

**THE HISTORY OF THE BAROLONG IN THE DISTRICT OF
MAFIKENG: A STUDY OF THE INTRA-BATSWANA ETHNICITY
AND POLITICAL CULTURE FROM 1852 TO 1950**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

**THE HISTORY OF THE BAROLONG IN THE DISTRICT OF MAFIKENG: A
STUDY OF THE INTRA-BATSWANA ETHNICITY AND POLITICAL CULTURE
FROM 1852 TO 1950**

Is my work both in conception and execution and that information drawn from other sources has
been duly acknowledged.

.....

Malose Daniel Ramoroka

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents:

My Pedile Johannes Ramoroka

You were the pillar of strength

And my mother

Motshemane Melita Ramoroka

You are the depository of all my knowledge

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on, among other issues, the early 'nationalist' among the Barolong, that is, the Barolong National Council (BNC), formed by the traditional leaders and clerics in the central Transvaal and northern and central Orange Free State in the early 1900s(NASA,Vol.12,1917). Its geographic axes were centred in Kimberly, Mafikeng, Kroonstad and Johannesburg. Its role was both to combat divisive political practices among the Barolong (which alienated already established nationalist-minded leaders like Solomon Plaatje and Chief Montshiwa of the Ratshidi of Mafikeng) and to create a distinctive cultural and economic epi-centre for what they loosely defined as 'Barolong interest'. This study unravels these neglected ethnic dimensions of early Barolong politics(NASA,Vol.12,1917).

The study also seeks to explore the source and the nature of the conflict between two Barolong groups, the Ratshidi and the Rapulana. Firstly it highlights the break-up of the Barolong kingdom after the death of the Barolong king Tau in about 1670 and the polarisation of the Barolong into different sections which developed ultimately into independent chiefdoms such as the Ratlou, Ratshidi, Seleka and Rapulana (Molema,1950: 3). Their relationship during the *difaqane* and their encounter with the Boers and British, which marked the beginning of the conflict over the Barolong paramountcy between the Ratshidi and Ratlou, are examined. The contribution of the Boers and the British to the contestation over the land of the Barolong is outlined. The consequences of the engagement of the Rapulana and the Ratshidi in the now famous siege of Mafikeng is also explored, in the context of Rapulana-Ratshidi relations. The dynamics of the power relations in Bechuanaland, is analysed.

The main focus of this research is the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because it was a period of intensified disputes that were ultimately fought in court between the Ratshidi and Rapulana. This study also deals with the rise of missionary activities among the Barolong which led to the development of the elites who contributed to the ethnic conflict.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction, Purpose, Scope and Methodology

The history of Africa and South Africa in particular consists of pre-colonial and colonial history. The pre-colonial history focused on the origins of the Africans including the Barolong, their traditional governance such as the centralization of authority and traditional practices including lobola, rainmaking ceremony and initiation rites. The colonial history started with the introduction of slavery where European countries used Africa as a reservoir of slaves removed from their families and transported to Europe and America to work in agricultural production. The output of production by slaves was fundamental in establishing the ground work for imperialism, industrialization, capitalism and later globalization. Missionaries and the formal occupation of Africa by European countries followed the slavery. According to Suresh Roberts (2007) the resistance of the Africans to colonialism brought two traditions, namely the imperialist tradition and the resistant tradition within the academic discourse which are still dominant today. The imperialist tradition is a scholarly discourse which justified actions led by the British imperialists and the Afrikaner nationalists. The history of the Barolong is a case in point because they were the victims of the colonization of the conscience by missionaries. They also suffered from slavery and the formal occupation of their land by both the British and the Boers and had witnessed the disintegration of their kingdom into independent segments. It would be shown in this research that in other parts of the world when Africans were confronted with enemies they united irrespective of ethnic parochialism. But within the Barolong the situation has been different because they were divided into two sections when confronted by the colonialists, one supporting the Boer colonialism and another backing the British imperialism. The two colonial forces were instrumental in fueling the disintegration of the Barolong kingdom because they wanted to advance their capitalist interests which included

the occupation of land and the expropriation of minerals from the land of the Barolong.

This study focuses on, among other issues, the early 'nationalist' among the Barolong, that is, the Barolong National Council (BNC), formed by the traditional leaders and clerics in the central Transvaal and northern and central Orange Free State in the early 1900s(NASA,Vol.12,1917). Its geographic axes were centred in Kimberly, Mafikeng, Kroonstad and Johannesburg. Its role was both to combat divisive political practices among the Barolong (which alienated already established nationalist-minded leaders like Solomon Plaatje and Chief Montshiwa of the Ratshidi of Mafikeng) and to create a distinctive cultural and economic epicentre for what they loosely defined as 'Barolong interest'. This study unravels these neglected ethnic dimensions of early Barolong politics(NASA,Vol.12,1917).

The study also seeks to explore the source and the nature of the conflict between two Barolong groups, the Ratshidi and the Rapulana. Firstly it highlights the break-up of the Barolong kingdom after the death of the Barolong king Tau in about 1670 and the polarisation of the Barolong into different sections which developed ultimately into independent chiefdoms such as the Ratlou, Ratshidi, Seleka and Rapulana (Molema,1950: 3). Their relationship during the *difaqane* and their encounter with the Boers and British, which marked the beginning of the conflict over the Barolong paramountcy between the Ratshidi and Ratlou, are examined. The contribution of the Boers and the British to the contestation over the land of the Barolong is outlined. The consequences of the engagement of the Rapulana and the Ratshidi in the now famous siege of Mafikeng is also explored, in the context of Rapulana-Ratshidi relations. The dynamics of the power relations in Bechuanaland, is analysed.

The main focus of this research is the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because it was a period of intensified disputes that were ultimately fought in court between the Ratshidi and Rapulana. This study also deals with

the rise of missionary activities among the Barolong which led to the development of the elites who contributed to the ethnic conflict.

1.1 Scope of Work

The study begins in 1852 with the signing of the Sand River Convention agreed upon by the British government and the South African Republic (Molema, 1966:38). This was an epoch-making event because the Boers occupied the Barolong land in 1837, much against the will of the British government which intended to stop the Boer encroachment into the interior. However, this time in 1852 the British allowed the Boers to stay in the land of the Barolong and make it theirs without British intervention. This was the first time in the history of South Africa that the British government failed to intervene in a land dispute that involved the Boers and the Africans and allowed the Boers to use the Africans as labourers (Molema, 1966:38). It was also the period when the British government promised the Boers that it would not make any alliance with the African people. With the British out of the picture, the Boers saw this as an opportunity for them to dispossess all the land of the Barolong. The issue of land is the major cause of conflict everywhere in Africa and the rest of South Africa. The Boers informed the Barolong chiefs that they live in the Molopo region at the mercy of the Boers and therefore had to pay tax and provide labour. This era demonstrated the fact that both the British and the Boers widened existing ethnic parochialism.

The study will end in the 1950s an era characterised by an uneasy peace brought by the court and litigation, which were paid for by both the Rapulana and Ratshidi in respect of their dispute in Lotlhakane. It was also an era that encompassed Herzog's Bills including the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 which led to a process of land clearance in South Africa. The areas of the Barolong including Biesjiesvley, Rietfontein, Sterkfontein, Ruitkuil, Geluk, Leeuspruit and so on were listed and classified as white areas and Africans living there were categorised as 'Black spots' that needed to be removed according to

the Act. This process of land clearance in South Africa was given credence by the Group Areas Act of 1950 passed by the apartheid government which perpetuated Hitlerism on the African soil. The Herzog's Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 had far reaching implications for the Barolong up to 1960s.

1.2 Approach to this study

The historiography of South Africa has been adequately elaborated upon by several prominent historians in the last decade or more (Saunders,1988:9; Wright,1977:78). What has been revealed is the highly polemical and political nature of South Africa's historiography which has been used to underpin different political intentions and points of view. These include the Afrikaner "school" of historians seeking to legitimise Afrikaner control and settlement in South Africa (Smith, 1983:89; Van Jaarsveld,1975; Scoltz,1967; Kruger,1958); the liberal (mostly English-speaking) view which, although paternalistic, recognised the injustices perpetrated against people of different races (De kiewiet, 1937; Wilson and Thomson, 1971; Marais,1939; Macmillian,1927); the Africanist perspective emanating in the early 1960s with the decolonisation of Africa (Peires,1981; Guy,1979); the radical or Marxist paradigm which focused on the paramountcy of the economic factors and relations in shaping political hegemony (Legassick,1973; Bundy,1979; Simons,1969) and finally the advent of the school of social historians who sought to rescue the role of the under classes in the contest between "forces" of history which dominated Marxist historiography (Beinart, and Bundy,1987; Cope,1930; Keegan, 1986). In Many cases historians employed several or different approaches because these categories were not mutually exclusive. All of those approaches have been fully critiqued and would not be appropriate to "go over old ground". In more recent years the divisions between these different views have become less intense with the need for "reconciliation" in changed political circumstances and as history as an academic subject has struggled to survive as a distinct discipline within academia. History in South Africa has also been forced to become more "relevant" leading to

specialist research in areas such as environment history, heritage history and so on.

Historians such as John Omer-cooper, Monica Wilson, Leonard Thompson and Shula Marks began to have interest in African history and reconstructed it in positive manner. Some of these historians had a liberal and Marxist political agenda, which they advanced against the already established Afrikaner nationalist thinking. Africans were put at the crossroad of these ideological fabrics among the liberals who wanted free enterprise, Marxist historians who advocated a classless society through the social revolution and Afrikaner nationalist who wanted to protect the Afrikaners as a nation from African's 'uncivilized' behaviour. However, liberal and Marxist historians' works were still trapped in the European centered world history. The African writers like Molema were imprisoned unconsciously within the Euro-centric perspective and promoted a view that Africans were inferior to the white race. Molema asserts that the Bantu "remain an indolent lethargic and dreamy race of men". According to Saunders, Molema relied on his personal information and used Theal and other Euro-centric sources and reproduce their European myth.

As a result of the two cataclysmic events that took place in the world, that is, the collapse of apartheid and communism in Russia, Afrikaner nationalists and Marxist historians were in disarray and they needed to refashion their perspectives to make them intelligible to the context of the present situation. This conflict driven history was suppose to reach its ideological melting ground and its succession became a subject of the new post-modernist school of thought that emerged at the end of the twentieth century. This school wanted to rescue history from the paradigmatic confusion created by different schools of thought in South Africa. The new thinkers provided the historians with a *New Contree* based on a priori explanatory structure called *heteroglossia* defined as 'varied and opposing voices' that seeks consensus through an understanding of diverse and contested positions (Bottomley, 1996:12). Bottomley, one of the post modernist

historians regarded the *New Contree* as a product of an antithetical desire to “slash and burn” “conflict history” to clear the desks in South African history, to begin afresh, to start anew (Bottomley, 1996:11). Post modernism views cultural relativism as an unavoidable element in historical creation. According to Bottomley (1996:11), our minds do not reflect reality directly and we perceive the world through a network of conventions, schemata and stereotypes which vary from one culture to the other. The post modernist historians challenged the discipline of history strongly and wanted to reshape it with postmodernist academic tenets.

African scholars also challenged the Euro-centric approach. They demystify these myths and reconstructed history based on the Africanist perspective. African scholars such as Ki-Zerbo, Mazrui, Mokhtar, Hrbek, Ogot, Edu Boahen and so on, have established an African centered world history and African scholars in South Africa will use their works as reference. These African scholars have laid the groundwork of an African voice. However, some historians are skeptical about the existence of the African voice. In 2003 history conference held in Cape Town, Albert Grunling asserts that:

substantial work has been done , particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, a later generation of white English-speaking historians of either liberal or radical persuasion, uncovered large swathes of hidden black histories. The historical landscape was altered well before major political shifts occurred. But it is true that even well into a decade of epoch-making change in South Africa since 1994, a general and authoritative history of South Africa with a distinct Africanist point of view is yet to appear (Jeppie, 2004:211).

In deed it is true that African scholars in South Africa have not yet claim their rightful place in the historiography of South Africa. However, the existence of the Africanist perspective is guaranteed. The reason why it is not fully established in South Africa is because of racism that had far-reaching implications to social science than any other discipline and Grunling should understand this because his predecessors crippled African intellectual progress by imposing a fascist

political order. However, Africans in Africa have already established the Africanist point of view and this perspective has been used to reconstruct the history of Africa including South Africa. Africanist historians in South Africa will continue this African scholarship drawn by the African scholars themselves. According to Shamile Jeppie we walk on the shadow of the Enlightenment and we cannot in an atavistic fashion reject Europe but we can remove it as the center of history (Jeppie, 2004:211).

In writing the history of the Barolong, all attempts had been made to insure that any point of view belonging to any school of thought it is supported by evidence. It is the intention of this research to reflect different voices as proposed by postmodernism and ensure that no single school of thought is followed in the conduct of this research. However, the contributions of the different schools' of thought including marxisms and social history had broadened the scope of the discipline of history by criticising a herotype history which placed the ordinary people and women on the obscure end of the broken bottle simply because they did not feature in official records as indicated by Euro-centric scholars such as Hegel and Ranke. Therefore a wide variety of sources consulted ranges from the written sources and oral informants from the royalists and ordinary members of the society in order to explore different perspectives emanating from different sources.

1.3 Methodology: Collection and analysis of sources

Secondary sources have been extensively analysed and in particular the works of the Ratshidi historian, Molema, have been critical in laying the ground work for origins of conflict within the Barolong from their point of view. Moreover, Molema was part of the royal family and his father was a chief. However, most of secondary sources including Molema's books focus on the Barolong activities in the nineteenth century. This research will therefore make a major contribution on

the history of the rural communities and be a source of reference of the history of the Barolong in the nineteenth and early twenties centuries.

Primary sources range from letters, diaries, oral informants, British Blue Books, War documents, notes put together by Molema and Plaatje collected from the University of Witwatersrand, National Archives of South Africa, Mafikeng Museum, and Barolong Kgotla. These documents were critically scrutinized to ascertain their authenticity because there were attempts by each of the parties involved in the Barolong conflicts to justify their actions. People who were onlookers or participants of events wrote primary sources. These sources have interpretation, opinions, facts and flaws and sometime they are notoriously fickle. Critical historical awareness skills were applied to evaluate their relevance, accuracy and usefulness. The skill of intellectual empathy was also used to guard against imposing today's standards and technology onto the activities of the past and regard them as backward. The activities, achievements and predicaments were evaluated within their scope of time and space. Most of the archival sources dealing with the twentieth century Ratshidi-Rapulana dispute collected were testimonies by the Ratshidi and the Rapulana and these were interpreted in conjunction with the historical data from oral sources. Documents which include War Office (War Office 1905) and the *Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs* (Transvaal Native Affairs Department (TNAD), 1905) collected from the archives dealt with the origins and genealogies of the Barolong and were based on oral tradition. These documents were produced in 1905 and they collaborate with the oral tradition of the Barolong. Relation between the Barolong and the British are contained mainly in the *British Parliamentary Papers* or Blue Books (British parliamentary Papers (BPP), C-3486, 1870 to 1900). Other sources such as the papers of Sol Plaatje and Silas Thelesho Molema were consulted at the Witwatersrand University Library (A979,Ad6.1, 1874 to 1934).

Unstructured interviews were conducted among the various sections of the Barolong. The oral informants included the royalists and ordinary members of the

society. The Molema family were interviewed at the Ratshidi *Kgotla*, Chief Matlaba was also interviewed in Rapulana *Kgotla* in Bodibe. The series of interviews included the 86 year mother of chief Matlaba and 82 year old man whose reminiscences about the Ratshidi history made it alive in the process of intellectual empathy. The Ratlou were interviewed in Madibogo, Khunwana and Phitshane. Chief Motsewakhumo and elders of the Ratlou in Phitshane were interviewed and shared their experiences in the traditional lives of the Ratlou Barolong and how they had evolved within different epochs into the modern era. The life interview approach is an effective methodology in the recollection of oral data because the interviewee are mostly older people and should be afforded the opportunity to talk about their life experience within their communities. Oral history is therefore seen as a whole stock of socio-cultural output stored up by people who were professed to have no written record. The old men who are its custodians have become the last vestiges of the ancient landscape which historians are seeking to restore (Ki-Zerbo, 2003:3). Euro-centric history is skeletal because it depends on pre-mediated official documents which are a product of the dominant section of the population and produce historical discourses of a hero-type nature that marginalized ordinary people in an attempt to comply with Van Rankean's objective history based on textuality. Every society has its own culture and its own history rooted on its oral history. The Barolong kept their record on the tradition and not in writing and the information was passed from one generation to the other by word of mouth. Oral traditions collected from the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana reveals some consensus regarding the origins but they differ with regard to chieftainship, conflict and the legitimate ownership of land. A healthy skepticism was applied in dealing with this oral data to reconstruct as accurate a picture as possible of Barolong ethnicity and political culture. Every precaution has to be taken to ensure that the materials contained in the tradition are carefully sorted and sifted (Ki-Zerbo, 2003:3). As a result of the methodology that evolved for making use of oral tradition, historians of Africa have become pioneer in that field and made a remarkable contribution to its development (Ki-Zerbo, 2003:25).

Qualitative method of presentation has been used extensively because social science is a hybrid of narrative and analytic constructs to make the story of the past accessible even to ordinary people. Moreover, an analytic, critical evaluation and interpretation of data has opened a dynamic window into the plethora of the past events. The historian or social scientist must speak to the facts, because facts cannot speak for themselves. This skill-based approach has probably authenticated this research to guard against it from being reduced to a chronicle or a mere listing of events or a corpse of history. In a real social science, the past events are resurrected and resuscitated in the historian's mind through a process of intellectual empathy thereby making the historian part of the reconstruction process. Therefore, history as part of social science is alive because the historian recreates it out of a desecrated past.

Quantitative method will be used but it will be kept in a low profile to support arguments put forward with statistical evidence. However, intensive statistics with graphs will not be used because it will undermine the nature of the historiography and make presentation a caricature of social science. Social science is a discipline that illuminates human's actions in its entirety and it is researched by another human-being who becomes part the fabric of research. Therefore, the research is done from within by an individual who suffered like his or her subjects. Unlike natural science where a researcher is outside his material, for example, gases, he or she is bound to be neutral and therefore objective because the expert does not know how it is to be a gas.

1.4 Literature review

The writing of Brown, Wookey, Molema, Matthews, Breutz, Sillery, Stow and Gray trace the origins of Barolong and contributed to this research by laying the ground work and background of the Barolong history (Brown,1926:217;Wookey,1929;Molema,1966:5;Matthews,1945:9;.Breutz,1996;

Stow, 1905:491; Gray, 1975:415; Sillery, 1996:489). This study is not necessarily divorced from the works of these historians, but includes issues, which they have left out, and also brings new ideas, perspectives and interpretations. Brown, for example, outlines the original history of the Barolong kingdom and successive kings. He describes the cruel nature of Tau's leadership and the disintegration of the Barolong kingdom into four chiefdoms. He even alludes to a significant fact that the paramountcy of the Barolong belonged to the Ratlou family but it was given to Montshiwa by the British government. However, Brown's work falls short of discussing the contribution of the Boers to the intra-Barolong conflict for ethnic paramountcy. In addition, his work does not go beyond *difaqane* era. Wookey (1929:24) charts the origins, successive leaders of the Barolong and in particular dwells in detail on the complexity of the subdivision of the Ratlou. Stow's work outlines the subdivision of the Ratlou in a complicated manner leading to confusion about the location of the Ratlou in Morokweng, Ganyesa, Setlagole, Kopela, Khuwana and Phitshane (Stow, 1905:491). On the other hand, however, Gray (1975:415) succinctly and in a scholarly manner outlines the polarisation and the destination of each and every Barolong subsection and his work was useful to this study. But his work has similar flaws to that of Brown. Another historian's work that needs critical analysis is that of Sillery (1996:489). His work delineates some of the aspects already mentioned by Brown and dwells in a rigid manner on the economic life of the Barolong. However, his work is scanty and does not explain the destinations of the four sections of the Barolong following the break-up of their kingdom. It has very little information on the history of the Rapulana.

Z.K. Matthews outlines the origins and migrations of the Barolong. This study is similar to those of Brown and Wookey, but Matthews adds valuable information on the Barolong-Boer contacts and their wars. He also explicates the conflict of Lotlhakane land as well as court decision of 1920 already referred to (Matthews, 1945). However, his work falls short of the activities of the Ratshidi in Lotlhakane that precipitated into the ethnic dispute. In addition, the impact of court case,

which took place between the Rapulana and Ratshidi, is invisible. Retrospectively, his work is like all others already mentioned, fails to record the rural dynamic, which manifested themselves in the form of the BNC.

One of the works that needs critical scrutiny is the ethnological publication, *The Tribe of Mafikeng District*, by P.L.Breutz. He outlines genealogies and origins of all sections of the Barolong as do Brown, Wookey and Matthews. However, he attempts to explain the subdivision within the Ratlou by breaking them into small units each time the chief has several sons. It is therefore difficult for the reader to understand whether they joined other sub-sections or formed independent chiefdoms. In addition, it is difficult to draw a distinction between the Mariba-Ratlou and Seitshiro-Ratlou (Breutz, 1996:104). His work is, however, crucial because it dwells, though in a sketchy manner, on the Barolong-Boer conflict over land, which will be discussed in this thesis.

The historiography of the Barolong's contact with the whites, presented by Shillington (1985:128) and Molema (1966:5) reveals bias in favour of the British intentions in Bechuanaland. Shillington deals with the Barolong-Boer war from 1881 to 1884. He projects a picture that hails Montshiwa as the most important Barolong chief and reveals the Ratlou and the Rapulana as if they did not have the right to the land. One of Shillington's critical weaknesses is that he regards Lotlhakane as Montshiwa's old town but does not provide sufficient evidence in his conclusion. He does not acknowledge the contributions of writers like Brown, who states that it was the British who gave the paramountcy of the Barolong to Montshiwa. This study reveals the original owners of Lotlhakane and discloses in detail how this land was given to Montshiwa by the British authorities. The study also outlines the contribution of both the Boers and British in the Barolong conflict and clears the misunderstanding created by those historians already mentioned.

Molema wrote more about the Barolong than any other historian and in his work *Bantu, Past and Present* he asserts that "the Bantu remained an indolent,

lethargic and dreamy race of men, and their dreary, featureless scene of barbarism and incompetence” (Saunders, 1988:108). He projects the Zulu revolution as a war of extermination and Shaka as a tyrant and Mzilikazi a drinker of blood (Saunders, 1988:108). In 1951, Molema published a somewhat more scholarly biography of *Chief Moroka*, but his book still undermined the Africans. In this book he stressed “that the minds of the Barolong were blank and utterly void, a howling vacuum... they were rude in their manners and totally illiterate, ignorant of the art of peace” (Molema, 1950:190).

Molema (1950:190) lambastes certain areas of African culture as backward. He was a product of the orthodoxies of colonial discourse and his conscience was colonised to support a teleological paradigm that undermines African perspective. He maintains that “polygamy was sunken in superstition, without light of any true religion, so degraded in morals as to be almost unmoral, and intellectually under developed”. According to Carr (1964:44), if one needs to understand the historian’s view one needs to know the historian himself and study historical and social environment. Molema’s father was one of the first councilors among the Batswana to convert to Christianity and Molema as his descendant saw non-Christians as heathen and evil. His Euro-centric belief coupled with his status as amateur historian has led him to promote the perception that whites were superior over Africans.

In 1966, Molema published a biography of Chief Montshiwa of the Ratshidi, *Montshiwa 1815-1896* in which he outlines the origin and the background of all sections of the Barolong. He highlights the formation of chiefdoms and their relationships with the whites. Writing as a member of the Barolong, he is not detached and impartial but biased in favour of the Ratshidi. He projects Montshiwa as though he was the paramount chief who claimed the land of Tau, the former king of Barolong on behalf of all the Barolong. He promotes the image of Montshiwa as the invincible chief who fought for the land of Tau with distinction while Matlaba the chief of the Rapulana and Moshete were described

as collaborators who sold the Barolong land to the Boers. This study seeks to assess the accuracy of Molema's description of Montshiwa as a paragon of virtue and Matlaba and Moshete as decadence. It also analyses the issues of land and shows that not only did Moshete and Matlaba hand over the land to the whites but also that Montshiwa gave the land to the British government. Molema's scanty knowledge of the Rapulana and Ratlou was caused by the reluctance of the Rapulana and the Ratlou to give him information. According to Mothibi, an old member of the Rapulana *Kgotla*, Molema interviewed them before writing his book and Mothibi claimed that Montshiwa had failed to subjugate them. In his book the history of the Rapulana and Ratlou is not explored in detail and there is, in fact, no book which deals exclusively with either the Rapulana or the Ratlou. The Ratlou and the Rapulana communities were as important as other ethnic groups in South Africa and their history should be recorded. They should be recognised because they, like the Ratshidi, were independent chiefdoms with their own chiefs. This could be interpreted as a bias of omission by historians, because both the Ratlou and Rapulana form part of the history of the Barolong. Every community has historical events which are worth recording and it is the role of historians to use memory to reconstruct the progress and intricacies of every body. Molema's strength, however, lies in fact that he consulted all available published sources at the time he wrote and that he was a Morolong who wrote Barolong history from their point of view and uses oral tradition, one of the most important sources of African history. The aim of this thesis is to bring the Ratlou and the Rapulana into the picture and present an explanation for their actions, particularly as Molema's work is biased towards the Ratshidi, a bias which was reinforced by his reliance on British correspondence which time and again praises Montshiwa for his loyalty to the British cause. The Ratlou, by contrast, have been damned by the association with the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) state.

Another historian, Manson, dwells on the Barolong-Boer wars of 1881 to 1884. Manson outlines the role played by Bethell and examines in detail matters that

affected him. He outlined the part played by external forces, namely the Boers and the British in the battle between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana and the death of Bethell, showing that this was one of the factors that led to the establishment of the British Bechuanaland. Unlike Shillington, who refers to Lotlhakane as Montshiwa's old town, Manson regards this land simply as the Rapulana's main town. However, Manson's work does not address the causes of the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict and the logistics in Lotlhakane. In addition, his work does not go beyond 1885 (Manson, 1998). All of the above-named historians have enriched the historiography of the nineteenth century Southern Tswana. These studies take as their focus specific region and distinctive political economics. These historians, just like the others already mentioned, concentrate only on the Ratshidi and project Montshiwa as if he was a paramount chief of all Barolong (Odendaal, 1984:42). This research has joined the efforts by historians such as Mbenga and Beinart in tracing the hidden struggle in the rural areas by identifying the rural political dynamics of the Ratlou and the Rapulana (Mbenga,1997; Beinart, and Bundy,1987).

Odendaal asserts that "in Bechuanaland no European-style political organisations sprung up after the Anglo-Boer War as they did in other parts of British South Africa" (Odendaal, 1984:42). This is over-simplistic and misleading because evidence reveals the existence of the BNC, already mentioned above, with its European-style constitution (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). Odendaal has little to say on the Ratshidi and has nothing at all on the Rapulana and Ratlou. He writes about the Ratshidi and in particular, about Plaatje and Molema, arguing that they did not form a Barolong organisation. This was part of the stereo-typing that preoccupied certain historians. They centered their work on Plaatje and left out other developments in British Bechuanaland that did not include him. These historians assert that the Barolong were represented in the SANNC simply because Plaatje, Molema and Montshiwa belong to it. Yet the reality is that the Rapulana and Ratlou representative were not invited to the first meeting of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) and it was Plaatje's

responsibility, as a prominent and educated leader of the community, to woo them into this organisation because it was the prerogative of executive members of the SANNC to unite their people in the spirit of solidarity and to end ethnic conflict. This exclusion of the Ratlou and the Rapulana as if the “dialectics of modernity on the South African frontier” had not affected them, needs to be corrected.

Sol Plaatje was a journalist and writer of books about Ratshidi and other Africans. In his book, *Mhudi*, he tackles the destruction of the Barolong kingdom by the AmaNdebele and the Boer on the highveld. As it is primarily a novel, his book deals with the Barolong-Boer contact in an insular manner and does not go beyond the *difaqane*. This book is general and it is not clear which sections of the Barolong Plaatje refers to. This confusion is caused by the fact that the four sections of the Barolong were temporarily united during the *difaqane* when they fled from the Basotho and AmaNdebele (Molema, 1950:33).

The early twentieth century Ratshidi-Rapulana dispute over Lotlhakane has not been recorded by historians. The anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (1994:91) have written only about Wesleyan missionary activities among the Ratshidi, and this has been their main focus. They mentioned the BNC in a parochial manner and did not associate it with its founders, namely, the Rapulana and the Ratlou traditional authorities. However, the work of the Comaroffs has contributed to this study by dealing with the christianisation of the Ratshidi.

Historians have also been preoccupied with the emergency of Independent Churches among African societies in South Africa. Roux (1966:79) locates the emergence of Independent Churches among the Thembu and records it exclusively within the Xhosa. Parsons (1984:211) dwells on the development of independent churches among the Basotho. Odendaal (1984:35) examines the establishment of the Native Independent Congregational church in British

Bechuanaland in 1885. He also mentions the development of Ethiopianism in British Bechuanaland but does not confine it to any population group. The Comaroffs (1994:91), who worked among the Ratshidi, examine Ethiopianism among the southern Tswana (Bathlaping, Barolong and Bathlarong) but they focus their study on the Bathlaping. What is common in the work of all these writers is that they did not record the development of Ethiopianism among the Barolong.

Campbell (1990:40) is the only historian who has recorded the development of Ethiopianism among the Ratlou. It should be mentioned that the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) which broke away from the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, was also known as the Ethiopian Church. Campbell (1990:40) outlines the support that the church gave to Chief Moshete when he replaced the London Missionary Society among the Ratlou in Khunwana. He however, confines his research to the ZAR and does not explore its activities in the Setlagole Reserve which was in the British Bechuanaland. This study has benefited from Campbell's work and examines the AME activities in Setlagole with the assistance of oral sources.

In a nutshell, the early writing of the Barolong history has been influenced by an imperialist tradition, which seeks to classify Africans as intellectually inferior from the European. The European centered world perspective on Africa influenced a substantial number of writers in the early colonial period to view Africans as sub-humans. Even the Barolong writers including Sol Plaatjie and Molema could not escape this imperialist paradigm and this is evident in their writings which classified the Barolong as uncivilized communities because of their subscription to traditional practices including the initiation rite, reed dance and rainmaking ceremonies. One of the pioneers of this school of thought, Francis Galton, asserts that when classifying the categories of humans according to their natural gifts, the Negro was so extravagantly inferior as to require an entirely different scale of evaluation ... The intellectual measuring tape had to be adjusted downwards to accommodate congenitally limited native capacities. This

supremacist paradigm has been the pre-occupation of the German school of social science (Suresh, 2009:26). Firstly, the scientific historian Leopold Von Ranke, from this German school, maintains that history should be objective and the only instrument is the rigorous scrutiny of official documents. This historical discourse eloquently dismissed Africa as a “historical continent” because African history relied heavily on the oral traditions. This conventional approach to history led to a monumental hero-type history which only featured heroes because ordinary people did not appear on official documents and were ignored as historical sources and their reminiscences were deemed superfluous. The oral testimonies and tradition were termed pack of lies. Hegel (1770-1831) had no hesitation in his philosophy of History that Africa “is not a historical continent; it shows neither change nor development” and that the black people were ‘capable of neither development nor education. As we see them today, so have they always been’ (Ki-Zerbo, 2003:12). The stereotypical assertions by these historians created a supremacist paradigm within which the European centered history was grounded and crafted to vindicate a perspective that anything that is valuable must have been imported from Europe and that Africans were ‘innate inferior’ and had incapacity for originality and development. This is the ‘degeneracy paradigm’ adopted by Afrikaner nationalist and liberal historians in South Africa and who saw Africans as monolithic ‘barbaric’ people who need to be ‘civilized’ by the Europeans. This is the reason why missionary activities preceded formal occupation of African colonies because the strategy was to convert them, humanize them and prepare them for the capitalist system, which was on its way. Theal, one of the early English historians, whose volume was the bedrock of both the Afrikaner and liberal historiography asserted that Africans welcomed slavery and he promoted the myth of the empty land when he asserts that “the country was not the Bantu’s originally any more than the white man’s, because the Bantus were also immigrants”. Most of their ancestors migrated to South Africa in comparatively recent time (Theal, 1902:190-191). This was the rallying cry of the Afrikaner nationalist historians who tried but in vain, to invent

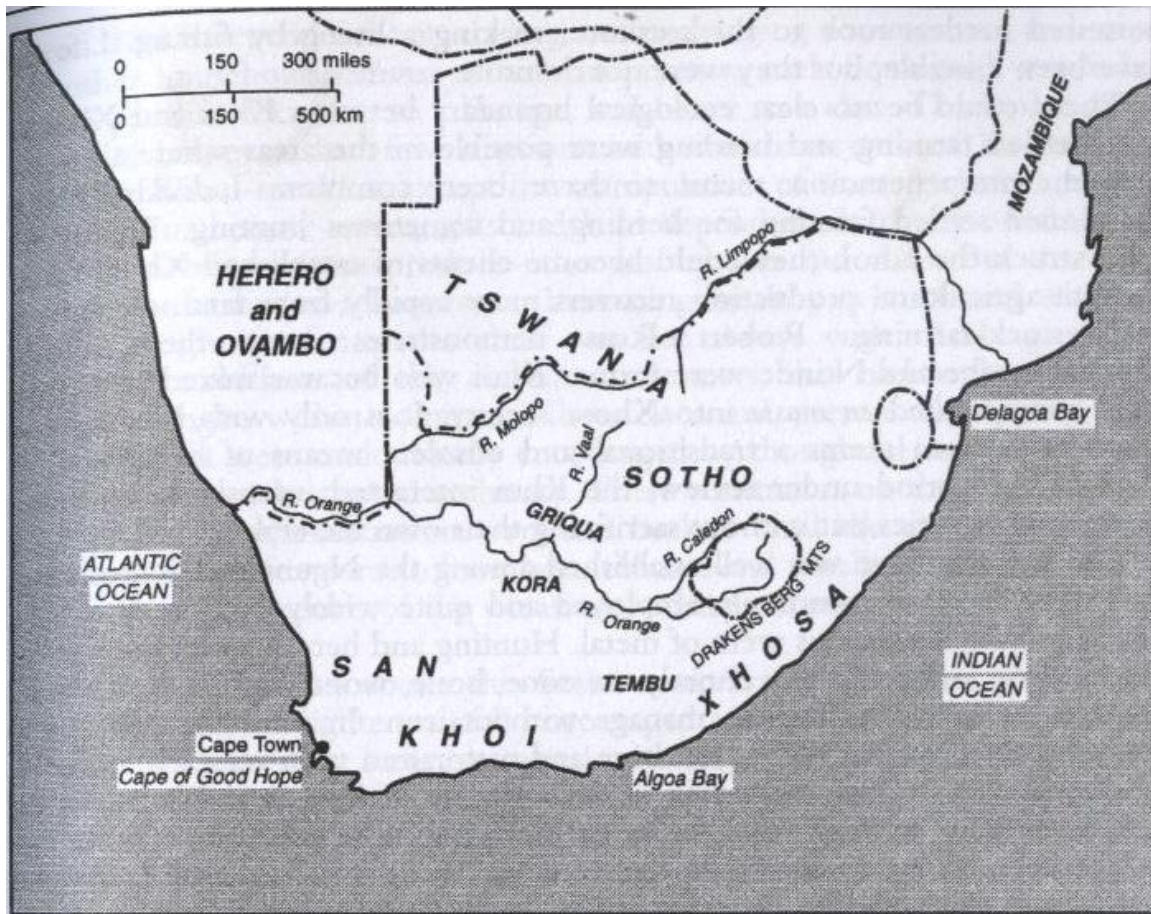
this myth in the South African historiography. Their historical orthodoxies were rooted in European trajectories.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 The Pre-colonial and “Colonial” period up to 1895

This chapter seeks to outline the origins and geographical location of the Barolong. It highlights the disintegration of the Barolong kingdom into small branches and their subsequent formation into independent chiefdoms. The chapter singles out two Barolong branches, the Ratshidi and the Rapulana, because they were situated close to each other and were involved in a prolonged struggle for land. It traces the sources of the conflict between the Ratshidi and Rapulana, which was caused initially by the break-up of the kingdom, leading to migration, settlement and resettlement of different sections of the Barolong. It outlines roles played by the Boers and the British in exploiting these polarisations that led to the Barolong War. It intends to provide an essential background to events in the twentieth century. Finally, the chapter adds some insights into the cause of events, but relies to some extent on existing studies, which provide a solid outline of the nineteenth century history of the Barolong.

MAP OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1500 -1800



Map:(Agot,1999:337).

The Barolong consisted of a number of clans, all of which shared the same origins, language and similar history. The Ratlou clan of the present-day Barolong is found at Khunwana, Ganyesa, Madibogo, Setlagole, Morokweng, Phitshane and Tshidilamoloma in the greater Mafikeng region. Its present's rulers are Motshete at Khunwana, Moamogwe at Ganyesa, Motseokhumo at Phitshane and Phoi at Madibogo. The Ratshidi lived in Mafikeng and are still in the village generally known as the "Stad" under the chieftainship of Montshiwa. The Seleka lived in Thaba-Nchu under Moroka's rule. The last groups consisted of the Rapulana who lived in Bodibe and Lotlhakane (about 15 kilometers to the south of Mafikeng) under Matlaba (Dachs, 1975:13; Sillery,1952:170;Molema,1951:2; Stow, 1905:491).

In the early nineteenth century the Barolong occupied what is today the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, which is bordered on the South-East by the west-flowing Vaal and Orange Rivers and on the north-west by the southern reaches of the Khalahari Desert (Shillington, 1985:40). They were generally scattered over wide areas of the Northern-Cape, the western ZAR, the Orange Free State, and the part of Botswana (B.Willan, 1984:2).

The Barolong were Setswana-speaking people and traced their origins from king Morolong who was the founder of the Barolong kingdom in approximately 1400 A.D. According to Brown (1926:260), the Barolong were an offshoot of the Bahurutshe who were “the primary branch” of all Batswana. Morolong was succeeded by Noto. Then came Morara, Mabe, Mabua, Manoto and Mabeo. King Mabeo was succeeded by Madiboa, who liked hunting and had no time to attend the *Kgotla*, which made him unpopular. According to the oral tradition the Barolong deposed him and his brother Tshesebe was installed. About the time of king Mokgopha who succeeded Tshesebe, the Bakaa people who were subjugated by the Barolong, branched off from Barolong and went to live under the chief of the Bamangwato (Breuz, 1956:28).

The Barolong lived in the western Witwatersrand in about early sixteenth century, probably in close contact with the Bakgalagadi of the desert area. The Barolong were forced south-west ward from Mosega area across Molopo by the Bahurutshe in the late sixteen century (Legassick, 1969:115). The Barolong then moved to the area around Mafikeng and kept their capital in the area until the following century. The movement was prompted by conflict with the Bakwena, who were in alliance with the Bahurutshe. Another reason was that the Bakwena wanted land for hunting and herding of livestock and sought iron ore in order to trade with the Kora and the Khoisan (Brown,1926:216). According to Legassick (1969: 116) the Barolong were at one time assumed to be iron workers because of their totem which were iron and hammer. According to Parsons, the most powerful and famous rulers of the Barolong were Thibela and his son Tau, who

reigned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the time of these leaders the Barolong country stretched from the Phitshane (within today's Molopo Reserve) to Molemane (Ottoshoop, Marico district) in the north, then to Klerksdorp in the south-west and Morokweng (Vryburg district) in the West. The Barolong rulers then may justifiably be said to have been kings and their state a kingdom because of the large size of the area they ruled. The kingdom covered much of what later became the northern Cape and the south-Western ZAR. Its subjects included groups of the Kora, Bakgalagadi and Bahurutshe (War Office, 1905:10).

According to the oral tradition, king Tau was a ruthless military leader, much like Shaka of the Zulu kingdom, who conquered and subjugated the neighbouring groups like the Kora, Bakgalagadi and the Bahurutshe. He treated his own people like slaves, killed the Kora, the San and also members of his own community. Those Barolong that he alienated, because of lack of food, were forced to eat fish from Vaal River, and they were therefore called the Batlhaping (Parson, 1984:47). Tau's attempts to control the Batlhaping brought him into conflict with the Kora who had joined the Batlhaping in an alliance after Tau had killed a Kora chief. The Kora chief's brother, Matsaledi (Tarbosch), then ambushed Tau and killed him in about 1760 in Taung (War Office, 1905:8).

According to Molema, Nthufu, Tau's brother, succeeded Tau and ruled for a while as a regent for Ratlou who was still a minor, but he died in 1775. He was replaced by Seleka, one of the sons of Tau, who relinquished the regency in favour of the rightful heir, Ratlou (Matthews, 1945:8). Ratlou who was 21 years old at the time, was installed as king of the Barolong at Mosita north of Taung in 1775 (A979, Ad6:39). Gray (1975:415) asserts that the Barolong kingdom reached its peak under the reign of king Ratlou. However, Ratlou's reign was short lived and he died of small pox and was buried at Mosita in about 1775 (Parsons, 1984:46). He had several sons by his wives namely, Seitshiro, Mariba, Modirwagale, Mokalaka and Lephontho and when he died they fought for the kingship, which led to the disintegration of the Barolong kingdom (A979,

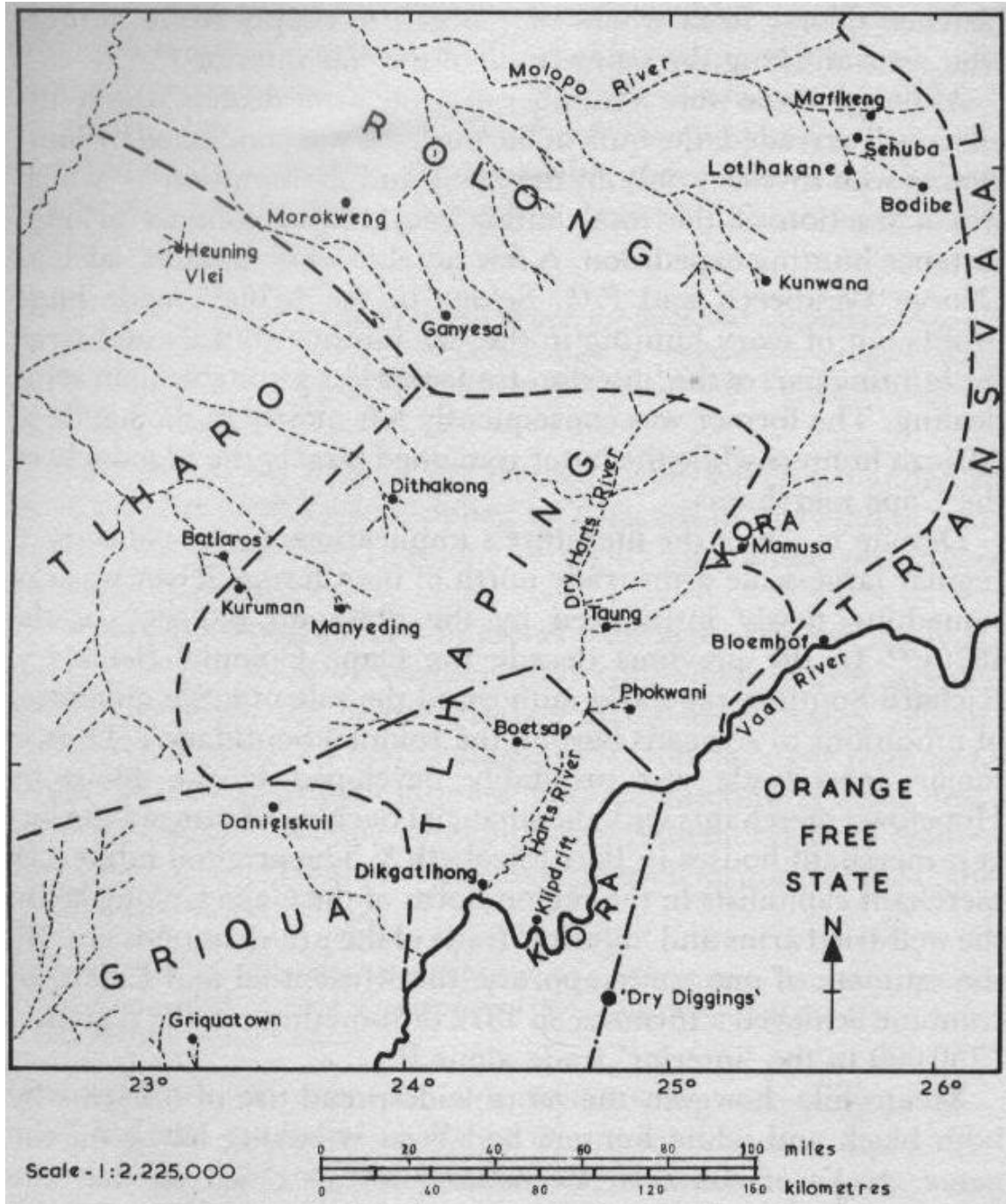
Ad6.1:2). However, the question of a legitimate heir and successor led to rivalries and divisions that resulted in a number of splits of distinct and independent Barolong clans. The conflict for the kingship was between Seitshiro and Mariba and this divided the Barolong into two groups. The Barolong claimed that Seitshiro's mother was betrothed first, while Mariba's mother's bride wealth was paid first. Modirwagale, one of Seitshiro's brother, who also supported him for the kingship was appointed as a regent for Seitshiro (A979, Ad6:3). Mokalaka, another brother of Seitshiro, who supported Mariba for the kingship resented Modirwagale's appointment and advocated dissention. He took away the young Mariba to establish an independent chiefdom (A979, Ad6.1:3). Subsequently, five branches, that is, Ratlou, Ratshidi, Makgetla, Seleka and Rapulana emerged each named after Tau's sons. However, the Ratshidi absorbed the Makgetla branch and only four branches remained. These are the four Barolong groups dealt with in this study. All four sections of the Barolong left Mosita and went to Setlagole near Madibogo because of internal conflicts caused by the Ratlou who could not easily accept the disintegration of the kingdom (Parsons, 1984:46).

2.1 Migration, Polarization and Chiefdom formation

According to Shapera, one of the Batswana historian the composite name "Batswana" comes from the term "tswana" which means "to come or to go out from one another, to separate," a derivation which suggests the every high incidence of secession and fission in Botswana history (Mbenga,1997:23). The process of fission was influenced by population growth, scarcity of land and water resources, which tended to exacerbate political deference's and succession dispute within chiefdoms. Thus disgruntled individuals and their followers would break away form their own separate chiefdoms elsewhere (R.Cornwell,1988). This process affected the Barolong who were divided into branches and later those branches were further sub-divided into small, independent chiefdoms.

While the Barolong were polarised into four sections, the Ratlou were further subdivided into the Seitshiro-Ratlou and Mariba-Ratlou (Molema,1951:3). The two branches ultimately established themselves as independent chiefdoms. The senior branch of the Ratlou, led by one of Ratlou son's, Seitshiro, moved from Setlagole to Disaneng, away from Mariba section of the Ratlou in order to evade conflict. The Mariba section occupied Phitsane. However, little evidence is preserved on Seitshiro's reign. According to oral traditions, when he died, he left a beautiful woman called Sereni whom he had married in apolygamous marriage but who did not have a child (Molema,1951:3). The sons of Seitshiro, namely, Kgosi, Mosweu and Mokoto quarreled over this beautiful woman. A great battle over Sereni, known as the "war of the woman", took place and divided the Ratlou further, blood being shed on a large scale between the rivals (Gray,1975:415). Some of the Barolong fled their country and others followed Sefunelo (the Seleka chief) and joined him in Khunwana. Most of the Ratlou left Disaneng and stayed in Khunwana under the leadership of Kgosi to move further away from the Mariba-Ratlou and other section of the Ratlou. Khunwana was swelled by the Ratshidi who were fleeing from the impending attacks of the Batlokwa. Some

THE ORIGIONS AND SETTLEMENT OF THE BAROLONG IN THE MOLOPO RIVER REGION C. 1400 A.D.



This map shows the settlement of the Barolong in the Northern Cape (Shillington, 1985:26.)

messengers in Khunwana who were entrusted with the responsibility of alerting the Barolong on impending attacks told the Barolong that the Batlokwa were

heading towards Phitshane and the Ratshidi decided to occupy Khunwana. However, the Batlokwa led by Mantatise attacked Khunwana instead (Gray, 1975:415). The Ratlou and the Ratshidi were attacked and defeated by Batlokwa. The Ratlou under Gontse (the son of Mokoto), and the Ratshidi under Tawana fled from Khunwana and resettled at Phitshane. In Phitshane they were joined by Sefunelo who had fled from the Basotho (Baphuting). The Bataung's attacks forced the Ratlou, Seleka and Ratshidi to return to Khunwana, which was safer (Stow, 1905:92; Breutz, 1956:102). Since Tau's death, there was no strong leader to centralise authority among the Barolong and build them into a strong nation because they had been disunited and only made piecemeal responses to outside attacks. These groups of Ratlou and Ratshidi fled to Platberg, but because the place was too small they later moved to Thaba-Nchu (A979, Ad6.1:8).

The second group of the Ratlou was the Mariba-Ratlou. When the Barolong were polarized in 1777, the Mariba-Ratlou went to Morokweng in the present-day Vryburg district (Breutz, 1956:102; Wookey, 1929:28; Matthews, 1945:12). They settled for a short period in Tshidilamolomo. The Mariba-Ratlou were subdivided among the sons of Moamogwe, namely Motshwari and Maiketso, because of conflict over chieftainship. Maiketso was acting for Letlhogile (another son of Moamogwe). Letlhogile left Maiketso with one section of his people in Morokweng, Setlagole and Ganyesa and took the rest of his followers and settled at Phitshane in Molopo Reserve (Stow, 1905:492). Maiketso was succeeded by his elder son who took another section of Morokweng and went to Dikgatlou with the small Ratlou group. He left his small brother Montsusi, in Morokweng, and became chief for his section that remained behind (Broadbent, 1865:96). Motshwari took his section to Phitshane and was succeeded by Makgobi who established the area as the stronghold of the Mariba-Ratlou and incorporated some of Maiketso's people. In short, Maiketso's people ended up in Phitshane, Ganyesa, Setlagole, Morokweng and Madibogo. The descendants of Motshwari settled in Phitshane, Leporung and Tshidilamolomo (Wookey, 1929:28-29).

This sub-division of the Ratlou happened spontaneous because of a struggle for chieftainship. The Ratlou were never united and were later scattered all over Bechuanaland. Their disunity stemmed from the conflict for the kingship of the Barolong and when other sections realised that there was a leadership crisis they broke away and formed their independent chiefdoms, thus marking the end of the original Barolong kingdom. This situation gave the Ratshidi, Rapulana and Seleka groups the opportunity to establish their independent chiefdoms ruled by independent chiefs, all of them being sons of the first Morolong king, Tau. The Ratlou did not have a strong leader who could centralise authority and unite them and it would have been very difficult for their rulers to unite all sections of the Barolong because they were unable to bring together the scattered Ratlou section of the Barolong.

The second section was the Ratshidi who traced their lineage back to Tau's son Tshidi from the second house. This branch broke away from the stem of the Ratlou. They left Setlagole in about 1777 under the leadership of Magetla (one of Tau's sons) who acted on behalf of Ratshidi who was still a minor at the time. Ratshidi took over when he had come of age. The Ratshidi went to Phitshane to avoid conflict with the Ratlou (Kinsman:1995:377). Thutlwa, an heir to the Ratshidi throne, died in 1805. After the Ratlou had attacked the Ratshidi because of the frustration caused by the collapse of the kingdom, they left for Setlopo, adjacent to Seleka and Rapulana clans of Lotlhakane. Ratshidi's son Thutlwa was survived by his sons and one of them, Tawana, became the heir to the throne, (Breutz, 1956:160) because he was still a minor, Leshomo, his uncle acted as a regent. In about 1800 Leshomo moved from Setlopo to Disaneng (Molema,1966:8). When Tawana grew up he demanded his rightful position but Leshomo did not want to relinquish authority, and in 1814 a civil war erupted (Molema,1966:8). Tawana fled to Leporung and then went to Tshoaneng and it was during this flight that Montshiwa was born. Montshiwa was destined to play an important role in the history of his people, as will be seen later in this

Chapter. Tawana managed to defeat Leshomo, drove him away and assumed his chieftainship. When Leshomo died his followers were received back into Ratshidi chiefdom (Breutz,1956:160). The Ratshidi managed to stabilise the situation again after civil war and that clearly showed the ability of the Ratshidi rulers to unite their people. Tawana then went to Phitshane and made his capital there. In June 1823 when a rumour of the Batlokwa attacks loomed, he moved to Khunwana. After being defeated he return to Phitshane because the area was at the edge of what later became the Mafikeng district along the border of modern Botswana and because he considered that if the other sections were attacked, Phitshane would be the last to be in danger and the Ratshidi would have enough time to prepare to flee (Molema,1966:8). He reoccupied Khunwana but because of the AmaNdebele attack, he went to Platberg and thereafter to Thaba-Nchu (War Office, 1905:8).

The third branch was the Seleka-Barolong under chief Seleka. They left with Seleka and went to Thabeng in about 1777 to avoid conflict with other sections of the Barolong. Due to the Koronas attacks they left Thabeng and went to Lotlhakane to join the Ratshidi and the Rapulana and thereafter established themselves at Dithakong (War Office,1905:8). After being dislodged from their homes at Thabeng by the Baphuting, the Seleka migrated to Makwassie. The attacks of the Bataung forced Sefunelo to move to Phitshane where he found the Ratlou and the Ratshidi. Sefunelo went with them to Khunwana but left for Platberg because the Seleka-Barolong wanted to build themselves up as an independent chiefdom. It was there that the Ratlou, Ratshidi and the Rapulana who had fled away from Mzilikazi joined the Seleka (Molema,1951:33). Platberg was also vulnerable to the attacks by the Bataung and therefore sections of the Barolong migrated to Thaba-Nchu which was relatively safe because it was under the jurisdiction of the Basotho king, Moshoeshoe (Molema,1951:35-36).

The last section of the Barolong was the Rapulana led by the founder chief, Rapulana. After the polarization of the Barolong Kingdom discussed earlier, the

Rapulana left Setlagole and settled at Lotlhakane in about 1777. It was here in Lotlhakane where their chief, Rapulana, died and was buried. However, the Rapulana did not settle there because they desired to live close to other Barolong communities for the sake of security. The Rapulana were either being subjugated or on the run. They went to Thabeng near Platberg and settled at Matlwang with the Seleka (Molema,1951:9). Their movement was driven by their fear of the Basotho attacks, and this made it convenient to join another sections of the Barolong. In addition, Matlaba became a vassal of Mzilikazi and seemed to work well with him (War Office, 1905,p.8). This information debunks the oversimplistic and misleading viewpoint about the cruelty of the AmaNdebele king. He had killed many of the Barolong but he also incorporated some of them into the AmaNdebele community because he acknowledged them as human beings. Moreover, he worked with Matlaba and did not kill him. Despite this, historians such as Molema and Stow (Stow, 1905) criticise Mzilikazi as a barbaric and cruel leader but without acknowledging his ability to relate with and accept members of other ethnic groups. Because of the attacks of the Bataung people against the Rapulana, they fled to Platberg and together with other sections of the Barolong went to Thaba-Nchu in December 1833 (Molema,1951:35-36). The Barolong were thus forced into hiding because of the period of violence called the *difaqane*.

The *difaqane* was a period between 1820s and 1830s, characterised by massive violence, inter-ethnic rivalry, destruction and chiefdom formation in southern and eastern Africa. Historians differ as to what caused the upheaval of 1820s and 1830s. In 1980 Julian Cobbing, challenged the generally held view by historians such as Omer-Cooper, that the upheavals of 1820s and 1830s were caused by Shaka and the Zulu kingdom. According to this view the rise of Shaka set in motion a whole series of migrations which extended their influence over a vast area of southern, central and east Africa (Molema, 1966:9). According to Cobbing the troubled times of the nineteenth century happened as a result of an mounting expedition for slaves to feed the demand for labour generated by the

Cape Colony and Portuguese Mozambique (Etherington,1995:13). Cobbing asserts that the battle between the Ndwande led by Zwide and the Mthethwa led by Dingiswayo was caused by slave trade. Zwide responded to the demands of slave trade in Brazil by launching devastating attacks against the Mthethwa and killing Dingiswayo in the process. In this paradigm, the rise of Shaka is seen as a defensive reaction against slave hunters. Cobbing's view was castigated by historians such as Peires, Saunders, Omer-Cooper, Eldredge, Parsons, Manson and others (Hamilton, 1995:21-435).

As already noted, the Barolong in the northern Cape were scattered all over the region by groups of the Basotho who had fled from Mzilikazi, the king of the AmaNdebele. The Barolong were divided and disunited and could only flee in search of a safer place. They could not contain both the Basotho and the AmaNdebele attacks and in their flight men, women and children lost their lives.



Families lived in fear of slave raiders(M. Morris,2004:46)

This section seeks to outline the impact of the *difaqane* raids on the Barolong

Communities generally and the Rapulana, Ratlou, Ratshidi in particular, especially those in the highveld area between the Drakensberg mountain and the Kalahari Desert. The Nguni fugitives such as the Ngwane and Hlubi from the Zulu king Shaka prompted the emergence of the Basotho forces such as the Batlokwa, Bahlakwana, Bafokeng, Baphuting and Bataung, who devastated sections of the Barolong (Kinsman, 1905: 363-393). After the Basotho attacks the AmaNdebele regiments wreaked further havoc on the Barolong (Molema, 1966:9). The Bafokeng conquered the Barolong under Gontse and Tawana at Khunwana and settled in their ripe fields to feast and recover (Kinsman, 1995:367). The Barolong fled and reoccupied Phitshane.

The Ratshidi, Seleka and Ratlou were also attacked by the Bataung where ever they went. They did not know which direction to take as the Bataung followed them. Other sections of the Barolong, such as the Rapulana, Ratlou and Ratshidi joined the Seleka at Platberg. They took refuge in Thaba-Nchu because of the devastation by the AmaNdebele who attacked Khunwana, killing members of the Ratshidi and Ratlou. The people who visited the spot two days later saw starving children sucking, but in vain, the breast of their lifeless mothers (Kinsman, 1995:386). The Barolong refugees increased the population at Platberg and because of a shortage of water, the Barolong went to Thaba-Nchu (Molema, 1951:35).

2.2 The causes of Ratshidi–Rapulana conflict, 1852-1895

The dispute between the Ratshidi and Rapulana arose because Montshiwa regarded Lotlhakane, the land occupied by the Rapulana, as the Ratshidi's land. He based his claim on the fact that it belonged to his father, Chief Tawana, who had died there in about 1849. The Rapulana justified their occupation of the land on the basis that it was occupied by their Chief, Rapulana, in about 1787, before the Ratshidi led by Tawana could occupy it. Therefore, the bone of contention behind the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict was Lotlhakane. In addition to the land

issues there was also the chiefly paramountcy of the Barolong. The Rapulana did not want to be ruled by Montshiwa (Mothibi,2005). They recognised Moshete as their paramount chief because the paramountcy over the Barolong as a whole had earlier belonged to the Ratlou.



Chief Montshiwa and his wife (Shillington, 1985:100)

However, their issue of the paramountcy was monopolized by the Boers when they came to the highveld in 1837. They wanted to use paramountcy as a lever to take the land of the Barolong. The only strategy the Boers had thought of was to align themselves with the Ratlou and encourage them to claim the paramountcy. The Boers were favoured the crumbling of the Barolong kingdom into four independent chiefdoms causing competition for land in the process. The Boers were fascinated by the impact of the *difaqane* which caused all sections of the Barolong to be unsettled because of the attacks and pillage by the Batlokwa, Basotho and AmaNdebele. Even though the Barolong were dichotomized into chiefdoms they were superficially united in Thaba-Nchu and did not fight against each other. But the Boers manipulated the Ratlou and forced

them to claim the paramountcy of all the Barolong in order to use it to take the land of the Barolong

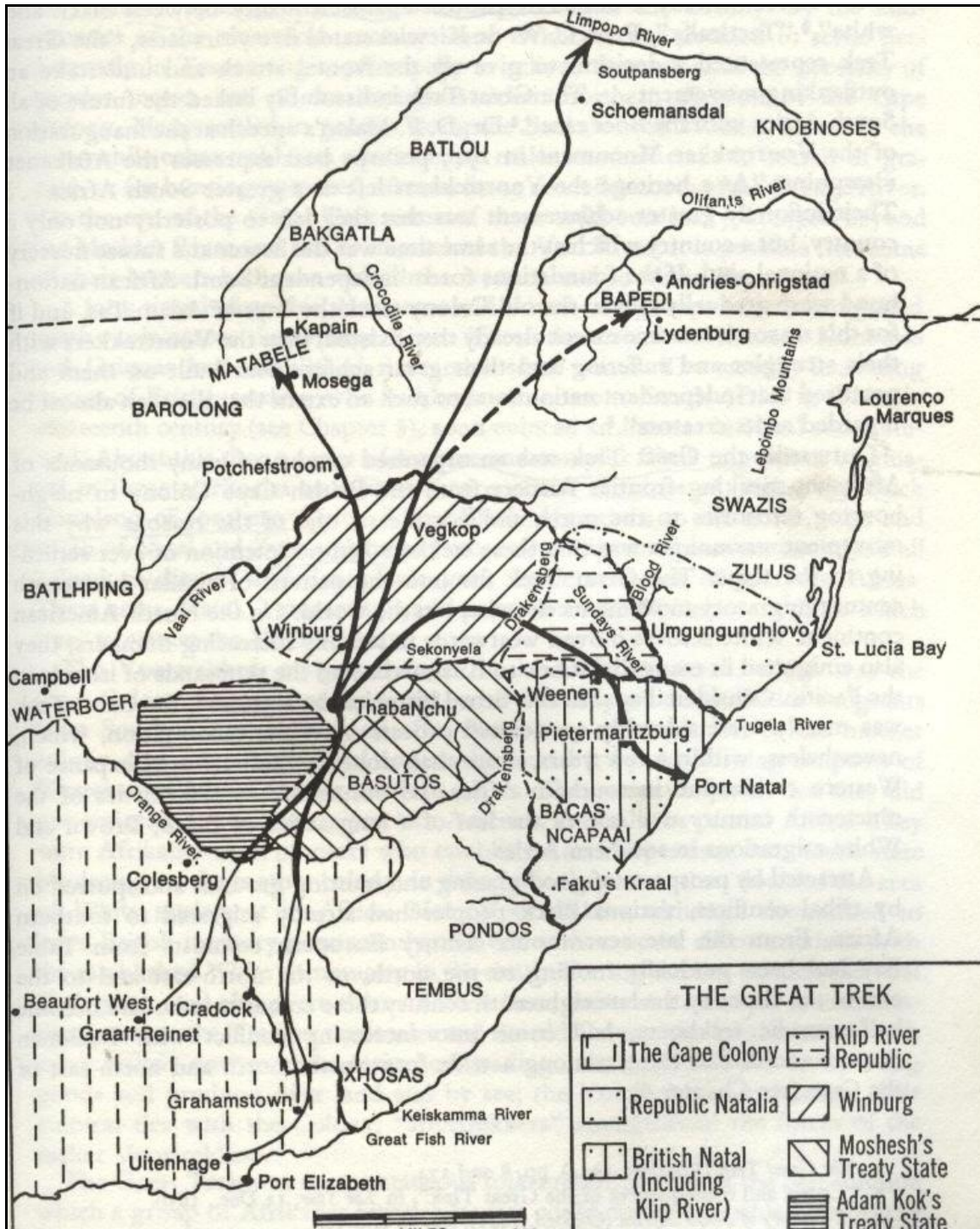
2.3 What were the rationale and the Impact of the Boers migration Into Bechuanaland?

The second occupation of the British in 1806 brought changes at the Cape which revealed developments which were taking place in Europe at the time. Europe experienced the scientific revolution and enlightenment while the Boers were in South Africa and implemented the ideal of the “dark Ages” based on slavery which was part and parcel of feudalism and chivalry. The declaration of the right of man after the glorious revolution in England in 1800 caused revelation and revolution across the world. Slavery was condemned and the divine right of kings was curtailed. Every person was regarded as equal to another irrespective of colour. The Afrikaner communities missed these developments and the oxwaggon was their level of technology in 1800 which was far behind the developments in Europe. This declaration of the right of man generated the campaign to end slavery and the British government advanced this course with vigour.

The British introduced among other things, Ordinance 50 and Emancipation of slaves, as an attempt to force Afrikaners to recognise Africans as human beings. However, the Afrikaners were embittered and regarded these laws as humiliating and unjust. The Boers decided to migrate into the interior. (Ramoroka et al., 2005:216) Afrikaner historians glorified it as “Great Trek”. Some historians however, called it either Boer migration or Boer trek. Because from their perspective the Boer trek was not a “great” occasion but a frustrated and disjointed groups of Dutch people who were running away from civilization brought by the British government. According to liberal historians, the Afrikaners missed the enlightenment on the frontier of South Africa and turned to Old

Testament. This view point stemmed from the fact that Afrikaners saw themselves as a group of Israelites moving from Egypt to Kanaan. The Afrikaner historians saw the “Boer Trek” as a civilising mission against the “evil” and “barbaric natives” (Ramoroka et al., 2005:216). This interpretation by liberal is valid because the Afrikaners pursued their middle ages life on the African soil and when enlightenment was brought at the Cape they resisted modernity and continued slavery in the interior of South Africa. Africanists compared this movement of the Boers with the *difaqane* and concluded that the *difaqane* would most probably have been called the “Great Trek” because of its magnitude and also because Africans were many compared to the Boers. However, an event becomes “great” because those who had the means to write could exaggerate it because at the time they enjoyed a measurable degree of power.

MAP OF SHOWING THE BOER TREK 1938



MAP:(Muller,1980:147).

The indigenous people, on the other hand, were powerless and could not romanticize their historical events which in most cases were belittled by liberals and Afrikaner nationalist historians and journalists. Therefore, the liberals and Afrikaner nationalists regarded the *difaqane* as a period of violence by “barbaric natives” and this interpretation showed the European Jingoism (Ramoroka et al., 2005:216).

The Boers, led by Hendrik Potgieter, were welcomed by Chief Moroka (who succeeded Sefunelo) of the Seleka. Moroka wanted the Boers to settle in Thaba-Nchu in order to protect him and the Barolong from Mzilikazi but the Boers were not interested and left shortly for the Molopo region. The Boers saw this as an opportunity to remove the AmaNdebele “obstacle” and to offer the Barolong protection in their own land. In 1837, shortly after their departure for the Molopo region, the Boers came to ask Chief Moroka for food because the AmaNdebele had taken their cattle. The Boers relatively defeated Mzilikazi, took his cattle and established a *laager*, but the AmaNdebele came during the night and took back all the cattle. The Boers were practically without food and wanted the Barolong to assist them in preparing the expedition against the AmaNdebele. However, of the Barolong chiefs only Matlaba took the leadership of the contingent against AmaNdebele because “he was a vassal of Mzilikazi; had often been to Mosega and therefore knew the country and the road well” (Mackenzi, 1887:57; ZAR Native Affairs Department (TNAD), 1905:16). The Barolong-Boer commando attacked the military headquarters of Mzilikazi at Mosega, killed about 4000 of the AmaNdebele and put the rest of them to flight (ZAR Native Affairs Department (TNAD), 1905:17).

The Boer thought that the other Barolong chiefs were reluctant to help them against Mzilikazi. They began to put their trust in Matlaba and even turned him against his brothers. They offered to protect Matlaba and his interests and promised him his favorite land Lotlhakane (that belonged to his forefather

Rapulana) if he remained loyal to them. Matlaba's interest in Lotlhakane clashed with that of Montshiwa at a later stage when he occupied Lotlhakane. Lotlhakane was a fertile area occupied by the Ratshidi, which meant that for the Boers to keep their promise and their friendship with Matlaba they had to push the Ratshidi out from that area (Shillington, 1985:128-129). This was the beginning of the rift within the Barolong caused by the Boers. This issue of Chief Matlaba needs some explanation. He was hated by most of the Barolong because he has often joined alliances with the enemies of the Barolong such as the Bataung, AmaNdebele and the Boers to escape of being the victim of the most powerful forces in the region before the British occupation. When Moletsane of the Bataung attacked Barolong, Matlaba entered into an alliance with him against the Barolong in the 1920s. In the 1930s when Mzilikazi came to the highveld, Matlaba switched his loyalty to the AmaNdebele and helped them to track down Moletsane whose military skills could not match those of the new white arrivals (Mackenzie, 1887:57; Molema, 1951:20). Moletsane fled to the Basotho. Then too, the Boers came to the highveld in 1837, Matlaba was the first to align himself with them against other sections of the Barolong. As a result, he was hated by other Barolong chiefs who regarded him as a traitor and Montshiwa wanted to curtail Matlaba's activities once and for all by subjugating his people.

In 1838 after the expulsion of the AmaNdebele, four sections of the Barolong also captured cattle from the Boers and drove them away until they reached the Vaal River. Here their cattle-drivers mistakenly brought them within sight of the Boers (Mackenzie, 1887:58). Potgieter immediately said that the livestock captured by the Boers would replace those stolen by the AmaNdebele and that they would share those captured by the Barolong. The Barolong conceded without resistance because they were disunited and too poorly organized to resist the Boers (Mackenzie, 1887:58). The relationship between the Boers and the Barolong(except the Rapulana) began to deteriorate and later on became ferociously hostile because the Boers thought the Barolong had assisted them in order to steal their cattle. However, both the Boers and the Barolong suffered

from the AmaNdebele's cattle lifting expedition and they fought in order to settle old scores, remove the enemy from their and repossessed their cattle. They won the battle but lost the cattle to, another enemy who disguised as a friend in order to colonize the land and economic resources of the Barolong.

In 1839 the Boers went to Potchefstroom and took possession of the land of the Barolong by virtue of their conquest of the AmaNdebele. The Boers realised that Barolong were disunited, disorganised and were weary of outside attack. They capitalised on this weakness. They offered to protect the Barolong but in reality they planned to acquire the land for themselves. Meanwhile, in 1845 the Barolong under Gontse, Ratshidi under Tawana and Rapulana under Matlaba left Thaba-Nchu and came to the west of Potchefstroom after Mzilikazi was defeated (NASA, Vol.12,File.718,1913). The Boers had already occupied the surrounding farms. The Ratlou moved to Platberg and were on their way to Khunwana, while Tawana and Matlaba remained in Potchefstroom until the Boers gave the Rapulana the area called Bodibe about 35 kilometers from Lotlhakane as a reward for their having assisted them against the AmaNdebele (NASA,Vol.12,File.718,1913). But because Tawana was too old, he ordered the Ratshidi to return back to Lotlhakane and Dithakong because these areas were fertile (War Office,1905:9). The Ratshidi came to Lotlhakane in 1847 and in 1849 Tawana died and was succeeded by Montshiwa (War Office,1905:9).

In 1851 some Boers came to settle to west of Lichtenburg upon land claimed by Montshiwa at the "eye" of the Molopo River (Molema, 1966:30). Montshiwa made a formal protest to Andries J. Pretorius, the newly appointed Commandant-General of the Potchefstroom and Rustenburg districts, about the occupation of his land by the Boers. Montshiwa's complaint was not heeded but was invited to meet the Boers to resolve the land problem. The Boers organized a commission of farmers consisting of Pieter Scholtz and Andries Stander and two field cornets. These men met with Montshiwa and his brother Motshegare with twenty

Barolong councilors and Ludorf (the missionary teacher from the Wesleyan Mission Society) on 30 December 1851 at the “eye” of the Molopo River. The Ratshidi and the Boers agreed not to encroach upon each other’s land and drew a boundary. It stretched from Mosega to Ottoshoop, to Buurmansdrif, through the source of the Harts River, and down along the river to a point opposite Makwassie (Molema, 1966:30).

When Montshiwa thought that the problem of the Boer encroachment was over, British gave the Boers the right to occupy the land of the Africans, including that of the Barolong in terms of the Sand River Convention of 1852. This convention which was signed by Assistant Commissioners Hogge and Owen on behalf of the British government, gave complete independence to the “emigrant Boer farmers beyond the Vaal River” (Sillery,1971:10; Danziger, 1978:11). The Boers were scattered all over the interior and it would have been too costly for the British to protect every African community whose land was being encroached upon by the Boers (Muller,1981:178). The British decided instead to grant the Boers concessions in accordance with the Sand River Convention (Molema, 1966:30). These concessions gave the Boers the legal right to land they occupied or claimed (Sillery,1952:10). Shortly after the conclusion of the Sand River Convention, Commander Scholtz, the highest Boer authority in Lichtenburg district, convened all the meetings of all the African chiefs living in the Molopo region. He told them that the land they occupied belongs to the Boers by right of conquest. Therefore there were liable to pay tax to the South African Republic (Sillery,1952:10). Chief Montshiwa resisted this move and refused to submit to the Boer authorities. The Boers attacked chiefs such as Sechele, Montshiwa and Motshegare who resisted their authority. In 1852 when the Boers resolved to attack Sechele in Rustenburg district because he was resisting their infringement upon his land and independence, Montshiwa was instructed to assist them (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje:10). Because the Bakwena and the Barolong were on friendly terms, paradoxically Montshiwa refused to join the Boers. In response to Montshiwa’s refusal, the Boers maintained that after their expedition against

Sechele they would attack him because he had refused to render the military assistant they demanded from him. The Barolong from Setlagole and Lotlhakane went to Rustenburg district and repossessed their cattle from the Boers who were unaware and preoccupied with the battle against Sechele (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje:10). However, after returning from the war, they traced their cattle from the Barolong. Montshiwa refused to deliver either the cattle or culprits because he knew that the cattle belonged to the Barolong (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje:16).

In September 1852 Montshiwa and his people were aware of the imminent danger posed by the Boers, and decided to leave Lotlhakane and Dithakong and settled at Setlagole in an attempt to avoid the impending Boer attack (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje:16). Because the Boers followed them up, Montshiwa and his people went to Mosite and ultimately reached Dikhukhung (Molema, 1966:60). The obstacle preventing Matlaba's occupation of the land was virtually removed by the Boers, but Montshiwa did not leave with all of his people. He had left headmen behind to safeguard his home area.

When diamonds were discovered on the Vaal river in 1868, the Barolong, the Boers and the Griqua began to compete for the ownership of the diamondiferous land. The ZAR used a "proclamation" including within its western boundary the entire Bechuanaland, from Lake Ngami on the north of the Langberg and southwest of Kuruman (Mackenzie,1887:60). In August 1870, a meeting organised by Pretorius and Commandant Paul Kruger took place between the Boers and the Barolong on the border of the ZAR near Mafikeng at the place called Buurmansdrift. Montshiwa, Moroka, Maiketso, Gaseitsiwe and Mosweu represented the Ratshidi, Seleka Barolong, Batlhaping, Bangwaketse and the Korana respectively (Molema,1966:61). The purpose of this meeting was to persuade the Ratshidi to give up diamondiferous land to the Boers. The Boers knew fully well that the Keate Award had given this land to the Barolong, Bangwaketse and the Batlhaping communities (Sillery,1971:41). The Boer

leaders urged the Barolong to safeguard their land by placing it under the control of the South African Republic. If they failed to do so the British would surely annex it. The Boers were concerned that the British, through their arbitrator Keate, might annex the diamond fields. Montshiwa refused to give up his own land and his stand was backed by the Barolong, Batlhaping and Korana chiefs. Montshiwa claimed the land from the north of the Vaal River to the Harts River, from the Schoon spruit in the south of the Vaal River down to its confluence with the Harts River. Montshiwa claimed to be the legitimate owner of the land, basing his claim on his inheritance from his forefathers (Mackenzie,1887:60).

The arbitrator Keate awarded the diamondiferous land to the Griqua and the Barolong. The ZAR and Orange Free State governments which were disillusioned by the Keate Award, forced Marthinus Pretorius and his state attorney Klein to resign and Thomas Francois Burgers became the new president of the ZAR in 1872 (Sillery,1971:41). This revolutionary move marked the beginning of serious conflict within the Barolong from 1873 to 1884. Burgers wanted to make claim to the land of the Barolong chiefs to counteract British imperialism on the highveld (Shillington,1985:128). He made an oral survey into the history of the Barolong and found out that Ratlou had been the king of all Barolong after the death of his father Tau that he was the eldest legitimate son to ascend to the Barolong kingship. According to Molema, President Burgers discovered that there were several clans, namely, the Ratlou, Ratshidi, Makgetla, Seleka and Rapulana in their order of seniority and that the principal chief of the clan was Moshete the chief of the Ratlou (Molema,1966:62).

Brown asserts that:

Although, as we have seen, the right to the paramountcy of all the Barolong tribes belonged to the family of Ratlou, the British government when it took over the county in 1884, gave the position to Montshiwa of the Ratshidi branch.....and his successors were recognised by the government as chief of the whole tribe, though members of the tribe

acknowledge the priority of the living descendant of the Ratlou as their paramount chief (Brown,1926:221).

Urged by these findings, the Boers approached Moshete, who was the elder son of Kgosi and an heir to the throne of the Ratlou chieftainship, who was working on Boer farms in Khunwana. The Boers found out that he was the future chief, set him free from the indentured labour and influenced him with the notion of being a “paramount chief” over the entire Barolong because they wanted him to officially hand over the land to them, thus paralysing Montshiwa’s resistance against the Boers (A979, Ad6.1, Molema-Plaatje Papers:13). They installed him as chief of “all the Barolong” in 1872 and gave him a staff as a symbol of kingship. They also gave him a carved stick, a kind of scepter and emblematic of his office and paramountcy (A979, Ad6.1, Molema-Plaatje Papers: 13). This stick is still treasured even today by Moshete’s family as a symbol of supremacy (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:13). President Burgers urged Moshete to cede all the territorial rights of the Barolong to the South African Republic as a reward for being granted the chieftainship (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:13). Indeed, the Boers managed to rubricate Moshete within the orthodoxies style of their political discourse and therefore the dynamics of power relations were dominated by the Boers. Burgers gave Montshiwa a letter stating that the country of the Barolong had been given to the Boers by Moshete, the “paramount chief” of all the Barolong (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:13). Montshiwa was furious and asserted that he had never being under Moshete’s rule and maintained that according to Barolong law the country was not divisible by individual chiefs (BPP,C-3486,1882). He further stated that the whole country belonged to the general ethnic group of the “Barolong”, (BPP,C-3486,1882) This was the beginning of internal strife among the Barolong crafted and grounded by the Boers. Therefore it is beyond any reasonable doubt that the Boers were to a large extent the cause and beneficiaries of the repercussions of the conflict among the Barolong.

When Moshete realised that politically he could rise over Montshiwa, he favoured the idea and agreed to be under the protection of the ZAR and to assist the Boers militarily against Montshiwa. Historians like Agar-Hamilton, Mackenzie and Shillington have all criticised Moshete's legitimacy as a paramount chief of the Barolong (Shillington,1885:28 ;Agar-Hamilton,1926:67). However, the reality is that Moshete was the eldest son of Kgosi who was the chief of the Ratlou, and therefore his legitimate successor. Moshete was not the paramount chief but if the outsiders raised matters of paramountcy, namely, the Boers and British, he could claim authority by virtue of being a descendant of king Ratlou who died at Mosita. However, Moshete's aspirations to the paramountcy were thwarted because the Barolong chiefs were independent and would not relinquish their authorities (NASA, Vol.12,File No.718,3 July 1913). In the titanic struggle for land and tribal supremacy between Montshiwa and Moshete, historians have relegated Moshete's actions to the same level as the land grabbing desire of the freebooters (Mackenzie,1887:6). They project Montshiwa as the paramount chief and do not criticize the British freebooters on Montshiwa's side who also desire the land and cattle of the Barolong. Evidence presented by these historians which correlates with the oral tradition of the Barolong proves that Montshiwa could not claim paramountcy over all the Barolong. Theal, for examples, states that Moshete was descended from the principal son of Tau, and was therefore higher in hereditary rank, but on the other hand, Montshiwa had a larger following and was favoured by the British authorities in South Africa (Theal,1919:48). Moreover, Montshiwa managed to secure a large area, which included the Molopo and Setlagole Reserves. The ascendancy of Moshete to the Ratlou chieftainship intensified acrimonious conflict between Ratshidi and Ratlou on the one hand, and Rapulana on the other. Boers had already united Matlaba and Moshete. Moshete was recognised for the first time as "paramount" chief of the Barolong by the Rapulana, another section of the Barolong. In 1873 President Burgers asked Montshiwa for an alteration of the boundary set by the Keate Award because the Boers wanted the diamond area to be on their side, but Montshiwa refused (BPP, C-3419,1873). As a result, in 1875 Montshiwa's

people were dislodged by the Boers from Bodibe where they had long resided, and Matlaba and his people were brought from Potchefstroom district to occupy Bodibe (War Office,1905:). In 1874 some members of the Rapulana in the ZAR asked Montshiwa to settle at Lotlhakane and he agreed (NASA,Vol.108,File No.48, C.4890 1886). Montshiwa gave the Rapulana permission to stay in Lotlhakane because the land belonged to all the Barolong



A Batswana Village (S. Haw, 2005:52)

but on condition that they recognised him as their chief.

In 1874 a small section of the Rapulana who had come from Matlwang arrived in Lotlhakane under the leadership of Mokgosi a Makgora, Chief Matlaba's cousin (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:8). In 1875 they were joined in Lotlhakane by Mothupi Mosikare with a small party of the Rapulana from Bodibe. Mokgora and Mosikare negotiated with Montshiwa and Molema (Montshiwa's brother) and agreed that they would settle peacefully with the Ratshidi and acknowledged Montshiwa as their chief. Mosikare acted as a petty chief until the arrival of Goutlwece Abram Motuba in January 1881 (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:8). He was installed by Matlaba in the same year. He however, obliterated the agreement between Montshiwa and Mosikare by claiming that

Lotlhakane belonged to the Rapulana and they did not need any permission from Montshiwa (A979,Ad6.1,Molema-Plaatje Papers:8). He informed the Rapulana that Matlaba was their chief and Moshete their paramount chief. Subsequently, the majority of the Rapulana defied Montshiwa and honoured Moshete as their “paramount” chief because they believe that the paramountcy of the Barolong belonged to the Ratlou family and, consequently, Montshiwa became furious. However, a small section of the Rapulana under Mosikare remained loyal to Montshiwa.

The acknowledgement of Moshete as a paramount chief was legitimate because the paramountcy belonged to the Ratlou not Ratshidi. Moreover, Lotlhakane belonged to the Rapulana because it was the home of the original chief, Rapulana, who had died and was buried there. The Rapulana believed that because Chief Rapulana had brought them there under his rule, they had to respect him by honouring Matlaba, his Rapulana descendant chief. They did not want to be separated from those in Bodibe. Molema asserts that:

In 1874 Burgers approached Chief Matlaba of the junior Branch (Rapulana) of the Barolong, and succeeded in obtaining from him a cession. Armed with Mosweu's, Moshete's and Matlaba's deeds of cession, Burgers Now issued a proclamation on 11 March 1874 that all the territorial rights of the Barolong were by cession from the 'paramount' Chief Moshete the territorial right of the South African Republic (TNAD,1905:17).

The Boers secured an agreement with Moshete in which he ceded all the Barolong land to the ZAR (Breutz,1956:19;TNAD,1905:17). However, the land of the Barolong could not be taken easily from them because Montshiwa was prepared to resist the Boers. If war erupted between the Boers and the Ratshidi, the Rapulana would obviously join the Boers who already got Moshete on their side. The Boers wanted to use the question of chiefly paramountcy to justify taking over all the Barolong land. The advent of the British and the Boers within the ranks of the Ratshidi and the Rapulana developed and consolidated the

conflict of the paramountcy of the Barolong, and was used as a lever by both the British and the Boers to take Barolong land. In 1881 the Boers encouraged Moshete to help them fight Montshiwa. In 1885 the British reacted by establishing its authority and installed Montshiwa as “paramount chief” in Mafikeng district after they had collaborated with him to take the diamondiferous land. At the time, the British used the word “principal chief” to suggest that Montshiwa was higher in the traditional hierarchy than all other Barolong chiefs in the Molopo Reserve. Some historian such as Molema, Mackenzie and Shillington put the Boers at the center of the cause of the conflict, asserting that the Boers came to the highveld to take land of the Barolong but did not implicate the British government (Shillington,1985,:124-144). However, according to Theal, British volunteers acquired weapons and ammunition for Montshiwa and therefore also contributed to the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict (Theal,1919,:147-147). In addition, the Boers decided to use Moshete as a counter to British imperialism. The British placed the diamond fields under their authority by using Montshiwa and promoting him into a paramount chief. What is clear is that both the British and the Boers wanted the diamondiferous land and both used the Barolong chiefs to accomplish this. It was the British who succeeded. The Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana became the victims of these circumstances.

Montshiwa, like Mankoroane, also enlisted the British volunteers, most of whom were willing to help him because he had promised them a share of the booty and a farm each when the war between Montshiwa and Boers was over. This was the opportunity for the whites to acquire land and cattle. The British term them freebooters (Theal,1919:146). The view advanced by Shillington and Mackenzie, namely that the Boers who assisted Matlaba and Moshete were freebooters or mercenaries who simply wanted land, is misleading (Shillington,1985, :131-160). The reality is that Moshete’s Boer volunteers as well as most of Montshiwa’s British volunteers were freebooters because they were all opportunist who wanted the land and cattle of the Barolong in exchange for fomenting trouble among the different Barolong groups, and which resulted in Barolong war of

1881-1884. According to Manson, a number of whites came to Montshiwa's aid in the war. These men were promised grants of land for their efforts.

Manson also states that European volunteers or freebooters, who would be rewarded for their service with the grants of land, assisted each of the four chiefs, namely Mankoroane and Mashau (Batlhaping), Montshiwa and Moshete (Barolong) (BPP,C-3486,1882;Manson,1998,:496-497).

In a nutshell, the source of the Barolong conflict stemmed primarily from the break-up of the kingship. This led to the struggle for paramountcy in the long run between Montshiwa and Moshete. The Boers and the British reinforced this ethnic cleavage (BPP,C-3486,1882). Therefore, it is true to say that the division of the Barolong, the British and the Boers contributed in varying degrees to the Barolong war (Sillery,1971:41).

2.4 The Barolong War of 1881 - 1884

The Barolong war, which occurred between 1881 and 1884, did not involve all the Barolong but only three sections, namely the Ratshidi, Rapulana and Ratlou. This war was an attempt by the Boers to use Matlaba and Moshete against Montshiwa to force him to surrender the Mafikeng district to them. The Ratshidi led by Montshiwa, used the war to attract the British attention. Montshiwa wanted to use the Mafikeng district and British support to ascend to power and resist Moshete, Matlaba and Boer attacks. If he controlled these large areas, which housed the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana, he would have power over the Barolong chiefs because this jurisdiction would prevent Matlaba and Moshete from controlling their own followers in Mafikeng district. He was aware about the oral tradition respected by all sections of the Barolong, which acknowledged the Ratlou as the only people who could claim paramountcy over other section of the Barolong. He also knew that the Ratlou would not accept him as the paramount chief of all the Barolong. Therefore, he used his resistance

against the Boers as an excuse to rule over other sections of the Barolong. He realised that the Barolong lacked a powerful chief who could counteract the Boers. If the Barolong needed a paramount chief, Moshete was the legitimate chief to claim paramountcy, but the decision came from the Boers. The Boers had assumed the illegitimate task of restoring the paramountcy to the Ratlou. The Rapulana on the other hand, were blamed by Montshiwa for occupying his country and without recognizing him as their ruler. Instead, they regarded Matlaba as their chief, and Moshete as their paramount chief, Montshiwa thus wanted the Rapulana out of Lothlakane and Bodibe because they were his subjects. The Boers, who brought the Rapulana there, did so at the expense of pushing Montshiwa's people out of their land in Lotlhakane. The Seleka were neutral. These were the logistics of the Ratshidi-Rapulana war.

In the summer of 1876 Montshiwa and his community left Moshaneng, returned to their traditional home and settled at Sehuba. The Ratshidi (Molema,1966:83) complained to Montshiwa that Matlaba's followers had provoked the Ratshidi by stealing their horses and cattle and firing at them as they worked on the land in Lotlhakane because of the dispute (Agar-Hamilton,1926:184). Montshiwa attacked the Rapulana in Lotlhakane, tied up Matlaba's son and others, and captured several of his cattle, horses, goats and wagons (Molema, 1966:79). This was the beginning of an inevitable showdown between the Ratshidi and Rapulana, and both sides were joined by Boers and British freebooters. The ZAR government warned Montshiwa that if he invaded Matlaba he would be indirectly attacking the ZAR government because Matlaba was their subject. Montshiwa responded by writing a letter to Lanyon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Griqualand West, complaining about the encroachment of the Boers on his land. He asserted that the Boers had brought Matlaba to Bodibe, which fell within his jurisdiction, and that they threatened Molema in Mafikeng demanding the payment of tax to the ZAR government (Molema, 1966:83).

Montshiwa's principal adviser was Christopher Bethell, a leader of Montshiwa's British volunteers who procured not only recruits, but also large quantities of ammunition at the diamond field (Theal,1919:146). Manson asserts that Bethell recruited a dozen Britons to assist his defense of the Barolong and some of these men were on Montshiwa's payroll simply as mercenaries (Manson,1998:496-497). He was in correspondence with the secretary to Sir Hercules Robinson, the British High Commissioner and took care to represent all events in which Montshiwa was implicated in the most favourable light (BPP,C-3419,1882). Bethell wanted to protect the Barolong land using a group of Britons who were given land for their role of protecting the Ratshidi and giving them arms.

Montshiwa outlined his programme of containing the Boer encroachment to the British authority. He asserted that the first course was for Her Majesty's government to annex the country generally known as the Bechuana Cis-Molopo country, and including all the country south of Molopo River, and east of the borders of the Kalahari desert, and lying between those limits and boundaries of the ZAR state and the Cape colony" (BPP,C-3419,1882). Secondly he would request the British to supply them with a special force that would deal with the Boer infringement (BPP,C-3419,1882). Thirdly if the British government failed to respond positively the chiefs who were loyal to British including Montshiwa, Bareki and Jantje of Batlhaping, Gaseitsiwe of Bangwaketsi and Sechele of Bakwena would request weapons from the British to defend themselves from the Boers and their Batswana allies (BPP,C-3419,1882). All these chiefs who were loyal to the British government agreed to Montshiwa's programme of containment. Montshiwa was startled by the fact that David Massouw of the Koranna, Mathlabani of the Batlhaping, Moshete and Matlaba of the Barolong were armed by the Boers to assist them to take the land and cattle of the Barolong (BPP,C-3419,1882).

In the ZAR Moshete gave the Boers land and they also had access to Matlaba's land in Bodibe, but they were not satisfied and wanted all the Barolong land. The Boers who regarded the Ratlou and Rapulana as their subjects were prepared to do anything to defend them against Montshiwa. The Boers were determined to use Mosehete's claim to paramountcy as a lever to acquire land and cattle belonging to the Barolong. Their aim was to render the Keate Award superfluous.

On 5 February 1881 Montshiwa gave Motuba, the Rapulana chief at Lotlhakane, who was under Matlaba in Bodibe, and had for some years been residing there, notice to leave that place, but Motuba refused (NASA, Vol. 12, File No. 718, 1913). Moshete collected his men at Khunwana and Matlaba at Polfontein (Bodibe) in order to pre-empt the impending attack from Montshiwa. On 2 May 1881 Montshiwa attacked Lotlhakane and routed Motuba's people, killing over 600 men. The white farmers along the ZAR frontier, who held Matlaba in high regard, intended to retaliate (Sillery, 1971:69; Mackenzie, 1887:53). Matlaba was too old and feeble to go to war but Moshete was ready to adopt his cause (Sillery, 1971:69). On 17 October 1881 Moshete and his partisans attacked Montshiwa at Sehuba just south of Mafikeng (Sillery, 1971:69). Montshiwa was unable to contain the attack. In 1882 Moshete and Matlaba with a hundred men and openly assisted by the Boer freebooters, attacked Sehuba and burnt it to ashes. The Boers took 30 farms, a church bell and pulled down the chapel (BPP, C-3486, 1882). Montshiwa retreated to Mafikeng, an outstation occupied by his brother Molema (NAD, Vol 12, File No. 718, 1913). Montshiwa complained to the British Resident about the infringement by the ZAR Boers who openly helped Moshete and Matlaba. The Boers on the other hand accused the British volunteers of assisting Montshiwa. Clearly, therefore, it would be fundamentally flawed to advance the view that only the Boers were central to fuelling the intra-Barolong conflict or participating in the Barolong war. In actual fact, the Boer-British relation were deteriorating not only within the Mafikeng area but also elsewhere in South Africa after annexation of the ZAR state in 1877 and this situation tended to exacerbate the Barolong war after 1881 when the Boers

regained their independence. Under Molema's direction, the British volunteers built trenches and wall to strengthen the defense work of Mafikeng so that they should resist any force that Moshete could bring against them (Theal,1919:150). On the other hand, Moshete and Matlaba forces, under Seleka, Letsapa and Motuba, assisted by the Boer freebooter from Rooigrond, Vleifontein and Lichtenberg, built a fort about 3 kilometers to the east of Mafikeng (Molema,1966,p.118). In these skirmishes Weber and Coetzee, leaders of Moshete and Matlaba's volunteers, were killed. On Montshiwa's side, James MacGillivray, a British volunteer, was captured (Manson,1998:496) and murdered by the Boer farmers. His disappearance caused much correspondence between the British Resident in Pretoria, the High Commissioner in Cape Town and MacGillivray's relatives, and tended to intensify the bitter feeling between the British and Dutch-speaking people in the area (Theal,1919:150). Moshete's volunteers appointed Nicolas Claudius Gey van Pittius to lead the Boer contingency against Montshiwa. The Boers made some sporadic attacks and sometimes they were repelled and there was loss of cattle on both sides.

Gey van Pittius urged Moshete to fulfill his part of the so-called "treaty" of 1882 and granted the volunteers their farms, while on the other hand he sent a message to Montshiwa on 1 May 1883 to remove his people within four days from certain lands they had cultivated for centuries (A979,Ba8, Molema-Plaatje Papers,1883:). Montshiwa refused and the volunteers destroyed his corn by letting their cattle feed on it. Montshiwa and the Barolong were furious and decided to mobilize Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse and Sechele of the Bakwena against the Boers. They attacked the Boers and burnt three of their houses in retaliation (A979,Ba8,Molema-Plaatje Papers,1883:14).

Montshiwa told the British Resident, George Hudson, that he had no intention of interfering with either Moshete or the ZAR. However, he made a coalition with Sechele and Gaseitsiwe to drive the freebooters out of Bechuana country (BPP,C-3841,1883). Montshiwa complained that when some members of the

Barolong visited his country they were stopped, taken to prison and their property confiscated, fined and released after spending six weeks in the laager (BPP,C-3841,1883). Montshiwa seemed skeptical about the British assistance because it was too slow to end the Boer encroachment on his land. The intention to form a coalition was prompted by a relatively lethargic reaction from the British authorities.

On 31 July 1884 the 300 Goshenites raided a Barolong post north west of Mafikeng and drove off over 300 cattle (Mafikeng Museum, 1986:4). In the same month the Goshenites had an engagement with Montshiwa's force, killed about a hundred of his men and wounded many more. Among those killed was Christopher Bethell (Manson,1998:492). The British were bitterly disappointed by the death of Christopher Bethell who was in the service of Her Majesty's government and they decided to send British volunteers to evict the Goshenites. Four thousand troops under Charles Warren arrived in Bechuanaland in January 1885, and the Boer freebooters suddenly melted away to become peaceful farmers or crossed into the ZAR rather than fight (NASA,Vol.12,File No.718,1884;Sillery,1971:127;Parsons,1984:164;Mafikeng Museum,1986:5). The British freebooters remained with Montshiwa and helped to defend him and his people against the Boers. In March 1885 the British announced the extension of the protectorate over Bechuanaland from beyond the Molopo river to the longitude that marked the boundary of the German protectorate (NASA,Vol.12,File No.718,1884; Parsons,1984:164;Mafikeng Museum,1986:7). The British divided the protectorate by the proclamation of 1885. The area south of the Molopo River became known as British Bechuanaland and separate under Shippard and the north of Molopo river was called the Bechuanaland Protectorate and was also under Shippard as the Commissioner (Parsons,1984:164).

After the establishment of the British Bechuanaland in 1885,Montshiwa and the Ratshidi were given jurisdiction over the Molopo and Setlagole Reserves that

included Lothlakane, Disaneng, Phitshane and Madibogo where the Ratlou and the Rapulana resided. Matlaba and Motshete on the other hand, had their headquarters outside Bechuanaland, in the ZAR. They were prohibited by the Bechuanaland, from exercising authority over their people who lived there (A979,Cc1-4,Molema-Plaatje Paper,1884:15). According to this Act, the chiefs who resisted to the ZAR had no jurisdiction over their people in Bechuanaland. Matlaba resided in Bodibe in the ZAR under the Boer authorities, while some of his people were in Lotlhakane, which was located in the Molopo Reserve, under the British rule. Moshete resided at Khunwana, which was in the ZAR, while the Ratlou resided in Phitsane and Setlagole Reserves within the Molopo Reserve in Cape Colony, which meant that he had no jurisdiction over them. To complicate matters, the Rapulana in Lotlhakane did not recognize Montshiwa as their ruler. Matlaba was their chief and the Moshete their paramount chief, and this widened the gap between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana even further. In effect this meant that animosity reached a new proportion in Lotlhakane after the British intervention. The attitude of “disobedience” of the Rapulana against Montshiwa is dealt with in Chapter Five.

While the protectorate defused direct and open warfare between the Rapulana and the Ratshidi, it reinforced the old disputes and squabbles among the Barolong through the demarcation and rules of the boundaries. The authorisation of Montshiwa’s jurisdiction over Matlaba and Moshete’s people by the British government was a serious source of hostility within the Rapulana and the Ratshidi communities. Montshiwa and Moshete competed for paramountcy and when the British brought Moshete’s people under Montshiwa’s jurisdiction, Moshete was appalled and vowed to incite his people to resist Montshiwa’s authority. Even in Lotlhakane the Rapulana did not recognize Montshiwa but instead acknowledged Matlaba who resided in the ZAR as their chief and they were determined to fight to protect their threatened interests (NASA,Vol.108,File No.48,1917).

In conclusion the disintegration of the Barolong Kingdom was a long-term cause of the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict because it polarised the Barolong into four sections already mentioned. But it also laid a fertile ground for dissensions, disunity and later internal conflict. The external forces such as the Boers and the British exploited and reinforced the exciting divisions. The Boers in particular planted the seeds of conflict in a vulnerable ground of the Barolong's political landscape. They fuelled this conflict in pursuit of minerals. While the Boers glorified Moshete as the paramount chief and the British crowned Montshiwa as the paramount chief of the Barolong and demarcated Molopo reserve to safeguard their political interests. The situation escalated the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict to a level like never before. It has to be noted that the Ratshidi and the Rapulana were divided but did not fight against each other and the series of conflicts that were prevalent should be blamed squarely on the roles played by the Boer and British freebooters who wanted the land and the cattle of the Barolong. The perpetual conflicts continued even when the South African war broke out and consequently the siege of Mafikeng set in the Rapulana and Ratshidi found themselves in the opposite sides. The siege of Mafikeng is the subject of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 The Barolong and the Siege of Mafikeng, 1899 to 1900

Introduction

The siege of Mafikeng was part and parcel of the South African war of 1899 to 1902. However, the siege took place from 1899 to 1900. This war was named the Anglo-Boer War because it was destined to be a “white man’s war” which was agreed upon by the Boers and the British. Some conservative Afrikaner nationalists call it the “Transvaal war of independence” because this was the objective they aspired to achieve when going into the war. They also agreed that Africans could only be used for auxiliary duties in assisting the Boers to achieve the above-mentioned goal. The British, on the other hand, wanted to protect Mafikeng against the Boer encroachment and this became their imperialist goal of securing the road to the north and preventing the Boers from having contact with the Germans in South West Africa(Namibia). The siege of Mafikeng is one war theatre within which Africans were used extensively by English and Boers respectively and they were placed at the crossroad of this war as it will be shown in this chapter. Most of the literature on the siege is published and written by white liberal and Afrikaner nationalist historians who have initially twisted the evidence to vindicate the perspective that the war was essentially a “white man’s war”. Paradoxically, the same brand of historians revised their works and accepted an all-encompassing perspective, namely, “The South African War”. However, even though this view point seemed to be accommodating to Africans of South Africa, its contextualisation is questionable because it was concluded by the liberal and Afrikaner nationalist historians. From African nationalist point of view, in the 1912 the Union of South Africa was an extension of the South African

republic (Transvaal). Therefore, the term South Africa in 1899 and 1900 did not include the Africans and it is still skewed in favour of the Boers. African perspective was not canvassed in the decision to name this country South Africa therefore it was a compromise to accept the name and subsequently the South African War. Pan-Africanist trajectory in South Africa could have coined this event as 'Azanian War of liberation'. This chapter attempts to bring the African perspective into the siege's historiographical equation. It draws extensively upon primary sources, especially the various diaries and scrutinises them and reinterprets them with the higher degree of scepticism to judge their usefulness and authenticity. It deciphers how Europeans dehumanised Africans and how Africans re-humanised Europeans. It analyses the written sources and evaluate their authenticity in their reconstruction of the role played by Africans in the siege and in particular how they examined racism during the siege. Finally, the chapter examines the consequences of the siege for the Ratshidi-Rapulana relations.

Historians including Warwick, Willan, Pakenham, Selby, Jeal and others have written about the siege and their works have been beneficial to this study in that they dealt with pivotal issues that affected the Barolong. The Afrikaner nationalists and liberals were initially responsible for this myth and twisted the facts and propagated that it was a white mans war but later revised their works because of the existence of sufficient evidence in particular the oral testimonies of the African people who were involved. Warwick's work centers entirely on Baden-Powell's preparations for the defense of Mafikeng and on the food situation. He has covered the British motive for occupying Mafikeng, which was to secure the road from Cape to the interior, an important issue, which has not been acknowledged by other historians already mentioned (Warwick, 1983:29). Warwick has written little about the impact of the Boer shells which affected men, women and children. Willan in his recent work on the siege outlines in detail the people who were designated to defend the Stad and shows how it was protected. His work also deals with the role of the Barolong in providing the non-combatant duties and military role in defending the Stad and also outlined the suffering of

the Barolong (Willan, 2001). His work contributes to the understanding of some of the important aspects of the siege. However, there were other issues which affected both the ordinary people and chiefs which historian like Willan said very little about and which this chapter deals with extensively. Another historian, Pakenham who has written incisively on the siege has tended to over-rely on Vyvyan's diary, particularly about the attempts to evacuate white women and children from Mafikeng. Willan and Pakenham do acknowledge the existence of racial discrimination but omit other important information about race-relations. Moreover, these historians have nothing on the consequences of the siege for the Ratshidi-Rapulana relations. The literature surveyed does not answer the following questions: Why did the British government choose the Stad as their line of defense? Was the Barolong the priority in the protection of Mafikeng or a ploy to use them and their encampment to safeguard the British imperialist interest in Mafikeng? Is there evidence that cast some skepticism to the so-called British "protection"? Is there sufficient evidence of discrimination against the Barolong? This chapter intends to answer these questions and interpret the siege from another dimension to fill the void left by historians.

In 1899 the Stad was swelled by refugees from the Transvaal which included the Fingo and Shangaans who came to the Stad to escape the South African War. The Fingo were driven into the Stad when their villages were burned down by the Boers and the Shangaan "mine boys" were expelled from the Rand gold mines and fled from the Transvaal to the Stad to seek British protection (Warwick, 1983:31). When the siege began in 1899 the Stad was placed within the defense of Mafikeng and the Ratshidi were willing to cooperate to protect the Stad and look upon his Majesty's government as their shield against the "cruel" Boers. This was a good opportunity for Montshiwa to defend the Stad under the British flag against people he had always considered his enemies. The Barolong thought that the British would arm them with guns to revenge against the Boers. However, they were told that the war was a "white man's war" and that they would be defended by the British government. From the very beginning of the

siege the British did not hide their hidden motives to use the Barolong as human shields against the Boers to protect themselves and the white communities. The Barolong's choice to assist the British was not a collaborationist stance to advance the British cause but they were fighting against the 'worse form of hegemony'. To that extent, African participation in the war was, paradoxically, part and parcel of Africa's struggle against foreign exploitation and in search of human dignity, human rights and social justice. However, their objectives to fight both the Boers and the Rapulana were compatible with the British cause and the Barolong were not hard to come by. But the Ratshidi had guns which they had secured much earlier from Bethel and other Englishmen to defend themselves with against the Boers and what they needed was ammunition. The Ratshidi did both combatant and non-combatant tasks at the beginning of the siege. As already noted, before the siege took place, the Rapulana-Barolong had been convinced by the Boers that they were fighting to restore Moshete's paramountcy. Montshiwa had always been backed by the English men against the Boers' attempt to take Mafikeng by force. The Ratshidi lost their women and children in these conflicts and wanted an opportunity in the absence of the Boers to teach the Rapulana a lesson.

Another reason that encouraged the Barolong to assist the British during the siege was that they wanted to repossess their cattle from the Boers. The Ratshidi realised that the Rapulana and the Boers continued stealing cattle even at the beginning of the siege in an attempt to placate the Ratshidi and the British resistance. The Boers stole cattle of the Barolong in order to put a total onslaught on the Stad in a common knowledge that it would be very difficult for the Ratshidi and the British to sustain the siege without food. For example, on 12 December 1899 a group of Boers tried to steal cattle from the Ratshidi, but retired without getting any (Molema, 1966:52).

After the outbreak of the siege and the South African war, Montshiwa called a meeting of the Barolong chiefs, at Mabeela in Mafikeng district. The chiefs who

met were Moshete of the Ratlou, Matlaba of the Rapulana and Makgobi of the Ratlou in Phitshane (Molema, 1966:106). He requested them to join the war on the side of the British government to protect their land from being taken by the Boers. This was a last ditch attempt by Montshiwa to pacify other section of the Barolong by compelling them to subsume themselves under the British government. Moshete and Matlaba refused to join Montshiwa and asserted that they were the “children of the Transvaal” because they were promised land by the Boers after they had helped them to defeat Montshiwa (Molema, 1966:106). Moreover, the other sections of the Barolong did not want to be dictated terms by Montshiwa whom they regarded as an opportunist and a minor chief with no respect for Moshete. Montshiwa was shaken by the negative comments made by Chief Matlaba’s nephew called Mogotsi who accused Montshiwa of ambition and greed for power and leadership and excessive love for anything British (Molema, 1966:107). There was a crisis and Montshiwa appealed to the chiefs to reprimand Mogotsi but he was applauded by Matlaba’s brothers and other men of the Rapulana for undermining Montshiwa. Montshiwa felt humiliated in before other Barolong chiefs and decided to “punish” the Rapulana. The impending attacks by Montshiwa triggered the Rapulana to fight the war on the side of the Boers, it was a good opportunity for Montshiwa to settle old scores during and after the war (Molema,1966:107). The Barolong were prepared to kill one another because of the iron curtain that had been established by the Boers and the British. It has to be noted that the Barolong entered the war in order to safeguard their land , cattle, women and children but also to rule themselves. However, the two colonial powers had their own agenda which included the discovery of diamond among the Barolong and the British quest to protect the road to the north which could be thwarted by the Boers occupation of the Northern Cape.

3.1 The Nature of the participation of the Barolong

From the beginning of the siege the Ratshidi-Barolong were engaged in both combatant and non-combatant duties. They established a maze of trenches all

around the town. The night parties who numbered between three and four hundred also established bomb-proof shelters and other defense works (Bell:29). Some of these duties were carried under heavy fire from the Boers and on many occasions the Barolong men, women and children became victims of a battle that was destined to be according to Baden-Powel of “one government against another but the Boers were making it to be the war against the people” (Comaroff, 1989:34). According to Vyvyan, a Deputy-Commander to Baden-Powel and also a diarist, Baden-Powel had employed gangs of Africans to dig a series of forts and earth works protected by sandbags and reinforced with steel from the railway yards. There were also three hundred Africans who were recruited to serve as “watchmen, police and cattle guards” (Packenham, 2001:119).

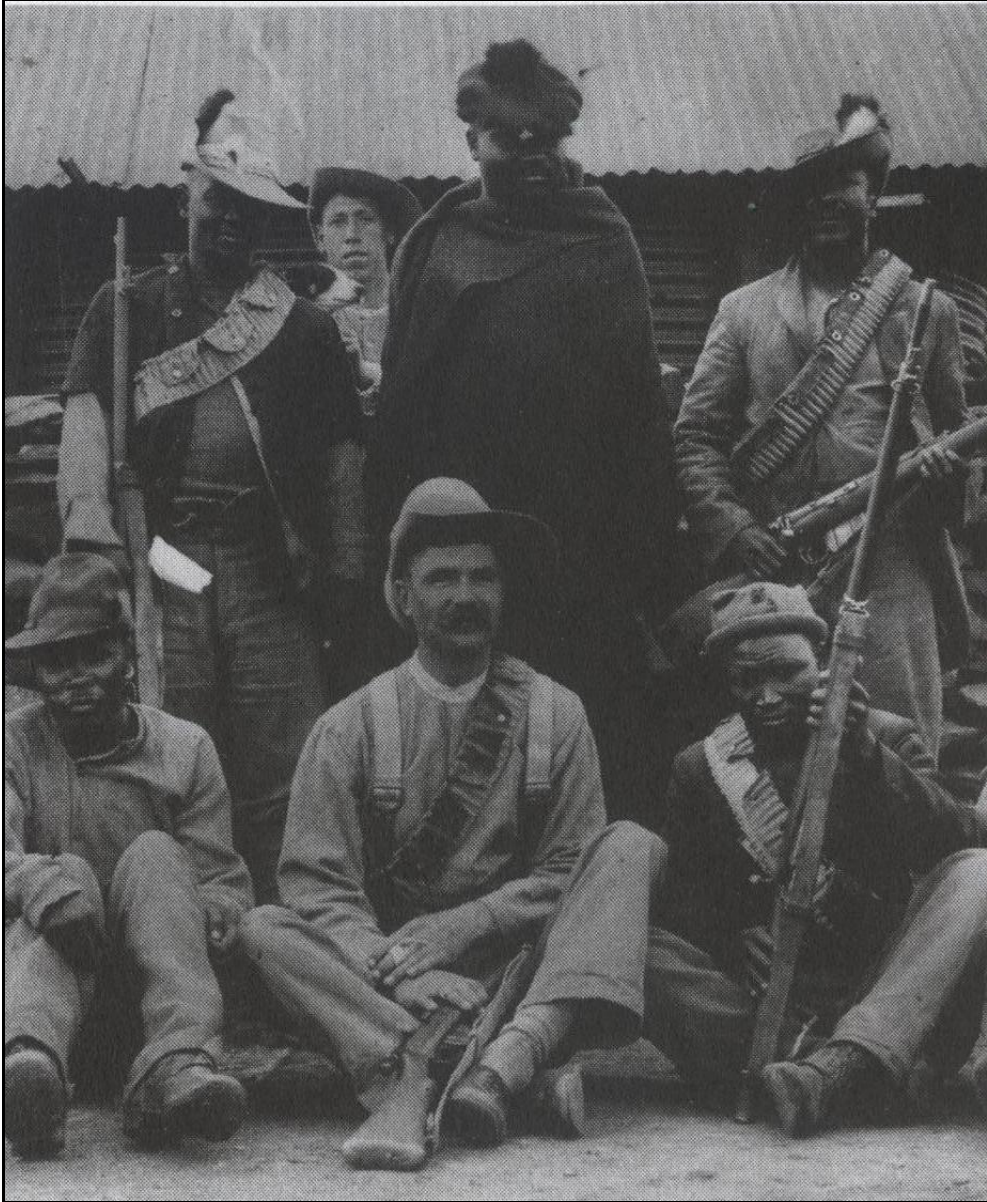
The Ratshidi and Rapulana were involved as runners in espionage missions on either side. They brought information which provided strategic direction to the planning of the attack on both sides. The letters of information about the movement of the Boers and the Rapulana, were generally written on tissue papers concealed in the lining of the caps, or soles of the books of the messengers and sent to Major Dodley who was in charge of the contingency against the Boers. Dispatches were often hidden in empty cartridge cases, and buried or thrown away at any sign of danger or discovery (Main,1996:162). In Mafikeng a group of Barolong and other Africans were employed as runners, scouts and collected information about the movement of the Boers. These runners were controlled by Smithman who was in charge of the Intelligence Department. He worked effectively with runners who brought in the information through the dispatches (Comaroff, 1989:110). He connected the information to Baden-Powel who would prepare the regiments to contain the impending Boer attack. On 8 March 1900 the runners brought news that one hundred Boers had been killed in a contingent led by Cronje one of the Boer Commanders and seven hundred were taken prisoner with him (Comaroff, 1989:110). They reported that one thousand Rapulana were scattered all over the country looking for Mathakong Kudumela the cattle raiding party leader (Comaroff, 1989:119). They

also maintained that Snyman had disarmed the Lotlhakane rebels (Rapulana) who took advantage of the siege to revenge against the Ratshidi (Comaroff, 1989:10). They brought information about an English relief column which was in Vryburg and on its way to Mafikeng. Baden-Powell and the British garrison managed to contain the advance of the Boer forces in many occasions because of the intelligent information supplied by the Barolong informers.

One of the outstanding Africans who assisted the British forces was Chief Seane of the Ratshidi. He disguised himself as a Rapulana in the early months of the siege by assisting Mafikeng's runners (Comaroff, 1989:110). He and the Ratshidi established a secret communication network which became an effective strategy to assist the British garrison to locate Boers like a radar and allow them to enter the British encirclement unconsciously where the British would make a preemptive strike. Later, he was captured by the Boers and removed to Lotlhakane, from where he provided Mafikeng garrison with intelligence reports through a labyrinth of Barolong runners. This flow of information caused the Boers to be in disarray because some of their missions to attack the Ratshidi were known before hand and when they happened, they were easily repulsed. When this happened the Boers accused a few Boer commanders of spying for the British. The degree of mistrust increased and caused the Boers to be in disarray pointing fingers at one another and not at the enemies. According to Pakenham, spies were rumoured to be everywhere (Pakenham, 2001:150). Undeniably, burgeoning of intelligence information in this particular terrain of the war elevated Chief Seane to a monolithic hero of the siege. These heroes of the siege were not acknowledged by the Afrikaner and liberal historians because they wanted to reduce their activities into oblivion and this precipitated into bias of omission.

The three diarists namely Edward Ross, Charles Bell and Major Baillie attempt to conceal the fact that the Barolong were armed to defend the Stad. They relegated the Barolong's participation only to non-combatant duties and cattle

raiding expeditions. According to Edward Ross, the Boer Commander Snyman armed three hundred Rapulana men who would be used to attack the Stad. Diarists find it easy to disclose the number of Boers and Rapulana who were armed but fail to reveal those armed by the British. Moreover, the information they presented about the armaments of Africans on the side of the Boers is skeptical because they visualised the unfolding of the siege from Mafikeng and it was extremely difficult for them to move out of the Stad because of hails of shells fired by the Boers. The Stad was like a defensive fortress for the British and the Ratshidi-Barolong and it was easy to interact with Baden-Powell to ascertain the statistics of Africans who were armed. The diarists, however, reveal that the Barolong were involved in a battle with armed Boers but, obviously the Barolong could not resist the Boers unarmed. Sol Plaatje in his diary gives incidents in which the Ratshidi were armed and attacked the Boers on many occasions. Pakenham who has written about the siege, uses the diary of Vyvyan extensively, and reveals that this diarist also played down the fighting role of the Barolong (Pakenham, 2001:150). This was done for political reasons because from the beginning, the war was destined to be a “white mans war” and they did not want to show the enormous contributions made by Africans. But, the historian Jeal, reveals the number of armed Africans to be between six and seven hundred



Many Africans were armed and drawn into the conflict of the so called a white man's war (Morris, 2004:131)

something which the diarists fail to state (Jeal, 2001:620). The reluctance of these diarists to reveal the full truth about African participation in armed combatant is similar to that of Baden-Powell who did not fully acknowledge the work done by the Barolong. Even at the end of the siege, the Barolong were not given money for reconstruction but money was given to the Boers. Consequently Montshiwa's decree of enforcing other sections of the Barolong to side with the

British government was strategically baseless because he was not given the latitude to do so by the British government. In addition, the British told him that the war was not for the Barolong but a “white mans war”. This rapacious shortsightedness proved to be exorbitant for the Barolong in general and made them to become polarised even further.

In 1899 Baden-Powell informed the Boers through a letter that the Boers killed women and children of the Ratshidi in their own country. He added that it would be difficult for the British to stop the Africans from rising against the Boers (Comaroff, 1989:34). This letter to the Boers was in actual fact justifying the armed involvement of the Ratshidi in the war. The Ratshidi had designed a contingent plan to protect their cattle from being stolen by the Boers. The Barolong managed to repulse the Boers’ attacks and killed some of them. Baden-Powell realised the value of these Barolong defenders and armed them on the basis of self-defense and subsequently five hundred of them were armed with rifles and ammunition (Comaroff, 1989:34). Barolong did not only defend the Stad but made sporadic offensive operation to over-run the Boer fort. They attacked the place with three rounds of ammunition per man and managed to open fire on the helplessly sleeping Boers. This incident revealed how vengeful the Barolong had become after relentless killing of men, women and children by Boer shells. The terms that controlled “civilised” warfare did not approve of a situation where helpless people including those who had slept and surrendered, were killed but preferred that they be held as prisoners of war. However, the so-called “barbarism” of the Boers seemed to have being reciprocated by the Barolong whom their children and women were killed indiscriminately much against the rules of “civilised” warfare which the Boers had vigorously advocated at the beginning of the siege. The Barolong had to be vigilant because they were a thorn between the squalor of ill-treatment by the British at home and the squalor of the Boer shells.

3.2 Cattle raiding expeditions

As mentioned earlier, the Boers continued their cattle lifting expeditions during the siege against the Ratshidi using the Rapulana. Similar expeditions brought many cattle of the Ratshidi to the Boers in the earlier Barolong wars of 1881-1884. The Ratshidi were determined to recover their cattle from the Boers when the siege began in 1899. This was an intricate task for the Ratshidi because they were trapped within the Stad and they were afraid to loose more cattle to the Boers. In contrast, the Boers and the Rapulana were free to move away and around the Stad to search for food and generally did not suffer like the Ratshidi who were incarcerated within the Stad by the Boer encirclement.

These raiding parties by the Ratshidi had the opportunity of waging a guerrilla war to kill the Boers at close range. One of the Ratshidi raiding parties opened heavy fire upon a hole in which the Boers had concealed themselves and eight Boers and six horses were killed (Bell, 1900:100). The Ratshidi came back with two horses, two rifles and two bandoliers belonging to the Boers. The parties of the Ratshidi were successful in that they brought back rifles and horses that reinforced their armaments (Bell, 1900:100). It was clear that the raiding parties were not only looking for cattle but also for food because in one incident where a party of both Barolong and Fingoes fired on a house and went in and ate the bread, meat, potatoes, brandy and took the furniture. The Barolong had begun to feel the pangs of hunger as the siege progressed and were desperate to take anything that could sustain life (Bell, 1900:105).

The substantial number of cattle raiding parties led by different leaders did not only bring cattle but also any removable property or food which would be useful to women and children of the Ratshidi. On 15 March 1900 Dinku, one of the leaders of these raiding expeditions attacked a Boer homestead and killed one Boer and captured the cattle. Another Barolong expedition managed to bring back forty sheep from the Boers. In the same month of March another expedition

brought forty-three heads of cattle. Molema, one of the Ratshidi royal family, led a raiding party against the Boers and managed to bring two bags of meal, a quantity of dried meat and a lots of pots, kettles and so on. These activities carried out by the Ratshidi showed their unequivocal commitment to defend the Stad and to sustain the lives of their families who faced starvation. In addition, these expeditions proved more effective because they attacked, brought food and property concomitantly.

The Boers and the British were confused by the Ratshidi and Rapulana because it was extremely difficult to distinguish between the two groups as they are one people and not distinguishable. This put the Ratshidi and the Rapulana in a better position to mislead the British and the Boers. If the British garrison were suspicious about an African they would instruct him to show them where he was staying and if he failed this test he was accused of spying and executed by the firing squad. Therefore, the Ratshidi cattle raiders pretended that they were the Rapulana and took the cattle, the Rapulana also did the same. The Barolong also experienced this problem themselves as it was difficult for their soldiers to identify all the Ratshidi or Rapulana more so that they did not wear uniform.

The Cattle raiding expeditions were successful and managed to repossess some of the cattle lost during the earlier Boer-Barolong war of 1884. They also thrived in getting more guns, bandoliers, food and horses. In addition, they killed some of the Boers. However, some expeditions were dangerous because some men were killed while lifting cattle. The Boers had one thousand armed Rapulana men who were scattered all over the area to capture the Ratshidi raiders (Comaroff,1989:119). The Boers were vigilant and did not want to risk losing more cattle. They were desperate to capture Mathakong Kudumela, one of intelligent Ratshidi leaders and definitely a hero of the siege on the aspect of cattle raiding (Comaroff,1989:119).

A critical analysis of the account on cattle raiding expeditions presented by the diarists already mentioned has unraveled bias against the Rapulana. These diarists have not recorded any success stories on the Rapulana cattle raiding expedition and it was impossible that the siege would have ended without a victorious Rapulana raid. The fact that they labeled the Rapulana as the “rebels” shows that they were on the side of the Ratshidi and the British. However, in a matter that involved variance between the Ratshidi and the British they took the British side, as it will be shown latter. According to the diarists the Ratshidi raiders managed through a series of raids to capture many cattle and sheep which would have kept the Ratshidi alive until the end of the siege. But they and all historians have excluded the raided cattle and sheep from the daily rations of the Ratshidi. It was noted that Baden-Powell knew at the beginning of the siege that the food were not sufficient to last the Barolong up to the end of the war. But he did not know how many cattle the Barolong would bring. When the Barolong were triumphant in cattle raiding the British took their cattle. The British got sufficient meat from the cattle captured by the Ratshidi and it was therefore, fundamentally flawed to deduct the raided cattle of the Barolong from the food equation. This repugnant state of affairs reduced the Ratshidi to a frame work of human skeletons always sleeping next to the soap shop, tired and weak to stand in a queue and only to be bitten by whites to stand up and get a small fraction of food. What was chagrin was the fact that the Afrikaner nationalist historians describes these weak Barolong as “lazy” instead of “weak” and this interpretation has a dirty ring of racism and xenophobia espoused by these white historians. In addition, the authenticity of the claim by diarists Baillie and Bell that whites also ate horse meat amid sufficient cattle raided by the Barolong is questionable, skeptical and objectionable.

3.3 The Impact of the Siege on the Barolong

The Barolong and other Africans suffered severely from lack of food to starvation and the British garrison masterminded this wholesale destruction (Comaroff,

1989:86). On 9 February 1900 the British evaluated the food and realised that the supply of foodstuffs for Africans would last at least sixty days. The British management decided that a couple thousand refugees had to leave for Kanye to enable them to feed the “legitimate” Africans, meaning the Barolong (Comaroff, 1989:90). This managerial decision was done without consultation with the Barolong whose area was used as an iron curtain to protect the British from the Boer shells. Now that the British felt threatened by the shortage of food which could lead to them competing for limited rations with Barolong and others, they decided to send Africans first (the Barolong would follow soon) to Kanye. The British did not expect other Africans to be in the Stad other than the Barolong because it would increase the burden of food shortage on the Stad. As the siege progressed the scarcity of food was felt among the Africans and several deaths from starvation were reported (Comaroff, 1989:104). According to Charles Bell if he fed one African the following day his yard was full of thousands of Africans outside his door waiting for food, most of whom were women (Bell, 1900 :94).

Another stigma that paralysed the Barolong and other Africans were shells fired into the Stad by the Boers at the end of 1899. On 25 November 1889 three Africans who were working at Ellis corner in the Stad were struck by a shell which wounded them. One of them had his leg amputated and died later (Bell, 1900:40). In another incident in the same month one African was wounded on the foot and another was shot through the stomach while crossing from the location to the town (Bell, 1900 :42). On 7 December eight Africans were killed and five wounded by the Boers shells (Bell,1900:48). These incidents were reported by diarists and they did not record white victims of the siege which also demonstrate their premeditated presentation of events which invented a skewed picture of the siege. Lack of African historians and segregation was responsible for this skew account because the Eurocentric historians did not believe in oral history and the dairies used were basically flawed and vindicated the invincibility of the white man.

The Boer shells, like rinderpests that eat the crops of both rich and poor indiscriminately, caught royalists and ordinary people simultaneously. For example, Chief Lefenya was injured on the stomach and his wife on the thigh (Comaroff, 1989:40). One woman had her jaws dislocated and shattered by a shell. On 5 February 1900 one African had his stomach smashed and his spine broken until he prostrated down and died thereafter. On 15 May 1900 a shell killed the Ratshidi Chief Wessel's wife and about twenty other women in the Stad (Comaroff, 1989:112). All these and other atrocious incidents were committed as a consequence of a "white man's war" which the Barolong had not initiated in any way.

Both the Rapulana and the Ratshidi suffered from several diseases mostly caused by lack of healthy diet or no food at all. In their efforts to work for the British and Boers respectively, they sustained irreparable harm including paraplegia, malnutrition diseases and death. But for the Ratshidi, the loss of life and injuries were not new and they were determined to remove the Boers once and for all from their land.

In one incident during the siege which demonstrated the injustice and racism against Africans, one African girl was raped by a white soldier and the matter was not taken seriously by the British authorities as if it was legal to commit a crime against an African. Plaatje was furious about this matter. The military court according to Plaatje did not care about cases of this nature and it was a normal phenomenon because crime was committed to a "sub-human". This issue had been ignored by white diarists and historians because they wanted to protect the so-called sacrosanct of the white man. Obviously liberal and Afrikaner historians and white diarists do not consider this as a historical fact and neither as an uncivilised and barbaric activity simply because it was committed by one of them. There were many atrocious activities which were exonerated from the spotlight by diarists because they wanted to protect the integrity of the British Authority.

The pandemonium displayed by the British was acrimonious and tended to tarnish the reputation of the British garrisons who had assumed a noble task of being the saviour of Africans in the interior against the so-called “uncivilised” Boer migration. There were other forms of discrimination advanced by Powell. Africans caught spying were executed by firing squared but white doing the same things whether British or Boers were taken as prisoners of war. Powell stopped the sale of grains to the Barolong because he suspected them of hiding stocks and they were instructed to hand over all their supplies to the Commissariat Department. It was later discovered that a black market was opened within the Stad by a white man who sold grains and he too was not executed. It was unfair on the part of the Barolong to be punished for a crime they did not commit.

Normally Africans who worked in the trenches and bomb-proof shelter were paid in the office of Charles Bell and one day a shell came unanticipated. Charles Bell asserts that:

“A shrapnel vigorously came through my office and burst the outer wall and damaged five natives.....two of them died and three were wounded....”

The three hundred men of the Rapulana who were armed by the Boers were pushed in front of them, as a defensive fortress, against the British and were far harder to drive off than double the number of Boers. Accordingly, this strategy failed and the Africans alleged that the Boers fired upon them during their retreat. This strategy of using Africans as human shields is dehumanising and clearly demonstrated that Africans in this war were used as objects of security to advance the Boer colonial interest of gaining political and economic power including land and mineral wealth. Some of Rapulana runners were killed by the British and the Ratshidi. Other Rapulana spies disguised as the Ratshidi, led a party of the Fingo (allies of the British) astray and the Boers killed twenty four of the Fingo as a result (Bell, 1900:92).

On 22 April 1900 Baden-Powell issued the instruction that all rations to Africans should be stopped. Horse meat and soup would be offered in place of rations as temporary measure, but in reality, food would not last until the relief column arrived in Mafikeng. This situation happened in spite of the Barolong's effort, risking their lives, in bringing cattle to sustain their life. According to the diarists the cattle raiding expedition existed through out the siege and, this meant that food was brought to the stad by raiders throughout the siege. The greater portion of the ration was given to the British garrison at the expense of the real providers, the Barolong. This was discrimination because the British only fought against the Boers but the guerilla war tactics was masterminded by the Barolong which assisted them to bring food. Obviously the British saw themselves as better human beings deserving to live than Africans, a view which was rooted in schools of thought such as social Darwinism, Fascism, Nazism, Calvinism and Eugenics movements. These schools of thoughts viewed Africans as sub-human who did not deserve freedom and whose intellectual capacity could be equated to that of sub-human. This supremacy was at the hard of British jingoism which was in operation at the stad and unfortunately the Barolong were at the end of this dehumanizing antics to either starve them to death or expose them to the Boer killing machines. An African died every day and some were very weak and fainted (Bell, 1900:92). The survivors were getting thinner everyday and crowded around the soup kitchen before down, waiting for the shop to be opened and only purchased sufficient to keep them alive (Bell, 1900:92). Some of the Barolong ate dog carcasses after the administration of the material law issued an order that dog tax should be paid. Many dogs were killed and the Barolong ate their meat (Comaroff, 1989;118). According to major Baillie and Charles Bell, the horse meat was not for the Barolong, even the white ate them (Baillie,1900:134). But Plaatje did not eat horse meat and never reported the eating of horse meat by whites. Despite all these hardships that befallen the Barolong, they continued to support the British course. Historians including Packenham, Willan, Warwick and Jeal, ignored this fact acknowledged by the two diarists, namely Charles Bell, and Major Baillie that whites also eat horse flesh. The reason why these

historians omitted this fact was probably that they were skeptical about it and they could not imagine white people eating horse flesh while cattle of the Barolong were in abundance. In fact, they only revealed the suffering of Africans and were careful not to record anything that would show that whites were tormented by hunger and had to eat food which they otherwise could not eat under nominal circumstances (Bell, 1900:94).

The British wanted to remove all obstacles to protect the whites and any attempt to question these antics would be insult to their hegemony. Wessel Montshiwa, the Barolong chief, refused to follow Baden-Powell's instruction to evacuate the Barolong to Kanye (Baillie, 1900:134). He raised a genuine concern that the Barolong would die of hunger eventually, if they followed the instruction and asserted that the British would not help them. As a result of this action, the British authority sacked Wessel and replaced him with a sub-chief, Lekoko. This was indeed an insult to the Barolong traditional fabric and this had demonstrated another effects of the British jingoism in Mafikeng. Sol Plaatje accused Wessel of misunderstanding Baden-Powell's instruction but the fear of starvation that Wessel had raised proved to be correct as the siege progressed. As the leader of the Barolong he did not want to be subservient to the Empire whiles his people were suffering. This was the British "stick and carrot" policy used all over Africa to give privileges to collaborators and punish dissenters.

Understandably, the Fingo died of starvation because they refused to eat horse meat and other Africans also died because they were not co-operative by refusing to move to Kanye as instructed by the British military authorities. Charles Bell held a meeting with Africans to discuss their departure for Kanye and the feeding of the Barolong (Bell, 1900:92). He got the information that they would not be relieved over a period of three months and decided to secure food only for the Barolong and the white people. Powell shut down the town grain store for refugees. He even closed employment at the defense work (Comaroff,1989:90). The feeding of the Africans was a complex question

(Baillie,1900:209). However, in February 1900 fever and other diseases were beginning to manifest themselves in the Stad. There were five cases of typhoid already reported in hospital, diphtheria, sore throat and bed eyes prevalent amongst children. In the Stad malnutrition diseases (and on occasion fatalities) were spreading among people (Comaroff, 1989:204). The people did not only die of starvation but also from different diseases associated with the lack of balanced diet. The diarist, Algie, officially estimated that by the end of the siege, about hundred blacks died of starvation and disease (Willan,1980:241).

3.4 The evacuation to Kanye

The food situation in the Stad compelled Baden-Powell to order the Barolong and other Africans to move to Kanye where cattle were sent by the British authority for Colonel Plumer to feed the refugees. Many Africans saw this instruction as a strategy to expose them to be exterminated by the Boers and they remained behind in protest. Some of the refugees left for Kanye and succeeded in getting there safely but others were killed by the Boers.

In February 1900 two Ratshidi runners brought news that two hundred Boers had left for Kanye to challenge Plumer and left the few of them in Mafikeng with the Rapulana (Bell, 1900:102). Powell nevertheless, decided to send parties of the Barolong women, children and men to Kanye with the knowledge that they could be attacked by the Boers who were heading for Kanye (Bell, 1900:102). Powell wanted the Africans out of the Stad because they competed with whites for limited food. Moreover, the refugees who were sent to Kanye earlier arrived there safely because the concentration of the Boers was still around Mafikeng until the time when the Boers realised that the British wanted to use Kanye as the refugee camp to safeguard children, woman and men who were war-weary and desperate for peace. The Ratshidi runners also brought the information that Plumer had lost and Zolmen (one of Plumer's soldiers) had been killed in the battle by the Boers at Ramatlabama. The route to Kanye was fraught with danger

posed by Boers and the stad was more secured than Kanye because the bulk of the Boers had gone there to challenge Plummer and the only problem was shortage of food.

A large number of Africans had left the Stad for Kanye and others were leaving daily because food was placed there. Baden-Powell perceived the Stad as unsafe. One party of women who left for Kanye were stripped of their clothes by the Boers and sent back to Mafikeng naked in an attempt to frustrate Baden-Powell and the British garrison. Another party of women and children who were on their way to Kanye met a strong force of the Boers who opened fire on them and killed two women, wounded two girls and several others. The thirteen women managed to reach Kanye safely and this encouraged others to move and ultimately “all” the Barolong women were gone to Kanye.

3.5 The consequences of Siege for the Ratshidi–Rapulana relations from 1899 to 1900

This section deals with the consequences of the siege for Ratshidi-Rapulana relations, which have not been discussed by other historians. Before the end of the siege the Rapulana were disarmed by the Boers for using the siege to settle old scores that originated from the Barolong War of 1884. The Rapulana were in disarray, not knowing what to do (Bell, 1900:97). The Rapulana lost their cattle which they had raided earlier from the Ratshidi through looting. The Rapulana also suffered because they were not rewarded by the Boers for their contribution. Consequently, they had to face the Ratshidi who waited for the siege to end in order to “punish” the Rapulana for helping the Boers.

On 15 May 1900 after the Boer column led by Eloff, the Boer Commander, was defeated near Lotlhakane and retreated into the ZAR, the siege came to an end. Then the Ratshidi realised that it was appropriate time to get the Rapulana to pay for their participation on the Boer side. On 19 May 1900 the Ratshidi went to

Lotlhakane to capture Motuba because he had collaborated with the Boers on behalf of the Rapulana in Lotlhakane. They planned to rescue Seane who was still being held hostage by the Rapulana (Bell, 1900:177). The Rapulana were accused of killing the Ratshidi people, assisting the Boers with intelligence information and occupying some of the British trenches during the siege. They took Abram Motuba, the headman of the Rapulana in Lotlhakane and fifteen leading men with all their livestock to Mafikeng. They were sent to prison by the British authorities to await trial in Cape Town where they were eventually charged for assisting the Boers and defying Montshiwa's authority (Bell, 1900:177). Motuba was, however released and died shortly afterwards. What was rather vexed was that the main culprits in the war the Boers were not punished and it was disheartening to visualise a humiliating system of injustice perpetuated by the British government against the helpless and desperate people who were fighting to protect their land.

The siege of Mafikeng reinforced the endlessness of ethnic parochialism among the Barolong. In Africa the colonial encroachment united Africans against the common enemies, however, in Mafikeng the existence of the colonial powers seemed to escalate the exciting animosities among the Barolong. South African war ended with a victory by the British over the Boers. The Ratshidi thought that they had an upper hand than the Rapulana because they had fought on the winning side, that of the British empire and therefore should shower their hegemony upon the Rapulana. The siege ended and the South African War in general was a turning point in the history of South Africa and the British withdrew from the affairs of the Barolong and left them without compensation or funds for the reconstruction of the Stad. The problem of the legitimate ownership of Lotlhakane remained unresolved as the British government was preoccupied with reconciliation with the Boers. The British parliament passed the South Africa Act in 1910 to establish the Union of South Africa, a new self-governing state. It was now clear that the Boers had lost their military battle in a campaign in which many black people including the Barolong had participated but they gained

political independence. The Ratshidi went through vicissitudes, vintages and vestiges to provide a fortress for British and fought on their behalf against the Boers but they suffered the consequences of their loyalty. The Africans had fought a lost cause without any reward for their efforts (Karis et al.,1972:8).

In conclusion, the siege of Mafikeng was a success for the British and the Barolong because they managed to safeguard Mafikeng from being taken by the Boers. The Stad and the Barolong were used effectively to achieve this victory. However, the Barolong remained with the damages to their houses, some of their people had been killed, women, children crippled and poverty was rampant. By the end of the siege it was officially estimated that 329 Africans had been killed or died as a result of shells and bullets (Packenhan,2001:136). On the other hand, the Rapulana also hoped to hold onto that land as their only hope of survival and would rather have died than succumb to Montshiwa. They had also suffered during the siege at the hands of the Boers. The end of the siege was not a relief as their side lost and they had to pay the price for having sided with the Boers. And indeed, the siege had widened the gap between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana, while the Boers and the British had withdrawn from the scene without assisting to quell the disorder between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana . The Ratshidi-Rapulana dispute lingered on and Montshiwa wanted the Rapulana to surrender Lotlhakane. The Ratshidi like the Rapulana had gained nothing from the siege and the status quo remained. The Rapulana remained in Lotlhakane and Montshiwa was not compensated for the efforts of the Barolong during the siege and he was determined to take Latlhakane by force. The next chapter deals with the educational empowerment through missionary education which led to the new protagonists in the dispute, the elites.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Missionary activities among the Barolong, 1822 - 1920

Introduction

This chapter seeks to trace the beginning of missionary activity among the Barolong, in particular the Ratshidi, the Rapulana and the Ratlou (Molema, 1956:5). It illuminates the unconsciousness of the colonization of the Barolong's conscience. It deals with the missionary impact on these groups in the area of western education, the gospel and the secular politics rooted in a capitalist market economy. Finally, it discusses in independent church movement among the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana.

The first missionary contact with the Barolong dated back to the *difaqane* in 1820s the Barolong moved between Khunwana and Phitshane to be far from Batlokwa of Mantatise who had attacked them in Khunwana. The Barolong's world was in the grip of forces led loose by the rise of Shaka. At the time many chiefs were desperate to have missionaries within their royal court because the forces of *difaqane* attempted to imperil their autonomy. The Missionaries entered this theater of war with technical skills capable of making decisive different – guns, plows, irrigation methods and means of distance communication (Commaroff and Commaroff, 1992: 161). Almost from the start they became mediators among the displaced populations of the interior (Commaroff et al., 1992:161). The missionaries did not focus on the good news only through ecclesiastical dogmas but engaged the Barolong in secular politics, which they perceived as part of their “civilising” mission (Commaroff at al., 1992:161). So then, what was the primary task of the missionaries? Was it to “civilise” the “barbaric” natives and transform them to become loyal colonial subjects or convert them to Christians for salvation. The Batswana in general appreciated the “practical” benefits of the missionaries but did not show any enthusiasm about their spiritual message because it was not practical and it lacked the

miracle that enshrines in the Bible. Moreover, the spiritual power of the African beliefs was based on the relations between ancestors and God and its spiritual power reigns supreme over the evangelists spiritual message. The missionaries emphasised practical reconstruction, seeking to lay the basis for conversion by transforming the person through mundane activities of every day life (Commaroff et al., Commaroff, 1992:161). From the Ratshidi's perspective Methodism was presented as a narrative – story of the “Good News” of coming of Christ. This helped them to weigh this new faith against their own religious practices. The two religious practices coexisted among the Barolong and there was a period where there was interplay of the two cultures and this reveals some acute dialectics. The missionaries had to use their technical skills to create a fan of associations to reinforce their gospel in order to subsume the Barolong's religious belief. It is preposterous for the Commaroffs to dismiss the Barolong cultural beliefs as religion and they seem to exhibit a converse that associate God only with the new comers. According to the oral Tradition the Barolong and other Africans believed in God and in ancestors and most of them were coerced to abandon their faith that kept them alive for millions of years before the arrival of the Europeans in Africa.

Robert Moffat, was one of the first missionaries from the London Missionary Society to meet the Barolong at Phitshane in about 1822. He found Sefunelo, Tawana and Gontse who ruled the Ratlou, Ratshidi and Seleka respectively. He also met the Barolong at Chaing, where he was welcomed. Moffat did not settle among the Barolong at that time because they were always on the run from the Bataung. Very little has been written about Moffat's activity among the Barolong.

In 1824 the pioneer missionary to the Barolong was Rev Samuel Broadbent. He was sent from Britain to South Africa for a vague destination in Bechuanaland (Molema, 1956:5). He left for Graff-Reinett and before he could meet the Barolong he was replaced by Rev Hodgson. Hodgson met the Seleka under Chief Sefunelo who were fleeing from the Botlokwa invaders of Mantatisi

(Molema, 1956:5). In the trail of refugees the missionary found the boy namely, Diratsagae, who had been left to die because people were fleeing for their lives. He became the first convert to Christianity, and in due cause became the first preacher and class leader (Molema, 1956:5).

Hodgson moved around with his wagon, teaching and preaching to the Barolong as opportunity arose. This evangelization campaign to convert the Barolong continued until Seleka settled below the Makwassie hills where they built houses and established the first mission station in the ZAR (Molema,1956:5). In 1824 the Wesleyan Missionary Society reviewed Hodgson's missionary activities and decided to deploy him to Cape Town. He was replaced by Rev James Archbell. But before Archbell could arrive, Bataung and Batlokwa attacked Makwassie and forced the Barolong to flee (Molema,1956:6). In 1826 Hodgson returned to Makwassie. Hodgson and Archbell took the Barolong to Platberg and commenced a school, conducted a regular services and set up printing press. In 1828 they were joined by Rev John Edward and Rev Thomas Jenkins.

At the end of 1832 Platberg was swelled by other sections of the Barolong namely, the Ratlou under Gontse and the Ratshidi under Tawana who were driven from Khunwana by the AmaNdebele regiments in 1833 (Kinsman,1980:6). The settlement of the Barolong at Platberg was not very happily situated from the point of view of water supply and grazing. The rainfall was also not abundant. It was known that large tracts of unoccupied land lay along the source of the Modder, Caledon and Riet Rivers towards Basutoland and missionaries decided to explore the possibility of a settlement there (Kinsman,1980:386). At the beginning of May 1833 an impressive expedition set out for this purpose. It consisted of 11 wagons and several armed horseman, Motlhare and Jacob Ngakantsi who were Chief Moroka's counselors, and some Griqua of Barend barends, Korannas of Jan Kaptein and Piet Baatjes from New Zealand, under the direction of Wesleyan missionaries, James Achbell and John Edwards (Molema,1966:22). After ten days of traveling, the expedition arrived to the land

which was suitable for settlement. Negotiations were completed with the Basotho King Moshoeshe about the place where the Barolong could settle. Moshoeshe gave the land known as Thaba-Nchu to the Seleka-Barolong led by the missionary party (Molema, 1951:36). Archbell, who had now become "Moroka's missionary", often visited Moroka and Tawana at their homes and tried to convert them to Christianity but with little success. The missionary began his evangelical work, first among chiefs and headmen. He befriended Tawana's sons, Montshiwa, Motshegare and Molema to whom he emphasised the need for salvation. Archbell urged the Barolong to offer the Boers cattle because their cattle had been taken over by Mzilikazi and they were practically without food. He encouraged the Barolong to extend the gesture of generosity to the stranded Boers (Molema, 1951:46). Chief Moroka who succeeded Sefunelo thus handed the cattle over to the Boers.

The missionaries did not only establish mission stations and change societies through Christian doctrine, western education and culture, but also played the role of mediation officers and advisors to the Barolong chiefs in the period of crisis and conflict and this role was outside the Christian paradigm. This peace keeping mission by the missionaries was a backdrop of bigger ideas, such as Christianity and capitalism. The missionaries used their status as Europeans to negotiate with other chiefs, the Boers and the British authorities in matters which affected the Barolong. Due to their status they were accommodated by the British and the Boers. The Barolong realized the respect offered to missionaries by the Boers and the British government and they realized that they should offer them the same respect which meant following their gospel.

The Ratshidi from Thaba-Nchu made their way to Lotlhakane and Montshiwa assumed his duties as chief of Ratshidi at the end of 1849. His people resided and settled down to normal life after being absent from their land for eighteen years because of their flight from AmaNdebele force. One of Montshiwa's first acts as chief was to send his brother Molema to Thaba-Nchu to request the

Wesleyans for a teacher. Molema had no difficulty in convincing Montshiwa to have missionary advisor at his court. Montshiwa had witnessed the diligence and generosity of Archbell and J. Cameron in rendering services to Chief Moroka and facilitating his relations with other groups (A979,ad6.1:3-8; Molema,1966:35). He had seen for himself how the French missionaries Arbousset, Eugene Casalis and other guided and piloted Moshoeshoe through the network of European diplomacy which threatened to entangle him. It was becoming a trend to African chiefs to have missionaries at their courts. The missionaries were significant particularly during the so-called Great Trek because the Boers introduced the system of treaties with the Africans and wanted to use this as a ploy to dispossess their land. In the period before 1822 Africans moved from one area to the next without rigid jurisdiction. Montshiwa was afraid he could be robbed of his forefathers' land by the Boers and therefore needed missionaries within his court to take precautionary measures.

The presence of missionaries defused hostilities within African communities. Montshiwa and his councilors had no experience in dealing with whites and they did not want to risk being subservient to them. Barolong-Basotho relation, for example, was cemented by missionaries in Thaba-Nchu when the Basotho gave up their land to the Seleka-Barolong. In addition, the missionaries managed to convince the Barolong to provide food to the Boers who were helpless after Mzilakazi had taken the cattle. When the Wesleyans in Thaba-Nchu gave Montshiwa the Rev Joseph D.M. Ludorf, he was welcomed in January 1850. In 1878 Ludorf acted as an emissary for all the Barolong against the Boers, particularly in the ongoing diamond dispute (Molema, 1966:66). He was the head of the delegation of the Barolong which met the Boers in connection with the Barolong land. He was there to ensure that the Barolong and other groups of the Botswana were not robbed by the Boers. Sir Henry Barkly, the Cape Governor and British High Commissioner, sent the copy of the Keate decision to Ludorf at Klipdriff, and he at once translated its text into Setswana and sent copies of the judgement to his clients, the chief of the Barolong, Batlhaping and Bangwaketse.

Ludorf urged these communities to unite to prevent any encroachment on their land by the Boers (Molema, 1966:66). This role that he played often united certain sections of the Batswana and resulted in good relations between them. But sometimes some sections who did not have missionaries at their *kgotla*, like the Rapulana, felt left out and misrepresented. The diamond fields won by the Barolong in 1817 were ultimately annexed by the British authority in 1885.

Ludorf died in Dithakong on 13 January 1872. The chiefs and Barolong and Batlhaping communities lamented his death. By his death Montshiwa was left without an adviser who could read, explain and answer letters coming frequently from officials of the South African Republic and the British government. Montshiwa requested Cameron from Thaba-Nchu to become the advisor but he was unable to do so because there were few missionaries in Thaba-Nchu. Montshiwa relied in the meantime on the service of another Wesleyan missionary, Jonathan Webb, who had just been appointed in 1873 to work among the Ratshidi at Mafikeng and Moshaneng. Montshiwa wanted missionary justification for everything, which was related to the Boers and the British government. He realised, after the work of Ludorf, that missionaries could represent the Barolong appropriately. He knew that Africans had been robbed of their land by the Boers and if it happened to his people, missionaries would appeal to the British authority for assistance.

4.1 Missionary progress at Thaba–Nchu, the Stad, Lotlhakane and Bodibe.

The missionaries established a mission station in Thaba–Nchu in 1833. They gathered children and the adults to attend school, bible classes and church services (Molema, 1956: 6.) The missionaries established an Archbell printing press and issued school books, scripture extracts, the catechism and hymnbooks (A979, Ad6.1,: 8). As a result of these missionary activities people acquired skills

of reading and writing (A979, Ad6.1: 8). Bible classes and day school were filled so rapidly that at the end of five years of settlement at Thaba-Nchu, there were more than two hundred Christians and a thousand people who could read fluently (A979, Ad6.1: 8). In 1838 a church with the capacity of thousand seats was established (A979, Ad6.1: 8).

Among the people who were converted was Silas Molema, Montshiwa's half brother and the son of chief Tawana. When Silas Molema converted to Christianity and became a local priest a crisis ensued because he was a member of the royal family who were ardent supporters of traditional beliefs. When Molema publicly accepted the doctrine of Christianity, it was regarded by the Barolong as a national catastrophe. This reaction was caused by the fact that the Barolong believed in their ancestors and Molema being one of the leading men in the royal family, his conversion threatened to cause division. This was the beginning of a revolution brought by education which enlightened a new generation of literate young men and women to break free from traditional beliefs and worship God rather than abide by the Barolong custom. Molema was the first prince, not only among the Barolong, but also among the Batswana, to take such a revolutionary step. Montshiwa and other members of the royal family were shocked and wanted to force Molema to reconsider his decision. Emergency council meetings were called and midnight committees met to warn him and tried to dissuade him. All these attempts failed (Molema, 1951:57).

Silas Molema took a new and inspired leadership role in education and his sons were the first members of the Barolong to attend missionary educational institutions and to attain the standard of secondary education (Molema, 1951:57). His sons returned to Mafikeng and opened the first day school among their people. His grandsons were the first to become ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and also to attend universities in America and Europe where they qualified in law and obtained degrees in arts and sciences (Molema, 1951:33). Molema was educated in Healdtown in Transkei and came back to Mafikeng to establish

a small school and a church in 1878. It was here where reading, writing, arithmetic and scripture were taught and many people including children attended, all were diligent to learn. The church and the school were involved in elementary education. Molema was the only teacher among the Barolong in the Stad and entrusted with task of converting and teaching them. He decided to seek assistance from the Xhosa- speaking teachers from Fingoland to come to Mafikeng to assist in teaching the Barolong. He even went to Ciskei to ask for more Xhosa teachers to come and provide education and preach the gospel for the Barolong (Molema,2004). There was a European Methodist missionary in Mafikeng town while Molema was an African missionary in the Stad (Molema, 2004). According to Commaroff (1994: 91), Molema became independent of the Wesleyan missionaries, and made it difficult for them to work among the Ratshidi because they, like other white missionaries, discriminated against African priests, a situation which in other parts of South Africa led to the development of Independent Churches. There were some members of the Barolong including, Goronyane, Leshomo, Mopedi, Mutla and Seatlholo who became fundamentalist Christians and were vanguards for the gospel of Christ (Commaroff, 1994:57). Silas Molema believed in education and had a firm conviction that the Barolong should adapt and change in response to new circumstances that developed in the later part of the nineteenth century (Willan, 1984:94). In these changing conditions, Molema's son namely Israel, Joshua and Silias, liaised with the outside world on behalf of the Ratshidi (Willan, 1984:94). Molema was preoccupied with the campaign to bring western education to the Barolong so that they could be on par with other ethnic groups elsewhere in South Africa who received missionary education. Molema had become convinced of the importance of extending education among his people (Willan, 1984:94).

During the twelve years of the Barolong migrations, Molema and his followers faithfully carried on with their preaching, class meeting and their worship, and attracted many Barolong. At Matlwang from 1840 to 1841, and at Lotlhakane from 1849 to 1852, their members had increased steadily. Now at Moshaneng

with more peaceful and settled state far from the Boers, these "people of the word", as they were called, formed themselves into an organised society whose way of life stood up in sharp contrast with tribal customs (Willan,1984:94). In 1856 Molema established a simple chapel and conducted a school, class meeting and church services and gradually a large number of people accepted the gospel message (Molema, 1956: 8). When Rev John Mackenzie of the London Missionary Society visited Moshaneng in 1860 and 1862, he found relations strained between those who upheld traditional beliefs in ancestors, led by the chief and Mokgwetsi, his uncle, on the one hand, and Christian groups led by Molema, Seane (his brother) and Buku (his daughter), on the other hand (Mackenzie,1871:103). Meckenzie (1971:228) writes: "In Montshiwa and Molema who were brothers, we have an instance of separation which the Gospel makes in heathen land, the one believing in paganism and the other in Christ". This was a great embarrassment to Chief Montshiwa, because members of his royal family undermined his decree by refusing to honour the cultural activities which were considered evil. Young people lost confidence in the old customs and focused on the word of God. A large number of people joined the Christians and rejected traditional beliefs and this disillusioned Montshiwa (Mackenzie,1971:229). Montshiwa was prepared to use his power to stamp out the gospel which Molema believed in and which divided his people and undermined his authority. The Christian groups became critical of traditional practices such as the belief in ancestors, polygamy and initiation school.

The early Barolong Christians endured persecutions and were blamed for all the calamities that befell the people, such as drought, famine and sickness (S.Afr.32/5/:101). In one incident Chief Montshiwa issued an instruction that one of the following Sabbath there should be no meeting of Christians in a little chapel (S.Afr.32/5/:101). However, the Christians assembled as usual and the chief entered the church carrying a sword and evicted everyone from inside (S.Afr.32/5/:101). All these activities against the Christians were advanced by

Chief Montshiwa to save the Barolong customs from being engulfed by the new doctrines.

Although Molema's mother Mosele Molekane (one of Tawana's wives) was a Rapulana, Molema's campaign to educate and Christianise the Barolong was only confined to the Ratshidi (Monye, 2004). He did not use Christianity and education to champion the unity of all sections of the Barolong. In fact the development of Christianity among the Ratshidi alienated them and widened the gap even further between the Ratlou, Rapulana and Ratshidi. The Ratshidi were more "advanced", educated than other sections of the Barolong because they had good relations with missionaries.

Montshiwa realised that more young people were converted to Christianity in spite of his battle to protect the traditional beliefs from being subdued (S.Afr.32/5/A:100). The chief thus began to advocate a compromise between Christianity and traditional beliefs. The chief's intention was not to alienate the Christians and missionaries because their work was crucial in guiding the Barolong and providing understanding of the complexity of his leadership. A compromise to Molema and his followers would mean that chiefs would become normal Christians, a position which Molema and his followers strongly denounced. Montshiwa wanted the Christians to observe the usual custom of their forefathers, such as the reed dance and then afterwards if they chose, accept the word of God (Molema, 1951:36). Molema and his followers were opposed to a system that obliged them to serve two masters. Consequently, there were accusations, defenses and criticisms, even in public (S.Afr.32/5/A:100).

Emil Holub (1975:296), an Austrian traveler who visited Moshaneng in 1873 made the same observation that on the advice of the traditional doctors the Ratshidi people were ordered to take part in the rain-making ceremonies but the followers of the new faith refused to attend so the chief forbade church gathering

and service, and dispersed any Christian people. The disagreements degenerated into open hostility and nearly divided the Ratshidi.

Montshiwa and members of the royal family did not embrace Christianity. They often attended a church service, and they had a warm relationship with the missionaries, but they thought Christianity contradicted traditional practices. They believed that Christianity was suitable for servants, children and commoners but not for adults. But even among servants and adults it was destined to lead to a polarised society (Holub, 1975:58).

According to Breutz (1956:78), the majority of the Ratshidi became Christianity because they came under missionary influence at an early date. A small percentage of the Christians were active church members because they understood Christianity and they acquired a certain level of literacy. The majority were normal Christians who had little knowledge of fundamental principles of Christianity, which was common during the early penetration of Christianity into African societies all over sub-Saharan Africa (Breutz, 1956:78). Another difficulty about Christianity was that it brought everybody to the same level in respect of rank, character and privilege. How could a king share a cup with his servants? (Murray, 1985:124) To the royalists, the fact that everybody was equal before the eyes of God was unacceptable; they would eventually be undermined by their own people because commoners and women Christians would see themselves not as ordinary but important figures (Murray, 1985:124). Moreover, it was difficult for the king to allow himself to be lectured to, from the pulpit, by his "slaves" (Murray, 1985:124).

Christianity advocated monogamy rather than polygamy because it was agreed that God created only Adam and Eve. It was difficult for the king, the husbands of all women of his people and the father of his people to be confined to one wife (Molema, 1951:38). But elsewhere among the Batswana, the chief of the Bakwena, Sechele, responded positively and divorced his wives, remained with

his principal wife, after he was baptised by David Livingstone in 1848. He then delegated all chiefly functions, which were considered incompatible with Christianity to his younger brother, Kgosidintsi. However, it was difficult for the Barolong chief to follow Sechele's example because, he would be obligated to relinquish his authority, thereby making himself merely the nominal ruler of his people (Molema,1951:59).

In January 1882 Silas Molema died of asthma. His enormous contribution to the well being of his people had been remarkable and his work would remain a legacy for future generations (Molema,1956:9). He had been a Christian leader for the Barolong for 46 years (Molema,1956:9). Some 400 boys and girls had gone to the school built by Molema in 1878 and went to larger schools such as Healdown, Lovedale, Tigerkloof, Kilnerton, Lessey and so on (Molema,1956). After Molema's death, there was a change in Montshiwa's attitude towards Christians because he felt sorry that they had lost the first African priest. In addition, Montshiwa felt guilty for his antagonism towards Molema and his followers and he wanted to assure them that he would not resist their religion again. Montshiwa befriended the preachers of the gospel after Molema's death. He announced a charter of religious liberty and ordered the Barolong Christian leaders to say prayers at the royal *Kgotla*, especially before people were due to dwell on any particular issue. Montshiwa had succumbed to Christianity and western education and this symbolised the fact that modernity was beginning to win over traditionalism. Montshiwa even nominated Setlhakonyane Maselwanyana from Thaba-Nchu, to send him a missionary. He also gave Wesleyan Missionary Society five acres of land for a mission station (A979,ad6.1:10-15). He sent all his sons, nephews and nieces to a local day school opened by one of Molema's sons (A979,ad6.1:10-15). Undeniably, Montshiwa did not break away from his forefather's customs despite his admiration for missionaries and Christians, but Christian values did influence his reign because he changed some rigid traditional laws that were previously compulsory. In 1878, for example, he abolished the right of compulsion exercised

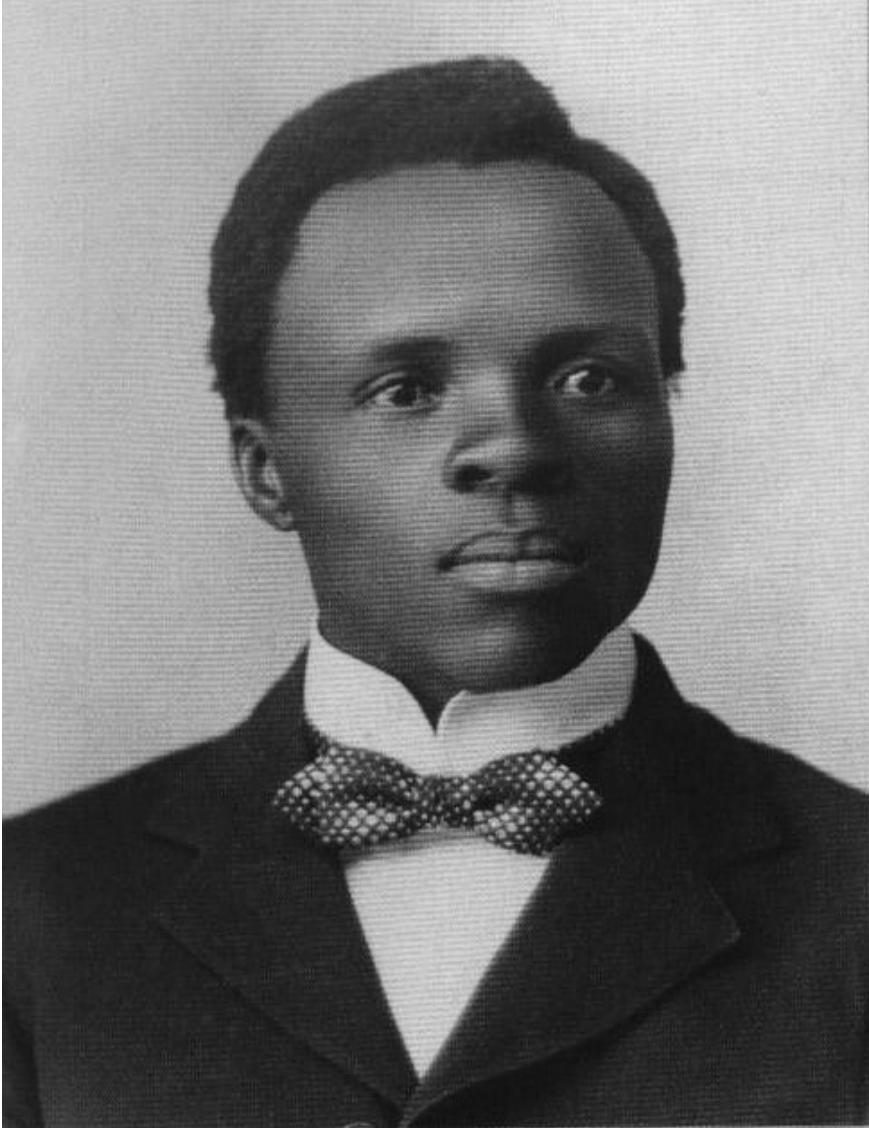
by parents over marriages of their children. In 1887 he prohibited the compulsory initiation of anyone who objected to the traditional ceremonies, to whose parents objected to the practice. He repudiated the compulsory confiscation of livestock or other property by authorities. Finally, he declared that any member of his people might worship according to his own religious beliefs, and no restrictions should be imposed upon the holding of church services by any religious body (Breutz,1956:210).

Montshiwa accepted Major Warren's offer to build a chapel for the Ratshidi in Mafikeng in 1885 (Mafikeng Museum,1986:5). This chapel was erected to replace the one build by Molema which was wrecked during the war of 1881-1884 against the Goshenites (Molema,1956:9). Three Barolong regiments made bricks and supplied unskilled labour while the Royal Engineers did the masonry and skilled work. The church was opened on 5 December 1885 (Mafikeng Meseum,1986:5). Montshiwa had cemented his relations with the missionaries and before he died, he requested Christians to give him a religious blessing (Breutz, 1956:210). Chief Montshiwa died in 1896 at a ripe old age and his death marked a turning point in the history of the Barolong, as many people subsequently became Christians. However, there were others who still continued to believe in ancestors, rainmaking ceremonies and other traditional practices. These cultural practices such as polygamy remained in the mainstream of the uneducated communities. Chief Montshiwa was succeeded by Wessel Montshiwa, who was then followed by Letlamoreng and both of them effected the changes he had introduced (NASA,Vol.12,1896;Breutz 1956:210). Many of the practices came into use in the early twentieth century and moved the Barolong further away from traditional practices towards western culture. The education and Christianity of the Barolong was reinforced by the arrival of Solomon Plaatje in Mafikeng. Before him the Barolong relied on a man called Stephen Lefenya, who was a secretary responsible for keeping tribal records. Plaatje's position as a secretary became necessary because of the complex legal system which faced the Barolong in the 1980's due to the establishment of British Bechuanaland and

attempts by the British to subject Montshiwa under the authority of the Cape Colony (Breutz1956:99).

Solomon Plaatje became the editor of *Kuranta ea Becoana*, written in Setswana and produced weekly. He wanted the Barolong to read and through his paper he introduced his readers to the outside world. It was a mechanism through which Sol Plaatje could communicate and thus influence the life of the Barolong to be more in line with western civilization (Breutz,1956:111). In one of the issues of the *Kuranta*, he criticised initiation ceremonies and urged that the Barolong should be "civilised" if they wanted to be treated as equals by the whites.

Plaatje lambasted the LMS when they revisited the translation of the Setswana Bible because they refused to work with him (Breutz,1956:111).



Solomom Thekisho Plaatje, the first Secretary - general of the ANC in 1912 and the adviser to Chief Montshiwa of the Ratshidi Barolong

Plaatje objected to the LMS but they argued that he was an Ethiopianist and his newspaper had the capacity to provoke Ethiopianism. Plaatje had criticised the LMS's education system in the *Kuranta* and this was the reason why the LMS was reluctant to work with him (Breutz, 1956:111).

The Rapulana and the Ratlou had their own different experiences with missionaries. With regards to the Rapulana, very little has been preserved about the missionary activities among their people because the Boers did not allow the missionaries to operate freely in the ZAR. Oral sources collected at Bodibe have confirmed this. A Hermansburg missionary, Hensel Janson, with mission field in the western ZAR, accompanied the Rapulana when they returned from Thaba-Nchu and from Platbeg (Klerksdorp district) to Bodibe (Polfontein) and Lotlhakane in 1872. Hensel established a mission station in Bodibe, (Breutz,1956:81) and this missionary taught the Rapulana to read and write giving them instruction in Setswana and German (Mothibi,2005; Matlaba, 2005). When they came to Bodibe and Lotlhakane, the Rapulana were also followed by the Wesleyan missionaries. The Rapulana aligned themselves to the Boers who distrusted the missionaries. Moreover, Matlaba did not use the missionaries to advise him because the Boers helped him instead. They wanted to dissuade the missionaries from their work among the Barolong and to propagate a pro-Boer campaign instead.

The Rev Hofmeyer, a priest, from the Cape Colony and missionary in the Zoutpansberg worked in the north ZAR for twenty years in the early days of white settlement. He wrote that the Boer at his time of arrival were distinctly hostile towards the missionaries. His predecessor had been visited by the Boer farmers armed with sjamboks who threatened him with physical violence because he was preaching to black people and himself had been practically boycotted on account of his vocation (Agar-Hamilton,1926:122). He had often been compelled to *outspan* in the market square of Schoemansdal in the village of Zoutpansburg, eating and sleeping alone in his wagons because no Boer would welcome him in their home (Agar-Hamilton,1926:118). This happened because the Boers did not trust the missionaries; they thought that their preaching challenged their practices such as the indenture labour system and expropriation of African land which in most cases was occupied without the permission of the Africans. The Boers saw missionaries as people who brought enlightenment and awareness to the

Africans and were afraid that after this influence Africans would begin to resist suppressive Boer tactics.

The Boer farmers obviously had no particular love for missionaries, but were prepared to make the best of their interaction with the missionary and try to use them to indoctrinate Africans to respect the Boer authority. The Boers accused missionaries of inciting the Africans to armed resistance, and of “unsettling” their political allegiance to Boers. The Boer farms noticed that the black people like the Ratshidi who had contact with missionaries were often supplied with arms and ammunition (Agar-Hamilton,1926:121). They also suspected the missionaries of participating in the trading of arms and ammunition. David Livingstone was told by the Boers that they could tolerate missionaries provided that they taught the Africans that the Boers were a superior race (Agar-Hamilton,1926:122). Under those circumstances, it was difficult for the Rapulana who were under the Boer control to become exposed to Christianity because the ZAR government hated missionaries and few mission stations were established in the ZAR during the nineteenth century (Matlaba,2004).

The Rapulana did not have a missionary at the *Kgotla* to advice Chief Matlaba because he was already preoccupied with instructions from the Boers who wanted him to assist them against the Ratshidi. The missionaries who preached to the Rapulana did it on their own because the Boers were skeptical about these activities and regarded the missionaries as agents of the British empire. These may as well have been the reasons why missionary activities failed to develop elites among the Rapulana in the late nineteenth century.

4.2 Capitalist and colonialist agents masquerading as missionaries

Missionaries, as colonial agents camouflaged as disciples of the gospel of God, were ruthless than the physical occupation of the country by colonial powers. These eclipsed forces of colonialism were haboured, taken care of and loved by

the local people who were unconscious about the colonization of their conscience. When these missionaries came into contact with the Africans they employed strategies to transform them into colonial subjects and through the establishment of “a mundane theater” of the industrial world of Britain. They advanced this politico-demagogic approach to establish class-consciousness among the Barolong. Their politico-economic trajectory was eclipsed within the Gospel of Jesus for the savage heathen natives and civilisation for the “barbaric”, “animist”, “nativist” and “atavist” Africans in preparation for their eventual subordination in a class conscious society of the industrial world.

Methodism was itself a product of industrial revolution in Britain, having been directed, in particular, to the emerging working class of the northern river valleys (Commaroff et al., 1992:161). Drawing from the metaphors from the factor and foundry, it spoke of individual salvation through arduous self-reconstruction (Commaroff et al., 1992:161). The Missionaries wanted to prepare the Barolong for exploitation in the industries – something that would keep them poor and hungry to make them to become ‘slaves’ of the industrial world. The capitalists on the other hand would be richer and richer in their brutal competition with one another. Obviously within these classes that the missionaries had created the superstructure was such that the colonial system impoverished the Barolong and they did not possess equal financial muscles to compete in the capitalist world. And they would eventually be coerced into the working class to work in despicable conditions far from their homes. The mission stations served as caricature of the industrial world where the Barolong were converted into Christians, civilized people and working class under the imposture of Christianity. Here they demonstrated the utility of the plow and the pump, preached the virtues of the sober discipline. The missionaries installed the clock and bell to mark out routines and ensure that time was well spend. Here too, as the other side of their spiritual coin, they were taught the value of the “varied treasures of commerce” and the supreme enabling power of money (Commaroff et al., 1992:161). The evangelists would foster the production and the sale of

agricultural surplus. They also cultivated a desire for “civilised” goods. For they instilled in Barolong “wants” that could only be satisfied through entry into the colonial economy, and made them thoroughly familiar with the signs and values of the industrial work-place. These development is similar to the renaissance and enlightenment where the European society went through a series of revolutions which brought a new modern religiosity that embraced secular interests such as science and capitalism. This development ended the period of the dark Ages. Therefore, the Barolong were being transformed unconsciously into a modern society dominated by the cash economy and Christianity was used as vehicle. Consequently when the “mineral revolution”, took place in South Africa the Barolong and many southern Tswana men (especially the Batlhaping) were prepared for employment and spontaneously sought employment in the diamond-fields.

The economic life of the Barolong depended on the sexual division of labour and men assumed managerial positions in the control of production. Africans were mostly raised in the commune or clans as a system of solidarity to help one another. Every man was responsible to work and manage the production of his household. In terms of the division of labour women cultivated crops in the broiling sun with their babies strapped at their backs. They produced for the homestead and they did not have control over production. Men managed production and livestock and were engaged also in political debate at the *kgotla*, rainmaking ceremonies, ancestral veneration, age regiment *Mophato* initiation. The women were prevented from these activities, as it was declared to be a taboo for a woman to do so. Men fulfilled their manhood by working for themselves and their families but the industrial world tended to kill this manhood. It reduced a man to a status of a woman within society whose production was controlled by another man and Brown assets that:

When a man's relatives notice that his whole nature is changed,
that the light of the mind is darkened and character has deteriorated

so that it may be said that the real manhood is dead, though the body still lives; when they realize that to all intents and purposes the human is alienated from fellowship with his kith and kin, they apply to him a name (*Sebibi* or *sehihi*), which signifies that though the body lives and moves it is only a grave, a place where something has died or been killed. The essential manhood is death. It is not uncommon thing to hear a person spoken of as being dead when he stands before you visibly alive. When this takes place it always means that there has been an overshadowing of the true relationships of life (Brown, 1926: 137-138).

The introduction of cash economy ate the cattle that used to keep the Barolong fat and promoted the use of money which burns those who tried to hold onto it “it runs through your pockets, living you hungry” but “cattle always return to make you fat” (Commaroff et al., 1992:168). The Barolong men saw themselves as women, children “donkeys” or even “tinned fish” because they had been transformed by the missionaries to be the sources of wealth for the white capitalists instead of their families (Commaroff et al., 1992:168).

4.3 Ethiopian Churches among the Barolong

The historiography on Ethiopianism and Independent Churches by historians such as Karis and Cartar, Roux, Parson, Commaroff and Odendaal has revealed the weaknesses of white missionary societies which discriminated against the Africans (Karis et al., 1972:7; Odendaal, 1984:23; Parsons, 1984:211, Roux, 1948:79). The anthropologists Jean and John Commaroff have examined the development of Ethiopianism among the southern Sotho but concentrated only on its development among the Batlhaping. Another historian, Roux (1948:79) centred Ethiopianism around the Xhosa (Thembu). However, Parsons (1984:211) claims that the first church to break away from the European mission was in Basotholand in 1887. These historians did not record the development of

Ethiopianism among the Barolong. The Barolong, like the Sotho and Xhosa, form part of South African society and their history also deserves to be recorded. The work of Campbell deals with the development of Independent Churches namely the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) among the Ratlou. It shows how it replaced the LMS and supported the chief against the ZAR government. Campbell's work has benefited this study more than others on Ethiopianism among the Ratlou (Campbell, 1990:40). He describes how the AME was formed in America in 1787 and became known all over the world because it recognized Africa as the land of origin of the African people. However, his research does not outline the religious principles of the AME which were in conflict with the traditional beliefs of the AME among the Ratlou in the Setlagole Reserve. According to Z.C Mashilela, the AME priest in the Mafikeng district, the AME and the Ethiopianism became one church in 1896 because they had common principles, namely that they were led by Africans and were against racial discrimination (Mashilela, 2003).

Ethiopianism was a religious practice in which African people broke away from European-led churches and formed their own Independent Churches that enhanced the culture and the interest of the African people. According to Odendaal (1984:23), Ethiopianism was a philosophy of religious independence which manifested itself in the rise of African separatist churches that broke away from the paternalistic control of white missionaries. Thus it was a form of response by Africans towards the growing white domination in South Africa (Odendaal, 1984:23). Among White and African Christians, friction arose early concerning the role that Africans were to play in the administration of various denominations. In 1884, Nehemiah Tile, an African clergyman broke away from the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Frustrated by the paternalism of the White ministry, a break-away group led by Mongena Mokorane formed the Ethiopian Church in Pretoria in November 1892. Later, he joined the AME Church, which was formed by the black people from America and was free from White influence (Karis and Carter, 1972:7).

The AME church was first started in Khunwana in 1897 at the invitation of Moshete, chief of the Ratlou. When the first AME emissaries arrived, Moshete was pleased to welcome them, especially when they informed him that the minister would be permanently stationed in the village (Karis and Carter,1972:). It appeared that the LMS had stopped serving the local people and the resident preacher was not empowered to dispense the sacraments (Campbell,1990:40). The LMS did not establish a mission station in Khunwana and only sent a minister to assist the community with solemnising marriages after a long period of time. In addition, the LMS refused to ordain a local preacher Gabashane because he did not speak Latin (Campbell,1990:40). In 1905 Khunwana residents seeking a Christian baptism, marriage or funeral rites thus had to walk over a hundred miles of sandy, rutted roads to the LMS station at Khanye. In contrast, the AME in Khunwana became a broad-based religious movement, which assisted a Black religious majority and recognised their right to control the education of their children and their claim to the land. The AME established a church and school, and the first convert of the AME was Moshete himself.

The Ethiopians regarded the missionaries as agent of colonialism because they attempted to destroy the traditional belief in ancestors, rain making ceremonies and so on. J.S.Moffat(the son of Robert Moffat) conceded that missionaries enjoyed little success where political institutions were in their “aboriginal vigour” (Murray,1985:124). According to Colin Murray (1985:124) most Sotho-Tswana who were Christians converts continued to believe in the importance of their obligation to the dead. The advent of the AME which was flexible and accepted the African cultures, became the spiritual home of many Africans who still obliged to follow traditional beliefs. The nominal Christians usually found a home in Ethiopian churches or the AME. The AME tolerated local customs such as initiation and bride wealth (Murray,1985:29). The collaboration of the missionaries with the colonial authorities was not approved by the Ethiopian churches. This was the reason why they supported Chief Moshete against the

Boers. The AME was led by Black people who were against colonialism and discrimination. On the other hand, the White people were against the AME because they maintained that it preached hatred against them. The AME did not only tolerate customs of the Barolong but also provided them with a strategic political direction by asserting African independence and a rallying cry of Africa for the Africans. According to Jean Commaroff Africans proved unable to resist the military power of the Whites. Therefore they developed an alternative form of resistance by rejecting White religious institutions. Many Africans opposed Christianity on the ground that it implied rejection of their own culture, while others gradually accepted the teaching of missionaries (NASA, Vol.12,1913). The AME enlightened its members about racism within the LMS. Moshete, supported by the AME, encouraged the Barolong to resist White domination. The AME supported Moshete when he objected to the deployment of Zulu policemen in Khunwana, claiming that they ill-treated the Ratlou and arrested people without informing the chief (NASA, Vol.12,1913). Moshete demanded instead that he be given Batswana police who would be obligated to respect him. Moshete saw Ethiopianism as a weapon to resist encroachment on his authority from both internal rivals and the colonial state (NASA, Vol.12,1913). The number of Moshete's old enemies, namely Montshiwa and the British had increased, with the Boers turning against the Ratlou. Moshete's father had good relations with the Boers and he had given a section of the Ratlou's land to them. Moshete was determined to get the land of his people back and had the AME on his side. Another problem experienced by Moshete with the ZAR government was that it did not want people to eat the meat of diseased cattle (NASA, Vol.12,1913). The custom of the eating the meat of diseased cattle was unacceptable and therefore it was very painful to bury them because it was a great loss of meat. Moshete was worried by the fact that many cattle of the Ratlou had died of drought because the fence which divided Khunwana and the Setlagole Reserve excluded his people from the source of water in the Molopo reserve and Moshete's complaints were not heeded by the Secretary of Native Affairs, Barrett (NASA, vol.12,1914). There was disagreement about what had caused the stock

to die but, according to the government, they were killed by anthrax. In compliance with the Stock Disease Act, this meant the government had to prevent the Africans from eating such meat. Moshete wanted permission to visit Pretoria to complain about the boundary issue because Chief Lekoko Montshiwa of the Ratshidi refused to allow Moshete's cattle to drink water in Setlagole Reserve which was under the Mafikeng district (NASA, Vol.12, 1914). This further amplified the struggle between traditionalism and modernism. The Ethiopian churches, including the AME, were flexible and tolerated such traditional practices and were therefore supported by the chief.

Moshete wanted a school to be built in the village because the LMS had left for Kanye and did not help the Ratlou with elementary education. He also requested the government to provide state-aided school in Khunwana, maintaining that the Ratlou children needed to be taught how to read and write and that the community could not provide the education themselves (NASA, Vol.12, File No.1237, 1913). The AME, therefore, came as a relief to the Ratlou because it provided elementary education, something, which Moshete had long been requesting.

Leaders of the mainstream churches were very critical of Ethiopian churches. Robert Moffat complained about Marcus Gabashane of the AME church for "illegally" solemnizing marriages in Khunwana. Gabashane preached against Whites (Campbell, 1990:41). The mainstream churches also complained about Gabashane and his son Abel who were active in British Bechuanaland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Abel preached a millennial version of the AME gospel, in which a Black king, descended from Solomon and Sheba would drive the Whites from Africa and restore the land to its rightful owners (Campbell, 1990:41). In 1906, a missionary of the church of England complained that Moshete refused to allow him to build a church or school in the Khunwana location. By 1910, the Native Commissioner at Lichtenburg was warning his superiors of the rapid spread of Ethiopianism in the area and estimating that fifty

percent of the Africans in the district had already joined the AME. The “root of this evil”, he maintained, was “Khunwana location where this doctrine reigns supreme” (Campbell,1990:41).

The ZAR government developed a negative attitude toward Moshete because he wanted the land which his father had given to the Boers in 1880s returned to the Ratlou and the Boers did not respond positively to his request. Moshete wanted to extend his jurisdiction over his own people, the Ratlou who were in Kraaipan, Madibogo and Setlagole under Montshiwa, (NASA,Vol.12,1913) but the Boer authority refused because they were afraid that Khunwana would spread Ethiopianism to the whole of Bechuanaland. There were two leaders of the AME church who were responsible for spreading its gospel in the Bechuanaland region. One of them was Seole who left Khunwana and toured through Landberg in British Bechuanaland to preach the new gospel. The other was Rev Marcus Gabashane who went north of Mafikeng and to the chief of Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1898 (Mashilela, 2003).

During the South African War Ethiopian churches flourished among the more settled chiefs and congregations. In 1900 some of the people of Ganyesa joined the AME, and took away its competent LSM evangelist and posted him to the Tadi district of the protectorate. In 1901 the majority of Morokweng community which rested on the western region of Molopo River became Ethiopianists (Mashilela, 2003).

The AME also worked among the Ratlou in the Setlagole Reserve where they were welcomed by Chief Phoi. AME priests performed burials and wedding ceremonies but they also tolerated traditional practices and were welcomed by the people of Madibogo, Mareetsane, Kraaipan, and Setlagole (Modukanelo,2004). The AME built a school called Motsitlane AME primary school in 1923 in Madibogo and P.R Nthoba was the priest and teacher at the school (Modukanelo, 2004). Khunwana and Madibogo were united by the fact

that they were served by the same church because the politics of chiefly paramountcy and demarcation of Molopo Reserve and the ZAR had divided them.

It was not only the Ratlou who experienced Ethiopianism but also the Rapulana. There is little information available on this aspect simply because, as already discussed, missionary work in the ZAR was hardly tolerated by the Boer authorities. One of the members of the Rapulana, Sehemo, the former secretary of Chief Matlaba, became the superintendent of the Africa Catholic Church in various districts. This church broke away from the Roman Catholic Church because of the same problem of discrimination by white priests and bishops. This is further evidence that some development of Ethiopianism was taking place in Lotlhakane and Bodibe (Modukanelo,2004).

The Ethiopian churches clearly had the power to unite the Barolong to resist the Boers. For example, in the case of the Rapulana, Sehemo used his African Catholic Church congregation which comprised the Barolong and other Batswana groups to form the Barolong National Council (NASA, Vol.108,1915) to unite all chiefs and assist the Barolong to fight for the common cause, that is, recognition by the government and accumulation of land. While Ethiopianism had the power to unite the Ratlou and the Rapulana, at the same time it tended to widen the gap between the Ratshidi, Rapulana and Ratlou.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 The intra-Barolong conflict in Lotlhakane and its aftermath

This chapter tackles the circumstances that led to the resurgence of Ratshidi-Rapulana dispute in the early twentieth century. It analyses the spasmodic intra-Barolong squabbles in Lotlhakane and its impact on the unity of the Barolong. It also explores idiosyncratic activities of Montshiwa's rule in Lotlhakane against those who opposed him. It highlights the panicle of conflict which culminated into legal actions in court by the Rapulana against the Ratshidi in their attempts to reclaim authority over Lotlhakane. It assesses the extent to which court decisions and litigation paralysed the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana economically and caused dissent within their ranks. In retrospect, the chapter elucidates the extent to which the British and Afrikaners succeeded in dichotomizing the Barolong nation into permanent by-polar segments. Finally this chapter reveals the government policy of land clearance imposed upon the Barolong.

5.1 What was the nature of the renewed conflict of the Barolong in Lotlhakane?

The Rapulana-Ratshidi dispute was the continuation of the rivalry and skirmishes, which resulted in the Barolong War of 1884 between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana. Most of the interaction between the Rapulana and the Ratshidi took place in Lotlhakane after South African War and Montshiwa intervened in Lotlhakane to ensure that his authority was respected. He also wanted to nominate a Ratshidi headman to lead Lotlhakane because he realised that the Rapulana stability was compromised by the fact that their leader, Motuba, wanted them to acknowledge Matlaba who was in the ZAR as their paramount chief. Therefore, the struggle at Lotlhakane was part and parcel of the intra-Barolong wars for paramountcy over all the Barolong since there was no paramount chief. As has been clearly stated in Chapter two, the Barolong Wars

were a product of the Anglo-Boer colonial conflict over the Batswana land and cattle.

This renewed conflict in the early twentieth century was caused by the advent of the British government in Bechuanaland in 1884, an issue which has already been noted in Chapter Two. The British deposed legitimate chiefs who did not want to follow the British policy. During the siege of Mafikeng in 1899, for example, Wessel Montshiwa the Ratshidi chief was deposed and replaced by Lekoko. The British government reinforced the existing ethnic polarisation among the Barolong and alienated the prospective paramount chief, Moshete, because he had already been won over by the Boers. The British also left Molopo Reserve immediately after the siege without solving the Barolong dispute to which they had contributed. As victors, they were in a better position than the Boers to settle the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict but they chose instead to withdraw.

Chief Lekoko, his successor John Montshiwa and the British authority did not learn from history that the Rapulana were not prepared to be subordinated to the Ratshidi because they had their own chief. In 1885 the Molopo Reserve was given to Montshiwa by the British administration in the knowledge that the area belonged to the Ratshidi, Rapulana and the Ratlou. In view of the fact that the Ratshidi and the Rapulana were locked in a continuous struggle, the British might have allocated Lotlhakane to the ZAR under the leadership of Chief Matlaba and Phitshane under Moshete in order to defuse the conflict. But they did not. The British government instead handed over to Montshiwa the Mafikeng district which included Lotlhakane and Phitshane, areas which were outside his jurisdiction. This was one of the events that laid credence to the view that the British authorities promoted conflict in Mafikeng District by undermining independent ethnic entities who were loyal to their respective chiefs. The British authorities undermined the traditional way of life of the Barolong by attempting to subject them under Montshiwa authority, rather than under their respective chiefs namely Matlaba and Moshete. This demarcation was a great source of friction and was in

sharp contrast to the ideals of the British peace mission in Bechuanaland. Montshiwa accepted jurisdiction over the Molopo Reserve knowing fully well that the Rapulana would resist his authority as they had done in 1884. This was a clear indication that Montshiwa wanted to extend his authority over other sections of the Barolong and was prepared to use force to prevent any secession from the Molopo Reserve.

Motuba, who was arrested by the British authorities with the help of the Ratshidi for assisting the Boers during the siege of Mafikeng, stood trial in Cape Town. He was freed after one year and six months prison sentence, and sent back to Lotlhakane (Reitfontein) (NASA Vol.12,1913). In addition, the Ratshidi, supported by the British, also arrested Israel Matlaba for the same offence and he appeared in Kimberly High Court where he was found guilty of assisting the Boers during the siege. He was imprisoned for a period longer than that of Abram Motuba. During Matlaba's absence, the Ratshidi occupied Bodibe, which was outside the Molopo Reserve and took possession of the cattle belonging to the Rapulana. This happened because Montshiwa claimed the whole region of Bechuanaland and yet his chiefly jurisdiction was only over the Molopo Reserve (Molema,1966:61). Clearly, therefore, the Ratshidi chief wanted to establish his authority over the Rapulana. The question is, what motivated Montshiwa to occupy Bodibe which was beyond the line recommended by the British authorities? On his return from prison Abram Motuba found that the Ratshidi Chief Lekoko Montshiwa had replaced him with his brother Paul Montshiwa as the headman of the Rapulana. This was done to impose Lekoko's rule over the Rapulana because they were regarded as the junior branch of the Barolong (Molema,1951:43). Paul Montshiwa exercised all rights and authority as a headman, including the right to allocate land and to handle legal wrangles within Lotlhakane. His rule was perceived by the Rapulana as harsh and oppressive (NASA,Vol.12,1917). Over the years chief Matlaba of the Rapulana had used a strategy of collaboration with the enemies of the Barolong to escape attacks. He had initially made an alliance with Moletsane against his brother, and then when

Mzilikazi (Molema,1951:43) came on the scene he willingly became his vassal, and later he collaborated with the Boers. This strategy had always been resented by the Barolong and this hatred continued even today (Molema:2003). In the early twentieth century, this could have motivated Montshiwa to extend his hegemony over the Rapulana in an effort to prevent them from being traitors to the Barolong yet again. Chief Lekoko died in 1915 and was replaced by John Montshiwa whom the government officials' accused of exercising a highhanded policy against the Rapulana and yet they had believed earlier that the new chief would not emulate his predecessor (NASA, Vol.12,1917). The Rapulana Chief Matlaba had every right to rule Lotlhakane because it was him who had taken his brothers Mothibi and Mothuba to settle there and decided with the larger following, to settle in Bodibe in 1874 (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Matlaba did not know that Montshiwa would recommend the extension of the British sphere of influence over Lotlhakane without consulting the Rapulana chief. These were the dynamics of power relations within the Barolong and the British authority were amplified over the Boers and this had negative political repercussions for the Ratshidi-Rapulana relations.

Brave attempts to regain control of Lotlhakane by Motuba in 1913 caused a deep-rooted pandemonium in the area. Motuba demanded that Paul Montshiwa vacate his position as headman. But Paul refused utterly to do so because John Montshiwa, the acting chief of Mafikeng district, supported him vigorously. He asked W.H. Hall the sub-Native commissioner in the district to resolve the issue. But Hall was transferred to another the district and handed case over to H.J. Frost, the Superintendent of the Native Affairs in Mafikeng (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Before Frost could arbitrate the matter, Abram Motuba, who had been ill for years, died, and was succeeded by his son George Motuba as the chief of the Rapulana (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

In 1917 Chief Matlaba and George Motuba met Frost in Mafikeng. They explained Abram Motuba situation and asserted that the headman died before

the decision could be taken. They emphasised the fact that the chieftainship of the Rapulana at Lotlhakane had for the past generations been in the hands of the Motuba family (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Matlaba requested the Native Affairs Department, through H.J. Frost, to investigate the matter and demanded that George Motuba's land be returned to him and that his unquestioned right to rule over his late father's people be granted (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

However, Matlaba and George Motuba were disenchanted when the decision confirmed Paul Montshiwa as the chief of Lotlhakane and Frost communicated the decision to Motuba. The reason for refusing to give Motuba the position of a headman stemmed from the fact that there were allegedly certain papers in the magistrate's office about George Motuba, the details of which were not disclosed even to him, and which influenced the government to rule against him. Motuba was chagrined by the decision and moreover was not even given the opportunity to reply to those allegations contained in those papers. In an effort to pursue the matter in order to redeem himself, he went to the superintendent's office in order to be allowed to peruse and scrutinize the documents. He was however, turned down by the superintendent and did not have access to those documents (NASA, Vol.12,1917). This refusal to give Motuba access to documents was highly questionable, suspicious and unfair. It is possible that the authorities wanted to keep Motuba out of the picture so as to impose the Ratshidi's supremacy over Lotlhakane. Moreover George had never been a headman; his father Abram was the leader, and it was ludicrous for any one to suggest that he could be in the bad books of the government even before he had taken over. The government's legitimacy to appoint headman at Lotlhakane was also questionable and this was done to vindicate the British imperialism in the Northern Cape. The British authorities deliberately complicated the issue of chieftainship in Lotlhakane by attempting to impose Montshiwa's hegemony over the Rapulana.

George Motuba called upon Matlaba, the paramount chief of the Rapulana, to resolve this matter of "the papers". Matlaba invited Moshete, the chief of the

Ratlou, who was also recognised by Matlaba as the “paramount chief” of all the Barolong, to mobilise other chiefs who were ardent enemies of the Ratshidi and who would assist in any matter against the Ratshidi (NASA, Vol.12,1917). The three chiefs, namely, Matlaba, Moshete and Motuba agreed that the presence of Paul Montshiwa and his right to rule over the Rapulana would cause friction because he would not be accepted by the Rapulana. Furthermore, Matlaba was the superior chief over Motuba and it would be difficult for him to maintain order in the presence of Paul Montshiwa. It was agreed that George Motuba be reinstated with all chiefly authority as his ancestral right and that Paul be removed from Lotlhakane. Those who had been forbidden to plough their land could now do so. In making his representation, Chief Matlaba was fully supported by Chief Moshete, who was the “paramount chief” of all the Barolong (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

On 2 February 1917, Barrett, the Secretary for Native Affairs, called upon the Rapulana to present their case to him after Frost’s failure. The Rapulana complained bitterly about the “oppressive rule” of their headman Paul Montshiwa (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Despite tireless and relentless efforts by the Rapulana, Barrett gave the Rapulana’s land in Lotlhakane to the Ratshidi. The Ratshidi did not waste time and began their settlement at Lotlhakane. In spite of the decision by Barrett, the Rapulana’s struggle continued nevertheless. They were plunged by Barrett’s decision into an era of defiance. The Rapulana insisted that the land was undoubtedly theirs both by inheritance and by conquest (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Barrett finally accepted the Rapulana’s testimony and course and handed over the land to the Rapulana. Barrett invited the Rapulana to nominate a headman and they appointed Motuba to occupy the position (NASA, Vol.12,1917). The authorities backed down on the Rapulana’s demand because they realised that their case was legitimate. The Rapulana had succeeded to have Lotlhakane handed over to them and under the Rapulana headman. However, the decision does not affect the jurisdiction of Montshiwa and Matlaba because the area was under Molopo reserve and therefore under Montshiwa’s

jurisdiction. Motuba would report to Montshiwa and not to Matlaba because he reside in the Transvaal(ZAR).

Because of the issue of the jurisdiction, the settlement was, however, only a provisional solution because the Rapulana at Lotlhakane acknowledged Matlaba of Bodibe in the ZAR as their chief and not Montshiwa. Barrett made it clear that while the government had no objection to a purely sentimental attachment of the Rapulana to their chief at Bodibe, the Union government made provision for magisterial areas, and did not approve of a chief in the Lichtenburg district (ZAR) exercising authority in the district of Mafikeng (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Despite Barrett's ruling, however, the Rapulana in Lotlhakane would resist attempted subjugation by John Montshiwa and the British authority.

In June 1917, John Montshiwa launched a complaint about George Motuba's disobedience in failing to respond to justifiable instruction to go to Mafikeng. He reported the complaint to Barrett saying that George Motuba had ploughed a certain piece of ground at Lotlhakane which had always been recognised as the chief's ground and had traditionally been ploughed by his predecessors as far back as the era of old Montshiwa and Tawana (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Barrett went to Lotlhakane to investigate the matter. On three occasions Motuba refused to go to Montshiwa when summoned and insisted, instead, that Montshiwa should come to him. He even claimed that he did not know about the land which belonged to the chief of Mafikeng in Lotlhakane (NASA, Vol.12,1917). John Montshiwa, acting on the advice of his councilors, fined Motuba two cows from refusing to come to him when he was asked to do so and thus ignoring Montshiwa's authority in the process. Motuba neither paid the fine nor apologised as Barrett had advised him to (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

The chief accused George Motuba of being misled by four advisors, namely Sehishu Mothibi(his uncle),Isaac Lerane, Johannes Goapili and Ranasilidi. These men did not recognise Montshiwa as their chief and so he wanted them out of his

district because they allegedly misled the Rapulana against Montshiwa. Montshiwa was determined to expel them from the Molopo Reserve for disobedience (NASA, Vol.12,1917). Barrett agreed to the fine imposed by Montshiwa on George Motuba, and emphasized that he should recognise John Montshiwa and not Matlaba as the chief. Barrett, however, repudiated the chief's plan to evict the four men. He advised Sehishu Mothibi to live with his relatives in Bodibe to avoid trouble, or alternatively to join his son in France by enrolling with the Native Labour Contingent. Barrett was told that Sehishu Mothibi was a troublemaker, the Ranasilidi had driven his own father from his kraal because he recognised Montshiwa as the chief, and that Isaac Lerane was a secretary to Sehishu Mothibi (NASA, Vol.12,1917). The Ratshidi seized cattle belonging to the secretary to Sehishu with an excuse that the Rapulana were plowing a piece of ground belonging to the Ratshidi. Joshua Molema, Silas Molema's brother, informed Barrett that all they wanted was that Motuba should recognise John Montshiwa as chief. He insisted that in this dispute it was the duty of the government to support the chief. If it did not do so there would be men with a small following in opposition to the chief, and chaos and anarchy would result, all of which could be blamed on the government (NASA, Vol.12,1917). John Montshiwa wanted to show these four Rapulana men that he was the undisputed chief in Molopo Reserve and that any person who resisted his authority would pay for his actions. On 14 July 1917, John Montshiwa sent out a party of about three hundred men in Lotlhakane led by Paul Montshiwa. This expedition collected forty-seven cattle and forty-seven ploughs from the four men. This action was designed to put pressure on the Rapulana to accept John Montshiwa's authority (NASA, Vol.12,1917). According to the government the seizure by John Montshiwa of Rapulana property and the ordering of Sehishu Mothibi and others to leave the Reserve clearly demonstrated that the acting chief of Mafikeng was adopting a high-handed policy. Indeed it was similar to that of Lekoko, noted earlier, which nearly resulted in bloodshed (NASA, Vol.12,1917). John Montshiwa wanted to use the leadership style followed by his forefather, Montshiwa who resisted the Boers and attacked the Rapulana in the

1880s. He did not realize that the role of chiefs in the twentieth century was marshaled by the British legal system.

A meeting between Motuba, Matlaba and Moshete was convened by Barrett to ascertain the grievances of the Rapulana and a number of significant observations were made. The Rapulana land was still under Ratshidi control and as the Ratshidi “hated” the Rapulana there could be no peace. Despite lawless acts committed by the Ratshidi, the Rapulana endeavoured to observe the law and looked to the government for justice. Apart from the seizure of cattle and ploughs by Montshiwa from Sehishu, Ranasilidi, Johannes Gaopele and Isaac Lerane, these men were also forbidden to plough. Their land were handed to a Xhosa-speaking man to plough on behalf of Letsapa Lekhoma who was John Montshiwa’s friend. Finally, it was alleged that John Montshiwa had ordered Sehishu, Goapele and Lerane to leave Lotlhakane (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

The strategy and tactics employed by John Montshiwa to stamp his authority in Lotlhakane forced Motuba, Matlaba and Moshete to regroup and place their case before the government. They intended to show the government that the Rapulana were not prepared to be under the control of Chief Montshiwa and the Ratshidi. It appears that Montshiwa wanted to subjugate Matlaba’s people because of the old grudge that they had assisted the Boers during the South African War. Another issue was that although Lotlhakane was occupied by both the Ratshidi and the Rapulana, Montshiwa’s authority was not welcomed by everybody there. Kevin Shillington (1985:128) claims that Lotlhakane was Montshiwa’s old town but does not give an explanation as to why it was his town. Shillington’s judgment falls short of explaining that the Rapulana arrived first at Lotlhakane, long before 1800, whereas Montshiwa and the Ratshidi only arrived there in 1847.

The grievances raised by the Rapulana were rejected by the government because of the presence of Matlaba and Moshete. According to proclamation

2BB of 1895, Matlaba and Moshete did not have any jurisdiction over the Molopo Reserve. The government thought they were assisting Motuba because Moshete and Matlaba hated Montshiwa and the Ratshidi. However, the reality was that historically the Rapulana regarded Matlaba as their chief and part of his people lived in Lotlhakane, within the Molopo Reserve (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). Moshete could claim paramountcy over all the Barolong because he was a Ratlou chief and, moreover, there were the Ratlou who lived under Montshiwa's jurisdiction in Phitshane, Leporung and Tshidilamolomo. But the jurisdiction of Chief Montshiwa over Molopo Reserve established by the British government alienated the two chiefs from their people in the Molopo reserve because they had supported the Boers during the South African War.

The drama was not yet over. In 1917 Montshiwa sent forty-seven men armed with rifles, axes and other weapons to drive four councilors out with arms in Lotlhakane because they misled Motuba. Montshiwa's men paraded Lotlhakane openly with arms. Matlaba was determined that if there was no immediate settlement, he would resort to a tribal war. In April 1917 Montshiwa asked for permission to evict the above-mentioned four men from Lotlhakane, but the government regarded such action as high-handed and rejected the request, arguing that it might worsen the conflict and reduce chiefly authority even further (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). This was evidence that the government was increasingly becoming discontent with Montshiwa's rule over the Rapulana and was determined to prevent a possible war between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana.

Another incident which demonstrated John Montshiwa's high-handed rule against the Rapulana took place on 31 August 1917. Montshiwa invited Motuba to attend a recruitment meeting for the Native labour Contingent and Motuba attended the meeting of about four to five hundred men. The chief requested Motuba to address them, which he did and after the gathering he returned to Lotlhakane (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). The meeting had nothing to do with the dispute but was

merely a ploy by Montshiwa to remove Motuba from Lotlhakane while a raid was launched against those who defied Montshiwa's control. When Motuba arrived at Lotlhakane, he learned from an African constable that Montshiwa had come with a strong force to carry out raids on Lotlhakane. Motuba immediately rushed to the scene and appealed to the chief and his force to stop their raids but only the chief agreed to return to Mafikeng. However, his men remained in Lotlhakane and raided Sehishu Mothibi's house and assaulted his wife in spite of Motuba's appeal for their withdrawal (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). This was advanced by Montshiwa in defiance of the government's ruling. From these provocative acts committed by the Ratshidi it is clear that the government had given freedom and latitude to the Ratshidi chief to harass the Rapulana. The government had no intention to stop John Montshiwa even though he had broken the law not to evict any one until permission was sought from the relevant minister, F.S.Malan. This incident clearly fuelled this conflict. The Rapulana were becoming weary of looking to the government for solution (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917).

In spite of the harassment that Montshiwa had instigated against the Rapulana, Barrett insisted that Motuba's *Kgotla* was under Montshiwa's jurisdiction at Mafikeng. It was also clear that the government was biased in this intervention and favoured the Ratshidi. However, the magistrate in Mafikeng stepped in to stop Montshiwa from breaking the law. He accused John Montshiwa of wrong-doing by illegally raiding Lotlhakane, looting Sehishu Mothibi's house and assaulting his wife. Mothibi was close to the Motuba and on certain occasions acted as the headman. He had been attending the meetings with Montshiwa and the chief of Mafikeng might have read Mothibi's attitude towards him. The magistrate asserted that Montshiwa knew that the government clearly supported his draconian rule over the Rapulana. Because of this there was widespread discontent by the Rapulana. They decided to take their complaints about Montshiwa's activities such as looting and harassment, to the magistrate. This was to no avail and subsequently they decided to take the matter to court (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917).



The Batswana *Kgotla* (Haw, 2005:251)

On 2 May 1917 the acting Chief John Montshiwa held a meeting of the Rapulana and some of their leader at Lotlhakane to explain his motives for attacking the Rapulana. He urged his people to live in peace with the Rapulana and claimed that the former Chief Lekoko's reign was harsh and this was why the government requested John Montshiwa to succeed him (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). He promised the Rapulana that he would return all their agricultural land taken earlier from them by the Ratshidi. He maintained that Motuba would decide on small matters in his village of Lotlhakane but he would decide on all the more serious matters about the land and the people. George Motuba, for example, would take decisions about the cutting of tree-branches at Lotlhakane. Lastly, Montshiwa mentioned that the land in Lotlhakane, known as "*Phasha*" which had been cultivated by Paul Montshiwa and the Ratshidi for Montshiwa, but now it had to be cultivated by George and the Rapulana for the chief of Mafikeng. Montshiwa offered to give land in Lotlhakane on condition that they agreed to recognise him as their paramount chief and Motuba as their headman, who in turn would only be accountable to the chief of Mafikeng. He outlined the hierarchy of leadership

to both the Ratshidi and the Rapulana showing that he was the highest authority over Motuba in Lotlhakane and would try to offer peace to the Rapulana if they accept his authority (NASA, Vol. 12, 1917). Montshiwa assured the Rapulana that they would receive their land back and urged them to live in peace with the Ratshidi. He wanted the support of the Rapulana and projected himself as a peaceful man who had their interest at heart. His approaches vary differently from the harsh treatment carried out against the leading Rapulana men under Motuba.

John Montshiwa entrenched his authority among the Rapulana at this meeting by trying to show that, despite his differences with Motuba and others who opposed his authority, he was not against the Rapulana and that he treated them equally with the Ratshidi. But, on the other hand, he clearly demonstrated that those who opposed his authority would be evicted from the Molopo Reserve. Not everything said by the chief was welcomed. There were two controversial announcements to the Rapulana that were unpalatable and these made them aspire to secede from the Ratshidi-dominated Molopo reserve. Firstly, they highlighted that the Rapulana land in Lotlhakane belonged to the Ratshidi and, secondly, that George Motuba and the Rapulana should cultivate the chief's land for him in Lotlhakane. This was unacceptable because the Rapulana did not accept Montshiwa as their chief but, instead, paid allegiance to Matlaba the chief of Bodibe as the paramount chief of the Rapulana (Mothibi:2003). The dispute over the land in Lotlhakane had reached breaking point and a tribal war was imminent. Matlaba mobilised Moshete to assist him against Montshiwa. The Rapulana decided to take the issue to court.

4.2 How did court ruling and Litigation impact on the Rapulana – Ratshidi relations

The disillusionment of the Rapulana about their dispute over Lotlhakane was demonstrated by their reaction of taking the matter to court. The Rapulana accused the Ratshidi of encroaching on their land, raiding their cattle and evicting the Rapulana councilors from their land. They challenged Montshiwa's claim of jurisdiction over Lotlhakane and that, in fact, it belonged to the Rapulana. They insisted that they should not be subjected to Montshiwa's control. The government sided with the Ratshidi in this case because they believed that Matlaba and Moshete had no jurisdiction over the Molopo Reserve, a stance which was highly repugnant to the Rapulana.

In 1917 the government outlined the nature of the Ratshidi-Rapulana dispute to the Supreme court and stated that Matlaba, who claimed to be the paramount chief of the Rapulana, had no jurisdiction over Lotlhakane (Rietfontein). Furthermore, the government stated that Montshiwa was the principal chief of the Molopo Reserve which included the Rapulana in Lotlhakane, the Ratshidi in the Stad and the Ratlou in Phitshane. According to the government, there was no provision for the exercise of judicial functions by a paramount chief over the whole of the Molopo Reserve and for administrative purposes, such as the nomination of headmen, collection of tax and receiving representative from the Molopo reserve, the government recognized Montshiwa as the principal chief because he controlled a larger area and had always been considered reliable by the British government (NASA, Vol.12,1917). However, Montshiwa had failed to act within the perimeters circumscribed to him by the government because he had exercised judicial authority over the Rapulana instead of confining it to his own people, the Ratshidi.

The Rapulana rejected the fact that they were under Montshiwa's jurisdiction and instead claimed that they had been brought to Lotlhakane by chief Matlaba of

Bodibe. In addition to that, their first chief Rapulana had died there. They contended that the jurisdiction was forced upon them and they had resisted it. They further alluded to the fact that George's father, Abram Motuba, and also Sehishu Mothibi's uncle, were recognised by the government of British Bechuanaland as the headmen of the Rapulana people at Lotlhakane, and that Abram was succeeded by George Motuba, while Sehishu Mothibi acted on behalf of George because he was still a minor (NASA, Vol.12, 1917).

The Rapulana led by Matlaba, Motuba and Sehishu Mothibi presented their case. They maintained that in 1886 the land in Lotlhakane had officially been allocated by the British authorities to the Rapulana people for their use and occupation. In 1901 Paul Montshiwa, a member of the Ratshidi people, who was acting on the instructions of the chief of the Ratshidi took a portion of the Rapulana's land situated east and west of Lotlhakane, and certain land to the north and south of Lotlhakane. Paul Montshiwa and the Ratshidi people regarded this land as theirs because they had occupied it before fleeing to Moshaneng from the Boers in 1873. This land had remained in Ratshidi despite protests made from time to time to the Union government which confirmed the allocation and ordered the Ratshidi and Paul Montshiwa to vacate the land. Thereafter, George Motuba, Sehishu Mothibi and other members of Rapulana, after notifying Montshiwa of their intention, commenced to plough and sow the land (NASA, Vol.12, 1917). In June 1917, John Montshiwa with a large number of armed members of the Ratshidi prevented members of the Rapulana from ploughing and took over the land for themselves. The Rapulana added that John Montshiwa also took the property of Mothibi, Lerane, Motshane Moseetlo and injured Sehishu Mothibi's wife and certain other Rapulana people (NASA, Vol.12, 1917).

The Rapulana submitted that Montshiwa be ordered to restore all the property belonging to Sehishu Mothibi, Isaac Lerane, Matsane Moseetlo and Mokone and that Montshiwa should pay £500 to the first two victims for the damages caused. They also claimed that he should pay £100 for the damages caused to Sehishu

Mothibi (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1917). Montshiwa, on the other hand, maintained that the Ratshidi and Rapulana were both sections of the Barolong. He had always been the paramount chief of the Barolong, and recognized as such by the government of the Union of South Africa. He had acted in his capacity as chief of the Barolong with the advice and consent of his councilors. He claimed that acts committed against the Rapulana were done in pursuit of the authority bestowed upon him by Bechuanaland Proclamation No.2BB 1885 Section 31 and 32 (NASA, Vol.12, 1917).

Montshiwa agreed to the seizure of the cattle. He maintained that on or about 16 June 1917 eighteen cattle were removed from Sehishu Mothibi's house and taken to Mafikeng. The cattle were removed on Montshiwa's instruction because Motuba had encroached on the land of Letsapa Lekoma, his friend, at Lotlhakane. Moreover, Sehishu Mothibi repeatedly disobeyed the chief's orders. According to Montshiwa, Sehishu's cattle were kept until such time he availed himself to the hearing but Sehishu did not attend. In addition, certain property which belonged to him was removed from his house and premises on the chief's order and sent to Mafikeng. All this property had been returned to the Rapulana's attorney on 8 October 1917. Montshiwa denied the accusation that any money had been taken (NASA, Vol.12,1917).

The government denied that the chief of the Ratshidi at Mafikeng had any right to land at Lotlhakane, nor could he require the people of Lotlhakane to plough lands for him according to "*pasha*" custom. This was an ancient practice by which the Ratshidi cultivated the land for chief Montshiwa under the authority of the minor chief of Lotlhakane. When his appointment of Paul Montshiwa failed to materialise (because Barrett installed Motuba) the chief insisted that Motuba should follow this custom and cultivate the land for him. The government did not recognize this custom and the only officers entitled to allocate land for cultivation on crown land were chiefs and minor chiefs who were officially recognized

(NASA, Vol.12, 1917). On 23 October 1919 the government stated through the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria that chiefs and minor chiefs were entitled to exercise jurisdiction over members of their own people but only after having been duly recognized by the government (NASA, Vol.12,1917). In the Mafikeng district it was decided that the various sections of the Barolong, that is, the Ratlou, the Ratshidi and the Rapulana were different ethnic groups and that the chiefs appointed over these various sections could only decide cases between people of their own particular ethnic communities. In other cases, as provided in the proclamation, the magistrate should decide if there was a dispute (NASA, Vol.12, 1917). The court resolved that the chief's jurisdiction was "personal" and not "territorial". For example, a chief could not claim jurisdiction over a particular area such as the Molopo Reserve but only over the people in the reserve belonging to his particular ethnic group (NASA, Vol.12,1917). The court ended Montshiwa's authority over the Rapulana and urged the Ratshidi not to enforce their control over them. It suggested that the Rapulana, and the Ratshidi should each choose the chief they wanted to live under. This court ruling brought anarchy in Lotlhakne because it empowered the ordinary people to defy the chief. In addition, it was difficult for the chief to exercise discipline as the guilty parties shift their loyalty time and again because the ruling maintained that allegiance to a chief was by choice. Silas Molema, one of the members of the Ratshidi royal family, was worried about this situation but was helpless because the Ratshidi had lost the case and did not wish to bother the Rapulana again. For the Rapulana the court ruling, was a watershed and the dawn of a new epoch in the history of the Rapulana. They stood on the threshold of victory because they would manage their internal affairs without the interference from Montshiwa and the Ratshidi.

In spite of the court decision, Ratshidi-Rapulana relations soured, but there was no longer any encroachment on the Rapulana land by the Ratshidi. The testimony of the Rapulana and the government showed that the Ratshidi were

guilty of infringing on the Rapulana land. The court decided that John Montshiwa as chief of the Ratshidi did not have the right to summon and put on trial members of the Rapulana; they could only be summoned by their own chief (NASA, Vol.12, 1917). The court further ruled that Montshiwa had no right to any land at Lotlhakane and that the *pasha* custom could not be imposed on the Rapulana. The Ratshidi were required to pay the litigation costs as well as those of the Rapulana attorney, De Kock. The Rapulana were also liable to pay De Kock but their dues were lower than those of the Ratshidi, who were ordered to give back to the Rapulana all property taken from them (NASA, Vol.12, 1917). Chief Montshiwa of the Ratshidi had virtually lost control of the Molopo reserve because his jurisdiction was confined to the Stad and Mareetsane where the Ratshidi resided. His authority in Lotlhakane and Phitshane was thus curtailed.

The problem of the Ratshidi increased when another setback hit them particularly hard. They experienced internal chieftainship problem which stemmed from several sources, including the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict. When Chief Kebalepile (who had succeeded Wessel Montshiwa) died in 1917 while Letlamoreng, the heir to the throne was still a minor, Paul Montshiwa, one of the elders of the Ratshidi, appointed John Montshiwa as the acting chief until Letlamoreng was old enough to take over (NASA, Vol.12, 1917). This appointment was approved by Barrett and the Ratshidi in 1917. It appears that the leading men of the Barolong were disappointed by John's conduct. According to Paul Montshiwa, John disrespected him and Letlamoreng, sold cattle which belonged to Letlamoreng without his permission, was always away and did not attend the *Kgotla* to address the problem of the Ratshidi (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). Furthermore he was an alcoholic and discussed the community problems in canteens with his friend M. Lekomo. Lastly, he harassed and undermined the Rapulana without consulting his counselors. In 1919 Paul Montshiwa, Tiego Tawana, William Tawana and Zechariah Nko presented these complaints about John Montshiwa before the Minister of Native affairs, F.S. Malan and the Acting Secretary, E. Barrett. Malan told John that he had harmed his reputation and he

subsequently deposed him, replacing him with Letlamoreng who had now reached maturity. John on the other hand was supported by Silas Molema, M. Lekomo and Jackson Montshiwa (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). John was disillusioned by the decision and maintained that he would not recognize Letlamoreng. It soon became clear that John Montshiwa's activities in Lotlhakane were not approved by his counselors and the Ratshidi and, moreover, his idiosyncratic behaviour caused the Ratshidi to lose money in the form of payments for litigation, money which should been used instead to improve their standard of living.

5.3 The Politics of Demarcation

Even though the supreme court had taken a final decision over the dispute for land, the question of jurisdiction in Lotlhakane in particular the division of land was far from over. On Thursday 6 November 1919, the Minister of Native Affairs, Malan, received a delegation of the Barolong chiefs and councilors accompanied by the Mafikeng attorney, De Kock. The deputation included chief Aaron Moshete from Khunwana in the ZAR, sub-Chief Monchusi Matlaba of Bodibe in the ZAR. The purpose of the delegation was to request the minister to agree to a boundary that would separate the Ratshidi from the Rapulana. De Kock outlined the position of the Rapulana and the Ratlou after the judgment on Montshiwa's case, showing how it had affected the Rapulana's affairs at Lotlhakane. This decision clearly established that George Motuba had jurisdiction over the people at Lotlhakane. But the decision on the payment of costs for litigation caused trouble at Lotlhakane. The Rapulana headman, Motuba, experienced opposition from some members of the Barolong although he was uncertain whether they were Ratshidi or Rapulana. There were several petty cases arising from a levy imposed upon the people by their chiefs to pay the legal costs in the Ratshidi-Rapulana case. Some people in Lotlhakane resisted this levy, although they had resided there for years under Motuba (NASA, Vol.3159, 1919). When attempts were made to enforce the levies, the people concerned went to the courts for

redress and this led to a number of litigation cases. These litigation cases resulted in the economic loss to the Rapulana and provoked further dispute from within.

Another matter raised by the delegation was that before the boundary was set between the ZAR and Molopo reserve, the Rapulana areas were united. Until 1885, Matlaba had been regarded as more senior than Motuba. The Rapulana at Lotlhakane were in the habit of taking important matters to Bodibe for settlement, while small issues were submitted to Motuba. As regards Chief Moshete, the Rapulana recognized him as their paramount chief. They were aware that the government did not recognize Moshete's and Matlaba's rights to exercise jurisdiction over the people at Lotlhakane, but they were anxious that these chiefs be accorded such rights (NASA, Vol.3159,1919).

The third matter they presented was the recovery of the litigation costs from the Ratshidi. The liability of the losing side amounted to approximately £2000. They had not formally demanded payment from Montshiwa's people, but had heard from some members of the Ratshidi that there was little prospect of recovering the money. Montshiwa told the Rapulana that his people were not in a position to pay because they were poor and many did not cooperate in making their contributions. In addition, some individuals imitated the Rapulana and took the headmen who had forced them to pay, to court (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). Lastly, De Kock explained that there were "river lands" at Lotlhakane, which his clients claimed had been dispossessed by the Ratshidi. Although these lands fell within George Motuba's jurisdiction, a number of Ratshidi who recognized Montshiwa lived there too. If boundaries were fixed the position would be clearly defined and anyone who did not want to submit to Motuba's authority would be free to leave (NASA, Vol.3159,1919).

Malan asserted that Matlaba and Moshete had no jurisdiction over Lotlhakane, but if the Rapulana chose to cross the border and submit their disputes to them

for settlement, the government offered no objection. People could not be compelled to pay allegiance to a chief they did not want. As regards a boundary, he said that he would like to hear the Ratshidi's side of the story (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). The court did not order the establishment of boundaries and it was maintained by Barrett that the Ratshidi and Rapulana in Lotlhakane should learn to live together. Allegiance to the chief of the Ratshidi or that of the Rapulana was their choice. Malan subsequently called a meeting of the Rapulana and Ratshidi to discuss the fixing of the boundary between them. The Ratshidi complained about the lack of adequate notice and stated that they should have been notified three months in advance so that they could consult their people. Moreover, they were preoccupied with the logistics of the internal dispute over the chieftainship between John and Letlamoreng Montshiwa (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). Malan reiterated the decision of the Supreme Court and Appeal Court that the Rapulana and Ratshidi were two different communities and that the Ratshidi were not in the Rapulana's jurisdiction and *vice versa*. Wherever a man lived he had to be loyal to his chief, and if a Ratshidi wanted to be loyal to the Rapulana chief it was his or her own choice. However, Malan agreed to demarcate lines only for the purpose of occupation of land and ploughing. The Ratshidi and Rapulana agreed to this, and three Ratshidi and three Rapulana representatives were appointed to work with Malan in the demarcation process. After the decision had been made it was decided that Malan would demarcate the land (NASA, Vol.3159,1919). The border was ultimately demarcated and the process was monitored by representatives of both the Rapulana and the Ratshidi (NASA, Vol.3159,1919).

5.4 Dispute and Litigation

The litigation fund was for payment to lawyers who spoke on behalf of the Rapulana and Ratshidi in the court of law in 1920. In addition, the Ratshidi had to pay the Rapulana because they had lost the case. However, neither party had

instant cash and both had to raise the money from their people. The Ratshidi and the Rapulana named it the “litigation fund”. The fund polarized the Barolong further into cliques, because those who did not want to pay instigated legal proceeding against the chief, which resulted in an avalanche of litigation cases. These cases exhausted the finances of both parties. Long before the dispute between the Rapulana and the Ratshidi was almost over, internal dissension divided the two groups further. Montshiwa and Matlaba found themselves at loggerheads with their own people when they attempted to enforce people to make their contribution to the fund (NASA, Vol.12,1920).

On 12 July 1921, chief Matlaba was sued by some of his subjects who objected to being compelled to contribute to the legal costs payable by the Rapulana of Bodibe, in their litigation against the Ratshidi (NASA, Vol.12, 1921). The judgment was given against the Rapulana chief. Matlaba then wanted the liabilities of this case to be paid out of the money raised by the Rapulana because the case had arisen from the main dispute. Matlaba thus increased the amount owed by the Rapulana in his attempt to help them. Matlaba did however not intend paying his new litigation costs from his own coffers, and he was hoping he could draw costs from the litigation fund.

On 24 November 1921, chief Moshete had similar problems and held a meeting in Lotlhakane where the Assistant Magistrate, Muller, who had succeeded Barrett, and Superintendent of native Affairs, C. Nicholson, were present. They discussed the litigation costs of the case in which Arie Kgosi sued Chief Moshete and others (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1921). This meeting failed to come out with a solution. The Ratlou and Rapulana chiefs held series of meetings and in 1925 it was agreed that the main dispute case and Matlaba's, should be treated in the same way as the case of the Rapulana litigation costs (NASA, Vol.12, 1925). They also agreed that a levy of 10 shillings be imposed on all the people over eighteen years of age living in Khunwana, Bodibe and Lotlhakane areas. The Rapulana agreed but they very anxious that government officials should

undertake the collection of the levy because they wanted to avoid corruption, accusation and friction among the people (NASA, Vol.12, 1925). They realized that the progress of the fund was not only hindered by the non-payment of the levy but also misappropriation of the fund by headmen who were responsible for the collection process.

The Ratshidi also requested the government to collect an additional 20 shillings per annum from every person paying government tax in the Molopo reserve and a portion of the Setlagole Reserve, for the litigation fund. They proposed that the fund be termed the Ratshidi Litigation fund and that when the costs had been paid off, the balance should be transferred to the existing Barolong Nation fund (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1925). The government agreed to collect this levy. The people complained for the heavy payment of these costs, and blamed the government officials for not protecting them. They saw payment of Litigation as a ploy by authorities to destroy them economically (NASA, Vol.12,1925). The Ratshidi in the Molopo reserve, as well as the Rapulana and the Ratlou, contributed to the Barolong national fund. The Ratshidi wanted to use the fund to pay their litigation costs, (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1925) but because the Rapulana were opponents of the Ratshidi in the litigation case it is doubtful whether it was fair that the Ratshidi should have paid any portion of the litigation costs from the fund (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1925). The process of collecting the litigation fund therefore caused further dispute and schism between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana.

On 16 March 1926 Chief Letlamoreng Montshiwa (who had succeeded John in the same year) and one councilor requested the Superintendent of the Native Affairs whether the outstanding amount of the litigation costs could perhaps be paid from the Barolong nation fund. This became yet another source of conflict because the fund belonged to both the Rapulana and the Ratshidi. This would further fuel the dispute. The voluntary levy imposed on the Rapulana did not materialize because the community did not have money. The government asked

the Rapulana to impose a compulsory levy but the chiefs were dissatisfied with this state of affairs. On March 1927, the Ratlou refused to assist the Rapulana,

STATISTICS SHOWING THE MONEY PAID BY BOTH THE RAPULANA AND THE RATSHIDI AND THE BALLANCE

The Ratshidi had paid 750 to Mr De Kock.

This statistics shows money paid and the Balance in 1920

TYPES LITIGATION	COSTS
Cost of the Trial and Appeal	£2718.7.1
Others to Chief Matlaba	£253.0.0
Interest	£24.6.0
Interest on £2718.7.1 from 23/05/1918	£124.0.8
Total	£3109.13.9
Money paid on 23/05/1918	£98.19.6
Balance	£2125.14.3

In 1921 the total amounts of money payable by both the Rapulana and the Ratshidi was £6000.

Statistics in 1925

TYPES OF LITIGATION	COSTS
Main Ratshidi –Rapulana Case	£130:10:3
Arie Kgosi versus Chief Moshete	£140:7:2
Malusi versus Matlaba	£193:5:6
Total	£464:2.11

The Rapulana had already paid £1000 to N.C De Kock their Attorneys and later they gave him £1900 with an interest of 8 per cent.

On the 30 June 1929 the Amount of money owing by the Rapulana include

ATTORNEYS	COSTS
Mr. E.H. Mathews	£137.18.9.
Mr. C.H. Meintjes	£138.13.4.
Mr N.C. de Kock	£449.17.11.
Total	£2726.10.0

Statistics: (NASA, Vol.12, File No.718,1917).

arguing that they were independent. In 1936, the litigation costs had still not yet been fully paid (NASA, Vol.12, 1936). The government did not want to intervene and suggested to Montshiwa that he should avoid any activities which might prolong the dispute.

In conclusion, Lotlhakane became the centre of the renewed conflict and it was caused by the issue of jurisdiction and control by Montshiwa over the Rapulana. The matter was taken to court and the Rapulana came out victorious. But this court resolution only entrenched the conflict as animosities reached boiling point and the Rapulana cried foul because they suffered in the hands of Montshiwa and when they thought they had succeeded litigation battles skyrocketed within their communities. The two groups, Ratshidi and Rapulana faced litigation funds which must be paid and the BNC which is the subject of the next chapter analysed this state of affairs in order to bring solutions.

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CHAPTER SIX

6.0 The Barolong National Council, 1915 To 1950

The late 1880s and early 1900 witnessed the genesis of political organizations among the Africans from different ethnic groups. Most of these organizations emerged from the Cape colony because it was a landscape dominated by missionary activities and Marcus Garvey's movements of 'Africa for the Africans' and 'return to Africa'. Later on African organizations mushroomed all over South Africa including in Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape colony. These organizations were stimulated by the Pan Africanist struggle led by Marcus Garvey and W.E. Du Bois. These early leaders were missionary graduates and others like Pixley Seme and John Dube were educated abroad and were influenced by Africanists like W.E.B. Du Bois, George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington. The leaders of the independent churches also added their intellectual fervor to the political equation and in most cases became leaders of the political organisation.

This chapter discusses the formation of the Barolong National Council (BNC) in the Northern Cape which was one of the rural organisations most neglected by historians. This organisation reveals the early political activities of the Barolong which were overshadowed by the Ratshidi political activities led by Montshiwa, Molema and Sol Plaatje. It examines the circumstances that led to the formation of this organisation within the Rapulana and Ratlou. This organization intended to enlighten the Barolong to overcome the "paradigm blindness" conditioned by the British authorities and the Boers. It shows the role of Ethiopianism in the enlightenment of the Barolong's political consciousness. The chapter explores its origins and social composition. It also deals with the role of this organization the First World War. Finally, this chapter highlights the obstacles faced by the organisation, and the political consequences of its demise up to 1950.

The African nationalism which accommodated Africans in spite of their different ethnic groups emerged in 1912. Leaders from different ethnic groups came to Bloemfontein and formed the South African Native National Congress(SANNC). This organization revealed a sense of hybrid for different cultures and humility towards the new government. This organisation became the first united and legitimate mouth-piece of the African people. Its main aim was not to overthrow the White domination but to secure rights for Africans to participate freely in all structures of the government. The organization was established as a platform to integrate all ethnic groups in South Africa and the Barolong chiefs and elites were also present. This organization focused on national issues which included the franchise issue. It was envisaged that if Africans had the right to vote then automatically they were recognised as full citizens of the Union of South Africa. It was not built in a vacuum but there were regional political organisations such as the *Imbumba Yama Afrika* and South African Native Congress from the Eastern Cape. Leaders who were product of missionary education and those who attended in American Universities came together in Bloemfontein. The African chiefs were also invited to form part of the new collective form of resistance to colonialism which recognised Africans as one nation in spite of different languages.

These intellectuals were among others John Dube, Solomon Plaatje, Pexly Ka Seme, Maphikela, Modiri Molema and others. The Barolong were represented by Lekoko Montshiwa, Molema and Sol. Plaatje. These groups of intellectuals did not only meet but also had written articles, different newspapers and books to enlighten the African people about the evils of colonialism and segregation. John Dube established a school and a newspaper called *Ilanga lase Natal*, Plaatje, a



These are founding members of the SANNCA(ANC) in 1912 who reacted against the exclusion of Africans from participation in the political structures of the government

Setswana scholar, created a newspaper called *Tsala ya Batho*. He also wrote a book, known as *Mhudi* where he outlined the history of the Barolong. He finally wrote another book called *The Native Live in South Africa* where he criticised the Native Land Act of 1913. Silas Modiri Molema wrote Books of the Barolong history namely *Chief Montshiwa*, *Chief Moroka* and *Methodism Maches*. However the father of African journalism was Tengo Jabavu who established *Imvo Zabantsundu*. These African elites used these newspapers and books to preach the spirit of unity and solidarity against colonialism.



Many black farmers had been sharecroppers until the introduction of the 1913 Native Land Act (Nisson, 2004:15)

Many elites were American graduates and were influenced by black American intellectuals, particularly W.E.B. Du Bois, George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington. According to Booker T. Washington, “the way to black emancipation lay in education and self-improvement” (Omer-Cooper, 1994:161). This encouraged John Dube to establish the Ohlange Institute in Natal on the model of Washington’s Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Du Bois inspired African middle class to form political organizations (Omer – Cooper, 1994:161). This group of elites was influenced by the pan-Africanist ideology which emerged in the United States led by Marcus Garvey and Du Bois. They were in contact with the Afro-American citizens who realised that there was a world wide plot to discriminate against Africans. This racial oppression stemmed from the

pseudoscientific theory called Social Darwinism which ranked races in a hierarchy according to their abilities. Africans were classified as inferior and white Europeans as superior. This classification became the bases of colonisation. Africans came from all corners of the country to represent different ethnic groups and there was no sign of ethnocentrism. The two ethno-linguistic groups in South Africa – Xhosa and Zulu did not attempt to subjugate others and they had agreed that all Africans are equal and are one and identified the common enemy the White man. These leaders who formed the South African Native National Congress in most cases were not carrying the mandate of the people in their own region. Montshiwa, for example, represented the Ratshidi Barolong and not all sections of the Barolong. It was this lack of community support that led to the failure of educated elites and chiefs to mobilize the support for the newly established SANNC. This lack of rural mobilization led to the establishment of the rural organizations including the BNC, Inkatha and others. There was also a tendency by some political leaders when they failed at the centre to claim leadership at the regional level and promote ethnic nationalism. The formation of the SANNC should not only be seen as a new response to colonial conquest but also as the beginning of power struggle between the elites, African religious leaders and chiefs.

The emergence of African churches also subscribed to this call by Du Bois to form organisations to resist racism. African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) broke out of the White dominated Methodist Church. The AME, which was introduced by Dwane in South Africa, assisted African students to have access to black colleges in the United States (J.D. Omer – Cooper, 1994:161). The AME found that there were Africans who formed their own churches like Nehemiah Tile who broke out of the Wesleyan Missionary Church. The Independent Africans churches grew in number and rejected racial humiliation and asserted the spirit of Pan- Africanism.

Sehemo who was the leader of an Independent African Church called the African Catholic Church which broke away from the church of England. Sehemo found home in the Ratlou community, a section of the Barolong, that resisted to be engulfed by White dominated churches like the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the London Missionary Society. This community supported structures and organization that championed the struggle of the African people. The African Catholic Church and AME enlightened the Barolong to resist subjugation by white colonialists. The AME minister was permanently stationed in the Moshete's village of Khunwana (Campbell,1990:40).

In April 1915 the Ratlou and the Rapulana formed the BNC. These sections of the Barolong were encouraged by the struggle waged by independent churches and newly formed political organization. They realized that the effective methodology of protecting their rights was to form a political or social organization. This organisation stemmed from the long dispute between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana. The Ratshidi and Rapulana advanced litigation against each other and the Barolong communities were tired of these conflicts and squabbles and were desperate for a peaceful settlement. Therefore, the Rapuana and Ratlou elites decided to reawaken the Barolong nationalism as a tool to unite the Barolong. BNC was a product of the pan Barolong nationalism, an initiative led by the Ratlou. In addition, the American 'Negroes' belonging to the "Africa for the Africans" movement crafted a propaganda about the Black fleet from America which was on its way to free Africa from colonialism. This propaganda was prevalent in Witwatersrand where the Barolong migrant labourers were working and it caused some sporadic strikes. Johannesburg and in particular the mines became the political landscape of the BNC and also of many organizations such as the African National Congress (changed in 1923 from SANNC to ANC) and ICU. These leaders of the Barolong were influenced by this organization in the mines to form their exclusive body which would pursue the interest of all the Barolong. These leaders of the Rapulana and Ratlou felt that the attorneys who had advised the Barolong to take their case to the

Supreme Court had misled them and wanted to cripple their economy. The Leaders of the two communities therefore decided to form the BNC to solve the dispute (NASA, Vol.108, 1915). The organisation's main aim was to unite the Barolong into one nation which would benefit from mutual economic assistance. The BNC was intended to end the conflict and amalgamate all sections of the Barolong into one "nation" under one paramount chief. Sehemo, the former secretary of Chief Matlaba of the Rapulana, was elected as its leader and EM Matlaba, the secretary.

The BNC was formed by the petit bourgeois including teachers, ministers, tailors, interpreters, clerks, carpenters, police and drivers. There were also priests, such as Sehemo, a protagonist of the independent church, the African Catholic Church (NASA, Vol.108, 1915). These people were not strong intellectuals like the Ratshidi's leading men, Sol. Plaatje and S.M. Molema and they related well with the chiefs and the ordinary people. Many of the Rapulana who were farming people, also joined the organisation, as did the royalist like Sehemo, J.R. Matlaba, E. Matlaba and Ramosiane Matlaba (the uncle of chief Moshete whom he claimed to represent) (NASA, Vol.108,1915). The BNC invited all Barolong in South Africa to become part of this move towards unity of the Barolong. It was clear that the BNC was well coordinated by the leading members of the Rapulana and Ratlou chieftainship, and it needed to have the support of Chief Matlaba and Moshete.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the Ratshidi and the Rapulana were locked in a serious showdown when John Montshiwa attempted to evict the leading Rapulana men and the Rapulana took the matter to court and came out victorious (NASA, Vol.108,1919). After the court settlement network of problems confronted both the Rapulana and Ratshidi. The chiefs found themselves in embroiled in conflict with their own people when they imposed the tax levy to pay the litigation fund. The Ratshidi leading men blamed John Montshiwa for spending time dealing with matters in Lotlhakane and leaving unresolved

problems at the Stad such as land disputes. This led a wide spread dissatisfaction among the Ratshidi community more especially within tribal hierarchy and John Montshiwa was disposed (NASA, Vol.108,1919). But the problem of litigation remained. The Rapulana also on other hand experienced problems because their members took Matlaba to court for imposing a levy on them. Matlaba was in the ZAR and some members in Bodibe were angry that they suffered economically because of matters in Lotlhakane. When Matlaba was found guilty and forced to pay money to the victims (NASA,Vol.108,1925). In Bodibe it was difficult for Matlaba to collaborate with the ZAR government, which did not interfere with the collection of litigation funds but demanded government taxation. The Ratlou also had problems because Moshete's attempts to enforce the levy brought him into conflict with his people (NASA,Vol.108,1925). The Ratlou in Khunwana were under Moshete and the Ratlou in Setlagole Reserve were under Chief Phoi. Khunwana was in the ZAR and Moshete did not have any jurisdiction in Setlagole (NASA,Vol.108,1918). In addition, Chief Phoi did not accept Moshete's authority. Moshete had written letters to Barrett insisting that the fence which was the boundary between Khunwana and the Setlagole Reserve be removed and that all the Ratlou were his people because he was the senior chief. Moshete held a meeting in the Setlagole Reserve with the help of his puppet councilor, Ramosiane (in the Setlagole Reserve) and told the Ratlou to pay the litigation fund to assist the Rapulana. The Ratlou headman and Chief Phoi disagreed and when the matter was taken to the government and Moshete was told that he had no jurisdiction in the Setlagole Reserve (NASA,Vol.108,1913). There was a wide spread dissatisfaction among the Barolong communities on how the issue of land was handled by their leaders and the leadership was in disarray. The Ratlou and Rapulana were convinced by their elites to form an organization which would restore order and authority of the chiefs over their communities. The BNC was formed and its intention was to root out deep-rooted ideological differences that perpetuated conflict among the Barolong. This dispute within the Barolong became the focal point of the BNC. The BNC recognized the fact that these conflicts were caused by the British

government because the empire extended its jurisdiction over the local communities in collaboration with Montshiwa.

The BNC established its structure and appointed its president. Rev E.M. Sehemmo. He was a favourable candidate for the position because his involvement in local politics his role as a leader of the Ethiopian church. He managed to built a large following within the Rapuana and Ratlou. In addition, he was highly regarded within the Ratlou and Rapulana communities who viewed him as a man of unquestioned integrity. They had recognised his activities since 1903 for the religious services he rendered towards them. He encouraged them to be loyal to the government and the Rapulana and Ratlou gave him unprecedented support to lead the council. He assisted in resolving the dispute of chieftainship within the Rapulana in Bodibe and Lotlhakane, and before long he was elected the president of BNC (NASA,Vol.108,1918). The chiefs, headmen and counselors representing various sections of the Barolong congratulated Rev Sehemmo and expressed the hope that he would follow the good work of his grandfather the late chief Matlaba who had fought for the right of the Rapulana to be ruled by their legitimate leader in Lotlhakane(NASA,Vol.108,1918). He was from the Rapulana Royal House and had formerly been secretary to his uncle, the late Chief Mokgothu Matlaba. Sehemmo was also a superintendent of the African Catholic Church which broke away from the Church of England. Sehemmo's role in leading the Africans out of the Roman Catholic Church and forming the African Catholic branch was viewed by the Rapulana and Ratlou as an act of heroism and certainly not denigrated as suggested by the Ratshidi. The Rapulana and the Ratlou trusted that Sehemmo would guide the Barolong to act constitutionally as people with laws and customs (NASA,Vol.108,1918).

Understandably, the BNC was not only formed to quell the disorder among the Barolong, but also to assist them to develop economically. It intended to "collect the National fund with which to buy stock, a farm and landed property" (A979, Cc4. 1, 1918:29). The leaders realised that it would be fruitless to build the nation

and ignore the economy, because the former depended entirely on the latter. The unity of the Barolong was fundamental and would be preceded by economic development (NASA, Vol.108, 1916). The BNC wanted all sections of the Barolong to be one nation with a common allegiance to one council and one paramount chief, Moshete.

According to its leaders, the BNC did not purport to be a political party, but a traditional council which existed under the tribal laws and customs of the Barolong people. The leadership also made it clear that the BNC intended to represent only the Barolong group and it was not opened to other ethnic groups. The council claimed that its existence was approved by the paramount Chief Moshete. This might well have been true because Moshete was always represented by his councilor, Ramosiane and in addition the council favoured Moshete's paramountcy. However, the collaboration of this council with Moshete and Matlaba clearly shows that there was a political motive on the part of the Rapulana and the Ratlou. They wanted to use the BNC as a lever to inaugurate Moshete as the paramount chief of all the Barolong. This appeared to be the prime objective of the organization and other endeavors such as nation building, unity and economic assistance probably became secondary. This apparent political agenda was the reason why the Ratshidi were skeptical about the BNC and rejected it outright. They complained that they had not been consulted and that the organization was led by the Rapulana and Ratlou who wanted to elevate Moshete into a paramount chief. In their eyes this European-style organization was just another attempt by the Rapulana and Ratlou to attain authority over Montshiwa. Montshiwa and the Ratshidi were at variance with the BNC since its inception. The Ratshidi's attitudes were caused by the fact that they underestimated the Rapulana and they viewed them from a parochial ethnic perspective rather than a modern political paradigm. They still perceive the Rapulana as the lowest group in tribal hierarchy and therefore could not lead the Barolong.

Whereas the focus of the BNC was ethnic in character, educated blacks elsewhere in South Africa were aiming at pan-South African unity. The South African Native National Congress, for example, was formed in 1912 by educated blacks such as John Dube. The educated Ratshidi leaders such as Montshiwa, Molema and Sol Plaatje joined various ethnic groups such as the Zulu, Xhosa and other to form the SANNC (NASA, Vol.108,916). Matlaba and Moshete did not join the organization and it is unclear whether they were invited to do so or not but, nevertheless, they were not represented on the SANNC. According to the testimony of the present Rapulana chief, Matlaba, the Ratshidi underestimated them even at the beginning of the twentieth century because they considered themselves more educated than the Rapulana and claimed to understand national politics better (Matlaba, 2001).

The Ratshidi elites, Molema, Plaatje and Montshiwa joined the SANNC because the South Africa Act passed by the Union in 1910 abolished the Cape qualified franchise. This led them to turn against the British government (Karis and Carter, 1972:18). They were also disappointed by the fact that the Barolong and other Africans were not compensated for their efforts during the siege of Mafikeng and the South African war in general. In addition, the Ratshidi failed to take total control of Lotlhakane. Sol Plaatje, who was elected general-secretary of the SANNC, was a recruiting agent of the organization and believed in the paramountcy of the Ratshidi over all Barolong. As an intellectual politician, Plaatje did not attempt to unite the Rapulana and Ratlou people in the spirit of African nationalism echoed by the SANNC, and this made the Ratlou and the Ratshidi to feel left out of the SANNC and all that it stood for (Karis and Carter, 1972:18). However, members of the Rapulana, including Chief Matlaba, joined the SANNC later because they realized that it was formed to unite all the ethnic groups of South Africa against the expropriation of land by Whites after the South African War.

In 1915 the magistrate in Mafikeng asked Chief Lekoko Montshiwa of the Ratshidi about his knowledge of the existence of the BNC because he was suspicious that the Rapulana and the Ratlou formed it in order to curtail Montshiwa's role in the Molopo Reserve. Chief Montshiwa responded by stating that president Sehemo of the BNC was a wandering minister of the religion whose headquarters were in the ZAR, and who had no authority to represent many of the Barolong, for example, those living in the Free State, ZAR, Northern Cape and Bechuanaland Protectorate. Montshiwa used the Colonial demarcation to oppose any development in the Northern Cape which was not initiated by the Ratshidi. Montshiwa asserted that Sehemo's conduct on several occasions was appalling because he realized that the leader of the BNC wanted to subjugate him and the Ratshidi. The chief concluded that the BNC had no legitimacy at all (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). The Ratshidi were apparently intimidated by the genesis of the BNC and were afraid that the Rapulana and Ratlou would succeed in uniting the Barolong despite the disapproval of members of the Ratshidi royal family. This development would undermine the role that Montshiwa, Plaatje and Molema played in the politics of South Africa.

This negative reaction by Chief Lekoko clearly shows that the Ratshidi would not accept any peace-keeping project initiated by the Rapulana or Ratlou. The Ratshidi wanted to take the lead, with others following their initiative. Lekoko felt that he could not cooperate with the Rapulana and Ratlou because the two groups had refused to join the Ratshidi in the siege of Mafikeng. Moreover, they had refused to collaborate with Montshiwa against the Boers and regarded Montshiwa as the minor chief. Subsequently, the Ratshidi despised the Rapulana and the Ratlou for non-cooperation and for giving a part of the Molopo Reserve to the Boers. Montshiwa could not bury the ethnic animosities which were at the epi-center of the dichotomy of the Barolong as a united nation. To him unity means subjugation of one group by another.

On 11 April 1916, a meeting of the BNC was held in Mafikeng to solve certain disputes among the Barolong and it was attended by chiefs from Bodibe, Lotlhakane, Tlhokoyeng, Khunwana and Mafikeng. The meeting expressed loyalty to the government and resolved to hold a peace conference of the BNC in Johannesburg on 19 and 29 May 1916 to demonstrate the fact that its jurisdiction was beyond northern Cape region of the Barolong (NASA, Vol. 108, File No. 48, 1917). This proposed meeting was intended to press for recognition of the BNC by the government, to unite and organize all the Barolong to belong to only one body, the BNC, and finally to assist in raising money for the Governor-General's Fund to help soldiers who were engaged in the First World War (NASA, Vol. 108: 1917). However, the meeting did not materialize because the government refused to recognize this council, as it did not represent the Ratshidi. The government also felt that the organization might worsen the existing Barolong dispute.

The acting chief of the Ratshidi, John Montshiwa, who succeeded Lekoko, also claimed that he knew nothing about the BNC. He asserted that "names such as J.R. Matlaba and Sehemo mentioned from the *Daily Mail* showed that the movement came from the Rapulana" (NASA, Vol. 108, 1917). The chief maintained that Sehemo was an Ethiopian church minister and Matlaba a chief at Bodibe. Therefore, according to Montshiwa, the BNC was formed by the Ratlou and the Rapulana and was intended to advance its territorial interests particularly in Lotlhakane and the Setlagole Reserve. Matlaba and Moshete were prevented from controlling their people in the Molopo Reserve where they had no jurisdiction and Montshiwa and the British authority were responsible for this situation and therefore any action they took was interpreted as anti-Ratshidi.

On 13 December 1916 the BNC sent a second petition to General Louis Botha for recognition. It mentioned that it intended to establish branches in Mothibistad, Klerksdorp, Wolmaranstad, Hartebeesfontein, Randfontein, Krugersdorp, Johannesburg and Lichtenburg (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). The BNC wanted to show

the government evidence of its expansion and constituency to justify its existence. In its application for recognition the BNC mentioned headman Ramosiane Matlaba who represented Moshete of Rapulana from Bodibe and Lotlhakane, S.Gabashane and Almaga from Krugersdorp. These people were named to demonstrate the all-inclusiveness of the council but in reality Montshiwa did not participate in the activities of the BNC because he was not invited to do so and did not want to be led by the Rapulana and Ratlou (NASA, Vol.14,1916).

John Montshiwa was extremely surprised and disappointed when he heard that the BNC leaders had mentioned his name in the membership of this council. He said in a letter to Moshete that he should advice Rev Sehemo that the BNC had no place in Johannesburg. Montshiwa's reaction showed that he was threatened by the expansion of the BNC. He wanted an explanation as to why his name was included and communicated to the press even though he was not a member. Montshiwa maintained that Rev Sehemo who brought the BNC delegation to Pretoria and Johannesburg had done so for his own leadership interests and had misled Matlaba and Moshete to follow him. BNC expansion in Pretoria and Johannesburg startled the Ratshidi chief because he realized that this organisation's jurisdiction was not only centered in the Molopo Reserve, Bodibe, Khunwana and Setlagole Reserve. He realised that the BNC advocated a pan-Barolong ethnic nationalism of all the Barolong throughout South Africa. The organisation's secretary, Emis Matlaba, was even holding meetings of Barolong working on the mines to propel the euphoria of ethnic nationalism.

In 1916 the BNC established the Bechuana Union Limited for the collection of the Governor-General's Fund to help ex-soldiers of the First World War. The Bechuana Union's board of directors consisted of Chief Matlaba, E.M. Sehemo, J.Ramoa and others. The Union mandated E.M. Matlaba to form committees in the Rand mines for collecting money. About £34.10s had already been paid to the Roodepoort magistrate. According to the BNC, Chief Moshete officially

appointed the Barolong members of the Bechuana Union Limited. The Union maintained that the collection of the Governor-General's Fund was approved by the Lichtenburg magistrate and a public meeting of the Barolong had been held on 25 March 1915. The annual synod of the African Catholic Church unanimously agreed to assist with the collection contributions (NASA,Vol.108,1916). This demonstrated the clandestine relations between the church and the BNC.

This resolution was forwarded to General Louis Botha on 27 April 1915. However, Whitehead, a government official who was given the authority by the government to collect the money for the fund, was instructed to form fund-raising committees among the people working on the mines. Whitehead refused to approve the Bechuana Union Limited's fund-raising campaign because he was afraid it could cause confusion and division, which might fuel ethnic cleansing by the majority of the dominant ethno-linguistic groups such as the Zulu and Xhosa against minorities like the Barolong (NASA,Vol.108,1916). Moreover, he feared that the money might be misappropriated. Evidence of litigation records revealed

LABOUR CONTRACTED AT THE MINES OF KIMBERLY, DUTOITSPAN AND DE BEERS, 1878 – 85, WITH 'TRIBAL' ORIGIN OF 'NEW HANDS' RECRUITED

	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883`	1884
Tlhaping	339	523	1601	1654	481	581	486
Rolong	313	328	492	454	233	266	354
Tlharo	-	74	209	211	60	74	21
Kwena	503	493	1746	2359	506	281	254
Ngwato		32	++	++	1187	328	211
Tswana	1881(5%)	1907(8.2%)	4437(14%)	4890(20%)	2561(8%)	1556(22%)	1382(17%)
New Hands	34227	23187	31697	26293	30889	7091	8214(100%)
Old Hands	++	39904	54541	53633	73817	66812	56818

++ means: There is no figure

Source: *Griqualand West Gazettes, 1878; and Blue Books of Natibe Affairs, 1881-4*

that the Ratlou and Rapulana had failed to collect the litigation fund properly and it was felt that they should not be trusted with monies for this fund (NASA,Vol.108, 1916). Whitehead appointed M.W. Teberer to form Fund raising

committees on the Rand mines (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). According to E.M. Matlaba's observation, most of these committees were dominated by the Zulu because they were in the majority. Matlaba felt that because these committees represented the Zulu the Barolong contributions would not be recognized. He felt that the Barolong should contribute to their own Barolong committees formed by him and he seemed determined to proceed even though permission was not granted (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). Matlaba was insistent that he would create a body that would unite the Barolong and bring them on par with other ethnic groups like the Zulu and Xhosa. He echoed the sentiments of the BNC to stand for the Barolong as an entity and to avoid subjugation by the majority of other ethno-linguistic groups. This was an ethnic political landscape where the Ratshidi failed because they confined their campaign against the BNC and Moshete to the Mafikeng district. Meanwhile, in contrast, the BNC visited the mines and succeeded in uniting all the Barolong, including the Ratshidi in contributing to the Governor-General's Fund. It was here on the mines that the BNC demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt that it had the capacity to unite the Barolong.

The BNC expressed its disillusionment over the non-recognition of the Bechuana Union Limited and complained to the government about Whitehead. Whitehead had accused E.M. Matlaba of the Bechuana Union of being disloyal to the government because he had challenged the legitimacy of the person appointed to collect money for the funds. The BNC attempted to convince the government that E.M. Matlaba, W.R. Matlaba and E.M. Sehemo were officially appointed to travel about and organize the money-collecting committees among the Barolong. However, Whitehead did not trust the Rapulana and he thought they might embezzle the money, so he advised Matlaba to work within the committees formed by Taberer. Matlaba refused vehemently and responded that he would first take the money to the chief and then to the government. Whitehead decided to stop Matlaba from collecting the money, but he had already formed committees and they had begun to work (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916).

Teberer claimed that Matlaba had been to and fro the Witwatersrand for a considerable time accompanied by numerous hangers-on and his activities had been more beneficial to himself and his party than the Governor-General's Fund. Taberer sent a circular letter to all miners warning them against all "irresponsible Africans" who were going around holding meetings to collect money for the Governor-General's Fund (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). On 1 November 1916, the mine manager sent a letter to Taberer confirming that Matlaba was not allowed to enter the mine compounds and hold concerts to collect money. The campaign was doomed to fail if it did not include the miners because they were the men who sustained their households in rural areas and they could not be expected to pay twice, that is, to mine compound authority as well as the Bechuana Union Limited (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916). The resistance by Whitehead was orchestrated by Montshiwa who was hailed by the government as the important chief in the Northern Cape and who claimed that he did not recognize the BNC or its organ, the Bechuana Union Limited.

The very facts put forward by Matlaba to justify the fund-raising campaign caused its rejection by the government. Matlaba and Moshete were recognized by the government as separate chiefs of the Ratlou and the Rapulana, respectively, in the ZAR, and had no jurisdiction over the Ratshidi. Any development that excluded the Ratshidi was declared invalid and was regarded as a ploy by the Ratlou Chief Moshete to impose jurisdiction over the Ratshidi. Moreover, it was alleged that the Rapulana could not be trusted they failed to collect the litigation fund to pay legal costs to their attorney. The government was concerned that the Governor-General's fund might even be transferred to the fund for the Rapulana legal costs. The Government had also witnessed the Barolong's failure to collect the litigation fund because of corruption and lack of financial records. It was also aware that Matlaba and Moshete were sued by some of their followers for forcing them to pay money towards the litigation fund (NASA, Vol. 108, 1916).

The BNC made a breakthrough despite these hardships, because it received recognition from the government. The inspector of Native Affairs, A.W. Rawlinson, granted them special permission to visit Barolong miners in the mine compounds in Krugersdorp and Randfontein without any hindrance from Whitehead (NASA,Vol.108, 916). The BNC advanced a persuasive argument and went through vicissitudes to get the recognition to contribute to the Governor-General's Fund. Furthermore, their case was backed up by the 1917 court judgment that declared them the winners in their dispute against the Ratshidi. In addition, the government condemned certain actions taken by Montshiwa, who realised after the litigation that the government could benefit from what the Rapulana intended to do. The BNC was able to visit a number of mines, namely Robinson Deep, Randfontein and Witwatersrand Simmer deep (NASA,Vol.108, 1916).

This was a major breakthrough for the BNC because it would be able to control the Barolong migrant workers who would in turn influence their families in the Molopo Reserve to learn about the BNC and to support it. The Barolong migrant workers paid less attention to whether they were the Ratshidi or Rapulana because they simply wanted to earn money to sustain their families (NASA,Vol.108,1916). The collection of the Governor-Generals' Funds was a ploy by the BNC to have a strangle hold over the mine workers. It was also a plan to have the BNC's activities recognised by the government.

On 22 and 23 May 1918, a general meeting of the BNC was held at Khunwana. It was agreed that the annual meeting should be held at Lotlhakane, which was probably made to demonstrate that the BNC had access to all places, including Montshiwa's stronghold in the Molopo Reserve, which included Lotlhakane (NASA,Vol.108,1916). The objective of the meeting was to nominate new officials, read and approve the constitution and recognize delegates from Johannesburg. The use of Lotlhakane as a meeting place without the Ratshidi's intervention encouraged the organization that the unity of the Barolong would

succeed without the Montshiwa's participation. It was difficult to ascertain whether the Ratshidi did not participate in these meetings because some Barolong were tired of narrow ethnic political crisis.

It should be noted that the BNC was not a radical organization. In its meeting on 25 and 27 June 1918, for example, the executive committee resolved that the BNC was opposed to any general strike organised by the newly formed Industrial and Commercial Union led by Clements Kadalie who was influenced by the Pan-Africanist ideology of Marcus Garvey. The BNC believed that strikes were detrimental to the economy of the country. It believed that the proper manner of showing dissatisfaction would be to submit grievances in a constitutional manner to the government. This approach was tantamount to the SANNC's moderate approach which contained a dirty ring of ethnocentrism and Western jingoism. This extravagant approach suggested that the violent or strike actions were 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'.

The BNC resolved to enlist the services of various sections of the Barolong to help the government in the event of unrest (NASA, Vol.108, 1916). This was a demonstration of the loyalty that characterised this organisation. The strategy that was adopted by the BNC was generally adopted by the SANNC and the African Political Organisation of the Coloured. They followed constitutional approaches such as negotiation and compromises. They turned to Booker T. Washinton's politics of moderation rather than to Garvey's radicalism.

In 1918 chief and headmen of the Barolong from all over the Union of South Africa assembled in Johannesburg to attend another meeting of the BNC. About fourteen chiefs and headmen attended. Their aim was to form a financing scheme for the Barolong "nation" in order to assist the people in disposing of their cattle and grain in farming implements of cost price (NASA, Vol.108, 1918). The council intended to form branches throughout the Orange Free State and other districts where the Barolong were located. The Rev Sehemo asserted that:

We want to finance the nation...our endeavour is to build it up intellectually, morally and educationally, so that we want not only to help our people to sell their produce and to provide agricultural machinery but also to build schools... we have no political motive, we want simply to help our people to do their own business (NASA,Vol.108, 1918).

The BNC managed to register itself as the first organization of the Barolong in South Africa. This was achieved through the cooperation of the Rapulana and the Ratlou people who felt that unity among the Barolong could be achieved through negotiation and economic relations. It brought a new dimension of rural organization which represented ordinary people with the intention of uniting all the Barolong. The nature of the Barolong response to colonial conquest changed from chief-driven resistance to one of more contemporary response led by the middle class. The organisation also succeeded in uniting the lower and upper middle classes in which Sehemo, superintendent of the African Catholic Church and other high profile men assembled policemen, teachers, carpenters, clerks, among others, to champion the progress of the Barolong.

The BNC collected money for the Governor-General's Fund although they initially struggled with Whitehead on the Rand because he did not recognize E.M. Matlaba. Ultimately the contribution of the BNC was welcomed by the Mafikeng magistrate, (NASA,Vol.108, File No.48, 1916) and the BNC also raised the political profile of chief Moshete who was given the authority to hand over the fund to the magistrate on behalf of all the Barolong. This initiative portrayed the Barolong as united in supporting the British government and this was not normally the way Moshete was seen. The BNC in a way tried to repair the damage caused by the Rapulana and Ratlou in the late nineteenth century when they had supported the Boers against the British government during the South African War.

The Bechuana Union Limited succeeded in securing permission to collect money for the Governor-General's Fund. In its campaign the union influenced the Barolong to move within the perimeters that the BNC had circumscribed for them. The BNC's advocacy for "national" unity reduced the ethnic parochialism of the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana as disgruntled segments and regarded them just as the "Barolong".

The BNC's economic plan to help farmers was a positive step because the Barolong farmers were united. The BNC "collected money with which to buy stock, a farm and other landed property" to help poor farmers to grow (NASA, Vol.108, 1918). This cooperation was aimed at assisting the poor farmers and integrating their efforts with those rich farmers to help one another with implements (NASA, Vol.108, 1918).

The government's unwillingness to allow E.M. Matlaba to collect money for the Governor-General's Fund was perhaps not without foundation because the BNC needed money to uplift the living standards of the Barolong and it was impossible for them to hand over all the money to the government while they were suffering economically. The litigation costs had obviously crippled them financially and the government knew that; this was why it was reluctant to allow E.M. Matlaba to collect the contributions to the fund.

In the 1920s the BNC's financial wing, Bechuana Union Limited, identified some discrepancies in the collection of the Governor-general's Fund and the Inspector of Native Affairs, Benoni, who has succeeded Rawlinson, was called in by the Union government to witness the investigations it instituted (NASA, Vol.108, 1920). The Bechuana Union Limited asked Gabashane, E.M. Sehemu, E.M. Matlaba and W.R. Matlaba to attend the meeting, produce their receipt books and the cash they had collected (NASA, Vol.108, 1920). But those men refused to cooperate and intentionally evaded meetings of the Bechuana Union Limited because they had embezzled the money. In the 1920s the Bechuana Union

Limited wrote to the Director of Native Affairs Department detailing the above-named culprits. They were accused of failing to follow the rules for producing the cash they collected and the receipts, as they had agreed they would do. They did not submit the subscription books and money to the Union as required (NASA,Vol.108,1920).

The misappropriation of BNC money was illustrated by an incident involving E.M. Matlaba early in 1920 (NASA,Vol.108,1920). He was urgently wanted by the Bechuanaland Union Limited and was eventually brought to the Marshall Square charge office in Bloemfontein by Constable Brimelow for trespassing. The chief was under the influence of liquor but was not charged and allowed to leave. It was then discovered that Matlaba had misappropriated £1578. He had signed a receipt for this amount, but when interrogated, he denied it. It was assumed that the chief might have used the money he had collected from the Governor-General's Fund to buy liquor (NASA,Vol.108,1918).

Sehemo had embezzled £78 which he had received on behalf of the Union and which he failed to account for. When he was elected as president people were jubilant because they regarded him as a man of unquestioned integrity. Not long afterwards, the funds under his responsibility could not be accounted for and he was reported to the government (NASA,Vol.108,1920). This was the end of Sehemo's role in uniting the Barolong because his efforts were clearly geared to advancing his own enrichment. The four culprits were berated by the investigators from the government and withdrew from the affairs of the BNC, although it is unclear whether they were prosecuted or not.

The BNC was an opportunity for the Barolong to come in an organization, to bury their differences and unite as individuals, families and clans sharing a common heritage. This was indeed the spirit of the SANNC. Prominent Barolong people like Sol.Plaatzje were entrusted with the responsibility to unite the people of South Africa which included the Rapulana. Pixley Seme has this to say:

The demon of racialism, aberration of the Xhosa-Fingo feud, animosity that exist between the Zulus and the Tongas, between the Basotho and every other Africans must be buried and forgotten, it has shed among us sufficient blood! We were one people. Those divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all woes and of all our backwardness and ignorance today (Karis and Carter, 1972:72).

The BNC failed to unite all the Barolong under the paramountcy of Moshete. The rural Ratshidi community did not recognize Moshete as the paramount chief of all the Barolong. They challenged the existence of the BNC and its activities in Johannesburg and the Ratshidi were afraid that if this organization was registered it could erase the reputation of the Ratshidi and their Chief Montshiwa because they were pivotal members of the SANNC. The BNC accentuated the hatred between the Ratshidi and Rapulana. Moreover, the BNC took sides and supported the Ratlou and Rapulana against the Ratshidi in their efforts to unite the Barolong. By 1930s the BNC had collapsed together with the ICU. In addition the ANC, APO and South African Indian Congress were virtual non-existent. The BNC disappeared from the political landscape while animosities and litigation continued to undermine the Barolong unity.

6.1 What was the result of the collapse of the BNC?

Herzog's four Bills in parliament passed in 1936 paralyzed the disgruntled Barolong. In particular the Native Trust and Land act made provision for the removal of Africans from White area known as 'black spots'. According to this Act if Africans were evicted from the so-called white areas they must be given alternative land. The Ratlou and the Rapulana were under the administration of the Lichtenburg district. The Farmers formed the Farmers Union to remove the 'Black Spots'. The farmers wanted the Department of Native Affairs to identify all the 'Black Sports' areas so that when they bought land for the resettlement of the Africans it should not encroach on the land of other farmers. This was

caused by the fact that Farmers Associations were formed all over South Africa and objected to the resettlement of the Africans near their areas. This situation meant that Africans had no control of either their land or their settlement. They would be requested to move to the open area and if they refused they would be forcefully removed from their land. This land clearance took place without resistance because the BNC had collapsed and rural organization such as the communist party could not reach all rural areas in the country.

The Farmers Union wanted to remove the Barolong from three areas, namely, Biesjiesvlei and Rietfontein and Rietkuil. The union complained to the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria that the Africans degraded the 'healthy area' of the whites in Biesjiesvlei. Moreover the police struggled with those people who drank beer and smoke dagga. The Africans were also accused of causing trouble next to the Provincial road.

The Commissioner of Lichtenburg held a meeting with 28 Africans who lived in Rietkuil and Biesjiesvlei in 1949. Those who stayed in Rietkuil were requested to move to Boedsuierspan and those from Biesjiesvlei were advised to move to Seberia next to Khunwana. The Barolong who stayed in Rietkuil maintained that they loved the place and the Boedsuierspan had no water. The people complained about the non-existence of water and some preferred to move to Sterkfontein rather than Boedsuierspan. The communities from Biesjiesvlei were willing to move to Sibera but also complained about the non-existence of water. This was against the Native and Land trust's stipulation that Africans should be given alternative suitable land. Those who refused to move were threatened with force removal through law because they reside in White areas. Sibera was already part of the Trust but according to the Department of Native Affairs it was already overcrowded. Other areas identified by the Union as Black spots were namely, Geluk, Leeuspruit, Sterkfontein, Wildfontein and Jachtkraal.

The Department of Native Affairs realised that Putfontein and Sterkfontein were predominantly Native areas but dominated by farmers who were also leaving there. These farmers did not aspire to have these areas declared 'Native land' and they too were determined to remove the 'Black spots' from their areas. The department requested the Farmers Union to exchange land in order to accommodate the Africans. Seven farmers from Sterkfontein were willing to sell their land to the trust but refused when they learned that it would be used for the 'Native' resettlement. The department requested the Farmers Union to convince their fellow farmers to sell their land to the trust otherwise the department would not grant the farmers permission to evict the Africans. According to the department if Africans were removed in Lichtenburg district they should be resettled elsewhere within the district. The department told the Farmers Union that there were no trust lands available for the settlement of Africans. The department further maintained that it would be impossible to remove Black spots if the farmers did not indicate land that can be bought by the trust. By 1950 the land clearance was far from over in the Lichtenburg district. But with the advent of the National party into power with its rural support farmers would be empowered to evict Africans from the so-called white areas. The National Party passed the Group Areas Act of 1950 and certain areas were declared White areas and Africans living there were forcefully removed.

The strength of the BNC rested on its ability to establish the first pan-Barolong organization and it brought the Rapulana and the Ratlou together as one "nation". It therefore laid the groundwork for Barolong ethnic nationalism. The BNC succeeded in uniting the Barolong petit bourgeois and the ordinary people. It attempted to solve the problems of the Barolong, but it was not given the opportunity by the Ratshidi, who did not want to be led by the Rapulana and the Ratlou. Then too, the BNC supported Moshete and regarded him as the paramount chief of all the Barolong. It tried to stop the Rapulana and the Ratshidi from taking their case to the Supreme Court by suggesting that it be taken to the council for arbitration, but it was clear from the criticism expressed

by the Rashidi that they would never accept the BNC's decision. By the early 1930 the BNC collapsed and its demise brought negative political consequences for the Barolong. There were faced with the land clearance instituted by Herzog's Native Land and Trust Act which necessitated the removal of the Black spots in the areas of the Barolong including Sterkfontein, Putfontein, Rietkuil, Biesjiesvlei, Rietfontein and so on. This problem of the land clearance was closed by the 1950's Group Areas Act that legalized the eviction of the people from the so-called White areas and the Barolong offered no resistance.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 The legacy of the Barolong- an evaluation

According to oral tradition the Batswana were at one time united under one king but fission has been common feature of their history. This tendency to break up into smaller branches happened among all sections of the Batswana and this was a major weakness because they could not unite against outside forces. The Barolong were no exception to this process of fission and they too were polarized into four sections when their king Tau died. They experienced internal conflict within these branches which subdivided them further as in case of the Ratlou who had many branches, each one being independent from another. But during the *difaqane* in the 1820s and 1830s the Ratlou, Seleka and Ratshidi were superficially united in Phitshane and fled to Khunwana to escape the Batlokwa attacks.

The struggle for power was also integral part of Batswana history as is even today. This internal dissent had resurfaced each time the chief died and an acting chief installed. When the legitimate heir had grown up the conflict usually began because the regent did not want to relinquish power to the rightful heir. This is the weakness of the Barolong and their vulnerability made them prone to anarchy, chaos and violence exacerbated by outsiders such as the Boers and the British. This shows that the centralisation of the Barolong under one strong leader was not viable. The unfeasibility of the united Barolong was realized by the British and Boers but they nevertheless were desperate to impose paramountcy among the Ratshidi and Ratlou.

From 1805 to 1846 there was no conflict among the Ratlou, Ratshidi and Rapulana before the Boers came to the highveld (A979,Ad6.1, Molema-Plaatje Papers,p.5). These communities always alerted one another in the event of

impending outside attacks by the Batlokwa and AmaNdebele. They would prepare themselves and unite in order to flee. They did not fight on their own against any force. Since the death of Tau the Barolong groups did not launch attacks on any group but masterminded the tactics of the fight from danger. The branches of the Barolong experienced internal struggle for chieftainship within but they related and coexisted peacefully with one another. Also Tawana, the chief of the Ratshidi at that time married a Rapulana Mosele Molekane who gave birth to Molema (Monye and Molema, 30 September 2004). This was evidence of some form of unity and co-existence between the Ratshidi and the Rapulana. Moreover, when the Rapulana were brought to Bodibe by the Boers, Chief Montshiwa who succeeded Tawana allowed Mosikare, Matlaba's brother, to settle at Lotlhakane in 1875. From the time of the Ratshidi-Ratlou skirmishes, which happened after the death of king Ratlou in 1805, the two sections did not fight against each other but when the Boers came to the highveld they influenced Matlaba and Moshete against his brother Montshiwa to fight for the paramountcy.

After the Boers had defeated Mzilikazi with Barolong assistance, they took the land of the Barolong as payment for driving out the AmaNdebele on their behalf. Although Mzilikazi attack the Barolong in Khunwana, they managed to protect some cattle to sustain their lives. However, after the Boers, had defeated Mzilikazi, the AmaNdebele came during the night and took all their cattle and the Boers were practically without food. This episode showed that Mzilikazi was a threat to both the Boers and the Barolong and that both groups contributed to his defeat. Without the provision of food and regiments by the Barolong it would have been extremely difficult for the Boers to defeat Mzilikazi. What was common between the Boers and the Barolong was that neither group could alone defeat Mzilikazi and it was therefore ludicrous for the Boers to think that they could protect the Barolong when they failed to protect themselves and their cattle from Mzilikazi. The Boers did not fight Montshiwa alone but they formed a coalition with Moshete and Matlaba to attack the Ratshidi. The Boers were always vulnerable and did not pursue any war alone. It was palpable that the Boers

wanted the Barolong's land desperately. Their land grabbing campaign was boosted by the Sand River Convention of 1852 which officially allowed the Boers to occupy Barolong land without British intervention. After the death of the king Ratlou the Barolong saw themselves as independent chiefdoms. From 1877 to 1850 the Barolong did not want to become one "nation" under one chief they accepted their divided entities and lived independently. However, in 1850 the Boers taught Moshete that he was the paramount chief of the Barolong because he was a descendant of Ratlou and offered to help him to claim this position. Moshete agreed and launched devastating attacks against the Ratshidi. Therefore, the Boers were to a great extent responsible for the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict.

The Boer encroachment did not go unchallenged. Montshiwa stood firm against the expropriation of land by the Boers. He tried to unite Matlaba and Moshete against the Boers but failed because they were already won over by the Boers. Montshiwa wanted to become the paramount chief of the Barolong but his ambition was thwarted by the Boers who supported Moshete for the paramountcy instead. This became a source of hostility because the Ratlou were sub-divided into Khunwana, Ganyesa, Setlagole, Phitsane and Madibogo were ruled by independent chiefs. Therefore, Moshete was not the paramount chief of all the Ratlou but only a section which stayed in Khunwana. The Boers knew that they would not succeed but decided to enforce the paramountcy issue because it was a crucial factor in their master plan to seize Barolong land. The Boers interfered in the logistics of the Barolong paramountcy and its oral tradition. The Barolong failed to unite them into one nation and it was certainly impossible for the outsiders to do so on their behalf. The Boers state of Goshen disappeared when Warren's forces drove the Boers into the ZAR and their land grabbing campaign in the Molopo region was a fiasco. They left without land and diamonds but took as much cattle as they could.

The British also contributed to the struggle for paramountcy. In 1852 they allowed the Boers to occupy the land of the Barolong and by 1884 realised that they had made a mistake and decided to “protect” the Barolong because they wanted to safeguard the strategic “road to the north”. The establishment of British Bechuanaland led to the establishment of the Molopo Reserve which ended Boer encroachment once and for all. The British did not have any interest in protecting the Barolong until diamonds were discovered. It is glaring, therefore, that they wanted to safeguard their economic interests. They promoted Montshiwa to become the paramount chief and granted him jurisdiction over the Rapulana in Lotlhakane and the Ratlou in Phitshane and Setlagole reserve. If the British were interested in “peace” and “protection” they would have reversed the complication caused by the Boers by resettling the Rapulana in Lotlhakane under Matlaba in Bodibe and the Ratlou in Phitshane and Molopo Reserve under Moshete from their people in Molopo Reserve. They enforced the Ratshidi’s authority in Molopo Reserve on the Ratlou and Rapulana and reinforced the ethnic conflict encouraged earlier by the Boers. After the siege conflict was intensified in Lotlhakane and the British helped to fuel it by imprisoning Abram Motuba, who subsequently died. The Barolong did not have the strength to escape these encroachments by the Boers and the British. They succumbed to these forces of disunity and engaged themselves in a series of conflicts and disputes for land, particularly in Lotlhakane.

The siege of Mafikeng was simply the continuation of the Ratshidi-Rapulana conflict but now under the milieu of British-Boer war. This war thrived on the division of these Barolong communities, the British and the Boers watched Africans exterminating one another in pursuit of the so-called the “white man’s war”. The two Barolong communities were victims of Settler colonialism and British imperialism in their fight for wealth and land of the Africans. It was during these ferocious hostilities that the two European communities accused each other of barbarism and of compromising the principle of civilization. The relationship between the Ratshidi and Rapulana was tense in Lotlhakane and

when the siege erupted it reengineered the Barolong conflict. The Rapulana were in a better position than the Ratshidi to settle old scores because they were outside the jurisdiction of the war which took place in the Stad. Immediately when the siege ended the Ratshidi were jubilant and they celebrated by deposing Abram Motuba and replacing him with Paul Montshiwa. The event impelled the acrimony between the two communities particularly those who stayed at Lotlhakane. The siege was therefore a vile imposture destined to reincarnate the Barolong conflict to a level which devoured these communities so that when the land was taken from them they should remain powerless and disjointed.

Between 1896 to 1898 a number of events took place which brought a revolution to the political situation in the Molopo Reserve. The Land Commission instituted by the British authorities resolved that Lotlhakane should be ruled by Abram Motuba. But this recommendation was rejected vehemently by Wessel Montshiwa who responded by taking the land of Abraham Motuba and other Rapulana men and ordered those who refused to obey him to leave.

While the Boers and the British were in the process of reconciliation, nation Building and state formation in 1910 pandemonium within the Ratshidi and the Rapulana and poignant conditions skyrocketed. Both the Rapulana and the Ratshidi were disarmed after the war. The Boer thought that the Rapulana could be dangerous to the White people in South Africa and they were disarmed. The British relegated the Barolong contribution during the siege to a futile exercise by not compensating them and remunerated the Boers instead. Their role was thus a forgotten episode until highlighted in recent years by historians.

The British reinforced this situation in the highveld by granting Montshiwa jurisdiction over the Rapulana in Lotlhakane. The Boers and the British simply withdrew from the affairs of the Barolong leaving the issue of Lotlhakane unresolved. The Barolong did not have the ability to rise above their ethnic parochialism and their chiefs failed to cooperate despite the absence of the

whites. However, since the withdrawal of the British and Boers in 1900 from the affairs of the Barolong, the Rapulana and Ratlou seldom engaged in any open conflict as they had done in 1881 to 1884 and from 1899 to 1900. Therefore the presence of the Boers exacerbated conflict within the Barolong because the whites were not concerned about peace among the Barolong and their primary aim was to take the land. This capitalist instinct became glaring when the British annexed the diamondiferous land which was owned by the Barolong and Batlhaping. In addition, the British vindicated Mafikeng from been occupied by the Boers in their last ditch attempt to save the road to the north. The British peace mission claims was fundamentally flawed and was a despicable masquerade to vindicate capitalist instinct of accumulating wealth responsible for the establishment of the British far-flung empire.

When dispute over Lotlhakane was taken to court the Rapulana were pronounced victorious but their jubilation was short lived. Both the Rapulana and Ratshidi were faced with heavy litigation costs to pay to the court and their attorneys. The enforcement of the costs upon the Rapulana, Ratshidi and Ratlou caused these chiefdoms to crumble. The people were poor and complained when chiefs embroiled them in conflicts and litigations. There was widespread dissatisfaction and communities resisted this treatment because they were not consulted by their chiefs when they enmeshed themselves in litigation. Even though the Ratlou chief pleaded with his people to pay, some sued him and thereby deterring the relentless efforts of the chief to stamp out litigation costs. Moshete and Matlaba incorporated their separate litigation expenses into the Rapulana litigation costs. The court authenticated the Rapulana claims to Lotlhakane and accepted the fact that they were the first to occupy Lotlhakane in 1777. However, the Ratshidi only occupied the land in 1846. The chiefs of the two communities, namely, Rapulana and Tawana were buried here and this was the reason why the two communities fought fiercely and desperately for this land. This land was a sacred place for the two communities and traditionally it must be protected. The Rapulana fought persistently and untiring and ultimately won the

land and freedom to secede from the jurisdiction of the Ratshidi. The court brought the conflict to an end but animosities within the two communities continued nevertheless.

According to Ali Mashrui every conflict in Africa is partly global and every global crisis is partly African. The conflicts of the 1800 were mostly facilitated by missionaries, traders and colonial officials. Their dichotomising mission had created permanent hostilities and had destroyed the establishment of centralised state within the Barolong. A persistent and constant attempt by Chief Montshiwa to use force to subjugate other groups and place them under the Ratshidi hegemony was a total fiasco. He tried to emulate strong leaders like Mzilikazi, Shaka and Dingaan but failed because he did not follow their programme of state formation which was internally crafted through the use of warrior tactics master minded by their own communities. Moreover, most of them were legitimate leaders with the right to claim paramountcy over their communities. Montshiwa's military tactics and rule were crafted by missionaries like Ludorf and Christopher Bethal one of the leader of the English freebooters. Later Montshiwa relied on Molema and Plaatje for advise who also were highly influenced by western civilization. They went through vicissitudes, to subjugate but their career plunged the Rapulana into a theatre of defiance.

According to Mashrui the presence of colonialism in Africa re-Africanised Africans because they began to recognise one another irrespective of their different ethnic groups. This is partly true particularly with regard to the struggle against segregation. But in South Africa the presence of the colonialists yielded the opposite results and it divided communities of the Barolong, Bagatla and Batlhaping into small units and fomented ferocious hostilities among them. The reason was that South Africa, unlike other African states, had two forms of colonialisms, that is, settler and British colonialisms. These two colonialists were responsible for the decentralised nature of the Batswana states.

This study has made a close examination of the BNC, one of the rural African organizations, most neglected by historians. Historians such as Odendaal made a tempting argument that no organization emerged in Northern Cape. This temptation appeared to be attractive but it was nonetheless notoriously blurring and overshadowing. It was water down version of the reality and reveals some research scantiness on the Barolong's political culture by most historians. This research managed to demystify the distortions and elucidate BNC as the most important component in the dynamics of power relations within the Barolong. The BNC denoted rural political dialectics that signified the Barolong political role in the South African political landscape. This study revealed the fact that while other communities were forming political parties to resist segregation the Barolong were also politically active in the rural areas and not sleeping as others claimed.

The BNC did not claim to be a political party but it had a political motive. Most of the parties, which were formed in the late 18th century and early 19th century, did not claim to be political parties and in most cases they addressed local issues. In the Cape Province these parties were influenced by Garvey's movement on the return of the land to its original owners and followed by the slogan "hurl the white man to the sea". They were also influenced by Ethiopian Churches, which were also influenced by Garvey. Historians concentrated their focus on these organisations and neglected other areas like Northern Cape. In this region the BNC was influenced by Ethiopianism. The BNC was highly challenged by Montshiwa who was a member of the SANNC (For runner of the ANC) together with his advisors Molema and Plaatje. These three men were engaged in national politics with other leaders and did not appreciate an ethnic organization in Northern Cape. Moreover, they were the powerful elites, especially Molema and Plaatje who played a pivotal role in South African politics up to the 1920s. But the BNC succeeded to a certain extent in uniting the Barolong in the mines by making them to contribute to the Governor General's Fund. However, it failed, in its impulse, to unite the Barolong and install Moshete as the paramount chief of all the Barolong. The various Barolong groups

continued to be independent from one another a situation that still exists today. It was also unsuccessful in improving the economic lives of the Barolong.

The BNC invited John Montshiwa and Sol. Plaatje to join them but they refused vigorously because they were members of the SANNC, as noted earlier. Threatened by the Ethiopian leader Sehemo, Montshiwa repudiated and discouraged the Rapulana and Ratlou from joining the organisation because he had always regarded the Ratshidi as the legitimate representative of all the Barolong. Montshiwa realised that the domination of the Barolong's ethnicity and political culture was about to end with the advent of the BNC.

The invitation to Plaatje was a test of leadership and character. It was an opportunity which Plaatje could have snatched to unite his community, the Barolong people first before other ethnic groups in South Africa. But he failed to comply with the simple science of logic and wanted to be a unitary force in South African political milieu but a dichotomising force in Northern Cape. He was engulfed by ethnic parochialism and his support for the illegitimate paramountcy of the Ratshidi obscured his political rationalism. At the meeting of the SANNC, Sol. Plaatje claimed to represent all the Barolong and the genesis of the BNC unmasked his political imposture. This was the reason why he and his chief Montshiwa did not recognise it and discredited it at all cost. He failed to establish ethnic solidarity as an essential element of national unity. African nationalism was doomed to failure if ethnic cleavages were promoted. The BNC knew that the Ratshidi, Ratlou and Rapulana shared the same language, culture and history and they trace their lineage from a common ancestor, Morolong.

In 1852 Molema Tawana, who became Montshiwa's advisor became an archetype of the christianisation and education of the Barolong. He created chapels in which the Barolong learned to read and write. He managed to convince Chief Montshiwa of the importance of Christianity and education in improving the living standard of the Barolong. Molema's children became the

prototypes of enlightenment among the Barolong because they educated the Barolong and entrenched the legacy of their father. However, this development did not filter through to other sections of the Barolong and it caused division because the Ratlou and Rapulana associated education with the Ratshidi. The Ratlou and Rapulana claimed that the Ratshidi wanted to subdue them because they were less educated which made them feel threatened (Mothibi: 2003). Despite the fact that Molema's mother Mosele Molekane was a Rapulana, the Molema family had not played a role in mediating between the Rapulana and Ratshidi conflict but their activities were epitomized by their support for the paramountcy of Montshiwa.

When Molema was converted to Christianity a pandemonium broke out within the Ratshidi royal family because he was the first councilor to undergo such a revolutionary path. Montshiwa was vigorously irritated because as a member of the royal council he was bound to be instrumental in continuing the cultural legacy of his forefathers. He became a priest and divided the Barolong nation between traditionalists and modernists. The traditionalists were members of the *Kgotla* led by Montshiwa and the Modernists were all the converts led by Molema. Molema's education did not enlighten him about the Colonisation of the conscience advanced by missionaries to prepare Africans for their eventual subordination in the industrial South Africa. Molema and his group defied Montshiwa when he called the people for the reed dance and rain making ceremonies. They regarded these traditional practices as "uncivilised", evil and primitive. This showed that Molema used Christianity to help missionaries to colonise the conscience of the Barolong. Plaatjie reinforced this colonisation by undermining traditional practices such as polygamy and circumcision rite regarding them as "uncivilised". He belonged to the generations of elites who believed that Africans must be civilised before they could be on the same footing with whites. He and his elites demonstrated before the whites that they had passed the trusteeship test and deserve to be equal to whites. Sol. Plaatjie was advancing the course of the SANNC that was to transform Africans from their

traditional practices to the dialectics of modernity outlined in the principle of western civilization. This research has shown that missionaries saw the seed of colonialism and it was advanced sub-consciously by African elites some of whom were members of the SANNC.

The educated middle class reinforced the ethnic parochialism among the Barolong. For, example, the Barolong had two powerful leaders on the opposing sides. Sol. Plaatje was on the side of the Ratshidi and supported Montshiwa's chiefly paramountcy in spite of his national political career as the Secretary-General of the SANNC. He did not advocate unity but supported polarisation of the Barolong. He supported John Montshiwa when he oppressed and ostracised the Rapulana in Lotlhakane. Sehemo, was however, the other strong man on the side of the Rapulana and Ratlou. He was influential because he was a superintendent of the Independent African Catholic Church. He advanced unity among all the Barolong and promoted the idea of Moshete as the paramount chief of all the Barolong and he was unsuccessful in mobilizing elites which could not work towards solidarity outside the jurisdiction of the chieftainship. The contrast between Plaatje and Sehemo was that Sehemo formed the BNC as a traditional council to promote unity and the cultural practices of the Barolong. Paradoxically, Plaatje formed *Kuranta ya Batho* to promote western civilization. He also participated in the formation of the SANNC which was an organization of elites, civilised and propertied people. This organization also promoted western civilization. They believed that they had passed the stage of civilisation and had tried hard to convince the whites that they were civilized but their campaign was rendered superfluous. The two Barolong leaders Plaatje and Sehemo made no commitment to meet and negotiate about the unity of the Barolong. Sehemo was willing because he invited Plaatje but Plaatje's pride crafted by his political profile denied him the opportunity of ending the Barolong dispute. This reluctance, therefore protracted the intra-Barolong ethnicity and political culture by ensuring that ethnic factionalism fostered a permanent dichotomy among the Barolong.

This research contributes to the history of the Batswana because it is a social study which identifies the rural political dynamics of the Rapulana and Ratlou, their struggle for land, jurisdiction and paramountcy. It explicates interaction between chiefs, headmen, counselors and community through the *Kgotla*. The study also reveals some of the traditional practices of the Barolong which were unique, like the *pasha* tradition discussed above. This will enhance our understanding of the present-Batswana situation in which so many independent chiefdoms still exist because of fission which has characterized Batswana history and Barolong history since the time of Tau.

7.1 The findings of this research

One of the findings of the study is that the conflict of the Barolong was caused by the British and the Boers. The two European communities wanted the wealth and land of the Barolong. The strategies that were used included an alliance with one section of the Barolong against another. The two colonialists managed to obtain land at the expense of the formatting wars which killed the Barolong men, women and children.

Another finding is that the British claimed that they protected the Barolong. This claim was fundamentally flawed because they sold the Barolong land to the Boers when they realized that it was rich with diamonds they offered to protect sections of the Barolong and Batlhaping who were became puppets of British Empire. The British finally annexed the diamond land and this did not benefit the Barolong but empire the British Empire.

The major finding of the study is that the paramountcy of all the Barolong belong to the Ratlou-Barolong. The last king of all Barolong Tau was ruthless and feared by all and managed to keep the kingdom together. When he died the kingship was handed over the Ratlou, his eldest son who was a legitimate heir to the throne. However, skirmishes over leadership between the children of Tau

namely, Ratshidi, Seleka, Magetla and Rapulana emerged. The kingdom disintegrated into four chiefdoms namely Ratlou-Barolong, Ratshidi-Barolong, Seleka-Barolong and Rapulana-Barolong. These chiefdoms were named after each of Tau's children. The unity that the Barolong enjoyed for many years disappeared and animosities developed and therefore the struggle for the paramountcy began. The British exploited the situation to its advantage by promoting the chief of the Ratshidi, who was loyal to the empire and who did not qualify according to traditional laws, to become the paramount chief of the Barolong. The Boers on the hand exploited the history of the Barolong and found out that the paramountcy belong to the Ratlou. They promoted Moshete, the Ratlo chief, to the paramount position and forced him to cede all the Barolong land to the Boers. However, the Ratlou, accordingly are the legitimate claimant of the paramountcy of all the Barolong. This is the reason why conflict has continued for many decades until today because the Ratshidi chiefs did not have the right to chieftainship of the Barolong and cannot claim the paramountcy of all the Barolong according to the Batswana laws. Therefore this was the fundamental cause of the long struggles fought by the Barolong. The Ratshidi and the British were responsible for strife, struggle, death and destitute of all the Barolong because they tried, albeit in vain, to enforce the paramountcy because of power and greed.

The role of the missionaries was also unraveled. The missionaries were agent of colonialism and colonized the Barolong conscience through the teaching of the good news. They turned the mission station into a mini industry where the Barolong were taught working routines and time management to survive in the cash economy. They converted the Barolong through mundane activities of every day life and created wants that can only be satisfied through entry into the colonial economy. They discouraged the Barolong from worshiping their ancestors and regarded their religious practices as demons. They also brainwashed Africans to become priests and used them to continue this underestimation of African traditional practices. In spite of the fact that the

missionaries resisted by Boer encroachment on the Barolong land, they none the less paved the British Authority for colonialism Bechuanaland.

The study also brought to light the facts about the contribution of the Barolong in the struggle of the independent churches in South Africa. The Barolong history had always being overshadowed by the history of one section the Ratshidi who were favoured by historians. This section of the Barolong was dominated by the Wesleyan Missionary Society who condemn ethopianism because this section sympathized with whites and consider them civilized and worth emulating. However, the Ratlou joined a revolutionary church called AME and ambraced its ideology and struggle in its attempt to free Africans from the bondage of racial oppression.

Finally the study has managed to unravel the Barolong Nationalist organisation, the BNC. This was the only organization that was ever formed by the Barolong. The organization wanted to becme a true representative of the Baralong ethnicity and political culture. This organization was registered and managed to unite the Barolong to a certain extent. The activities of BNC have been neglected by historians and this study has recorded these rural dynamics of the Barolong and proves that they were also affected by the dialectics of modernity. Their contribution to the politics in South Africa is comparable to other ethnic groups elsewhere in the country who developed rural organisations to resist subjugation by colonialists and fought for the rights of their communities. This research has succeeded to highlight the hidden struggles of the ordinary people in the rural areas.

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