Protectorate, pp. 120-121. See also Sekgoma Khama, "Khama's Life," loc. cit.
84. Chief Kgama's evidence, in Parliamentary Papers, Accounts and Papers II. Colonies and British Possessions, 1887, LIX [C.4890], p. 9.
85. J.D. Hepburn, Twenty Years in Khama's Country (London, 1895) edited by C.H. Lyall, pp. 14-34; Serpa Pinto, How I crossed Africa, translated by Alfred Elwes (Philadelphia, 1881), Volume II, pp. 212-214.

responsible for the poor response;⁸⁶ among the Ngwaketse James Good blamed Gaseitsiwe's indifference to Christianity and the chief's attachment to traditional ceremonies especially initiation ceremonies.⁸⁷ Among the Kwena Sechele was reported to have compounded missionary efforts to convert his subjects, as the chief repeatedly embraced Christian as well as heathen practices;⁸⁸ while Roger Price reported that cattle herding interfered with conversion as boys too often absented themselves from school to look after cattle.⁸⁹ These observations are borne out by progress reports. Thus after the L.M.S. had been working among the Ngwato since 1862 Hepburn reported in 1873 that his church had only seven full members, including one Kalanga convert.⁹⁰ At Molepolole Price baptised two Ngwaketse children

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86. Hepburn to Mullens, 20th April 1875, Jacket A - Folder One - Box 38 (L.M.S.).
87. Good to Whitehouse, 25 August 1879, Jacket D - Folder One - Box 40 (L.M.S.).
88. Robert U. Moffat, John Smith Moffat C.M.G. Missionary, A Memoir (London, John Murray, 1921, Reprinted Negro University Press, New York, 1969), p. 144; Price to Mullens, 15th December 1868, Box 35 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).
89. Price to Mullens, 30th November 1870, Jacket B - Folder One - Box 36 (L.M.S.).
90. Hepburn to Mullens, 13th September, 1871, Box 36 - Jacket D - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

in March 1868 and six Kwena adults the following May;⁹¹ in 1870 he baptised fifteen candidates, including five candidates from a Kanye outpost.⁹² The neighbouring Kgatla church at Moshupa had only twenty eight 'enquirers' in 1870, although the chief there was an ardent supporter of Christianity.⁹³ By 1875 Charles Williams, who had succeeded Price, reported that some Molepolole church members had volunteered to evangelise the Kgalagadi, a community living in the Kgalagadi desert.⁹⁴ But church attendance at Molepolole is reported to have declined sharply in 1876, when the Kwena went to war with the Kgatla.⁹⁵

While early missionary reports suggest Tswana communities to have been divided into two simple compartments of heathens and Christians, Mackenzie's analysis of Ngwato reaction to Christianity is more subtle and is probably representative of all Tswana communities. Mackenzie divided the Ngwato of the

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- 91. Price to Mullens, 15th December, 1868, Box 35 - Jacket A - Folder 1 (L.M.S.).
 - 92. Price to Mullens, 5th July, 1870, Box 36 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).
 - 93. Price to Mullens, 30th November, 1870, Box 36 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).
 - 94. Charles Williams to Mullens, Molepolole Annual Report for 1874, enclosed in letter of 6th January, 1875, Reports, Africa - South. Box one (L.M.S.).
 - 95. Williams to Mullens, 25th September, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

1860's into three main groups: one composed of devoted Christians; another of enthusiastic followers who regarded Christianity merely as a popular movement but did not understand what it was all about, and one third comprised of the majority of the Ngwato, who were die-hard traditionalists and rejected Christianity out of hand.⁹⁶ The last two groups seem to have held sway before 1880.

Between 1862 and 1876 only twenty six candidates were baptised out of a Tswana population of about 90,000. If the number of converts is a sad commentary on evangelical achievement, it is also indicative of the fact that the religious life of Northern Tswana Chiefdoms remained largely unaffected by the missionary factor during the pioneer period. Some observations of missionaries and laymen alike suggest that traditional religious practices were in vogue between 1862 and 1880. Thus W.C. Willoughby's texts of some Tswana oral traditions show that a prophetess arose among the Ngwato in 1864, and was reported to have had a large following.⁹⁷ In the same year accusations of witchcraft sparked off fighting between the Kwena and the Ngwato: the Kwena took the offensive when they believed the Ngwato to have cast spells on their crops.⁹⁸

96. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, p. 275.

97. See "Worshipping the Daft," in Folder 770, Willoughby Papers, Selly Oak Colleges Library.

98. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn in Dark Places, p. 223.

Initiation ceremonies continued to be revered despite missionary efforts to stigmatise them. Soon after her arrival at Molepolole, Mrs. Price was informed that no girl was considered fit for marriage until she had been initiated.⁹⁹ Among the Ngwato Mackenzie found that initiation was associated with the attainment of wisdom. A Ngwato elder was proud of the marks he sustained during circumcision rites and displayed them to Mackenzie with a sense of accomplishment: "Monare [Sir], you must, no doubt, have also observed my superior wisdom. You see, my father did not beat me so severely in vain."¹⁰⁰ In 1879 a missionary reported initiation ceremonies to be rife at Kanye.¹⁰¹

In 1869 a German traveller to Bechuanaland observed the sort of euphoria which resulted from initiation ceremonies in a Tswana village: "When these [instructors] pass out of the village with their troop of young maidens wearing short petticoats of plaited rushes, all the men get out of the way Later, the young women are exhausted by excessive watching and dancing and made to carry water and heavy loads of wood to the village, by way of learning their future duties as wives."¹⁰²

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99. E. Price, op. cit., pp. 128, 159, where a married woman is reported to have been initiated because "she was not a genuine woman until" initiated.
100. Mackenzie, Ten Years North of the Orange River, p. 376.
101. James Good to Whitehouse, 25th August 1879, Box 40 - Jacket D - Folder One (L.M.S.).
102. Edward Mohr, To the Victoria Falls of the Zambezi, (London, 1876), p. 137.

Another German traveller, Emil Holub, found initiation ceremonies very much venerated by Tswana communities in the 1870's. According to his account bogwera initiates had an age range varying from nine to fourteen years. Holub noted that the bogwera did not "universally or necessarily indicate the attainment of a state of maturity--it is rather an initiation into the system of hardening which every youth is required to undergo before he is considered worthy of the title of 'mona' or 'ra' which betoken a man's estate."¹⁰³ He further observed that the bonds of friendship formed at these ceremonies lasted a life time, and were unaffected by any subsequent conversion to Christianity.¹⁰⁴

Of the three Northern Tswana Chiefdoms Chief Gaseitsiwe of the Ngwaketse organised initiation ceremonies, Sechele conducted a half-hearted campaign against them; while Kgama tried hard but in vain to legislate against them. In 1876 Kgama informed Holub that he was determined to ban initiation cere-

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103. Emil Holub, Seven Years in South Africa: Travels, Researches, and Hunting Adventures, Between the diamond-fields and the Zambezi, (187-79) translated by Ellen E. Frewer (London, 1881), Volume One, p. 398; J. Tom Brown, Among the Bantu Nomads (London, 1926), p. 73: "The age is not a fixed one, for it is governed by the time at which a child or near relative of the chief is judged to be ready for the [circumcision] ceremony;" W.C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Initiation Ceremonies of the Becwana," in The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, XXXIX, (1909), p. 229: "It is held every fourth year, but the chief will sometimes delay the bagwera or hasten it, for the sake of having a son of his own or, failing that, a nephew in the ceremony." There were political motives in the delay for each regiment was led by a member of the ruling family. See also Schapera, A Handbook, pp. 104-117.
104. Holub, op. cit., pp. 399-400; Parker Gillmore, The Great Thirst Land (London, 1878), p. 300: circumcision was: "supposed to bind them firmly together for good or bad."

monies forthwith, but in fact succeeded only in banning them from the chief's court (Kgotla).¹⁰⁵ The chief must have taken the missionary's advice into account, for Mackenzie had cautioned him against the use of "force to put down rites which [had] a singular fascination for the people."¹⁰⁶ In contrast to Kgama's attempts to proscribe initiation ceremonies, the Rolong chief, Montshiwa, punished Christians who refused to take part in traditional ceremonies.¹⁰⁷

The suspicious reserve with which some Tswana communities often responded to new ideas illustrates the faith they had in their own customs; the 'turkey incident' at Shoshong is a case in point. When the hunter and prospector, Thomas Leask, stopped at the Ngwato capital in 1869, he conformed to Tswana protocol by presenting a turkey to Chief Macheng. However, after Leask's departure from Shoshong, the turkey caused some commotion.

105. Holub, op. cit., Volume II, p. 421; Mackenzie to Mullens, 20th April, 1875, Box 38 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

106. Mackenzie to Mullens, 18th August, 1876, loc. cit.

107. Holub, op. cit., Volume One, pp. 295-6: "Baffled on this occasion, by the advice of his rain doctor Montshiwa next required that followers of the new faith should take part in two ceremonies connected with rain-magic; first, in the letshulo-hunt appointed by the rain doctors for the capture of certain wild animals, parts of which were employed in the incantations; and secondly, in turning up a plot of ground for the service of doctors, which was afterwards considered consecrated, and called 'tsimo ea pul/a' the garden of the rain." See also Alexander Bailie's report, in Parliamentary Papers, 1878-9, LII, [C.2220], p. 76.

Macheng suspected it to be a bad omen and summoned a pitso, where Ngwato councillors "accused the turkey of being a personification of some new sort of witchcraft which was being perpetrated on them by white men." Assurances by one of the councillors and Leask's African servant, Saul, that turkeys were edible were rejected by the pitso. Although the fate of the turkey is not told, the suspicion it aroused was the subject of a lively discussion, which lasted the whole day until the pitso was "adjourned to meet next day, and Saul was ordered to attend, but, fearing the displeasure of his master, he gave them the slip and left them to come to their own decision."¹⁰⁸

Among the Kwena Sechele continued to pay lip-service to his missionary, but in fact observed some of the practices he condemned. When again afflicted with dropsy in 1879 he was reported to be "trying his missionary's medicine--his traders' medicine--and his own native doctor's medicine, all in turn. The latter has ordered for him one composed of some minute portion of the inside of a zebra."¹⁰⁹ When drought threatened Kwena crops in that year, Sechele employed rain-makers to avert

108. Leask, op. cit., pp. 144-5. Cf. The Thlaping's angry reaction to the killing of a crocodile which they considered sacred (see Read to Hardcastle, 15th March, 1817, loc. cit., L.M.S.).

109. E. Price, op. cit., p. 368.

the disaster. Sechele's predicament in 1879, which had ample precedents in his life since the 1840's, was to reconcile Tswana traditions, especially those imposing on him obligations to fend for the tribe, with the demands of Christianity. His dilemma was appreciated by Mrs. Price, who in spite of her strong objections to rain-making, could well understand Sechele's resort to it as it was a "time of distress and dire necessity for him and his people and he is tempted to try anything which will bring rain."¹¹⁰ However, when Sechele suspected that his missionary had been informed about his rain-making activities, he visited Price to plead his innocence.

Tswana systems of government and the administration of justice were largely unaffected by missionaries during the first two decades of their stay in Northern Tswana Chiefdoms. During his visits to Northern Tswana Chiefdoms between 1872 and 1879 Holub observed the position of the Tswana chief to have been paramount, but he was persuaded to conclude that the Tswana system of government was constitutional.¹¹¹ Among the Kwena the restraining influence of the pitso was noted by Bailie in 1876, when he reported the Kwena government to be "a mild despotism tempered by a council;" he also noticed the Ngwaketse chief's power to have been checked by the pitso, and

110. Ibid., p. 375.

111. Holub, Seven Years, Vol. I, p. 393.

that Gaseitsiwe consulted his son Bathoen even on very small issues.¹¹² Missionary accounts tend to corroborate travellers' observations on the functioning of Tswana governments. While the exigencies of the war of 1876 had compelled Sechele to take summary measures which suggested that he had assumed dictatorial powers, a report of 1879 shows that he had since restored consitutional government to the Kwena: "Sechele had a meeting with his people yesterday with a view to ask them to assist in purchasing corrugated iron roofing for the church"¹¹³

An idea of how the judicial process functioned is shown in Holub's account. He noted that where a theft was reported to the chief, the latter sent a 'royal herald' through the town declaring his intention to punish the offender; and that when witchdoctors assisted the chief in psychological intimidation, the culprit invariably surrendered the stolen goods unnoticed at night.

The Tswana system of punishment was restitutive, meting light sentences to first offenders and severe ones to incorrigible criminals. Thus a prisoner who was convicted of theft

112. Bailie, op. cit., p. 76.

113. Price to Mullens, 2nd July, 1879, Box 40 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.): "...after the meeting was over the chief sent his second son down to inform me of the willingness of the people to accede to his request" Charles Williams to Mullens, 8th May, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). For accounts on the war between the Kwena and the Kgatla, see, Edwin Smith, Great Lion of Bechuanaland, pp. 201-202; I. Schapera, A Short History of the Bakgatta - бага Kgafela of Bechuanaland Protectorate (Communications from the School of African Studies - University of Cape Town 1942); Alexander Bailie, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

for the first time was liable to pay a fine two or four times the value of the stolen goods; a second or third conviction on the same charge was punishable by scalding off finger tips; while an incorrigible offender lost the whole hand. Murder was a capital crime, but the convict could redeem himself by paying a fine to the deceased's next of kin in cash or in kind.¹¹⁴ A condemned criminal could be tortured before he was executed.¹¹⁵

But the presence of traders and miners in Tswana communities necessitated some change in the judicial process, and in this regard the Shoshong missionary played a prominent part. Macheng's letter to Governor Wodehouse spelled out the core of the problems: he invited the British Government to occupy the Tati area because he himself "felt utterly unqualified to govern such a community as that of gold diggers these gold diggers are your people; therefore I invite you, and I beg you, to come and occupy the gold country."¹¹⁶ When the British government did not respond to his request, Macheng set up a special court for whites that was presided over by

114. Holub, op. cit., p. 396.

115. E. Price, op. cit., pp. 431, 481.

116. W. Douglas Mackenzie, John Mackenzie, South African Missionary and Statesman (London, 1902), p. 124. For a slightly different version of the letter, see Mackenzie to Woodhouse, 29th March, 1868, Reel One, Mackenzie Papers, Rhodes House.

Mackenzie, the chief's presence at the court merely conferring legal validity to its decisions. When Kgama became chief he attended the special court more regularly than did Macheng. All told the Ngwato seem to have adjusted to the new two-tier court system fairly well, and Kgama's fearless administration of justice to blacks and whites alike enhanced his prestige.¹¹⁷

L.M.S. agents did not, until late in the nineteenth century make any conscious efforts to promote the economic well-being of the Tswana. Although Roger Price is reported to have built a dam at Molepolole,¹¹⁸ the venture must have been of little consequence, as successive reports from that station show drought and hunger to have been perennial. Charles Williams' annual report for 1873 is typical: "The people have been widely scattered searching for food."¹¹⁹ Hunting remained a reliable source of food and wealth, although game resources were continually diminishing. Edward Mohr, who passed through Ngwato-land in 1869 noted that "elephants have now entirely disappeared from this neighbourhood, driven away by ceaseless persecution.

117. Captain Patterson's Report of July 1878, enclosed in Number 78, Governor H.B.E. Frere to Sir Michael Beach, 14th September, 1878, in Parl. Papers, op. cit., p. 237: "Justice is administered in Shoshong by the chief sitting in the Khotla, surrounded by the elders, his advisers. The law is one of custom, well defined and understood...." See also Coillard, On the Threshold of Central Africa, p. 49.

118. E. Price, op. cit., p. 209.

119. Charles Williams to J.O. Whitehead, 16th December, 1873, Molepolole Annual Report for 1873, Box One (L.M.S.).

It is quite a mistake to imagine them to have been all killed; indeed, I was assured that they emigrated in small troops, most of them following a north easterly direction."¹²⁰ To ensure adequate revenue for their chiefdoms, Tswana rulers issued decrees making the trade in feathers and ivory a monopoly of the chiefs. But the monopoly was difficult to enforce.¹²¹ Enterprising Tswana hunters sometimes sought the assistance of professional white hunters. Thus, when in 1875, Frederick Hugh Barber combined with Ngwato hunters in Ngamiland the group shot adequate game, so that "... trees all round the wagons were red with meat, hanging up to dry, and their wagons were filled with biltong."¹²²

Not that this assistance acquired white hunters any lasting favours or privileges, for Tswana rulers were keenly aware of the declining game resources in their chiefdoms. When Barber asked for Kgama's permission to collect young ostriches and to hunt elephants in 1877, he refused "saying that, as there were so few elephants left in his country, feathers were the only source of revenue left him; and if he allowed young birds to be caught, there would very soon

120. Mohr, op. cit., p. 124. For diminishing game resources see also H. Hall, "Notes on animal life in South Africa, C.M.M. Vol. I (January, 1857), p. 6.

121. Mohr, op. cit., p. 157; Mackenzie, Ten Years North, p. 179.

122. Edward C. Tabler, editor, Zambezi and Matabeleland in the Seventies (London, 1960), p. 66.

be none to grow up into big ones to grow feathers for his hunters to shoot."¹²³ By 1878 Kgama had banned all professional hunters, preferring those who hunted for sport.¹²⁴

By the late 1870's Shoshong had the biggest concentration of white traders; twenty three adult males, six women, and thirteen children. They operated nine retail stores but complained that their annual turnover was declining sharply. And due to the civil disturbances at Shoshong, Ngwato population had fallen from 30,000 in the 1860's to about 10,000 in 1878; of these 2,500 were soldiers divided into five regiments, each headed by one of Kgama's brothers. Patterson estimated the Ngwato to have possessed between 7,000 and 8,000 oxen and a considerable number of sheep and goats; he confirmed earlier accounts on the ~~scarcity and~~ barrenness of farming land and the scarcity of water. Because of these disabilities Patterson concluded that Shoshong was not a safe place to live.¹²⁵

The Kwena and the Ngwaketse had some six resident traders between them by the late 1870's. Although both groups bartered

123. Ibid., pp. 70-71; Holub (op. cit., Vol. One, p. 389) who estimated the Ngwato chief to have had an annual revenue of £3,000.

124. Patterson's Report, op. cit., p. 237; Gillmore, op. cit., p. 212.

125. Patterson, op. cit., p. 237. Yet Shoshong hills were sanctuaries in times of war, as was demonstrated during the civil war of 1866 dealt with above. See also, Pinto, How I Crossed Africa, II, p. 220.

with itinerant traders, they tended to purchase more goods from resident traders. In 1876 James Good reported that resident traders were happy to notice the new Ngwaketse purchasing habits, and that beads, clothing, and trinkets had become popular with Kanye residents. The introduction of ploughs was gradually affecting some aspects of Tswana life. Previously agricultural farming was performed by women, but since ploughs were drawn by cattle, which women were not allowed to handle, men now had to do the ploughing.¹²⁶ This taboo was bound to become obsolete because, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the mining industry of South Africa was expanding and required more men from neighbouring countries, making it even more imperative for the women to attend to agricultural pursuits.

Resident traders seemed to be associating with Tswana communities in a way that disturbed the chiefs. In 1865 Sechele complained about their relations with Tswana women: "Hark! I know what they are doing now. They are giving beads to the young girls, for it is dark. They are corrupting the women of my people, they are teaching my people abominations of which

126. James Good to Mullens, 28th April, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket A - Folder 3 (L.M.S.); Holub, op. cit., Volume One, pp. 339-40. Pinto, How I Crossed Africa, II, p. 215.

even they were once ignorant, heathens as they may be."¹²⁷

Attempts made by L.M.S. agents to dissuade traders from having illicit sexual relations with Tswana women and conform to Christian standards of living were sometimes resisted. Hepburn's experience with a Shoshong trader typified the problem: "He told me on Sunday evening that he regarded that subject as too sacred and too private for the interference of a second party and he for his part resented my inter-meddling with so sacred a thing as his duty between him and his God."¹²⁸

Nor were traders themselves regular churchgoers. In 1875 Hepburn thought he had succeeded in persuading Shoshong traders to attend Sunday services regularly; but, as his review shows, "It continued until they could bear it no longer and they plainly told me not to come any more."¹²⁹ Gambling and drinking seem to have been the traders' most popular past-times.¹³⁰

These shortcomings seem to have had no ill effects on the traders' personal relationship with chiefs and missionaries.

127. J.S. Moffat to Tidman, 18th December, 1865, Box 33 - Jacket A - Folder 5 (L.M.S.).

128. Hepburn to Whitehouse, June 1880, p. 61, Box 40 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

129. Ibid. See also Pinto, op. cit., p. 218.

130. Hepburn, Twenty Years in Khama's Country, p. 117: "And it is enough to make the heart of any man sad to recall how many an Interior white trader has also been civilised off the face of the earth by liquor." See also, Patter-son, op. cit., p. 237.

Although their occupations appeared to be mutually irreconcilable, there is evidence to suggest that missionaries and traders worked out a modus vivendi.

In his review of twenty-two years' missionary work in Ngwatoland, Hepburn cited instances when he advocated fair business practices, as for example in 1880, when he severely reprimanded the Tawana chief, Moremi, for ill-treating white traders in Ngamiland. Later that year Hepburn could report that Moremi "made a very [big] improvement of his conduct ... the traders say who are residing at the Lake. They can sell, and they are not plagued with continuous petty annoyances from his people as formerly."¹³¹ This service to the traders was often acknowledged and rewarded in the form of small gifts to the missionary, but the traders' appreciation was more conspicuous when a missionary was transferred to another station, or when he went on furlough.

In 1875 traders at Molepolole forwarded a \$25 cheque to L.M.S. directors which was to be given to Price who was on furlough "as a small recognition of the many acts of kindness we have received from him."¹³² In 1876 the same traders

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131. Hepburn to Whitehouse, June 1880, Box 40 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.) See also Good to Mullens, 28th April 1876, loc. cit.
132. Henry Taylor to Mullens, 25th January, 1875, Box 38 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.) In Elizabeth Price, Journals, p. 237, three Boer hunters found poaching in Sechele's country had their fines reduced to half after Roger Price interceded on their behalf; such services rendered to traders and hunters cultivated lasting friendships.

were more specific in their indebtedness: "Those unacquainted with the history of South Africa but little know the vast amount of commerce that has in all cases followed the steps of missionary labour. Some 50 years ago but little was known north of the Vaal river."¹³³ And before Mackenzie went on furlough in 1868, Shoshong traders gave him £35, and pointed out that the money was presented in recognition of the good work he had done as a minister of religion and the high esteem all traders had for him as a person.¹³⁴

The sporadic conflicts between chiefs and missionaries were certainly offset by long intervals of mutual understanding, a condition no doubt necessitated by their social and economic interdependence in isolated communities separated by vast land masses. In this connection, the Molepolole trader, Henry Boyne, seems to have been one of a few traders who became intimate friends of any Tswana chief. Mrs. Price must have underestimated Boyne's relationship with Sechele when she equated it with their own tarnished relationship with the Kwenā chief.¹³⁵

133. Henry Taylor to Mullens, 9th August, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). See also Gillmore, Great Thirst Land, p. 441.

134. Shoshong traders to Mackenzie, 19th November, 1868, Mackenzie Papers, Rhodes House.

135. Una Long, op. cit., pp. 393; 391.

This was demonstrated in 1881 when Sechele had a marital problem to solve. After his wife's (Mma-Sebele) death in 1880, Sechele had hardly recovered from his bereavement when his flare to meddle in the affairs of neighbouring chiefdoms was aroused by the arrival at Shoshong of Kholoma, one of Lobengula's run-away wives. Sechele wooed Kholoma by sending her lavish presents, and, after she accepted his marriage proposal, the chief assigned Boyne the onerous task of delivering her to Molepolole. Kholoma was safely brought to the Kwena capital in June 1881.¹³⁶

Thus by 1880, inspite of some petty quarrels among them, a pattern of mutual coexistence between the Tswana, missionaries, and traders was emerging; frequent incursions on Tswana territory by the Boers tended to engender Tswana reliance on Britain. When the British felt the need to expand their sphere of influence into the African hinterland, Northern Tswana Chiefdoms were a natural corridor to Central Africa and their annexation became inevitable.

136. Ibid., pp. 471-73: Boyne's task must have been a risky one as Lobengula's spies had orders to capture Kholoma and send her back to the Chief's harem.

CHAPTER FOUR

Events leading to declaration of a Protectorate;

Tswana resistance to British rule;

Government intervention in tribal affairs.

The declaration of a British protectorate over northern Tswana chiefdoms was linked to white expansion in southern Africa throughout the nineteenth century.¹ In this development southern Tswana chiefdoms experienced white encroachment earlier than their northern counterparts because, situated as they were closer to white polities, they were exposed to the more daring white adventurers than were northern chiefdoms. Nevertheless the last quarter of the nineteenth century was destined to engulf northern Tswana chiefdoms in the tangled web of European imperialism. Before the British started to extend their sphere of influence in earnest, northern Tswana chiefdoms had had several clashes with Boers, the 1852 war between the Kwena and the Boers being one of the most serious conflicts.²

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1. See, for example, Eric A. Walker, The Great Trek (London, 4th edition, 1960), The Frontier Tradition in South Africa (Oxford, 1930); Martin Legassick, The Griqua, The Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1780-1840: The politics of a frontier zone, Ph.D. Thesis, 1969, University of California (70-2230, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan); C.W. De Kiewiet, A History of South Africa: Social and Economic (Oxford, 1941, reprinted, 1964), pp. 56-87ff. The Tswana chiefdom, Morafe, was spread over a territory although its boundaries were not always precisely defined; in the chiefdom were included wards and towns, the masimo or agricultural land, and mareka (cattle posts, which were looked after mainly by serfs, i.e., the Sarwa and Kgalagadi). The collection of tribute even when exacted irregularly, was one of the grounds used by a chief to claim ownership of territory. Thus Chief Kgama III could claim (see Parliamentary Papers, 1890, Li, C.5918, p. 67) the Tati area on the grounds that: "...at the Shashi there remained the Masarwa, who were our people. We have never been disturbed or seen anything to remove us from Shashi."
 2. See Chapter Two, pp. 56-57.

The Ngwato and the Kwena had another challenge to their territorial integrity in 1876 when a disaffected sect of the Dutch Reformed Church (also called the "Doppers," or "Gereformeerde Kerk Van Suid-Afrika") from the South African Republic resolved to go to Damaraland through Tswana territory with or without the chiefs' approval. The belligerent mood of this essentially fundamentalist Boer group was given by Parker Gillmore, a contemporary who stayed with the Doppers for some time on the Limpopo. Gillmore observed: "They [Doppers] consider themselves to be the chosen people of God, and are still in search of the promised land, which they profess to believe exists farther north in the interior of Africa. The heathen they say, have been given them as a heritage No kind look or even word here cheers the [Doppers]' task, for no bond of sympathy exists between the Dopper and the black man. His house he takes pleasure in, his cattle he is proud of, but a heathen merits not a thought."³

The threat of a Boer attack came at a time when Kgama had hardly consolidated his position as Chief at Shoshong and

3. Parker Gillmore, The Great Thirst Land: a ride through Natal, Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Kalahari Desert (London, 1878), p. 275ff. See also, F.A. Van Jaarsveld, "The Ideas of the Afrikaner on his calling and mission," The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History (Cape Town, 1964), pp. 1-30. For estimates of the number of Boers who camped on the Limpopo, see Simon Rachosa (in "My Book," p. 71) who put the figure between 800 and 1000; Henry A. Bryden (in Gun and Camera in Southern Africa, London, 1893, pp. 415-416) says there were seventy or eighty families.

when Kgamane, now a refugee in Kwenaland, was flirting with Boers in the Transvaal, urging them to support him in an attempt to unseat Kgama.⁴ In the circumstances Kgama chose to rely more on diplomatic techniques⁵ than on military ploys to ward off the imminent Boer attack. Thus as soon as his sentinels reported the presence of Boers on the border Kgama drilled his regiments for defensive purposes while at the same time mounting a campaign to pacify the Boers: he asked some of his councillors and Rev. Hepburn to contact the Boers on his behalf. Addressing them as "... My friends on the crocodile river," Kgama offered the Boers advice on how to cross the formidable Kgalagadi desert, pointing out that only small convoys of three wagons could hazard the journey at a time.⁶ But the

4. Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, I, p. 36; Patterson, op. cit., p. 237; Mackenzie to Mullens, 18th August, 1876, loc. cit., (L.M.S.).

5. Ratchosa, op. cit., pp. 218-19, says Kgama sent five messengers to talk to the Boers, namely, Hepburn, and councillors Mokomane, Lerobise, Tsheko, and Mokone, who were informed that the Boers would fight if Kgama intercepted their passage through Ngwatoland. Holub, in Seven Years in South Africa, Volume I, p. 37 describes the distress of emigrant Boers and Kgama's military preparedness. Kgama's preference of diplomacy to war is a trait that observers of Tswana politics have amply recorded, see Mackenzie, in Day-Dawn, p. 221, who says: "But while Bechuanas sometimes fight with their spears, they decidedly prefer to do so with their tongues ... And so diplomacy played a prominent part in the public business in each little court ..."

6. Kgama to emigrant Boers, 6th and 23rd March, 1876, in Bailies report, op. cit., p. 43.

Boers ignored Kgama's advice and instead invited Kgama to come and discuss the issue with them on the Limpopo.⁷ Kgama, who as head of state must have thought the invitation to be inappropriate, coming as it did from people of a lower rank than himself, refused to go and negotiations between the Ngwato and the Boers were shelved for some time.⁸

If the Ngwato were ill-prepared to deal with emigrant Boers the threat of Boer aggression found the Kwena at a most inopportune moment because the latter were at war with the Kgatla-baga-Kgafela.⁹ However, that conflict and the Boer threat were abated¹⁰ by the timely arrival of Alexander Bailie, a labour recruiting agent from the diamond fields of Griqualand West. Bailie arranged a truce between the Kwena and the Kgatla in November 1876, which both sides agreed to observe until he

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7. C.M. Du Plessis to Kgama, 26th March, 1876; T.C. Greyling to Kgama, 26th June and 16th November, 1876, 27th February, 1877 in Bailie, op. cit., pp. 43-46.
 8. Kgama to L.M. Du Plessis, 11th March, 1877, in Ibid., p. 46.
 9. The casus belli was the Kgatla chief's refusal to pay tribute to Sechele, see Howard Williams to Joseph Mullens, 8th May, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.), who predicted: "Sechele's power is almost done, and if he has to close his life as a fugitive I shall not be surprised;" I. Schapera, A Short History of the Bakgatla baga-Kgafela (Cape Town, 1942), passim.
 10. See Bailie to Commander of Emigrant Boers, 13th November, 1876, in op. cit., p. 44.

returned from Matebeleland.¹¹ In this instance Bailie wielded more influence than L.M.S. missionaries who failed to stop the war and had to be content with merely passing a resolution deploring the conflict.¹² Sechele's disregard¹³ of the advice of missionaries is another illustration of Tswana diplomacy in the nineteenth century, when alliances with white groups was determined by the benefit the chiefdoms expected to get from them. Sechele must have calculated that he would get British military aid more readily through Bailie than through the B.D.C. Hence his acceptance of the truce. Nor was that the end of Bailie's influence: he succeeded in keeping the Boers off Tswana territory by warning them that Britain would intervene on the Tswana's behalf if they trespassed on Tswana territory.¹⁴

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11. Bailie to Administrator of Griqualand West, 6th November, 1876, Ibid., p. 53.
 12. B.D.C. to Mullens, Minutes of July, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).
 13. Williams to Mullens, 8th May, 1876, Ibid., who complained: "He [Sechele] asked my advice as to the war, and telling him it was the last time I would say anything about it I advised him to make peace and act like a Christian ... not five minutes after ... he sent a message to his adversaries to the effect that they were to remove from his ground immediately after harvest ... and almost upon the heels of the messenger a commando was despatched to attack them;" the B.D.C. to Mullens, Minutes of July, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).
 14. Alexander Bailie to the Commander of Emigrant Boers, 13th November, 1876, op. cit., p. 44.

The warning was effective for not only did the Boers postpone their journey, but the tone of their letters became conciliatory: in one letter they assured Kgama that they had no intention of taking his country by force, and that they would not be accessories to Kgama's conspiracy against him.¹⁵

Meanwhile another diplomatic problem was unfolding across the Limpopo. J.D. Botha, a field cornet in the Marico district of the Transvaal, charged Kgama with having wrongfully impounded the property of one William Groening, a resident of the Marico district.¹⁶ The charge was a sequel to a series of inter-border clashes between the Boers and the Tswana which had been a common feature since the 1840's and which both groups had tried to resolve without success. What had actually emerged was an unwritten convention by which Boers and the Tswana could mutually punish trespassers in their respective territories without any recriminations from the offenders' country of origin. It was on the strength of this understanding that Kgama had impounded Groening's property after the latter had been found game-poaching in Ngwatoland.

Kgama rejected the charge and concluded that racial prejudice had impelled Botha to challenge his right to punish Groening:

15. L.M. du Plessis to Kgama, 27th February, 1877, Ibid.

16. J.D. Botha to Kgama, 22nd January, 1877, Ibid.

"No opportunity is ever lost of making us know and feel how much you despise us because God has chosen to make us black and you white."¹⁷

He further submitted that Boer inconsistencies in their relations with the Ngwato undermined the latter's confidence in them.

Strategic and political considerations appear to have influenced chiefs' favourable responses to Bailie's request for labourers. Gaseitsewe and Sechele agreed to supply Bailie with labourers after the ploughing season was over, while Kgama provided him with fifty men. Although he needed the men for his army, Kgama must have known that the immediate loss of fifty men was also a tribal investment because it was calculated to win British friendship and protection. And when the three chiefs invited the British to protect them against Boer attacks, there were precedents to draw from. Just as they had invited German missionaries to forestall Boer aggression in the late 1850's, so did the same political expediency dictate Tswana alliance with the British in 1876. Even before Bailie had visited Shoshong, Kgama had written to "the great Queen of the English people" asking for protection:

"I wish to hear upon what conditions Her Majesty will receive me and my country and my people under her protection. I am weary with fighting."¹⁸

17. Kgama to L.M. du Plessis, 11th March, 1877, Ibid., p. 45.

18. Kgama to Sir Henry Barkly, 22nd August, 1876, No. 4, Chief's Papers, Willoughby Papers, Selly Oak Colleges; Hepburn to Barkly, 2nd March, 1877, Parliamentary Papers, op. cit., p. 42.

When the Boers renewed their request to be allowed to pass through Ngwatoland early in 1877, they unwittingly strengthened Kgama's faith in the British by asserting that their relations with the Ngwato were guided by Christian morality. To Kgama, who was himself a practising Christian,¹⁹ the Boer religious inference was clearly incompatible with their belligerent mood the previous year.²⁰ In the circumstances the British had the credible appearance of promoting peace, while the Boers had a long enough record of conflicts with the Ngwato as to discredit themselves as war mongers. Kgama's retort to their claim to Christian morality was an uncompromising indictment:²¹

But I come now to speak of your own deceitfulness and treacherous conduct: you call yourselves Christians, and I also am a Christian, a member of a Christian Church. I am doing all that lies in my power to lead my people to give up their old and sinful [sic], customs ... to serve the living God and His son Jesus Christ, who I believe died for white and black ... My missionaries have never taught me, and God's book does not teach me, that a man may write anything he likes today and do any other thing he likes tomorrow.

Even though Kgama had had to punish British traders who contravened his laws, the British government's record in South Africa

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19. He had been baptised on 6th May, 1860, See H. Schulenburg, in Folder 795, Selly Oak.
20. Questions of Christian morality must have worried Kgama alone for Sechele (see footnote 13) and Gaseitsiwe did not share the same convictions with Kgama.
21. Patterson's Report, Parliamentary Papers, LII, C. 2220, p. 46; Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, Volume One, pp. 36-37; Bryden, Gun and Camera, pp. 415-416.

persuaded Kgama to believe that it was a more dependable nation with which to align than were the Boer republics. Nevertheless the Boers were allowed to pass through Ngwato territory.²¹

The Boer sojourn on the Limpopo was another reminder to Tswana chiefs that their land was susceptible to foreign occupation unless the chiefdoms themselves defended its inalienability. At least one chief seems to have learnt a lesson from the episode. In November 1876 Kgama reinforced Ngwato precepts on land tenure at a meeting of white traders at Shoshong. He asked all traders to sign a declaration in which they pledged that they would not sell the property or the land on which they operated their businesses. In this connection Mackenzie reported that

Kgama recently proclaimed that the presence of Europeans in the country had not altered the [Ngwato] law as to land and houses: that the ground was inalienable; that no house could be bought or sold; but might be used by its occupant in the transaction of business, or as a residence, so long as he observed the laws of the country.²²

The declaration seems to have been rigidly enforced by Kgama, and Captain Patterson's report of 1878 suggests that all Tswana chiefdoms observed the traditional law regarding land tenure:

22. Mackenzie to Mullens, 18th August, 1876, Box 38 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). See also Bailie, *op. cit.*, p. 54: "Yesterday the chief called a meeting of all white inhabitants ... The chief is anxious all should understand that building and occupying a house upon his ground gives no right to the person to sell or alienate the property, and that all buildings upon his ground belong to him;" proclamation concerning occupation of land by Europeans, 7th November, 1876, in Chief's Papers, No. 7, Selly Oak.

According to native law all property is vested in the chief, who grants permission to build, and guarantees undisturbed residence to all the traders as long as the laws are compiled with, but will not permit such buildings to be sold.²³

Thus by 1880 northern Tswana chiefdoms had succeeded in upholding their traditional land laws and, by accepting a vaguely defined Protectorate²⁴ from British officials they also averted a major threat to their independence. However, by the same token Tswana chiefs opened a corridor for British imperial expansion to the north, a phenomenon that was destined to undermine the same independence the Tswana sought to preserve.

II

In 1876 Bailie reported a trend that struck him as characterising all Tswana chiefdoms north of the Kuruman river. In his view each consecutive chief appeared to be more powerful than his immediate neighbour to the South:

23. Patterson, Ibid., p. 237. See also Schapera, Handbook, pp. 195-213.

24. Besides the military assistance implicit in the protectorate offered the Tswana in 1876 and again in 1878, British terms of the alliance were not spelled out. Hence Captain Patterson, op. cit., p. 237, one of whose duties during his tour of 1878 was to affirm the British offer of a protectorate, had no ready answer when Kgama asked him to define the protectorate: "He earnestly asked me to define 'British protectorate.' As this was far beyond my instructions, I declined."

From the weak monarchy of the Batlapings the chief of each succeeding tribe assumes more and more power ... showing ... that the tendency of the natives being brought into contact with Europeans is to weaken the power of the chief.²⁵

Although some Tswana chiefs, notably Kgama, used Europeans to strengthen their positions, there is some truth in Bailie's observation. Ever since Europeans had started coming to Tswana chiefdoms in relatively large numbers after 1840, they had in some ways contributed to the weakening of the chiefship though some fissions within tribes were of the Tswana's own making. Again, because of their proximity to the Cape, southern Tswana chiefdoms experienced the ill effects of European encroachment earlier than their northern kinsmen. Thus by the 1870's a Southern Tswana chief who had watched the fragmentation of his own chiefdom could complain to Mackenzie:

there is nothing binding us together since the headmen have taken to live at their own places instead of in the chief town. They are just small chiefs themselves, and take no notice of me or my laws. Divided as we are, we are at the mercy of any enemy.²⁶

Most L.M.S. agents, Mackenzie among them, looked at the declining power of the chiefs as a happy development because they believed greatly centralised chiefdoms to be less responsive to evangelisation; and by the same token all missionaries longed for the day

25. Bailie, op. cit., p. 76.

26. Mackenzie, Austral Africa, Volume One, p. 76; Governor Frere to Dr. J. Mullens, Foreign Secretary of the L.M.S., 13th June, 1879, who commended the work of missionaries, but conceded: "The ancient authority of the chief, whether great or small ... has been imperceptibly lessened."

when Tswana chiefdoms would come under British rule.²⁷ In 1876 Mackenzie urged the High Commissioner to expand the British sphere of influence as far north as Mashonaland.²⁸ The Thalping and their neighbours seem to have been aware of and resented the political activities of missionaries. Thus during the war of 1878 L.M.S. agents were lumped together with other white laymen in the enemy camp because they were believed to be working in league with British authorities. Rev. A.J. Wookey, whose own home at Motito was looted by Tswana insurgents, informed his Society about Tswana resentment of missionaries.

I have been told again and again that we are deceivers and only trying as agents of the [British] government to get the country.²⁹

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27. Hence when the B.D.C. assessed (see B.O.C. to Frere, 25th January, 1879, *loc. cit.*) the effects of the 1878 war on tribes in Greater Molopo area they sent a detailed account to Governor Frere covering all facets of Tswana life but only casually referred to the chief's authority: "... as for the waning of the power of their chiefs, they will grow accustomed to that also, provided a good position is secured them as respectable subjects of the Queen."
28. B.N.A., HC. 48/1/2, Mackenzie to Sir Henry Barkly, 2nd May 1876.
29. A.J. Wookey to Mullens, 3rd September, 1878. See also, Mackenzie, Austral Africa, 1, pp. 80, 82; Ashton to Whitehouse, 1st September, 1879, who gives the main cause of the rebellion as the annexation of Griqualand West to the Cape Colony in 1871: "It was acquired upon a false issue, and that most unjustly because it was found to contain diamonds;" J. Tom Brown to Whitehouse, 5th September, 1879, traces the root cause of the rebellion to the Keate award of 1870, when the diamond-rich area, discovered in 1867, was awarded to the Griqua Chief Nicholas Waterboer: "The claims of the Bechuanas who had lived in and ruled over part of the country were treated with little less than contempt;" J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, The Road to the North: South Africa, 1852-1886 (London, 1937), p. 138; Eric A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa (London, 1961), pp. 330, 351, 356, 359, 372, 395.

Mackenzie also gives an account of his belated efforts to convince his Bible students at the Kuruman Institution that they should accept white immigrants and build up a multiracial society. The students rejected his plea and instead suggested that Queen Victoria should stop the flow of emigrants from Britain, especially that type of English man who engaged in freebooting activities.³⁰

The rebellion of 1878 was swiftly suppressed because the Thalping and their neighbours failed to unite against British forces, a weakness that was engendered by perennial quarrels among the Tswana themselves. As a British officer noted, some chiefs "actively cooperated with British troops in pursuing the refugee rebels; indeed, in several instances they captured some and delivered them up."³¹ Sir Charles Warren, who led the British campaign, was therefore able to win a quick victory, and, between 27th October 1878 and 1st January 1879 all rebel chiefs had capitulated; even those chiefs who had not taken part in the revolt asked to become British subjects.³² The British occupation of what was then known as south Bechuanaland lasted until 1881.³³

30. Mackenzie, Austral Africa, I. p. 80.

31. Parliamentary Papers, 1883, XLIX, p. 18, Captain Harrel to Administrator of Griqualand West, 27th April 1880.

32. Ibid., p. 7.

33. Mackenzie, Austral Africa, I, p. 106.

The withdrawal of British forces in 1881 left the Boers with little serious challenge to their freebooting activities. And just as the British forces had taken advantage of Tswana disunity to contain the rebellion of 1878, so did the Boers accentuate rivalry between the chiefs in order to acquire land. In 1882 the Boers rallied behind opposing chiefs and set up two incipient republics in the Greater Molopo area. The republic of Stellaland was founded on land ceded to William Van Niekerk and his followers after the latter had supported the Koranna Chief, David Massauw, against Chief Mankurwane of the Thlaping; their capital was at Vryburg. In the north-east another group led by Gey Van Pitius supported the Rolong Chief Moshette against Montshiwa, Chief of the Tshidi-Rolong, and in return were ceded some land. They called their new community Goshen and their capital town was Rooigrand.³⁴

Boer activities in the Greater Molopo area was a further factor that spurred the British to step up their northern expansion; the Germans had earlier aroused British anxiety when they founded a settlement at Angra Paquena in Namaqualand, South-West Africa, in 1883. In the wake of these threats to 'the road of the north,' Britain proclaimed a protectorate over south Bechuana-land in 1884 and, on the advice of the High Commissioner Robinson,

34. W.J. Leyds, The Transvaal Surrounded (London, 1919), pp. 109-112, 180; Walker, Southern Africa, pp. 396-398.

the Reverend John Mackenzie was appointed the first Deputy Commissioner of the Protectorate.³⁵

The new mood of imperial expansion was reflected in the attitude of L.M.S. Directors towards the creation of the Protectorate and their response to Mackenzie's appointment. Whereas they had opposed his appointment to a government post during the first occupation of South Bechuanaland,³⁶ they now saw a necessary connection between their country's colonial expansion and the progress of their missionary activities. Hence they "yielded to what seem[ed] to be a providential indication of the will of God in the disposal of the services" of Mackenzie and allowed him to join the new Administration;³⁷

35. Mackenzie, Austral Africa, I, p. 79; A. Sillery, Founding a Protectorate (London, 1965), p. 40.

36. John Mackenzie had served as an official assistant to Warren from the beginning of hostilities until the middle of 1879. When Governor Frere asked the L.M.S. Directors to allow him to be officially appointed assistant commissioner for South Bechuanaland, they refused to do so because all members of the B.D.S. opposed the move. Ashton's letter to the L.M.S. (1st September, 1879) was typical: "I think both the missionary position and influence of both Mr. Mackenzie and all the rest of us would suffer by his accepting office." Also, see Frere to Mullens, 13th June, 1879; J. Tom Brown to Whitehouse, 5th September, 1879; Mackenzie to Whitehouse, 25th September, 1879, 10th February, 1880; Frere to Whitehouse, 22nd December, 1879 (L.M.S.).

37. The L.M.S. Chronicle, 10th March, 1884, pp. 119-120.

their assumption was that Mackenzie would influence other government officials to augment L.M.S. efforts to evangelise the Tswana.³⁸ However, Mackenzie's tenure was short-lived, owing to the precipitate manner in which he dealt with Boers in Goshen and Stellaland and the indiscretion of proclaiming new British territory without consulting the High Commissioner. He was replaced by Cecil John Rhodes in August 1884.³⁹

Meanwhile, Boers and Germans seemed to match Britain's expansionist policy. In January 1885 Paul Kruger annexed the Rolong Chiefdom of Montshiwa to the Transvaal. This spurred the British to declare a Protectorate over north Bechuanaland in January 1885.⁴⁰ Sir Charles Warren was instructed to inform northern Tswana Chiefdoms of the existence of a British pro-

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38. Ibid.: "That through the development of a just and humane policy on the part of the British Government ... there may be inaugurated a future for the Bechuana [Tswana] people, by which the first beginnings of civilization and the early lessons of the Gospel may be carried out in abundant prosperity ..."; also in W.D. Mackenzie, John Mackenzie: South African Missionary and Statesman (London, 1902), p. 306.
39. Parliamentary Papers, 1885, LVII, pp. 61-2, Mackenzie to Sir Hercules Robinson, 19th August, 1884, enclosed in Robinson to Derby, 29 of 20th August, 1884. In the same communication Mackenzie formally resigned from being Deputy Commissioner. See also, Ibid., p. 84, Earl of Derby to Robinson, 56 of 27th September, 1884, in which Mackenzie's resignation was accepted and a gratuity of £300 allowed to him; Sillery Founding a Protectorate, p. 40.
40. Sillery, The Bechuanaland Protectorate, p. 53; S.M. Molema, Montshiwa: Barolong Chief and Patriot (Cape Town, 1966), pp. 155-164: C.O.417/4, Robinson to Colonial Office, 123 of 8th April 1885.

tectorate.⁴¹ Tswana responses to Warren's declaration varied from one chiefdom to another, ranging from Kgama's ready acceptance to Sechele's cautious reserve.

Among the Kwena Warren's embassy had a protracted discussion with the pitso when he tried to convince them that a British protectorate was in their chiefdom's interest. As soon as he announced the existence of a protectorate there on 27th April, 1885, Sebele, who seemed to have inherited his father's (Sechele) shrewdness, retorted: "What in us had brought this on, that the country should be taken from us." Warren's assurance that Kwenaland had not been taken by the British was rejected by Sebele, who insisted that his interpretation of a Protectorate was borne out by Cape Colony papers. He also protested that the Protectorate had been declared before the Kwena had been consulted.⁴² However, Warren found support from a most unexpected quarter, the councillor Kgosidintsi, who urged the acceptance of the Protectorate on grounds of logical consistency. He argued that the history of the Kwena in the nineteenth century had been marked by Sechele's endless search for a protective alliance with the British crown, citing the Chief's

41. C.O. 417/4 Robinson to Special Commissioner for Bechuanaland, Charles Warren, 5th January, 1885.

42. Parliamentary Papers, 1885, LVII, C.4588, p. 37; C.O. 417/4, Sechele to Warren, 13th March, 1885, enclosed in Robinson to Earl of Derby, 132 of 15th April, 1885, had instructed his missionary to inform Warren: "He says he is glad of your arrival ... and feels confident you will settle this long disturbed country."

abortive trip to England in 1852 and the expulsion of German missionaries (1864) in preference to British missionaries as some of the proofs that the Kwena had always sought to become British subjects. Now that the protectorate had been declared, Kgosidintsi could tell Warren: "Yes, that is what we have always wanted." He went on to say,

I hear nothing you have said today to
make my heart sore. I hear merely the
words which we asked for in olden time.
I have no more to say but I feel assured
I am an Englishman.⁴³

Sechele and Sebele stood their ground throughout the morning session of the pitso. However, after the lunch break, during which time Sechele consulted his councillors, Kgosidintsi seems to have swayed him, for when the pitso reassembled in the afternoon Sechele conceded that he, too, had been "an Englishman" since 1852. But that fact notwithstanding the Kwena preferred to judge Britain's sincerity first before they accepted the Protectorate; and the Kwena's testing ground was Ngwaketse-land and Rolongland, where Britain had pledged to recover the looted cattle from the Boers. Only after the restoration of those cattle could the Kwena decide on the desirability of a Protectorate.⁴⁴

43. Ibid., p. 38. See also, Haccius, Hannoversche (1910), pp. 419-22.

44. Ibid., p. 41: There was no formal Kwena acceptance of British rule. Sechele said, "Go back and do the work you have in hand, and then we shall see the benefit of a Protectorate." In C.O. 417/4, Mokgosi to Warren, 123 of 23rd March, 1885, the Lete Chief had said: "We are anxious to place ourselves under the protectorate of Her Majesty's Government. We are close on the border, and are continually molested by the Boers."

Gaseitsiwe accepted the protectorate after very little persuasion; he gave to the British government strips of land to the east and west of his chiefdom, but stipulated that his subjects be allowed to hunt in the western strip for as long as game might abound.⁴⁵

At Shoshong Warren had a more receptive pitso during his two day visit. On 12th May, 1885 he easily persuaded Kgama to accept the Protectorate by enumerating the advantages that Kgama and his subjects would derive from it; namely, that the British administration could check treasonable activities of Kgama's brothers; that they would support Kgama's prohibition of the sale and consumption of liquor and that they would stop German and Boer aggression.⁴⁶ Kgama's brothers and councillors accepted the Protectorate but pleaded that the British administration respect their land laws. Gohakgosi, one of Kgama's brothers, said:

We have heard the words of the Queen of England. This is our answer. We do not deny her; we do not oppose her coming into our country; but what we do say is that the Queen must not come into the country to sell it; for if it is sold, being that we are an agricultural and pastoral people, we shall not have room to sow our gardens or keep our stock.⁴⁷

45. Parliamentary Papers, 1885, LVII, p. 48.

46. Ibid., p. 43.

47. Ibid., p. 43. Rauwe, chief of the Khurutshe, spoke for the subject tribes of the Ngwato (Ibid., p. 44): "We are glad of the Queen's message, but should be sad to see our country sold, as we live by cattle and corn."

In his reply to Warren's speech Kgama was much more accommodating than his councillors and brothers. He offered to the British government some land that lay between the Shashi and Motlloutsi rivers as the Ngwato price for what it would cost the Administration to protect their chiefdom. Kgama made more concessions:

Further, I give to the Queen to make laws,
and to change them in the country of the
Bamangwato with reference to both black
and white.⁴⁸

When Warren wound up the pitso proceedings on the 13th May he was tactful enough to ignore the dissenting opinions of some of the councillors on the Protectorate issue but highlighted Kgama's acceptance of the Protectorate. Thus he informed the 2,000 strong pitso that their "chief [had] spoken as a chief ought to speak, in the interest of his people."⁴⁹

III

Although northern Tswana chiefs did not wage armed resistance against British rule, they nevertheless expressed

48. Ibid., Lloyd to Thompson, 4th July, 1885, Box 43 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.), reported Kgama's complaint about the 22° parallel limit of the protectorate: "The word which I hear which speaks about 22° as shown on maps ought to be taken away: I do not express thanks for it; it speaks of nothing which has existence. Boundary line there is none at 22°. It is to cut my country in two."

49. Parliamentary Papers, 1885, Ibid., p. 44; Lloyd to Thompson, loc. cit., 4th July, 1885.

some reservation and even protest against the authority which British officials exercised in their chiefdoms. In December 1888, four years after the declaration of a Protectorate, Sidney Shippard the deputy commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate toured northern Tswana chiefdoms. At Kanye Chief Gaseitsiwe expressed misgivings about British intentions in regard to his chiefdom. Part of Gaseitsiwe's address to Shippard, which Rev. James Good chose not to translate into English, wondered how the Commissioner could be "so unselfish as to seek to benefit others without demanding some recompense from them ... Whether the Deputy Commissioner, in return for the good he was doing to the Ngwaketse, would not in time demand a large grant of their land for himself."⁵⁰

Shippard must have discerned the general tone of resentment to British rule throughout the Protectorate. He therefore convened a conference of Chiefs at Kopong on 5th February 1889, at which he was to reassert British authority. But the outcome of the conference was disappointing to the commissioner, because except for Kgama's declaration of loyalty, all chiefs expressed the wish to rule themselves without British interference. Shippard closed the conference abruptly, a day after it started for, as he

50. Parliamentary Papers, 1890, LI, C.5918, p. 152. Shippard to Robinson, 11th December, 1888, enclosed in Robinson to Knutsford, 49 of 22nd December, 1888.

reported, "The defiant attitude assumed by them--of which it is impossible to convey an adequate idea through the minutes of the meeting--left me no alternative but to adopt this course."⁵¹

The post-Kopong era witnessed further clashes between some chiefs and British officials, in spite of some attempts by L.M.S. agents to foster loyalty in the British government. At Molepolole Sebele, who was virtually ruling the Kwena on account of his father's old age, had a brush with Shippard on an issue pertaining to British authority. When in June 1890 Shippard ordered Sebele to open a store the Chief had ordered closed, Sebele refused, saying it should remain closed because its owner, a Mr. Faulkner, had refused to purchase furs on terms favourable to the Kwena.⁵² Later that year Sebele refused Captain Carrington of the Bechuanaland Border Police permission to graze his cattle at Metsemalthabe because the Captain's cattle would interfere with the principal source of water for

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51. C.O. 417/28, Shippard's report, 6th February, 1889, enclosed in Robinson to Knutsford, Confidential of 27th February 1889. See also C.O. 879/30, African (South), No. 372, pp. 63-5 where the B.D.C. sympathised with Shippard and regretted the failure of the Kopong conference: B.D.C. to Shippard, 6th February, 1889, enclosed in Robinson to Knutsford, 24 of 25th February, 1889.
52. C.O. 879/32, African (South), No. 392, p. 275, Loch to Knutsford, 251 of 2nd July 1890, enclosure 1, Captain Carrington's Telegram of 30th June, 1890.

the Chief's cattle; Sebele further stated in the same letter that he wished to govern his Chiefdom himself, "and not have it governed by white people."⁵³ In November 1890 Sebele wrote to the High Commissioner saying that he wanted independence for his Chiefdom.⁵⁴

Trouble flared again in 1892 when Assistant Commissioner W.H. Surmon closed two Molepolole stores because their Indian owners were not licensed. Sebele ordered the stores reopened on the ground that "he refused to allow any one trading on his ground to pay any license whatever; he was the man to whom licenses had to be paid, not the English Government."⁵⁵ On that occasion Sebele seems to have had the support of the Kwena. According to Surmon, "Kgosidintsi and several other leading members of the tribe, questioned the right of the Government to demand license money from any persons trading in their country."⁵⁶ In his report of 1892 Surmon included the license incident, observing that in another incident Sebele had actually prevented a hawker from paying for a trading license.⁵⁷

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., Enclosure 2, Sebele to High Commissioner, 4th November, 1890.

55. C.O. 879/36, African (South) No. 426, pp. 97-101, Surmon to Administrator, 18th February 1892, enclosed in Loch to Knutsford, 92 of 16th March 1892.

56. Ibid.

57. Parliamentary Papers, LY. 8. 1892, p. 44, "Report of the Assistant Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, from 1st August 1890 to 31st March, 1892."

Kwena illusions about the degree of autonomy they were entitled to enjoy in spite of the declaration of a British protectorate, were soon dispelled as the Administration decided to punish Sebele for interfering with the police. On 16th February 1892 Jules Ellenberger and Surmon went to Molepolole to investigate a report that Sebele had prevented Lance-Corporal Lind from collecting license fees. Surmon and Ellenberger were unable to meet Sebele but held an inquiry in his absence and determined that Sebele be fined twenty head of cattle or £60. In the event Sebele actually paid ten head of cattle.⁵⁸ In June that year Sebele was encouraged to visit Cape Town so that he could, in the words of the High Commissioner, appreciate the "difference between European and native civilization, and that the power and resources of the former might impress him to such an extent as would probably obviate any chance of his again acting in a manner likely to endanger the peace of the Protectorate."⁵⁹ Sebele went to Cape Town on 7th June 1892 accompanied by his son Kebohula and his interpreter, the Rev. Howard Williams. He was reported to have apologised to the High Commissioner for his quarrels with Protectorate officials and was impressed by the treatment he got from Henry Loch; the High Com-

58. C.O. 879/36, op. cit., pp. 97-101.

59. Ibid., p. 238, Loch to Knutsford, 196 of 14th June, 1892.

missioner thought other chiefs should be encouraged to visit Cape Town.⁶⁰ However, Sebele's apology might have been a result of Loch's stern warning, rather than the splendour of Cape Town. Rev. Williams reported the High Commissioner to have been "very firm with [Sebele] for which I was exceedingly glad ... I think he has come back a wiser man and must appear a much more insignificant personage than he had hitherto believed himself."⁶¹ In the event neither Sebele's visit to Cape Town, nor that of Bathoen to the same city later in 1892 calmed the chiefs for any length of time.⁶²

The period between 1892 and 1910 witnessed some instances in which Tswana chiefs tried to reassert their chiefdoms' political autonomy. However, these strictures were outweighed by measures that were introduced by the Government to entrench British authority over the Protectorate. In some chiefdoms the chiefs' claims to sovereignty were in fact belied by their reliance on Protectorate officials to intercede on their behalf in domestic as well as external affairs. A case in point was Bathoen's

60. Ibid., p. 239.

61. Williams to Thompson, 10th June 1892, Box 49 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

62. See Parliamentary Papers, 1892-3, No. 100, C.6857, p. 55, Report of the Assistant Commissioner for the Southern part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1892-3.

quarrel with some Boers in 1894. When he learned that a party of Boers intended to go to Ngamiland through his chiefdom, Bathoen warned their leader Isaac Bosman in a letter to a newspaper:

"My country is not in the power of other people; it is in the power of its owners ... the Bangwaketse ... Bosman you must not pass / you must not pass through my country with your people, for you know yourself that I have no agreement with you in regard to my country. I told Mr. Surmon in the (land) Commission /1893/ the words of my country, at Gaberones, I said, 'My country is ruled by myself.'"⁶³

But Bathoen's warning was not matched by any concrete show of force, for when Bosman remained undeterred, the chief appealed to the Resident Commissioner for assistance, which he got, and only then was Bosman prevented from passing through Ngwaketse territory.⁶⁴

Among the Tawana Sekgoma Lechulathebe II had some quarrels with British officials, but his position as chief was vulnerable because he was merely a regent. This was a sequel to chief Moremi's death in 1890, which created a vacuum as the heir apparent Mathiba was a minor and for that reason could not

63. See "Bathoen Protests," Bechuanaland News, 7th July, 1894.

64. C.O. 879/40, op. cit., pp. 393-413.

assume the Chiefship.⁶⁵ In the event Moremi's brother Sekgoma became a regent in 1891, a position which, according to Tswana custom, he was required to relinquish when Mathiba became of age. In the meantime he seems to have consolidated his position so much so that, when Mathiba became of age, a large number of the Tswana wanted Sekgoma to continue to rule as chief. Before the declaration of a Protectorate usurpers of Sekgoma's brand might have succeeded, or hived away with their supporters to form a new tribe. Now, British officials intervened to install the legitimate heir, Mathiba.

During his regency Sekgoma's first clash with British officials occurred in 1896, when he claimed ownership of Ghanzi, an area ⁱⁿ which the High Commissioner wished to allocate farms to Boer settlers. However Sekgoma did not persist on his claim because he wished to be protected against outside attacks. In consequence he informed the colonial office that he was willing to renounce his claim to Ghanzi if the British could guarantee

65. See Rev. Edwin Lloyd to Thompson, 1st June 1891, Box 48 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.) who reported that Sekgoma was a young man of 22 years and that for that reason his uncle Dithapomeno was acting for him; John Reid (a lay missionary) to Thompson, 9th August, 1893, Box 50 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). According to Thomas Tlou ("Political History," op. cit., p. 227) Sekgoma Lechulathebe's installation as chief was delayed until 1891 because he had to undergo circumcision before becoming a chief.

the protection of his chiefdom.⁶⁶ The Colonial Office offered him the guarantees and in 1897 the High Commissioner assigned 250,000 moogen of land to the Boers and assured them that they would be independent of Sekgoma.⁶⁷

Relations between Sekgoma and British officials improved after the chief renounced ownership of the Ghanzi area. In 1900 Surmon informed the High Commissioner that Mathiba's claim to the chiefship must be resisted and that Sekgoma could expell from Ngamiland two people who were suspected of plotting against him.⁶⁸ Sekgoma's position became even more insecure when Chief Kgama III (who was immensely popular with Europeans) joined the campaign⁶⁹ to end his regency in order to have his nephew Mathiba installed as Chief. However in 1901 Commissioner Ashburnham reconciled Sekgoma and Kgama at a pitso held at Palapye.⁷⁰ Nor did that reconciliation ensure Sekgoma's tenure for any length of time.

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66. C.O. 879/47, op. cit., Sekgoma to Rosmead, 27th October, 1896, enclosed in British West Charlerland Company to Colonial Office, 565A of 27th January, 1897.
67. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., pp. 53-5, Milner to Chamberlain, 50 of 7th July, 1897.
68. C.O. 879/68, African (South) Confidential, No. 656, p. 273, Surmon to Milner, 18th October, 1900, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 170 of 31st October, 1900.
69. C.O. 879/69, African (South) No. 659, Confidential, pp. 96-98, Sekgoma Letsholathebe to Surmon, 1st November, 1900, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 64 of 13th February, 1901.
70. Ibid., pp. 98-99, Ashburnham to Surmon, 8th January, 1901.

Between 1901 and 1905 Mathiba's supporters became more restless in their demands for the ouster of Sekgoma; Rev. A.J. Wookey and the L.M.S. Church at Tsau turned against Sekgoma because the Chief had left the Church and promoted initiation ceremonies.⁷¹ Another factor that militated against Sekgoma was the fact that the new Resident Commissioner Ralph Williams distrusted him. In his autobiography Williams, who took part in terminating Sekgoma's tenure, said:

"Sekgoma was a native ... of a singularly crafty disposition ... There is no proof that Sekgoma ever definitely decided to cast in his lot against the British Government, but there was considerable reason to believe that he would do so ..."⁷²

This unfavourable opinion about Sekgoma's person did not amount to much so long Mathiba was still a minor; but when he became of age, Sekgoma's regency became even more untenable.

Early in 1906 Sekgoma left Tsau to recuperate from an illness in the desert. During his absence supporters of Mathiba, who was living with Kgama, mounted their campaign to have him

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71. C.O. 879/86, African (South) No. 763, Confidential, p. 369, "Notes on the Batawana; their History and Political Situation," by A.J.B. Wavell, enclosed in Selborne to Lyttelton, 25th September 1905; Jennings, Report of Serowe Mission for 1904, (L.M.S.).
72. See Ralph Williams, How I Became a Governor (London, 1913), p. 339.

installed. When in March 1906 Sekgoma went to Kimberley to consult a doctor about his illness, partisan supporters of the two protagonists almost fought each other during the Chief's absence. When news of this impending civil war reached Government officials, Ralph Williams had Sekgoma trailed on his return from Kimberley and detained at Serowe in an attempt to avert civil war at Tsau.⁷³ In May 1906 Ralph Williams went to Tsau to determine who the legitimate Chief should be; his investigation satisfied him that Mathiba, not Sekgoma, was the heir apparent.⁷⁴

A turning point came in December 1906 when the High Commissioner ordered Sekgoma's arrest and detention in Gaborone prison,⁷⁵ from which the Chief engaged lawyers to challenge his detention.⁷⁶ In October 1909 Sir Edward Carson initiated proceedings in England against Lord Crewe the Colonial Secretary for a writ of Habeas Corpus for the release of Sekgoma. After lengthy litigations the High Commissioner's right to detain

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73. Ibid., p. 325; "Another Version: The trouble in the Northern Protectorate ... The story of Sekgoma's Arrest," Diamond Field Advertiser, 10th August, 1910.
74. Williams, How I became a Governor, pp. 340-344; "Another Version," loc. cit.; A.W. Hodson, "The Ngamiland Mission, 1906," Diamond Field Advertiser Christmas Number, 1906.
75. C.O. 879/95, African (South) No. 872, Confidential, p. 71, Proclamation No. 25 of 1906, Selborne to Panzera, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 44 of 25th February 1907; Thomas Tlou, op. cit., pp. 282-6.
76. See J.M. Chirenje, "Chief Sekgoma Letsholathebe II," Botswana Notes and Records, Volume 3 (1971), pp. 64-69. However Mathiba's mother, not Sekgoma's, was Ngwato, contrary to assertion in (Ibid., p. 68, note 8) the article.

Sekgoma was upheld in a ruling handed down on 14th December 1909. An appeal against the verdict was dismissed on 25th April 1910.⁷⁷ Sekgoma had thus exhausted all legal remedies to free himself.

Sekgoma's case dramatises the extent to which British officials intervened in the affairs of northern Tswana Chiefdoms. Between 1885 and 1910 British officials intervened in several issues bearing on the social, political, and economic life of the Tswana. A sample of cases from northern chiefdoms gives an indication of the range of issues in which British officials played a part.

Among the Ngwato the Tati area created a crisis in 1886 when three Boers, William Groening, John Meintjes, and W.A. Van Zyl were found game-pouching and using Kgama's Sarwa. Kgama arrested two of them and impounded two wagons and some oxen belonging to Groening who had escaped. In the pre-colonial era Kgama would have dealt with the offenders himself; but now he was not certain if he was competent to do so and consulted Shippard on the issue. Shippard informed Kgama that he had

77. C.O. 879/103, African (South) No. 943, Confidential, p. 245, passim, Proceedings, Judgments, Orders of the Court, and Affidavits in connection with an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus for the release of Sekgoma Letsholathebe, High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, Royal Court of Justice, 19th October, 1909; 25th April, 1910.

acted within his jurisdiction but advised the Chief to free the two prisoners as a gesture of friendship to the Transvaal Boers.⁷⁸ Kgama took heed of Shippard's advice, but the overture did not ameliorate relations between Boers and the Ngwato for any length of time.

In December 1887 Kgama expelled three whites--William C. Francis, Edward Chapman, and J.G. Wood--from the Tati area for prospecting for minerals without his permission. The Protectorate Administrator Shippard reprimanded the prospectors and warned them not to foment trouble between Kgama and Lobengula again.⁷⁹ In 1888 the three prospectors came to Shoshong, where Kgama again deported them to the Transvaal. When in July that year Kgama sent a regiment to intercept them on the Limpopo, Mokutshwane's regiment shot Piet Grobler and one Lottering, the former dying from the wound later in the year, and the latter being permanently incapacitated. Shippard investigated the incidents and, after establishing that the Ngwato bore responsibility for the shooting, persuaded the Transvaal authorities to accept a settle-

78. Parliamentary Papers, 1887, LIX, C.4890, pp. 111-112, Chief Khama to Shippard, 6th September, 1886; Shippard to Khama, 28th September, 1886.

79. C.O. 879/29, African (South), No. 358, Confidential, pp. 17-18, Wood, Chapman, and Francis to Lobengula, 15th December, 1887, enclosed in J.S. Moffat to Deputy Commissioner, 26th December, 1887; Shippard to Wood, Chapman, and Francis, February, 1888.

ment whereby the British Government paid Grobler's widow an annuity of £200, while Lottering received a lump sum of £250.⁸⁰

Perhaps the most decisive intervention occurred in 1895 when the British Government reassured Tswana chiefs that they would retain the Protectorate status over the then Bechuanaland Protectorate. This was a sequel to rumours that had been circulating to the effect that the chartered company intended to annex the Protectorate to Rhodesia.⁸¹ Although the Charter granted to the British South Africa Company by the British Government in 1889 provided for the eventual cession of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the B.S.A. Co., Tswana Chiefs preferred to remain under the British Crown. By 1894 Cecil Rhodes had made up his mind to annex Bechuanaland. When it appeared to him that Sir Sidney Shippard was promoting the annexation of the Protectorate to South Bechuanaland, Rhodes wrote

80. Parliamentary Papers, 1890, LI, C.5918, Shippard's tribunal report of 9th September, 1888, enclosed in Robinson to Knutsford, 485 of 24th September, 1888; Lloyd to Thompson, 25th July, 1888, Box 45 - Jacket C - Folder 3, 28th September, 1888, Box 45 - Jacket D - Folder 3 (L.M.S.); Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, pp. 104-112.

81. See Neil Q. Parsons, "The Visit of the Chiefs to England," a dissertation for the Diploma in African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 1967; Parliamentary Papers, 1896, Lix, C.7962; W.C. Willoughby, Sundry Papers (L.M.S.); Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, pp. 212-234.

Shippard:

"I find you have been warmly advocating the annexation of the Protectorate to Bechuanaland. You are aware that [Her Majesty's] distinct pledges have placed the ultimate destination of the country with the Charter. In return for which we have undertaken heavy expenditure. Your action is nothing more nor less than an attempt at public robbery from the Charter."⁸²

In the event Rhodes' attempts to bring Bechuanaland under chartered company rule were failed by Tswana chiefs, who were no doubt kept informed about the company's intentions. For example, in 1893 John Smith Moffat reported that Palapye residents were angered by rumours that their chiefdom might be annexed to Rhodesia.⁸³ This unhappy development became so acute that by 1895 Chiefs Kgama, Sebele, and Bathoen went to England later that year to lobby the British Government for support against any moves the chartered company might take to annex Bechuanaland;⁸⁴ they were accompanied by Rev. Willoughby, who acted as the Chiefs' interpreter and secretary. On arrival in England the Chiefs were supported by L.M.S. Directors⁸⁵ and

82. See Rhodes House, Oxford, Manuscripts, Cecil John Rhodes, Rhodes to Shippard, July, 1894.

83. C.O. 879/37, op. cit., p. 84, Moffat to High Commissioner, 7th January, 1893.

84. See Neil Parsons, "Khama, not missionaries, initiated trip for negotiations," Kutlwano, February, 1972, p. 12, where he states that Chief Kgama III initiated the trip to England.

85. See L.M.S. Chronicle, October, 1895, pp. 251-253.

some philanthropic organizations; they had an audience with Queen Victoria and Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial Secretary, before whom they urged that Bechuanaland remain a British Protectorate. In the event the visit of the Chiefs was a success and the British Government pledged to retain the Protectorate.⁸⁶

The Protectorate administration also intervened in several inter-tribal disputes and in disputes between Chiefs and their next of kin. The tendency of Tswana Chiefs' next of kin to want to unseat the ruling Chiefs was a special feature of nineteenth century Tswana history. In 1885 John Mackenzie observed:

"In every part of Bechuanaland, without exception, we find the actual Chief is ruling in spite of the fact that a claimant, or, as in some cases, claimants, for the chieftainship exert and put forward their claims more or less openly."⁸⁷

Tswana Chiefs were keenly aware of the danger of being removed from the Chiefship; hence when Kgama, Sebele, and Bathoen visited England in 1895, the Chiefs asked the British Government not to make it easier for ambitious brothers to stir up trouble in their respective Chiefdoms as the latter were apt to say:

86. Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, pp. 212-231.

87. See Mackenzie, "Disputed Chieftaincies," in Parliamentary Papers, 1885, LXII, C.4588, p. 66.

"I also am a son of my father. The chief cannot punish me as he would another man. I can appeal to the Government. If I lose, the Government will still give me land and allow me to take my cattle. If I win, I become an independent chief."⁸⁸

The tendency to secede was minimised after 1885 owing to Government regulations. Professor Schapera has observed:

"The official demarcation of tribal reserves in and after 1899, coupled with enforcement of the rule that all inhabitants of a reserve must submit to the authority of the local chief, meant that rebels could no longer hope to establish independent chiefdoms either within tribal territory or on unclaimed land somewhere else ..."⁸⁹

Nevertheless there were some instances when factions within a tribe seceded and in some of these secessions Government intervention averted war. Thus among the Ngwato Government intervention led to the peaceful separation of the Mphoeng-Raditladi⁹⁰ faction from the Ngwato in 1895-6 and that of Kgama's son Sekgoma in 1899, which lasted until 1922.⁹¹ Boundary disputes were also settled by the Protectorate administration: in 1886

88. See Parliamentary Papers, LXii, Correspondence relative to the visit to England of Chiefs Khama, Sebele, and Bathoen, p. 14.

89. I. Schapera, "Kinship and Politics in Tswana History," J.R.A.I., 93 (1963), p. 163.

90. C.O. 879/47, pp. 37, 83, J.S. Moffat to Graham Bower, 5th February, 1896, Ashburnham to F.J. Newton, 2nd March, 1896. For the group's settlement in Mangwe, Rhodesia, see C.O. 879/47, pp. 504-5, Earl Grey to Rosmead, 1st March, 1897.

91. C.O. 879/57, African (South) No. 574, Confidential, pp. 89-101, 157-8; B.N.A. Unit No. S. 42/3, Barry May to Acting Resident Commissioner, Francis Town, 17th June, 1911, R.M. Daniel to Barry May 22nd May, 1911.

the Kwena and the Ngwato accepted Captain Goold-Adams settlement of the ownership of Lopepe wells;⁹² in 1887 Shippard settled land disputes between the Ngwato and the Seleka-Rolong;⁹³ in 1890 the Administration interceded on behalf of the Ngwaketse and obtained for the latter land which was claimed by the Hurutshe of the Transvaal.⁹⁴

A more decisive intervention, with political as well as economic consequences, was taken in 1893 when the Government set up a Commission to determine the validity of land concessions that had been issued by Tswana Chiefs. While part of the reason for the rather indiscriminate granting of land concessions by Chiefs lay in the unfamiliar procedures adopted by some of the Syndicates, the economic motive was compelling owing to the ever diminishing game resources and of the fluctuating prices of feathers and ivory.⁹⁵ In the event Syndicates or individual concessionaires persuaded chiefs, with or without the pitso's approval, to grant them concessions.

92. Parliamentary Papers, 1887, LIX, C.4890, pp. 12-13.

93. Parliamentary Papers, Ibid., C.5070, pp. 7-18.

94. Parliamentary Papers, LY. 8., 1892, p. 44.

95. For declining resources, Captain Harrel's estimation in Parliamentary Papers, 1883, XLIX, 12, p. 18, which shows that by 1880 Southern Tswana trade in ivory and feathers had dropped from an all time record of £100,000 a year in the 1850's to about £50,000. The declining trend was also reported in 1885 by Captain Goold-Adams (in Parliamentary Papers, 1886, XLVIII, 48, C.4839, p. 220) when he noted that feathers fetched such low prices at the Cape that it was hardly profitable to send them there, and that a trader informed him that his yearly income from that trade had dropped by 50%.

The earliest concession to have been granted by any northern chiefdom appears to have been transacted in 1878, when Chief Lechulathebe of the Tawana allocated a farm at Ghanzi to H.M. Van Zyl. By 1888 the Administration became concerned about concession granting and issued a notice limiting the powers of chiefs in granting concessions.⁹⁶ This measure had little effect. By 1890 more than thirty mineral and land concessions had been granted to whites all over the Protectorate. Government anxiety over concessionaires was further caused by the latter's disputes over the ownership of their respective areas of operation or when, as in 1890, a Syndicate operating in Ngamiland sought assurances from the High Commissioner that the tenure of their concession would remain valid even if the area came under the German sphere of influence.⁹⁷ In some instances concessionaires were even suspected of encouraging Tswana resistance to British rule. In 1890 the High Commissioner said:

Chiefs are discontented at the restrictions placed on their sovereign rights, and their discontent is fomented by disappointed concession seekers.⁹⁸

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96. Sillery, Bechuanaland Protectorate, p. 64.
97. C.O. 879/32, African (South) No. 392, p. 33 Messrs Fairbridge, Arderne to Imperial Secretary, 14th January, 1890, enclosed in Loch to Knutsford, 17th January, 1890.
98. C.O. 879/37, African (South), No. 441, p. 1, Loch to Knutsford, 1 of 24th November, 1890.

By 1891 the High Commissioner was even more dissatisfied with the issue of land concessions:

There can be no doubt that the system of concession seeking which has grown up of late years, is most prejudicial to the best interests of the country, and that it would be a great advantage if all these concessions could be disallowed.⁹⁹

Sir Henry Loch nevertheless realised that such arbitrary action might "raise a fierce opposition amongst the disappointed concession holders."¹⁰⁰

The upshot of this concern was the appointment of a commission which was to enquire into and determine the validity of all concessions granted by Tswana chiefs and make recommendations to the Colonial Office.

An examination of even a sample of the claims that came before the Commission of 1893 suggests that Tswana rulers must have granted some of them under great misapprehensions; for example, in Ngwaketseland Chief Gaseitsiwe was supposed to have given the Kanya Exploration Company a 999 year lease to build and operate twenty trading stations on one square mile plots at a yearly rent of £10 per station. In all cases economic considerations seem to have outweighed traditional land laws. Thus even the more astute Sechele, whose business acumen was acknowledged by a whole generation of hunters and traders, appears to

99. Ibid., p. 2, Loch to Knutsford, 4th July, 1891.

100. Ibid.

have been swayed by concession hunters until he gave away land indiscriminately. In June 1890 he was supposed to have given the Secheleland Syndicate a fifty year land lease with powers to make ordinances, establish courts of justice, set up a force of police, regulate traffic in liquors, and to suppress slavery for a lump sum of £2,000.¹⁰¹ Not unexpectedly Kgama had been the most cautious of all Tswana chiefs, having granted only one concession to the Bechuanaland Exploration Company in 1887.¹⁰²

One L.M.S. agent, James Good of Kanye, appeared before the Concessions Commission to contest a claim to his farm, "Hilda Vale." Although Good had declared in 1888 that he had served the Ngwaketse but "had never accepted land or cattle of theirs or anything else belonging to them,"¹⁰³ he had in

101. C.O. 879/50, African (South) No. 537, p. 19, Loch to Ripon, 7th October, 1893.

102. Ibid., p. 33.

103. Parliamentary Papers, 1890, LI, C.5918, p. 152. Labouchere, a British member of Parliament and editor of the magazine, Truth, was the first to question if Good had not violated professional ethics by accepting land from the Ngwaketse. But Rev. Good "looked upon it as a gift that a tribe or parish can properly give to their minister." The Bechuanaland News (6th December, 1893) refuted Labouchere's objections on economic grounds: anybody who "occupies, utilises, and improves land in this country ought to be allowed to keep it." The L.M.S. Directors demanded in vain that Good return land to the Ngwaketse (in letters to Good, 9th December, 1893, 15th December, 1893, 3rd March, 1894). Good denied that there was anything unethical in accepting the farm as a gift: "I accepted it as such from them /the Ngwaketse/, and not from any special value in the gift itself," in Good to Thompson, 15th January, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.). John Brown (on 6th January, 1894) informed L.M.S. Directors that it was customary for missionaries to accept gifts from the chiefs.

fact accepted a 10,000 morgen farm granted to him verbally by Gaseitsiwe and subsequently ratified in writing by Bathoen on 9th January, 1890.¹⁰⁴

The Concessions Commission's terms of reference were weighted in favour of English law and reflected Tswana notions of land tenure only marginally.¹⁰⁵ In a political sense the appointment of the Commission was also a way of asserting British authority, for its findings bound all parties concerned without any recourse to law courts.¹⁰⁶

When the hearing started at Gaberones on 10th May, 1893,¹⁰⁷ Sebele, who had succeeded to the chiefship after his father's death in 1892, challenged the competence of the tribunal to determine the validity of the concessions granted in Kwenaland because

as sovereign of the soil, he ... had full power to grant concessions in and over his country to whomsoever he pleased without his acts being questioned by any one.¹⁰⁸

Sebele's protest was noted but ignored.

104. C.O. 879/50, op. cit., p. 9, Loch to Ripon, 1 of 7th October, 1893.

105. Out of the twenty terms of reference only three Clauses took into account Tswana law and custom: Clause 1 provided for the cancellation of a concession if it was granted by the chief without the approval of the tribe; Clauses 6 and 7 provided that a chief who granted concessions in a subordinate chiefdom had to prove that he received tribute from it in recognition of his paramountcy, in C.O. 879/37, loc. cit., p. 78, Loch to Ripon, 24th January, 1893.

106. Ibid., pp. 1-8.

107. The session at Gaberones adjourned on 23rd May; the Commission resumed enquiries at Mafeking on 6th June and concluded on the 7th June.

108. C.O. 879/50, op. cit., p. 1.

The proceedings of the Commission show that, besides the economic motive, military and political considerations impelled Tswana chiefs to give away land and mineral concessions; and this motive is a recurring theme in nineteenth century Tswana history.¹⁰⁹ As has been recounted above, Gaseitsiwe, Sechele, and Kgama offered Warren strips of land that were clearly buffer zones between their chiefdoms and their potential enemies. Kgama's military and political motive was discerned by Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, who rejected the Shashi offer forthwith. Whereas Warren had reported the Shashi offer to be "magnificent," Robinson saw it for what it was:

"Khama's offer is nothing but an attempt to obtain a 'buffer state' of English settlers between himself and his enemy Lobengula."¹¹⁰

The Ngwaketse must have had military reasons for granting concessions because Chief Bathoen conceded under cross examination that the concessionaires were supposed to prevent Boers from coming into his chiefdom.¹¹¹

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109. For example, when German missionaries (see Chapter Two, pp. 69-73) were invited to work in Kwenaland and Ngwatoland in 1857 and 1859, respectively.
110. C.O. 879/23, *op. cit.*, p. 10, In *Ibid.*, p. 15 the Colonial Office objected to Kgama's offer of the Shashi area (1885) "Because he wishes for the English settlers only, and this... would accentuate the division between Dutch and English, which it is most important to obliterate."
111. Bathoen's testimony to the Concessions Commission, in With the Concessions Commission, (1893), p. 39.

At the conclusion of the investigation only seven out of the forty five claims were recognised, the rest being either rejected or deferred owing to paucity of evidence.¹¹² In the aftermath the Colonial Office suggested that the British South Africa Company compensate those chiefs who would lose much revenue in consequence of the cancellation of their concessions. The Company agreed to pay the chiefs concerned, but at slightly lower rates than those suggested by the Colonial Office.¹¹³ Under the Company's scheme the yearly grants to the chiefs were: Bathoen £150; Sebele, £225; Lenchwe (Chief of the Kgatla Kgafela), £70; and Ikaneng (Chief of the Lete), £50.¹¹⁴ The chiefs accepted the grants and thereby placed themselves under more obligation to the B.S.A. Company.

The Commission of 1893 did not prohibit the granting of new concessions, nor did the Colonial Office issue any instructions on the matter; but the rules governing new land transactions were implicit in the Commission's terms of reference. On the whole Tswana chiefs seem to have conducted their land transactions more carefully thereafter. Thus when Chief Sekgoma

112. C.O. 417/101A, Loch to Ripon, 422 of 7th October, 1893.

113. The Colonial Office had recommended the following annual grants: Bathoen, £200; Sebele, £250; Ikaneng, £50; and Lenchwe, £70.

114. C.O. 879/50, *op. cit.*, p. 28, British South Africa Company to Colonial Office, 3 of 12th December, 1894. The B.S.A. Co. readily agreed to compensate Tswana chiefs because they hoped Botswana would eventually come under the Company's control in accordance with the terms of the Royal Charter granted to them on 29th October, 1889.

of the Tawana granted some land to the L.M.S. in July 1893, he safeguarded its inalienability.¹¹⁵ And when a formal deed of gift was granted for the same plot five years later, Sekgoma was even more explicit in his demands, the L.M.S. agent was required to promise that

In building at Kgwebe, it does not mean that I am taking from the Botaona [Tawana] their country; the country is theirs, we are teachers only ... It is not my veldt, it is theirs.¹¹⁶

Bathoen, too, seems to have learnt a lesson from past experience with concessionaires. When, in 1898, he granted to the L.M.S. a piece of ground he stipulated in the agreement that the Society had no power to sell it.¹¹⁷ The Ngwato, who had always been sensitive to land issues because of Kgama's ascetic¹¹⁸ leadership and the trouble caused by white hunters,

115. Wookey to Thompson, 13th July, 1893, Box 50 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

116. C.O. 879/53, op. cit., p. 431, Agreement of 11th July, 1893, L.M.S. to C.O., 401 of 26th October, 1898. The Foreign Secretary of the L.M.S., R.W. Thompson, noted Kgama's insistence that land be not alienated. He reported that while he was at Palapye he received documents "by which the chief and people have made over to the Society a plot of land on which the English community in that place had erected ... a small place of worship. The deed of transfer ... gives the land to the Society but without power to alienate it," in his Report of the Deputation to South Africa (Confidential), January to March 1898, p. 37. See also C.O. 879/53, op. cit., p. 59, L.M.S. to Colonial Office, 21st January, 1898.

117. C.O. 879/53, op. cit., pp. 499-500, Milner to Chamberlain, 485 of 7th December, 1898. The plot measured 150' x 310'.

118. See Sekgoma Khama, "Khama's Life," 28th March, 1925, in B.N.A., No. Serowe 337, S.601/18.

had a more consistent land policy than their southern neighbours. When, in 1897, Rev. Willoughby quarrelled with assistant commissioner J.A. Ashburnham over the use of a water well which the former wished to monopolize, Kgama ruled that both parties were entitled to use the well.¹¹⁹

A move that had lasting effects on Tswana tribes was the demarcation of boundaries to the chiefdoms. This was done in 1899 and the boundaries have remained in force to date. In the same year (1899) taxation, which chiefs Kgama, Sebele, and Bathoen had accepted in principle during their visit to England in 1895, was introduced. Each Tswana hut was liable to a ten shilling tax per year, the chiefs retaining 10% of the taking.¹²⁰ In 1904 the High Commissioner abolished the practice whereby Tswana chiefs were entitled to collect royalties from white hunters;¹²¹ in 1907 an order was issued to prohibit the export of ostriches and ostrich eggs.¹²² While these measures had the

119. Kgama to Willoughby, 20th February, 1897, Willoughby to Kgama, 17th February, 1897, Kgama to Willoughby, 18th February, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.). See also Thompson, Deputation, 1898, pp. 38-9.
120. C.O. 879/78, op. cit., pp. 362-63, Goold-Adams to Milner, 3rd July, 1899, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 320 of 29th September, 1902; Sillery, Bechuanaland Protectorate, pp. 79-83. I. Schapera, Native Land Tenure in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Lovedale, 1943), p. 10.
121. C.O. 417/392, Milner to Harris, Minute of May 1904.
122. H.C. Juta, The Laws of the Bechuanaland Protectorate (London, revised edition, 1949), Volume II, p. 987.

effect of entrenching British authority, they certainly curbed the revenue accruing to Tswana chiefdoms.¹²³ Yet, in spite of the worsening economic situation of the Protectorate, it took the L.M.S. and the Protectorate administration a long time to provide the Tswana with vocational training that was suited to their environment.

123. See for example, Kgama to High Commissioner, Lord Buxton, 28th March, 1916, Box 79 (L.M.S.).

CHAPTER FIVE

"TO MAKE A BOOK TALK":

Problems and Progress in Tswana Education,

1880 - 1910

The second phase in Tswana education, which began in the early 1880's, witnessed a significant change in the educational policy of the L.M.S. Hitherto education had been largely literary, related mainly to the study of the scriptures; but after 1880 Tswana parents were spurring L.M.S. agents to broaden the scope and content of the school curriculum; some chiefdoms started their own tribal schools to augment what they believed to be an inadequate L.M.S. school system. In deference to Tswana demands missionaries belatedly reconsidered their approach to education until they discarded some of the Society's concepts on the subject which had been in vogue since the formation of the Society in 1795. However, vying with this transition to vocational education were fundamental problems that had been inherited from a system of education that James Read started at Kuruman in 1816.

I

A study of Tswana education between 1880 and 1910 shows that the major obstacle to progress was the missionary's philosophy of life. To them the most useful pursuit was man's preparation in this world for life after death. In pursuance of this view evangelization took precedence over formal education, some of the missionaries actually equating Christianity with education. Hence L.M.S. agents were satisfied if their pupils acquired a veneer of literacy to enable them to read the Bible.

Nor were Tswana parents unaware of the limitations of such an education. To them L.M.S. education enabled them merely "To make a book talk."¹

Even when they had changed their educational policy, L.M.S. agents in Bechuanaland were not unnaturally preoccupied with evangelization well into the twentieth century. Thus at an emergency meeting they held at Serowe in 1904 the B.D.C. expressed a view not far removed from earlier attitudes: "We as a committee hold that education is not the primary work of a missionary society. We do it because the Government has not yet taken up its proper responsibility."² And yet in spite of their partisan attempt to educate the Tswana, L.M.S. agents laid the foundation on which Botswana has built up its present system of education.

By 1880 a thin network of schools had been built throughout Northern Tswana chiefdoms, and the wagon and tree improvisations of the pioneer period had given way to pole and dagga classrooms; some school buildings were even built of bricks. Ngwatoland, with a population of about 20,000, had five schools in and around Shoshong; the Ngwaketse, who numbered about 10,000,

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1. Alfred Wookey, "Literature for the Bechuana: Its Preparation and Influence," Chronicle (January, 1902), p. 57; also, see Richard Lovett, The History of the London Missionary Society (London, 1899), Volume One, Chapter XXII, passim.
 2. Minutes of the B.D.C., in Howard Williams and Albert E. Jennings to L.M.S. Directors, 26th October, 1904.

had four schools, one situated at Kanye and three at the outstations; all were manned by Kuruman trained evangelists.³ In 1881 the Boys Boarding School at Kuruman, the Society's sole supplier of evangelists, had an enrolment of five students, which was an increase of only one student on its student intake since 1876.⁴

The Kwena, who by 1881 numbered about 15,000 had one day school at Molepolole with 140 pupils including four Boer children; its head teacher was a Miss Wallace.⁵ By 1887 school enrolment had dropped to 86 pupils (58 girls and 28 boys) and Miss Wallace was now assisted by a moTswana teacher, Moshoboro.⁶ However by 1891 its enrolment had increased to 255, while the central school at Kanye had 500 pupils.⁷

Ngamiland does not seem to have benefited much from the service of Khukwe Mogodi, for soon after his arrival there in 1878 he paid little attention to teaching but reverted to his old occupation of trading in ivory. Khukwe probably traded in order to augment his irregular salary. The B.D.C. nevertheless

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3. Report of Kuruman Institution, 14th December, 1881, Box 2 (L.M.S.).
 4. Lloyd to Thompson, 6th February, 1885, Box 44 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).
 5. Miss C. Wallace to Thompson, 15th May, 1887, Box 44 - Jacket C - Folder 5 (L.M.S.).
 6. Howard Williams, Molepolole Report, 1891, Box 2 (L.M.S.).
 7. James Good to Thompson, 2nd April, 1891, Box 48 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

subsequently reprimanded him for what they construed to be a misconduct and transferred him to Moshupa in Ngwaketse-land in 1881.⁸

Missionary reports throughout the 1880's suggest that L.M.S. agents were generally satisfied with the type of education provided in their schools. For the majority of missionaries learning by rote was the standard method of children-scholars acquiring new knowledge. Thus Edwin Lloyd could report in 1887 with a sense of accomplishment that one of his best students was a blind Tswapong man who had "committed many passages of scripture to memory."⁹

However, if learning by rote impaired the intellectual growth of many Tswana students, it did not seem to have had any ill effects on Chief Sechele. Ever since he had been taught to read and write by Livingstone in the 1840's Sechele continued to make spectacular progress. Although part of the reason for his extensive study of the Bible was a reaction to his suspension from church membership, Sechele seems to have been a man of above average intelligence. By 1880 his knowledge of scripture and his ability to interpret it in the context of Kwena experience had become extensive. Thompson,

8. Minutes of the B.D.C., 3rd June, 1881, Box 41 - Jacket C - Folder 5 (L.M.S.). For earlier reference to Mogodi see Chapter Three.

9. Lloyd to Thompson, 11th February, 1887. (L.M.S.).

who visited Molepolole in 1883, reported that Sechele could "quote scripture in support of his own position with great aptness."¹⁰ But the majority of Tswana students required a school environment that was conducive to learning and in this respect they were unfortunate because the L.M.S. school system was beset by problems. One of the problems besetting Tswana education during the nineteenth century was the conflict arising from the traditional modes of occupation on the one hand, and the equally persistent demands by L.M.S. agents that pupils should attend their schools regularly. In this connection cattle herding and hunting, which we have observed to have been sanctified in the traditional education of Tswana boys (see Chapter Two, p. 49), accounted for their poor school attendance well into the twentieth century. Girls on the other hand were required to work in the fields and gardens, but because agriculture was a seasonal occupation, it did not take as much time as the perennial occupations of hunting and cattle herding; and for that reason the schools enrolled more girls than boys.¹¹ A Molepolole report of 1885 explains the problem

10. Ralph Wardlaw Thompson to Whitehouse, 26th December, 1883, Box 42 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.). See also Bryden, Gun and Camera, pp. 274-5; Walter Montagu Kerr, The Far Interior: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure from the Cape of Good Hope Across the Zambezi to the Lake regions of Central Africa (London, 1887), pp. 27-8.

11. For boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies, see Chapter Three, pp. 117-9. The hunting season was roughly from April to September.

of absenteeism: "I have asked the reason why the boys do not come to school, and the men say that they are away at the cattle posts in the different parts of the country. If they, the boys, come to school, there will be no one to take care of the cattle."¹²

In 1885 one L.M.S. missionary tried to improve school attendance by asking his adult church members to dig the gardens so that girls could attend school more regularly;¹³ and since the same plan could not have been applied to the boys, Hepburn devised a programme for them whereby they were encouraged to take their books with them to the cattle posts so that they could teach each other how to read and write.¹⁴ However, Hepburn's innovations achieved little success as it was improbable for him to supervise his students at the cattle posts, while the task force he set up to relieve the girls from agricultural duties had to be abandoned since, for reasons that will be shown later, it impinged upon the chief's authority.

The school curricula, which were by no means uniform owing to the decentralised nature of school organization,

12. Wookey to Thompson, 7th September, 1885, Box 43 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). In 1875 John Brown wrote: "The boys are sent to these posts and grow up there away from school, away from public worship ...," Cape Monthly Magazine, XI, (July, 1875), p. 2.
13. Shoshong Report in Hepburn to Thompson, 11th February, 1887, Box 2 (L.M.S.).
14. Lloyd to Thompson, 13th January, 1889, Box 46 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

included reading and writing, scripture, arithmetic, and sewing; the Moffat Institution at Kuruman offered geography "of Bible lands" in addition to the above subjects. Until 1880 L.M.S. missionaries believed their school curriculum to be a flawless contrivance; the Tswana were repeatedly blamed for their failure to show sufficient interest in the L.M.S. schools.¹⁵ However before the 1880's were over some missionaries started questioning the usefulness of the type of education they were giving the Tswana. One reason for this reappraisal of their educational endeavours was sparked by Tswana preference - at least by the few parents who could afford it - of sending their sons to schools in Basutoland and the Cape Colony, a trend which missionaries belatedly construed to be a reflection of the poor quality of education in L.M.S. schools.

Even before L.M.S. missionaries themselves started reassessing the relevance of their education to Tswana conditions, the Society's Foreign Secretary, R. Wardlaw Thompson, conducted an inspection of Tswana schools in 1883 and made some useful suggestions on how they could be improved. He stressed the need to shift educational priorities from the largely religious and academic curriculum which had hitherto

15. For example, see B.D.C. Minutes of 1892, in Ashton to Whitehouse, 19th November, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

dominated L.M.S. schools, to one that would fulfil the economic needs of the Tswana.¹⁶ While R. Wardlaw Thompson's recommendation was clearly a salutary departure from an educational philosophy that had long ignored Tswana economic needs, the Foreign Secretary's notion of an industrial education was, like those of the B.D.C. on the issue, too superficial and was probably influenced by the prevailing attitudes in England. To Thompson, the harnessing of Bechuanaland's agricultural and pastoral potential did not lend itself to investigation but instead he lamented over the fact that the country was a socio-economic unit that appeared to be hopelessly beyond redemption. Hence he could report: "The greater part of the

16. Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, Deputation to South Africa, September 4th, 1883 to April 9th, 1884, printed for the use of the Directors (L.M.S.), p. 30. See also Miss Wallace to Thompson, 15th May, 1887, Box 44 - Jacket C - Folder 5 (L.M.S.). Even at Molepolole, where the school was reported by Thompson to be satisfactory, Kwena parents (including Sechele) sent their children to Lovedale. Debate on education for Africans seems to have started earlier at the Cape than in Bechuanaland for in 1875 a correspondent (in Cape Monthly Magazine, X, April 1875, p. 210) advocated for the opening of trade schools in African communities: "The crucial question is, what will the thousands of boys and girls do with their power of reading, writing, and ciphering ..., if they don't know how to use a plane or a saw, a needle or an owl, much less to cut out a coat or a gown...?" Lovedale was a nondenominational multiracial school that had been started by the Free Church of Scotland in 1841. By 1878 James Stewart its Principal could write: "All colours, white and black, and brown and yellow are to be found among the pupils," in Lovedale Past and Present (Cape Town, 1879), p. ix.

country is so far removed from markets, and conveyance is so serious a difficulty that it is not at present worth the people's while to attempt to grow corn enough for sale beyond their own borders. The only trade they have, which is worth anything, is in the produce of the chase, and that is becoming increasingly difficult every year. The hunting still claims the attention of a large number of the men, but it leads them farther and farther afield during several months of the year, and has not a healthy influence, either in relation to settled habits of life, or the development of moral [sic] principle."¹⁷

Among the people who joined in the re-evaluation of the educational policy of the L.M.S. was J.S. Moffat, himself a former L.M.S. agent who had left the Society in 1879 to take up a government appointment in the Transvaal. Moffat could view the functioning of L.M.S. schools from a layman's point of view, and because of that measure of detachment he was in a position to compare more perceptively the performance of Tswana school leavers with their counterparts in the Transvaal, the Free State, the Cape Colony, and Basutoland where he held government posts at various times. One major weakness he noticed in the L.M.S. school system was the poor quality of

17. Thompson, Deputation, p. 21. For a survey of Victorian attitudes on education, see Brian Jackson, "100 years of State Schools;" Sonia Jackson, "The long haul," The Sunday Times Magazine, London, January 4th, 1970.

its teachers and in March 1888 he wrote to the L.M.S. urging the Directors to give more attention to the training of teachers than of evangelists.¹⁸ The same view was expressed by Howard Williams at Molepolole in 1889.¹⁹ By 1891 Moffat had become disillusioned by the Society's slow progress in education and offered further suggestions on how Tswana schools could be improved generally; he thought the central school at Palapye should have a trained white schoolmaster to relieve the missionary who was "so largely engaged in pastoral supervision that he cannot even supervise new schools adequately." He went on:

What is wanted is a man who would do this - and also carry such scholars as were worth it a step further. At present there is nothing progressive in your system of education. The Seminary at Kuruman does not meet the want and never will on its present footing.²⁰

Nine months later Moffat repeated his criticism of L.M.S. schools, pointing out that the trend towards sending Tswana youths to

18. J.S. Moffat to Thompson, 21st March, 1888, Box 45 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.): "It seems to me that the preaching of the gospel in a broad sense includes this higher education ... These people [Tswana] will have to fight for their own lands some of these days; perhaps very soon, with the gold fever on in Southern Africa and reaching to the Zambezi; and if we don't give them something more in education than we have done, we don't give them a fair chance."
19. Howard Williams to Thompson, 13th May, 1889, Box 46 - Jacket D - Folder One (L.M.S.).
20. Moffat to Thompson, 13th September, 1891, Box 49 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

schools in Basutoland and the Cape had increased: "Two of Kgama's brothers have sent their sons to Lovedale and are paying for them there and it is said that more are going. This indicates an earnest longing for something more than what they have had supplied to them by us."²¹

The Society's Directors did not share the sense of urgency which Moffat and Williams tried to convey. In their reply to Moffat they regretted the fact that they were unable to muster a single moTswana who had a passable command of the English language even though they had had schools in Bechuana-land for over sixty years. They attributed their failure to lack of money, a dearth which they predicted would handicap their Tswana mission for a long time to come.²²

II

L.M.S. agents had more problems to grapple with than just the quality and content of education, and chief among them was the friction between chiefs and missionaries which seemed to increase in proportion to the converts each station mustered. Once a missionary had a sizeable number of followers, he seemed to incline towards setting up a miniature theocracy

21. Moffat to Thompson, 3rd May, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

22. Thompson to Moffat, 24th May, 1888, Box 21. The Society received money from donations.

within a chiefdom. Although the missionary's motive was ostensibly to counteract 'backsliding' of converts, the scheme was clearly contentious since the Northern Tswana states were centralised polities in which the chiefs readily punished any persons - his subjects and aliens inclusive - who tried to usurp their authority. When therefore a missionary insisted that only church members could construct a school building, he unwittingly provoked the tribal chief, who took the traditional view that any public work should be done by a regiment, regardless of the religious beliefs of its members;²³ and that he alone could sanction the erection of school buildings and assign work projects to the respective regiments. Whenever chiefs and missionaries refused to compromise over this issue, valuable time was lost before the buildings were erected.

Of all Tswana chiefs Sechele was the most rigid exponent of the supremacy of the chief over church and state. Part of Sechele's somewhat uncompromising attitude no doubt was inherited from the humiliation he suffered when he was suspended from church membership in 1848. Just as he had clashed with evangelist Sebobi over the issue in 1854, so did Sechele insist that he supervise all public works at Molepolole a quarter of

23. All L.M.S. agents reported the chiefs' opposition to this religious segregation.

a century later. And because Rev. Price was as obdurate as Sechele himself, their quarrels had the effect of crippling church and school work. In 1884 Price reported: "The church here is in a very important sense a state church; and it has been one constant struggle between myself and old Sechele as to who shall be supreme in the church fellowship. Still his influence over his sons and nephews, and other young headmen of the Bakwena, who are members of the church, is very great, and does not tend to promote their goodness and usefulness."²⁴

Sechele coupled his assertion of unfettered sovereignty with a demand for reinstatement into the fellowship of the church; but, unhappily for the chief, his demands fell on deaf ears because of Victorian assumptions about the separation of church and state. It was similar assumptions that led Alfred Wookey, who had succeeded Price at Molepolole in 1884 to report a year later that he had rejected Sechele's application for reinstatement.²⁵ But old age seemed to have mellowed Sechele somewhat. Although he could occasionally defy both British administrators and missionaries late in the 1880's, reports from Molepolole suggest that the nagging pre-

24. Price to Thompson, 29th December, 1884, Box 42 - Jacket D - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). For Sechele's quarrels with British officials, see Chapter Four, pp. 149, 153-4.

25. Wookey to Thompson, 4th August, 1885, Box 43 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

occupation with the fate of his soul - for Sechele was very much a religious person - dictated that he should be more accommodating to his missionary than before, if his readmission was to be effected. Hence in 1888 after he had demanded that Kwena regiments should build the Molepolole church, Sechele withdrew the order when Wookey insisted that only church members could build it. It is tempting to correlate Sechele's withdrawal with the religious literature he was then reading, for at that time he was reported to be reading Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.²⁶ In November 1888 Wookey reported that "Sechele has given in, and has left the work to the church people, including members, engineers and attendants."²⁷ Sechele's conciliatory attitude paid off when in 1889 his church membership was reinstated after forty one years' abeyance.²⁸

The last three years of Sechele's life were bedridden; but even in his sickly condition he cooperated with the Molepolole missionary "in any good work for the benefit of his people, whether educational or religious."²⁹ After Sechele's

26. Wookey to Thompson, 27th April, 1888, Box 45 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

27. Wookey to Thompson, 15th December, 1888, Box 43 - Jacket E - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

28. Howard Williams, Molepolole Report, 1889, Box 2 (L.M.S.).

29. Howard Williams, Molepolole Report, 1890, Box 2 (L.M.S.).

death on 25th September, 1892, L.M.S. missionaries who had worked in Kwenaland revealed some of Sechele's complex character in their eulogies to him. Howard Williams depicted him as an international figure: "With Sechele's death there disappears a prominent character, not only in the history of South African Missions, but of South Africa itself." Roger Price, who worked among the Kwena for over fifteen years, declared that "The church of the Bakwena will not be the same; it will seem strange without Sechele ... although he was never a member [during Price's time], he was always intensely interested in all that concerned the church," adding "Sechele's knowledge of the Bible was simply marvellous."³⁰

Ngamiland also had its share of the problem of separating the church from state control. Although Khukwe had reported shortly after starting a school among the Tawana that his mainly adult pupils were making good progress in reading, he soon fell out with Chief Moremi over the question of church discipline. The occasion was a church meeting in 1880 where Khukwe insisted that the chief behave himself by refraining from smoking tobacco. Moremi disobeyed Khukwe's order; whereupon the evangelist refused to preach "whilst the chief continued smoking and told him he was only a man like other men." Khukwe's equation of smoking with sin annoyed

30. See Chronicle (February, 1893), pp. 39-40.

the chief intensely and according to his report to Hepburn, Moremi henceforth actively organised church members against Khukwe, and in consequence the members were evenly divided in support of the two protagonists.³¹ The dispute between Khukwe and Moremi was temporarily settled during Hepburn's visit to Ngamiland in 1881, but the chief left the church permanently in 1886 when he refused to observe L.M.S. injunctions against polygamy and beer drinking.³²

Moremi's neighbour to the north-west of Tawanaland, Chief Ntare of the Yei (Koba), who no doubt like most Tswana chiefs of the time wanted a white missionary for security reasons, rejected Khukwe's offer to teach in his town on the superficial ground that "Black men cannot teach," adding "and more than that I refuse to be taught or to allow my people to be taught."³³

Ngwaketseland, unlike other Tswana chiefdoms, was not plagued by Chief-Missionary conflicts until the turn of the twentieth century. But in spite of this respite, it too had hurdles to overcome in its schools. While its central school was efficiently run, the outstations were neglected by the evangelist-teachers. In February 1886 Matsami was dismissed

31. Hepburn to Whitehouse, 7th June, 1880 (L.M.S.).

32. Hepburn, Twenty Years in Khama's Country, pp. 259-303.

33. Hepburn to Whitehouse, 7th June, 1880, Box 40 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

from his Pitsani post after the B.D.C. discovered that he had absented himself from his teaching job for a whole year without permission.³⁴ In 1890 Diphukwe Yakwe was expelled from his Moshupa job for drunkenness and negligence of duty, he himself reportedly confessing that he had been "destroying rather than building up the church under his care."³⁵

In Ngwatoland Kgama's strained external relations with the Boers since 1876 augured well for a mutual understanding between the chief and Rev. Hepburn. As we have seen above (see Chapter Four, pp.134-142), Hepburn and some of the Shoshong traders assisted Kgama in his delicate negotiations with the emigrant Boers between 1876 and 1878; Hepburn again played a crucial role as interpreter when the British protectorate was declared in 1885 and when Kgama had his diplomatic and military problems with Boer freebooters between 1885 and 1890.³⁶

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34. See Minutes of the B.D.C. meeting held at Kuruman, 9th February, 1886, Box 44 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.). Rev. James Good had a good working relationship with Gasitsiwe. But he too, like the evangelists, was not hard working and often absented himself from Kanye. In 1897 (Thompson to Good, 9th January, 1897) Thompson wrote: "I suppose you are still the missionary of Kanye though I have had no reply from you to official letters of a serious character written a very long time ago." In 1901 (Thompson to Good, 26th January, 1901) he said: Reports from Cape Town created an "impression in our committee that for some years past a very considerable portion of your time has been spent at Cape Town or in journeying to and fro."
35. James Good to Thompson, 8th January, 1890, Box 47 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).
36. See Chapter Four, pp. 163-165.

Another reason for the cordial relations between Kgama and Hepburn was the chief's enduring desire to have his people evangelised, an attribute of Kgama's that is corroborated by missionaries and travellers alike.³⁷ And yet paradoxically the confidence Kgama reposed in Hepburn and which the missionary took for granted in the course of time, was also the cause of the rupture between chief and missionary. As long as Hepburn could get Kgama's cooperation all seemed well with him. But Hepburn failed to realise that Kgama, in addition to being a cooperative Christian ruler, was also very much a diplomat; so that as soon as the Boer threat to his chiefdom was removed by the presence of British officials late in the 1880's, there was a corresponding decline in Kgama's reliance on Hepburn and also a decline in the confidence he had traditionally reposed in his missionary.

The tragedy of this development was that Hepburn was unprepared for Kgama's change of attitude. In fact his report of 1887 shows that he had by then over-estimated how much the Ngwato could respond to his missionary work:

37. Frederick Arnot, From Natal to the Upper Zambezi, p. 26-7; J. Cooper-Chadwick, Three Years with Lobengula and Experiences in South Africa (London, 1894), p. 39. H.M. Hole, The Passing of the Black Kings (London, 1932), p. 269.

There is one thing about which I say nothing yet, but must wait to see how it shapes itself, and what progress it makes. I have not found it easy to practise patience, but it is most necessary to the growth of our work, if it is to be natural and not forced growth ... We are often greatly tempted to dig up the seed to see whether it has sprouted.³⁸

Unfortunately for Hepburn, the turn of events did not allow him to test his own degree of toleration, for another problem came to the fore before Hepburn could even find out the depth of his tolerance. This was the age-old propensity of Tswana chiefs and their brothers to quarrel over the chieftainship.³⁹

If Hepburn was impatient at Ngwato response to his mission, as the above candid confession suggests, he was psychologically ill-prepared to direct the establishment of a new mission station when the Ngwato moved their town from Shoshong to Palapye in 1889.⁴⁰ And yet Hepburn conceived the

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38. Shoshong Annual Report, in Hepburn to Thompson, 11th February, 1887. The Ngwato remember him as a short-tempered person, see "Notes from the Bamangwato," in Wookey to Hawkins, 26th December, 1914, Box 76 (L.M.S.).
39. For a discussion of this phenomenon see I. Schapera, "Kinship and Politics in Tswana History," The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 93 (1963), pp. 159-73; See also Mac-kenzie's "Disputed Chieftainships," in Parliamentary Papers, 1885, Lvii, C.4588, p. 66, when he noted the rivalry that existed between Tswana chiefs and their next of kin.
40. Scarcity of water supplies at Shoshong compelled the Ngwato to move their town to Palapye. See Hepburn, Twenty Years in Khama's Country, p. 305; Lloyd to Thompson, 27th May, 1889, Box 46 - Jacket D - Folder One, 1st July, 1889, Box 46 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). This was confirmed by Mrs. Lucy Syson Research Assistant, Surveys and Training for Development of Water Resources and Agricultural Production, Botswana, personal communication, 10th October, 1969.

erection of a new mission station on a grand scale, as the new Palapye church was designed to cost £3,000. In pursuance of his grand plan he required his church members to give large sums of money as church contributions (Phalalo): according to some members of the Palapye church he asked every church member to subscribe £200 while Kgama was required to contribute £10,000.⁴¹ Kgama, on the other hand, was probably aware of his subjects' financial limitations and suggested that his regiments assist Hepburn in building the church gratis. But Hepburn, in the tradition of Williams and Wookey in Kwenaland, rejected Kgama's offer and, according to some Ngwato Church members, "in the middle of this work our teacher said that it ought to be built by the church members alone."⁴² A stalemate had thus been reached in the struggle between church and state.

The tense situation that had built up at Palapye worsened when Hepburn sought to evangelise the Kalanga in the Sashimotlotsi area by sending Ngwato preachers there without Kgama's permission. Kgama opposed the move because he had not been consulted and also because he feared that the Ndebele, who

41. Lloyd to Thompson, 13th January, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

42. Church of Bamangwato to the L.M.S., 13th January, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

claimed ownership of the area as did the Ngwato, might be provoked and retaliate by sending a punitive expedition against the Ngwato.⁴³ When Hepburn, who had taken offence at the chief's veto of his Kalanga mission, charged Kgama with usurping his clerical authority, the rift between chief and missionary became open: Kgama transferred all church meetings from the temporary church building to his Kgotla because he had reason to believe that Hepburn was undermining his power.⁴⁴ An impasse was reached when the chief and the missionary refused to discuss their differences. The breaking point was finally reached in December 1891 when Hepburn abruptly left for the Cape Colony.⁴⁵

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43. Chief Kgama to the L.M.S., 10th November, 1891, Box 48 - Jacket D - Folder One (L.M.S.): "And I objected also during one Sunday Service Mr. Hepburn called for twenty members of the church to go out to teach the Makalaka who are under the rule of Lobengula ... the proper way was to ... write ... to Lobengula."
44. Church of Bamangwato to L.M.S. Directors, 13th January, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.): in one church meeting Hepburn was asked by one, Mocwaedi, "Should the chief call out our regiment as usual, are we to obey the chief to go and do whatever he asks?" and Hepburn said "No, and you must not obey the chief; you are the servants of Christ, and you must obey Christ alone." The Ndebele-based missionary, Cullen Rees had had a severe reprimand from Kgama in 1890 when he meddled in Ngwato politics (see Khama to Rev. Mr. Rees, 4th August, 1890, Chief's Papers, Selly Oak) "Now I am chief of the country. You are a teacher. I cannot allow any teacher to act and speak as if he was a chief of my town."
45. Hepburn to Thompson, Telegram, 4th November, 1891, Moffat to Thompson, 2nd and 22nd March, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket B - Folder One; Also Moffat to Thompson, 3rd May, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).

After Hepburn's departure Chief Kgama, the Ngwato Church, Moffat, and Hepburn himself wrote to the L.M.S. trying to unravel what had happened. Even Kgama's brothers, who did not always agree with the Chief, supported him in assuring the Society that the quarrel with Hepburn did not mean that they had broken their ties with the L.M.S. So early in 1892 they jointly applied for two missionaries: "We write to our fathers, we are your children we ask for two teachers so that one can be the teacher of the church the other one of the school for this is a very large town."⁴⁶

J.S. Moffat, who was Assistant Resident Commissioner for the northernmost part of the Protectorate suggested that the L.M.S. investigate the Kgama-Hepburn dispute and the state of the Society's schools before they should again send missionaries to the Ngwato. The Society sent their Foreign Secretary to Palapye in August 1892. Thompson's investigations showed that Hepburn had acted peremptorily in the dispute with Kgama but he exonerated the missionary's conduct on what he surmised to be medical grounds:

46. Chief Kgama, Raditladi and others to L.M.S. Directors, 3rd May, 1892, enclosed in Moffat to Thompson, 3rd May, 1892, Box 4 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

He [Hepburn] was already overstrained by disease and long years of zealous labor when the task had to be undertaken. Neither the Bamangwato people nor the Directors will ever know fully what it cost him, not only in money but in mental anxiety and physical suffering, to carry out the task he conceived to be set him of erecting a place of worship worthy of the Christian aspirations of the people whom he loved as his own soul ...⁴⁷

The Ngwato were advised by Thompson to dedicate themselves more fully to spiritual pursuits and to defy temporal power if it interfered with their religious conviction.⁴⁸

Although Thompson's visit pacified the Ngwato and the Society sent W.C. Willoughby to fill Hepburn's vacancy in 1893, the problem of delineating church affairs from state issues remained tenuous and periodically manifested itself in various guises well into the twentieth century. Nor indeed were Kgama's quarrels with his brothers healed by Thompson's visit. Instead some of Thompson's remarks to the Ngwato provided material for Raditladi's group in their quarrels with Kgama.⁴⁹

In May 1894 Raditladi and Tiro, together with Mphoeng and Gohakgosi, all of whom had in fact secretly supported

47. Moffat to Thompson, 22nd March, 3rd May, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).
48. R.W. Thompson, Report of Special Visit to South Africa, during August, September and October, 1892, pp. 3-4. See also Thompson to Kgama, 1st January, 1892. (L.M.S.).
49. Opponents of Kgama's were his half brothers, Mphoeng, Raditladi, and Seeletso, a cousin, Kuate, and a near relative Tiro. The group was occasionally joined by Kgama's full brother, Kgamane. See Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, p. 207. See also, Schapera, "Kinship and Politics in Tswana History," op. cit., pp. 159-173.

Hepburn against Kgama in 1891, wrote to the L.M.S. through Roger Price at Kuruman alleging that Kgama had again usurped the pastoral authority of the Palapye missionary and that he had embarked on a systematic persecution of Christians which the uninitiated Willoughby could hardly notice: "But it is certain that he, Monare [Sir] Mr. Willoughby will be deceived like the other one [Hepburn]: he is a white man ... he does not understand the Se[Tswana] language."⁵⁰ Raditladi's group had thus found a convenient ground on which to continue the perennial fight with Kgama.

By 1895 the group had given Kgama so much trouble that the chief wanted them removed from Palapye on the pretext that they violated his prohibition of the brewing and consumption of beer,⁵¹ an allegation that impressed some Government officials and led to the removal of the group from the Ngwato capital. But Raditladi's group wanted to justify themselves before

50. Raditladi and Tiro to Price, 4th May, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.). Apparently the Ngwato wanted male missionaries for the L.M.S. had sent them two lady missionaries (Ellen Hargreave and Alice Young) in February, 1894, see Hargreave to Thompson, 18th March, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket B - Folder One, 20th August, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket B - Folder A (L.M.S.).

51. See Willoughby to Cousins, 23rd February, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.): "...when the chief and his younger brothers fell to quarrelling, both parties wanted to carry their quarrel into the church."

the L.M.S. They thus highlighted Thompson's declaration⁵² of 1892 in which the L.M.S. Secretary had asserted that Christian duty ought to take precedence over secular demands, and they used that cue to try to discredit Kgama. Hence on 16th March, 1895 the group told Thompson that Kgama had improperly exerted his authority in church affairs, alleging him to have said: "Let the church be in the chiefship, let it be ruled by the chief: but we [Raditladi's group] refused - we who were a part of the church: and so there were two churches: one of the chief - one of Jesus."⁵³ But the Society had been forewarned of the faction's intrigues, thanks to Willoughby's report,⁵⁴ and Thompson accordingly ignored their charges but instead admonished them against initiating fission in the Ngwato tribe.⁵⁵ However, neither

52. See Thompson, Report, p. 5, where he stated: "... I reminded them that times might come in the life of a man, or in the experience of the Christian community in Bechuanaland when the law of God must be obeyed even though it might involve the penalty of disobedience to the law of the State.

At once Raditladi, the chief's brother and a deacon of the church, responded to this that they were well aware that the church was not to be under the control of the State, and that if the chief, as chief, attempted to interfere with them in their Christian life and duty they would speedily let him know that he was interfering in matters beyond his province."

53. Palapye Church to Thompson, 16th March, 1895, Box 52 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

54. Willoughby to Thompson, 18th March, 1895, Box 52 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

55. Thompson to Tiro, 27th July, 1895.

Thompson's counsel nor that of the Protectorate administration pacified Kgama and his brothers for any length of time; the rift between them widened until the British authorities intervened and moved the Raditladi group, first to a place bounded by the Motloutsi and Mpakwe rivers, which was partly in the disputed Tati area, from where they moved to Bulilima Mangwe district in Rhodesia in 1901.⁵⁶

Meanwhile in Kwenaland Sebele, who had succeeded his father in 1892, was periodically asserting his independence of British authority and jealously warding off missionary encroachment upon his sovereignty. But he, too, faced a serious challenge to his authority in 1896 when his brother, Kgari and the latter's son Baanami, hived off from the tribe with about 5,000 followers to set up an independent chiefdom east of Molepolole. The Kgari-Baanami faction, like that of Mphoeng-Raditladi in Ngwatoland, wished to involve the L.M.S. in their dynastic feud: their request for a missionary, if it had been granted, would have been construed to be a recognition of their independence. But the Society foiled the Kgari faction's political stance by informing them "that until they [faction] had a permanent location, and a permanent recognition as an independ-

56. Willoughby to Cousins, 23rd February, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.), the faction had 100 adults, 30 of whom were Christians.

ent tribe, it was scarcely possible that they should expect the Board to consider their claim to have a missionary to themselves."⁵⁷

These disputes between chiefs and missionaries, and between chiefs and their brothers, had the unfortunate effect of braking progress in church and school life of the Tswana.

III

A special feature of Tswana education between 1880 and 1910 was the frequent inspection of L.M.S. Schools. That the recommendations of these visitors - some of whom made very cogent observations - were largely ignored is one of the unhappy commentaries on the Society's educational policy in Bechuanaland.

When he made his special trip to Bechuanaland to settle the Hepburn-Kgama conflict at Palapye in 1892, Thompson also inspected Tswana schools and was disappointed with the quality of education his Society provided. He noted that school work might improve if the children could be disciplined; he recommended that the salaries of teachers be increased to attract an efficient teaching staff into the school system.⁵⁸ In con-

57. R.W. Thompson, Report of the Deputation to South Africa (Confidential) January to March, 1898, p. 39.

58. Ibid., p. 17; salaries ranged from £10 to £24 according to the teachers' qualification, see Thompson to Gould, 1st July, 1899. (L.M.S.). Some schools engaged teachers without pay, see Willoughby to Thompson, 4th October, 1900 (L.M.S.).

trast to Thompson's critical attitude, the majority of L.M.S. agents were apparently satisfied with their educational efforts but lamented what appeared to them to be the Tswana's congenital inability to make use of the educational facilities at their disposal. At their annual B.D.C. conference held at Kuruman in November 1892 they passed a resolution that amounted to a formal endorsement of their traditional attitude to Tswana education:

The Committee regret that the superior education offered by the Kuruman Boarding School for boys does not seem to be appreciated by the [Tswana] to anything like the extent they had hoped, and especially that up to the present time one of the, if not the, most important objects of the school, viz. the providing of teachers for the elementary schools of the country has remained unfulfilled--there is not an ex-pupil of the school engaged in the work of teaching, or indeed in any work in which the education received in the school is of any special advantage, most of the boys having simply returned to the usual avocations of their countrymen--cattle herding, wagon driving ...

To combat this defection of trained teachers, the B.D.C. passed a supplementary resolution urging L.M.S. agents to be more judicious in their recommendation of prospective candidates so that only those students most likely to make teaching their career could be selected for training.⁵⁹

But some Tswana parents - especially chiefs and those commoners who could afford money - were not as complacent as the B.D.C. and continued to send their children to Lovedale

59. Minutes of the B.D.C. in William Ashton to Whitehouse, 19th November, 1892, Box 49 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

(Cape) or Morija (Basutoland). As one newly arrived missionary reported, this Tswana gesture was a tacit disapproval of L.M.S. schools. Willoughby therefore refuted Thompson's rather simple analysis of Tswana parents' attitudes to education:

... I think the fact that many parents do this and pay \$20 a year for their boys education goes to disprove your statement that the [Tswana] do not care for education ... I look forward to the day when the white elephant at Kuruman [Boys Boarding School] will make room for a more useful creature in some less remote part of the country.⁶⁰

Part of the reason for Lovedale's and Morija's popularity was their renown - at least as far as the Tswana were concerned - in the teaching of English, whose mastery in the Protectorate enhanced one's social and economic status. In order to check this 'drain' on their prospective students some L.M.S. missionaries introduced a two-tier system of education at their stations whereby one stream of pupils paid a higher school fee than the other to enable them to take extra English lessons. Thus in

60. Willoughby to Thompson, 22nd September, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket C - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). Not all Tswana students made full use of Lovedale facilities. Chief Kgama's son, Sekgoma (see Ratshosa, "My Book," p. 144) kept two thoroughbred horses at Lovedale and kept two servants, Baipedi and Kahiso; he was a frequent guest of G.M. Theal (Historiographer at Cape Town) and of Loch, the High Commissioner. According to Ratshosa this soft life led to his failure at school.

1894 the newly arrived school mistress at Palapye, Miss Alice Young, divided the central school there into two streams: one group had 150 pupils who paid 5/- per year and had all their lessons in the vernacular, while the other stream of 38 pupils paid^f 2 each per year to get extra lessons in English.⁶¹

In Ngwaketseland Edwin Lloyd divided the Kanye school (1893) into two separate schools, one "Free-School" and the other "Fee-School." The "free" school did not charge fees and was under Mothowagae, an evangelist who later broke away from the L.M.S. and founded his own church. The "fee school" charged the pupils 6d. each per month and was under Lloyd's charge; it did not offer English lessons but was supposed to impart a superior kind of education to that provided at the "free school" in virtue of its schoolmaster's qualification. However, by October 1893 the "Fee-School" was in arrears: "At first the people entered into the idea of improving the school, and paying fees with heartiness, but, gradually, they wearied of paying for the school month by month, until by August scarcely anyone paid, though 50 or 60 children attended." But at Moshupa, where the only school at the station charged fees, there were no arrears according to the evangelist there,

61. Willoughby to Thompson, 19th November, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket C - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

John Kesieman.⁶² Significantly, too, Mothowagae's school was better attended than Lloyd's and, by the beginning of 1894 Lloyd predicted the demise of all "Fee-Schools" in northern Bechuanaland.⁶³ These predictions did not materialise for as will be shown later in the chapter, some Tswana chiefs took the initiative in imposing an education levy on all tax payers.

Meanwhile the idea of building a trade school in some central part of the Protectorate, which we have seen to have been advocated for by Willoughby and a few L.M.S. agents and J.S. Moffat at different times, was gaining momentum. The need for the school was even more acutely felt after the closure of Kuruman, the sole supplier of teachers and evangelists (the Moffat Institution at Kuruman) in 1893.⁶⁴ In May 1896 the B.D.C. passed a resolution urging the Directors to approve the construction of an industrial school at Mafeking in the Cape Colony. But the proposal was suspended when rinderpest broke out late that year and the L.M.S., together with

62. Edwin Lloyd to Thompson, 21st December, 1893, Box 50 - Jacket D - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

63. Palapye Annual Report for 1893 in Lloyd to Thompson, 14th February, 1894, Box 2 (L.M.S.).

64. The school was closed after the B.D.C. had failed to find a replacement for its principal J. Tom Brown, who was going on furlough. See Minutes of the B.D.C., enclosed in J.T. Brown to Thompson, 20th November, 1893.

some British charitable organizations, channelled its funds to the relief of the impoverished Tswana.⁶⁵

When the L.M.S. Foreign Secretary again visited Bechuanaland in 1898 he found that the recommendations he had submitted in 1892 regarding the improvement of L.M.S. schools had been very largely ignored. He noted, too, that the shortage of trained teaching assistants had even become more acute since his last visit. Thompson again baldly commended the B.D.C. to overhaul their educational system:

I ventured to tell the Committee that, after looking at the matter very seriously, I had come to the conclusion that the training of evangelists was a mistake, that what the people had needed for years past, and what they certainly needed very urgently now, was Christian men trained as teachers, who would in addition be prepared to carry on some measure of Christian work. The evangelist as he has been trained in the past has unfortunately been too much disposed to arrogate to himself the title and position of a missionary, and to regard school teaching as altogether beneath his dignity.⁶⁶

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65. For effect of rinderpest on the Tswana and their cattle, see Alfred Wookey to Thompson, 20th June, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket C - Folder 2, 15th September, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket B - Folder 3, 17th September, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket B - Folder 2; Willoughby to Cousins, 9th June, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket D - Folder One, 14th August, 1897, Box 54 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). See also Chapter ~~Four~~^{Seven}, pp. 323-9.
66. Thompson, Deputation, pp. 44-6. Before Thompson visited Tswana schools, the B.D.C. sent Willoughby on a tour of the following mission schools in Lesotho and the Cape Colony: Lovedale and Blythswood (Presbyterian); Morija (Paris Evangelical Society); Healdtown (Wesleyan), and several Anglican schools at Grahams-town, Keiskama, and Aliwal North. His conclusion was that missionaries at these schools were doing "very superior work ... At any rate I am bound to tell you that we are very far behind," in "Report of Visit to Certain Native Boarding Schools in South Africa," 1st February, 1898, Box 55 - Jacket E - Folder One (L.M.S.).

Among some of Thompson's recommendations were an improved salary scale for assistant teachers, and the recruitment of young European teachers into L.M.S. schools until such time as the proposed industrial school produced its own teachers.⁶⁷

An important aspect of Thompson's recommendations was that, for the first time in the Society's history in Bechuanaland, the principle of training students for careers in their own communities was clearly spelled out, for the proposed trade school was designed to give "to all youths who leave school such a knowledge of tools as will enable them to be useful to themselves and to others..." However, for reasons connected with school administration and the Society's financial limitations, Vryburg, a town in the Cape Colony was selected as the home for the new school. Tswana communities, as we shall see later in the chapter, deeply resented the location of the school.⁶⁸

While Thompson's report covered the broad outlines of the current state of Tswana education and projected what ought to be its goals in future, a more factual account of how L.M.S.

67. Thompson, Deputation, pp. 44-5. In July, 1899 (see Thompson to Gould, 1st July, 1899) Khukwe and Shomolakae had their salaries raised from £24 to £36 per annum.

68. Thompson, Deputation, p. 51: "One important consideration which reconciled me to placing the school within the colony was that it would thus come within the range of Government inspection, and that the Society might reasonably hope to obtain Government grants for the Normal School and for the Industrial Department."

schools were run was given by Rev. James Richardson in his inspection report of 1899.⁶⁹ In the schools he visited, Richardson gave a reading test in seTswana to a sample of pupils. The position of Ngwato schools was as follows: At Sekao where there were 89 girls and 32 boys present, only 5 students passed the reading test; Boririma had 19 successful candidates out of its enrolment of 68 students (45 girls and 23 boys). The Khurutshe school had no successful candidate out of its student intake of 61 students (40 girls and 21 boys); and equally poor results were obtained at the Talaote school, where only one student passed out of the school's 99 pupils (68 girls and 31 boys). The best results were obtained at the Palapye central school where 31 out of the 40 students passed the test; the school had an enrolment of 135 pupils. The Molepolole school, which had an enrolment of 170 (130 girls and 43 boys) had 15 successful candidates out of the 100 pupils tested, while only 5 out of 50 candidates at the Kanye Central School passed the reading examination; the Kanye school had an enrolment of 260 pupils. Richardson's report showed that the majority

69. James Richardson, "Report of an Examination of the Chief Schools in Bechuanaland, July-September, 1899, Box 56 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.). Richardson's report does not seem to have been uniform, for example, he did not show the number of students he tested at the Khurutshe school.

of L.M.S. schools did not keep school registers, a practice which must have partly accounted for the poor attendance of students; it also must have been a factor in the children's poor achievement in reading since school attendance and achievement are correlated. Richardson's concluding remarks, like those of Thompson before him, exonerated L.M.S. missionaries but blamed the Tswana for what he judged to be a poor educational system.⁷⁰

The financial limitation of Tswana schools, which most L.M.S. agents repeatedly reported to have curtailed progress in education over the years, was slightly improved in 1903 following negotiations that went on between the L.M.S. missionaries and the British Government between 1901 and 1903. In 1901 the B.D.C, supported by the Resident Commissioner, Surmon, applied to the High Commissioner in Cape Town for an educational grant-in aid;⁷¹ the application was given more weight by Reginald Balfour who, after his inspection of L.M.S. schools late in 1901,

70. Ibid. "I sympathise very much with the missionaries in Bechuanaland, battling against such enormous inertia among the people, and the great irregularities in the attendance of the scholars makes a teacher almost despair."

71. C.O. 879/76, op. cit., p. 113, Surmon to Kitchener, June 1901, enclosed in Kitchener to Chamberlain, 87 of 16th August, 1901. Part of the grant was given to a Palapye European school of 24 pupils run by a Boer teacher, J.B. Oelrich (Ibid., pp. 37-8).

recommended that the B.D.C. be given some financial assistance.⁷² The application was unsuccessful because of the expenses Britain was incurring in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) that was in progress.⁷³ The first British contribution to Tswana education was not granted until 1903 when £600 was voted to the L.M.S.⁷⁴ Even so, Tswana education lagged behind Swaziland and Basutoland (the other British Protectorates in Southern Africa) for many years thereafter.

IV

Perhaps the most important event to occur in the history of Tswana education was the opening of Tiger Kloof industrial school in 1904. The idea of building an industrial school, as the above account shows, had been a lively issue during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Tiger Kloof's philo-

72. C.O. 879/78, op. cit., pp. 90-4, Reginald Balfour's Report, 11th November, 1901, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 88 of 14th February, 1902. Balfour, like Thompson in 1898, emphasized the need for industrial training. Kgama, who had sold lots of cattle to the British during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) donated £1760 towards Ngwato education, Howard Williams to Thompson, 25th April, 1901.

73. In Folder 778, Selly Oak Colleges, 25th May, 1900, "Notes of conversation with Chamberlain," Willoughby's informal request for an educational grant-in-aid was approved with a proviso, Chamberlain replying, "Yes, I don't see why you should not ... just now we cannot think of anything else; but after the war is over;" see also, Folder 376, "The contribution of Protestant missions to the life of the World" by Willoughby.

74. See Parliamentary Papers, 1904-5, LXXIII, Cd 2684 - 25, pp. 10-13.

sophy of education, which succeeding L.M.S. delegations and some B.D.C. members described in often garbled terms, was articulated by Reginald Balfour: "The industrial school should begin with a definitely utilitarian aim. It should not be until comparatively late in school life that the [Tswana] mind should be trained to perceive that things may be attractive or beautiful apart from or beyond, the measure of, their usefulness."⁷⁵ That Tiger Kloof should have excluded girls is a reflection of the pre-suffragist, Victorian attitudes of L.M.S. teachers who attached more importance to a man's career than a woman's vocation. Balfour justified this policy when he commended the proposal for building an industrial school to the High Commissioner in 1901:

But with regard to the men teachers, I may point out that there would be very little waste to the government,

as those teachers who resigned their posts could always be employed as government clerks and court interpreters, a feedback which in his view could hardly be expected from women.⁷⁶

But Tswana women were not entirely forgotten in the post-Balfour period, provision being made for them to improve their

75. Balfour's Report, op. cit., p. 93.

76. Ibid., p. 91. For a background of the school systems that influenced missionary attitudes to education, see: P.W. Musgrave, Society and Education in England since 1800 (London, 1968), passim; S.J. Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain (London, 1967), p. 140, passim.

mastery of the courses that had always been offered in existing schools: they were taught to wash, starch, and iron clothes, and also to make and mend them, one L.M.S. agent was even more specific and recommended that Tswana girls be taught "to make and bake a decent loaf of bread in a three legged pot."⁷⁷

The Tswana yearning for a practical education was aptly summed up by Chief Sebele at the official opening of Tiger Kloof in 1905. Reinforcing Willoughby's opening speech, Sebele said:

You speak words today that we have long had in our thoughts. Because you came and taught only from the books, we have had some doubt in our hearts; if we are taught only from books, and are not taught wisdom, how shall we live-- how shall we get light if we are not taught the ways and means by which the white people live? ... The book learning is no help to give to the people to live; the books told us some of the things which we may expect when we come to die. Today we have had words which I am very glad to hear ... Now we find what is to be done and what the books mean; a new prospect is now opened up before us.

Nevertheless some Tswana parents are reported to have withheld sending prospective students to Tiger Kloof presumably

77. Willoughby to Ralph Williams, 13th August, 1903 (C.O. 879/79, *op. cit.*, p. 662) enclosed in Lawley to Lyttleton, 426 of 16th November, 1903. Balfour, who was a Transvaaler, did not approve of multi-racial schools: "Their [three white children] presence in a school [at Palapye] where the medium of instruction is Sechwana, and where only the headmistress is of European race [sic] is, I am informed, bad for them and for the native children with whom they associate."

because the urban environment of the school might corrupt their children and also because it was situated far away from northern Tswana chiefdoms.⁷⁸

The Ngwato opposed the location of Tiger Kloof because the L.M.S. had refused to locate the school at Palapye in spite of the tribe's offer to use the old church building and site free of charge.

Ngwato opposition to the location of Tiger Kloof was shown by what amounted to a virtual boycott of the school. Some idea of their attitude is shown in Jennings' report, where they are reported to have said:

Monare [Sir] we tell you the wish of the tribe. The tribe wants to keep the church building at Palapye and make it into a school. Tiger Kloof is too far to send our children, and the tribe wants to get a teacher of its own to take charge of the school at Palapye.⁷⁹

Before the emergency meeting at Serowe was convened in 1904, Ngwato resentment to the location of Tiger Kloof had been dramatised by the only Ngwato boy who tried to enrol as a student

78. Willoughby, "Historic gathering at Tiger Kloof," The Chronicle (January 1905), pp. 312-13. With the exception of Jennings, all missionaries did not accept criticism for having built Tiger Kloof outside the Protectorate proper. Hence the Ngwato complaint against the location of Tiger Kloof was dismissed very lightly: "They evidently wish to have control of the missionaries and their work, even the deacons striving to make church polity subservient to tribal policy." (B.D.C. Minutes, 26th October, 1904). See also, Norman Goodall, A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945 (London, 1954), pp. 245-6.

79. Jennings to Thompson, 3rd May, 1904 (L.M.S.).

in it, Simon Ratshosa. Simon was expelled from Tiger Kloof on the same day he arrived there because he was not prepared to follow the rigid disciplinary code of the school:

He swelled about [the school] in master style all day, smoking cigarettes and patronising the other boys; I [the principal] took careful notes of what was going on ... I was just sending for him when he appeared on the scene, and said he had come to tell me that he thought this place was scarcely ready for him yet; but that he might return later on. I soon corrected that notion, and sent him home.⁸⁰

Students from Ngwaketseland and Kwenaland, though more restrained than Simon Ratshosa, showed a similar inclination to defy school regulations: of the five Ngwaketse boys who enrolled when the school started, two deserted before the end of the term; one of the two Kwena boys also left during the term because he did not like the food provided by the school and Willoughby's stern discipline.⁸¹

The combined B.D.C.-Ngwato meeting held at Serowe in October 1904 pacified the Ngwato but only after a protracted discussion in which themes underlying the failure of L.M.S.

80. Willoughby to Thompson, 15th January, 1904. Ratshosa does not deal with this aspect of his early life in his manuscript.

81. Willoughby to Thompson, 15th January, 1904. Simon Ratshosa was Kgama's grandson and is the author of the manuscript "My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom, etc." (1931) kept at Rhodes House, Oxford. Willoughby enforced strict discipline from the beginning, as is shown in his account (8th March, 1904, L.M.S.): "Within a few weeks of our arrival we had between thirty and forty native lads who wanted to learn the building trade ... of these lads some soon tired of industry, and others we weeded out as being unlikely to learn..."

schools, the conflict between the Society's agents and the tribe, had been fully discussed. Foremost among Ngwato grievances against the B.D.C. was the low quality of education provided in Ngwato schools, especially those situated in Serowe. The central school was heavily criticised and its headmistress, Miss Ella Sharp, was blamed for the school's lax discipline; they recommended that she be replaced by a man as Ngwato boys tended to despise women generally. Thus it would appear that, in spite of their criticism of Willoughby's stern discipline, the Ngwato appreciated some kind of order in the schools. Another grievance was the Society's refusal to employ some of the Ngwato boys in their schools, in particular one, Tibe, whom the Pitso felt was particularly suited to teach. The Pitso further submitted that Ngwato boys could teach more effectively, because they were more fluent in the vernacular than Miss Sharp. The B.D.C. nevertheless opposed the Ngwato on this issue, maintaining that the majority of Lovedale graduates were notoriously immoral; that on that score only two out of about fifty former students of Lovedale (and Moriija) in Bechuanaland were fit to teach in L.M.S. schools. The discussion on this issue was indecisive.

By the 24th October the Ngwato-B.D.C. meeting had reached an impasse. The Ngwato then relaxed their stand against the B.D.C. and made several concessions. Late on 24th October

Kgama sent his brother, Kebailele, to assure B.D.C. members that the Ngwato still had full confidence in the L.M.S.; they also withdrew their request to have Miss Sharp removed from the Central School. But Ngwato retraction came at a time when the B.D.C. had already felt the impact of the Pitso's criticisms, as the missionaries had in the meantime resolved to send a deputation to the British Administration urging them to take a more active role in Tswana education than previously; they also proposed that a schools' council be set up in each chiefdom to ensure full participation and cooperation of the Tswana in the education of their children. It was suggested that each schools' council should comprise of the local magistrate, the tribal chief, and a co-opted member. Finally, they recommended that there be an annual government inspection of schools, starting with James Burns' inspection late in 1904.⁸²

The British Government did not participate in Tswana education as actively as the B.D.C. had anticipated, but, from 1904 on voted an annual education grant to the L.M.S. The education votes from 1903 to 1910 were as follows: 1903-4, £600; 1904-5, £650; 1905-6, £822.19.6; 1906-7, £650; 1907-8,

82. See Minutes of the B.D.C., 26th October, 1904 (L.M.S.), James Burns, Report on the L.M.S. schools in the Bechuana-land Protectorate, Tiger Kloof, 14th December, 1904 (L.M.S.).

£850; 1908-9, £1000; and £999 for the financial year 1909-10.⁸³ Another major contribution made by the British Government to Tswana education was the appointment of E.B. Sargant as a school inspector for the High Commission territories (Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland) in 1905.

Before he was appointed inspector of schools, Sargant, who was an education officer in the Transvaal, carried out another inspection of Tswana schools in 1905, the fifth independent inspection by an outsider in six years.⁸⁴ Some of Sargant's most important observations concerned educational priorities of African communities in the three territories and the methods used in the teaching of English and arithmetic. Sargant found that the prestige attached to the mastery of the English language had gravely undermined the vernacular:

It should, however, be noticed that the first impulse of recently Christianised natives who send their children to school is the exact reverse of a desire for the more perfect command of their own language, whether spoken or written. The less the idiom is taught and the more rapidly English is introduced, the better they are pleased.⁸⁵

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83. C.O. 879/84, op. cit., pp. 249-50, Milner to Lyttleton, 148 of 25th April, 1904; Parliamentary Papers (1905) LXXIII, Cd. 2684-25, pp. 9-13; 1905-6, Liii, p. 5; 1906-7, LXVIII, p. 6, 1907-8, LVii, p. 5, 1908-9, LVii, pp. 6-7, 1910, LXIV, pp. 4-5.
84. E.B. Sargant, No. 52, Report on Native Education in South Africa, Part III, Education in the Protectorates (Headley, Surrey 1908).
85. Ibid., p. 4. This was criticised by Solomon T. Plaatje who, reminiscing on his school days (see his book, Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and their European Equivalents, London, 1916, pp. 15-16) observed: "The head teacher is usually the white missionary, who, even if a good linguist must, except in rare cases, have the accent and use the idiom of a foreigner, and the pupils invariably drop their mothers' accent and speak... 'as teacher speaks it'... a kind of 'school Sechuana'."

But the mastery of English must have been difficult for the pupils, for as Sargant found out, the teachers concerned themselves more with pronunciation of words and less with the meaning of words and passages.

The teaching of arithmetic was found to be defective in the extreme: not only were some currency denominations (for example, farthings and half-pennies) not in use in the three territories included in the exercises assigned to the pupils, but the rules of working the problems were drilled mechanically.⁸⁶ The greater part of Sargant's report was devoted to aspects of Tswana education that had been covered by Richardson (1899), Balfour (1901), and Burns (1904). However, L.M.S. agents in Bechuanaland do not seem to have responded to the report with any seriousness. Their indifference to the report seems to have been caused by Sargant's critical strictures and the frequency with which their work had been unfavourably reviewed since 1898; the missionaries therefore became sensitive to what appeared to them to be unsympathetic observations by outside visitors. Haydon Lewis typified the casual manner in which missionaries reacted:

86. Sargant, Report, p. 20.

"From this visit we learnt a few things about ourselves, which tho not absolutely new to us, were nevertheless clothed anew when touched upon from the point of view of an educational expert."⁸⁷

Nevertheless the post Sargant era in Tswana education saw some marginal improvements in those aspects which Sargant and his predecessors had criticised. But some of these improvements, for example the cooperation between chief and missionary, were erratic and were often effected independently of the missionary. In 1906 Bathoen donated £ 40 towards the education of the Ngwaketse.⁸⁸ In the same year Kgama contributed £ 120 towards the cost of a Tower clock at Tiger Kloof and paid school fees for two Ngwato students there. Jennings, who had witnessed the Ngwato-B.D.C. discord of 1904 welcomed Kgama's gesture: "It is quite evident that Khama has still a very generous heart in all things connected with the L.M.S. and its work in this country."⁸⁹

87. Haydon Lewis, Molepolole Report, 1905, Box 3 (L.M.S.); Edwin Lloyd (Serowe Annual Report, 1908, Box 4 (L.M.S.)) had objections to the report: "For the educational work of Serowe Mr. Sargant has no word of praise, but only severe words of criticism. But it is not clear whom he blames, whether the chief or the missionary, or both."

88. Howard Williams, Kanye Report, 1906, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

89. Jennings, Serowe Report, 1906, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

Among the Kwena the rapport between the headmistress of the Central school, Miss Partridge, and Sebele was conspicuous by its absence. Although he was interested in the education of the Kwena, Sebele seems to have been unimpressed with L.M.S. schools, which nevertheless plodded on without the co-operation of the tribe. By 1907 the enrolment at Miss Partridge's 'fee-school' at Kanye was reported to have fallen from 119 in 1906 to 113 in 1907 because, "The 6d. fee is still a grievance and keeps a great number of children away."⁹⁰

In 1908 Sebele opened a tribal school in his Kgotla which, as Haydon Lewis' report shows, he ran independently of the L.M.S.: Sebele opened it "without referring to his missionary, and his reason was, that the school master who would be paid by the tribe, would be expected to do the chief's secretarial work, which would mean a saving of £8 per month to Sebele."⁹¹ This was another indication that the Tswana were dissatisfied with L.M.S. schools. In 1909 Sebele imposed an education fee of 2/- on every tax payer; apparently he had by then patched up his differences with the L.M.S. that year for he proposed to the Protectorate Administration that local

90. Miss Partridge, Report for Molepolole School, 1907, Box 4 (L.M.S.). In 1909 the Ngwaketse complained against school fees.

91. Haydon Lewis, Molepolole Report, 1908, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

schools in Bechuanaland be under the control of a committee comprising the Assistant Commissioner, the local missionary, and the tribal chief.⁹² By 1910 school committees had been set up in all principal Tswana tribes; Miss Partridge abolished the school fee at the Central school at Kanye and, significantly enrolment at that school rose from 113 in 1907 to 342 in 1910.⁹³

In Ngwatoland cooperation between chief and missionary seems to have been restored, for in 1909 the ageing chief was reported to have visited many villages, admonishing parents to send their children to school: "Why don't your children get taught?" "You are not people to allow your children to grow up in such ignorance!"⁹⁴

V

Meanwhile Tiger Kloof was making steady progress. By 1908 its enrolment had risen from 11 students in 1904 to 49. Although most missionaries had outgrown their nineteenth century attitudes, this departure from conservatism seems to have eluded Willoughby. In 1908 he explained Tswana reluctance to

92. Lewis, Molepolole Report, 1909, Box 4 (L.M.S.). It appeared that the Committee that was reported to have been set up in 1904 (see p.221 and reference in footnote 82) had not functioned.

93. Mary Partridge to Thompson, 16th June, 1910 (L.M.S.).

94. Lloyd, Shoshong Report, 1909-10, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

send children to Tiger Kloof in superficial terms reminiscent of nineteenth century attitudes: "We have of course to help the Bechuana [Tswana] in spite of their own foolishness, but it is unfortunate that the boys are not coming in faster than they are."⁹⁵

Although Kgama's donation of 1906 suggested that he had accepted Tiger Kloof, Ngwato students do not seem to have emulated his example. Some of them failed to adjust to Willoughby's stern discipline and their resentment of school rules was tacitly encouraged by Jennings, who corresponded with them from Serowe. In 1908 Jennings received several

95. Willoughby, Report of Tiger Kloof Institution for 1908 (L.M.S.).

Analysis of Pupils for 1908

	Appren- tices	Boarding School	Working Pupils	Bible Students	Total
Present at end of 1907	33	27	6	-	66
Failed to return in 1908	1	14	-	-	15
Returned in 1908	32	13	6	-	51
Admitted during 1908	14	1	1	2	18
Left during 1908	16	3	1	-	20
Transferred during 1908	-	3	1	-	20
Transferred to Tiger Kloof in 1908	1	-	1	2	4
Present at end of 1908	31	8	6	4	49

letters from Ngwato boys in which they complained that life at Tiger Kloof was unbearable. One of the letters from Gaofhetoge Motiki (of 27th August, 1908) discussed conditions at the school at great length:

Here at school I am getting no advantage - I am sitting down merely ... I am not satisfied to stay here ... I inform you that if it depends upon me I shall not come back next year. I might return if Mr. Gillender [school master] were not here ... In this Institution I am afraid of the teacher and the principal.

Another Ngwato student complained that "Mr. Willoughby says he is a chief and everything he says has to be done, has to be obeyed." Gaofhetoge's father, himself an L.M.S. evangelist among the Kalanga at Letlakana in Ngwatoland, probably encouraged his son to disobey school rules, for on 22nd July, 1908 he complained to Jennings that the teaching staff at Tiger Kloof was needlessly severe on the students and that food at the school was bad; he urged the Society to replace the entire teaching force by a more tolerant staff. But when Jennings subsequently laid charges of incompetence against Willoughby, the B.D.C. dismissed them as groundless.⁹⁶ When in 1909 Gaofhetoge and three Ngwato boys disobeyed Willoughby's order to transfer their course registration from carpentry to build-

⁹⁶. Jennings to Thompson, 31st July, 1906 (L.M.S.).

ing, they were all summarily expelled.⁹⁷

Between 1908 and 1910 Willoughby became a centre of controversy because of his polemical statements on Tswana politics. In July 1908 he angered the Tswana when he informed a Cape Parliament Select Committee on Native Education that there was no need to teach agriculture in Tswana schools because the latter had "large stretches of land and esteem it their mission in life to put in crops in mealies, and waste a lot of time in gardening." Willoughby, whose own school did not teach agriculture, even predicted that Europeans would in due course take whatever arable land the Tswana possessed; he further recommended the abolition of communal land tenure and its replacement by individual land tenure.⁹⁸

Willoughby's views did not go unchallenged. They were challenged by delegates to the Bechuanaland Native Teachers' Association meeting held at Mafeking on 29th September, 1908. Delegates also took the occasion to review education in Bechuanaland and concluded that it lagged behind Basutoland, Chief Silas

97. Jennings to Thompson, 31st July, 1909. His criticism of Tiger Kloof and its principal was rejected by the B.D.C. in May, 1909, when the latter cabled their Society: "The B.D.C. have unanimous and complete confidence in Tiger Kloof and Willoughby" in Minutes of the B.D.C., 1st-11th May, 1909, Box 71 (L.M.S.). For Tswana-Missionary conflicts over land, see Chapter Four.

98. Ibid. to Thompson, 1909.

Molema, who was a guest speaker, ascribing it to the Society's "primitive methods" which in his view did not match the "pushfulness" of the Paris Protestants in Basutoland. Mr. Solomon Plaatje, editor of the weekly Koranta ea Becoana, criticised the Society's virtual monopoly on Tswana education, which he thought ought to be removed if any progress was to be made.⁹⁹

Chief Kgama, who was offended by Willoughby's testimony to the Select Committee, informed Rev. Lloyd that the latter's views on land tenure were as unacceptable as Mackenzie's; and that in his view missionaries ought not to meddle in tribal politics. Also, by commenting on the sensitive issue of land tenure, Willoughby opened up old wounds as Kgama recalled some of the conflicts he had had with him over the years:

I went to England with him. There I was helped by Monare [Sir] Thompson and Mr. Albert Spicer. I do not reckon that Olloby [Willoughby] helped me at all. When in England, he kept me away from people to whom I wished to speak. After our business had been settled, I observed that a great change came over Olloby and I could not work with him any longer.

Willoughby's unpopularity was reported to be widespread. An Ngwato church elder who attended a deacons' conference at Kuruman said: "Olloby batho ba mothsaba bothle" [Willoughby: the

99. Diamond Fields Advertiser, 19th October, 1908.

people are all afraid of him"⁷.¹⁰⁰ As Kgama observed in his account, these grievances against Willoughby partly accounted for Tswana reticence to send their children to Tiger Kloof.

By 1910, when this study of Tswana education ends, Tiger Kloof was barely six years old. Although its theology department ordained the first Tswana ministers in 1910¹⁰¹, the fledgling school and other L.M.S. schools had as yet to wield greater influence on Tswana society.¹⁰² In the course of time the school created an elite that has had a great impact on contemporary affairs in Botswana. The Rev. A.E. Haile, who succeeded Willoughby as principal of Tiger Kloof in 1914 writes:

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100. Lloyd to Thompson, 20th August, 1909. Kgama suggests (in "Notes on the Remarks of the Chief Khame and the Serowe Deacons, 1909") that his private secretary Seiso and Willoughby swindled some of his money during the Chief's visit to England in 1895: "I took £600 to England. Seiso ... stole some of this money. I told Olloby [Willoughby] to buy something for Mrs. Willoughby ... he bought her a saddle ... when we returned to Phalapye, Olloby gave me £60, which was the amount remaining over from the £600... my people complained of him."
101. Minutes of the B.D.C. Annual Meeting held at Kuruman, May 1st to May 11th 1909; Minutes of B.D.C. meeting, 18th April to 30th April, 1910. (L.M.S.).
102. For which the Hon. B.C. Thema, Minister of Education in the Republic of Botswana is grateful: "Their [L.M.S.] educational philosophy was simply that man did not only have a soul to nourish, but he also had reason to develop and skills to cultivate, and on this basis they provided Botswana with education, of the heart, the head, and the hand," in KUFELWANO, Volume VIII, No. 12 (Dec. 1969). However, this could hardly be an accurate assessment of their nineteenth century schools.

As for Tiger Kloof it would be impossible to give you any comprehensive account of my experience over the years when I was principal from 1914-1945. I may say ... that 5 out of 6 African members of the present Botswana cabinet are old Tiger Kloof pupils, as well as the President, Sir Seretse Khama, and the Director of Education, Miss G.M. Chiepe.¹⁰³

Even before L.M.S. agents had improved on their record of inept teaching, there is evidence to suggest that their efforts were not altogether in vain. Literacy among Tswana Chiefs and commoners alike proved to be invaluable during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Whenever chiefs corresponded with the British Government or with the L.M.S., they sometimes wrote the letters themselves or used their private secretaries to do so. Indeed literacy enabled them to keep abreast with events in Southern Africa.

Reading vernacular papers¹⁰⁴ from the Protectorate and

103. Rev. A.E. Haile, Sussex, in letter communication of 12th December, 1968.

104. The B.D.C. published papers mainly for their church members; beginning in 1856, the following papers have been in circulation during the specified times: Molekudi ua Bechuana, monthly, 1856-7; Mokaeri oa Bechuana, monthly, 1857-9; Mahoko oa Becwana, monthly, 1883-98; Koranta ea Becoana, weekly, 1901-8; and Tsala ea Batho, weekly, c. 1910-9. Except for the last paper which was printed at Tiger Kloof, all were printed at Kuruman. While most of the stories in these papers were of a religious nature, some reports were exposes of what the missionaries thought to be social injustices, for example in 1890, when Mahoko oa Becoana published a story alleging that Kgama had killed a woman, Kgama wrote to Thompson (11th April, 1890, Box 47 - Jacket C - Folder One) complaining that "...Mr. Wookey has put a letter in the paper. The letter is by one of Sechele's people. It has

from the Cape Colony kept them informed about events. A case in point was the Ngwato reaction to a report in the January issue (1893) of Mahoko Oa Becuana. When they read about the B.S.A. Co's intention to annex Bechuanaland the Ngwato were deeply concerned. Lloyd reported:

I saw yesterday afternoon several leading men of the town sitting as solemn as a congregation of owls with this book [Mahoko] in their midst; so the thorn is in again which I extracted or tried to the other day.¹⁰⁵

Nor was political consciousness the only advantage literacy enhanced; Willoughby's accounts show that he used pamphlets printed in the vernacular to teach hygiene and distributed

104. (cont.)

been done to help Khari Macheng [Kgama's rival]. Why does it tell old words of long ago?" The Rolong chief, Montshiwa (Lloyd to Thompson, 14th June, 1893) was reported to have written to the same paper in defence of "the payment of cattle for wives. He has three wives himself." The Hermannsburgs published Moshupa-tsele. For the history of Tswana Press see Plaatje, Sechuana Proverbs, pp. 4-5; Schapera, The Tswana, p. 18. See also C.O. 879/37, Africa (South), No. 441, p. 55, Chief Kgama to the Editor of Cape Argus, 3rd December, 1892, enclosed in Loch to Ripon, 49 of 19th December, 1892.

105. Lloyd to Thompson, January 1893. For more examples, see Kanye Church to Thompson, 3rd November, 1902 (translated by Kgosikobo Cholongona) Chief Bathoen to Thompson, 19th February, 1903 (translated by Cholongona), Chief Kgama to L.M.S. Directors, 3rd May, 1892, Palapye Church members to Thompson, 16th March, 1895, Bathoen to Thompson, 21st May, 1903.

thousands of them throughout Bechuanaland between 1904 and 1914.¹⁰⁶

Thus by 1910 Tswana education had undergone several transformations. Although L.M.S. agents had for a greater part of the nineteenth century been unable to correlate education to secular needs, they remedied that omission and made some improvements in the school system. The opening of Tiger Kloof in 1904 was a landmark in the evolution of Tswana education. Its importance lies not so much in the new educational experiences it offered Tswana youths as in the problems it posed in school organization especially the relationship between parents, teachers and L.M.S. agents. Attempts that were made by both missionaries and Tswana parents to solve these problems launched Tswana education into the modern era.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of its imperfections education had thus been made more compatible with Tswana needs: it had become something much more than just "To make a book talk."

106. Willoughby Papers, Folder 376, Selly Oak. Between 1904 and 1914 Willoughby distributed about 80,000 pamphlets in Setswana dealing with syphilis, chest trouble, wounds and some infectious diseases.

107. By 1907 a "Native Advisory Council" had been set up which comprised missionaries and representatives from the principal tribes. At its meeting held at Kanye in January 1907 Chief Bathoen was reported to have "delivered an able address on the questions before the meeting." For an assessment of the effectiveness of Tswana education during the first half of this century, see Chiepe, "An Investigation of Problems of Popular Education in the B.P.", op. cit.

CHAPTER SIX

The Boikgololo Movement in Northern Bechuanaland,

1898 - 1910.

The turn of the twentieth century saw northern Tswana chiefdoms embroiled in a movement that was in many respects complementary to the efforts the Tswana were making to improve the prevailing system of education. Church schism, which had its beginnings in Basutoland and the Cape during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, spread to northern Tswana chiefdoms in earnest in 1898. Led by disgruntled L.M.S. evangelists, 'Ethiopians' or separatists were spurred on by secessionists from neighbouring territories; and in Ngwaketse-land there is evidence to suggest that legal counsel discouraged the breakaway group from reconciling with the L.M.S. church at Kanye.

Yet throughout the nineteenth century L.M.S. missionaries relied on teacher-evangelists (or 'native agency') for the proselytization of the Tswana especially in the outlying 'bush' schools. Some of the Society's evangelists were Paul Mebalwe,¹ Khukwe Mogodi, Diphukwe Yakwe, and Shomoloekae Sebolai.² Missionary reports suggest that Tswana evangelists rendered faithful service, although the quality of their work was often judged to be poor. Even so, this incompetence was explained away in over-simplified terms, the Tswana being

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1. See Livingstone, Missionary Correspondence, pp. 49, 102.
 2. See J. Tom Brown, The Apostle of the Marshes: The Story of Shomolekae (London, 1925); Willoughby, "Shomolekae," Folder 807, Selly Oak.

thought to be naturally incapable of performing good work. Missionaries influenced L.M.S. Directors who, like their agents in Bechuanaland, readily concluded that African evangelists were less resilient workers than their white counterparts. Thus, when Khukwe Mogodi fled from Ngamiland in 1885 after his house had twice been ransacked by the Ndebele, the L.M.S. Foreign Secretary wrote: "I am not greatly surprised that Khukwe should have come to the conclusion not to return to the Lake after all he had endured. Had he been a European missionary we might have expected a little more resoluteness, and the manifestation of a determination to persevere in spite of all obstacles."³

If missionary views on the Tswana capacity to work were inaccurate, they nevertheless influenced them in determining the rank of evangelists in the pastoral leadership of the church. Thus although missionaries readily conceded that the services of Tswana evangelists were invaluable to evangelization, it never occurred to them that native evangelists

3. Thompson to Hepburn, 17th June, 1886 (L.M.S.). Mogodi was again posted to Ngamiland in 1886. See also Thompson to Lloyd, 22nd December, 1887, in which he advised Lloyd to be patient (*festina lente*) when dealing with Tswana evangelists. Methodist missionaries seem to have shared the same view on African evangelists, see for example, H. Wainman to Hartley, December 1891, M.M.S., Box Transvaal, 1891-96, in which he reported that teacher-evangelists required the constant supervision of European missionaries.

should be elevated to the Congregational ministry. Also, remuneration was meagre⁴ and irregular, a condition that compelled some evangelists to trade in ivory to augment their salary. Yet when in 1881 the B.D.C. discovered that Khukwe had engaged in small scale trade in ivory, they recalled him from Ngamiland and reprimanded him before they transferred him to Moshupa in Ngwaketseland.⁵

Relations between Tswana rulers and teacher-evangelists were by no means cordial either. The misunderstanding between chiefs and evangelists was partly inherited from the beginnings of the L.M.S. mission when, for strategic and military reasons, chiefs preferred European missionaries to African evangelists.⁶ Another factor that militated against cordial relations between chiefs and evangelists was that pastoral leadership too often conflicted with the secular authority of the chiefs.⁷ Thus, for a greater part of the nineteenth century African evangelists occupied an ambivalent position in Tswana society: on the one hand the L.M.S. judged

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4. See Alfred Wookey to Thompson, 14th October, 1902 (L.M.S.), who said the salaries varied from £6 to £12 a year.
 5. Minutes of the B.D.C. meeting held at Kuruman, in Ashton to Whitehouse, 3rd June, 1881. Khukwe Mogodi returned to Ngamiland in 1883.
 6. See for example Chief Ntare, et. al., in Chapters Five and Three, pp.195, 23-6.
 7. See for example Sechele's response to Mabalwe's pastoral leadership in Chapter One, p. 38.

them to be inefficient agents; on the other Tswana chiefs were continually irritated by the evangelists' assertiveness in church affairs; while the majority of the Tswana were indifferent to the Christian message of salvation. However, much Tswana evangelists might have felt the need to improve their conditions of service, the social and political milieu in which they worked condemned them to menial pastoral positions. In due course L.M.S. missionaries came to believe that their mission to the Tswana was beyond reproach. This attitude influenced them to impose a system of education that easily lended itself to criticism towards the end of the nineteenth century. And just as the high quality of education at Morija (Basutoland) and Lovedale (Cape)⁸ spurred the Tswana to agitate for better schools, so were members of the Boikgololo⁹ movement inspired by secessionists from neighbouring territories.

8. See for example, an editorial in Koranta ea Becoana, 2nd November, 1904, enclosed in Jennings to Thompson, 31st July, 1909, Box 71 (L.M.S.), in which Lovedale and Morija were reported to be "what Oxford and Cambridge had been to the Englishman;" that they were "two pioneer civilizing agencies" without which Africans in Southern Africa would be the poorer.

9. For an assessment of the effectiveness of Tswana Schools see Chapter Five. For the origin and meaning of Boikgololo see Williams, Report of the Kanye Mission, 31st December, 1908, Box 4 (L.M.S.) where he said of the secessionists, also called Ethiopians: "The people who belong to this say "No we are not Ethiopians but BOIKGOLOLO...it means 'the free,' i.e., free from the control of the white missionary." See also John Brown, Secwana Dictionary (London, 1895), p. 102 where golola is rendered as "to set free, or deliver," I am grateful to Miss Leloba Molema (of Royal Holloway College) for confirming the meaning of Boikgololo. See also, B.N.A., Rev. James Robb, Port Elizabeth, to Milner, 18th September, 1902, who said separatists were called Ethiopians.

The Transvaal, which wielded considerable influence on the Boikgololo movement in Bechuanaland, experienced the first African secession from a white church in 1892, when for reasons stemming from racial discrimination Rev. Mangena Mokone broke away from the Methodist church. Mokone subsequently formed a church of his own, which was recognised by the Transvaal Government in August 1896.¹⁰ The new church assumed a universal character as its members called it the 'Ethiopian Church,' a name that purported to embrace all Blacks in the world.¹¹

The universal character of the Ethiopian Church was given more weight in 1896 when that church affiliated itself to the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Contact between the two churches was initiated by Charlotte Manye, a niece of Makone's who had travelled to America with a church choir in 1895 and subsequently enrolled as a student at Wilberforce University in Ohio. Charlotte informed Mokone of the existence of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

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10. Josephus R. Coan, "The Expansion of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa, 1896-1908," Ph.D. Thesis, 1961, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Appendix III, p. 443; R.R. Wright, et. al., The Encyclopedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 318.
11. Wright, Encyclopedia, p. 318; B.N.A., No. 2384, S.178/1, Athlone, High Commissioner to Resident Commissioner, 15th August 1924; L.L. Berry, A Century of Missions of the A.M.E. Church, 1840-1940 (New York, 1940), p. 74; Coan, op. cit., p. 425. In the Southern African context (see J.D. Taylor, ed. Christianity and the Natives of South Africa, Lovedale, 1925, pp. 75, 86) 'Ethiopian' and 'Separatist' are used interchangeably to describe Black secessions from Christian churches led by Whites.

with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Subsequently at their third annual conference held in Pretoria in March 1896, Ethiopian delegates resolved to join the A.M.E. church. The preamble to the resolution had Pan-African overtones: "This conference is strongly of the opinion that a union with the African Methodist Episcopal Church will not only be hailed by our people, but would be the means of evangelising numerous tribes of this vast continent."¹² Conference appointed Rev. James Dwane and Rev. Jacobus G. Xaba to go to the United States to negotiate the affiliation of their church to the A.M.E. church. In the event only Dwane was able to go to America and late that year the Ethiopian church was affiliated to the A.M.E. church.¹³

Meanwhile the Ethiopian church seems to have stepped up its organisation in the Transvaal; its recruitment of disaffected members of established churches into its fold seemed unorthodox to white ministers of religion. Rev. George Weavind must have captured the mood of the clergy when he complained that "this independent church has already created many difficulties in the country. The leaders have

12. Berry, op. cit., p. 75.

13. Ibid., pp. 76-78; Wright, op. cit., pp. 318-319; Roux, Time Longer than Rope, pp. 81-83.

laid hands upon any native, without respect to character, who had some little education, and in some cases ordained him and in others placed him in positions of responsibility. These men ... have ... caused trouble and the government are beginning to see that Native churches without a European head, will set the country in a flame if they are not suppressed."¹⁴ In the event Transvaal officials did not consider the Ethiopian movement sufficiently dangerous to be outlawed.¹⁵

Meanwhile in Bechuanaland proper no significant indigenous church had thus far emerged to challenge L.M.S. dominance. Although there had been some schism in the South at the Taung church between 1886 and 1890 and at Manthe in 1893, the Tswana region north of the Molopo remained essentially unaffected until the end of the 1890's. In 1898 two Ethiopian representatives from Khumwana in Rolongland, Seile and Mareko, visited Chief Bathoen at Kanye. They assured Rev. James Good that they had no intention to interfere with his work as such but that "their presence would be valuable to the tribe affording

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14. M.M.S., Transvaal Box, 1886-96, George Weavind to Marshall Hartley, 29th August, 1896, see also, Weavind to Hartley, 25th September, 1896.
15. The Ethiopian Church was in fact recognised on 12th August, 1896 (see footnote 10 above).

them variety in teaching."¹⁶ To L.M.S. agents, who no doubt remembered with anguish their encounter with Matsame at Taung in 1886 and must have also known the activities of the Ethiopian church in South Africa,¹⁷ the Ethiopian overture was intolerable. But in spite of the visitors' offer to improve the quality of education with which the Ngwaketse were slowly becoming disenchantered, Chief Bathoen was not enthused either. After Seile and Mareko had stated the object of their visit in the Kgotla, the pitso urged them to renounce Ethiopianism and to come back to the L.M.S. fold. Bathoen seems to have been largely responsible for the rejection of this incipient Ethiopianism. In his summation of the pitso proceedings Bathoen reminded the Ngwaketse that they owed literacy and some measure of political independence to the L.M.S. (or "The London"). In Bathoen's view the Ethiopians could never hope to match the impressive record of the L.M.S. and in the circumstances he saw no need for another church. Hence he could declare: "No, Hear me! I

16. Good to Thompson, 11th November, 1898, Box 55 - Jacket D - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). For the Schism at Taung, see N. Parsons, "Ethiopianism among the Tswana in the 19th and 20th Centuries," Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 29th January, 1970. For church schism at Taung, see also Sundkler, Bantu Prophets, pp. 38-39.

17. For a viable Separatist movement, see C.C. Saunders, "Tile and the Thembu Church," Journal of African History, XI, 4 (1970), pp. 553-570.

am a London, I have always been a London, and if you wish for change here, you must wait till I have gone, and my son Seapapitso is ruling in my stead."¹⁸ When the B.D.C. met at Kuruman in March 1899 they resolved not to recognise the Ethiopian church and to punish any evangelists or church members who might join it.¹⁹ Nor did that measure stop the spread of Ethiopianism in Bechuanaland.

In 1901 five Ethiopians appeared in Ngwatoland under the guise of being 'prophets;' they claimed to possess the power to solve all social and political disabilities of the tribe. Although their message appealed to some Ngwato in and around Palapye, Kgama apprehended them swiftly. He convened a phuthego on 15th April, 1901, at which the 'prophets' were tried on charges of false pretences. At that trial one of the prophets was reported to have "confessed that he had commanded the people to worship him."²⁰ The phuthego found

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18. Good to Thompson, 11th November, 1898, (L.M.S.). For the Tswana fight against the B.S.A. Company, see Parsons, "Visit of the Chiefs," *op. cit.*, Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, pp. 212-234.
19. Minutes of the B.D.C., 14th March, 1899, Box 56 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).
20. Willoughby, "Worshipping the Daft," Folder 770, Selly Oak. This was not unprecedented for in 1864 (see Ibid.), a 'prophetess' called Mmaborola is said to have arisen among the Ngwato; she claimed to possess supernatural powers, but Willoughby does not say what she was capable of doing.

them guilty and ordered that their houses be burnt down; the court also ruled that persons who had given the prophets some presents be fined twice the value of the goods they had given away.

Meanwhile American Negroes had become more active since the affiliation of the Ethiopian church to the A.M.E. church in 1896. In consequence two years after the affiliation A.M.E. church membership in South Africa rose from 2,000 to 12,000,²¹ a trend that must have encouraged American Negroes to send a representative to South Africa in 1899. Even before that delegate arrived, Northern Tswana chiefdoms had attracted the attention of the A.M.E. church, for in 1898 it sent a representative to start a church at Palapye. However, that mission was nipped in the bud because Chief Kgama III, who had by then been a staunch supporter of the L.M.S. for thirty six years, summarily expelled the Ethiopian from Ngwatoland.²² In 1899 Bishop C.A.A. Rideout was sent to South Africa to organise the A.M.E. church. A former District Judge in the U.S.A., his legal training seems to have fired the imagination of Ethiopians in Southern Africa. Rev. Mangena Mokone's welcome speech which was subsequently

21. Coan, op. cit., pp. 426-427.

22. Howard Williams to Thompson, Palapye Report, 1898, Box 3 - (L.M.S.). For Kgama's observance of Christian teaching see Chapter Three, footnote 58.

published in the A.M.E. church paper Voice of Missions was clearly laudatory:

Praise God! such a man as Rideout [is] on our shores. He is the first man of this kind in these parts of South Africa. We never saw a black judge in our lives, only Rideout ... we want a man of some qualifications, and who will stand [against] ... prejudice, one who will fight for equal rights for the [Black] race on the face of the globe. The men of honorary M.D. and M.A. wont do much here. We want the men who passed their degrees who can face an opposer with great power; we want the engineers.²³

Mokone concluded his eulogy by appealing to American negroes to come and live in South Africa.

There is no evidence to suggest that Mokone's appeal was taken seriously by American Blacks; it appears that the few American Blacks the A.M.E. church sent to South Africa merely filled administrative posts in the church hierarchy. Nevertheless, the A.M.E. church officials had some impact on the spiritual and secular life of Blacks in Southern Africa. Hence soon after Rideout's arrival in South Africa Gordon Sprigg the premier of the Cape Colony reported that the Bishop visited Pondoland and freely dabbled in the internal politics of that chiefdom:

23. B.N.A., No. 2384, S.178/1, "Ethiopianism at Kgama's," in C.O. 879/74, Gordon Sprigg to Milner, 9th December, 1902, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 12 of 29th December, 1902.

The influence Rideout endeavoured to exert amongst the Pondos was not exercised in a right direction, the tendency of his teaching being to set native against European.²⁴

This allegation was later denied by some Ethiopians, who pointed out that the A.M.E. Church in the Cape had a white minister.²⁵ Nevertheless, by 1902 the activities of the A.M.E. church (or the Ethiopian church) were considered by some observers of the geopolitics of Southern Africa to be a serious threat to European hegemony in that region.²⁶

Yet in spite of this Ethiopian onslaught in South Africa proper, Northern Tswana chiefdoms remained largely impregnable to church separatists. One reason for this quiescence was that the frontier politics on the high veld during the second half of the nineteenth century had fostered mutual interdependence between L.M.S. missionaries and Tswana chiefs.²⁷

24. Ibid., see also Harry Dean, Umbala (London, 1929), pp. 243-247 where he noted that the first A.M.E. church resident Bishop to South Africa, Rev. J. Coppin, urged eighteen African chiefs who had come to see the Prince of Wales in Cape Town in 1901 to befriend one another and also taught them the Ethiopian song: "Ethiopia, stretch forth thy Hands ..."

25. See Minutes of N.A.C.S.A., Vol. IV, p. 474.

26. See R. Wardlaw Thompson to Willoughby, 20th September, 1902 (L.M.S.). But the South African Native Affairs Commission (see their Report, op. cit., p. 64) advised against "any measure of legislative repression" against the Ethiopian movement.

27. For the development of this phenomenon, see Chapters Two and Four, pp. 69-70, 163-165.

However, two factors seem to have favoured the penetration of the Ethiopian spirit in northern Bechuanaland: first, the poor quality of education, which easily lended itself to criticism by outsiders and^{by} the Tswana themselves;²⁸ second, the overly paternalistic L.M.S. policy toward teacher-evangelists,²⁹ which led missionaries to believe that no Tswana evangelist was good enough to be promoted to the clergy. Thus when a persistent Ethiopian sect appeared in any chiefdom in northern Bechuanaland, missionaries were ill-prepared to deal with it; their leverage lay in Tswana chiefs, who appear to have suppressed Boikgololo incursions more for political reasons than for religious ones.

In Ngwaketseland the Kanye church and Chief Bathoen were embroiled in a church schism at the turn of the century when an L.M.S. evangelist asserted his right to lead the church. The leader of the dissident group was Mothowagae Mohlogeboa, himself a moNgwaketse. Mothowagae's early life is obscure, but it is known that from 1874 to 1880 he was an assistant teacher at Kanye under Rev. James Good. Between 1880 and 1884 he was a student in the Bible School at Kuruman, returning at the end of 1884 to become an evangelist at Kanye.³⁰

28. See Chapter Five, pp. 188-190, 217.

29. See p. 232 and footnote 29 above.

30. See B.N.A., No. 715. R.C. 10/11, Mothowagae, B.C. Koko, Tsime, et. al., Petition of King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church to Resident Commissioner, 19th October 1903; Chief Bathoen to Acting Assistant Commissioner, 27th June, 1902.

By 1893 he had enhanced his popularity by conducting a non-fee paying school while Rev. Lloyd witnessed a decline in attendance in his fee-paying school.³¹ Mothowagae's own testimony suggests that by 1900 he believed himself to be a minister of religion and a co-equal of Rev. Edwin Lloyd.³²

The B.D.C. precipitated Mothowagae into belligerent Ethiopianism when, in 1901, they transferred him to Lehututu in the Kgalagadi desert. According to Chief Bathoen Mothowagae was willing to go but could not do so because of his wife's illness.³³ Mothowagae's own account asserts that Chief Bathoen and the church at Kanye wanted him to stay;³⁴ while Rev. Lloyd reported that he was dismissed in July 1901 for refusing to go to Lehututu. The dismissal was condemned by the church at Kanye and the church members took the occasion to criticise the L.M.S. over a number of issues. According to Lloyd "those who were inquirers were dissatisfied because they

31. Lloyd to Thompson, 14th June 1893, Box 50 - Jacket A - Folder 2, 21st December, 1893, Box 50 - Jacket D - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). See also Chapter Five, p. 210.

32. B.N.A., Petition of King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church, loc. cit.

33. B.N.A., Bathoen to Acting Assistant Commissioner, 27th June, 1902, loc. cit.

34. See Petition of King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church, loc. cit.

were not admitted into church at once ... The dissatisfied headmen joined the now dissatisfied evangelist."³⁵ The dissident group demanded that Mothowagae be ordained as a minister of the L.M.S. and that he should take charge of the Kanye church. The group included Bathoen's brother Kwenatsile, the Chief's brother-in-law Tsime, the latter having accompanied Bathoen to England in 1895.

Early in 1902 the B.D.C., no doubt shaken by Mothowagae's support, summoned Mothowagae to a meeting at Palapye even though the evangelist was no longer an officer of the L.M.S. There the B.D.C. conducted a test to find out if Mothowagae could be considered for ordination. He was reported to have failed the test.³⁶ Although missionaries did not state what type of test they gave him, Mothowagae maintained that he was given a Latin test:

"I attended in 1902 at Phalapye at the conference held there and on my presenting myself for ordination I was given a Latin Book and asked to read same. I informed them that they had not taught me this Language in their schools and they refused to ordain me."³⁷

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35. Lloyd to Thompson, 9th May, 1902 (L.M.S.).
36. See Willoughby to Thompson, 17th December 1902, (L.M.S.), who described Mothowagae as "an ignorant fellow;" B.N.A., 410, R.C. 7/8, Bathoen to Acting Assistant Commissioner, 13th June 1902, who said Mothowagae failed in every subject.
37. See B.N.A., op. cit., "Mothowagae's Declaration," in Petition, loc. cit.

That failure notwithstanding, there was now a popular support for Mothowagae's leadership. On 12th June 1902 Bathoen wrote to the Protectorate administration saying he had refused demands from the secessionists to authorise Mothowagae to baptise children.³⁸ Bathoen again wrote to Assistant Acting Commissioner Jules Ellenberger on 27th June 1902 asking if Mothowagae could marry and baptise members of his congregation.³⁹ But Ellenberger was in the meantime corresponding with L.M.S. missionaries,⁴⁰ who in turn, tried to present their protagonist in bad light.

Lloyd wrote to Ellenberger on 27th June 1902 acquainting him with the church dispute at Kanye and suggesting that the Government had no business to meddle in church affairs.⁴¹ Rev. James Good, who had retired to the Cape in 1900 wrote to Ellenberger on 30th June 1902 recounting what he surmised to be the underlying principles of Mothowagae's sect and other Ethiopians generally. To Good Tswana Ethiopianism was part of a Southern African movement whose desire was "to cast off

38. B.N.A., 410, R.C. 7/8, Bathoen to Assistant Acting Commissioner, 12th June, 1902.

39. B.N.A., op. cit., Bathoen to Ellenberger, 27th June, 1902.

40. B.N.A., op. cit., Jules Ellenberger to Lloyd, 17th June, 1902.

41. B.N.A., op. cit., Lloyd to Assistant Acting Commissioner, 27th June, 1902.

the tutelage in which [the Tswana] have lived up to the present."⁴² Good ascribed Kanye Ethiopianism to the influence wielded by Tswana migrant workers returning from Johannesburg and Kimberley mines and also to Tswana students at Lovedale who brought back "the most wonderful stories about the churches and their methods in the colony--the Ethiopians in particular."⁴³ The Resident Commissioner subsequently informed the B.D.C. that the church dispute at Kanye was not within the purview of the Government⁴⁴ but, as will be shown later, the political overtones of the dispute entailed government intervention not only at Kanye but at all other Tswana centres as well.

Meanwhile L.M.S. Directors thought they could pacify the Mothowagae group by transferring Rev. Lloyd to a station in the Cape Province. But the transfer was opposed by a section of the Kanye Church. On 3rd November, 1902 twelve members purporting to represent five hundred L.M.S. Church members at Kanye wrote to the L.M.S. Directors urging them

42. B.N.A., op. cit., James Good, Kenilworth, Cape, to Ellenberger, 30th June, 1902.

43. Ibid.

44. B.N.A., Ralph Williams to B.D.C., 18th August, 1902.

not to transfer Lloyd;⁴⁵ a month later forty six church members wrote to the Directors demanding that Lloyd be reinstated to his Kanye post; they regretted the fact that Mothowagae was administering the sacrament and that he allowed his followers to drink Khadi.⁴⁶ This permissive attitude seems to have attracted an impressive following. In January 1902 Mothowagae's followers were estimated at forty four;⁴⁷ in January 1903 Lloyd reported that 88 members had left his Kanye church to join Mothowagae's group;⁴⁸ and by February that year the number had risen to 95, which was about one third of the 266 church members at Kanye;⁴⁹ while in October 1903 Mothowagae himself declared that his followers at Kanye, Moshupa, and Moshaneng amounted to 700 souls all told.⁵⁰

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45. Kanye Church members to Thompson, 16th December, 1902 (L.M.S.). However, there were less than 400 church members at Kanye, see John Brown and Willoughby, in "Report of a Visit to Kanye," 14th February 1903 (L.M.S.).
46. Kanye Church members to L.M.S. Directors, 16th December, 1902, (L.M.S.).
47. B.N.A., op. cit., Lloyd to Assistant Acting Commissioner, 27th June, 1902.
48. See Kanye Annual Report, in Lloyd to Thompson, 28th January, 1903 (L.M.S.).
49. See Brown and Willoughby, "Report of a Visit to Kanye," 14th February, 1903 (L.M.S.).
50. B.N.A., op. cit., Petition, 19th October, 1903.

The Bechuanaland District Committee took some steps to try to bring the Mothowagae faction back to the L.M.S. fold. Early in January 1903 they set up a commission of two missionaries to inquire into the dispute and to initiate reconciliation. However, when Willoughby and John Brown went to Kanye in February, 1903, they were unable to meet Mothowagae owing to their impatience to negotiate with a man they considered to be a misguided rebel.⁵¹ Yet, in spite of their failure to hear Mothowagae's version to the dispute, the two missionaries reported that Lloyd was not to blame for the religious schism at Kanye.⁵² When Bathoen complained about the irregular manner in which Brown and Willoughby had conducted the inquiry and recommended that Lloyd be removed,⁵³ the Directors of the L.M.S. informed the chief that he was needlessly meddling in church affairs and that neither Bathoen nor the British Government for that matter had the right to expell a missionary.⁵⁴ In May 1903

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51. See Willoughby to Thompson, 5th March 1903 (L.M.S.), in which he conceded that they had felt insulted by Mothowagae and his followers.
52. Brown and Willoughby, Report, loc. cit., 14th February, 1903.
53. Bathoen to Thompson, 19th February, 1903 (L.M.S.).
54. Thompson to Bathoen, 28th March, 1903 (L.M.S.). Cf. Thompson's view on church and State, Chapter Five, pp. 204 n. 52.

Bathoen again wrote to the Directors bemoaning the fact that the church schism at Kanye was so deep that reconciliation was no longer possible;⁵⁵ and about the middle of 1903 Bathoen allowed the Mothowagae faction to build their own church at Kanye;⁵⁶ he then retracted his earlier request to have Lloyd removed from Kanye.⁵⁷

In the meantime Mothowagae was alienating Bathoen's sympathy and even drawing the attention of the Ngwato Church. Some of the points of conflict between the Chief and the evangelist were political, while others were slightly religious. Bathoen's main complaint was that Mothowagae flouted his authority.⁵⁸ This allegation impressed Ralph Williams who, although he had said in 1902 that his Administration did not wish to interfere in church affairs, declared:

"I don't care if a man is a fire worshipper, a Mohometan, or a Christian, he is entitled to his own views--but if he uses the fact of his religious beliefs to create disturbance in the tribe ... it cannot be tolerated."⁶⁰

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55. Bathoen to Thompson, 21st May, 1903 (L.M.S.).
56. Bathoen to Thompson, 27th August, 1903 (L.M.S.).
57. Bathoen to Thompson, 23rd October, 1903 (L.M.S.); for Bathoen's earlier stand see footnote 53 above.
58. See B.N.A., No. 715, R.C. 10/11, Ralph Williams to Assistant Commissioner Ellenberger, 2nd November, 1903; Bathoen to Ramaeba, undated.
59. B.N.A., op. cit., Williams to B.D.C., 18th August, 1902.
60. B.N.A., op. cit., Williams to Ellenberger, 2nd November, 1903.

Williams said that if Mothowagae's insubordination could be established Bathoen would be justified in punishing the Ethiopian.⁶¹

But before he was banished, Mothowagae petitioned the Resident Commissioner Ralph Williams on 19th October 1903 to be allowed to solemnise marriages, under the provisions of what he said was an English law of 1838. Mothowagae had also by this time named his group "King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church,"⁶² a name that seems to have been chosen in order to flatter British officials, for the then reigning monarch in Britain was King Edward VII. But events were moving swiftly against King Edward's Church. On 26th October 1903 Bathoen convened a pitso in which he announced the banishment of Mothowagae from Kanye for reasons stemming more from the evangelist's political activities than from religious ones.⁶³ On 10th and 11th November, 1903 Bathoen cited instances in which Mothowagae had clashed with him. These ranged from

61. Ibid.

62. B.N.A., op. cit., Petition of 19th October, 1903; Schapera, A Short History of the Bangwaketse, op. cit., p. 20.

63. See B.N.A., No. 715. R.C. 10/11, Minutes of Inquiry by Ellenberger at Police Quarters at Kanye, 10th November 1903, in which Bathoen observed that a chief could summarily banish a subversive person without the pitso's approval.

Mothowagae's refusal to allow Mabe, a moNgwaketse, to teach scripture; his refusal to appear before Bathoen on four occasions in 1897; his refusal to pay taxes; to Mothowagae's failure to return some money he had borrowed from the Chief. Perhaps the last straw in a series of acts of insubordination occurred on 7th September 1903 when, during an interrogation Mothowagae answered back on Bathoen, which in Tswana protocol is a gesture of extreme insolence. Thus Bathoen could maintain:

"According to our laws, only a chief may speak to another chief in this way, the word 'Kabomo' (purposely) may only be used by one chief talking to another: a member of the tribe, addressing his chief in that way, brings himself to the same level as his chief. The people all blamed him for thus addressing me."⁶⁴

These indiscretions notwithstanding, the Ngwaketse did not approve of the banishment and according to the chief's testimony a large section of Kanye residents became so hostile to Bathoen that he had to be guarded.

On 30th October 1903 Seametso, one of Bathoen's messengers, took Mothowagae to Ellenberger to report the evangelist's refusal to leave Kanye. In his defense, Mothowagae said banishment was too severe a punishment and that it deprived his

64. Ibid. See also I. Schapera, "Tswana Legal Maxims," Africa, 2 (April, 1966), p. 122.

followers of a teacher. When Ellenberger suggested that he join the L.M.S., Mothowagae refused, saying his group was hurt by "certain proceedings of the L.M.S." but did not elaborate. He then pleaded: "We want to have our own church under the protection of the Government as other churches are." He alleged that Bathoen was thrashing his followers and that the chief's hostility towards him had more to do with a quarrel Mothowagae had had with Bathoen in 1884 than with his religious activities.⁶⁵ Ellenberger did not take sides on the issue.

When Mothowagae returned to Kanye he seems to have again irritated the chief by his refusal to leave Kanye. On 4th November 1903 Bathoen wrote to Ellenberger alleging that Mothowagae did not give him due respect and asked the official to intervene; the chief reported that Mothowagae had since sought refuge in Makabe, one of Bathoen's brothers, where he commanded more support from Kanye residents while the chief was virtually deserted.⁶⁶ Ellenberger investigated the cause of the quarrel between chief and evangelist at Kanye on 10th and 11th November 1903. At that inquiry Bathoen

65. B.N.A., op. cit., Statements taken at Gaborone on 30th October, 1903.

66. B.N.A., op. cit., Bathoen to Ellenberger, 4th November, 1903.

maintained that Mothowagae was undermining his authority while the evangelist pleaded that the chief had been too severe on him. Bathoen then displayed typical ambivalence when he regretted that his people had "gone astray" in accepting Mothowagae's Ethiopianism while in the next breath he asserted that religion had no bearing on Mothowagae's banishment. In the event Ellenberger refused to sanction banishment on the grounds that it would be too severe a form of punishment.⁶⁷

In the meantime Mothowagae, who displayed considerable inclination to rely on tribal and English legal remedies to support himself well into the 1920's,⁶⁸ sought refuge in the 'belly' of Bathoen's deceased father Gaseitsiwe, a desperate step that brought his pardon. As Ralph Williams reported, "Mothowagae, in seeking the protection of the late Chief Gaseitsiwe, took a most serious step. He invoked the ancient customs of the Bangwaketse. The Chief Bathoen carried out

67. See B.N.A., op. cit., Minutes of Inquiry at Kanye, 11th November, 1903.

68. See for example, B.N.A., op. cit., Messrs. Minchin and Kelly, Mafeking, to Resident Magistrate, Kanye, 10th June, 1927 through whom Mothowagae sought an injunction against Chieftainess Ntebogang for interfering with his faith.

those customs and pardoned Mothowagae."⁶⁹ Bathoen's withdrawal of the banishment certainly played into the hands of Mothowagae, and he seems to have become even more determined to sustain his sect. But the Ngwato were alarmed by Mothowagae's activities and Bathoen's apparent leniency on him. On 25th November 1903 an article purporting to give a Ngwato view appeared in a Tswana paper suggesting that if Mothowagae had in fact stopped rain,⁷⁰ as had been rumoured, then he was a witch and by that act forfeited his claims to Christianity. The article warned that Mothowagae was using his sect as a guise to usurp the Ngwaketse chieftainship; the Ngwaketse were urged to be more vigilant in their dealings with Mothowagae.⁷¹ In another article Mothowagae was declared to be a false prophet who was indeed seeking the chiefship: "Pray, we assure you that it is not a church, but deceit with a view to seeking the chieftainship only, it is nothing

69. B.N.A., op. cit., Ralph Williams to Ellenberger, 20th November 1903. According to Bathoen (See B.N.A., op. cit., Bathoen to Assistant Commissioner, 14th November 1903) murder was an exception to this kind of pardon.

70. See B.N.A., op. cit., Bathoen to Ramoeba, undated, in which the chief alleged Mothowagae to have said: "I, Mothowagae stopped the rain last year; recently I have bewitched your work."

71. See "Khane ea Bangwato," in Koranta Ea Becoana, 25th November 1903.

else."⁷² The Ngwaketse were informed that the Ngwato punished false prophets more resolutely than Bathoen's indecisive strictures.

Elsewhere the Boikgololo movement was making some headway. Among the Khurutshe, the Ngwato neighbours at Selepeng in the Tati concessions area, the evangelist Tumedi successfully led a revolt against the L.M.S., and the secret of his success seems to have been his ability to get the support of Ranwe Sekoko, chief of that Khurutshe community. The Khurutshe leader, like his southern neighbours, seems to have been encouraged to secede from the L.M.S. by Ethiopian representatives from South Africa and some Ngwato youths living in Rhodesia. In 1904 Rev. Gould observed:

"Some years ago an Ethiopian protege came to visit Tumedi and he evidently sowed his seed there and then and it has been slowly maturing ever since. He told Tumedi that the missionaries of the L.M.S. did not allow such men as he the rightful privileges, such as baptising, giving the communion, marrying and such like duties ... That they should have the same status as any European missionary."⁷³

When the unnamed Ethiopian visited Selepeng for the second time, he is reported to have converted Tumedi, who was the L.M.S. teacher-evangelist at that station. Tumedi in turn mustered

72. See "Bangwaketse," in Koranta, 2nd December, 1903.

73. Rev. Gould to Tiddie, 16th September, 1904 (L.M.S.).

the support of Chief Rauwe Sekoko, the chief's son-in-law Molefhi, and some headmen.⁷⁴ Tumedli tried to spread Ethiopianism to Serowe but was expelled by Kgama;⁷⁵ he was reported to have been also expelled from the Ngwato exiles in Rhodesia, but that measure seems to have been ineffectual as Raditladi's sons, who were educated at Lovedale, displayed strong Ethiopian tendencies. By 1904 Raditladi's sons, who freely drank beer in defiance of their father's orders,⁷⁶ had made the L.M.S. evangelist Moyahi's work so difficult that he wanted to resign from his post.⁷⁷

Once the Tumedli group had decided to assume full control of the Selepeng church, they avoided a direct confrontation with the L.M.S. but instead found a pretext to justify the removal of Rev. Gould. In 1903 they demanded

74. Ibid.

75. Gould to Thompson, 19th June, 1903 (L.M.S.).

76. Gould to Tiddie, 16 September, 1904, loc. cit. In 1892 (See J.S. Moffat to Thompson, 3rd May, 1892) it was reported that two of Kgama's brothers had sent their sons to Lovedale.

77. See C.D. Helm, in Minutes of the M.D.C. held at Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 11th November, 1904 (L.M.S.).

Gould's removal on the grounds that he was inefficient.⁷⁸ What ever truth there was in the charge, it is noteworthy that six out of eight deacons supported Tumedi.⁷⁹ In September 1904 Rev. Gould reported to the Protectorate Administration that Ethiopianism had taken root in Tati and that the Government ought to suppress it while he was away on furlough.⁸⁰ The Administration agreed to watch Ethiopianism closely but cautioned against any hasty action against its leaders.⁸¹ The Tati concessions promised to cooperate with the missionaries.⁸² In the meantime secessionists were making themselves felt at the Selepeng church. By June 1904 the L.M.S. Church attendance on Sundays had fallen from fifty to fifteen,⁸³ and in September that year Tumedi was reported to have attracted sixteen members from Gould's church.⁸⁴

78. Gould to Thompson, 19th June, 1903 (L.M.S.).

79. Ibid.

80. B.N.A., No. J.1288, S.41/2, Gould to Panzera, Confidential, 13th September, 1904.

81. Gould to Thompson, 23rd November, 1904 (L.M.S.).

82. Ibid. See also, G.C.H. Reed to Thompson, 17th September, 1903 (L.M.S.).

83. Gould to Thompson, 16th June, 1904 (L.M.S.).

84. Gould to Tiddie, 16th September, 1904, loc. cit.

When Gould went on furlough in November 1904 the Tumedu group had ample time to organise. Evangelist Moyahi, who remained acting in Gould's place, appears to have been ineffectual as opposition to Gould's tenure mounted in his absence. In March 1905 the M.D.C. was informed that Mpotokwani and Modisane, the only deacons who had hitherto supported Gould, had now joined the Boikgololo faction. Rev. Cullen Reed, who investigated Khurutshe attitudes to Gould concluded that "Gould was personally hated by the Bakhurutshe as a church and people."⁸⁵ Reed's report must have influenced L.M.S. missionaries in Matebeleland for the M.D.C. did not reinstate Gould to the Selepeng post. Khurutshe opposition to the L.M.S. coupled with the Tati Concessions Company's refusal to issue long-term leases forced the L.M.S. to close its Tati station in 1908.⁸⁶

Leadership within the Boikgololo sect at Selepeng passed from Tumedu to one Lobang some time after 1905, when Tumedu fades away from missionary correspondence. By 1908 Lobang, who had previously been a school teacher in the Transvaal, was reported to be running a school of three

85. Minutes of M.D.C., 11th November, 1904, loc. cit.

86. William M. Carleton to Thompson, 15th July, 1908 (L.M.S.).

hundred pupils and that he had the support of Rauwe Sekoko and his subjects. Lobang's relationship with Moyahi must have been a strained one because in his letter of 1908 to his Society Rev. Carleton used highly pejorative terms to discredit the new Boikgololo leader.⁸⁷ The year 1908 also saw the emergence of an Ethiopian Church in the Tati area when Rev. Marcus Gabatshwane started an A.M.E. Church among an emigrant Rolong group under Chief Moroka at Francis Town.⁸⁸

In Ngwaketseland Mothowagae put his pardon in 1903 to some good use and he set up what appears to have been a network of organisers. In 1904 it was reported that Setlagole, an outstation of Kanye, had been taken over by Ethiopians.⁸⁹ In the same year Mothowagae demonstrated the influence he wielded at Kanye following the death of Kwenatsile, one of Bathoen's brothers who was an Ethiopian. At Kwenatsile's funeral Mothowagae demanded and obtained the right to conduct the services together with Rev. Lloyd of the L.M.S.⁹⁰ Else-

87. Carleton to Thompson, 15th July, 1908, loc. cit.

88. Coan, The Expansion of A.M.E. Church in South Africa, p. 474.

89. Lloyd to Thompson, 23rd January, 1904 (L.M.S.).

90. Lloyd to Thompson, 24th June, 1904 (L.M.S.).

where in Ngwaketseland the Ethiopians continued to make some progress. In 1905 Moshupa, an L.M.S. outstation was reported to have been converted to Ethiopianism en masse, the local headman being one of the converts.⁹¹

Whatever setbacks Ethiopians had elsewhere in Bechuanaland, it was their good fortune that Ngwaketseland had a vacillating chief. Thus although Bathoen pleaded with L.M.S. Directors not to repost Lloyd in 1903, he changed his mind three years later and asked for a new missionary.⁹² The Directors referred the issue to the B.D.C. who in turn sent Williams and Willoughby to Kanye in July 1906 to find out why Bathoen desired to have a different missionary. The delegation was informed by Bathoen and other church members that they wanted Lloyd removed because he was lazy.⁹³ Lloyd was replaced by Williams late in 1906, but his removal did not curb Ethiopianism in Ngwaketseland.

The Ngwato, too, had their share of Ethiopian spasms in spite of Kgama's opposition. When he was asked by a member of the South African Native Affairs Commission in September

91. Lloyd to Thompson, 30th March, 1905 (L.M.S.).

92. Chief Bathoen to Thompson, 8th February, 1906 (L.M.S.).

93. See Report of a Deputation to Kanye, July 1906 (L.M.S.).

1904 if Ethiopians had reached his chiefdom, Kgama said, "I have heard the name, but so far there are no Ethiopians in my country."⁹⁴ Yet hardly four years later Kgama, like other Tswana chiefs, had to deal with prophetism, which was a variant of Ethiopianism. According to Rev. Williams the Ethiopians called themselves 'prophets' in order "to cover a propoganda calculated to stir up bad feeling in the ... native mind towards the white."⁹⁵ Like their predecessors in Ngwatoland in 1901, the 1908 prophets claimed to possess supernatural powers to solve the social and economic problems of the Tswana. In 1908 a travelling prophet, Sencho Legong, appeared on the borders of Bathoen's territory and "proclaimed himself an 'angel' of God, a prophet, the Lord Jesus himself, and this was the burden of his message: rain which should cover hill tops, 3 harvests a year, absolute freedom from the white man's control, and a return to all the old heathen customs of the past."⁹⁶ Some Ngwaketse responded to Sencho's promise of relief by burning their Bibles and church hymn books; others offered the 'prophet' some gifts. Sencho is

94. See, Minutes of Evidence, 15 September 1904, S.A.N.A.C., Vol. IV, p. 252.

95. Williams to Thompson, 25th March, 1908 (L.M.S.).

96. See Williams, in Kanye Annual Report, 31st December, 1908 (L.M.S.).

reported to have 'reluctantly' accepted 30 heifers, 129 sheep and goats, a gun, a span of 14 oxen, one wagon, several fowls, and some corn.⁹⁷

However, what appeared to be the triumph of Ethiopianism in northern Bechuanaland was soon reversed by Tswana chiefs. At Kanye Sencho's followers were whipped in the Kgotla. White traders, who no doubt feared that their stores might be boycotted in anticipation of a millennium of bliss, persuaded the Resident Magistrate to prosecute Sencho. He was subsequently tried at the Magistrate's court--presumably charged with false pretences--but was declared insane and ordered to live under the custody of his parents.⁹⁸ But no sooner was Sencho sent to his parents in 1908 than he escaped and went to Sebele's chiefdom, where he burned down an L.M.S. church at Mokhibidu. At Molepolole Chief Sebele welcomed a prophet with presents of several herd of cattle, some sheep, and a bride. But the fortunes of that prophet were reversed at Serowe, where Kgama typically had him arrested and tried in his court; the phuthego sentenced him to caning and ordered that all his 'gifts' be confiscated; the bride was sent back to her

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

parents in Kwenaland.⁹⁹ In 1908 Serowe became a target for Ethiopianism originating from Mathebeleland, where Rev. Maghato's activities were causing concern to Rhodesian authorities.¹⁰⁰ In that year a man from Matebeleland was sentenced by a Serowe magistrate to three months imprisonment for his Ethiopian activities.¹⁰¹

Thus the Boikgololo movement, which reached the apogee of its impact on Tswana chiefdoms in 1908, had its momentum braked that year. Harried by chiefs,¹⁰² government officials, and missionaries from all sides, the Ethiopians were unable to make further progress. The only smouldering embers of that movement remained in Ngwaketseland, where Mothowagae and Sencho displayed some measure of resilience. Mothowagae,

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99. See R.H. Lewis, in Molepolole Annual Report, 1908 (L.M.S.).
100. See for example, Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, Southern Rhodesia, Matebeleland, for the year ending 31st March 1906, p. 1; Ibid., 1907, pp. 4, 16. For Rev. Maghato's break with the Dutch Reformed Church, see Minutes, S.A.N.A.C. Vol. IV, pp. 199-204; T. Ranger, "The Early History of Independence in Southern Rhodesia," Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Religion in Africa, pp. 58-59.
101. See Shoshong Annual Report, 1908, Box 4 (L.M.S.). For church schism in Northern Rhodesia, see T. Ranger, "The 'Ethiopian' Episode in Barotseland," Rhodes-Livingstone Journal, 37, (June 1965) pp. 26-41.
102. See for example Williams, in Kanye Annual Report, 1909 (L.M.S.).

in addition to his Ethiopian activities, continued to commit acts of insubordination, which subsequently led to his banishment. Even before his banishment Mothowagae and his followers had shown their determination to stick to Ethiopianism. Minutes of the Ngwaketse tribal assemblies (lechulo) show that the Ethiopians continued to meet between 1908 and 1910 inspite of Bathoen's disapproval. Thus on 22nd February, 1910 Bathoen summoned a lechulo to discuss the Ethiopian movement in the presence of the Resident Commissioner Ellenberger. At that meeting the Ethiopians "stated that they refuse [a] to abandon their faith."¹⁰³ Soon after Bathoen's death on 1st July, 1910, the new chief, Seapapitso, informed the Ngwaketse about his attitude to Ethiopianism: "Bangwaketse, I tell you that I do not want two religions here, even if they are practised (privately) in your homes." He affirmed his father's decree that had banned Ethiopianism in 1908.¹⁰⁴ When the Ethiopians did not yield, Seapapitso banished Mothowagae in July 1910; the Chief

103. I. Schapera, editor, The Political Annals of a Tswana Tribe: Minutes of Ngwaketse Public Assemblies 1910-1917 (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1947), pp. 20-21.

104. Ibid., p. 25, being part of minutes of lechulo held on 31st August, 1910. By two religions he meant Ethiopianism and the L.M.S. Church.

gave him the option to go to either Potsane or to Lekgolobotlo.¹⁰⁵ But Mothowagae refused to comply, saying both places were not suitable for farming.¹⁰⁶ Seapapitso asked for government intervention which he obtained, and on 11th August 1910, Mothowagae was reported to have left for Lekgolobotlo.¹⁰⁷

Banishment does not seem to have mellowed Mothowagae, for in 1911 he was reported to be in touch with Ethiopians at Taung and Moshupa and, on the advice of Malolo of Taung was also bringing a legal suit against the Ngwaketse chief, restraining the chief against interfering with his church.¹⁰⁸

Sencho's Ethiopian activities seem to have gone unabated in spite of legal restraints placed against him in 1908. His influence at Kgoro, a village thirty two miles south of Kanye and in Ngwaketse land generally seems to have disturbed Chief Seapapitso so much so that, in January 1913, the chief had him sent to a prison in Gaborone; but a medical officer again ordered him to be

105. Ibid., pp. ; B.N.A., op. cit., Seapapitso to Resident Commissioner, 20th July, 1910.

106. B.N.A., op. cit., Seapapitso to Resident Commissioner, 20th July 1910; Interview between Resident Commissioner and Mothowagae, 9th August, 1910.

107. B.N.A., E. Joyce to Resident Commissioner, 11th August, 1910.

108. B.N.A., op. cit., Clark Nettelton to Hodson, 28th June, 1911; Seapapitso B. Gaseitsiwe to Resident Commissioner, 23rd June, 1911.

looked after by his relatives. Sencho subsequently went to work in the mines in the Transvaal and returned shortly afterwards to lead what appears to have been a quiet life in Ngwaketseland.¹⁰⁹ If the Boikgololo movement was weakened largely by Tswana chiefs, the A.M.E. Church representatives were unable to make much headway either. Like its Boikgololo counterpart, the A.M.E. Church found it difficult to penetrate northern Tswana chiefdoms.

Yet in spite of the obstacles they had to face, Ethiopians achieved some of their objectives. One of their major victories was the marked change of missionary attitudes towards the Tswana and the former's reexamination of the effectiveness of their educational system. Whereas previously the B.D.C. did not bother to consult the Tswana on religious and educational issues, Ethiopianism compelled L.M.S. missionaries to share the leadership of the church and the schools with the Tswana more than they had hitherto done. Missionaries began to criticise themselves more openly than they had done in the past. For example, in 1907 Rev. Alfred Wookey wrote an introspective account that was revealing. He conceded that Ethiopianism was a Tswana "effort to regain some of their former liberty. Perhaps, too, we have been

109. Schapera, Minutes of Ngwaketse Public Assembly, pp. 26-27.

repressing them too much in religious and church, as well as political life ... We are too apt to think that if they do not agree with us they are immoral, or not fit to be church members; or if they want to have more liberty in the management of their affairs they must be wicked; but unless we are prepared to meet them as far as possible in their requests they will leave us, or we shall have to leave them."¹¹⁰ Significantly the first two Tswana ministers were ordained in 1910.¹¹¹

Students of Ethiopian movements have often been baffled by what appears to be an absence of doctrinal differences between the seceding African sect and the parent European church;¹¹²

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110. See A.J. Wookey, "Missionary work in Bechuanaland," Diamond Fields Advertiser, 11th February, 1907. See also W.C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Relation of the Black and White Races in the Civilization of the World," (Cape Town, 1913), p. 16, in Tracts on Natural History, bound by the British Museum, in which he asserts that "the destiny of all the varieties of humanity is that of complementary helpfulness" and implies that whites ought to emulate the patience of Blacks.
111. See Minutes of the U.D.C. Meetings at Inyati, 18th April to 30th April, 1910 (L.M.S.).
112. See for example, W.C. Willoughby, The Soul of the Bantu: a sympathetic study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa (New York, 1928), p. 131, passim; Willoughby, "African Thought and Custom in Relation to Christianity," M.S. (L.M.S.); Lerigo, "Prophet Movement," loc. cit.; C.T. Loram, "The Separatist Church Movement," International Review of Missions (July, 1926), pp. 476-82; H.R. Fox-Bourne, R.W. Thompson, W.C. Willoughby, et. al., editors, The South African Natives: Their Progress and Present Condition (London, 1908), p. 20: "apparently none of these secessions have been due to doctrinal differences."

Some observers of these essentially religious schisms have tended to impute all Ethiopian leaders with political motives, while others have suggested that economic self-aggrandisement alone inspired the leaders of these secessions. One reason for this lopsided view of Ethiopianism is that most of the observers in question have been missionaries who, being protagonists themselves, seem to have been unable to give balanced accounts of Ethiopians who challenged their competence. The other reason lies in the fact that far too few Ethiopians have presented their own case in person or in writing, with the result that many scholars have had to rely on secondary sources for the study of these movements. The evidence from a few Ethiopians who have provided reasons for seceding from parent churches suggests that religious motives far outweighed political considerations. For example, Rev. Mangena Mokone's declaration of secession in 1892 shows that what compelled him to break away from the Methodist Church was the failure of white ministers to foster Christian brotherhood.¹¹³ Significantly the South African Native Affairs Commission, which collected evidence on the "Separatist Movement" from eighty three persons including some Blacks between 1903 and 1905,

113. See "Founders Declaration of Independence," Appendix 1, in Coan, The Expansion of the A.M.E. Church, p. 440.

was persuaded to resolve that Ethiopianism was "the outcome of a desire on part of the natives for ecclesiastical self-support and self-control" which in the commission's view was not in itself a political act.¹¹⁴ In 1905 a French missionary in Basutoland justified Ethiopianism on the grounds that it was the only effective way to make Christianity indigenous to Africa.¹¹⁵ In Bechuanaland proper Mothowagae repeatedly asserted the right of his sect to pray according to their conscience; and, apart from his quarrels with Ngwaketse rulers, there is no evidence to suggest that he amassed wealth for himself. Even the travelling prophets who accepted some gifts seem to have accepted them more in deference to Tswana custom than from any greed for wealth. The important point is that Ethiopians dramatised the plight of the Tswana before a missionary Society that did not pay nearly enough attention to the

114. See, The South African Native Affairs Commission Report, p. 64. See also, L.N. Mzimba, "The African Church," in Christianity and the Natives of South Africa, edited by J.D. Taylor (Lovedale, 1929), pp. 86-95.

115. E. Jacottet, The Native Churches and their Organization (Morijsa, 1905), pp. 4-6,8.

material well-being of its pastorate. Thus, whatever political overtones¹¹⁶ Tswana Ethiopians might have engendered, the Boikgololo movement was essentially a religious organization that challenged Christianity to be compatible with the religious as well as the economic life of the Tswana.

116. Here the observation of Rev. L.N. Mzimba, who preferred to substitute African for Ethiopian, is instructive (See J.D. Taylor, editor, Christianity and the Natives of South Africa, p. 91): "The African church is not a political organization. Neither was it planned to be a national church. She has however succeeded in awakening the Bantu to the full understanding of the text 'God helps those that help themselves'."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Aspects of Tswana Transformations

In this chapter an attempt is made to examine the impact of Europeans on some of the institutions of the Tswana. An important feature of the interaction was that European enthusiasm to bring about cultural changes was matched by Tswana reluctance to alter their mode of living, the latter phenomenon manifesting itself in various guises way into the twentieth century.

Yet, missionaries and laymen alike remained undaunted and persistently introduced measures to transform Tswana chiefdoms into polities that would resemble as closely as possible metropolitan notions of an ideal Christian community. Among the institutions that L.M.S. agents tried to change or abolish were the initiation ceremonies (bogwera and bojale),¹ and the drinking habits of the Tswana. In spite of concerted efforts to stamp out these practices the Society achieved limited results.

Some Chiefdoms - notably the Ngwato under Kgama III - responded to missionary endeavours a little more readily than others, and by 1890 some elements of their ritual and social life had been changed.² Part of the reason for this marginal

1. For a discussion of initiation ceremonies, see Chapter Three, pp. 117-119.

2. For example, in 1890 Chief Gaseitsiwe of the Ngwaketse was buried in accordance with Christian rites; see Kanye Report, in Rev. Good to Thompson, 6th April, 1890; Box 2 (L.M.S.).

success was that, after the establishment of the Protectorate in 1885, the British administration supported the L.M.S., especially in suppressing initiation ceremonies. In doing so it appears that the British officials were impelled more by medical considerations than by religious motives. For example, the flogging administered in the course of the initiation ceremonies, especially the wounds sustained during the bogwera rites, could be fatal. Rev. Wookey's report of 1888 gives an indication of the physical hardships experienced by novices (bogwera) and of the pressure missionaries were exerting upon the new administration: "... A short time ago the bogwera circumcision rites were held for the boys of this place. According to the usual custom as many boys as possible were brought together ... Two or three of the boys died almost as soon as they entered. Their arms and legs were cut off and the flesh made into medicine and mixed with the food of the rest of the boys and given to them to eat. Shortly after an epidemic broke out amongst them and over fifty of them died. The cruelties ... are very great and under the British Protectorate should be brought to an end."³

3. See Wookey in Molepolole Report, 1888, Box 2 (L.M.S.). See also Wookey to Thompson, 30th October, 1888, loc. cit., in which he reported that fifty boys died during a bogwera ceremony.

The British administration had in fact been informed about the health hazards of circumcision in July 1886, when J.S. Moffat, resident magistrate in British Bechuanaland wrote: "it is a well-known fact that a certain percentage of the boys who go through this [circumcision] ceremony succumb, either as a consequence of severe floggings to which they are subjected or of the inflammation following on the operation from its being performed in a clumsy manner, or from the undue exposure to the weather in a state of nakedness," adding: "The deaths are carefully hushed up, though there is an allusion to them in the songs connected with the ceremonies."⁴ After he had received this report Shippard instructed Moffat to prevent the forcible abduction of boys and girls for initiation; but as Moffat's account suggests, the secrecy that surrounded bogwera and bojale precluded close observation from outsiders.⁵

The reports of missionaries on the ceremonial and ritual life of the Tswana show that they too often underestimated the depth of these practices. Hence in 1890

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4. Parliamentary Papers, 1887, C.4890, LIX, p. 2, Moffat to Shippard, 6th July, 1886.
 5. Ibid., but Edward Mohr (see Chapter Three, p. 111) seems to have been able to observe the rites more closely than Moffat.

Rev. Williams reported that observance of initiation ceremonies at Molepolole was declining, and yet hardly five years later he suspended several church members who defied his injunctions and participated in them.⁶ The Kwena proved to be the most persistent observers of traditional ceremonies partly because of Sechele's tacit support for these institutions but largely because Kgosidintsi, a most influential councillor and a brother of Sechele's, encouraged them to do so.⁷

Witchcraft (boloi), too, appears to have flourished side by side with Tswana ceremonial rites, and until the turn of the twentieth century the British administration was unable to intervene largely because the cases escaped their attention. When in 1888 two Kwena women were charged with witchcraft in Sechele's Kgotla and condemned to death, the sentences were commuted when Rev. Williams pleaded to Sechele for clemency.⁸ The Ngwato, too, appear to have practised witchcraft in spite of their chief's ascetic character. This is suggested in Hepburn's report of 1885

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6. See Williams in Molepolole Report, 1890, Box 2; Williams to Thompson, 6th August, 1894, loc. cit., (L.M.S.).
7. Most visitors to Kwenaland reported Kgosidintsi to be a most consistent traditionalist. See for example, Williams to Thompson, 6th March, 1901 (L.M.S.).
8. Williams, Molepolole Reports, 1888, loc. cit., (L.M.S.).

when he observed that the non-Christian inhabitants of Shoshong had revived "immoral customs and baldly in the face of open day."⁹ Among the Ngwaketse Bathoen's efforts to abolish initiation ceremonies were not very successful, as is indicated in his address to the Native Advisory Council in 1907, when he admitted that bogwera and bojale were some of the obstacles to progress amongst the Ngwaketse. Nor was the Protectorate administration doing much to stop them. Thus the Native Advisory Council, which seems to have been dominated by Christian delegates, could complain that their children were "morally destroyed by these ceremonies and that the Government [was] more careful for the preservation of game in their reserves, than for the welfare of their children."¹⁰

If Christian members of Tswana society were concerned about the prevalence of heathen practices, the non-Christians were equally determined to preserve their traditional ceremonies and institutions. Among the Tswana and the Ngwato members of the ruling families regarded observance of traditional ceremonies as a punishable offence.¹¹

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9. Hepburn to Thompson, 6th November, 1885, Box 43 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).
 10. Minutes of the B.D.C., 1st February, 1907 (L.M.S.).
 11. Jennings, Serowe Report, 1904, Box 3 (L.M.S.).

In spite of the persistence of some customs, Tswana interaction with missionaries produced some changes. By 1898 the Ngwato observance of Molomo (i.e. tasting the first fruits of the harvest) had been adapted to conform to Christian notions of Thanksgiving. In this respect the combined efforts of the missionary and the chief seems to have minimised resistance to change.¹² An 1896 report gives an idea of Ngwato adoption of Christian elements in the molomo;

Every year on the appointed day, just before sunrise the whole of the natives assemble at the [Kgotla], not only the Christians, but heathens as well, and it is curious to note that this is the one ceremony in which the two opposite creeds assemble for the same purpose. As the sun slowly appears ... the chief or his representative, rises, uncovers his head, and announces 'We come to bite the year.'¹³

In Ngwaketseland Bathoen banned initiation ceremonies in 1896; while in Kwenaland Sebele proscribed them late in 1904, four years after he had been in fact actively promoting them. Legislation against initiation ceremonies by both chiefs was reported to have been influenced by the chiefs' visit to

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12. Willoughby to Thompson, 28th May, 1898, Box 55 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.). See also Bechuanaland News, 25th July, 1896.
13. "To bite the year, a native ceremony," Bechuanaland News, 25th July, 1896; Willoughby to Thompson, 30th March, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

Britain in 1895. Nevertheless, traditional ceremonies - especially bogwera and bojale - persisted even when Tswana chiefs had legislated against them.¹⁴ In 1906 the B.D.C., some of whose members had hitherto underestimated the depth of Tswana customs, conceded that large numbers of Christians and non-Christian members of Tswana Society observed bogwera and bojale.¹⁵ In 1907 Wookey reinforced the B.D.C. in an article to a Kimberley newspaper in which he asserted that initiation and rain-making ceremonies were an essential part of Tswana life:¹⁶

Bogwera and Boyale still remain, for they seem to contain the rites and ceremonies connected with them all that really pertains to Secwana religion, and to tribal or national life ...

II

Marriage was another institution that missionaries and government officials sought to transform, particularly those

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14. C.O. 879/69, op. cit., pp. 378, 374; Wookey to Surmon, 3rd May, 1909, who reported that early that year bogwera ceremonies were "begun in the Kgotla and the religious services which had been conducted in the Kgotla had to be discontinued, and have since been conducted at a Mopipe tree near the worn as there is not a church there yet." See also I. Schapera, "Uniformity and Variation in Chief-made Law," loc. cit., pp. 5-7.
15. Jennings, Serowe Report, 1906, Box 4 (L.M.S.). For a change of missionary attitudes towards some Tswana institutions see Chapter Five.
16. See Alfred Wookey, "Missionary Work in Bechuanaland: Interesting Historical Reminiscences," The Diamond Fields Advertiser, 11th February, 1907.

aspects pertaining to bogadi (bride wealth or bride price), beeelwa (betrothal), lehuha (polygamy), and tlhalano (divorce). Although payment of bogadi was the most contentious issue, observers of Tswana institutions were not agreed on its significance. Some thought bogadi was a form of purchase;¹⁷ others maintained that it was merely a token to strengthen bonds of union between the families of the bride and the bridegroom,¹⁸ a view that has gained current support.¹⁹

Because of the missionaries' strong objections to the notion of bride purchase (however mistaken such a notion might have been), one of the earliest church laws (melao yaphuthego) passed by the B.D.C. was directed against payment of bogadi. In 1875 the B.D.C. conceded that payment of bogadi was widespread but nevertheless condemned it as "being evil," and resolved to discourage its payment by refusing to solemnise

17. For example, Burchell, Travels, p. 397; Rachosa, "My Book," p. 86; C.O. 879/52, op. cit., p. 197, where M.W. Searle in an advisory opinion said: "...these so-called Native marriages ... are in the nature of a 'sale' of the woman by her father, and are in their essence repugnant to civilised laws." Cf. Ellenberger, S.A.N.A.C. Minutes, IV, p. 243, where he said bogadi was "simply a gift to the father. A man does not purchase his wife."

18. Freeman, A Tour, p. 270; Jennings, Bogadi, p. 20.

19. Schapera, A Handbook of Tswana Law, p. 125. It appears that, although bogadi was considered to be a bond of union between two families, it had by 1931 become commercialised as is suggested by Rachosa and Raditladi in "My Book," p. 86.

any marriages in which bogadi had been paid.²⁰ Betrothal of girls was condemned by missionaries from the very beginning of their Tswana mission, the majority of missionaries actually equating it with domestic slavery.²¹

Polygamy was another controversial marriage practice. So widespread was the custom that the Thlaping chief, Molehabangwe, was surprised that none of the members in Lichtenstein's embassy of 1801 was a polygamist.²² Traditionally polygamy was associated with wealth because only a rich man could afford to marry more than one wife; it thus understandably enhanced one's prestige. But in 1801 Molehabangwe's wife, Makaiitschoah, suggested that the population ratio between men and women in Thlapingland induced polygamy, for she pointed out that monogamy "would not suit the [Tswana], because there were so great a number of women, and male population suffered such diminution from the wars."²³ Owing to paucity of statistical data for the Tswana region, it is not possible to test Makaiitshoah's observation. However in 1849

20. Minutes of the B.D.C., in Ashton to Mullens, 27th October, 1875, Box 38 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).

21. See Minutes of the B.D.C. meeting held at Kuruman, October, 1875, Jacket C - Folder One - Box 38 (L.M.S.).

22. Lichtenstein, Travels, II, p. 386.

23. Ibid., p. 396.

John Freeman, who recorded figures of a census taken by David Livingstone at Kolobeng, showed that there were over 20% more females in that town than males.²⁴

One of the greatest handicaps to the substitution of Christian for traditional marriage customs was that the chiefs and church deacons themselves invariably abrogated marriage laws, which must have encouraged commoners and church members alike to follow suit.²⁵ In this connection the L.M.S. had enormous problems to contend with in all the major chiefdoms. Among the Tshid'-Rolong the most formidable opponent to their mission was Chief Montshiwa who was himself a polygamist and a staunch supporter of the payment of bogadi. In 1893 he expelled the L.M.S. evangelist at Disaneng, Motlanke, and contributed an article to an L.M.S. monthly (Mahoko oa Becuana) in which he supported payment of bogadi.²⁶ A 1904 report concerning the Khurutshe enclave in the Tati Concessions showed that the L.M.S. evangelist there Tumedi and Chief

24. Freeman, A Tour of South Africa, p. 280.

25. Perhaps conveniently observed by commoners in deference to an old Tswana custom (see Livingstone, Private Journals, p. 299): "Sechele says the immemorial custom of the people in this country has been to imitate their chiefs. If he is fond of oxen all the men live at the cattle posts, if fond of hunting all rear dogs and hunt with them."

26. Lloyd to Thompson, 14th June, 1893, Box 50 - Jacket A - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

abduction of a certain girl from Palapye for religious reasons, he also had personal reasons for doing so, as Willoughby's report suggests:

It has transpired that the Deacon in question has been carrying on immoral intercourse with the girl's mother, who is also a member of the Church. They had kept their secret well, but at last it could no longer be hid. Then the woman told all about it. We have ... expelled them from the church; but it has done us much harm. They had both been members of the Church for 20 or 30 years; and were counted as our most reliable people ... He confessed it at last, so there was no doubt about it.²⁹

Part of the reason for what the missionaries called 'backsliding' among the Ngwato might have been influenced by Kgama's marital life. Mma-Bessie, his first wife, died in 1889. Kgama married Bathoen's sister the following year³⁰ but she died shortly after her marriage. In 1895 Kgama married Sefakwana, a commoner and a non-Christian and, for that reason "the match was not very popular in the tribe."³¹

29. Willoughby to Thompson, 22nd April, 1898, Box 55 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).

30. Chronicle, January 1891.

31. Willoughby to Thompson, 29th June, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket C - Folder 2 (L.M.S.). Simon Rachosa, who was Kgama's grandson, probably gave a biased account about Sefakwana's character for he described her (see "My Book," p. 136) as having been a "very wicked woman, who caused the chief many troubles, having allied herself with worthless men..." See also Inquisitor, "Khama, the King," reprinted from the Sunday Times, Johannesburg, 1914, in Botswana Pamphlets, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Rauwe Sekoko were polygamists, although the former had assisted Rev. Gould in founding the mission station there hardly six years previously.²⁷

Nor was the Ngwato church a model of the 'City of God' as travellers' accounts suggest. In this regard Theodore Bent's praise of Kgama typified the prevailing attitudes of whites towards Kgama:

Somehow one's spirit of scepticism is on the qui vive on such occasions, especially when a Negro is in question; and I candidly admit that I advanced towards Palapye fully prepared to find the chief of the Bamangwato a rascal and a hypocrite, and that I left his capital, after a week's stay there, one of his most fervent admirers.²⁸

However, the state of the Ngwato church was more complex than Bent's simplistic view suggests. In 1898 Willoughby reported a return to traditional custom that must have been extant when Bent prepared his glowing report on that station. One of the cases Willoughby reported concerned an elderly church deacon. Although the deacon in question had strenuously opposed the

27. Gould to Thompson, 16th June, 1904 (L.M.S.).

28. J. Theodore Bent, "Among the Chiefs of Bechuanaland," 1892, Pamphlets, Volume 121 South Africa Magazine Articles (Royal Commonwealth Society), p. 651. See also Q.N. Parsons, "The 'image' of Khama the Great, 1868-1970," Botswana Notes and Records, Vol. 3 (1971), pp. 41-58.

The marriage was dissolved in 1899 and later that year Kgama married Semane, who survived him when he died in 1923.

Whatever justification Kgama might have had for divorcing Sefakwana, it is quite clear that his disaffected brothers and some Christians used the Chief's divorce to justify their political demands and to divorce their own wives. And of more significance than the fodder it provided Kgama's opponents at Palapye, Kgama's divorce revealed the lack of consistency in the Society's marriage laws. In 1899 Rev. Howard Williams wrote sympathetically about Kgama's divorce:

If you have any recollections of the 'lady' you will probably have concluded that she was not fitted to be the wife of a man like Khama.³²

The L.M.S. Foreign Secretary seemed equally sympathetic:

The news of Khama's marriage was a surprise, though not so great a surprise as if he had been a European. I am glad he has got so suitable a wife this time. Please give him my warm greetings.³³

32. Williams to Thompson, 21st July, 1899, Box 56 - Jacket B - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

33. Thompson to Willoughby, 29th December, 1900 (L.M.S.).

If Kgama considered himself compelled by circumstances beyond his control to divorce his wife in 1899, Chief Sebele irritated missionaries and government officials alike when he decided to take a second wife. Although he had tried unsuccessfully to assert his chiefdom's political autonomy in the 1890's, Sebele's quarrel with Protectorate officials in the marriage issue seemed to have the sanction of Tswana custom. Hence he maintained that, so long as he conformed to Tswana marriage customs, his disgruntled wife could not sustain her grounds for complaining against him. What turned out to be Sebele's time of troubles started in 1900 when he disregarded a Tswana custom that required him to sleep with his wife during the Molomo (tasting the first fruits of the harvest) ceremony. Sebele's breach of this custom was indefensible; so was his cohabitation with the wife of one Mhiko.³⁴ However, when the Kwena capital was moved to Borakalalo in 1901 Sebele remained at the old capital Molepolole with the woman Bautlwe (also called Matadi) whom he wanted to marry. The L.M.S. agent opposed it because it was apparently being used by the Kwena as justification for polygamy. In 1902 Rev. Haydon Lewis observed:

34. C.O. 879/69, op. cit., pp. 5-6, War office to C.O. 5 of 27 December 1900, enclosure 5, Surmon to Milner, 13th December 1900.

Polygamy still holds the people in its grip and has the chief as its prime advocate. The actions of Sebele [have] shaken the Christian community profoundly, and have disturbed many a man's faith who regarded the chief's marriage as sealed by the irrevocable law of Christ ... On the contrary I believe it to be but an excuse, eagerly seized by some members of the Christian community as a pretext for similar conduct.³⁵

The Protectorate administration started playing a more definite part in Sebele's marital affairs in 1900 when Assistant Commissioner Surmon convened a pitso at Molepolole to settle what was supposed to be Sebele's estrangement from his first wife Macholohelo.³⁶ Once Surmon had started investigating the issue the delicate balance so common to members of Tswana ruling families in the nineteenth century was upset, and the Kwenā polarised into two factions, one faction supporting Macholohelo (this included her sons Kealeboga, Kebohula, and Sebele's cousin Baruti Kgosidintse); the other faction supported Sebele. At the end of the pitso proceedings Surmon ordered the chief to take back Macholohelo, but this Sebele did not do. On 18th April, 1901 Macholohelo wrote to Surmon complaining that Sebele had not taken her back but instead was living with Bautlwe at Molepolole; she urged Surmon to use his influence to stop Sebele's impending marriage to Bautlwe.³⁷

35. Lewis, Molepolole and District Report for 1902 (L.M.S.).

36. C.O. 879/69, op. cit., p. 374, Acting Resident Commissioner Surmon to Kitchener, 13th May, 1901, enclosed in Kitchener to Chamberlain, 260 of 7th June, 1901.

37. Ibid., Macholohelo to Surmon, 18th April, 1901; she asked Surmon to send his reply through B.J. Vickerman, a trader at Molepolole.

When Surmon subsequently contacted Sebele on the issue, the chief gave a candid account³⁸ of his determination to marry Baulwe and commented freely on what appears to have been a series of sex scandals among the Kwena ruling elite. Sebele stated, inter alia, that he had lived with Baulwe for twenty-one years and had had six children by her. In his view opposition to his impending marriage did not come from the Kwena as such but was engineered by people who were jealously in love with Baulwe; that one of these people, Baruti Kgosi-dintsi, had in fact had sexual relations with Baulwe on several occasions. Sebele observed that all Tswana men (heathen and Christian alike) maintained several mistresses: "All Christians has sweet hearts, and you only speak about me because I do all things in plain. If you speak about Bechuana's marriage you will be tired." Sebele complained that Surmon was trying to judge him according to English law which the chief said was not binding on him; as far as he was aware Tswana customary law vindicated him, as had been demonstrated by the Kwena's approval of his impending marriage to Baulwe. Sebele further submitted that he was not in any way being cruel to Macholohelo for he was not divorcing her; above all, some of

38. Ibid., pp. 375-6, Sebele to Surmon (undated).

his sons approved of the marriage.³⁹ Sebele married Bautlwe early in 1901.

In May 1901 Rev. Wookey wrote to Surmon asserting that Sebele's marriage to Bautlwe in defiance of the Assistant Commissioner's disapproval warranted the Chief's instant dismissal from office.⁴⁰ On 11th May that year Surmon informed Sebele of his disappointment at the Chief's marriage to Bautlwe in accordance with Tswana custom; he warned Sebele that he would hold him responsible for any political disturbance that might break out in Kwenaland.⁴¹ Macholohelo continued to campaign for a reconciliation with Sebele. In July she wrote to Assistant Commissioner Jules Ellenberger complaining that her estranged husband was still irreconcilable.⁴² Macholohelo's letter appeared to have had serious political consequences, as it led to a direct statement by the Administration on measures they would take to punish Sebele. Ellenberger recommended that Sebele be deposed from the chieftainship,⁴³ and

39. In Sebele to Ellenberger (undated, Ibid.) the chief said that another reason that compelled him to marry Bautlwe was that the Kwena objected to a chief keeping a concubine.

40. Ibid., Wookey to Surmon, 3rd May, 1901.

41. Ibid., p. 379, Surmon to Sebele, 11th May, 1901.

42. C.O. 879/76, op. cit., pp. 271-2, Macholohelo to Ellenberger, 19th July, 1901: "I am still leading the same miserable life owing to Sebele's action with Bautlwe."

43. Ibid., p. 271, Ellenberger to Surmon, 4th August, 1901.

further showed what little regard he had towards Sebele when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and Yoke visited South Africa in 1901. He humiliated the chief by inviting his son Kealeboga and Baruti Kgosidintsi to go to Cape Town to meet the Royal visitors, a diplomatic move that was clearly at variance with Tswana protocol. But official snubs did not weaken Sebele's love for Bautlwe.

In August 1901 Sebele restated his determination to live with Bautlwe as his second wife and rejected Ellenberger's allegation that Bautlwe interfered with his official duties:

But with regard to the woman, I really do not see how she could prevent a chief from ruling his people justly or interfere with him in the ruling of his people, because a woman remains in the yard whilst her husband is at the Kgotla, and that is why I say I shall not abandon Matadi.⁴⁴

Although the arguments advanced in the missionary and government correspondence on the Sebele-Bautlwe issue clearly uphold Sebele's right to marry according to Tswana custom, the political overtones of the case were less apparent but were quickly detected by the newly appointed Resident Commissioner

44. Ibid., pp. 273, 270 Sebele to Ellenberger, 9th August, 1901. See also Acting Resident Commissioner to Milner, 8th August, 1901 (Ibid.).

Ralph Williams, who complained that the issue had got out of all proportion:

The correspondence which I find with regard to Matadi appears to me to be merely what is known as tittle-tattle, and I don't think the consideration of it by the Assistant Commissioner has had a good effect on the tribe.⁴⁵

Missionary reports show that, on various occasions towards the end of the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century L.M.S. agents required that their church members who married according to Tswana custom before they joined the church be married according to Christian rites in L.M.S. churches. Thus in 1904 Rev. Jennings reported that he had solemnised sixty such marriages at Serowe and forty in Ngamiland.⁴⁶ The British administration also passed legislation governing Tswana marriages although it was often framed in legal language that missionaries and officials themselves - let alone the Tswana - found difficult to understand.⁴⁷

45. Ibid., p. 275, Ralph Williams to Milner, 7th November, 1901.

46. Jennings to Thompson, 16th June, 1904, 28th July, 1904, Ngamiland Report, 1905 (L.M.S.).

47. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., p. 197, Surmon to Imperial Secretary, 9th October, 1897, Minute No. 1., 130, Native Marriages, enclosed in High Commissioner to Chamberlain, 175 of 25th October, 1897. For example, in the same correspondence when the B.D.C. asked which marriages were valid in Botswana, M.W. Searle, a colonial officer at the Cape advised that only those marriages contracted according to Christian rites were valid and that those contracted according to Tswana custom were invalid as they were "repugnant to civilised laws," a condition that could hardly have been fulfilled by non-christian members of Tswana chiefdoms.

III

If (L.M.S.) missionaries and British officials had persuasive moral and medical grounds for wanting to abolish payment of bogadi and the traditional initiation ceremonies among the Tswana, the grounds for wanting to abolish the consumption of European liquor and the Tswana brew (Khadi) were as slender as they were dubious. And yet correspondence on prohibition in both the L.M.S. archives and the Public Record Office is disproportionately heavy. The reason for this anomaly is that the arch prohibitionists (Government officials, missionaries, and to some extent Tswana chiefs) failed to appreciate the importance of beer drinking in Tswana social life. To the Tswana and their neighbours beer drinking was one of the highest forms of enjoying their leisure and of extending hospitality to strangers and friends alike. In 1903 a missionary observed:

... the idea of a mo/Tswana/ is to make a big brew, and invite his friends to a ... beer-drink, which will begin in the morning and last till beer is consumed, perhaps in the courtyard till the afternoon. There they sit soaking around these beer pots for the greater part of the day ... Then in a day or two another of the clique will have his brew ready, and the process is repeated in his courtyard. Sunday is the favourite day.⁴⁸

48. Williams, in Molepolole Report, 1903, Box 3 (L.M.S.).

According to Kgalagadi tradition beer-drinking has always been a favourite past-time. In 1938 an informant said:

As far as I know, we always drank Kgadi.
It is something known for a long time.
It is very popular with us.⁴⁹

Another fallacy that persisted at the end of the nineteenth century was that European liquor had only been recently introduced to the Tswana.⁵⁰ On the contrary travellers' accounts suggest that brandy might have been introduced in the eighteenth century. Dr. Henry Lichtenstein's account shows that the Thlaping and their neighbours had by 1805 acquired a pronounced fondness for European liquor and menacingly demanded to buy some brandy.⁵¹ By 1873 brandy had become such an important item of consumption that Holub's party was mobbed at Taung by crowds

shouting eagerly towards [them]. They were nearly all provided with bottles, or pots, or cans, and cried out for brandy, 'suppy, suppy, bas, verkup Brandwen' they repeated impatiently.⁵²

49. Schapera and Van der Merwe, Notes, p. 66.

50. As is suggested in "Poisoning of Africa Papers," Number 12, Africa - Pamphlets (1884-1895), p. 542, Rhodes House, Oxford.

51. Lichtenstein, Travels, p. 370.

52. Holub, Seven Years in South Africa, Volume One, pp. 235-6; Holub, "On the central South African Tribes," loc. cit., p. 7, in which he reported that the Khoikhoi were addicted to brandy.

Accounts by traders show that northern Tswana communities were also amply supplied with liquor between 1850 and 1875.⁵³

While it is often difficult to determine drunkenness or addiction to alcohol, accounts left by Government officials and missionaries suggest that some African communities in Bechuanaland were drinking excessively. By 1877 the drinking habits of tribes around Kuruman seem to have reached alarming proportions and prompted the B.D.C. to send a resolution to the Colonial Office urging them to close all beer-selling canteens in Southern Bechuanaland.⁵⁴ In August 1877 Rev. Wookey reported that Griquas were selling their farms to Europeans to enable themselves to buy liquor.⁵⁵

53. In 1850 J. Leyland (Adventures in the Far Interior, p. 59) reported that the Thlaping Chief Mahura was fond of Cape Brandy; Anderson (The Okavango River: A narrative of travel, exploration and adventure, London, 1861, pp. 196-7) reported in the late 1850's that liquor was in great demand in Ngami-land; E.W. Smith (Great Lion, p. 162); Mrs. Price (see Una Long, Journals, pp. 153, 179), reported that a Mr. Hewitt sold large quantities of brandy at Sheshong in the 1860's and alleged that Sechele's unpredictable behaviour was largely influenced by European Liquor. For the 1870's see works cited in footnote 52.
54. Minutes of the B.D.C. meeting held at Kuruman on 12th June, 1877, enclosed in Mackenzie to Mullens, 22nd June, 1877, (L.M.S.).
55. Wookey to Mullens, 28th August, 1877, Box 38 - Jacket C - Folder One (L.M.S.).

And when the Thlaping and their neighbours rose in insurrection against the British in 1878 some missionaries ascribed the rebellion to drunkenness.⁵⁶ By 1879 the B.D.C. were so flabbergasted by what they believed to be the demoralising influence of liquor that they again urged Governor Frere of Cape Colony to close all beer-selling canteens in Southern Bechuanaland, pointing out that they were "unmitigated curses to all connected with them."⁵⁷

Northern Tswana communities seem to have had liquor supplied to them throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, as is suggested in the journals of Mrs. Price.⁵⁸ The Ngwaketse likewise had access to liquor because in 1877 Alexander Bailie reported that Chief Gaseitsiwe and his sub-

56. Rev. Ashton in letter to Diamond Field News, 16th August, 1878.

57. B.D.C. to Frere, 25th January, 1879 (L.M.S.). Apparently their recommendation of 1877 (see footnote 54) had not been carried out. Licensing laws that were promulgated in Southern Bechuanaland do not seem to have been rigorously enforced: see for example Rev. John Brown to Robinson 3rd November, 1885, 23rd July, 1888, Box 45 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.) in which he complained that Africans were still obtaining liquor from canteens. In 1880 Captain Harrel reported (see Parliamentary Papers, 1883, XLIX, p. 23) that traders sold liquor in contravention to the law.

58. Una Long, The Journals of Elizabeth Price, p. 218.

jects were being demoralised by it.⁵⁹ By the 1870's the Kwena could still get ample supplies of liquor; Sechele himself was a regular drinker, obtaining it from his close acquaintance, Henry Boyne. In 1881 Mrs. Price observed that the Kwena residents at Molepolole were "fast impoverishing themselves by [buying expensive clothes] and by brandy drinking."⁶⁰ In the same year she noted that Sebele drank brandy when he could get it and Khadi when European liquor was not available. The effects of that admixture seem to have been disastrous:

There is constantly a disturbance arising in the town, thro his drunkenness and passion ... One cannot fancy his ever becoming chief in his father's place. Certainly as he is now he cannot be.⁶¹

The Ngwato seem to have had sufficient supplies of liquor in spite of their chief's puritanical stand against it. In 1876, hardly a year after he had usurped the Ngwato

59. Parliamentary Papers, 1878-9, Lii, C.2220, p. 76, Alexander Bailie to Administrator of Griqualand West, 17th May, 1877.

60. Una Long, op. cit., p. 461.

61. Ibid., p. 482. At about the same time Sechele's new bride Kholoma (Ibid., p. 473) could be said to have become a connoisseur of liquor, preferring champagne and wine to gin. For Sechele's marriage to Kholoma see Chapter Three, p..131.

Chieftaincy, Kgama III wrote to Queen Victoria asking for a protective alliance so that he could enforce, among other measures, the prohibition of the sale and consumption of liquor.⁶² His views on prohibition were not initially influenced by Christianity. Rev. Willoughby, who worked among the Ngwato from 1893 to 1904 was informed by Kgama on several occasions that the Chief's views on prohibition were formed in his youth independent of religious influence, following an incident in which his drunken father would have been swindled of valuable tusks of ivory, but for Kgama's decisive intervention.⁶³ Soon after he became Chief he banned the sale and consumption of all alcoholic beverages and seems to have enforced the law⁶⁴ resolutely until he

62. Kgama to Barkly, 22nd August, 1876, Chief's Papers, No. 4, p. 121, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

63. W.C. Willoughby, "Khama: A Bantu Reformer," International Review of Missions, (January, 1924), pp. 74-6. See also Hepburn to Whitehouse, 11th May, 1880, Box 40 - Jacket B - Folder 4 (L.M.S.), in which he reported that Kgama resolved in his youth that he "would not rule over a drunken town and people."

64. See, for example, Chief's Papers, No. 7, Selly Oak, Birmingham, "Documents signed by some Europeans recently came on the station respecting intoxicating drinks," 21st January, 1880, when traders pledged "to drop entirely the use of all intoxicating drinks." Arnot, From Natal to the Upper Zambezi, p. 26: in May 1882 Arnot did not see "any intoxicated person [at Shoshong] ... which could not be said by anyone, for the same period, in any other town in Africa, where the white man with his trade has access. The Chief, Khama, has put down the drink traffic most effectively." The view that Kgama did not tolerate liquor traffic through his chiefdom is not wholly accurate for F.H. Barber diaries show (in Tabler, Zambezi and Matebeleland in the Seventies, p. 70) that Kgama allowed them to pass through Shoshong with casks of brandy.

suspended it in 1895. By 1880 Kgama's views on prohibition had gained him international repute. In October that year the Directors of the Scottish Temperance League wrote to Kgama commending him for the

noble stand which you have made against the traffic in intoxicating liquors, introduced and carried on by white men in your town of Shoshong.⁶⁵

Among the Kwena liquor traffic went on unabated as Sechele did not cooperate with Rev. Wookey in enforcing prohibition. Hence by 1888 Wookey could report that Henry Boyne was selling liquor to whites and blacks and even organising drinking parties for white policemen and laymen alike, with impunity:

I went to Sechele yesterday and tried to get him to put an end to the sale of drink on the station, but I fear it is not much use going to him.⁶⁶

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65. See "Khama and drink traffic," by J. Johnson, et. al., in The League Journal, Glasgow (9th October, 1880). The authors criticised Britain at great length: "It is a matter of shame and deep humiliation that Christian Britain, which has sent to Africa the Gospel of Jesus Christ - the water of life - has sent along with it the water of death, and that the ships which have carried the Bible and the missionary have carried the rum cask and the liquor seller to your shores." In their enthusiasm to support African Chiefs who opposed the introduction of liquor in their communities, anti-liquor organizations in Europe did not always report accurately; see for example "Poisoning of Africa Papers," op. cit., p. 542, when Kgama was reported to be the "First native Christian Chief in Africa." See also, Inquisitor, "Khama, the King," loc. cit.
66. Wookey to Thompson, 4th August 1888, Box 45 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

In Ngamiland Chief Moremi, who obtained liquor from traders there, was a confirmed drinker and could advance physiological reasons to justify his liking for brandy and Khadi. When he visited Shoshong in 1880 he paid lip-service to Kgama's injunction against liquor but in fact secretly asked one of Kgama's brothers to supply him with some beer, a breach for which the latter was punished by Kgama.⁶⁷ In 1885 Moremi was reported to have become a moderate drinker after Hepburn had reprimanded him.⁶⁸ However, a year later he renounced all pretensions to Christianity and henceforth drank liquor and Khadi unfettered.

Kgama's lonesome fight against alcoholism received a boost in 1888 when Bathoen became an abstainer,⁶⁹ a move which the L.M.S. Directors praised highly.⁷⁰ In 1890 Bathoen prohibited the sale of liquor in Ngwaketse.⁷¹

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67. Hepburn, Twenty Years in Khama's Country, p. 85.
68. Hepburn to Thompson, 7th March, 1885, Box 43 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).
69. C.O. 879/30 op. cit., pp. 2-4, Shippard to Robinson, 3rd August, 1888, enclosed in Robinson to Knutsford, 2 of 22nd August, 1888.
70. Thompson to James Good, 15th July, 1886, Box 19; 15th January, 1891, Box 23 (L.M.S.).
71. Kanye Report for 1889-90, in Good to Thompson, 6th April, 1890, Box 23 (L.M.S.).

In the meantime some charitable organizations in Britain and elsewhere were building up pressure upon imperial powers of Europe to enact anti-liquor laws in their colonies. In 1890 several European countries, Britain included, passed the Brussels Act, which bound signatories to prohibit the consumption of European liquor ("fire water") in their respective colonies. Hence in 1891 the Native Races and Liquor Traffic United Committee (N.R.L.T.U.C.) could write to the Colonial Office drawing their government's attention to a report that purported Cecil Rhodes to have said the B.S.A. Company might abrogate anti-liquor laws in those areas falling under the Company's sphere of influence.⁷² Although Britain did not enforce the Brussels Act immediately, the campaign for prohibition was

72. C.O. 879/33, op. cit., p. 52, Rev. J. Grant to Knutsford, 47 of 2nd January, 1891. See also, Ibid., p. 61, C.O. to Rev. Grant Mills (of the N.R.L.T.U.C.) 57 of 17th January, 1891 in which the British Government policy was enunciated: "With regard to your observations as to the views of Khama on this subject, I am to state that Khama has the full sympathy and support of Her Majesty's Government in his policy of preserving his people from demoralization by the liquor traffic." For the Brussels Act of 1890 see "Poisoning of Africa Papers," No. 12, op. cit., p. 543. To discourage liquor traffic, the Act imposed high tariffs: 6½d. per gallon in British colonies and 15 francs per hectalitre in French colonies.

strengthened by reports that alleged Tswana communities to have become addicted to liquor.⁷³ Hence in February 1892 the High Commissioner issued a proclamation that controlled the distribution and consumption of liquor in Bechuanaland.⁷⁴

However, liquor laws and regulations were passed at a time when public opinion regarding prohibition lacked a consensus among Africans and Europeans. Opposition to prohibition seems to have centred round two main schools of thought: the first school of thought was derived from a pseudo-scientific notion that alcoholic beverages, especially the local brews variously called Secwana boyalwe, Khadi, or Kaffir beer, were a veritable source of energy and made

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73. For example, see Cape Argus, 31st January, 1890; C.O. 879/37, op. cit., p. 27, J.S. Moffat to High Commissioner, 6th October, 1892, enclosed in Cameron to the Marquess of Ripon, 17 of 14th October, 1892, in which Moffat reported that the new Kwena Chief, Sebele, was addicted to Alcohol.
74. H.C. Juta, The Laws of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Volume II, pp. 669-677 (Chapter 84, Liquor Proclamation, (a), 4 April, 1892). The Proclamation listed three types of native liquors (i.e. Kaffir beer, mokolane, Kabidikama or ila) that were considered potentially dangerous.

Africans who drank them more productive workers than abstainers;⁷⁵ the second was inspired by economic considerations and was ably enunciated by an editorial in the Bechuanaland News. In a rebuttal to Advocate Molteno, who had supported prohibition in an address to the Church Temperance Society at Cape Town, the editor dissented:

I do not believe in it [prohibition], I do not think it possible. Such a gospel in an avowedly wine-producing country is unwise, and productive of bitter opposition, as instanced by the formation of an anti-teetotal League at the Paarl and Wellington. Let us be moderate, temperate in the true sense of the word.⁷⁶

In the circumstances traders were apt to infringe liquor laws by carrying on a clandestine traffic. The

75. See for example, "Liquor and Native Labour," Bechuanaland News, 16th February, 1895. For views on the nutritious value of 'Kaffir beer', see "The beer question, Kaffir Beer as a National Food and Beverage of the African," The South African Outlook, 1st November, 1941, in particular Dr. R.T. Bokwe, Thomas Nkosinkulu, et. al. I assume that the formula and ingredients for making Kaffir beer have remained more or less the same; M. Hole, The Passing of the Black Kings (London, 1932, pp. 266-7.) Some Europeans believed (see Willoughby to Thompson, 31st December, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket C - Folder 2, L.M.S.) that 'Kaffir' beer cured scab.

76. See "Liquor Problems and Legislation," the Bechuanaland News, 16th December, 1893.

number of offenders who escaped punishment⁷⁷ must have been considerable. Nonetheless some were apprehended and punished. In April 1895 a Vryburg magistrate fined a Mr. M.W. Theal £2.10.- for supplying a bottle of brandy to an African, Dirk Mentor.⁷⁸ In November that year two African transport riders - a driver and a conductor - who broached a case of whiskey at Palapye were arrested and sentenced to two months' imprisonment each.⁷⁹ But at Molepolole Chief Sebele obtained regular supplies of liquor from traders in spite of the Protectorate laws on prohibition, as for example in December 1894 when he obtained ample supplies of liquor after he had persuaded an army doctor to prescribe brandy for him.⁸⁰ Later that year the veteran trader, Henry Boyne, was convicted on a charge arising from his illicit supply of liquor to Sebele;

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77. See Footnote 96 below. Some farmers at the Cape made brandy out of an indigenous plant described by a Swedish traveller as "a species of cactus of a considerable size": see Andrew Sparrman, A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarctic Polar Circle ... from 1772-76, Vol. II, translated from the Swedish original, p. 345.
78. See "Sensational Liquor Case," Bechuanaland News, 27th April, 1895.
79. "Notes from Palapye," Bechuanaland News, 16 November, 1895.
80. Williams to Thompson, 5th January, 1895, Box 52 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

he was fined £10 and forfeited his liquor licence. Significantly Sebele successfully pleaded to the British Administration for clemency and Boyne's licence was restored.⁸¹

Among the Ngwato prohibition heightened tensions between Chief Kgama and his brothers. In 1895 Kgama accused one section of the Ngwato church of drunkenness; the faction included his perennial opponents, Raditladi, Mphoeng, and Tiro.⁸² His puritanical views on liquor notwithstanding, Kgama rescinded his rigid liquor laws in 1895 to forestall a major split in his chiefdom;⁸³ later that year the Chief attributed all the political bickering at Palapye to liquor.⁸⁴

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81. Williams to Thompson, 20th September, 1895, Box 52 - Jacket A - Folder 2. For Boyne's renewal of liquor licence, see Williams to Thompson, 7th January, 1896 (L.M.S.).
82. Raditladi, Mphoeng, *et. al.* to Thompson, 16th March, 1895, translated by J.S. Moffat (L.M.S.). For a discussion of Kgama's quarrels with his brothers see Chapter Five. Willoughby correctly (in letter to Thompson, 16th March, 1896) observed that the beer issue had been used as a stance to provoke political dissent. See also, Palapye Church to Thompson, 17th February 1896; Willoughby to Thompson, 30 March 1896 (L.M.S.).
83. See "Khama and his people," The Bechuanaland News, 6th July 1895: "The Chief's power is considerably weakened and he feels he can no longer enforce his liquor laws. He had therefore removed the restriction on beer drinking. He has done it against his own wish..." Later that year prohibition featured prominently in the discussions that went on (see Sillery, Founding a Protectorate, Chapter XVIII) between three Tswana chiefs and the British Government in London.
84. "Khama interviewed," Bechuanaland News, 24th October 1895.

Once prohibition had been lifted it appears that liquor consumption increased in Ngwatoland and had deleterious effects on the inhabitants. A report from Palapye in 1896 said:

A transport rider informs us that carriers have great difficulty in getting away from Palapye; their boys [drivers] go on the spree as soon as they get there and openly defy their masters when it is time to trek on, telling them to go and inspan themselves. Last month [December 1895] as many as 100 wagons were standing in the town.⁸⁵

This account was confirmed by Assistant Commissioner Ashburnham in May 1896.⁸⁶

While press reports tended to lament losses sustained by European traders through alcoholism, there are some accounts which assessed the ill effects alcoholism had on the Tswana. One side effect was that the Tswana brewed beer at the expense of their food supplies. In 1896 a British official observed:

Large stocks of grain, which in former years would have been held in reserve or bartered away for other supplies, have this year been consumed in the beer making ...⁸⁷

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85. "Beer Drinking at Palapye," Bechuanaland News, 11th January 1896.
86. C.O. 879/47, op. cit., p. 158: "It is, I fear, perfectly true that the drinking of Kaffir beer at Palapye has occasioned delays to traffic and inconvenience to the public."
87. Ibid.

In consequence Kgama again imposed (1896) prohibition partly to ward off starvation but largely because he no longer feared the effect it might have on tribal unity as Raditladi's group attracted few followers.⁸⁸

Meanwhile at Molepolole Chief Sebele epitomised Tswana defiance to government and church law. But in this respect his reliance on Tswana custom was more suspect than his carefully reasoned rejection of Christian marriage laws at the turn of the twentieth century. He consistently exercised his right to drink beer and liquor until his death in 1911. Soon after his return from England in 1896 Sebele broke his pledge to abstain from alcohol and drank large quantities of brandy.⁸⁹ In June 1896 he was reported to have been intoxicated on the two bottles of brandy which he had obtained from the trader Van Zyl;⁹⁰ later that year Sebele obtained eighteen bottles of brandy and avoided meeting Rev. Williams for six weeks.⁹¹ By

88. Ibid. In January 1896, 500 transport riders petitioned Kgama to reenact liquor laws.

89. Williams to Thompson, 27th March, 1896 (L.M.S.). See also, MacRae, The Protectorate and Prevalent Diseases, p. 20, who said Sebele died of cirrhosis of the liver, a disease caused by alcohol.

90. Williams to Thompson, 5th June, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

91. Williams to Thompson, 12th October, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket B - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).

November 1896 Sebele's drinking habits had become so bad that Chief Kgama and Chief Bathoen went to Molepolole to counsel him against excessive drinking. They warned Sebele that if he did not take heed of their advice they might be compelled to regard him as a hostile neighbour.⁹² Sebele is reported to have exercised restraint after Kgama and Bathoen's departure. In April 1898 Henry Boyne, who was perhaps the trader closest to the Kwena ruling family, died at Molepolole.⁹³

In Ngwatoland Chief Kgama's laws on prohibition do not seem to have been observed by the majority of his subjects. In 1896 Kgama informed the N.R.L.T.U.C. that his efforts to outlaw the consumption of liquor had yielded minimal results: "And concerning liquor I am still trying, but I do not think that I can succeed."⁹⁴

If Kgama's apprehension was premature his observation was perceptive on at least one issue: the traders' calculated

92. Williams to Thompson, 20th November, 1896, Box 53 - Jacket C - Folder 3 (L.M.S.).
93. Williams to Thompson, 22nd April, 1898, Box 55 - Jacket B - Folder One (L.M.S.).
94. C.O. 879/47, op. cit., pp. 378-9, Chief Kgama to N.R.L.T.U.C., 24th December, 1896.

contravention of liquor laws.⁹⁵ Although the Assistant Commissioner at Palapye had assured the Resident Commissioner in 1896 that the Protectorate's liquor laws were rigidly enforced, there is reason to believe that liquor licences were issued indiscriminately and in contravention of the pledges Chamberlain gave to the Chiefs in 1895. In 1897 the question of licenses was raised in the House of Commons when Sir Mark Stewart asked for assurances that railway canteens along the railway line linking Bechuanaland and Rhodesia, would not be granted licenses against Kgama's wishes. In reply Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, said that Kgama's views on the issue and British pledges to uphold prohibition enunciated since 1895 would be respected.

If Chamberlain's assurances were given in good faith, or just because he wouldn't be bothered or wasn't just interested, officers of the Protectorate administration do not seem to have had strong convictions on prohibition. Their attitude might have been influenced by white opinion in South Africa, which as we have seen above was generally against prohibition; hence the laxity with which liquor

95. Kgama had said: "Here in our country there are Europeans who like liquor exceedingly, and they are not people who like to save a nation, but to seek that a nation may be destroyed by liquor; and they are not people who like to be persuaded in the matter of liquor," Ibid.

laws were enforced.⁹⁶ Nor were missionaries themselves agreed as to the ethical validity of total abstinence.

When John Brown complained that James Richardson had inspected L.M.S. schools in 1899 (see Chapter Five, p.213-4) while he was under the influence of alcohol, the B.D.C. absolved Richardson on 25th October, 1900, adding:

... even if the words in Mr. Brown's letter regarding Mr. Richardson not being a total abstainer are strictly true the committee is unable to regard that statement as being a reflection on Christian character.

96. For laxity in enforcing liquor laws the following letter to the editor (Bechuanaland News, 5th May, 1894) is revealing: "Are the government sincere in their professing to keep a strict supervision over the liquor brought into the Protectorate and beyond its borders? Or is it only a superficial action to blind the British public? If they are sincere, why do they not have a strict watch kept over the class of carrier loading it up north? ... While writing these lines a native carrier is outspanned here [Palapye] on his way north with a load of liquor ... As for the Bechuanaland Border Police acting as customs officers, I am quite sure the collector of Customs will agree with me that it is the greatest farce out. Six regular customs officers under the direct control of the collector of Customs would be of more use than the 500 men of the B.B.P. acting as at present. Not that I for one moment insinuate that there are not good and true men in the B.B.P., but there seems a want of judgment in the selection of men sent on the out-stations. Not always the most sober are chosen for that duty. It does not give you the most exalted idea of Her Majesty's acting excise officers when they come much the worse for liquor, and make a pretence of looking through your waybills, and wind up by asking you if you have not got a bottle of whiskey you can spare!" Also, for unruly behaviour of the Sotho members of the B.B.P. see "Tragedy in the Kalahari," Bechuanaland News, 4th February, 1899.

On that occasion the B.D.C. resolved that Tswana church members abstain from drinking all intoxicating beverages except the Secwana boyalwe, which they deemed mild enough for consumption.⁹⁷

Even when the B.D.C. had passed regulations upholding prohibition, there is evidence to suggest that individual missionaries either forgot about these rules or enforced them only haphazardly. Thus in 1902 Rev. Willoughby reported that the Ngwato were drinking excessively and suggested:

We must either take a resolute stand against it in church membership, or it will wipe us out. I wish you were here to see and discuss things.⁹⁸

In 1904 Rev. Jennings reported (apparently unaware of the B.D.C. resolution of 1900) - that he had banned beer drinking among

97. Minutes of the B.D.C. enclosed in John Tom Brown to Thompson 25th October, 1900 (L.M.S.), section C of the Minutes merely suggested: "Without wishing in any way to add to the Society's rules and regulations, we would suggest the advisability of selecting such missionaries for our Becwana Mission as are total abstainers, so that no missionary may find himself in an anomalous position in carrying out" measures against excessive drinking. For irresolute missionary policy on prohibition, see Willoughby to Thompson, 9th March, 1901 in which he said "... we never made it a sine qua non in church members... it does not require total abstinence. From imported spirits, and a new fangled brew of golden syrup brew ... as strong as brandy, yes! From their own malt liquor, no!" In John Brown, Secwana Dictionary (London, 1895), p. 37, boyalwe is defined as a "kind of weak beer."

98. Willoughby to Thompson, 23rd December, 1902 (L.M.S.).

Church members at Serowe.⁹⁹ In Kwenaland Rev. Haydon Lewis reported in 1907 that he had enforced "the total prohibition of beer at Christian marriage feasts."¹⁰⁰ What emerges from the above account on liquor is that missionaries, British officials, and Tswana chiefs were lax in their enforcement of liquor laws and that as a result Tswana communities - both Christian and non-Christian - did not observe prohibition with any seriousness.

In 1904 some Khurutshe church members informed Rev. Gould about their views on beer drinking:¹⁰¹

We drink beer very much and so long as our hearts wish to drink it, we will continue to drink it.

In Ngamiland the church deacon at Tsau and several church members there confessed to Jennings in 1905 that they had always drunk brandy and Khadi;¹⁰² in 1908 Motlapise, a Mongwato who had been a celebrated preacher between 1871

99. Jennings to Thompson, 15th June, 1904 (L.M.S.).
100. Lewis to Thompson, 1907 Molepolole Report, Box 4 (L.M.S.).
101. Gould to Thompson, 8th September, 1904, 16th September, 1904 (L.M.S.). Prohibition was one of the issues that led to the formation (see Chapter Six) of the Ethiopian movement in Bechuanaland.
102. Jennings, Report on Ngamiland, 1905 (L.M.S.).

and 1891, was reported to have lapsed as a Christian, Rev. Lloyd adding: "Strong drink has been his downfall."¹⁰³

By 1900 of the four principal Chiefs in Northern Bechuanaland, Bathoen, Sekgoma (Chief of the Tawana) and Kgama observed total abstinence, but Mathiba¹⁰⁴ the heir apparent in Tawanaland and Sebele were confirmed drinkers. In May 1901 Sebele was reported to be failing to fulfil his duties as chief because of drunkenness, a misdemeanor for which he was severely reprimanded by the Resident Commissioner. By August that year Sebele accepted the principle of moderate drinking but maintained that Khadi was a kind of food:

I have also heard with regard to Khadi and I shall leave it alone, as you have advised me to do, although I merely look upon it as food, for we all drink it, but, if a person drinks much of it, such persons might get under the influence thereof. That is the fault I find in it. So far as I am concerned, I have not seen myself under the influence thereof ...¹⁰⁵

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103. Lloyd to Thompson, 15th July, 1908 (L.M.S.).
104. C.O. 879/76, op. cit., pp. 162-3, Mervyn Williams to Ralph Williams, July 1901, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 121 of 4th October, 1901.
105. C.O. 879/69, op. cit., pp. 374, 377, Surmon to Kitchener, 13th May, 1901, enclosed in High Commissioner to Chamberlain, 260 of 7th June, 1901; Rev. Alfred Wookey to Surmon, 3rd May, 1901.

Sebele's pledge to stop drinking Khadi was clearly never honoured. In 1908 Rev. Lewis reported: "It is a fact that during 1908 Chief Sebele has seldom been sober."¹⁰⁶ Nor was Kgama's fight against the consumption of Khadi and liquor wholly successful either. When Rev. Jennings tightened church laws on prohibition in 1901, many people resigned their church membership, while some professed Christians drank beer secretly.¹⁰⁷

Thus it would appear that attempts to transform initiation ceremonies, marriage customs, and the drinking habits of the Tswana met with little success. Viewed in the context of the Tswana social milieu and also in the light of parallel experiences elsewhere in Africa, attempts made by Europeans to transform African social institutions met strong resistance largely because they sought to change a people's personality in the shortest possible time, and the Tswana were not so susceptible.¹⁰⁸

106. R.H. Lewis, Molepolole Report, 1908, Box 4 (L.M.S.). Lewis noted that illicit liquor traffic was a lucrative enterprise which Protectorate officials seemed to condone.

107. Rev. Jennings, Serowe Mission Report, 1909, Box 4 (L.M.S.).

108. Elsewhere in Africa prohibition was not successful either. See, for example, "The Triumph of Gin," in E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 (London, 1966), p. 307 *passim*; Robert I. Rotberg, Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924 (Princeton, 1965), p. 127 *passim*. In a general sense European attitudes towards Tswana institutions was influenced by the prevailing cultural absolutism of the day, in contradistinction to the now widely held views on cultural relativism (popularised by Ruth Benedict, in Patterns of Culture, London, 1935). See also, H. Alan C. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism, British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890 (London, 1965), pp. 120-146, for a discussion of some aspects of cultural relativism.

IV

Of all the spheres in which Europeans tried to influence and, on their own terms, improve Tswana life, the economic realm seems to have been most beset by vicissitudes way into the twentieth century. A pattern of unrelieved economic hardship set in after the heyday of the ivory trade in the 1850's which had declined so sharply that by the 1880's it was no longer a profitable enterprise. We have also observed that, partly as a result of these diminishing game resources, Tswana rulers compromised the traditional systems of land tenure and issued land concessions in order to replenish the revenues of their chiefdoms.¹⁰⁹ It is also tempting to correlate economic hardship with the readiness with which the Tswana accepted innovations to some of their farming practices. The introduction of the plough in the 1870's had important social and economic consequences.¹¹⁰ By the 1880's - thanks to the white traders - the use of ploughs seems to have been widespread¹¹¹ as is suggested by a visitor to Bechuanaland who observed:

109. See Chapter Four, pp. 157-163.

110. See Chapter Three, pp. 169 - 173.

111. Although no estimates of ploughs in the possession of the Kwena are given, the plough must have been widely used there for in 1881 Sechele forbade its use as a punishment for his army's poor performance in their 1881 war with the Kgatla; see Price to Thompson, 14th December, 1881, loc. cit. (L.M.S.).

The number of wagons and ploughs in the country is very considerable. They use hardly anything but American and Swedish ploughs, which are much lighter than the English make.¹¹²

Even the Tswana, who did not have as many white traders as their southern kinsmen, were reported to be in possession of eight ploughs in 1894;¹¹³ a year later it was estimated that the Ngwato had 1,500 ploughs.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless the introduction of ploughs coincided with persistent droughts, with the result that there was little real progress in agriculture. Even a few wells that the British administration sank along the main routes barely sufficed for Tswana household consumption.¹¹⁵ In the absence of regular water supply crop

112. R. Wardlaw Thompson, "With the Boers and Blacks in South Africa," Pall Mall Gazette, 6th June, 1884. The use of ploughs is confirmed by H.A. Bryden (see his Gun and Camera, p. 117) who observed that in 1890 the Bechuanaland Trading Association sold 300 American ploughs at £5 each in one day at their Shoshong store.
113. Alfred Wookey, "More News from Lake Ngami," The Chronicle, October 1894, p. 238, in which he noted: "I went to one garden where some of them were learning both to train oxen and to plough at the same time ... They asked me to show them how to plough, but, though I tried, I don't think I helped them very much."
114. The Chronicle, March 1895, p. 107.
115. Between 1891 and 1892 (see Parl. Papers, Lx.8, 1892, p. 46) the B.S.A. Company sank six wells along the route between Ramathlabama and Ramoutsa, while the British Administration sank four wells along the same route. But Thompson (see "With Boers," loc. cit.) gave an optimistic account of the irrigation potential of Bechuanaland: "As for the lack of water ... that is entirely due to their failure or neglect to dig for water ..."

failures remained endemic, the dearth of corn invariably inducing price fluctuations of great magnitude. For example in 1890 a 205 lb. bag of maize that previously cost 10/- rose to 36/-.¹¹⁶ The outbreak of rinderpest in March 1896 caused a sharp increase in the price of maize owing to the shortage of draught animals normally used for transporting grain to the Protectorate. Hence between March and October 1896 the price of maize rose from £2 10/-¹¹⁷ to £20 a bag.¹¹⁸ Another factor that caused price fluctuations was the ephemeral nature of the demands for Tswana produce. One such demand was created in 1890 when the Chartered Expeditionary Force (also called the Pioneer Column) passed through the eastern portion of Bechuanaland on its way to Mashonaland. The Tswana suddenly found a ready market for their cattle, goats, and labour.¹¹⁹ On another occasion the Ngwato found

116. Bryden, Gun and Camera, p. 117. In 1893 (see Wookey to Thompson, 21st October, 1893) maize was selling at £1 a bag in Ngamiland, while Boer meal was selling at ~~£1 10/-~~

117. Willoughby to Thompson, 30th March, 1896 (L.M.S.).

118. Willoughby to Thompson, 12th October, 1896 (L.M.S.). See also C. Van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa, 1896-97," J.A.H., XIII, No. 3 (1972), p. 485, where corn meal is reported to have fetched £10 per bag of 200 lbs. However, luxury goods (sweets, jams, tea) had never been an essential part of Tswana diet.

119. See Bryden, Gun and Camera, p. 261, who estimated that the expeditionary B.S.A. Co. force to Mashonaland in 1890 bought Ngwato produce worth £20,000. However by 1893 (see J.S. Moffat to Thompson, 30th January 1893, L.M.S.) it was reported that the circulation of money had eased off as there were not many Europeans going to the North.

a market for their labour when in 1893 hostilities broke out between the Ndebele and white settlers in Matebeleland. Chief Kgama sent a force of 1,900 men to assist the white settlers and was paid £1,100 in return.¹²⁰

If the Ngwato benefited most from the war of 1893, the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) provided a market for all principal Tswana tribes. British demand for livestock for slaughter,¹²¹ timber,¹²² water,¹²³ and auxiliary labourers¹²⁴ brought substantial cash to Tswana chiefdoms. By May 1900 Rev. Williams

120. C.O. 879/40, op. cit., pp. 209-226, Loch to Ripon, 133 of 12th March 1894. It is not clear how the figure of £1,100 was arrived at as the men were reported to have been engaged for twenty two days at the rate of one shilling each a day, which should have amounted to £2,090.
121. See Howard Williams to Thompson, 11th May 1900 (L.M.S.), in which he said cattle were selling at £25 - £30 a herd; sheep and goats at £3 each. See also Ellenberger, "The Boer War," loc. cit.; Willoughby to Thompson, 4th October, 1900 (L.M.S.).
122. See for example, C.O. 879/78, op. cit., pp. 439-40, 472, Milner to Chamberlain, 379 of 8th November, 1902; Earl of Onslow to Milner, 398 of 11th December, 1902, where Chief Sebele received £1,300 for the sale of timber.
123. See for example Ellenberger, "Boer War," loc. cit., p. 16, where Chief Bathoen is reported to have placed his dam at the disposal of Colonel Plumer's forces for two days at the rate of £5 a day.
124. See for example, Lloyd to Thompson, 20th August, 1909, (L.M.S.), where Kgama was reported to have received £1728 for the service rendered by his subjects to British troops during the war.

estimated that British forces had purchased livestock worth £65,000, adding - no doubt with some exaggeration - that the Tswana had become the "chancellor of the Government exchequer ... all the ready cash is in the hands of the natives."¹²⁵ It was the Tswana's misfortune that these spells of economic opportunities were punctuated by droughts and epidemics, which in turn affected the pace at which the chiefdoms could be transformed.

What perhaps was the greatest catastrophe to strike Tswana communities during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the rinderpest (bolowane) epidemic of 1896-7. Although European observers tended to exaggerate the number of cattle that the Tswana lost, there is no doubt that rinderpest killed large numbers of cattle. In its wake missionaries and government officials tried to check its spread by persuading the Tswana to destroy all infected cattle and by restricting the movement of live ones, but they failed to get the cooperation of some Tswana communities. In Kwenaland the destruction of cattle was opposed by a faction led by Kgosidintsi, who asserted that the dingaka alone were capable of curing rinderpest. In the event Kgosidintsi is reported to have lost all his cattle; Chief Sebele lost all but 77 of

125. Williams to Thompson, 11th May, 1900, loc. cit.

the 10,000 herd he possessed.¹²⁶ The Ngwaketse, too, sustained heavy losses,¹²⁷ while the Ngwato lost over 90% of their cattle in spite of the combined efforts of the chief, the veterinary officer, and a large section of the tribe to check the spread of rinderpest.¹²⁸

In a region that had always been plagued by droughts the outbreak of rinderpest deprived the Tswana of one of their most valuable forms of wealth and it brought in its train great hunger. In the wake of the epidemic Chiefs, missionaries, and government officials set up some relief projects. Initially Chiefs, for various reasons, resented European participation in relief projects. Sebele objected to European participation on the grounds that the chief alone had the prerogative to distribute food.¹²⁹ On the

126. Williams to Thompson, 11th May 1896. See also Willoughby to Thompson, 28th June 1896; Williams to Thompson, 31st July 1896 (L.M.S.).

127. Good to Cousins, 24th September 1897, in which his report certainly exaggerated cattle losses as it claimed that all cattle had died.

128. Willoughby to Thompson, 29th June, 18th September, 1896; Williams to Thompson, 15th May, 5th June, 26th June 1896 (L.M.S.). See also C. Van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest," op. cit., p. 474.

129. Williams to Thompson, 31st July, 1896 (L.M.S.).

other hand Chief Kgama objected to the free distribution of food, especially to those members of his tribe who were still able to do some manual work: "I am averse to the maintenance of my people by the charity of the government or of the English people ... I desire that my people may be allowed to earn their living."¹³⁰ Chief Bathoen was so desperate to save his people. To him expediency transcended all questions of protocol; hence he pleaded: "We have no money, but we want food."¹³¹ The Chiefs' varying reactions notwithstanding, relief projects were launched and in due course many Tswana communities received food rations consisting mostly of corn and sorghum. In Ngwaketse-land Rev. Lloyd reported that between November 1896 and September 1897, 1,868 people received food rations;¹³² that by September 1898, 400 lbs. of grain was being distributed

130. C.O. 879/52, *op. cit.*, p. 112, Kgama to Milner 9th August 1897, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 107 of 25th August 1897.

131. *Ibid.*, p. 75, Bathoen to Ellenberger, 17th June 1897, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 33 of 13th July, 1897.

132. Lloyd to Cousins, 17th September, 1897 (L.M.S.). There were two relief committees, one set up by the L.M.S. in London, and another made up of L.M.S. agents and Protectorate officials in Bechuanaland.

each morning to 10 men, 410 women, and 81 children.¹³³
 Relief schemes seem to have succeeded in Kwenaland, too, once Sebele had agreed to work with missionaries and government officials. In August 1898 Wookey reported that about 500 people received food rations every morning.¹³⁴ By December that year over 1,400 people - mostly women and children - were on relief.¹³⁵

When Kgama requested that his people be provided with jobs in order to earn their living, he had in fact anticipated the Colonial Secretary's views on the issue, for in ^{April} 1896 Chamberlain instructed Robinson to encourage all able-bodied Tswana men to go and work in the gold-fields in South Africa, and that only needy women and children could be supplied with food.¹³⁶ A month later

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133. Good to Thompson, 22nd September 1898 (L.M.S.). Among the tribes that received rations were Rolong, Thlaping, Thlaro, and some Kgalagadi who came from Lehututu.
134. Wookey to Thompson, 4th August, 1898; Mary Partridge to Thompson, 8th September, 1898 (L.M.S.).
135. Wookey to Thompson, 29th December 1898. See also Wookey to Thompson, 11th and 29th September, 10th November 1898. (L.M.S.) However, government and missionary reports are not clear if the same people received rations at the various times nor do they specify the time it took a recipient to consume a ration before he could come for the next ration.
136. C.O. 879/47, op. cit., p. 98, Chamberlain to Robinson, Telegram, 16th April, 1896.

he instructed that some men be employed as labourers on the railway line that was being built between Gaborone and Bulawayo.¹³⁷ While some men worked on the railway line, others were employed to fence it on the Protectorate side of the railway strip, an engagement that entailed the supply of timber by Tswana communities living along the railway line. Thus in one report a government official estimated that the Tswana would be paid £765 to supply poles for fencing the line between Mochudi and Ramakgwebana.¹³⁸

At first many Tswana men were reluctant to work as labourers because their families tried to eke out an existence on carcasses of cattle. However once the meat of these rinderpest victims was known to be contaminated,¹³⁹ Tswana men were compelled to seek employment so that they could earn money with which to buy food for their families. Tswana participation in the work projects within the Protectorate was commended by the High Commissioner in 1897; Robinson was so impressed with their work that he intro-

137. Ibid., p. 147, Robinson to Chamberlain, 5th May, 1896.

138. Ibid.

139. See for example Good to Thompson, 21st January 1898 (L.M.S.), in which he reported that 1,500 people had died in Ngwaketse land ~~that~~^{the} previous year.

duced another scheme whereby Tswana communities could earn money by selling brushwood and timber to the Kimberly diamond mines.¹⁴⁰ This scheme was facilitated by the completion of the railway line linking the Protectorate with the Cape in 1897 as the wood and timber could now be carried by trains more expeditiously and at a cheaper rate than by road transportation.¹⁴¹ The railways also made it cheaper to transport grain to Bechuanaland. In 1897 a government official reported that, because of cheap transportation, maize was being sold at £1 - 7⁶ - 6d a bag, which was less than half what it would have cost if there had been no railway line.¹⁴² Railways again played an important role in restocking Bechuanaland as cattle, sheep, and goats were conveyed from the Cape to the Protectorate at rates that were one third of the normal cost.¹⁴³ Before the advent

140. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., pp. 112, 118, Milner to Chamberlain, 107 and 113 of 25th and 27th August, 1897.

141. See Ibid., in which the De Beers Mining Company is reported to have shouldered half the cost of transporting timber and brushwood.

142. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., p. 213, Milner to Chamberlain, 188 of 13th November 1897.

143. See "To restock Bechuanaland," Bechuanaland News, 23rd September, 1899.

of the railways cattle had had to be moved on the hoof.¹⁴⁴

In the aftermath of the rinderpest the Tswana appear to have accepted European veterinary measures, such as dipping cattle and killing infected ones, to check and prevent the spread of diseases. The Protectorate administration, which had had little to do with veterinary measures since 1885, stepped up its efforts to check cattle diseases after 1900. In 1904, a veterinary officer, Mr. G.W. Lee, was brought to the Protectorate on a temporary basis to help prevent the spread of a cattle disease called the East Coast fever. In 1905, Mr. W.H. Chase was appointed a permanent veterinary officer for the whole Protectorate.¹⁴⁵ Mr. Chase's work seems to have been effective, helped no doubt by fears of a repeat performance of the disease of 1896-7; for example, when he asked the Ngwato to destroy their infected cattle in 1908 all but six of those who attended the pitso at Serowe opposed him. Other Tswana chiefdoms must have cooperated with the veterinary officer for in

144. J. Falconer, "History of the Botswana Veterinary Services, 1905-66," Botswana Notes and Records, 3, p. 74.

145. Ibid. In August 1892 a Proclamation was issued to prevent the spread of a cattle disease called foot and mouth, see D. Ward, Bechuanaland Protectorate Orders in Council and High Commissioner's Proclamations (Cape Town, 1904), p. 29, revised and brought up to date by Barry May.

his annual report for the period 1908-9, Mr. Chase commended the Tswana for agreeing to have their cattle inoculated:

"So far, not a hitch has occurred; thousands of head of cattle have been successfully inoculated; many outbreaks of the disease [rinderpest] have been smothered by the prompt destruction of affected cattle; and throughout the country the people are awakening to the fact that the disease, from the devastation of which they have suffered so long, can be stamped out, and are clamouring for assistance."¹⁴⁶

The move to improve pastoral farming tapped the Protectorate's most viable industry and after 1900 the Tswana relied more on cattle and products derived from cattle, such as hides and skins, for trade than they had done in the past. However, Ngamiland was an exception as the Tswana and their neighbours had in addition to cattle, ample hunting grounds which abound with a variety of game. The Tswana hunted in the Mababe-Chobe forests, Luiana river, and Tsodilo hills area; some hunted on horseback. Their produce consisted of

146. Parliamentary Papers, Lvii, 195, 190, pp. 8-9. Government expenditure on veterinary services between 1901 and 1910 was as follows: 1901-2, £307; 1902-3, £398; 1903-4, £576; 1904-5, £98; 1905-6, £689; 1906-7, £721; 1907-8, £793; 1908-9, £1,039; 1910, £2,601, see Parliamentary Papers, Lxxiii, p. 10; Liii, p. 5; Lxviii, p. 4; Lvii, p. 5; Lvii, pp. 6-7; Lxiv, p. 5.

cattle, skins of various animals, horns, tails, ostrich feathers, and hides of hippos out of which white South African farmers made canes for driving cattle (Sjamboks in Afrikaans);¹⁴⁷ they marketed part of their produce through the five white traders in Ngamiland. Some Tswana engaged in transport riding and carried part of the produce to South Africa in their wagons. A trip from Ngamiland to South Africa earned a Tswana operator £80 - £100.¹⁴⁸ However, transport riding was gradually made obsolete especially among the Ngwato, Kwena, and Ngwaketse by railway trains which from 1897 onwards conveyed goods to and from South Africa more expeditiously. Not that agricultural produce was altogether wanting. During the infrequent seasons when rainfall was good the Tswana grew maize and sorghum which some of the farmers sold and used the money they obtained from the sales to buy cattle; others do not appear to have handled their produce wisely as they are reported to have been in the habit of selling their grain at harvest time, only to find themselves in need of buying it back from the

147. See Ellenberger, Notes on the Tswana, Folder 796, No. 9 Ngami, *op. cit.*, Selly Oak; Tlou, "History of Northwestern Botswana," p. 235.

148. Tlou, *op. cit.*, p. 235; I. Schapera, Migrant Labour and Tribal Life (London, 1947), p. 28.

same traders for their own consumption later in the year and at much higher prices than they had sold it.¹⁴⁹

The settlement of Europeans along the Eastern strip of Bechuanaland after 1903 - known as Tuli block farms, Lobatsi block farms, and Gaberone block farms - opened few opportunities for employment. Nor did the stores and hotels in the Protectorate employ many Tswana workers either; in 1903 they employed 600 men¹⁵⁰ all told, a figure that represented a very small fraction of the population. Nevertheless, the settlement strip was used as permanent refuge on at least two occasions by whites whom Kgama did not want to remain in his chiefdom: Rev. Edwin Lloyd in 1914,¹⁵¹ and Paul Jousse of the Bechuanaland Trading Association in 1916.¹⁵²

The preceding account has shown that economic opportunities and natural resources within the Protectorate were scanty. It is against this background of scarcity that the

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149. Evidence of Kgama and Ellenberger, Minutes of S.A.N.A.C., Vol. 4, pp. 251, 235.
150. See Schapera, Migrant Labour, pp. 27-8, who also shows that over 1,000 herdsmen (all probably Sarwa) were employed by white farmers at Ghanzi. See also B.N.A., J.978, S.29/5/1, Paul Jousse to Assistant Commissioner at Francis Town, 13th March 1915, in which he said the Bechuanaland Trading Association stores employed 40 Africans.
151. See Lloyd to Hawkins, 25th February, 17th August 1914, Box 76 (L.M.S.).
152. B.N.A., J.978, S.29/5/1, H.C. Sloley to Macgregor, 24th February 1916; Bonar Law to High Commissioner, 14th February 1916.

Tswana were lured to the mining and other labour markets of South Africa. The Tswana had been going to work in the diamond fields since the 1870's. By 1880 there were 2,135 Tswana workers at Kimberley; in 1881 the number had increased to 2,571, the majority of them being Kwena, Ngwato and Kgatla. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 led to more demand for labourers. Thus the precedent set by Alexander Bailie in 1876 was repeated by even more aggressive labour recruiting agents who frequented the Protectorate. By 1898 the conduct of some of these agents was causing concern to British officials in Bechuanaland. In that year the assistant Resident Commissioner pointed out some of their improper practices:

"...the natives are persuaded to leave their homes under promises of high wages ... which are seldom paid, or if presumably paid there are so many reductions made that the native seldom gets what he was led to expect."¹⁵³

In consequence the High Commissioner introduced measures in 1899 to protect Tswana migrant workers. One of the measures required that every labour recruiting agent obtain an annual license from the Resident Commissioner for Bechuanaland at a

153. C.O. 879/57, Ops.cit., p. 195, Hamilton Goold-Adams to Milner, 4th October, 1898, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 111 of 27th March, 1899.

cost of £5; each agent had to deposit £100 as a guarantee against abusing recruits. A few of the recruits worked in Rhodesian mines and at the Monarch and other mines in the Tati.¹⁵⁴

Migrant workers seem to have fended for their families if only after spells of absence. In 1897 the High Commissioner observed: "During their absence it is probable that many of their wives and children are being left with but scanty provision, but the men as a rule return in due time to their own country to spend their earnings."¹⁵⁵ However, in 1904 Ellenberger, a Protectorate official, informed a government commission that Tswana migrant workers were apt to spend all their money in South Africa and returned home only with some goods.¹⁵⁶ This suggests that many of the workers did not

154. Ibid., pp. 193-4, Proclamation of 15th March 1899; I. Schapera, Migrant Labour, pp. 26-7, 225, where he shows labourers from the Protectorate to the Witwatersrand to have been as follows: in 1902, 357; 1903, 2,730; 1904, 1,723; 1905, 2,944; 1906, 1,333; 1907, 299; 1908, 2,380; 1909, 1,538; 1910, 1,865. For earlier reference to Tati mines, see Chapter 3, pp. 108-110.
155. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., p. 117, Milner to Chamberlain, 113 of 27th August, 1897.
156. Ellenberger, Minutes of Evidence S.A.N.A.C., Vol. 4, p. 245; C.O. 879/52, op. cit., p. 117, where Tswana workers are reported to have earned about £2 - £3 a month.

have sufficient cash with them on their return, a practice that must have limited their purchasing power within the Protectorate. In another vein Ellenberger's testimony suggests that Tswana men were beginning to pay little attention to their families owing probably to the ^{is} detract-ions caused by living in mining compounds in which they were unable to lead normal married life.¹⁵⁷

If migrant labour was not the ideal way of salvaging the economic life of the Tswana, there was at least one chief who was resourceful enough to try one of the white man's methods of making a living. Although he had previously opposed the sale or purchase of business premises,¹⁵⁸ Kgama decided to purchase the ailing Serowe retail stores of Reginald P. Garrett and Adolph G. Smith but retained the former owners as his managers.¹⁵⁹ Kgama, who obtained per-

157. For a fuller study of this problem, see I. Schapera, Migrant Labour and Tribal Life: A Study of Conditions in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (London, 1947). See also "Labour problems of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland," International Labour Review, XXIX, No. 3 (March, 1934), pp. 397-406.

158. See Chapter Four, p. 14/ of this thesis.

159. See Rachosa, "My Book," p. 201, who says Kgama prevailed in spite of opposition from the tribe against the move; Khama to Buxton, 28 March, 1916, Box 79 (L.M.S.).

mission from the Government to enter into retail business, maintained that at the time he purchased the stores in 1909 he had become a poor man, adding no doubt with some exaggeration, that the declining revenue of the chief's coffers had reduced him "practically on the same footing as any individual member of the tribe."¹⁶⁰

By 1916 the business had expanded, with branches at Tsau, Mopepe, Karoube, and Bobonon; it was reported to represent a capital investment of £20,000 and yielded the chief an annual income of £800.¹⁶¹ However, Kgama's venture was short-lived, for in 1916 the Government ordered him to withdraw from the business following repeated allegations by the management of the Bechuanaland Trading Association Company that the chief was influencing the Ngwato to

160. Khama to Buxton, 28th March, 1916, loc. cit. Nevertheless the chief paid, according to Rachosa, several thousand herd of cattle to Garrett and Smith, see Ratshosa, op. cit., p. 201; B.N.A., J.978, S.29/5/1, Garrett to Resident Commissioner, 29th February 1916, who said Kgama bought four houses for the use of his managers for £3000. This suggests that Kgama was better off than an ordinary moNgwato. See also B.N.A., No. J.127, Khama's will, 17th July, 1907.

161. B.N.A., J.978, S.29/5/1, J.C. Macgregor to High Commissioner, 15th January, 1916.

to boycott their stores and to patronise his own business.¹⁶² Nor does Kgama seem to have received any compensation from Garrett and Smith who continued to operate the business after his withdrawal; the only consolation appears to have come from the Protectorate Administration in the form of annual grants worth £ 500.¹⁶³ It is doubtful indeed if this grant was adequate to cover Kgama's household needs and to fulfill his obligations as chief. The important point to note is that 1916 marks the year in which Kgama joined the list of colonial chiefs receiving some stipend from a British Administration. And since the allowance was clearly not a tribute to Kgama in the traditional sense, it marks a turning point in the life history of a chief who had always encouraged his subjects to earn their living and whose own position as chief did not entitle him to remuneration.

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162. Correspondence on this issue is heavy; see for example, B.N.A., J. 978, S.29/5/1/, R.M. Daniel to Government Secretary, Mafeking, 11th October, 1913; Paul Jousse to Assistant Commissioner, 13th March 1915; E. Campbell to Panzera, 14th July 1915, 2nd July 1915; Affidavit of A.H. Casalis, Manager of the Bechuanaland Trading Association stores, Serowe, 14th June, 1915.
163. B.N.A., op. cit., Herbert Sloley, Memorandum of decision of Sir Herbert Sloley, 10th December, 1915; High Commissioner, 31st July, 1916; E.C.F. Garraway to Khama, 9th August, 1916; Khama to Buxton, 28th March, 1916, loc. cit.

IV

One of the ironies of the advent of Europeans in Bechuanaland is that, while their presence tended to circumscribe the political autonomy of Tswana chiefdoms, Europeans were largely responsible for the amelioration of the civil and economic conditions of the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi. Hitherto Tswana masters held the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi in abject form of servitude.¹⁶⁴ The system of servitude was started at the time (c1720-1800) when Tswana groups settled in the regions that were under their control by 1885. They found the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi occupying most of the region and sought to make them into serfs.¹⁶⁵ Initially the process of enticing serfs seems to have been a peaceful one, consisting mostly of placing some cattle

164. I prefer to use servitude in place of slavery, which most nineteenth century observers used rather indiscriminately. However, Schutz was cautious: "When talking of slaves amongst natives, the term slave does not bear the same import as to the European mind ... [the] position between master and slaves is more one of relative domesticity than actual slavery," see Schulz, A. and Hammar, A. The New Africa (London, 1897), p. 166. See also, I. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, p. 83; G.B. Silberbauer and A.J. Kuper, "Kgalagari Masters and Bushmen serfs: some observations," African Studies, 25, No. 4 (1966), pp. 171-2, who use serfdom in stead of slavery.

165. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, p. 83.

under the care of a band or group of the Kgalagadi;¹⁶⁶
 in the case of the Sarwa early contacts with the Ngwato
 were established during hunting trips, when the latter
 befriended them with presents of meat.¹⁶⁷ This was pro-
 bably the method adopted by other Tswana groups in bring-
 ing serfs under their control. On the other hand the
 Tswana claim to have used witchcraft to bring serfs under
 their control.¹⁶⁸ In all Tswana chiefdoms overseers (mong)
 of serfs collected produce from them as tribute (lekgetho).
 This consisted of ivory, ostrich feathers, hides and skins;
 and as reward for their service the Tswana master supplied
 them (through the overseer) with hunting dogs, allowed
 them to retain the meat of the animals they killed, and
 they were also free to milk the cows for their own consump-

166. See "Organization of a Tribe," Folder 761, Selly Oak.

167. London Missionary Society, The Masarwa (Bushmen) Report of an Inquiry (Lovedale, 1935), p. 4;
 I.W. Joyce, "Report on the Masarwa in the Bamangwato Reserve, Bechuanaland Protectorate," League of Nations Publications, VI, B., Slavery (C.112, M.98, 1938, VI), pp. 57-8.

168. Tlou, "A Political History," p. 154.

tion.¹⁶⁹ Serfs remained attached to their master's family for the rest of their lives and they were inherited by his children and could be captured in war as booty. Serfs had no access to tribal courts.¹⁷⁰

Whatever amicable conditions surrounded the initial contacts between the Tswana and the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi, there is little doubt that by the turn of the nineteenth century Tswana dominance over their serfs had become absolute, some Tswana masters actually offering serfs for sale. In 1806 a Tlhaping man offered to sell to Dr. Lichtenstein's party two boys aged eight and ten years. The prospective seller is reported to have informed the white visitors that the boys had been captured by him in war and were his for ever. He demanded a sheep for each but the visitors refused to buy the human commodity.¹⁷¹ In 1824 Robert Moffat saw two elderly persons (who were probably Tlhaping) who offered to sell their child-

169. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, p. 89; "Chief's Taxes," Folder 798, Selly Oak.

170. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, p. 89; Schapera, A Handbook, pp. 251-2.

171. Lichteinstein, Travels, p. 397.

ren to him in vain.¹⁷² In 1859 William Baldwin, who was in Ngamiland, was given a present of a Sarwa man by a Tawana man and in turn bought a Sarwa companion for him with beads.¹⁷³ While recorded instances of traffic in humans are few, there are ample accounts that suggest that Tswana masters illtreated their serfs.¹⁷⁴ In 1843 Livingstone reported the relationship between the Tswana and their serfs in unfavourable terms, alleging the Kgala-gadi to have been "enslaved" by Tswana masters.¹⁷⁵ J.D. Hepburn, who visited Ngamiland in 1877 and 1881, described the condition of the serfs there in the same vein.¹⁷⁶ And

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172. Moffat, Apprenticeship, p. 131. See also, Broadbent, A Narrative, p. 97. Yet Professor Monica Wilson says the Tswana did not sell human beings, see M. Wilson and L.M. Thompson, editors, The Oxford History of South Africa (London, 1969), I, p. 148.
173. Baldwin, African Hunting, pp. 437-8. See also, Chapman, Travels, I, pp. 51-2, where a child was offered for sale but he refused to buy it.
174. Anderson, "A Journey," loc. cit.; Anderson, Lake Ngami, p. 453; Oswell, "Extract of a letter," J.R.G.S., XX (1851), p. 149; Livingstone, "Extract of a letter," J.R.G.S., XXX (1851), p. 23; Bain, Journal of Residence, p. 136; Cumming, A Hunter's Wandering, p. 197; Mackenzie, Day-Dawn, p. 63. The treatment included beating, maiming, and death.
175. Livingstone, Missionary Correspondence, p. 37; Livingstone to MacLehose, 20th June 1843, National Library of Scotland.
176. Hepburn, Ten Years in Khama's Country, pp. 85, 190-1.

John Mackenzie observed that Tswana masters treated their serfs with contempt, the Kgalagadi being held in a little more esteem than the Sarwa. He said: "... Bushmen [Sarwa] seldom secure much liking or consideration from their Bechwana masters. 'Mosarwa a bolotsana thata' ('Bushmen are perfect rascals'), 'Masarwa Ki linoga hela' ('Bushmen are perfect snakes'), are remarks often heard among the Bechwanas."¹⁷⁷ This suggests that by 1884, when Mackenzie's book was published, Tswana attitudes towards their serfs had not changed much.

Yet, since their arrival in northern Bechuanaland, missionaries had preached against serfdom. In Ngamiland, where serfdom seems to have been more prevalent than in other chiefdoms, Hepburn and evangelist Khukwe Mogodi preached against serfdom. Thus between 1877 and 1881 Hepburn reported that Chief Moremi of the Tawana promised him to stop serfdom and the traffic in human beings and that some Tawana masters had freed their serfs.¹⁷⁸ However, reports from Ngamiland show that between 1881 and 1895 the Tawana retained some serfs.¹⁷⁹ In 1895 Rev.

177. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn, pp. 58-9.

178. Hepburn to Thompson, December, 1877 (L.M.S.).

179. Hepburn, Ten Years, p. 262; Wookey to Thompson, 3rd December, 1894, Box 51 - Jacket C - Folder 2 (L.M.S.).

Wookey, who was stationed in Ngamiland, reported that Chief Sekgoma Lechulathebe was opposed to the presence of the L.M.S. there because he feared missionaries might influence the serfs not to pay tribute to him.¹⁸⁰

The advent of white traders enhanced the economic status of serfs. Although Tswana masters forbade the serfs to barter with whites, the vastness of the Tswana region made it difficult to enforce the ban, with the result that the serfs were able to sell some of their produce. In this connection Mackenzie observed:

"...it is not difficult to account for the well known reluctance of Bechwana chiefs to allow traders to pass through their country, as it is well known that the [serfs] do not hesitate to keep back part of the produce from their masters, and barter with themselves as soon as a European waggon makes its appearance."

In an attempt to discourage clandestine barter the masters found themselves offering more presents to their serfs.¹⁸¹

In economic terms this was certainly a boon to the serfs.

180. Wookey to Thompson, 3rd February, 1895, Box 52 - Jacket A - Folder One (L.M.S.).

181. Mackenzie, Day-Dawn, p. 59. See also, Captain Harrel's Report, 27th April, 1880, in Parliamentary Papers, 1883, XLIX, p. 13, who said the Sarwa "through the force of events, are gradually emerging from their thraldom, and getting in many instances compensation for their services, such as a share of the game they kill."

Of the four principal northern Tswana chiefs Kgama relaxed the restrictions placed against serfs soon after he became chief.¹⁸² In 1916 Kgama said he removed the restrictions because he "considered it as interfering with the freedom of the people." That "The tribes became in the first instance apprehensive of the declaration so that at least I had to ask European traders to travel amongst them and sell goods ... and eventually I asked these Europeans to establish trading stores amongst them." Kgama coupled this ruling with the prohibition of the sale of Sarwa children¹⁸³ and the transfer of serfs from one master to another; by 1890 he had allowed serfs to acquire and keep livestock and he encouraged masters to reward their services by gifts of stock. Among the Ngwaketse Gaseitsiwe forbade his people to arrogate for themselves the goods of Kgala-gadi serfs or to enter their villages without his permission.¹⁸⁴ Although it is difficult to attribute these measures entirely to European influences, Kgama seems to

182. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, p. 89.

183. Kgama to Buxton, 28th March, 1916, loc. cit., Captain Patterson, op. cit., p. 235: "Chief Khama ... does not permit them to be sold."

184. Schapera, Tribal Innovators, pp. 46, 89-90.

have emulated the British for their abolition of slavery, as is suggested in his letter to emigrant Boers in 1877, when he said: "I love the nation which tries to stop wicked men from buying and selling black people ... and treat them worse than their dogs."¹⁸⁵

The advent of British rule reinforced missionaries, whose efforts to stamp out servitude had met with little success. In 1896 Rev. Lloyd assured Chamberlain that there was no servitude in the chiefdoms of Bathoen, Sebele, and Kgama, pointing out that the Kgalagadi owned cattle, sheep, goats, horses, ploughs, and wagons which they had previously been denied; he also observed that Kgalagadi youths were now free to take up jobs in the mines of South Africa.¹⁸⁶ Bathoen also wrote to Chamberlain asserting that serfdom was no longer in vogue. The chief gave an account of a master-servant relationship in which the Sarwa and Kgalagadi were free to own property and to work for rewards.¹⁸⁷

185. Khama to L.M. du Plessis, 11th March, 1877, Baillie's Report, op. cit., p. 46.

186. C.O. 879/47, op. cit., p. 119, Lloyd to Chamberlain, 7th April, 1896.

187. Ibid., p. 140, Bathoen to Chamberlain, 3rd April, 1896.

However, eyewitness accounts by Protectorate officials suggest that the status of serfs had not improved to the extent that Tswana chiefs claimed. It appears that the chiefs, in an attempt to present themselves in favourable light before British officials, exaggerated the extent to which serfs enjoyed economic and civil rights in their respective chiefdoms. Thus, hardly a week after Bathoen had written to Chamberlain on Ngwaketse relations with serfs, Goold - Adams sent an eye-witness account to a colonial official at the Cape that portrayed the serfs as having a more circumscribed status than Bathoen and Wookey had asserted. He said: "What ever may now be said by the missionaries as to the Bakalahari being part of the tribe, I am convinced that if the Bakalahari were allowed to choose freely for themselves whether to live separately or not from the Bangwaketse, they would gladly accept the former; at the present moment, writing as I am amongst the Kraals of the Bakalahari, I can safely say that they are a subject race, kept in their present position by force, obliged to give their labour for nothing, and only allowed, except in a few instances, to be the possessors of a few sheep and goats."¹⁸⁸

188. Ibid. Goold - Adams to Graham Bower, 9th April, 1896.

Writing from Ngamiland in 1897 Lieutenant Scholefield described the conditions of the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi under the Tswana to be similar to those reported by Goold - Adams a year earlier.¹⁸⁹

Among the Ngwato Kgama's quarrel with his son Sekgoma at the turn of the century revealed that the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi were still held in servitude. In 1898 Goold - Adams reported that Kgama did not allow some Sarwa to join the seceding Sekgoma faction because the chief required them to herd his cattle and to collect feathers for him.¹⁹⁰ In 1899 Goold - Adams took up the question of servitude with Kgama and urged him to stop it among his subjects. Kgama is reported to have said that he would put more efforts to stamp out servitude but is said to have conceded that the "servitude of the Bakalahari and Masarwa was an old tribal custom which would take some years to entirely overcome."¹⁹¹ This was certainly a more

189. C.O. 879/52, op. cit., Scholefield to Newton, 3rd July 1897.

190. C.O. 879/57, op. cit., p. 91, Goold - Adams to Ashburnham, 10th November, 1898.

191. Ibid., p. 248, Goold - Adams to Milner, 12th April, 1899. See also, Wookey, Molepolole Report, 1900, loc. cit., who observed that the treatment of "serfs, though better than it was years ago requires looking into."

candid observation than Bathoen's account of 1896 for the question of servitude was destined to simmer unresolved way into the twentieth century, as the L.M.S. found out to their dismay in 1905, when a Ngamiland evangelist admitted that he kept a serf who rendered him service without pay.¹⁹²

Yet, in spite of Tswana reluctance to accept the Sarwa and the Kgalagadi as their equals, the serfs achieved a measure of economic and civic freedom that had hitherto been denied them. This stemmed largely from the fact that government officials and missionaries insisted that serfs and their Tswana masters be treated as equals in secular as well as in religious affairs.

CONCLUSION

By 1910 the Tswana had had continuous intercourse with Europeans for over sixty years. Although there were a little over 2,000 full members¹⁹³ of the L.M.S. Church in northern Bechuanaland out of a Tswana population of about 90,000, the

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192. A.E. Jennings, Report of a Visit to Lake Ngami District, April to August, 1905, (L.M.S.), *Inquisitor*, "Khama, The King, loc,eit.
193. A.J. Haile, Historical Survey of the London Missionary Society, p. 29.

European impact upon Tswana chiefdoms was more profound than what the number of converts suggests. And in all chiefdoms a special feature of the interaction was diversity, a characteristic that was fostered by the different personalities of Tswana rulers and their subjects.

In an attempt to convert persevering followers, L.M.S. missionaries had introduced a system of education that interfered with traditional economic activities without offering the Tswana groups alternative ways of making a living. This created a lacuna which the L.M.S. tried to fill by introducing vocational education at the turn of the century. Yet, viewed in the context of Tswana history the L.M.S. can be said to have merely restored an institution that its missionaries had put in abeyance, for the traditional initiation schools trained Tswana youths in the vital arts of homecraft, hunting, and farming.

Tswana intercourse with traders produced a diplomatic expertise that proved invaluable during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Armed with shrewd diplomacy, northern Tswana chiefs successfully used it as a weapon to ward off the more aggressive forms of European imperialism.

The advent of British rule guaranteed Tswana chiefdoms protection against their neighbours. In the changed circumstances the Tswana could now afford to build their towns in

places where water was more readily available, where - as previously military considerations compelled them to choose sites that were strategically safe from outside attacks but invariably far from water supplies.¹⁹⁴

If it is difficult to measure with precision the degree of social change in any given community, there is little doubt that Tswana responses to European ideas was characterised by a delicate balance between the old and the new forces. The point which needs great emphasis is that the existence of two modes of life - one traditional and the other new - was conducive to tribal stability. Though by no means uniform in its manifestation, the balance ranged from Kwenaland, where the inhabitants could choose between Sechele (Christian) and Kgosidintsi (traditionalist) to Ngwatoland, where Kgama's subjects were also able to choose between the old and the new in spite of the fact that the chief and his next-of-kin were practising

194. See for example, C.O. 879/76, op. cit., p. 278, Kgama to Milner, 5th September, 1901, in which he said he wanted to move his town to Serowe, adding: "Serowe is a place that cannot be easily defended against foes ... But now that there is only one King in South Africa, whether in Matebeleland or in the Transvaal, we have ceased to think of these things."

Christians. This aspect of Tswana life was spelled out in 1897 when a missionary prodded Kgosidintsi to become a Christian. The arch-traditionalist said: "No, monare, I cannot allow it. I put no hindrance in the way of my children. As you know, most of my sons and some of my grandsons are members of the church. My wife attends the service regularly; but as for me, I shall die as I have lived, and God who knows my reasons, will judge me righteously."¹⁹⁵

Finally, the single most veritable agent of stability in nineteenth century Tswana history was Kgama III. Having endeared himself to a generation of traders, missionaries, and British government officials, the Ngwato Chief became an epitome of a progressive Christian ruler. This attribute of Kgama's was an asset to all northern Tswana chiefdoms, as it offset the more unguarded moves that his counterparts were apt to make in dealing with expanding white groups. Hence when in 1895 Kgama, Sebele, and Bathoen visited England to plead their country's case, the British public highlighted Kgama's ascetic character, temperance and philanthropic organizations actually equating the chiefs' campaign against

195. See Williams, in L.M.S. Chronicle, (February, 1897), p. 231.

annexation of Bechuanaland with a crusade for prohibition. And yet Sebele was not an abstainer, and both Sebele and Bathoen were known to defy British authority from time to time. The success of the 1895 mission can therefore be ascribed to Kgama's personality.

If Kgama was a successful diplomat, he was also a perceptive observer of Tswana life. When in 1900 a visitor noted that whites complained that the Ngwato were rather slow in absorbing European ideas, Kgama gave a terse reply that applied to all Tswana chiefdoms:

"Ah! Monare; they see what we are; but they do not know what we were."¹⁹⁶

196. See Willoughby, "Decennial Review of Mission work at Palapye," 1st January, 1900, Box 3 (L.M.S.).

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