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“The Fat Which is Begged for Does Not Make the Hair Pretty”:

K.T. Motsete and the Margins of Self-Determination
in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

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December 2019

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Ross Simon Melczer

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This dissertation was inspired by the love of Radell, Peter, Stacy, Melissa, Georgia, and Piere.

December 2019

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ABSTRACT

“The Fat Which is Begged for Does Not Make the Hair Pretty”:

K.T. Motsete and the Margins of Self-Determination

in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

by

Ross Simon Melczer

Previous scholars overlooked the contention in this dissertation that African intellectuals in 1930s Botswana accommodated British imperialism as a strategy to encourage African self-determination. These scholars alleged African intellectuals existed in ideological or relational ambiguity when they actually developed a profound political and socio-economic strategy to advance African communities. This lapse transpired because previous scholars applied insufficient and misleading historical frameworks. They claimed that African intellectuals were socially and culturally convoluted, isolated from the majority of people, and either collaborators in or flawed resisters of colonialism. Consequently, their accounts lacked a depth of understanding, especially regarding the astute rationale underpinning why and how African intellectuals engaged with key issues. In the 1930s, African intellectuals employed liberal terminology and appealed to the notion of multi-racial cooperation and partnership. Nonetheless, a reading of the clandestine subtext African intellectuals embedded in their writings shows that they prioritized advancing various forms of African self-determination. This dissertation focuses on intellectual, educator, and nationalist, K.T. Motsete, and his English-speaking colleagues in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana). Motsete founded the Tati Training Institute, the first secondary school in Botswana, in partnership with Kalanga communities living in the BuKalanga borderlands. The school was a profound

example of realized self-determination. Motsete inspired Africans to take advantage of the developing opportunities in European-style education and bolstered the ability of Kalanga communities to preserve their vitality. Still, despite Motsete's immense education and tactful political and educational strategy, he was ultimately frustrated by the inherent inadequacies of African liberalism and unable resolve the dilemma of the African liberal within the context of British imperial rule.

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Introduction

After spending a few weeks at the Botswana national archives poring over the material related to K.T. Motsete's life, I took a bus to Francistown in the North-East District to tour the place where Motsete and the BaKalanga had built the Tati Training Institute eighty-five years earlier. From Francistown I took the A1 highway north for about an hour and then a dirt road for another two hours through the Tati Reserve to Mosojane (near Masunga and Tsessebe). I arrived at the *kgotla* (administrative center or African court) on an August morning in 2017 at about 8 am. I introduced myself to Chief Mosojane who directed me to the site of the former school. On the outskirts of the village, on the east side of the Tati River, is a place called Nyewele. There, the light blue, black and white colors of Botswana's flag marked the site of the school, which the National Museum declared a national monument in 2012. Within a few minutes, four women who appeared from adjacent houses, guided me through the site, showed me what remained of the school's buildings, and explained the layout of the grounds.

I imagined the boys' and girls' dormitories, the classrooms, and Motsete's cottage constructed out of bricks molded by the students and Kalanga workers. The sporting field where the boys played soccer and the girls played basketball is now a farm. My guides showed me the smoothed-out stone where kitchen workers ground maize, the place where the pigs and sheep were kept, and the grave site of two students who had fallen ill and died. One gets a sense of the remoteness of the rural areas in the BuKalanga borderlands of Botswana and Zimbabwe. The ambience is peaceful, the surroundings beautiful, and the people welcoming. I imagined what it would have been like to arrive in the 1930s and witness almost 100 students busily going through their school day. Mornings were filled with prayer,

scripture, and singing. The students studied math, history, geography, English and TjiKalanga (Kalanga language). In the afternoons, they performed agricultural work, manual labor, and played sports. The evenings were filled with studying. Looking across the school grounds, I imagined Motsete, dressed in grey trousers, a white shirt, a homburg hat, and holding a notebook under his left arm as he emerged smiling from one of the classrooms. Motsete realized his dream to build the first secondary school in Botswana and I decided to elaborate the details of his life story.

The central feature of the political process in the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1930s was the scheme by the British Empire to disempower the *dikgosi* (chiefs), who stood in opposition to the British implementing a South African-inspired agenda of settler colonial development.¹ Under the system of indirect rule implemented by the British in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the African intelligentsia, referred to here as “educated Africans” were excluded from political power. Here, “educated Africans” is the term for Africans who had obtained European-style education, meaning the academic curriculum common in Western Europe, the United States, and elsewhere at that time.

Indirect rule marked a shift in colonial policy from territorial segregation to institutional segregation. To facilitate indirect rule, colonial governments instituted a system

¹ Michael Crowder, “Black Prince: A Biography of Tshekedi Khama,” unfinished typescript, Schapera E-Library, 1988, Thuto.org. <http://www.thuto.org/schapera/etext/classic/blpr.htm#contents>, chapter five; Michael Crowder, *The Flogging of Phinehas McIntosh: A Tale of Colonial Folly and Injustice: Bechuanaland, 1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968), chapter four; William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), chapter two, section vii; Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), section one; Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929-37* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988); Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: Macmillan Botswana, 1984), 182-186; Diana Wylie, *A Little God: The Twilight of Patriarchy in a Southern African Chieftdom* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), chapter two.

of local administration mediated through African chiefs. Indirect rule was based on the British aligning with so called “traditional authorities” who were tasked with maintaining African tradition. The British shunned educated Africans because they deemed them ambivalent or even hostile to tradition.² In the 1920s, the French accepted educated a degree of assimilation by educated Africans, while as Michael Crowder suggested, the British “actively discouraged the formation of a class of Europeanized Africans, particularly at the level of the central colonial administration.”³ Mahmood Mamdani reinforced this point, “Simply put, as the link with traditional authorities was forged, so the alliance with the educated strata was severed.”⁴ Thus, beginning in the late 1920s, educated BaNgwato (the largest SeTswana speaking group in the Bechuanaland Protectorate), referred to here as the “progressives,” sought alternative methods for achieving influence.⁵ In 1930, the progressives discharged the “progressives’ petition” to the British government, thus challenging the African and British authorities upholding the system of indirect rule. A three hundred-page typed record of the government inquiry into the progressives’ petition housed at the Botswana national archives is a key source and the focus of chapter six.⁶ This dissertation traces the life of one of the progressives, Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete (1899-1974), also known as K.T. Motsete, an intellectual, educator, and social reformer from

² Neil Parsons, “‘The Idea of Democracy’ and the Emergence of an Education Elite in Botswana, 1931-1960,” in Center of African Studies, ed., *Botswana: Education, Culture and Politics: Seminar Proceedings No. 29* (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1990), 181.

³ Michael Crowder, *Indirect Rule, French and British Style* (Oxford: University Press, 1964), 203; Henry Francis Morris and James S. Read, eds., *Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice: Essays in East African Legal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 15, 282; Karen E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), chapter one.

⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, “Indirect Rule,” in Robert O. Collins, ed., *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2007).

⁵ Falola describes a similar process in Nigeria in, Toyin Falola, *Yoruba Gurus: Indigenous Production of Knowledge in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999), 10.

⁶ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition.

Botswana who played a central role in the progressives' political movement before founding the first secondary school in Botswana, the Tati Training Institute, in 1932.

Educated Africans in Historical Scholarship

Scholars have too often qualified educated Africans for where they stood on the continuum between collaborator with and resistor of colonialism. The developments in Southern African historiography attest to the over reliance on the collaboration / resistance paradigm. Although historians who moved beyond and around the collaboration / resistance paradigm effectively highlighted the complex rationale motivating educated Africans, they overlooked their principal objective in the 1920s and 1930s. The Botswana case suggests that despite Motsete and his colleagues' ideological and relational equivocality, educated Africans in the 1920s and 1930s were motivated first and foremost by their earnest commitment to promote African self-determination at numerous levels.⁷ "Self-determination" means the freedom to live as one chooses, or the freedom for an individual or group to act or decide based on what they believe to be most advantageous.

The liberation historiography, established by Frantz Fanon in the 1960s, set the pattern for the radical school and others to designate educated Africans as collaborators with colonialism.⁸ For instance, Amilcar Cabral, Es'kia Mphahlele, and Basil Davidson deemed

⁷ In this dissertation, "self-determination" has no association with the principle of self-determination in international law.

⁸ Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1992), chapter four; Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 6; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Christian John Makgala, *Elite Conflict in Botswana: A History* (Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2006), 23; Christian John Makgala, "The Policy of Indirect Rule in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-57," (Ph.D. diss, University of Cambridge, 2001), 4; Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey*. Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (London: V. Gollancz, 1948); Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

educated Africans culturally alienated allies of colonial imperialists, who lived materially and spiritually in a foreign culture and prioritized their own class interests.⁹ For Cabral, educated Africans were part of the indigenous petite bourgeoisie; marginalized local representatives of the foreign ruling class trapped between the two poles of colonizer and colonized.¹⁰ Edward Said, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o reinforced the argument for cultural alienation based on the notion that educated Africans had absorbed an image of themselves, of Africa, and of Europe constructed to render them subordinate.¹¹ More recently, Paul Zeleza took this argument further by claiming, “educated Africans dreamt in both African and European languages” and “suffered from a terrible crisis: they had been taught to hate Africa that produced them and to like Europe that rejected them.”¹²

However, beginning in the 1970s, historians of Botswana aptly designated the educated Africans of the 1920s and 1930s in Botswana as proto-nationalists. They highlighted their resistance to colonialism based on the significant critique they forged of British imperialism and the political system in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.¹³ In his inaugural lecture at the University College, Dar Es Salaam, in 1969, titled “The Recovery of African Initiative in Tanzanian History,” Terence Ranger endorsed John Iliffe’s

⁹ Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Speeches* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 46, 61; Basil Davidson, *Let Freedom Come: Africa in Modern History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 37, 167; Es'kia Mphahlele, “The Dilemma of the Elite,” *Twentieth Century*, 165, 986 (1959): 319-325.

¹⁰ Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source*, 61-69.

¹¹ V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey, 1986), 17.

¹² Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization* (Dakar: Codesria, 2013), 248; Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's Globalization* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003).

¹³ Barry Morton, “Moana R. Segolodi and the Slow March of Nationalism in Botswana,” paper presented at the African Studies Association, San Diego, November 19, 2015. Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/18338440/Moana_R_Segolodi_and_the_Slow_March_of_Nationalism_in_Botswana; Neil Parsons, “Shots for a Black Republic?: Simon Ratshosa and Botswana Nationalism.” *African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal African Society*. 73, 293 (1974): 449-458.

pronouncement that that African history could no longer depict Africans as “passive objects of colonial rule” or describe Africans’ responses in terms of resistance. “Instead, a very complex pattern emerges, a pattern of local initiatives and local bargains, an interplay between European and African aims.”¹⁴ African historians writing in and after the 1990s focused on culture and power and moved beyond the collaboration / resistance paradigm to explore ambiguous African agency in complex and challenging historical contexts.¹⁵ They became more aware of the complexities of human motivations and of the rational calculations made by Africans after assessing their interests and the probable outcomes of their decision.¹⁶ From this vantage, the choices made by individuals and communities were determined not by nationalist or anti-colonial sentiments but by logical material calculations.¹⁷

A deeper reading of the case history of the progressives in Botswana in the 1920s and 1930 shows that they aligned themselves with British authorities as part of a robust strategy of collaboration, accommodation, and resistance designed to encourage African self-determination.¹⁸ While Motsete and the progressives challenged imperial structures, they advocated for the existing political system of British protection as a refuge from the threat of

¹⁴ T.O. Ranger, *The Recovery of African Initiative in Tanzanian History* (Dar Es Salaam: University College, 1969), 10.

¹⁵ Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Collins, *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa*, 58; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in Southern Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Frederick Cooper, Ann Laura Stoler, eds. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1997); Philip D. Curtin and James W. Fernandez, eds., *Africa & the West: Intellectual Responses to European Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972); T.O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64* (Oxford: James Currey, 1995).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ This argument made for West Africa in A.G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973).

¹⁸ Q.N. Parsons, “Simon Ratshosa: ‘Shots for a Black Republic?’”, Lesotho and Swaziland History Conference (Gaborone: University of Botswana, 1973).

settler colonial expropriation. Motsete and the progressives claimed Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate to be subjects of the British Empire and sought to heal the socio-political disjunction arising from internal ethnic and social differentiation by implementing political reforms to generate self-directed individuals, protect ethnic minority groups, and strengthen African communities. The inherent ambiguity in British protection and the inadequacy of indirect rule produced debates regarding the future of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.¹⁹ Operating amidst political uncertainty, Motsete and the progressives designed strategic political rhetoric that paired overt political discourses with purposeful subtexts.

The title of this dissertation, “‘The Fat Which is Begged for Does Not Make the Hair Pretty’: K.T. Motsete and the Margins of Self-Determination in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” expresses the balance Motsete struck between accepting European paternalism and promoting African self-determination. “The fat which is begged for does not make the hair pretty” was Motsete’s literal translation of a proverb he used to characterize the attitude of Africans involved with the Tati Training institute.²⁰ The proverb describes the experience of African girls who took pride in making themselves beautiful by using butter fat as a hair slave. It explains the idea that when one of these girls relied on friends for her butter fat, there was never enough to nourish her hair to make it as pretty as theirs. The proverb suggests that girls should make their own butter fat so that they have a sufficient supply. This proverb symbolized Motsete’s acceptance of the idea that Africans were engaged in a symbiotic partnership with paternalistic Europeans, and his warning that the relationship would be spoiled if Africans were forced to “beg” reluctant Europeans for “fat,” or in other

¹⁹ John Comaroff, “Bourgeois Biography and Colonial Historiography.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16,3 (1990): 553; William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 194; Henderson Mpakati Tapela, “The Tati District of Botswana, 1866-1969” (Ph.D. diss. University of Sussex, 1976): ii-v.

²⁰ BNARS, S.243/16, “Tati Training Institution, Progress (1932 – 1933),” October 13, 1933.

words, beseech Europeans for education and socio-economic progress. The second half of the title, “the margins of self-determination” symbolizes the precarious situation African intellectuals faced trying to accept European paternalistic oversight, symbolized by butter fat from friends, and claim a measure of self-determination, symbolized by making one’s own butter fat. Motsete understood that being spoon fed by Europeans was demoralizing so he promoted self-determination through self-help, self-confidence, and racial self-respect.

Self-Determination, Historical Agency, and African Culture

The suggestion here is that the fundamental goal of educated Africans in Botswana in the 1930s was to advocate for progress towards the same principles of self-organizing which underpinned the Black Consciousness movement of the 1970s.²¹ In the 1930s, self-determination meant that Africans sought to increase opportunities to lead and run their own organizations. A good example is Motsete’s Tati Training Institute. At that time, educated Africans did not promote the type of self-reliance embodied in the Black Consciousness slogan, “Black man, you are on your own!” or see whites as a “major obstacle in [African’s] progress towards peace, prosperity, and a sane society,” as was the case with Black Conscious movement leader Stephen Biko in the 1970s.²² Instead, educated Africans in the 1930s promoted partnerships with sympathetic Europeans contingent on the willingness and capability of those Europeans to participate in transitioning Africans away from unreliable dependence and towards self-determination.

Self-determination is dependent upon historical agency, defined here as self-directed

²¹ Hashi Kenneth Tafira, *Black Nationalist Thought in South Africa: The Persistence of an Idea of Liberation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 17-20.

²² Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 274.

action or independent will and volition. Sociologist William Sewell suggested that agency involves the capacity to exert control and to some extent even transform one's social relations. Social psychologists describe this as self-efficacy or the ability to experience oneself as capable of acting upon rather than reacting to the environment.²³ A prospective mode of agency exists when individuals envision alternative courses of action. In the prospective mode, structures of thought and action are reconfigured in relation to the actors "hopes, fears, and desires for the future."²⁴ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper emphasized possibilities and referred to aspirations as "political imagination."²⁵ Toyin Falola asserted that African intellectuals have always invested in the notion of progress – the genuine hope that Africa would develop and that they would be the agency of transformation.²⁶ Stephanie Batiste's Black American subjects experienced performance as "an embodied commitment to a hypothetical present and a possible future." She contended that they made a symbolic act that "affirmed faith and articulated hope."²⁷ A significant component of agency is how people imagine shaping the future.

According to Frederick Cooper, agency was not merely what an individual could or could not do but the creative or innovative ways one planned to respond to circumstances. He located Africa's relationship to the world in terms of the "invidious entanglements" and "relationships of solidarity" which produced the possibilities and constraints encountered in

²³ Ronald J. Berger, "Agency, Structure, and the Transition to Disability: A Case Study with Implications for Life History Research," *The Sociological Quarterly* 49,2 (2008): 309–33, 311; William H. Sewell, *Toward a Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1989).

²⁴ Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, "What Is Agency?" *American Journal of Sociology* 103,4, (1998), 971.

²⁵ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 16.

²⁶ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 15.

²⁷ Stephanie Batiste, *Darkening Mirrors: Imperial Representation in Depression-Era African American Performance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), xvi.

the context of empire and colonialism.²⁸ Cooper emphasized asymmetrical relationships of power where neither side was totally dominant. This model highlighted agency and encouraged historians to examine the limits of power and how people with less power pushed back.²⁹

As co-editor of the *Journal of African History*, Lynn Thomas affirmed the importance of historical agency. “African history came into being through the assertion of African agency” and by 2016, agency was still “the defining project of the Africanist historical scholarship.”³⁰ She argued that the way to push agency in a fresh direction was “by attending to the multiple concerns and desires – some intentional, other not – that animate (contested practices), and by examining how different historical actors have themselves understood agency.”³¹ For this case study, Thomas’s idea means highlighting why Motsete and his colleagues focused on self-determination and how they operated within the structural limitations that defined their ability to influence their circumstances.

John Lonsdale aptly deemed historical agency as “agency in tight corners,” because it is always practiced within a certain context.³² Lonsdale’s derived his idea of agency from Karl Marx’s notion that “men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”³³ In other words, individuals operate within the structural constraints delineated by things like colonialism, the

²⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 7-9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Lynn M. Thomas, “Historicising Agency.” *Gender & History*, 28,2 (2016): 324-39, 327.

³¹ *Ibid.* 325.

³² John Lonsdale, “Agency in Tight Corners: Narrative and Initiative in African History,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 13,1 (2000): 5-16, 6.

³³ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International, 1926).

capitalist world system, and underdeveloped states.³⁴ Nonetheless, Lonsdale lauded Terrence Ranger and the social historians who “subverted abstractions with the flesh and blood struggles of ordinary people.”³⁵ They sought to focus on Africans’ agency by writing history from the bottom up so as to center Africans as “active at the heart of their continent’s biography rather than merely suffering at the periphery of a world system.”³⁶ Still, emphasizing the intellectual or personal dimension of agency does not omit the grand political or structural narratives. According to Giddens, agency and structure exist in a dialectical interplay.³⁷ The contextualized intellectual or personal history is a potent means to understand public discourses, for example in the dialogue between educated Africans, the BaNgwato *morafe* (polity), and British authorities in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁸

Philip Zachernuk observed that “the West African intelligentsia did not always suffer the fate of otherness designed for colonized subjects: they were not always silenced.”³⁹ The same holds true in Botswana. Educated Africans appropriated European knowledge of and discourses on Africa to appropriate the power over Africa that came with it. From this perspective, Africans were historical agents rather than victims.

The appropriation of colonial ideas resulted in educated Africans assuming a reformist position. They sought to dismantle European ideas of the African past and then rebuild them to better suit their present-day needs.⁴⁰ Educated Africans accepted much of the

³⁴ John Lonsdale, “Agency in Tight Corners,” 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7; Terence Ranger, “Towards a Usable African Past,” in C. Fyfe, ed., *African Studies Since 1945; a Tribute to Basil Davidson*, ([Place of publication not identified], Longman, 1976), 17-30.

³⁶ John Lonsdale, “Agency in Tight Corners,” 12.

³⁷ Anthony Giddens, “A Reply to My Critics,” in David Held and John B. Thompson, eds, *Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and His Critics* (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 23.

³⁸ John Lonsdale, “Agency in Tight Corners,” 15.

³⁹ Philip Serge Zachernuk, “Orientalism and West African Intellectuals in the Nineteenth Century.” *Passages: A Chronicle of the Humanities*, 6 (1993): 4-7, 4.

⁴⁰ Philip Serge Zachernuk, “Orientalism and West African Intellectuals,” 5.

European construction of Africa and many of them worked within the limits of colonial discourse. However, as Ashis Nandy showed in his analysis of colonialism in India, the intelligentsia held an innovative dialogue with European thought and in some cases contributed to the making of the very discourses they engaged with.⁴¹

Falola's category of middle roader best describes Motsete and the progressives in Botswana in the 1930s. Middle roaders advocated embracing certain aspects of European civilization while retaining many aspects of African culture. They were known as "accommodationists," "modernizers," or "reformers," the term preferred here. They favored a policy of gradualism through constitutional changes and remaining under British imperial rule over complete independence.⁴² Far from a total surrender to European values, they sought to understand foreign ideas and discern what was valuable for Africans. Their priority was to develop Africa by using European colonial technologies and institutions to fight against colonialism and European claims of universalism.⁴³

The idea that there was innate racial difference between Europeans and Africans collapsed in the interwar years. However, British colonizers still justified African inferiority and the need for imperial tutelage as a matter of circumstances and not inherent ability. They assumed that in time Africa would advance along the evolutionary trajectory and join the modern world. This shift to commonality coincided with a shift in colonial policy. Universal standards of progress challenged the indirect rule ideal of preserving African traditions. Zachernuk deduced that according to Nigerian intellectuals, "Africa's future prosperity no

⁴¹ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), xiv.

⁴² Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 89.

⁴³ Philip D. Curtin and James W. Fernandez, eds., *Africa and the West*, 232; Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 30.

longer required preserving the old, but insisted on creating the new, on bringing Africa up to European standards of development.”⁴⁴ This new era marked educated Africans acceptance that universal principles did apply to Africa. Africa’s cultural difference was important, but educated Africans considered difference historical and cultural, not racial or permanent.⁴⁵ There was a shift away from race peculiarity towards acceptance of a common human nature and a global civilization. For instance, Nigerian Ladipo Solanke espoused “universal brotherhood” and leading the government towards “the modern form of democracy” preferable throughout the civilized world. ⁴⁶

Accepting universal ideas did not mean that educated Africans abandoned African culture. According to Falola, in Nigeria, the 1930s marked the peak of the writing of cultural nationalists and local intellectuals who sought to “defend African cultural heritage in the face of Western stereotypes and the desire to document the past for prosperity.”⁴⁷ Already by the 1850s, Edward Wilmot Blyden had become the father of cultural nationalism because he blended progress with racial pride and dignity.⁴⁸ He rejected institutional models of Europe and white America based on the argument that they were unsuitable for African realities and advocated pride in African history, culture, and its unique contribution to global civilization.⁴⁹ Falola depicted him as “the first African philosopher to embrace the

⁴⁴ Philip Zachernuk, “Lagos Intelligentsia and the Idea of Progress,” in Toyin Falola, ed. *Yoruba Historiography* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991), 155.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 156.

⁴⁶ Ladipo Solanke, “Lectures delivered at the Abeokuta Centenary Celebrations on the Egba-Yoruba Constitutional Law and Its Historical Development, Lagos, 1931,” in Toyin Falola, *Yoruba Historiography*, 156.

⁴⁷ Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, eds., *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), x.

⁴⁸ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 35.

⁴⁹ Gloria Chuku, *The Igbo Intellectual Tradition: Creative Conflict in African and African Diasporic Thought*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10; Robert W. July, “Nineteenth-Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden.” *Journal of African History*, 5, 1, (1964): 73-86; Hollis Ralph Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford U.P, 1967).

ambiguities and complexities of modernization and tradition and to carefully reflect on how Africa could borrow European ideas while retaining its pride and identity.”⁵⁰ As Hakim Adi showed in regards to West African students in the 1920s and 1930s, cultural nationalism was not about national independence. The focus was to continue to cooperate with Britain to develop African nations culturally, economically, and politically.⁵¹

According to Falola, “The pioneering elite was more concerned with issues of culture: how the past could be preserved in writing, used to define the Self, and serve as an agency of development in a fast-changing world.”⁵² African intellectuals who emerged out of European-style schooling may have found foreign ideas appealing but they faced the challenge of applying them in the local context. The primary job of African intellectuals was to act as a mediator of history and culture. They presented European values to Africans, either as critics or reformers, and African history and culture to Europeans.”⁵³ The issues which remain consistent were, “how to retain and African identity and Africa for Africans while re-appropriating the West for progress.”⁵⁴ They focused on countering colonialism and racism through negotiation with Europeans. European-style education and colonial conditions made educated Africans aware of the need to fight for decolonization.⁵⁵

African cultural nationalists in the 1930s suggested that superior European technology had facilitated the colonial invasion. Many, including Motsete and the progressives, sought to harness European technologies and therefore deemed these technologies as the redeeming features of colonialism. For instance, new ideas like

⁵⁰ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 35.

⁵¹ Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998), 35-37.

⁵² Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, xviii.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, xviii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 27.

European-style education could shape Africa in positive ways. They contended that the onset of colonialism was a new beginning for Africa. One that would bring progress and benefits. However, as was the case with many of their views, they had an ambiguous relationship with colonialism. Falola suggested that the writings of cultural nationalists, “reflect on how colonialism could be effectively resisted, modified or transformed.”⁵⁶ They “reflected various shades of nationalism. Even when they welcomed the spread of Christianity and the imposition of colonial rule, they did so as nationalists who saw in such changes the possibility of transformation.”⁵⁷ Motsete and the progressives did not seek to isolate themselves from the colonial system. Instead, aware of the implications of their political actions, they sought to accommodate the British Empire and struggle against overt racism, colonialism and European authoritarianism by resisting or criticizing policies antithetical to advancing self-determination.

Motsete and the progressives criticized British imperialism even though they tried to find a means to accommodate themselves to it. Similar to other African cultural nationalists, Motsete and the progressives “were both culture bearers and culture creators, who also had to invent a future for Africa.”⁵⁸ They sought to reclaim African cultures, present cultures to Africans and Europeans, and envision a new African future. They planned to retain the benefits of European-style education while shedding its anti-African ideology and called for a hybrid theory of the old and new ways of life.

On one hand, Motsete and the progressives could not ignore African cultures and identities. On the other, European civilization meant that they could not totally accept

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 89.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 85.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 92.

African cultures. Falola argued, “As editors of two cultures, they had to present an image of themselves as intellectual superiors, discerning learners and teachers, wise leaders of their people, and arrogant followers of Europeans. Wanting to assimilate without being assimilated was tricky.”⁵⁹ According to the assessments made by Falola and Kwame Appiah, many African intellectuals had still failed to achieve this complicated balancing act at the turn of the millennium.⁶⁰

Fanon characterized African intellectuals as walking a tightrope between their beliefs in the cogency of ideas cultivated outside of Africa and their need to maintain association with their people.⁶¹ He showed that African intellectuals studied institutions in Europe or the United States and then organized similar institutions in Africa in order to mobilize the people and apply pressure to the colonial administration.⁶² Motsete and his colleagues operationalized concepts such as “liberty” and “British justice,” familiar to Europeans and others, for this very reason. They were formidable political tools to inspire commoners and to attract favor from local British authorities and the empire-wide liberal network. Nevertheless, as Kevin Gaines argued, discourses took on specific meanings in specific contexts.⁶³ For instance, it should not be assumed that Motsete advocated Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee model of education simply because he used the term “racial uplift,” or that Motsete’s use of “self-help” was merely condoning the ideas promoted by 19th century social reformer and contributor to mid-Victorian liberalism Samuel Smiles in *Self-Help*.⁶⁴ “Racial uplift” meant

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 31.

⁶⁰ Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), x; Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 32.

⁶¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 45.

⁶² *Ibid*, 107.

⁶³ Kevin Kelly Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁶⁴ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance* (Nashville, Tenn.: A.H. Redford, 1873).

advancing Africans. “Self-help” meant self-determination. Both were an attack on the doctrine of *laissez-faire* liberalism fundamental in settler colonial philosophy in Southern Africa.

Motsete used existing discourses such as “cooperation,” “racial uplift,” and “self-help” to engage with and speak to power in order to connect Africans to the ideological and financially supportive networks of the Black Atlantic. Gaines showed that American Blacks used the self-help ideology of racial uplift as a response to de jure segregation.⁶⁵ Motsete and his contemporaries deployed existing discourses such as “cooperation,” “racial uplift,” and “self-help” as an arsenal to incorporate Africans into racialized categories of colonial progress and civilization, while also transcending those categories by connecting Africans to alternative models for African advancement. For example, Motsete deployed the term “civilization” to critique settler colonial ideas of civilization. He promoted a worldview based on diasporic multiplicity and the notion that Christian civilization and global civilization was based on the accomplishments of humanity and transcended settler colonial interpretations of civilization or of civilizing Africans.⁶⁶

The Negritude movement of the late 1930s shows that although self-determination in colonial Africa was not predicated on gaining state sovereignty, educated Africans challenged racism and promoted pride in Africa’s achievements.⁶⁷ Léopold Sédar Senghor believed that a newly liberated Africa would contribute to an emerging [global civilization]

⁶⁵ Kevin Kelly Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*, xiv.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Jonathon L. Earle, “Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History,” in *African Intellectual History and Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7; David Northrup, *Crosscurrents in the Black Atlantic, 1770-1965: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008), 19.

in which each part of the world would have an equal role to play”⁶⁸ This discredited and displaced European universalism. Negritude was not simply a retort to European exceptionalism, but an articulation of values transcendent of European culture. Negritude was anti-colonial because it shattered the European universal model.⁶⁹ The Negritude movement rejected Eurocentrism for Black cultures and civilizations, and created a discursive space for the creation of counter discourses that contributed to black consciousness, pride in Afrocentric values, and a reversal of Eurocentrism.⁷⁰ Later generations deemed the Negritude movement outmoded because of its conciliatory or co-operational politics. However, Senghor and his colleagues in the late 1930s were in the unique position to reject cultural assimilation into European civilization and advocate global civilization as a symbiosis of all people.⁷¹ Senghor told Africans, “assimilate, do not be assimilated,” meaning Africans should contribute to global civilization by creating their own synthesis of their own and European cultures.⁷²

In the 1939 *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, one of the founders of the Negritude movement, Aimé Césaire, accepted that his sense of alienation was a consequence of colonial education.⁷³ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o elaborated on how the colonial process disconnected Africans’ minds from,

the place he or she already knows to a foreign starting point even with the body still remaining in his or her homeland. It is a process of

⁶⁸ Sylvia Washington Bâ, *The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1973), 153; Lifongo J. Vetinde and Amadou Tidiane Fofana, eds., *Ousmane Sembène and the Politics of Culture* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 6.

⁶⁹ Cheikh Thiam, *Return to the Kingdom of Childhood: Re-Envisioning the Legacy and Philosophical Relevance of Negritude* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014), 7-8.

⁷⁰ Lifongo J. Vetinde and Amadou Tidiane Fofana, *Ousmane Sembène and the Politics of Culture*, 6,17.

⁷¹ Sylvia Washington Bâ, *The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, 170-177; Basil Davidson, *Let Freedom Come: Africa in Modern History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 178-180.

⁷² Léopold Sédar Senghor, *La Communauté Impériale Française* (Paris: Alsatia, 1945).

⁷³ Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land: Bilingual Edition* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 2013), xiv; Janice Spleth, *Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), 7.

continuous alienation from the base, a continuous process of looking at oneself from the outside of self or with the lens of a stranger.⁷⁴

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni considers this type of alienation the result of mental colonization which results in an identity crisis in the colonized person.⁷⁵ Falola articulated the inescapable condition of alienation in the African intellectual.

The fear and appreciation of the west have created grave concerns, some bordering on alienation and others on excessive imitation. Academic and political thinkers have called for diverse strategies to in overcoming these fears and/or excesses. All have been forced to address the impact of the West on Africa... None has been able to move away from the framework of alienation.⁷⁶

The Negritude movement developed in the 1930s as a response to Europeanized Blacks' search for identity and self-assertion in the face of the alienation of living in a white world.⁷⁷ Césaire identified with W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of the double consciousness and attempted to create for colonized Blacks a version of Alan Locke's New Negro, whereby Africans accepted the charge to promote dignity within themselves and their communities and refuse to submit to racist dehumanization.⁷⁸

In Césaire's view, the imposition of colonialism impeded Africa from developing its own norms. Negritude was based on an attempt to remodeling old practices so that a new black humanity could emerge.⁷⁹ Robin Kelly argued that Césaire's sought to create a new forward-looking society.⁸⁰ His optimistic vision of the African future was a direct affront on

⁷⁴ Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, "A Globalectical Imagination," *World Literature Today*, 87,3 (2013), 39.

⁷⁵ Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Siphamandla Zondi, eds. *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2016), 34.

⁷⁶ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 17.

⁷⁷ Sylvia Washington Bâ, *The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, 158; Janice Spleth, *Léopold Sédar Senghor*, 22.

⁷⁸ Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, xiv.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Robin G. Kelly, "The Poetics of Anti-Colonialism" in Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism; A Poetics of Anticolonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

the negative stereotypes about Blacks and Africa furthered by Europeans.

Ntongela Masilela constructed a category called the “new African intellectuals,” to examine the more historically well-known educated Southern Africans comparable to Motsete and the progressives. According to Masilela, the new African intellectuals were committed to contemplate, criticize, and write about the questions pertinent to African society and its future. They acquired European-style education, became indoctrinated into the missionary discourse of the “civilizing mission,” and took inspiration from their African heritage, European modernity, the enlightenment, the thinkers of the Black Atlantic, and elsewhere. They undertook the process of cultural fusion as a means to interpret and respond to social change and re-defined themselves, combining cultural elements from Africa, Europe, and elsewhere into what became a uniquely African identity. The new African intellectuals saw themselves as the agents responsible to meet the historical challenge to usher in a new and improved future by reconciling the cultural practices that they regarded as outdated with those they considered productive in the colonial context.⁸¹

According to Masilela, the new African intellectuals attempted to forge the African future out of African culture, European-style education, and Christianity. Consequently, they all sought European-style education, many going abroad to study before returning to Africa to prepare themselves to meet the challenges of engaging with colonialism. The new African intellectuals considered European-style education as a prerequisite for reconciling cultural practices and therefore for defining Africa’s future. They asserted that their education and

⁸¹ Ntongela Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014), 1; Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement in South Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2013).

skills, not their racial traits or social class, qualified them as leaders and socio-political critics.⁸²

Comparable to their new African intellectual colleagues, Motsete and the progressives had obtained European-style education and were literate in English. Most were connected to the imperial order and/or the BaNgwato ruling class. They were equipped to articulate their responses to the socio-political order, the relationship between the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Britain, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate's position in the Southern African political and economic scene. The progressives presented themselves as educated, rational, and capable of understanding and solving a myriad of problems. They advocated for reforming the system of indirect rule and promoted European-style education as the basis for African socio-economic advancement.

Motsete and the progressives stood at the point of multiple ambitions. Cultural assertiveness was the crucial connection between philanthropists, European liberals in the British Empire, and the British administration's precarious goals for developing education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Motsete was a complex and motivated individual who engaged as a critical participant by seeking cooperation amid the parameters defined by the colonial government and the complex forces operating in the rapidly transforming Southern African socio-political milieu in the 1930s. Motsete operated amidst imperial power and contingent uncertainties and struck a balance between structures of power and individual agency. Men like Motsete, facilitators of European-style education, were powerful shapers of Africa's future. They were brokers of European frameworks, who applied them to both transform and reify African culture. Any program for development, including Motsete's Tati

⁸² *Ibid.*

Training Institute, was the result of interaction between complex and sometimes antagonistic expectations.

Motsete's task was not simply trying to understand the process of change. He attempted to alter Tswana and Kalanga society through his political reforms and by spreading European-style education. Motsete did not merely mitigate the implementation of British colonial education policies, nor was he working solely for the BaKalanga (Kalanga people) or for any specific vision of national progress. He sought inspiration from Southern Africa to the American South and beyond. From a variety of perspectives, he navigated the difficult terrain of African education. While prioritizing the many concerns of African elders, community leaders, students, and parents, he managed to balance the local and the global. Locally, he navigated the guidelines delineated by British imperial authorities. Globally, he considered how debates between liberals and conservatives in England and Southern Africa affected the African situation.

This study addresses what may seem like contradictions in Motsete's thoughts, ideas, and actions. He continually struggled to reconcile Tswana, Kalanga, and African cultures and histories with elements of European and global civilization. Motsete was faced with the significant task to retain an African identity, promote the Pan-Africanist notion of Africa for Africans, while reshaping ideas from Europe and the Black Atlantic for Africa. The challenge was to determine from where to draw models for progress. There were a myriad of alternatives circulating through the Black Atlantic and beyond. Motsete's ideas employed a variety of philosophies. Although categories like liberalism, nationalism, paternalism, Christian socialism are all legitimate categories for contextualizing Motsete's ideas and deconstructing his writings, none is consistent enough to claim as his credo.



Figure 1; K.T. Motsete, given to the author by Motsete's son Masego "Moso" Motsete, August 2017

Motsete is an example of the plurality of African traditions. He was aware of the variations and contradictions in schools of thought on imperial and colonial Africa. He contextualized for the local context a wide variety of ideas derived from Tswana, Kalanga, Black American, Christian missionary, and British culture. He drew on principles from Pan-Africanism, African liberalism, British imperialism, and settler colonialism. Motsete and the progressives are best treated as contemporaries of intellectuals in Africa, Britain, the United States and elsewhere, rather than as if they lagged behind or functioned in isolation.

Biography and History

Through the lens of a life history, the aim of telling K.T. Motsete's story is to advance what C. Wright Mills called "the sociological imagination." In other words, grappling with the intersection of biography and history by linking personal challenges to public issues and collective narratives.⁸³ T.C. McCaskie argued that agency and intersubjectivity are hard for historians to grasp because people often act with complexity, passion, and without clarity of purpose.⁸⁴ Thus, the challenge is to uncover Motsete's motivations, contextualize them in relationship to how he experienced his own agency or lack thereof, and provide a sense of the agency / structural dialectic.

Motsete's life history follows what Lisa Lindsay and John Sweet regarded as "a surge of studies of the 'Black Atlantic' organized around particular life stories."⁸⁵ By attaching names and faces to broad processes, it is possible to examine how individuals shaped the meanings of things like protection and indirect rule, and how these broader processes were

⁸³ C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Grove Press, 1961).

⁸⁴ T.C. McCaskie, "The Consuming Passions of Kwame Boakye: An Essay on Agency and Identity in Asante History," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13,1 (2000): 43–62, 44.

⁸⁵ Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, eds. *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 1.

experienced by individuals. Motsete's life story reveals examples of self-fashioning, which Lindsay referred to as "the personal struggle of the modern age – for selfhood, dignity, prosperity, freedom, justice, and community."⁸⁶ Motsete's trajectory is a means to understand how transnational, hybrid cultures of the Black Atlantic took shape in Botswana in the 1930s. Large scale processes such as mobility, imperialism, and education look different when viewed from the bottom up by those who experienced them. His partnership with ethnic minority Kalanga speaking communities demonstrates that in the 1930s, Motsete was grounded in the so called "bottom up" endeavors of Kalanga leaders dubbed "peasant intellectuals" by Stephen Feierman.⁸⁷ Motsete's life history reveals that his "struggles and strategies were about families, communities, and alliances ranging in scale from the intimate to the broadly political."⁸⁸ Out of the fragmented and scarce historical sources emerge a partial and fleeting but powerful story that "challenges the ideology of the autonomous individual" and presents the reader with the human reality of hybrid identities and the evolution of one's sense of self.⁸⁹ Robert Rotberg argued that "biography is history" because it seeks to uncover "the texture of human endeavor that emanates from a full appreciation of human motivation, the real or perceived constraints on human action, and exogenous influences on human behavior... The individual is always within the historical web."⁹⁰ According to Rotberg, biographical historians are able to uncover motivations, contextualize their subjects, and recover forgotten human agency and overlooked human efforts to produce historical change. Rotberg asserted that when historians illuminate "the influences, across

⁸⁶ Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, *Biography and the Black Atlantic*, 8.

⁸⁷ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 4,18.

⁸⁸ Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, *Biography and the Black Atlantic*, 15.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Robert I. Rotberg. "Biography and Historiography: Mutual Evidentiary and Interdisciplinary Considerations." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40,3 (2010): 305-24, 305-307, 324.

many dimensions, on an individual's life and work," they connect biography to intellectual history⁹¹

The editors of the journal *Global Intellectual History* defined intellectual historians as those seeking to recover "what people in the past meant by the things they said and what these things meant to them."⁹² In a like manner, Jonathan Earle described intellectual historians as being concerned with "how people made sense of their world."⁹³ According to Earle, "the intellectual history of Africa is concerned with understanding how communities in the past understood and debated the spaces they inhabited, and how discourses circulated and changed over time."⁹⁴ In the 1930s, African intellectuals were connected internationally, engaged in the global circulation of ideas, and concerned with how international ideas were interpreted and reworked for specific contexts in particular geographies.⁹⁵

In 2015, Falola suggested that the study of African intellectual history is a relatively new phenomenon. He alleged, "Very little is known of what African thinkers made of their times... African intellectual history comprises a small but growing body of scholarship that highlights how ... African writers intervened creatively in their political world."⁹⁶ According to Leo Spitzer, although historical writing on Africa went through a boom in 1960s, little work was done on African intellectual history in part because of the challenge of writing about African intellectual history in a comprehensive manner. Not only were there several

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Jonathon L. Earle, "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History," 3; Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds. *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁹³ David Cannadine, ed., *What Is Intellectual History Now?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002), 127; Jonathon L. Earle, "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History," 3.

⁹⁴ Jonathon L. Earle, "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History," 6.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Abdul Karim Bangura, *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 7; Derek R. Peterson and Giacomo Macola, eds., *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009).

ideological approaches in any given time period, “several modes of thought tended to coexist in the mind of a single individual – even when these seemed to be completely incompatible with each other.”⁹⁷

According to Falola, “the question that has dominated intellectual thinking in Africa in the last two hundred years has been constant: against the backdrop of western incursion, how can Africa uplift itself?”⁹⁸ For Falola, change, continuity with the past, and adaptations to new circumstances “have all been part of the challenges that intellectuals have confronted as they make sense of modernity and reflect on what they perceive as their alienation in a world increasingly dominated by European values.”⁹⁹ Thus, African intellectuals sought to understand the dialectic of change and continuity but also experienced the reality of the very process they were analyzing. This compelled them to confront a variety of alternatives for engaging with ideas.

Motsete’s life story is an example of the complex motivations and challenges of being a human being in a dynamic world. Frederick Cooper contended that without a nuanced approach, categories such as collaboration and resistance obscured the complexity in human aspirations and flattened the texture of people’s lives. He appealed for historians to analyze “the complex strategies of coping, of seizing the niches within changing economies, [and] of multi-sided engagement with forces inside and outside the community.”¹⁰⁰ The goal here is to accept Cooper’s challenge to seek to understand the ways that ideas formed and were actualized within and around the margins the socio-political context.

⁹⁷ Leo Spitzer, “Interpreting African Intellectual History: A Critical Review of the Past Decade, 1960-1970,” *African Studies Review*, 15,1 (1972): 113-118, 113.

⁹⁸ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals*, 15.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History.” *The American Historical Review*, 99,5 (1994): 1516-1533.

African Liberalism and Decolonization in the Bechuanaland Protectorate

Valuable historiographical canons have been written from a structural perspective. Examples are the liberation or anti-colonial historiography and the vast body of work framed from the vantage of political economy.¹⁰¹ Both had a profound impact on nationalism and independence between the 1960s and the 1980s. However, the structural approach is limited when it comes to analyzing the ideological formation of intellectuals, and the ambiguity and instability of the human experience. The radical critique of the 1970s and 1980s represented Southern African history as a class struggle connected to South African and international capitalism.¹⁰² Because they analyzed history predominantly at the structural level and emphasized the category of social class, these works neglected cultural and historical gradations at the individual level. The liberal historiography of Africa is also problematic because it was written as if there was actually a steady progress towards African rights and freedoms when in fact, the liberal political platform was a series of utter failures. Liberal political muscle did not gain strength in the decades between 1880 and 1970. Rather, it grew weaker. In retrospect, the liberal historiography is erroneous because it was underpinned by

¹⁰¹ For the liberation historiography: Amílcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral* (London: Heinemann, 1980); Amílcar Cabral, *Selected Texts by Amilcar Cabral* (London: Stage 1, 1974); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon, 1965); Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Panaf, 1974); Ahmed Sékou Touré, *Afrika and Imperialism* (Newark, N.J.: Jihad Pub, 1973).

For the radical historiography: Giovanni Arrighi and John S Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967); Colin Bundy, "African Peasants and Economic Change in South Africa, 1870-1913, with Particular Reference to the Café" (Ph.D. diss, University of Oxford, 1976); Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988); Steven Friedman, *Race, Class and Power: Harold Wolpe and the Radical Critique of Apartheid* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2015); Martin Legassick, *Academic Freedom and the Workers Struggle* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1999); I.R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London: Longman, 1988); Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope*; Harold Wolpe, *Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid* (Dar Es Salaam: University of Dar Es Salaam, 1974).

¹⁰² See: Radical historiography on the preceding footnote.

inherently flawed politics.

Politically, liberals anticipated slowly empowering Africans and expanding rights and access to social programs like education. However, through most of the 20th century, Southern Africa, led by settler regimes in apartheid South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, proved to be the slow removal of African rights. In South Africa, Apartheid (1948-1994) was a system of institutionalized racial segregation. Racial discrimination in Southern Rhodesia was codified by the Land Apportionment Act (1930), the Native Urban Areas Accommodation Act (1947), the Land Tenure Act (1969), and the color bar. Neither place developed into an inkling of a multi-racial country where Africans and Europeans shared institutions until Zimbabwe emerged in 1980 and the African National Congress took power in South Africa in 1994. Thus, the correct history of liberalism in colonized Southern Africa is failed politics, paternalism, inequality, and racism.

African liberals had a complicated relationship with European culture and the state. In his work on the African National Congress in the first decades of the 20th century, Peter Limb described African liberals as sharing respect for British justice, a sense of British identity, and aspects of British culture such as the use of the English language.¹⁰³ Still, Africans did not evoke British or liberal values without ambiguity and subversive sub-text. For instance, Africans may have sought innovation by employing European liberal ideas, but African liberalism was based on their distinct interpretations in a specific context. Even if they facilitated colonial rule, as many did to some degree or another, African liberals were critically engaged in the struggle against and formulated multiple and complex responses to colonialism.

¹⁰³ Peter Limb, *The ANC's Early Years: Nation, Class and Place in South Africa Before 1940* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), 8.

Motsete and the progressives embraced a form of African liberalism unique to the Bechuanaland Protectorate. They certainly opposed what they considered to be the most obviously damaging elements of imperial rule, such as overt racism and the subjugation of ethnic minorities. In the case of Motsete and his colleagues, African liberalism meant invoking British values and supporting British rule as a means to strengthen relations with British authorities. However, this was a means to confront colonial power, which under the guise of imperialism and nation attempted to infringe on the ability of Africans to shape their own destiny.

This study historicizes the broad process of decolonization, which took hold in the Bechuanaland Protectorate by the late 1920s, when Simon Ratshosa and other educated Africans began questioning the very nature of protection. In *Tensions of Empire*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler argued that conflicting visions of imperial rule opened up space within which colonized peoples challenged imperial structures and contested the very legitimacy of empire.¹⁰⁴ This is a story of the varied critiques which arose out of competing and plural narratives of decolonization. Since the 1990s, scholars such as Cooper, and Jean and John Comaroff presented interpretations of various people on both sides of the colonial encounter. They undertook the task of writing nuanced and multifaceted historical accounts that privileged the lives of multifarious actors.¹⁰⁵ At the turn of the millennium, scholars such as Stephan Miescher and Karin Barber, were part of the growing trend in African history to

¹⁰⁴ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule: Introduction." *American Ethnologist*. 16 (1989): 609-621, 620

¹⁰⁵ Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*; Cooper, *Tensions of Empire*; Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women*.

prioritize subjectivity and identity. They published biographical work focused on the internal lives of individuals and case studies of local cultural formation.¹⁰⁶

The appeal from Cooper and others derived from the premise that the categories of colonizer and colonized “were not fixed but problematic, contested, and changing.”¹⁰⁷ The discourses analyzed here highlight the “competing agendas for using power [and] competing strategies for maintaining control” by a variety of Africans, British officials and European liberals in South Africa and England.¹⁰⁸ Voices from Motsete, the progressives, Simon Ratshosa, Tshekedi Khama, BaNgwato secretary Peter Sebina, European liberals, and members of the British imperial administration show the “conflicting conceptions of morality and progress, which shaped formal debates as well as subterranean discourses” among those involved.¹⁰⁹ Variants of progress and distinct critiques were based on lived experiences and arose out of the shifting and fluid historical and cultural contexts.

Historians aptly showed that whether analyzed from the top down or from the economic vantage, European-style education in Africa was a matter of social control.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, subsequent historians shifted their attention to African agency and analyzed why Africans demanded schools, were keen on learning English, and resisted modified or adapted versions of European-style education.¹¹¹ Arguing that Africans insisted on access to

¹⁰⁶ Karin Barber, ed. *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006); Stephan Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, “Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule,” 609.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: D. McKay, 1974); Dickson Mungazi, *Education and Government Control in Zimbabwe: A Study of the Commissions of Inquiry, 1908-1974* (New York: Praeger, 1990); Rachel Sharp, Anthony G Green, and Jacqueline Lewis. *Education and Social Control: A Study in Progressive Primary Education* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975).

¹¹¹ J. Mutero Chirenje, *From Tuskegee to Fort Hare College: The Quest for Higher Education in Southern Africa, 1884-1916* ([Place of publication not identified: publisher not identified], 1980); Part Themba Mgadla. *A History of Education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate to 1965* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2003); Part Themba Mgadla, “Missionary and Colonial Education among the Bangwato, 1862-1948” (Ph.D. diss,

a curriculum on a par with that being offered in Europe and elsewhere, they contended that Africans actively sought European-style education because it had a profound impact on their communities. These histories made the case for the significance of African agents like Motsete, articulated the complexity of their responses, and demonstrated how they shaped their activities to fit their own inclinations.¹¹²

This further complicates the question of cultural imperialism, a point that historians have argued over for decades. The colonial administration may have successfully subjugated African economic and political life, but today's historical perspectives demonstrate that frequently it did not have control over powerful and influential Africans like Motsete. Africans continued to live on their own resolve whenever possible, and whole communities, like the BaKalanga, lived in colonial borderlands where state power was weak and inconsistent.

In African Music, Power and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe, Mhoze Chikowero worked beyond the validity of the social control paradigm. Chikowero's perspective is that although Africans may have seemed to be collaborators or accommodationist, ultimately, they were subversives. Chikowero observed,

Africans did not simply submit to the colonial designs... They variously mediated, accommodated, appropriated, resisted, and subverted those designs... The evaluation of colonial designs therefore simultaneously highlights the dialectical relationship between colonial violence and African ingenuity and innovativeness.¹¹³

Boston University, 1986); Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

¹¹² Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection."

¹¹³ Mhoze Chikowero, *African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 4.

Chikowero focused on how Africans like Motsete deployed European culture based on counterhegemonic self-fashioning. Motsete's education project transcended the state's program for social control. His authority as an educator was contingent on his being able to maintain his ability to fuse European-style education and African culture and history. The Tati Training Institute was a space where Motsete and his students cultivated African worldviews, especially regionally based Kalanga culture and history.

Politically, Motsete and the progressives fought their battle in the forum of the African courts, an arena for moral struggle and competing ideologies. Martin Chanock, Wazha Morpedi, and Isaac Schapera effectively argued that African customary law was historically constructed and fluid.¹¹⁴ Various people used African courts as an arena for asserting their claims and African law as their weapon to impose those claims. Because of contested norms, conceptualizations of customary law were used as a means to bolster specific ideologies and make others capitulate.

Under indirect rule, the *dikgosi* controlled the *kgotla* and therefore customary law. They employed it as a defense against Africans who had different interpretations of social obligations and as a means for resisting British authority. The historical case of the progressives' petition underscores Chanock's emphasis on the need to consider the differences in power, status and class between disputants and how unequal relationships perpetuated conflicts.¹¹⁵ Chanock's argument is akin to the "invented tradition" concept set

¹¹⁴ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Wazha G. Morapedi, "Demise or Resilience?: Customary Law and Chieftaincy in Twenty-First Century Botswana," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 28, 2 (2010): 215-230; Isaac Schapera, *Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and Social Change, 1795-1940* (London: Athlone P., 1970); I. Schapera, *Tswana Law and Custom* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), preface.

¹¹⁵ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order*, 17.

forth by Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm,¹¹⁶ whereby customary law is “an idealization of the past developed as an attempt to cope with social dislocation.”¹¹⁷

Conflicts such as the one which emerged between the *BaNgwato* and the progressives show that it is vital to prioritize plurality and historicize Africans heterogeneously. The colonial encounter was not simply African civilization confronting European civilization. Africans engaged in a world of competing interests and ideas. Intellectual thought was a product of the local context but informed by ideas spanning the entire globe. The idea that the colonial encounter was complex and not simply a clash of different cultures does not diminish the fact that although state policies varied to some degree in the various colonial territories, racism was endemic in every colonial context. When it came to the struggle against racism, Motsete and the progressives faced challenges similar to other Africans in the region and beyond. They struggled for individual rights in the imperial context where Africans were systematically denied liberty and equality and considered inferior by Europeans. Although racial boundaries limited the progressives’ capacity to promote African self-determination, they operated within the imposed limits and consistently challenged what is referred to here as “overt racism.” Here, “overt racism” is defined as those policies that liberal Africans deemed unacceptable despite accepting some degree of European paternalism.

Bhekizizwe Peterson demonstrated that as a temporary response, H.I.E. Dhlomo, Sol Plaatje, and Benedict Vilakazi struggled for individual rights in the colonial context by

¹¹⁶ E.J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹¹⁷ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order*, 17.

adopting the position of W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of the "talented tenth."¹¹⁸ The talented tenth was predicated on the idea that it was necessary to develop a Black leadership class in the context of de jure segregation as an interim step towards securing outright political rights for Blacks. Supporters of the theory sought a scheme to enable the top ten percent of Blacks to gain access to a classical or European-style education, so as to produce an educated group of exceptional leaders. The talented tenth was underpinned by the notion that equality was based on individual merit and ability instead of race. The majority of Africans who adopted variants of this approach were teachers, like Motsete, who saw themselves as role models who had accepted the responsibility of taking the first step towards equality.

But a theoretical approach akin to the talented tenth produces another paradox: the need to affirm the principle that all men are created equal while advocating the interests of a leadership class. Conceded here is the notion that accepting the responsibility of the talented tenth contradicted the progressives' argument for individual rights and equality for ethnic minorities because identifying as members of a talented tenth type class meant accepting that their education differentiated them from commoners. But as Peterson observed, this did not impede the talented tenth type class in Southern Africa who promoted the political salience of individual rights as well as claiming an elitist predisposition.¹¹⁹ Granted, colonialism was full of contradictions and in many cases Africans responded ambiguously. However, the concern here is examining Motsete and the progressives' modes for self-fashioning. Peterson described this as the "role-model inspirations that flowed from recognizing individual merit

¹¹⁸ Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries & African Intellectuals: African Theater and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 182.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and ability.”¹²⁰ In other words, how they conceived their responsibility to lead others as members of the talented tenth type group.

A primary tool for resisting racism was self-assertion or the promotion of the ideas a person made about him or herself. According to Stuart Hall, modernity and Blackness were ambiguous, frequently multilayered and seemingly conflicted.¹²¹ This was well articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois’s concept of the “double consciousness” or what Richard Wright called the “psychological fracture” in *Native Son*.¹²² Jean and John Comaroff asserted that Africans “on the road to modernity” were compelled to fashion themselves paradoxically as right bearing secular citizens of the civilized world and Black ethnic subjects of various African polities.¹²³

In the colonial context, race and ethnicity were socially constructed categories and therefore in an ongoing process of being redefined and contested. From this theoretical vantage, identity emerges as unstable, fluid, and enigmatic. Motsete and the progressives were never destined to some past disposition or Europeanization because despite the substantial confines of the colonial or imperial context, African cultural identity was always morphing, experiencing nostalgia for the past, and in a process of stretching towards an unrestrained and uncertain future.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 185.

¹²¹ Kuan-Hsing Chen, ed., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (Comedia. London: Routledge, 1996).

¹²² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1903); Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940).

¹²³ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Volume 2* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 400.

Sources

This study is limited to educated English speaking BaNgwato who left records of their ideas. Contemporaries of their historically better-known Southern African counterparts, intellectuals in Botswana held distinct perspectives that have received very little academic attention. Unlike the majority of their Southern African counterparts, intellectuals in Botswana emerged out of the political context of the system of indirect rule and were thus comparable in significant ways to their counterparts in British non-settler colonies in West Africa such as Nigeria and Ghana. This dissertation puts Motsete's historical material in conversation with the rarely used writings of other intellectuals in Botswana in the 1920s and 1930s, especially progressives Simon Ratshosa, Moanaphuti Segolodi and Leetile Raditladi.¹²⁴

Motsete appears in a very limited capacity in the comprehensive histories of Botswana. The basic historical narrative asserted that Motsete's Tati Training Institute was the first secondary school in the country and that he and Tshekedi Khama shared a history of political conflict.¹²⁵ Motsete disappears from the narrative for twenty years and re-appears in 1960 as the founder of the first mass nationalist political party, the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP), which became the victim of Seretse Khama's triumphant victory in Botswana's first presidential election.

¹²⁴ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom, etc. and Bechuanaland Protectorate and its Rulers*. unpublished, in *Vivien Frederic Ellenberger Papers*, microfilm; L. D. Raditladi, Motšwasele II (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1945); Moanaphuti Segolodi, "Ditso Tsa Batawana," original Setswana manuscript, 1940, in BNARS, Schapera Papers PP/1/2/9, translation July 11, 1994, by Mmualefhe Raditladi, edited by Barry Morton, May 2015, Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/12170767/Ditso_Tsa_Batawana_by_Moanaphuti_Segolodi_1940.

¹²⁵ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987); Jeff Ramsay, Part Themba Mgadla, and Barry Morton, *Building a Nation: A History of Botswana from 1800 to 1910* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1996); Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: Macmillan Botswana, 1984).

My efforts to seek out the existing evidence for reconstructing Motsete's life led me to uncover the complex dynamics of his life history. It also took me to libraries, archives, and historical sites from the United States to Southern Africa. Fortunately, Motsete was very articulate and left a significant amount of written material. I uncovered Motsete's story by putting his writings in conversation with other historical sources and in their broader context. Motsete emerged more clearly in some capacities than in others. His political aspirations and educational philosophies are well documented. However, his personal and spiritual life are relatively absent from the historical record. From interviews with his family and friends, I learned that Motsete was married with children and considered himself a spiritual person and believer in God.¹²⁶ Dr Gaositwe Chiepe, Botswana's first female cabinet member, diplomat and foreign minister, told me Motsete was handsome and walked through life with a happy disposition and a smile on his face.¹²⁷ Still, I choose to avoid significant engagement with his personal life because it seemed extraneous.

Motsete published numerous pieces setting forth his social and political programs which lay in the historical record, dormant and unengaged by historians. Motsete published his education objectives in "An Educational Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate" (1934), in the British colonial Education Department journal *Oversea Education*.¹²⁸ Motsete appeared as a participant in the record of the New Education Fellowship Conference in South Africa (1934) and the Jeanes Conference in South Africa (1935).¹²⁹ His most extensive socio-

¹²⁶ Interview with Masego Motsete, Gaborone, Botswana, August 30, 2018.

¹²⁷ Interview with Dr. Gaositwe Keagakwa Tibe Chiepe, Gaborone, Botswana, August 25, 2017.

¹²⁸ K.T. Motsete, "An Educational Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *Oversea Education: A Journal of Educational Experiment and Research in Tropical and Subtropical Areas*, 5,2 (January 1943): 58-64.

¹²⁹ Inter-territorial "Jeanes" Conference, *Report of the Interterritorial 'Jeanes' Conference, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia, May 27th - June 6th, 1935*. (Lovedale, S.A.: Lovedale Press, 1936); E. G. Malherbe, *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society: Report of the South African Education Conference Held in Capetown and Johannesburg in July 1934, Under the Auspices of the New Education Fellowship* (Capetown: Juta & Co, 1934).

political commentary is the four-part expose in the international Christian journal *The Laymen's Bulletin* he published in 1937 and 1938.¹³⁰

D.M. Mulale's University of Botswana History Department B.A. Dissertation (1977), "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete," based partially on interviews Mulale conducted with Motsete, is the only critically engaged history on Motsete's life.¹³¹ Mulale's study provides previously unknown details on many aspects of Motsete's life. It is of note that four decades later, Motsete adamantly defended his political activities in the 1930s. Mulale's central arguments are correct. Motsete was mis-understood publicly because there was so little information in the historical record on his motivations. For half a century after Botswana's independence in 1966, the public remembered Motsete as the man who established the first secondary school in the country, a political opponent of Tshekedi Khama, the politician who failed in his bid to become the first President of Botswana and the accomplished musician who penned Botswana's national anthem "*Fatshe Leno La Rona*" (Our Country or Blessed Be This Noble Land).

Constructing deeper histories of intellectual thinking in Botswana was challenging because the archives are scattered and there are a number of decisive writings by key figures that are difficult to access. Materials pertinent for this study are housed in collections spanning the globe: Botswana Notes and Records Services, Gaborone; The University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; University of Cape Town; National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare; School of Oriental and African Studies, London; University of London, London,

¹³⁰ K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 83 (December 1937); "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Second Article" 84 (March 1938); "The Incorporation Issue in Bechuanaland," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 85 (June 1938); "On the Imperfections of Missionaries," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 88 (March 1939).

¹³¹ Dingaan Mapondo Mulale, "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977).

University of Birmingham; and numerous archival depositories in the United States.

The vast majority of the archive on Motsete, the progressives, and the Tati Training Institute is housed at the Botswana National Archives and Records Services. It consists of about a dozen files containing detailed information on the Tati Training Institute, including reports and records, and about a dozen files scattered throughout pertaining to Motsete's political activities in the 1930s and the 1960s.¹³² Preserved at Botswana National Archives is the nearly three-hundred-page transcript of the inquiry into the progressives' petition, yet to be referenced in any published work.¹³³ In the decade Motsete operated the Tati Training Institute (1932-1942), he wrote extensively on the school. The archival files include correspondence, annual reports, and treatises on Motsete's education philosophy.

The experience of researching Motsete and the progressives suggested that there is a need for historians to work well beyond the repositories of African national archives and to consider how documentary sources housed in the piecemeal global archive, which Jean Allman deemed the "transnational shadow archive," challenge existing historical narratives.¹³⁴ The transnational shadow archive sufficiently enhanced my ability to, as Ann Stoler suggests, read "along the archival grain," and focus on critical engagement with the archive itself.¹³⁵ This study is therefore rooted in, but not dependent on, the shape of Botswana's reconfigured post-colonial state archive. Botswana's national archive contains valuable information about the Tati Training Institute, but it is not the authority on Motsete's

¹³² Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, DCS 38/1; DCS. 1/19; DCS.14/8; S.163/17; DCS15/3; UCCSA Private Archives Collection, Box 1; S.79/2; S.359/8; S.100/7; S.100/8/1; S.243/11-19; S.443/1/2.

¹³³ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives' Petition.

¹³⁴ Jean Marie Allman, "The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Tyrannies of History," *Journal of Women's History*, 21,3 (2009): 13-35.

¹³⁵ Ann Laura Stoler. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

political disposition. The materials at Botswana's national archive depict Motsete as a hasty and stubborn young intellectual, who was determined to assert his own ideas of progress. However, the richer materials housed elsewhere were evidence that Motsete was a thoughtful and innovative socio-political critic. The limited material housed at Botswana's national archive is a significant reason for why there are no historical accounts dedicated to Motsete, Simon Ratshosa, or the other progressives.

It is likely that Motsete was subjected to what Jean Allman called being purposely "forgotten" or "disappeared" from the historical record.¹³⁶ Motsete and the progressives were political adversaries of the Khama faction prior to independence and the Khama faction remained in power until Seretse Khama's administration as president of Botswana ended in 1980. Materials pertinent to Motsete and the progressives may have met their fate when the archive was reconfigured after Botswana's independence, as the young state was concerned with suppressing potential political opposition and ideas that threatened unification.

The majority of material used to examine Motsete's early life was collected from the piecemeal global shadow archive. The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) archive collection at SOAS in London contains the most information on Motsete's father Tumedisho Maruapula (circa 1878-1946) and their time at Tiger Kloof Native Institution in Vryburg, South Africa.¹³⁷ There is evidence of Motsete's activities as a student at Tiger Kloof Institute and of his relationship with L.M.S. missionary Chirgwin who played an instrumental role in Motsete's academic and professional trajectory. Published field reports by L.M.S. missionaries Chirgwin, Haile, Willoughby, Cousins, and Hawkins are valuable sources for

¹³⁶ Jean Marie Allman, "The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe."

¹³⁷ J.H.L. Burns, "Palapye and Serowe, 1889 – 1941," in *100 Years of Christianity Among the Bangwato. A Historical Account Published for the Shoshong Centenary Committee* (Lobatsi, Bechuanaland Protectorate, Bechuanaland Book Center, [no year specified]), chapter two.

piecing together personal details and setting the context for Motsete's schooling.¹³⁸ The archives of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland at the University of Birmingham detail Motsete's participation in the organization while schooling at Hackney and New College in London, later amalgamated into the University of London. They helped to flesh out how Motsete engaged with ideas such as global Christian culture and Christian socialism. Hubert William Peet's interview with Motsete published in 1929 as, "A Bantu's B.D.," in the Hampton school publication *The Southern Workman*, is the only interview of Motsete in existence conducted during the earlier portion of his life.¹³⁹ In it, Motsete lauded his personal relationship with and deep admiration for Chief Khama III, his propensity to study the Classics, and his love for composing Christian hymns infused with African influences. Motsete's correspondence with British liberals, especially Margaret Ballinger, are key sources for understanding Motsete's justifications for his political schemes and for how he conceptualized African progress.

Although the colonial archive related to Motsete, the progressives, and the Tati Training Institute is a memorial to the discourses circulating around Southern Africa in the context of colonial power relations, the thoughts and motivations of various players are frequently not apparent. Here, the goal is to lift the veil hiding the real meanings of words

¹³⁸ George Cousins, William Dower, and Charles James Tarring, *Report on Visit to the South African Missions of the Society, November 1910 - April 1911*, (London: London Missionary Society, 1911); London Missionary Society and A. M. Chirgwin, *Reports by Rev. A.M. Chirgwin, M.A. After a Secretarial Visit to South Africa September 1930 - February 1931* (London: London Missionary Society, 1931); A.M. Chirgwin, *An African Pilgrimage* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932); A.M. Chirgwin, *Yarns on Men of Africa* (London: Livingstone Press, 1937); Alfred John Haile, *African Bridge-Builders: Tiger Kloof Native Institution, South Africa* (Livingstone Press: London, 1937); John Rutherford, *Little Giant of Bechuanaland: A Biography of William Charles Willoughby, Missionary and Scholar* (Gaborone, Botswana: Botswana Society, 2009); W.C. Willoughby, *Native Life on the Transvaal Border* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1900); London Missionary Society, *Report of the Rev. W.S. Houghton and Dr. G.H. Hawkins, Deputation to Central Africa. March-June 1913* (London: London Missionary Society, 1913).

¹³⁹ Hubert William Peet, "A Bantu's B.D.," *Southern Workmen*, 57,12,lvii (December 1928): 516-517.

and dialogues, and un-silence the ways Motsete and the progressives understood their circumstances and formed their intentions. Below the exchanges preserved in the colonial archive exists the maneuvering of human beings in and around the world of power dynamics. Dialogues were deliberate and contain the deeper intentions of their architects: for example, what the speaker thought people wanted to hear or what would make the speaker relevant or their agenda attractive to their audience.

My reading of this archive shows that Motsete and his colleagues deployed terms such as “liberty,” “autocracy,” “slavery,” and “British justice” as calculated political devices designed to induce favorable responses. The material related to the Tati Training Institute displays Motsete’s skillful use of concepts familiar to British and colonial officials, like “self-help,” “uplift” and “education under Christian auspices” as a means to attract support. British and colonial officials wielded the power to set real limits on the African political agenda and to determine the viability of the school. Motsete spoke in terms he thought would make those in power regard his project as feasible and within the boundaries of their own, sometimes differing agendas. At the same time, Motsete and his colleagues did not accept these discourses at face value or simply mimic the rhetoric of power. They spoke to power by using these terminologies to both attract and critique the status quo. They understood that definitions were somewhat subjective and redefined over time. While engaging with these various discourses, Motsete and his colleagues maintained the space for reading and shaping their meanings to communicate multiple layers of meanings implicit in different contexts.

Chapter Outline

The seven chapters are arranged chronologically. Chapter one, “The Bechuanaland Protectorate: African Liberalism, Paternalism, and Nationalism (From the Mfecane to Charles Rey),” traces the political history of the Protectorate from the mid 19th century. Motsete and the progressives advocated a form of civic nationalism based on a liberal discourse of individual rights as a response to the ambiguity of indirect rule. The progressives, Botswana’s early nationalists, advocated continuation of and not destruction of the imperial order, a version of British imperialism capable of transcending African ethnic difference and settler colonialism.

The goal of chapters two and three is to foreground K.T. Motsete’s life as an educator and politician with the people and ideas with which he engaged in his formative years. Due to the scant source material directly related to this period of Motsete’s life, chapters two and three are somewhat speculative. In some instances, they rely on historical sources pertaining to the people connected with Motsete.

Chapter two, “Motsete’s Formative Years: Liberalism, Paternalism, the Classics, and Cultural Fusion (1899–1923),” traces the intellectual development of Motsete, the story’s protagonist, in the first twenty-four years of his life. At that time, Motsete’s ideas were shaped by two variants of liberal racial cooperation: the paternalism espoused by L.M.S. missionaries and the African self-determination exhibited by the BaNgwato chieftaincy. Motsete learned to reconcile African, European, and Christian traditions for the African context to advance African socio-economic interests.

Chapter three, “An Experience Abroad: Modeling Self Assertion (1923-1930),” examines how Motsete engaged with ideas such as British paternalism, social evolutionary

theory, Christian socialism, and concepts such as “racial uplift” and “self-help” circulating in the Black Atlantic. Motsete used these ideas as a means to critique the British Empire, conditions in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the dogma of European supremacy, and colonialism. His understanding of these concepts reinforced the critical non-racial liberalism he adopted in his formative years and considerably furthered his sense of the importance of forming an agenda for advancing African self-determination.

Chapter four, “The Progressives: Individual Liberty and Connections to African Culture and History,” examines the scheme set forth by Motsete and the progressives to heal the socio-political disjunction they attributed to ethnic and social differentiation. It details their critique of the *dikgosi* and their promotion of political and social rights for individuals and ethnic minorities. Although African liberals like Motsete and the progressives accepted paternalistic ideas temporarily, they distinguished between what they considered productive paternalism and crude European supremacy. By the 1930s, seeking to reaffirm their African identities, they turned towards African culture and heritage and cultivated previously dormant ethnic loyalties with ethnic leaders who shared their ideas for progress.

Chapter five, “The Progressives: African Advancement, English, and Allegiance to Empire,” shows that Motsete and the progressives aligned themselves with the British administration by accepting the historical narrative that protection was established based on the idea of Africans becoming British subjects with certain obligations. They based their reformist political agenda on their interpretation of British justice and *Pax Britannica*. This justified advocating European-style legal reforms designed to protect individual rights and their vision of a liberal non-racial polity based on individual achievement. The ubiquitous need to employ African culture and history compelled Motsete and the progressives to

remain oriented with African communities.¹⁴⁰ Structurally ambiguous, they identified with and struggled against the socio-economic problem of discrimination and racism common among Africans.

Chapter six, “The Progressives’ Petition: Customary law, African Self-Determination, and Liberalism,” examines the debates which arose out of disparate interpretations of African customary law and intensified after the progressives’ petition to British authorities and the ensuing inquiry. It details the progressives’ demands for individual rights, freedom of speech, and the right to private property, and establishes the connection they made between advocating for legal protections for individuals and equality for ethnic minority groups.

Chapter seven, “The Tati Training Institute and Self-Determination in the BuKalanga Borderlands,” shifts the focus to the ethnic minority Kalanga and Motsete’s attempt to seize the moment to inspire Africans to take advantage of the developing opportunities in European-style education. The focus is on the development of the Tati Training Institute which Motsete organized and managed, in partnership with TjiKalanga speaking community leaders, as its founder and principal. The school was a profound example of actualized self-determination for Kalanga communities struggling to preserve their influence.

¹⁴⁰ Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Chapter One

The Bechuanaland Protectorate:

African Liberalism, Paternalism, and Nationalism (From the Mfecane to Charles Rey)

In October 1933, Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete typed a progress report for the Tati Training Institute. The school had been in operation for only one year. In the planning stages, Motsete had proposed that the school would be maintained by the voluntary contributions made by Africans and friends. Motsete deemed it “an experiment in native cooperation with government aid.”¹ He had skillfully positioned the school as the responsibility of and benefit to Africans and the Bechuanaland Protectorate government.

Motsete faced serious challenges at the outset of the school. In its first year the school had twenty-four boarders and forty-two cattle. Motsete and numerous students had become ill with malaria.² In early 1932, Motsete reported that due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease and the ensuing cattle embargo befallen on the country, scholars were unable to raise sufficient money to pay school fees.

The failure of crops early this year which has resulted in the existing shortage of food, amounting to famine among the people, has further accentuated our difficulties by drying up another source of local native support, namely grain, from which the school benefited a great deal last year. The problem of feeding the boys has been aggravated by the recent high prices of the only available grain purchased at the stores.³

Motsete acknowledged that these difficulties were a serious setback to progress and posed a threat to the school’s existence. He appealed to all “friends,” for “HELP! HELP HELP!”⁴

¹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.243/11, “Outline of Scheme, The Tati Central School [later renamed The Tati Training Institute],” November 10, 1931.

² BNARS, S.243/13, K.T. Motsete, “Bakalanga Central School [later renamed The Tati Training Institute], Report for April 1932.”

³ BNARS, S.243/16, “Tati Training Institution, Progress (1932 – 1933),” October 13, 1933.

⁴ *Ibid.*

The school survived its initial growing pains and flourished in its second year. It had forty-two boarders in three dormitories.⁵ Classes were held under a tree near the store where Motsete had his temporary living quarters.⁶ In January 1934, Motsete triumphantly reported that the school had persevered through tough times and had won the confidence of the people. When shortages of food had threatened the school, “the chiefs and tribesmen rallied splendidly to the support of the school giving their last grain of corn. But our people are poor and cannot be expected to go on indefinitely to make such sacrifices.”⁷ Motsete reminded the government that two years prior, the school had been started “as an experiment under government auspices” and that even if it had “undoubtedly fulfilled expectations and thereby justified its existence,” the school deserved broad-based support because graduates were employed in a variety of capacities and were “playing an important role in the industrial and social life of the territory.”⁸

This sketch is symbolic of the prevailing interplay Motsete established between himself and the empire. It demonstrates how he skillfully balanced self-determination, liberalism, and nationalism. On one hand, he presented the Tati Training Institute to British authorities in a way that reinforced self-determination. His priority was to organize and manage the school. And on the other, he cajoled paternalists by reinforcing the notion that the school required liberal cooperation in the form of government support. Motsete’s use of the phrase, “the industrial and social life of the territory” showed that he pandered to the

⁵ BNARS, S.243/12, “Tati Training Institute (Formerly Bakalanga Central School),” December 10, 1932.

⁶ BNARS, S.243/13, Dumbrell, “School Report, Bakalanga Central School [later renamed The Tati Training Institute], Visited on September 26th, 1932,” October 6, 1932.

⁷ BNARS, S.243/13, Motsete to the Resident Commissioner and the Inspector of Education [Dumbrell], “The Tati Training Institution, January 31, 1934.

⁸ *Ibid.*

empire's agenda for development while staying committed to the idea that European-style education was the engine for advancing the nation.

This chapter traces the history of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from the mid 19th century to the 1930s in order to show that from its inception, the political system of protection was fraught with uncertainty of meaning. Unresolved ambiguity in the power dynamic under indirect rule between the British and African administrations led to political competition between the British and the *dikgosi* (chiefs), and between Africans. Buttressed by British authorities, the *dikgosi* developed a greater degree of autocracy in the 1920s. Indirect rule fostered conflicts and instability out of which emerged competing discourses and challenges to the state.

In the early 1930s, Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Charles Rey and Colonial Dominions Secretary Leopold Amery sought to implement a scheme of settler colonial development centered around expanding South African industry in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. They used African advisory councils as a strategy to ingratiate politically emergent educated Africans to the empire without endowing them with any real legal or political power. This was part of the larger imperial scheme to assemble and mobilize allies to support the implementation of Rey's proclamations designed to curtail the power of the Tswana *dikgosi* and break their ability to interfere with the empire's development agenda.⁹

Although African liberals accepted a degree of paternalism, adopted missionary discourse, and took a moderate reformist political position, they were prominent agents in

⁹ P.T. Mgadla and A.C. Campbell, "Dikgotla, Dikgosi and the Protectorate Administration," in John D. Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds., *Democracy in Botswana: The Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 52.

challenging imperial structures and regional settler colonialism. African liberals positioned themselves as supporters of the empire but expected rights and fair treatment. Within their advocacy, they asserted a strong critique of what they deemed unreasonable, especially overt racism and excessive paternalism.

Motsete and the progressives advocated a form of civic nationalism based on a liberal discourse of individual rights. This was a response to settler colonialism in the region and indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. They claimed that rights and freedoms should be consistent for all Southern African subjects of the British Empire. Internally, they advocated for accommodation of multiple levels of ethnic consciousness and for interethnic cooperation and mutuality. For instance, Motsete did not see a contradiction in simultaneously advocating for Kalanga cultural rights and a nationally based agenda.

Motsete and the progressives articulated an early form of nationalism in Botswana because they formed a critique of the political system of indirect rule and pressed for legal protections for individuals. The progressives and others who championed liberal ideas in the late 1920s reassembled in the late 1950s to organize the first mass national political parties that played an important part in the drive towards national independence.¹⁰ Therefore, examining early nationalism shows that there was significant ideological continuity between the politics of the 1930s and the 1960s and places into question the common erroneous historical narrative that nationalism arose in Botswana in the late 1950s. The progressives, Botswana's early nationalists, advocated continuation of and not destruction of the imperial order. However, they sought to significantly alter the systems of indirect rule and advocated a

¹⁰ Neil Parsons, "The Idea of Democracy," 179.

version of British imperialism capable of transcending African ethnic difference and settler colonialism.

A Political History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

In the British colonial system, a protectorate was a territory under the crown which was not used for European settlement and therefore was a non-settler colony. In theory, a protectorate was created through a treaty with or by invitation from African authorities. African authorities were responsible for the expenses and administration of the Protectorate and it was the responsibility of the British to protect it against claims by European or African rival powers. The system of protection did not safeguard African people, who were subjected by the authorities to policies similar to those in other colonial territories, such as taxation, racially based exclusions, some degree of land expropriation, and schemes to produce dependency on labor migration.¹¹

The Bechuanaland Protectorate was established in 1885, the year after the Berlin Conference further institutionalized the European imperial “scramble” for control of the African continent. Bechuanaland was the lands designated by European powers between the German colony of South-West Africa (now Namibia) and the Boer Transvaal Republic (now part of South Africa). Bechuanaland was inhabited primarily by SeTswana and TjiKalanga speaking groups and governed by Khama III, chief of the BaNgwato.

Boer aggression was the primary impetus for Khama III’s partnership with London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) missionary John Mackenzie, who began asking Britain for

¹¹ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 187.

protection against the Boer settlers in the 1850s.¹² Khama's fears of Boer rule intensified after German national Carl Mauch learned that gold existed in the Tati area in 1866. The British, facing the threat of the possibility of the unification of their German and Boer rivals, favored agreeing to protection over Bechuanaland as a means to secure their imperial interests in the region. The relationship of protection further coalesced after European discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1869 because Boer settlers grew increasingly interested in controlling the northward trading routes through Bechuanaland.¹³ In 1890, Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company were joined by Bechuanaland officials (mainly the Bechuanaland Border Police) and 1,700 BaNgwato, in the invasion of Zimbabwe and the British South Africa Company's war against the Ndebele between 1893 and 1894.¹⁴ After the war, the British South Africa Company maneuvered to assume power over Bechuanaland. In September 1895, Khama III of the Bangwato, Sebele I of the Bakwena, and Bathoen I of the Bangwaketse, known as "the three *dikgosi*," in partnership with W.C. Willoughby, the L.M.S. missionary, petitioned Britain to agree to designate Bechuanaland as a British protectorate. Their goal was to secure Bechuanaland from a British South Africa Company or Boer takeover. In response, the British split northern and southern Bechuanaland into two political entities. The northern section became the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the British declared the southern section a colony and annexed it to the Cape Colony.¹⁵

The Mfecane (the crushing or scattering) was a series of wars and forced migrations

¹² Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: Macmillan Botswana, 1984), 147.

¹³ *Ibid*, 150.

¹⁴ A. Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1952), 65.

¹⁵ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, 285.

in the second and third decades of the 19th century that changed the demographic, social, and political configuration of southern and parts of central and eastern Africa. John Omer Cooper's *The Zulu Aftermath* reflected the pervasive historical argument made by the colonial settlers of Southern Africa that violence initiated by Nguni groups, such as the Zulu in South Africa and Ndebele in western Zimbabwe, was responsible for radical political and social changes among African societies like the Tswana and Kalanga in Bechuanaland. Colonial settlers used this argument to obscure the effect of the colonial imposition and deny their own culpability. It led to the inaccurate but commonly held historical narrative that the Ndebele threat was the primary impetus for the three *dikgosi* requesting Britain to place the Bechuanaland Protectorate under its protection.¹⁶ Julian Cobbing's retort of Cooper's thesis, "The Mfecane as Alibi," correctly situated the violence stemming from European settler territorial expansion as the primary motivator for requesting protection.¹⁷ Based on Cobbing's argument, the relationship between Africans and missionaries developed more out of the arms trade and as an outcrop of military strategy in and around the Mfecane than around Christianity or education."¹⁸

In the 1850s, Tswana leaders used missionaries to ward off the Boers and maintain relations with the Ndebele. Allies Khama III and the L.M.S. sought British protection primarily as a means to fortify their military and economic interests against the power of the Boers and the British South Africa Company. A pattern of mutual coexistence emerged by the 1880s between the BaTswana (the people who speak SeTswana), the L.M.S., and

¹⁶ John Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath* (London: Longman, 1966).

¹⁷ Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo," *Journal of African History*, 29, 1988; Christopher C. Saunders, *Writing History: South Africa's Urban Past and Other Essays* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1992), chapter eight.

¹⁸ J Mutero Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana, 1850-1910* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), chapters one and two.

European traders, while frequent Boer incursions into Tswana territory reinforced Africans' reliance on Britain.¹⁹

Although protection was primarily security against European hostility, military conflict did eventually develop between the BaNgwato and Ndebele. By the 1850s, conflicts emerged as the BaNgwato and Ndebele sought to control the Tati area (between the Shashi and Matlotsi Rivers). This forced the majority of the BaKalanga living in the Tati area to seek shelter in Khama III's country to the east and in the following decade, Ndebele raids into BaNgwato territory intensified.²⁰ Thus, beginning in the middle of the 19th century, power relations among Kalanga communities in the Tati area were convoluted.²¹ Historically self-determined and not definitively aligned with either of their neighboring BaNgwato or Ndebele polities, the BaKalanga resisted the dimensions of African and imperial rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate which threatened their sovereignty.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, chapter three.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ J.T.M. Nyamupachitu, "Bechuanaland Protectorate-Southern Rhodesia International Border: Its Effects on the Partitioned Ikalanga-Speaking Society" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1989), 27.

British officials governed the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a territory of the British Empire. In 1899, they split the territory into eight geographical areas called reserves, each designated as the homeland for a certain SeTswana speaking group they referred to as a “tribe.”²² In addition, there were Crown Lands under the jurisdiction of the British and the Tati Company administered lands, under the jurisdiction of the Tati mining company. Each reserve was headed by its own *kgosi* (chief). The BaNgwato were the largest group on the largest reserve, so the Bangwato *kgosi* acted as the head over the other seven. Overall, SeTswana speaking groups made up about 80 percent of the population.²³ The remaining 20 percent were ethnic minorities, the majority of which were TjiKalanga speakers. Kalanga communities lived on the Tati Company administered lands (later named the North-East District) or in the BaNgwato Reserve (later named the Central District) under the rule of the BaNgwato *kgosi*.

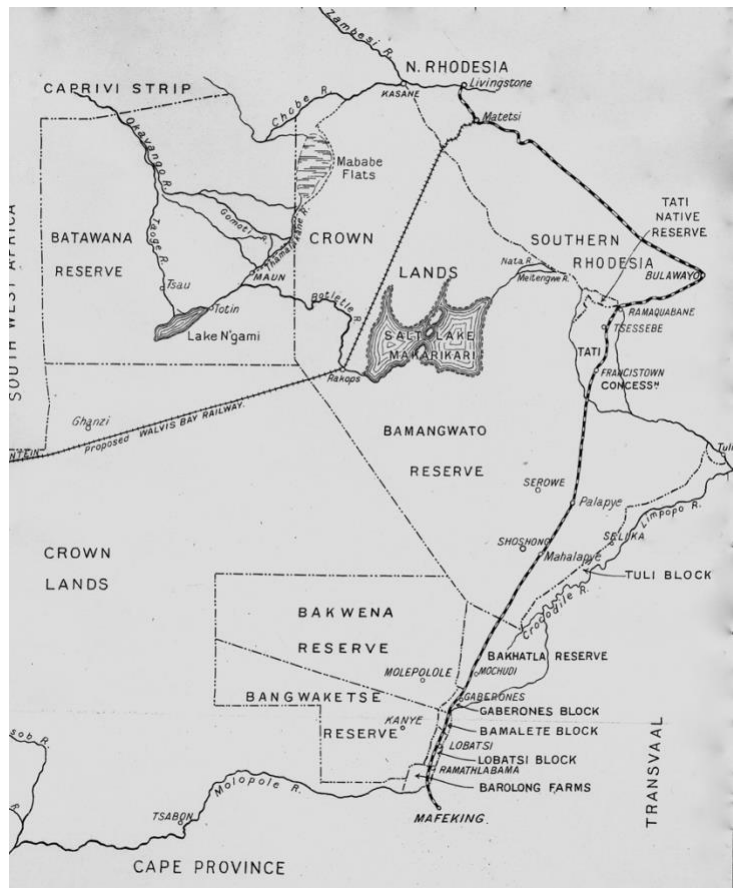


Figure 2; the Bechuanaland Protectorate Reserves

²² A. Sillery, *The Bechuanaland Protectorate*.

²³ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, 167.

Instituted by British officials, the reserves system redefined the jurisdiction of the *dikgosi* as territorial. This made land occupation more important than ethnicity or political allegiances as the basis for chiefly authority. A *kgosi* governed all inhabitants living in his reserve. Land enclosure and fixed settlement patterns limited the land available for Africans living in those reserves and blocked those who wanted to break away from the rule of the *kgosi* and establish their own chieftaincy. Routinely, the *dikgosi* in the *kgotla* (administrative center or African court) or British officials adjudicated disputes in favor of the *dikgosi* as a means to preserve the authority of the government. The delineation of the reserves greatly weakened the existing system of checks and balances on the power of the *dikgosi* and resulted in a greater degree of autocracy in the governing practices of the *dikgosi*.²⁴

The delineation of reserves also perpetuated ethnic and social differentiation within and between the various Tswana chieftaincies. Distinctions between various ethnic groups became more acute. Although the Tswana had systems for integrating ethnically diverse groups, the stress of colonization and especially land shortages increased tensions between the Tswana and the ethnic minorities living within the reserves they governed. In the system of reserves, the BaKalanga and other ethnic minorities such as the Basarwa, BaYei and BaKgalagadi were excluded from political power and access to land.

Indirect rule was the political system operative in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The primary concern of the British was political and economic control and it was this that shaped the administrative and legal system. Under indirect rule, the British were theoretically responsible for all external relations, while the *dikgosi* were responsible to govern their subjects by means of the African legal system referred to here as “customary law.” Colonial

²⁴ Christian John Makgala, *Elite Conflict in Botswana: A History* (South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2006), 18.

officials deemed the African legal system “native law and custom.” But for the past fifty years, scholars have used the term “customary law.” Nevertheless, customary law under indirect rule was neither customary nor traditional. From the moment the British established indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, they reinforced the powers of the *dikgosi* to regulate and control customary law.

Beginning in the 1950s, historians deemed the system in the Bechuanaland Protectorate parallel rule founded on an idealized notion that the system was a non-hierarchical form of indirect rule based on of a balance of power between the British and the Tswana *dikgosi*.²⁵ Despite those who advanced the ideal that protection meant that the *dikgosi* and the British had equal political power, the reality was that the system in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was not much different from the indirect rule instituted in numerous non-settler British colonies because a hierarchy of rule was firmly set in place.²⁶ At the top was the Dominions Secretary in London, followed by the High Commissioner in Cape Town, South Africa, then the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking, South Africa, local British officials in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and finally, the *dikgosi*.

Although the *dikgosi* agreed to protection and accommodated indirect rule, they considered themselves on an equal footing with British officials and wanted to rule their people according to their own interpretations of customary law.²⁷ Shortly after the declaration of protection, conflicts emerged between the British and individual *dikgosi* that

²⁵ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), chapter two, section vii.

²⁶ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), 2.

²⁷ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order*; Kristin Mann and Richard L. Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991); Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana*, 146.

cut to the heart of the very nature of their political relationship.²⁸ Each *kgosi* faced a unique set of challenges based on their population. The result was that each reserve evolved based on a unique set of social, political, and economic experiences. Hence, the Bechuanaland Protectorate was really a polity made up of eight discreet districts.²⁹ Following the demarcation of boundaries in 1899, Khama III ruled over the Central District, the largest reserve in the Protectorate.³⁰ About 80 percent of his subjects were BaNgwato. The vast majority of the rest were ethnic minority BaKalanga.³¹

The unresolved ambiguity in the power dynamic between the British and African administrations under indirect rule led to political competition between the British and the *dikgosi*, and between the administration and others within the polity. Buttressed by British authorities, the *dikgosi* developed a greater degree of autocracy in the 1920s under what Mahmood Mamdani aptly referred to as “decentralized despotism.”³² Indirect rule failed to mediate conflict, in part because it relied heavily on authoritarian measures and undermined fluid power relations at the local level. This fostered conflicts and instability, out of which emerged competing discourses and challenges to the state from a variety of African positions. The British administration depended on upholding the authority of the *dikgosi*. Mamdani asserted, that because the system of indirect rule reinforced chiefly despotism, the anti-colonial movement in the 1930s was at the basic level an attack on chiefly power.³³ As

²⁸ Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana*, 152.

²⁹ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana*, 1.

³⁰ Glorious B. Gumbo, “The Demarcation of Reserve Boundaries in the Bechuanaland Protectorate” (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1986); A. Sillery. *Bechuanaland Protectorate*, chapter seven and eight.

³¹ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, 167.

³² Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 219; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³³ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 104.

tensions between Africans intensified in the 1920s and 1930s, it prompted the British to implement a scheme to curtail the power of the *dikgosi* through a series of proclamations which Resident Commissioner Charles Rey attempted to implement in the middle 1930s referred to here as “Rey’s proclamations.”³⁴

The administration of Charles Rey, Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate (1930-1937) blamed internal tensions on socio-economic stagnation in the 1920s and promoted a development plan to expand the South African settler colonial mining and commercial agriculture industry in the Protectorate. In 1925, Leopold Amery, the new Colonial Dominions Secretary, removed the High Commission Territories (including the Bechuanaland Protectorate) from the Colonial Office and placed them under the newly created Dominions Office responsible for South Africa and other settler dominions. In order to allow the government to establish a program for colonial development, Amery recruited Charles Rey to institute a policy similar to the one promoted by the governor of Kenya, Robert Coryndon.³⁵ Hence, Amery and Rey’s basic orientation was towards implementing a scheme of settler colonial development centered around expanding South African industry in the Protectorate.

³⁴ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 212; The National Archives, Kew, London, CO 567/16/30, “Interview Granted by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Tshekedi Khama (1930),” in Casper Andersen and Andrew Cohen, eds. *The Government and Administration of Africa, 1880-1939, Volume 4* (London: Routledge, 2016); Michael Crowder, “‘I Want to Be Taught How to Govern My Country Not to Be Taught How to Be Governed’: Tshekedi Khama and Opposition to the British Administration in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-1930” (Nairobi, Kenya: Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, 1985); Christian John Makgala, “Limitations of British Territorial Control in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1918-1953,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36,1 (2010): 57-71.

³⁵ Neil Parsons, “Colonel Rey and the Colonial Rulers of Botswana: Mercenary and Missionary Traditions in Administration, 1884–1955,” in J.F. Ade Ajayi, J. D. Y. Peel, and Michael Crowder, eds., *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder* (London: Longman, 1992): 199; Sir Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929-37* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988): xxi.

Amery's primary concern was to protect British political authority and avert political insurrection. He adhered to the paternalistic notion that at least for the time being, imperial rule must be maintained as Africans were being groomed to handle political power and established African advisory councils to cultivate cooperation with Africans congenial to imperial rule.³⁶ The African advisory councils established in the Protectorate had no real political power.³⁷ They therefore did not satisfy Africans who hoped they were a mechanism to diffuse power away from the ruling elite or democratize the state within the systems of indirect rule. Instead, the councils were merely a means for the paternalistic imperial government to provide an outlet for dissenting opinions, diffuse the tensions directed at the status quo, and protect the under-fire administration. Although battles ensued over which African elites would participate, the *dikgosi* controlled who populated the councils. Dissenting voices did emerge in the councils, but they had no legal authority and as such were ineffective in opposing government policy.³⁸

As Amery's agent, Rey's primary objective was to implement his proclamations designed to alter the existing system of indirect rule to allow the administration to establish their scheme for South African development.³⁹ Khama III died in 1923 and Tshekedi Khama took over as BaNgwato Regent in 1926 because the heir to the chieftaincy, Seretse Khama, was still a minor. During the regency, Tshekedi Khama gallantly opposed Rey's proclamations and his colonial development agenda. As Tshekedi Khama's biographer Michael Crowder demonstrated, Tshekedi Khama was competent as a political strategist and

³⁶ E. Hilton Young, *Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies of Eastern and Central Africa*, Cmd 3234 (London: H. M. Stationery Off, 1929).

³⁷ Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 203.

³⁸ Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 204.

³⁹ Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey*, 199.

apt in handling internal and external opposition.⁴⁰ Outright antagonism emerged between the British authorities and the *dikgosi* during Rey's administration. Rey responded by encouraging educated Africans to take a more prominent political role to offset the power of the *dikgosi*. Tshekedi Khama deferred practically all of the proposed colonial reforms through the mid 1930s, including Rey's proclamations and South African mining. He opposed mining because of the negative social consequences apparent in South Africa and because he believed that any capital investment in the Protectorate would strengthen South Africa's case for incorporation. As a young regent, Tshekedi Khama exploited the ambiguity of indirect rule to force the British to contend with an African authority in ways they had not experienced elsewhere on the continent. He successfully challenged British authority without being deposed. So, by the late 1920s, indirect rule hinged on a precarious political partnership between the African and British administrations.⁴¹

African Liberalism and Paternalism

By the 1920s, in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, European-style missionary education produced a class of educated Africans anxious to participate politically. However, under indirect rule, they were disregarded in favor of chiefs.⁴² Subjected to the power nexus of imperial officials, African authorities and European missionaries, educated Africans tried to protect themselves and broaden their political role. They proposed legal protections in such matters as personal property and freedom of speech and urged the British to implement a

⁴⁰ Michael Crowder, "Tshekedi Khama and Opposition to the British Administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-1936." *The Journal of African History* 26,2 (1985): 193-214.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, 199.

system of appeals whereby British courts could review unfavorable judgements handed down by African authorities in the customary law courts.⁴³

Neil Parsons argued that educated Africans, including Motsete and the progressives, tried to legally disconnect themselves from their chieftaincies to establish the independence necessary to organize themselves politically.⁴⁴ They identified as members of the vast majority of people, referred to here as “commoners.” Those who were not politically or economically elite, were subjected to imperial rule, and were most affected by government policies.⁴⁵ Identifying as commoners justified educated Africans’ claim to understand the best course for advancing the interests of the vast majority of people.

The progressives developed their agenda for progress in part based on historical accounts of Khama III’s administration written in the early 20th century. Historians, such as G.A. Gollock and Julian Mockford, celebrated Khama III for successfully incorporating social reforms such as European-style education and Christianity to preserve African self-determination in the face of the colonial imposition.⁴⁶ In the 1920s, colonial observers argued that Khama III’s adept political scheme differentiated him from less successful African rulers.⁴⁷ They attributed this to his ability to balance European ideas with African self-determination. Influenced by these historical narratives, Motsete and his colleagues adopted the idea that they were entrusted with the task of preserving African self-determination by

⁴³ An appeals system was instituted in the neighboring Protectorate Lesotho (then called Basutoland) when the Basutoland (National) Council formed in 1910.

⁴⁴ Neil Parsons, “The Idea of Democracy,” 183.

⁴⁵ K.T. Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” *The Laymen’s Bulletin*, 83 (December 1937): 7.

⁴⁶ G.A. Gollock, *Sons of Africa* (New York: Friendship Press, 1928); Julian Mockford, *Khama: King of the Bamangwato* (London: J. Cape, 1931); W.C. Willoughby, “Khama: A Bantu Reformer,” *International Review of Mission*. 13,1 (1924).

⁴⁷ Neil Parsons, “The ‘Image’ of Khama the Great: 1868 to 1970,” *Botswana Notes and Records*. 3,40 (1971), 58.

maintaining the trajectory set forth by Khama III. In his manuscript “The Destiny of Seretse Khama,” Leetile Raditladi, a colleague of the progressives, depicted Khama III as an “Englishmen” and a “friend of the British.”⁴⁸ Fierce competition emerged between the progressives and the BaNgwato establishment as both claimed the right to perpetuate their interpretation of Khama III’s legacy and the trajectory he set forth for the country.

The progressives emerged because by the 1920s decades of colonization and commercialization produced the potential for economic, social, and political mobility.⁴⁹ This meant there were new opportunities for a variety of people to critique and challenge existing institutions. In the non-settler colonies in Africa, the British mitigated their support for the African administration and began searching for opportunities to cultivate relationships with innovative Africans they considered potential partners in their emergent agenda for colonial development. It was based on this agenda that the British engaged with Motsete and the progressives.

Although the progressives posed a challenge to British authorities and colonial power throughout the region, they did so by critically accepting and promoting British imperial rule. As a component of accommodating British imperial rule, the progressives promoted interracial cooperation as the best response to racial discrimination. They were operating within a certain socio-political framework known as Cape liberalism and were deeply steeped in the Cape liberal notion that Africans and Europeans were economically bound up together and thus the good of Africans was the good of Europeans and vice versa. Supporting non-

⁴⁸ Michael Crowder Papers (Crowder), Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London, London, England, ICS123, Box 19; Leetile D. Raditladi, “The Destiny of Seretse Khama,” unpublished manuscript.

⁴⁹ O. Marata, “African Traders in the North-Eastern District up to 1981: The Rise and Development of an African Middle Class,” (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1983); I. Schapera, “Labour Migration from a Bechuanaland Native Reserve: Part I.” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 32, 129, (1933): 386–97.

racialism did not mean Africans of this era were duped into cooperating with Europeans or that they were uncritical or oblivious to the limitations of the liberal position. It meant that they favored non-racialism based on the existing circumstances, one of which was their belief that imperial rule was inescapable in the near future.

Europeans founded Cape liberalism in Southern Africa based on concerns for oppressed people. Such ideas were held in particular by missionaries, especially those of the L.M.S. In the first decades of the 19th century, the L.M.S. pressed for the removal of restrictions imposed on the Khoikhoi and argued for liberating Africans they deemed as enslaved. By the 1850s, Cape liberalism had developed into the British Government's response to settler aggression. Based on the color-blind franchise of representative government granted to the Cape in 1853, the tradition emerged that all colonial legislation should be color-blind. With very few exceptions, this was the case in the Cape for the rest of the century. However, governments instituted racially based legislation in other parts of what would later become the Union of South Africa, such as the Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

Cape liberals promoted Cape liberalism as a third alternative in the persistent debate whether it was best to assimilate or segregate Africans and Europeans. This debate intensified in and around the Union of South Africa in 1910. Cape liberalism was a political alternative to the settler colonial affinity for segregation. Although Cape liberals believed that Africans and Europeans were permanently integrated economically, they resisted social integration and accepted territorial segregation. They accepted political and legal segregation as a temporary concession to settler colonial political power, but this hinged on their idea that South Africa would eventually become a multi-racial country based on commonality instead

of legal discrimination.⁵⁰ In the 20th century, Cape liberalism, also known as “African liberalism,” the term preferred here, turned into the partnership between paternalistic Europeans and the class of educated Africans. It was sustained in the churches, English speaking institutions, and in the Joint Councils movement. African liberals generally looked to Britain for support in extending rights and protections to Africans on the continent.⁵¹

Cape liberalism was based on linear social evolutionary theory, which maintained that all societies could be classified according to the stage of development they had reached. This produced a hierarchy whereby western European societies were the most advanced and African societies were at an earlier stage in the process of linear development.⁵² Social evolutionary theory affected British attitudes towards how they perceived the potential speed of social change. Social evolutionary theorists believed that under normal circumstances it would take centuries for Africa to catch up to Europe. Accordingly, they claimed that through paternalistic intervention, they could shorten the process.⁵³ All paternalists agreed that control over the colonies must be continued until Africans were better equipped to handle the negative consequences of European socio-economic and cultural contact. However, they debated the nature of paternalistic interventions. In the 1920s, based on notions of trusteeship embodied in the League of Nations, a growing number of British paternalistic critics of colonialism emerged who advocated that the responsible policy of a just British Empire was to replace the so called “laissez-faire policies” of exploitative

⁵⁰ Christopher C. Saunders, Nicholas Southey, and Mary-Lynn Suttie. *Historical Dictionary of South Africa*. 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 156.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Penelope Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa, 1920-1940* (London: F. Cass, 1978), 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 66.

colonialism with paternalistic socio-economic assistance programs designed to mitigate the impact of colonialism.⁵⁴

Article 22 of the League of Nations covenant shaped paternalistic ideas. Article 22, ratified in 1923, stated that the administration of territories mandated to Britain and France after the First World War and “inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world” formed a “sacred trust of civilization,” and therefore, advanced nations were entrusted with the tutelage of such peoples.⁵⁵ The mandate system institutionalized the concept of trusteeship, which meant eventual autonomy for colonized territories. This discourse informed and reshaped ideas about protection in Southern Africa. But as was the case with protection, trusteeship and international oversight were conceptually vague and led to a variety of different interpretations. To make things even more confusing, after 1923, discourses related to the mandates, trusteeship, and protection became comingled and were in most cases indistinguishable from each other.

British liberals, such as Leonard Barnes and Norman Leys, considered the League of Nations mandates a response to European exploitative colonial practices and claimed that trusteeship meant promoting the welfare and development of Africans with all deliberate speed. The African liberal paternalist doctrine involved faith in the good intentions of European administrators and missionaries in Africa. Paternalists tended to stress the importance of preserving what they deemed desirable in African societies as part of a larger scheme to advocate for the benefits of a synthesized version of African and European culture.⁵⁶ They emphasized the need for developing African societies to mitigate the socio-

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 62.

⁵⁵ Michael D. Callahan, *A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa, 1929-1946* (Brighton: Sussex, Academic Press, 2004), introduction.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 51.

economic impact of imperialism. Liberals aimed their criticism at British society and maintained the ideological paradox of honoring the freedoms and rights associated with the liberal ideology while maintaining that Africans were backward and in need of assistance.

In the 1920s, European liberals encouraged paternalistic policies under the guise of trusteeship. They perceived history as a universal linear process in line with the enlightenment ideas of reason and individualism, and the liberal ideas of liberty, progress, toleration, fraternity, constitutional government, and separation of church and state. They sought to carry Africans along the historical continuum and argued that through rational paternalist intervention, they could transform African society into a culture of enlightened liberated individuals. They accepted the idea that it was the burden of Europeans to civilize, control, develop, and protect Africans.⁵⁷

The mission schools were the place where Africans engaged in the liberal paternalistic discourse of the civilizing mission. Out of these schools emerged the liberal paternalistic historiographical tradition written by African moderates beginning in the 1920s.⁵⁸ The writers of these works exhibited racial tolerance, meaning they opposed racism but did not demonize all Europeans. They maintained a critical but optimistic attitude towards the role of the British Empire in Southern Africa. They accepted some degree of political and territorial segregation of Africans and Europeans. Politically, their position aligned with the decades-old Cape liberal position. They supported the qualified franchise and Cecil Rhodes dictum of “equal rights for all civilized men.”⁵⁹ Consequently, they

⁵⁷ Saul Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1989) cited in Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries & African Intellectuals: African Theater and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press Inc, 2000), 15.

⁵⁸ S.M. Molema, *The Bantu, Past and Present: An Ethnographical & Historical Study of the Native Races of South Africa* (Edinburgh: W. Green & Son, 1920).

⁵⁹ Gordon Le Sueur, *Cecil Rhodes: The Man and His Work* (London: John Murray, 1913).

supported, at least temporarily, a non-democratic system whereby commoners held a meager amount of political power.⁶⁰

African liberals who subscribed to paternalistic social evolutionary theory were resigned to the idea of European societies at the top of the hierarchy with African societies somewhere further down. As such, they were bound to the creed of multi-racial trust and cooperation and forged their battle against racialized barriers to individual socio-economic advancement and liberty. Although loyal to their partnership with Europeans, they criticized what they deemed tyranny, injustice, and overt racism. They considered cooperation a means to usher in an era where British colonial territories in Africa would become meritocratic multi-racial countries based on legal equality and universal franchise.

Non-racialism and cooperating with Europeans did not mean accepting the dogma of European supremacy. It meant that African liberals accepted a temporary partnership with Europeans because they deemed it the most potent response to settler colonialism, European supremacy, and the segregationist ideology designed to inhibit African political rights and socio-economic progress. They measured their relationship with Europeans based on their notion of trusteeship, which meant how committed Europeans were to facilitating African socio-economic advancement.

Jane Starfield, the biographer of Tswana medical doctor Silas Molema (b. 1891), argued that the prominent Lovedale Missionary Institute in South Africa encouraged students to believe that the fidelity to empire and a European-style education merited the reward of equal citizenship. Citizenship for loyalty and representation for taxation were two of a series

⁶⁰ Kenneth Wyndham Smith, *The Changing Past: Trends in South African Historical Writing* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 131.

of exchanges which indicated Africans' recognition of the Cape liberal ideology.⁶¹ Africans who recognized the Cape liberal ideology framed the struggle against colonialism in terms of liberal democracy, individual equality, and the separation of church and state. They claimed human rights by virtue of being sufficiently "civilized" to act as responsible citizens. In this case, "civilized" meant having obtained a certain degree of European-style education.⁶² Bhekizizwe Peterson argued that African liberals engaged with and critiqued colonialism through the analytical categories, language, and ideology they accepted from paternalistic missionaries. They operated in an ambiguous space of the false binaries of colonialism and redeployed paternalistic dualities such as civilized / uncivilized, primitive / modern, and traditional / progressive.⁶³

Paternalism was an outgrowth of the development of an African form of Du Bois's concept of the "double consciousness." Motsete and his contemporaries considered rights in terms of being both citizens of the British Empire and subjects of an African authority. The responsibility was on Motsete and his contemporaries to bridge the imperial with the local, fuse the global with the African, overcome local African ethnic differences, and struggle against regional colonial power and European domination.

African liberals' agenda to reform and not abolish European rule was in part an outgrowth of paternalistic social evolutionary theory. However, while African liberals promoted their reformist agenda, they were prominent agents in challenging imperial structures and regional settler colonialism. They distinguished between what they deemed productive paternalism, which contained a satisfactory degree of what they considered

⁶¹ Jane Valerie Starfield, *Dr. S. Modiri Molema (1891-1965): The Making of an Historian*. (Ph.D. diss, University of the Witwatersrand, 2007), 187.

⁶² *Ibid*, 17.

⁶³ Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs*, 11.

African socio-economic advancement, and crude forms of European supremacy or colonial policies. African liberals invariably opposed what they considered overt racial oppression of any African.

In *Native Life in South Africa*, Sol Plaatje, founding member and first General Secretary of the South African Native National Congress, which became the African National Congress, set the pattern for Southern African intellectuals like Motsete, not connected to the political authority, to appeal to sympathetic members of the British parliament and the British public for protection against the hardships and injustices of settler colonialism.⁶⁴ In *Native Life*, Plaatje's based his condemnation of the 1913 Natives Land Act on the premise that the British were obligated to protect the rights of Africans and assure they received just and reasonable treatment. Plaatje in 1902 and Silas Molema in 1903, publicly made claims to equal rights by positioning themselves as "loyal British subject[s]."⁶⁵ They argued that loyalty to the crown meant upholding the law and "assisting their European neighbors in the industry of the [country]."⁶⁶ Their rhetoric showed that African liberals positioned themselves as supporters of the empire but expected rights and fair treatment. Within their advocacy, they asserted a strong critique of what they deemed unreasonable.

Beyond fair treatment, Africans demanded a satisfactory level of socio-economic advancement. Motsete redeployed the language in Lugard's magnum opus on indirect rule, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, to emphasize that Africans considered trusteeship or protection to mean that the British were responsible for facilitating socio-

⁶⁴ Solomon T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa, Before and Since the European War and the Boer Rebellion* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1915).

⁶⁵ Sol Plaatje, "Equal Rights," *Bechuana Gazette*, September 13, 1902, cited in Brian Willan ed., *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Witswatersrand University Press, 1996), 64.

⁶⁶ "Letter from Silas Molema to Sir H.J. Gould Adams, Lieutenant Governor of the Orange River Colony," April 11, 1903, cited in Brian Willan ed., *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings*, 73.

economic advancement. In their writings, African liberals consistently juxtaposed African socio-economic advancement under British rule against the menacing alternative of African insurrection. This is what Motsete meant when he declared, “It is not revolution that we want but evolution in our social systems.”⁶⁷ The term “evolution” as a demand for socio-economic advancement was a reference to Lugard insisting in *The Dual Mandate* that, “the task of the administration officer is to clothe his principles in the garb of evolution, not revolution, to make it apparent to [all] that the policy of the government is not antagonistic but progressive – sympathetic to [Africans’] aspirations.”⁶⁸ African liberals tried to motivate British officials to promote African socio-economic progress. However, by invoking the “evolution / revolution” discourse, Motsete also questioned the fundamental validity of British rule which was measured by Africans based on the level of socio-economic advancement it enabled.

Nationalism in the Bechuanaland Protectorate

Motsete advocated a form of civic nationalism based on a liberal discourse of individual rights. Individual rights were a response to settler colonialism in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia and a challenge to the European and BaNgwato power nexus bolstered by indirect rule. Motsete claimed that Africans living under British protection should be subjects of the British Empire and individual Africans’ rights and freedoms should be consistent, if not throughout Southern Africa, then at a minimum throughout the British Southern African protectorates of Bechuanaland and Swaziland, and the British Crown Colony of Basutoland.

⁶⁷ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, S.96/7. “K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930; Margaret L Hodgson (Mrs. Ballinger) Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, (Ballinger) Ballinger, A3.1.17, “Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti,” A3.1.18, K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.

⁶⁸ F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: F. Cass., 1965), 194.

Because segregation was institutionalized in Southern Rhodesia by Responsible Government (1923) and the Land Apportionment Act (1930), and in South Africa by the Natives Land Act (1913) and the Native Trust and Land Act (1936), the Southern African protectorates became the focal point for British political influence in the region and for maintaining the Cape liberal notion that Blacks would maintain some degree of political power.

Motsete combined liberalism with civic nationalism as part of a larger trend emerging from the Black Atlantic in the late 1920s.⁶⁹ African intellectuals who had been educated in Europe or the United States, especially those returning to indirect rule territories in West Africa, moved away from racially centered Pan-Africanist claims based on assimilation and racial identification and focused their attention locally, on liberal ideas, such as citizenship and rights within a colonial territory. Educated Africans shifted the focus away from racial boundaries towards experience and social class. They considered European-style education as the engine for African socio-economic advancement and therefore as the basis for their scheme for national development. They promoted education and individual legal protections through discourses of “self-help” and “racial cooperation” underpinning liberalism. Their strategy was to combine the liberal notion that a partnership existed between Africans and Europeans with the civic nationalistic idea that nationalism meant building a common culture within a polity that adhered to the liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality, individual rights, and anti-state authoritarianism.

Motsete both transcended and maintained a national conceptualization of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. At one level, Motsete’s support of socio-economic self-determination for Kalanga communities was antithetical to the BaNgwato state and therefore

⁶⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

to the Tswana polity as a whole. But more broadly, his concern was political. He sought to alleviate the problems facing ethnic minorities under indirect rule and encourage unity and sustainable coexistence within a national framework.

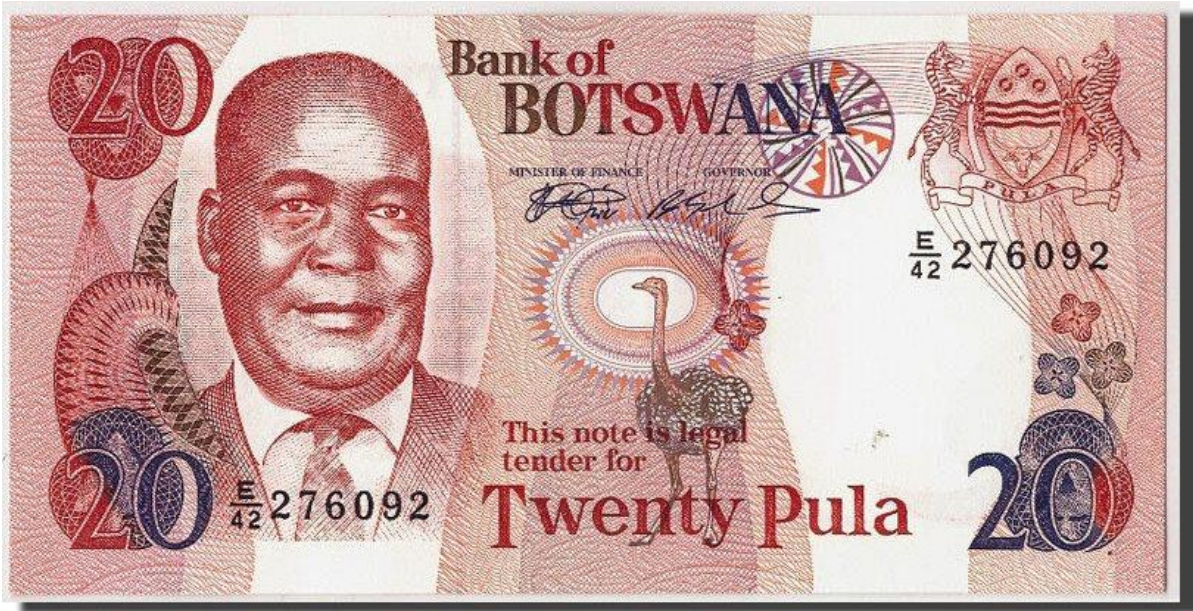


Figure 3; K.T. Motsete's image on the front of the 20 Pula Banknote

Motsete and the progressives maintained a reformist political disposition even though they posed a significant challenge to the government. The approach was similar to the one employed by Kalanga elites in Botswana after independence. Richard Werbner deemed Kalanga elites “reasonable radicals” because they were not “secessionist or saboteurs.”⁷⁰ They held strong views about Kalanga ethnic identity and Kalanga language and culture but did not deploy this ethnic agenda against the state.⁷¹ Motsete’s and the progressives’ reformist position becomes even clearer when one takes a longer view of the political trajectory. Remnants of the 1930s progressives reformed in 1959 to establish the first

⁷⁰ Richard P. Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The Public Anthropology of Kalanga Elites* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁷¹ Enocent Msindo, review of Richard Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The Public Anthropology of Kalanga Elites*, in H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews (April 2005): 1.

territory-wide political party, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party.⁷² At that time, Leetile Raditladi, Motsete, and other members of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party were strong advocates for national cooperation and transcending ethnic and cultural differences.⁷³

Motsete's claim to be a multi-ethnic MoTalaote (mixture of Kalanga and Tswana) is indicative of a sense of nationalism which can accommodate multiple levels of ethnic consciousness. This is a dimension of what Werbner refers to as "cosmopolitan ethnicity," defined as interethnic cooperation and mutuality. Motsete, like the Kalanga intellectuals of independent Botswana, advocated for Kalanga cultural rights and active participation in wider national associations.⁷⁴ Motsete drew cultural and historical inspiration from the regional Zimbabwean cultures that underpinned Kalanga identity, while simultaneously developing educational or political institutions shaped by a national consciousness. However, as Enocent Msindo aptly argues, Kalanga communities were already politically distinct from their Ndebele and Tswana neighbors and estranged along political lines. Fleshing out the story of the struggle of cross-border Kalanga communities in the early decades of the 20th century shows the challenges Motsete and others faced reconciling their heritage within the national ideal propagated by those in power in the Bechuanaland Protectorate or Southern Rhodesia.⁷⁵

Historian Jeff Ramsay's "Builders of Botswana" series of biographies in the *Weekend*

⁷² Keene Boikhutso, "The Life and Times of Leetile Raditladi, 1910-1971" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1985); The Botswana Society, "L.D. Raditladi and the Federal Party," Facebook, June 7, 2018. https://www.facebook.com/search/posts/?q=l.d.%20raditaldi&epa=SERP_TAB.

⁷³ Maitseo M. M. Bolaane, *Leetile Raditladi, Botswana Political Heroes* (Gaborone, Botswana: Vision Publishing (Pty), 2016); Jeff Ramsay, "Patriot Profiles 1 – Leetile Disang Raditladi (1910-71)," *Weekend Post*, June 20, 2016.

⁷⁴ Richard Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals*, chapter four

⁷⁵ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

Post newspaper is representative of the trend towards examining the deeper histories of nationalism in Botswana. Ramsay profiled Motsete in the series which coincided with celebrations of Botswana's 50th anniversary of independence in 2016. Ramsay revealed Motsete's involvement with the progressives and outlined the basic tenets of the progressives' petition. The petition articulated the progressives' critique of the political system of indirect rule in place in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and pressed for legal protections for individuals. Ramsay's profile rationalized Motsete's political opposition to Tshekedi Khama, which had previously existed in the public memory as simply a personal quarrel. The 50th anniversary of independence was the celebration of Botswana's unity and diversity. Because dissenting voices were no longer a threat to the unity of the nation, space emerged for a more complex reading of Botswana's national heroes. The country embraced disparate political ideology, cultural multiplicity, and ethnic difference.⁷⁶ Motsete and others included in the Builders series, such as ethnic minority Kalanga *she* (chief) John Nswazwi, once considered potentially dangerous adversaries of the state, were recast as influential leaders by the shifting historical narratives. Conflicts between Tshekedi Khama and his advisories were blamed on the imposition of colonialism, the intensification of competition over land, and administrative control from Serowe.⁷⁷

Neil Parsons correctly asserted that the national political parties that formed beginning in the late 1950s were an extension of African political movements that championed liberal ideas beginning in the mid 1920s.⁷⁸ Barry Morton claimed Moanaphuti Segolodi penned Botswana's first known nationalist sentiments by 1930, in part because of

⁷⁶ Jeff Ramsay, "K.T. Motsete," *Weekend Post* (August 20, 2016).

⁷⁷ Jeff Ramsay, "She Nswazwi VIII," *Weekend Post* (September 12, 2016).

⁷⁸ Neil Parsons, "Shots for a Black Republic?: Simon Ratshosa and Botswana Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 73, 293 (1974): 449-458; Neil Parsons, "The Idea of Democracy."

his involvement in the progressives' petition.⁷⁹ Early nationalism was intentionally forgotten in large part because of its strong anti-*dikgosi* sentiments.⁸⁰ However, in and around the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of independence, the state embraced early nationalists like Motsete, Sogolodi, and Leetile Raditladi as innovators of cultural capital. Appreciating deeper histories of nationalism also served as a response to the ongoing challenges to liberate Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe from their colonial past by resituating Botswana as a stronger partner in the ongoing struggle against the legacies of colonialism.

Early nationalism in Botswana was unlike its variants in other Southern African colonial territories because nationalists in Botswana in the 1920s and 1930s acquiesced to empire and were not revolutionary. The nationalism that used colonial tools to define itself was somewhat limited in the case of Botswana. The Bechuanaland Protectorate was not a settler colony and was not conquered militarily. There was no *Chimurenga* (armed struggle against colonial intrusion) as there was in Zimbabwe and it was therefore more difficult to clearly define the enemy. Botswana's early nationalists advocated continuation of and not destruction of the imperial order. Their aim was to alter the political systems of indirect rule. They advocated a version of British imperialism capable of transcending settler colonial racism and African ethnic difference and sought imperial protection as a refuge from the settler colonialism dominant in the neighboring territories of Namibia, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia.

Much of this story hinges on the discourses of differentiation of the imperial from the

⁷⁹ Moanaphuti Segolodi, "Ditso Tsa Batawana," original Setswana manuscript, 1940, in BNARS, Schapera Papers PP/1/2/9, translation July 11, 1994, by Mmualefhe Raditladi, edited by Barry Morton, May 2015, Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/12170767/Ditso_Tsa_Batawana_by_Moanaphuti_Segolodi_1940.

⁸⁰ Barry Morton, "Moana R. Segolodi and the Slow March of Nationalism in Botswana," paper presented at the African Studies Association, San Diego, November 19, 2015. Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/18338440/Moana_R_Segolodi_and_the_Slow_March_of_Nationalism_in_Botswana

colonial. From its inception, Khama III's appeal to the British Empire was for protection and security against the ambition of European settlers. As Paul Rich argued, British liberals bolstered their advocacy for African socio-economic development in the Southern African protectorates by juxtaposing them as a counterbalance to Southern African settler colonial and segregationist policies.⁸¹ Because Responsible Government in Southern Rhodesia (1923) and the Statute of Westminster (1931) furthered legal freedoms from Britain, the Southern African protectorates became increasingly important as an anchor for British influence in the region and as means to offset settler power.⁸²

Historical perceptions absent from the discourses and therefore not apparent in the archive are vital for contextualizing how Africans reconciled British rule and how they drew the limits of resistance. Africans understood their circumstances based on the history of the African continent's experience with colonial power and on the experiences of Africans at home and in the diaspora. They were not ideologically confined to a specific nation or the compartmentalized Berlin Conference map of the continent.

For instance, Africans throughout the continent were aware of the atrocities perpetrated by King Leopold II and the Belgians (1885-1908) in the Congo Free State. The pictures which emerged from the Congo of the severing of resisters' hands achieved international notoriety.⁸³ In South West Africa (now Namibia), the German Empire perpetrated a genocide against the Herero, Nama and San.⁸⁴ This was done under the guise of a protectorate established in 1885 that was theoretically similar to the one Britain established

⁸¹ Paul B. Rich, *White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921-60* (Greater Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 38.

⁸² K.C. Wheare, *The Statute of Westminster, 1931* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933).

⁸³ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

⁸⁴ Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide* (Adelaide: Crawford House, 2000).

in Bechuanaland. This was only one instance which made Africans skeptical of European protection.

Southern Africa experienced continual conflicts between Africans and Europeans over land and resources. In the colonial era, European settlers inflicted cultural genocide on the Khoisan population and subjected them to displacement and forced labor. By the time the 1913 Natives Land Act was instituted in South Africa, virtually all of their land was lost.⁸⁵ The Cape Frontier Wars, known as “Africa’s 100 Years War” (1779-1879) between the Xhosa and European settlers in what is now the Eastern Cape, were a protracted series of nine conflicts. The Anglo-Zulu war (1879) resulted in the breaking of Zulu power in the Eastern Cape.⁸⁶ The British South Africa Company broke the power of the Ndebele and various groups, later known as Shona speakers, in the First *Chimurenga* in 1897.⁸⁷ In the 1890s, Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company attempted to control the Bechuanaland. South African settlers maintained an ongoing scheme to incorporate Bechuanaland into South Africa.⁸⁸ These and other colonial conquests may have mitigated the possibility of Africans enacting a military struggle against British colonialism in the first decades of the 19th century but they generated a healthy distrust of settler colonial power and a skepticism of European intentions.

From this history, Africans throughout the continent saw, among other things, the conspicuous violence of the colonial state, the corrupted missionary societies’ inability to

⁸⁵ Mohamed Adhikari, *The Anatomy of a South African Genocide: The Extermination of the Cape San Peoples* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011).

⁸⁶ John Laband and Ian Knight, *The Anglo-Zulu War, War Correspondents* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1996).

⁸⁷ Brian Raftopoulos and A. S Mlambo, eds. *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), chapter two; Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-97: A Study in African Resistance* (London: Heinemann, 1967).

⁸⁸ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, 145, 154.

oppose colonial power, and the debate over empire and colonialism raging between liberals and conservatives in Britain. Africans throughout the continent were aware of these histories and took them into consideration in their own engagement with colonial power. This sort of colonial violence persuaded Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate to determine that their most potent alternative was to coalesce to seek refuge under the British imperial crown.

My reading of the historical sources suggests that the African voices which appear in the archive in the 1930s, including those of Motsete, the progressives, and the *dikgosi* preferred British protection as a response to the insecurity produced in this fraught environment. However, they forged a strategy of adaptation to and struggle against colonialism. Even though Motsete and his colleagues continually sought refuge under the imperial British crown, they understood that the ambiguities and uncertainties in British protection and indirect rule afforded significant space for resistance. Hence, their writings describing their overt political schemes were laced with clandestine subtext.

The British authorities engaged in discourses, such as “chiefly autocracy” and “Basarwa slavery” as tools to discredit chiefs as part of the larger mechanics of colonialism.⁸⁹ Basarwa is a SeTswana term for Khoesan speakers. Many of the Basarwa were subjugated by Tswana groups in the 18th and 19th centuries. The British authorities used discourses to label and demean African knowledge systems and social and political architecture. While the *dikgosi* struggled to maintain their influence within the system of indirect rule, the British administration deployed and reinforced disparaging labels such as “autocrat” as a means to control and humiliate the *dikgosi* and reinforce their own authority.

⁸⁹ BNARS, S.420/11, Interview of Tshekedi Khama by Resident Commissioner, February 19, 1935.

Writers such as Frantz Fanon and Michael West characterized African intellectuals like Motsete and the progressives as the antithesis of African chiefs, repositories of colonial knowledge, and as being self-invested in the colonial project.⁹⁰ Based on a rhetorical analysis, this seems true in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Motsete and his colleagues, in conjunction with British administrators, weaponized the discourses of “chiefly autocracy” and “Basarwa slavery” to attack chiefly power and ingratiate themselves to the British. As Fanon aptly shows in a different context, Motsete and the progressives attempted to forge a partnership with colonizers as they thought they could usher in a new era of peace and coexistence.⁹¹ They used demeaning discourses, not necessarily as historical realities, but because they knew the British authorities considered these practices heinous. Their aim was to illuminate these practices and exacerbate existing tensions between the British administration and the *dikgosi*.⁹² Africans, European liberals, and opponents of the chiefs employed these same weapons to denigrate the *dikgosi* and, while attempting to break the integrity of African structures of power, Africans on the margins of African polities deployed these same discourses to resist state power and to assert their own authority.

The decades-long settler attack on African knowledge and African political and socio-economic systems had significant impact on the Bechuanaland Protectorate by the 1930s. Historians of the political economy of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa were especially thorough in detailing how the settler colonial state expropriated African land, forced Africans into wage labor, and ravaged African socio-economic systems.⁹³ Before

⁹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

⁹¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 44.

⁹² Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 64.

⁹³ Giovanni Arrighi and John S Saul, *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967); Colin Bundy, “African Peasants and Economic Change in South Africa, 1870-1913, with Particular Reference to the Cane”

colonial land policies took their toll on African agricultural in the 1910s, Africans supplied the majority of agricultural products to the settler state.⁹⁴ Pressure on African farmers led to social stratification.⁹⁵ After European occupation, the burden on women to perform agricultural and domestic labor increased as African peasant households tried to resist wage labor employment.⁹⁶ Colonists forced Africans to provide labor to the mining sector by means of restricting Africans' access to land, undermining peasant agriculture production, and instituting taxation.⁹⁷ The land question was fundamental to the relationship between Europeans and Africans. Europeans used their control over land to secure for themselves a position of economic and political dominance.⁹⁸

Radical South African historians William Beinert, Shula Marks, Edward Roux, and others detailed the socio-economic challenges facing Southern African communities as a consequence of their deteriorating political economies in the first decades of the 20th century.⁹⁹ Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate were part of the regional milieu.

(Ph.D. diss, University of Oxford, 1976); Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988); Steven Friedman, *Race, Class and Power: Harold Wolpe and the Radical Critique of Apartheid* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2015); Martin Legassick, *Academic Freedom and the Workers Struggle* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1999); I.R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London: Longman, 1988); Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope; a History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (London: V. Gollancz, 1948); Harold Wolpe, *Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid* (Dar Es Salaam: University of Dar Es Salaam, 1974).

⁹⁴ I.R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 60.

⁹⁵ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992), 68.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 70.

⁹⁷ Charles Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), 91.

⁹⁸ Robin H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), introduction.

⁹⁹ William Beinart, Peter Delius, and Stanley Trapido, eds., *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986); Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980); Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture, and Consciousness, 1870-1930* (New York: Longman, 1982); Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, *The Politics of Race, Class, and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (London: Longman, 1987); Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope*.

Although the majority of the Protectorate was not subjected to settler colonialism, the conditions in its neighboring territories had a direct effect on the country. Policies on cattle trading, cattle disease, and labor were oriented regionally and in many cases to the advantage of Botswana's more powerful neighbors in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. This promoted African power brokers in the protectorate to seek the favor of allies beyond the region, especially in Britain, as a means to secure themselves against encroaching settler power.

Kgosi Khama III agreed to protection as a means to secure Bechuanaland from settler hostility. After initiating protection, British officials split Bechuanaland into eight geographical areas called reserves, each designated with a Tswana *kgosi* governor. This redefined the jurisdiction of the *dikgosi* as territorial and greatly weakened the traditional system of checks and balances on chiefly power. The delineation of reserves also perpetuated ethnic and social differentiation between Africans.

Military conflicts in mid 19th century in the Tati area between the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia resulted in convoluted power relations among Kalanga communities. Confined by the delineation of the reserves, the historically self-determined BaKalanga were not definitively aligned politically with either the BaNgwato in the Bechuanaland Protectorate or the Ndebele in Southern Rhodesia and resisted any form of African or imperial rule which threatened their sovereignty.

In the 1930s, the system of indirect rule generated instability and conflict. Buttressed by British authorities, the *dikgosi* developed a greater degree of autocracy. This led to competing discourses and challenges to the state. Anxious to participate politically but excluded under indirect rule, educated Africans reconceptualized the history and meaning of

protection, and Khama III's intentions for accepting British imperial rule. Operating within the Cape liberal framework, they challenged British authorities through a strategy of critical accommodation of imperial rule. Africans educated in the mission schools accepted a certain degree of European paternalism and a moderate political disposition, but they criticized what they deemed tyranny, injustice, and overt racism. Educated Africans accommodated imperial rule as a means to advance the notion that the Bechuanaland Protectorate was on a trajectory towards meritocratic ideals, multi-racial cooperation, and legal equality. African liberals accepted a temporary partnership with Europeans but did not accept excessive paternalism or the dogma of European supremacy.

As was the trend emerging from the Black Atlantic in the 1920s, Africans educated in Europe and the United States moved away from racially centered Pan-Africanist claims based on assimilation and focused their attention on promoting liberal and multi-racial politics within an African colonial territory. Educated Africans promoted European-style education as the basis for national and individual socio-economic development. They combined multi-racial partnership, fundamental in African liberalism, with civic nationalism based on developing a polity dependent on classic liberal values.

Motsete both transcended and maintained a national focus. On one level he supported socio-economic self-determination for Kalanga communities. On another, he sought to alleviate the problems facing ethnic minorities under indirect rule and encourage unity and sustainable coexistence within a national framework. This is one example of how Motsete and the progressives maintained a reformist political disposition while they posed a significant challenge to the state.

Motsete and the progressives articulated an early form of nationalism in Botswana.

Even though they advocated reforming and not destroying the imperial order, they sought to reshape British imperialism into a framework capable of transcending settler colonial racism and African ethnic difference. Lastly, the mass national political parties that formed in the late 1950s and accelerated Botswana's push towards national independence were rooted in the political developments of the 1930s and the activities of Motsete, the progressives, Simon Ratshosa, and others who had championed liberal ideas beginning in the 1920s.

Chapter Two

Motsete's Formative Years:

Liberalism, Paternalism, the Classics, and Cultural Fusion (1899–1923)

In 1924, while living in London, Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete composed the secular hymn “*Legae*” (*Home Sweet Home*). He wrote the song from his own perspective as he fondly reminisced for his homeland. The chorus translates to, “Oh! How can I ever forget thee, Dearest country of my birth; Even though time and tide may part me, from thee, loveliest spot on Earth. Thy sweet memories live forever, while through foreign lands I roam; Oh! What silent voices seem to whisper, ‘Home sweet home.’” Motsete wrote “*Legae*” thirty-eight years before he drafted what became Botswana’s national anthem, “*Fatshe Leno La Rona*” (Our Country or Blessed Be This Noble Land), while attending a Pan-Africanist conference hosted by Kwame Nkrumah in Accra, Ghana in 1962.¹ The chorus of “*Fatshe Leno La Rona*” translates to, “Awake, awake! O men, awake! And women close behind them firmly stand! Together we’ll work and serve, this land this happy land.”² Motsete began playing music as a child. He was an accomplished multi-instrumentalist who played *nkokwane* (one string bow harp), trumpet, cornet, saxophone, piano, and organ. He composed approximately 100 songs. In “*Legae*,” Motsete conveyed his love for Botswana and its people. In “*Fatshe Leno La Rona*,” Motsete mounted a call to the people to unite to advance Botswana in harmony and peace. The following chapter reveals the context of Motsete’s early life out of which emerged his admiration for his country and his dedication to becoming a leader of Botswana and its people.

¹ Motsamai Mpho, *The Autobiography of Motsamai Mpho* (Gaborone, Botswana: Lebopo, 1996), chapter six.

² K.T. Motsete, “Botswana National Anthem,” *Kutlwano*, (January 1973).

The focus of this chapter is on the first twenty-four years of Motsete's life. The goal is to trace the formation of the influential ideas which became integral in the political and educational strategies which he enacted in the 1930s. Motsete maintained a liberal and non-racial political position, struggled against what he considered to be overt racism, and supported African self-determination alongside British rule. This chapter argues that in his formative years, Motsete's ideas were influenced by the non-racial liberalism espoused by L.M.S. missionaries and the BaNgwato chieftaincy. He was raised in Serowe in a multicultural family experienced in reconciling African and Christian traditions for the African context. In Serowe, the BaNgwato capital, BaNgwato chief Khama III maintained a strong grip on power through the 1910s. Even with the presence of the British Empire, Serowe exemplified a balance of racial cooperation and African self-determination. Next, Motsete attended Tiger Kloof Institute in Vryburg, South Africa, operated by the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.), from the age of ten years old through secondary school. Its principal, W.C. Willoughby, promoted a philosophy of non-racialism constituted within the missionary paternalistic creed. This section suggests that Motsete accepted paternalism as a practical reality of British rule. Lastly, while at school, he engaged with the histories and literatures of Greco-Roman classical antiquity and used them to strike a balance between British rule and African self-determination, and to bolster his positions on politics and culture. Classical histories of the African continent proved Africa's contributions to global civilization and thus, counteracted the European notion that Africa was altogether void of civilization.

Motsete's Childhood:

Family, Serowe, and The London Missionary Society Church School

Growing up in Serowe, Motsete interacted with, and his ideas were influenced by key figures in the Protectorate's history: Khama III (BaNgwato *kgosi* 1875-1923), Tshekedi Khama (BaNgwato Regent 1926-1952), and Simon Ratshosa. He formed personal relationships with these influential and politically significant men. In an interview in the late 1920s, Motsete expressed strong admiration for Khama III and claimed that although he was a commoner, he and the *kgosi* (chief) were personal friends from the time Motsete was a small boy.³ In the 1930s, he used this relationship to strengthen his argument that he understood the trajectory for African advancement established by Khama III. Throughout Tshekedi's regency, Khama III served as an influential model of achievement. According to his biographer Michael Crowder, Tshekedi Khama studied the history of his father's life and times and based his regency on continuing the trajectory for African advancement established by Khama III's administration.⁴ Thus, historiographical interpretations of Khama III's legacy were central in how Tshekedi Khama and his critics measured African advancement, and interpretations of Khama's legacy were integral in the debates about the nature of protection, indirect rule, and customary law.

In the late 1920s, two schools in Serowe offered European-style education: The L.M.S. Church School which Motsete attended and the Serowe Public School (later named the Khama Memorial School). Serowe Public conducted some classes in Setswana but after 1919 the curriculum taught at the two schools was very similar. Lessons were taught in

³ Hubert William Peet, "A Bantu's B.D.," *Southern Workmen*, 57,12,lvii (December 1928): 516-517.

⁴ Michael Crowder, "Black Prince: A Biography of Tshekedi Khama," unfinished typescript, Schapera E-Library, 1988, Thuto.org. <http://www.thuto.org/schapera/etext/classic/blpr.htm#contents>, chapter one.

English, which served to unite the multilingual and multiethnic student body in a common language. English enabled African students to engage in international discourses more easily. Zimbabwean writer Lawrence Vambe touted the benefits of English language schooling. He asserted that English had the potential to serve as a communication link between different African groups and that it was a means to “rediscover [the African] lost past, enrich the present and build a better future.”⁵ Vambe’s advocacy of English was akin to the position of Motsete and his colleagues who believed that English could unify diverse African populations, was a means to critique European and colonial historical narratives, and discern the value of European cultural practices for the African future.

In addition to English, Motsete spoke multiple African languages: SeTswana, Sesotho, TjiKalanga, and SiZulu. His father spoke English, Setswana, SeSotho and likely some TjiKalanga. Although the mission schools they attended emphasized proficiency in English, being fluent in multiple African languages was a means to maintain connection with a broad range of African communities throughout the region.

Motsete, who attended the L.M.S. schools, was a member of the community of educated Africans in Serowe and grew up with the cadre of men influential in politics and education in the late 1920s and beyond. In the first decade of the 20th century, Simon Ratshosa served as Headmaster of Serowe Public School.⁶ Tsheledi Khama (b. 1905) attended Serowe Public from the age of seven years. The school was run by MaTalaote Tsoegang Sebina, the first BaNgwato teacher and cousin of Tsheledi's closest friend and advisor, Peter Sebina.⁷ Simon Ratshosa, son of Ratshosa Motswetle and Tsheledi Khama’s

⁵ Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), 82.

⁶ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla. *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 193.

⁷ Michael Crowder, “Black Prince,” chapter one.

late half-sister Bessie, was one of Khama's teachers.⁸

The two schools in Serowe were influential models for Motsete's subsequent ideas about education. While schooling in Serowe, he witnessed the disparities emerging between the missionaries and the *dikgosi* over the general direction of African education. According to Part Mgadla, African-run schools were a result of tensions between the L.M.S. and African educators like Tibe Chiepe and Simon Ratshosa who prioritized African self-determination.⁹ Juxtaposed against the paternalistic model at the L.M.S. Church School, Serowe Public School was an example of the benefits and challenges of African self-determination. These schools served as models for Motsete when he developed his scheme to establish his own school.

The L.M.S. held a virtual monopoly on education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate which caused acute tensions between the mission and Khama III. Tensions between missionary W.C. Willoughby, the principal of Tiger Kloof, and the Tswana *dikgosi* persisted through Khama III's tenure. Dissatisfied with the L.M.S.'s poor record of education and their lack of commitment and financial fortitude, the BaNgwato turned towards self-determination and attempted to take control of education from the mission. Khama III appointed his administrative secretary Simon Ratshosa to be headmaster of Serowe Public. Ratshosa controlled BaNgwato education until 1922.¹⁰ Through the 1920s, the struggle to direct education resulted in a lack of common purpose, delayed the development of state-wide education programs and contributed to widespread financial challenges. However, the *dikgosi* responded to these challenges by developing schools independent of the missionaries and

⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹ Part Themba Mgadla, "Missionary and Colonial Education among the Bangwato, 1862-1948" (Ph.D. diss, Boston University, 1986), chapter four.

¹⁰ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*, 193.

established the pattern of Africans attempting to create and maintain self-directed educational programs.¹¹

Liberal ideas came into practice in the urban and cosmopolitan center of Serowe. It was a place where various African groups and Europeans coexisted. Growing up in Serowe, Motsete was exposed to the European world and witnessed how Khama III synthesized foreign ideas such as Christianity and European-style education. The L.M.S. church and school was a manifestation of the synthesis of the Bangwato state, European Christian missionaries, and European-style education.¹² The various African ethnic groups incorporated into the BaNgwato state and living side by side in large wards embodied the cosmopolitan nature of Serowe.¹³

Motsete grew up in a BaTalaote ward in Serowe.¹⁴ BaTalaote are an ethnic mixture of BaKalanga and BaNgwato found in Botswana and south-western Zimbabwe. They are descendants of the BaKalanga-Banyai, a Rozvi people whose totem is *moyo* or *pelo* (a heart). Motsete was a member of the BaTalaote (Goora-Motseta) clan. His ancestors were Banyai of Dalaunda, part of the Munhumutapa Empire originated from the Bulilima Mangwe area, which included the Tati area before the colonial boundary was drawn between Botswana and Zimbabwe.¹⁵ The Banyai crossed into Khama's country seeking political asylum from the Ndebele in the 1860s. They intermarried with locals and assimilated into the BaNgwato, but

¹¹ Part Themba Mgadla, "Missionary and Colonial Education Among the Bangwato," chapter four.

¹² Christian John Makgala, "A Note on the History of Serowe," *Botswana Notes & Records*. 34,1 (2003): 160-163.

¹³ Bessie Head, *Serowe, Village of the Rain Wind* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 94.

¹⁴ Soma African Anthropology Network, "Batalaote Tribe," Facebook (June 10, 2019), https://www.facebook.com/Soma-African-Anthropology-Network-663128327208491/?__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCjr5aWAWuIUwt58IDJsZqPb_g40b_IbQ5auOo4NXSbHuBV-PhNLezSxOiYq7Xu-OQKyCzfGBD7uUJp.

¹⁵ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.416/7, R.A.R. Bent, Histories of the B.P. Tribes, BaTalaote of Senyawe; Catrien Van Waarden, *The Oral History of the Bakalanga of Botswana* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988), 15.

still to this day identify as BaTalaote (BaDaluanda). Motsete's identification as an ethnic minority is important for two reasons. First, he advocated for legal protections for ethnic minorities as part of his political agenda; and secondly, he promoted a regionally based interpretation of BaTalaote and BaKalanga history. This was due in part to his identification as a BaTalaote, whom he considered to be descendants of the Banyai who originated from the Bulilima Mangwe area of BuKalanga (now western Zimbabwe).

Motsete attended the L.M.S. Church School in Serowe until Standard IV. He then accompanied his father, Tumedisho Maruapula, to Tiger Kloof. Tumedisho went for theological training and Motsete attended primary school. At Tiger Kloof, Motsete distinguished himself academically and completed Standard VI and the Standard VI Teaching Certificate in 1918. After graduating from Tiger Kloof, he obtained the first L.M.S. bursary for higher education. He spent six years (1923-1929) studying at Hackney and New Congregational College in London and earned Bachelor of Divinity, Bachelor of Divinity (Honors), Bachelor of Arts (Honors), Master of Arts (Philosophy), and a teaching certificate in music.¹⁶ He was the first MoTswana (Tswana person) commoner to obtain a university education.

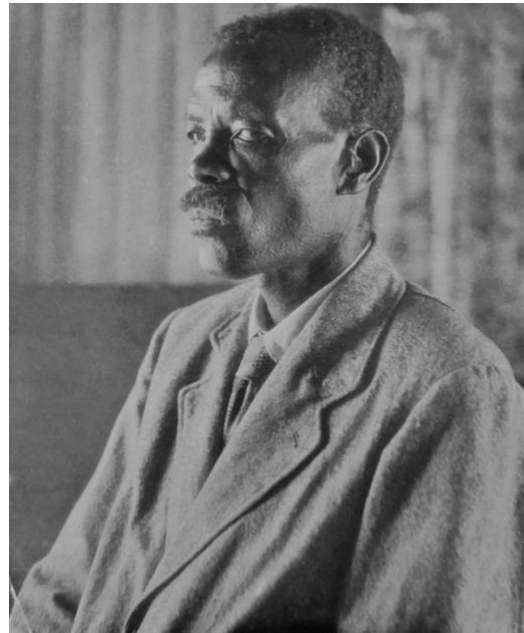


Figure 4; Rev. Tumedisho Maruapula, SOAS, Council of World Missions Archive, CWM/LMS/04/10/04/058

Bessie Head's historical novel, *A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga*, based

¹⁶ BNARS, DCS.12/6, B.A. Honours Examination in Philosophy, K.T. Motsete.

in part on Mulale's short biography, "The Life and Career of Dr. K.T. Motsete," popularized the narrative that Motsete's grandfather, Maruapula, belonged to the group of reactionaries against Khama III's Europeanizing reforms which included Christianity and European-style education.¹⁷ According to Head's narrative, Maruapula, an African steeped in tradition, forbade his son Tumedisho (Motsete's father) from European-style schooling. After Maruapula's death, Tumedisho became a devoted member of the church and trained as a minister at the Theology School at Tiger Kloof. Although it is unclear if Motsete's grandfather actually stood in opposition to Khama III's Europeanizing reforms, Head's objective was likely to strengthen Motsete's legacy as a nationalist by reinforcing his connection to African culture.

Tumedisho, Motsete's father, gave a very different impression of their family during his examinations for ordination into the Ministry. In his ordination exam, he wrote that there were numerous family members, including two influential uncles, who served as role models and mentors for his uncomplicated transition to Christianity.¹⁸ This narrative is also somewhat dubious because Tumedisho likely constructed it in order to impress Willoughby and those assessing his bid for the ministry. The discrepancy in the two narratives is indicative of the historical inconsistency between how Motsete is perceived in the public memory and what a more complex reading of the historical sources reveals about his formative years. This is also evidence for why much of Motsete's early life and details about his family remain shrouded in mystery.

¹⁷ Bessie Head, *A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1986); Dingaana Maondo Mulale, "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977).

¹⁸ William Charles Willoughby Papers, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England, (Willoughby), DA49.1/2/697 (F804), Tumedisho Maruapula, London Missionary Society Ordination Examination, 1914.

Head's novel and Tumedisho's ordination exams serve as allegories for European-style education, how it came to Southern Africa, what it was used for, and what it meant for those who developed it in the African context. They show the challenges of promoting European-style education in an environment where it was not fully embraced because what it would produce was not fully evident. Among Africans, European-style education was somewhat mysterious and to a large extent divisive. It was a powerful technology, with the capability to invoke certain social and economic transformation. Common in both sources was the storyline of Motsete's family successfully overcoming the obstacles inherent in European-style education in an African society. This legitimized Motsete's standing as someone capable of understanding the challenges Africans faced and solving education problems for the society at large.

European-style education came to the BaNgwato as a cooperative response to settler colonialism by the *kgosi* and the missionaries. The L.M.S. began evangelizing and educating in the 1860s, concentrating first on the royal house. By 1872, missionary John Mackenzie founded and instructed at a seminary school in Shoshong, the BaNgwato capital before it was moved to Palapye in 1899 (later named the Moffat Institute 1876-1892). Mackenzie introduced European-style education only after obtaining the cooperation of the *kgosi*. Mackenzie built his relationship with the *kgosi* based on representing the mission as an agent of the protective well-intentioned British empire. He positioned his mission as a guardian of African well-being and against Cecil Rhodes's aspirations for colonial rule in Bechuanaland, in and around the moment the failed 1885 Jameson Raid exposed Rhodes's nefarious agenda to control Bechuanaland. For the *kgosi*, Mackenzie became associated with the British Empire. They considered him a friend, protector, ally against colonialism, and agent of

African interests. The conflict between Moffat and Rhodes furthered the chasm between the imperial and the colonial and strengthened the case for obtaining British protection.¹⁹

The notion that the L.M.S. were the protectors of Africans was not limited to the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Bishop Smart Methembu (b. 1901 in Plumtree, Zimbabwe) of the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion described the L.M.S. station in Mphini near Plumtree, founded by Cullen Reed in 1895, as a sanctuary for the BaKalanga from Ndebele invaders, European farmers, and the colonial government. Methembu's claim is somewhat problematic because if the situation in Southern Rhodesia was similar to the one in the Eastern Cape after the Zulu Wars, than according to Norman Etherington, early missionary converts were likely refugees of colonial conquest during the First *Chimurenga*.²⁰ However, Africans associated with Christian missions propagated the idea that Christian missions were a refuge for Africans from the worst excesses of the colonial order.

Methembu claimed that Christian Kalanga communities considered the L.M.S. at Dombodema and Plumtree to be guardians of Africans, because they allowed people to be baptized without formal education and accepted a higher level of Christian and African cultural synthesis than other European churches. In other words, African converts could accept Christianity while maintaining Kalanga cultural practices.²¹ Methembu's claim that the L.M.S. accepted a significant level of cultural synthesis is important because it implies

¹⁹ A.J. Haile, *A Brief Historical Survey of the London Missionary Society in Southern Africa* (Hope Fountain, Southern Rhodesia, 1961); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in Southern Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 199.

²⁰ Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 92, cited in Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 45.

²¹ Obed N. Kealotswe, *An African Independent Church Leader: Bishop Smart Mthembu of the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion* (Gaborone, Botswana: Dept. of History and Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana, 1994).

that African adherents to the mission, like Tumedisho, would have continued to practice significant aspects of African culture after joining the church. Steven Volz suggested that in Tswana society, Christianity was a platform for Africans to discern and critique cultural differences. Africans did not adopt Christianity as a single package. While integrating Christianity, they modified and rejected some of their former practices.²² Therefore, the Christian converts in Motsete's family followed a process of cultural synthesis.

The detailed accounts of conversion in the autobiographies of Motsete's father, Tumedisho, and the other 1909 and 1910 Tswana graduates of Tiger Kloof Seminary is evidence that the students became progressively more committed to Christianity because they learned from Tswana Christian elders to have faith and love for a Christian notion of God.²³ According to Volz, Tswana Christians circumvented the mediating role played by the *dikgosi* or their ancestors and accessed divine power themselves. This direct relationship with the God of Christianity empowered individuals. However, it also alienated Christians from some of their neighbors since Christians ordinarily refused to participate in some African social and community-building practices, such as initiation rights and polygamy.²⁴

Christianity posed a threat to particular elements within Tswana society. The clear social hierarchy delineated by the Tswana system of patronage was challenged by the Christian teaching of egalitarianism and Christ's sympathy for outcasts, the crippled, and the poor. The Christian idea that all people were equal before God challenged Tswana notions of privilege and authority.²⁵ African Christians' challenges to Tswana society in the half century

²² Stephen Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and their Communities During the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 16.

²³ Willoughby, DA49.1/2/697(F804), Tumedisho Maruapula, London Missionary Society Ordination Examination, 1914; Volz, *African Teachers*, 183.

²⁴ Stephen Volz, *African Teachers*, 190

²⁵ *Ibid*, 192

before 1900 opened the door for critique of social and political systems in the 20th century and the promotion of a discourse of equal rights for individuals and ethnic minorities.

African Christians, especially those with little or no formal missionary education, were mostly self-taught, through their own study of the Bible. There was no distinction between preacher and teacher in the commonly used term *moruti* (African minister). Tumedisho's ordination examinations suggest that he was influenced by his Christian uncles who likely fit the pattern of self-taught and self-motivated *moruti*.²⁶ As one of the many older men who became seminary students, Tumedisho's reservoir of life experiences suggests he fit this pattern. Experience attracted the L.M.S., who sought self-sufficient and self-motivated Africans capable of carrying the Christian message.²⁷

Even liberal Africans opposed the aspects of European oversight that hampered their ability to be self-motivated and self-sufficient. In his biography of Motsete's contemporary, Methodist Reverend Thomson Samkange (1893–1956), Terence Ranger focused on Samkange's drive for independence from European supervision. Samkange was in charge of a large Methodist circuit in western Zimbabwe without a European colleague. According to Samkange, it was an individual's choice to accept the responsibility of a Christian life. Claiming to be Christian meant being accountable to Christian morality, which he defined as self-help and self-discipline.²⁸

Samkange's Wesleyan Methodist Church originated as an African directed church and thus, it was an example of African initiative and self-sufficiency. However, African

²⁶ Willoughby, DA49.1/2/697(F804), Tumedisho Maruapula, London Missionary Society Ordination Examination, 1914.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 223

²⁸ T.O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men?: The Samkange Family & African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64* (Harare: Baobab, 1995), chapter one.

independence in the Wesleyan sense did not preclude multi-racial cooperation. The Wesleyans were dissimilar from adherents to the African initiated or African independent churches which developed independently of Europeans. Samkange endorsed the Wesleyan narrative that the church was founded on equality and cooperation between Africans and Europeans. He considered European missionary John White, the founder of the Wesleyan Church in Southern Rhodesia in 1896, to be his mentor and inspiration. As an empowered leader of the Methodist church, Samkange worked hard for African leadership and equality among all Christians of all denominations.²⁹ He was an example of the challenges Africans faced to uphold non-racialism in colonial Southern Africa.

Samkange, and other adherents of European Christian denominations, opposed the version of racial cooperation propagated by the vast majority of paternalistic European missionaries because those missionaries set severe limits on African autonomy. European missionaries accepted the Darwinian evolutionary theory of the common origins of mankind and the ensuing idea that Blacks could be made equal to Europeans, or what they called “civilized,” through the processes of European-style education. Therefore, they deemed European-style education and civilization as synonymous.

Tiger Kloof, James Stewart, and Multi-racial Cooperation

James Stewart, founder of the University of Fort Hare, narrated the story of the transformation of Tiyo Soga, one of Fort Hare’s first eleven African students. Stewart described the journey from “raw kaffir” to “cultured Christian gentlemen.” He claimed that

²⁹ *Ibid.*

after Soga's university training in Glasgow, Soga was respected by Blacks and Europeans as an eloquent preacher and translator.³⁰ This narrative was surely self-propagating because it presented the viability of Fort Hare. However, it also showed that paternalistic missionaries preached the rhetoric that education or "civilization" could produce Africans equivalent to Europeans.³¹

When measured against the context of Southern Africa in the early decades of the 20th century, Stewart's model at Lovedale contained a significant degree of non-racialism. Africans and Europeans took courses together and ate at the same dining hall. Stewart promoted the advantages of contact and competition between Africans and Europeans. He claimed they fostered sympathy between the groups and proved Africans could compete on an even playing field. Stewart believed that Lovedale's non-racial educational context "was the first practical recognition that the Africans are our fellow-men; that they have the rights of British subjects, and must be treated according to the laws of the Empire; and that earnest efforts must be made for the healing of racial prejudices."³² In some sense, Stewart pioneered advancements in racial equality.

The model Stewart developed at Lovedale Mission Institute in the Eastern Cape influenced missionaries throughout the region. Stewart claimed his notion of equality and justice to be the most progressive in the world. Africans indoctrinated under his tutelage were likely inspired by the prospect that this type of non-racial paternalism would engulf Southern Africa. Stewart's Lovedale model was the primary influence on L.M.S. Reverend W.C. Willoughby who established Tiger Kloof Institute, in 1904, at Vryburg, South Africa, close

³⁰ James Stewart, *Lovedale, South Africa* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1894).

³¹ James Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale: The Life of James Stewart* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909).

³² *Ibid*, 104, 190.

to the Bechuanaland Protectorate border.³³ In terms of education, Africans considered a full range of academic and industrial subjects the hallmark of multi-racial cooperation.

Willoughby pandered to the notion that Tiger Kloof offered a full curriculum in his inaugural speech at the opening of the school. When the school opened, he instituted the liberal Cape curriculum which meant that African and European students sat for the same examinations.³⁴

At Tiger Kloof, instruction was in English and even though English was not their first language, Africans proved themselves as able as their European contemporaries.³⁵

Willoughby considered English the *lingua franca* of necessity. Employees arrived at the school from overseas with no ability to speak African languages and African students spoke a variety of African languages. English was the means to connect African students to others. It opened up a new world of communication and scholarship to the students. Instruction in English meant that the school did not favor an African language and thus lent to less social stratification among the students.

Tiger Kloof emphasized advancing meritocratic ideals. It was a model of social integration and racial and social equality. This contributed to why the school attracted a diverse student body. This included Africans like Motsete and his father who were not from affluent or socially influential families. Willoughby disliked the aristocratic privileges of those he called “high-born Africans.” He believed in equally supporting the individuals who “advanced through individual industry.”³⁶ The meritocratic model at Tiger Kloof attracted Motsete and his father. Likewise, the L.M.S. was attracted to Motsete because he was one of

³³ *Ibid*, 194, 201.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ James Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale*, 126.

³⁶ W. C. Willoughby, *Tiger Kloof: The London Missionary Society's Native Institution in South Africa* (London: London Missionary Society, 1912), 57.

the few students of non-royal birth attending the school. Sympathy for Motsete's family's social standing and their commitment to the church played a role in why A.M. Chirgwin, L.M.S. Assistant Home Secretary (L.M.S. Foreign Secretary 1929-1932 and General Secretary 1932-1950), assisted Motsete to attend university in England. The L.M.S. considered Motsete an ideal partner. They were at odds with the *dikgosi* over a number of political and educational matters. Because of these tensions, they actively groomed the emergent class of non-royal Africans as a means to fortify their power.

Willoughby's policy to mix African and European students was one dimension in his program to diminish social class, race, and ethnic distinctions among the students by reducing discrimination or preferential treatment. Since Tiger Kloof was predominantly for Africans who came from better off families and who would later occupy positions of authority, many arrived in high standing positions in the social strata. At other schools, students ate different food and sat at different tables based on term fees. Students at Tiger Kloof, regardless of social background, ate the same food, wore the same uniforms, and shared the same dormitories and facilities.³⁷ In this regard, Tiger Kloof was a model of social integration and racial equality. The policy of social impartiality at Tiger Kloof was an example of how the school attempted to institute a shift towards a more meritocratic system.

At Tiger Kloof, Willoughby's ethical teachings were part of the typical missionary order of strict discipline. Usually this type of discipline is associated with Europeans instilling into their African students, their ideas about colonial order or their dogma of European supremacy. However, working beyond that point, the missionary order was also a means to teach young people self-esteem and self-determination. L.M.S. brass A.M.

³⁷ John Rutherford, *Little Giant of Bechuanaland: A Biography of William Charles Willoughby, Missionary and Scholar* (Gaborone, Botswana: Botswana Society, 2009), 127.

Chirgwin's description of Tiger Kloof emphasized the connection between European colonial ideas about order, discipline, and morality. Quoting Reverend A.J. Haile, the principal of Tiger Kloof from 1915 to 1945, Chirgwin proclaimed, "We have striven for order, method, punctuality, cleanliness, industry and self-restraint, respect for those in authority, the ability to do one's own thinking, and great reverence in worship."³⁸ Motsete engaged with the highly ordered world-view of Christian missionaries, akin to the paternalistic notion that individual character consisted of accepting authority and concurrently developing the qualities of a self-motivated responsible individual. This was the precarious balance facing Motsete and his contemporaries in the 1930s: bound to the seemingly paradoxical notion of accepting a degree of European paternalism, and therefore African inadequacy, they cultivated self-respect and the greatest degree of autonomy possible.

European missionaries understood the problems that occurred when they imposed an alien regime of European-style education and cultural values on African students. This alien regime and the disposition of paternalistic missionaries was especially difficult for students from non-Christian upstanding African families because they were more invested in their own culture. Liberal minded missionaries, like A.J. Haile at Tiger Kloof, tried to make it easier for Africans to incorporate the values they tried to instill by attentively managing the process. They used extra-curricular activities as a means to harmoniously mix Africans and Europeans and facilitate the process of cultural synthesis and multi-racial cooperation.

Mission schools organized activities for interracial cooperation and the advancement of liberal non-racialism. Examples were the Pathfinders (scouts), Wayfarers (guides), student

³⁸ A.M. Chirgwin, *Arthington's Million; the Romance of the Arthington Trust* (London: Livingstone Press, 1936), 142.

Christian associations, the marching band, and sports such as, tennis, cricket, and football.³⁹ During the time he studied at Tiger Kloof, Motsete participated in the debate society, performed music and poetry, and played football.⁴⁰ He participated in the Student Christian Movement when he was a student in London. During his schooling, Motsete engaged in activities which fostered liberal non-racialism. Subsequently, as the principal of the Tati Training Institute, he organized sporting competitions and Pathfinder and Wayfarer troops.

Willoughby was both a pioneer in liberal non-racialism and a paternalistic missionary. He argued vehemently against settler colonial and segregationist notions of race and color and accepted to some degree, the equality of educated or what missionaries referred to as “civilized” Africans. This is not to say that he did not infantilize the majority of commoners by deeming them uneducated and therefore uncivilized. According to Willoughby, these so called African “brothers” were adolescents, not ready to govern themselves.⁴¹ The point in belaboring Willoughby’s ideas is to show the paradoxical nature of Willoughby’s position and that despite being a pioneer for non-racialism, he still believed in the right for Europeans to lead the vast majority of African commoners.

In the first decades of the 20th century, Southern African liberals believed that European contact with Africa, especially capitalism, led to rapid economic changes that undermined African societies and produced African moral deterioration. Their solution was to try to regulate the rate of social and economic change by instituting protective paternalistic

³⁹ Alfred John Haile, *African Bridge-Builders: Tiger Kloof Native Institution, South Africa* (Livingstone Press: London, 1937), 27.

⁴⁰ Interview with Dr. Gaositwe Keagakwa Tibe Chiepe, Gaborone, Botswana, August 25, 2017; Interview with Masego Motsete, Gaborone, Botswana, August 30, 2018.

⁴¹ W.C. Willoughby, *Tiger Kloof*, introduction; William Charles Willoughby, *Race Problems in the New Africa: A Study of the Relation of Bantu and Britons in Those Parts of Bantu Africa Which are Under British Control* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 180.

policies designed to mitigate the shock. Willoughby and others conceived education from this vantage.

African liberals gauged the validity of European paternalism based on how potently it facilitated African advancement. African and European liberals juxtaposed non-racialism and racial cooperation against their propagandist rhetoric that Ethiopianism and the cry of “Africa for the Africans” represented an atrocious form of African autonomy. They deemed these movements for autonomy irresponsible and racially antagonistic.⁴² Liberal products of the mission schools got caught up in the idea that Africa’s future was connected to a cooperative multiracial partnership. They argued that their well-intentioned European partners were ultimately committed to cultivating African self-determination. They positioned themselves as the vanguard to advance Africans under European oversight, which they argued was a necessary step in the evolution towards African autonomy.

All liberal paternalists shared the notion that Africans would eventually handle their own affairs. The key difference was when. The most radical liberals believed Africans would be ready in a generation. Conservatives believed that it had taken Europeans millennium to become civilized and that since Africans had been in contact with civilization for only two generations, the process would take Africans a significant amount of time. For instance, James Henderson, a contemporary of Willoughby who took over as principal of Lovedale in 1906, believed that as it had done in Europe, the process of civilization would take millennia in Africa.⁴³ This, in 1912, when Willoughby said that he thought European guidance would

⁴² London Missionary Society and F. H. Hawkins, *London Missionary Society South African Mission: Supplementary Report of Mr. F.H. Hawkins, November 1912 - March 1913* (London: London Missionary Society, 1913), introduction.

⁴³ Jane Valerie Starfield, “Dr. S. Modiri Molema (1891-1965): The Making of an Historian” (Ph.D. diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2007), 179.

be necessary for a minimum of fifty years, his disposition was moderate relative to other European liberals in Africa.⁴⁴

Motsete embraced elements of the Christian missionary discourse he had engaged with while in the L.M.S. schools. He learned to believe in ideas such as the promise of the Christian civilizing mission. He came from a similar background as R.V. Selope Thema. Thema was educated at mission schools and at the Lovedale Missionary Institute before becoming an early member of the South African Native National Congress, later known as the Africa National Congress. In Thema's autobiography, he professed that Christians inspired hope in him by preaching the dawn of a new world. He wanted to learn to read English to understand the Bible's message. The Bible opened up a new world and shed light on problems puzzling Africa.⁴⁵ Thus, Africans like Thema and Motsete considered missionary paternalism as their best alternative to deal with the colonial imposition and they accepted their responsibility as associates of European paternalists to critique the negative consequences of colonialism and usher in a better African future.

Thema showed that Africans who accepted Christian paternalism also stood in strong opposition to oppression. They did accept a level of oppression because they believed it was a temporary means for advancing Africans. However, they believed that oppression was not ultimately what the Christian God of the missionaries intended for Africa. Thema wrote that Lovedale taught him to see all men as Christian equals, and to fight against tyranny and injustice. He believed, "The African race was created in the image of God to occupy a nobler place than that of servitude in the affairs of mankind."⁴⁶ Thema's personal experiences of

⁴⁴ W.C. Willoughby, *Tiger Kloof*, 35.

⁴⁵ Richard Victor Selope Thema, *From Cattle-Herding to Editor's Chair: The Unfinished Autobiography and Writings of Richard Victor Selope Thema* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2016), chapter two.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 35.

maltreatment informed his politics. He demanded respect for all Africans, regardless of their education, and humane treatment for everyone regardless of color.⁴⁷ Thema's writings show that although some Africans educated in the missions did not want to return to African life, when taking on Christianity and aspects of European civilization, they fully understood the historical cruelties Europeans had perpetrated on Africans, such as the Atlantic slave trade and colonialism, and subsequently avidly attacked overt oppression.

Therefore, non-racialism in the 1930s did not mean immediate equality for all Africans. It meant a gradualist liberal notion, including fidelity to empire, promoting European-style education, and equal citizenship for those who had obtained a significant degree of education. African and European liberals were gradualist in the 1920s and 1930s, which meant that African liberals like Motsete acquiesced to create spaces to operate at the highest possible level of self-determination in order to facilitate the process of educating or civilizing commoners.

Moving beyond the liberal paternalistic context of the Christian mission and especially Tiger Kloof where Motsete and his father spent a significant portion of their lives, a deeper examination of the available sources allows an examination of Motsete's boyhood in Serowe, his schooling at the L.M.S. Church School, and he and his father's experiences at Tiger Kloof. The goal is to foreground Motsete's ideas and further scrutinize how his family engaged with the concepts of liberal cooperation, non-racialism, and cultivated self-determination.

In 1911, Serowe's population of about thirty thousand made it one of the largest urban centers in Southern Africa. Khama III, a lover of foreigners (non-Setswana speakers),

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 55.

peacefully welcomed Africans and Europeans to Serowe. African foreigners, or what are referred to here as “ethnic minorities,” occupied large wards (neighborhoods) in Serowe. According to Bessie Head’s interview with 104-year-old elder Ramosamo Kebonang, in Serowe, people were so well integrated that it was difficult to determine who was an ethnic minority. Foreigners adopted the Setswana language and strengthened the BaNgwato *morafe* (polity).⁴⁸ Kebonang alleged, “Serowe may be the only village in Southern Africa where a Black man can say with immense dignity that he likes some of the things the white man brought. The white man hasn’t trampled here on human dignity.”⁴⁹ For the most part, until the middle 1930s, this was true because Africans controlled Europeans in Serowe and not vice-versa.⁵⁰ Kebonang’s points support the argument that the BaNgwato system easily accommodated African immigrants. Being an ethnic minority or originating from a group of foreign speakers was not problematic, it was inherent in the development of the BaNgwato polity. This included Europeans who were welcomed as foreigners living under BaNgwato rule. Although there is a significant history of conflict between Europeans, especially between missionaries and the *dikgosi*, Kebonang’s narrative is based on the notion that Khama III was a strong and effective ruler of Africans and manager of Europeans. It is evidence that Serowe exemplified a balance of African self-determination and racial cooperation.

⁴⁸ Interview with Ramosamo Kebonang at 104 years old in Bessie Head, *Serowe, Village of the Rain Wind* (London: Heinemann, 1981).

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 94.

⁵⁰ Michael Crowder, *The Flogging of Phineas McIntosh: A Tale of Colonial Folly and Injustice: Bechuanaland, 1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Ikanyeng S. Malila, “The Role of Punishment in the Political Subordination of the Dikgosi in Colonial Botswana,” *Botswana Notes and Records* 44 (2012): 13–24.

Tumedisho, Motsete's father, taught SeTswana and Sesotho at the L.M.S. Church School in Serowe until missionary Jennings arranged for him to attend Tiger Kloof in 1906.⁵¹ He entered the Theology School's first class in 1908, when he was about forty years old. The three-year program included a Christian religious curriculum, along with material on the relationship between African religion and Christianity. Students were required to have the recommendation of their local churches and permission of government officials. Theology students were provided with a cottage on campus, monthly rations, and were allowed to live with their families. Children of the theological students, like Motsete, attended school free of charge.⁵² Willoughby did much of the tutoring so he had a great deal of contact with Tumedisho and the theology class.⁵³ In 1930, two decades later, Motsete worked for about eighteen-months as the Theology School tutor under the direction of Gavin Smith.

It was common that students at Tiger Kloof were older than the normal age of a student. The average age of theology students was about twenty years old. Despite their age, many of the incoming students were at an elementary stage in their schooling, lower than a Standard III education (normally about fourteen years old). Most attended the normal (primary) school in conjunction with their theology studies. Tumedisho was about forty when he began his theology training at Tiger Kloof. Based on his maturity, experience in teaching, and his longstanding relationship with the L.M.S., he was a promising theology candidate. But as was often the case with older theology students, his academic credentials were subpar. He studied at the normal school for approximately eighteen months in preparation for the opening of the Theology School.

⁵¹ BNARS, RC 6/1, E.B. Sargant, Report on Education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1905; E.B. Sargant, *Report on Education in Basutoland, 1905-6*. 1906, microfilm.

⁵² W. C. Willoughby, *Tiger Kloof*, 42.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 108.

Tumedisho and the other older students symbolized maturity and level-headedness to the younger staff even though they commonly had little or no prior formal schooling. Tumedisho and his older classmates were unable to pass Standard III. Inability in academic subjects did not preclude theological students from ordination, provided they were capable in their theological studies and maintained a level of personal character.⁵⁴ Tumedisho's 1910 examination results show that he was below average in every theological subject and in reading Setswana and English.⁵⁵ His 1912 examination results showed that he was average in theological subjects but read below the Standard IV level. Missionary Hawkins reported that Tumedisho had "a particularly awkward manner. His method [was] clumsy, but he has shown a persevering spirit and seems to have improved considerably during the past two years."⁵⁶ Despite his academic challenges, Tumedisho was ordained as a L.M.S. minister in 1915.⁵⁷

Tumedisho's 1914 ordination exams, a ten-page typed transcript, is the best historical source for understanding his formative years.⁵⁸ It is especially revealing of the familial context in which he learned to hybridize African and Christian cultural practices. According to his own account, Tumedisho grew up in a strict household. He had a typical African boy's life: herding cattle, hunting, ploughing, and driving an ox wagon transport. When the L.M.S. Church School opened, he taught SeTswana alongside the English missionary Miss Sharp.

⁵⁴ John Rutherford, *Little Giant of Bechuanaland*. 136.

⁵⁵ George Cousins, William Dower, and Charles James Tarring. *Report on Visit to the South African Missions of the Society, November 1910 – April 1911* (London: London Missionary Society, 1911), 152.

⁵⁶ London Missionary Society and F. H. Hawkins, *Supplementary Report of Mr. F.H. Hawkins*, 180

⁵⁷ A.J. Haile, *A Brief Historical Survey*. 30.

⁵⁸ Willoughby, DA49.1/2/697(F804), Tumedisho Maruapula, London Missionary Society Ordination Examination, 1914.

Initially, his parents had trouble releasing him from agricultural and pastoral work. He convinced them it was beneficial to spend time reading the Bible.⁵⁹

According to Tumedisho's account, Khama III's Christian reforms had ended all community-wide practices of ancestral worship. African medicine was the only remaining African religious practice accepted by his family.⁶⁰ He associated African medicine with the process of educating age regiments, whereby leaders allegedly practiced covert human sacrifice. The human sacrifice narrative was part of the missionary discourse of "African barbarity" and propagated to demean African cultures. Tumedisho may have been indoctrinated into the Christian notion of Africans as barbarous, but more likely, he redeployed the human sacrifice narrative to impress his missionary audience. Either way, Tumedisho fused African culture and Christianity. As a Christian he fought to end the African practices he assumed were outmoded but as the oldest child in his family he continued to recognize his familial and social obligations, especially to his father and uncles.

Based on Tumedisho's ordination exam, his transition to Christianity was fairly untroublesome. In his exam, he claimed to have three Christian uncles and to be familiar with the African Christian lifestyle. Lencwe, one of the uncles, was a deacon of the BaNgwato Church. Tumedisho claimed Lencwe as an influential figure in his life because he had helped him to learn to read. Tumedisho described his conversion as an easy transition because it was based on his love for God and not on fear. Although his brothers remained so called "heathens," he dedicated his life to the love of and service to God.⁶¹ Tumedisho's familial background should be taken with a grain of salt because he likely played up the Christian

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

dimension of his upbringing and underplayed the difficulties in his conversion. However, it speaks to the ways in which Africans engaged in the practice of cultural fusion and religious conversion. Motsete grew up in a family practicing Christianity and cultural fusion for at least two generations. This context showed him the benefits of hybridizing African practices and foreign elements.

Music was a significant part of Motsete's life. Aside from education and politics, it is the most obvious means to examine how he practiced cultural fusion. Motsete claimed to have loved music from the time he was a child, and as a child to have played the *nkokwane* (one string bow harp).⁶² Later, he played piano and composed hymns using the tonic-sol-fa system. Motsete, like African musicians Reuben Caluza of Ohlange and John Knox Bokwe of Lovedale, composed music based on the Christian hymn model. John Dube, founding president of the South African Native National Congress, later known as the Africa National Congress, and founder of the Ohlange Institute, published *A Zulu Songbook* in 1911, a group of secular hymns written in the tonic-sol-fa system. The lyrics drew upon Zulu traditions and the music was closely tied to the European-style hymns of the period. This musical genre was the actualization of hybridizing African, Christian, and European culture into something uniquely African. Over his lifetime, Motsete composed over one-hundred songs. Over sixty of those compositions, many of which are hymns, are in the possession of his family. Some of the compositions stem from the 1920s but Motsete wrote the vast majority in the last decade of his life.

For John Knox Bokwe, the hymn represented the complexity of Africans' engagement with European cultural forms. Hymns were typically considered to be simply

⁶² Hubert William Peet, "A Bantu's B.D."

African language lyrics applied to existing music. Bokwe contended that the synthesis was far more complex.⁶³ At the Lovedale Jubilee in 1891, Bokwe embraced the inconsistency of colonialism: the progress of Christianity and the civilizing mission along with the “dark side” and “evils” which the Europeans brought along with them.⁶⁴ The African-penned hymn was a means to bring a hybridized form of African culture into being through a musical form.

H.I.E. Dhlomo, a founding figure in South African literature, considered Caluza the “exemplary cultural proselytizer of modernity.”⁶⁵ This is because of the importance Dhlomo placed on music and the hymn as a hybrid genre in the 1930s. Music played an important role in shaping African society. Musicians, like other creators of hybridized African culture, were tasked with the responsibility of balancing the complex dialectic between Africa and external influences.

As Mhoze Chikowero argued in *African Music, Power and Being*, Africans “deployed their music to contest their being, to regenerate their selfhoods, and to strive for self-liberation ... Their music was informed by, and it constituted, indigenous epistemic orders that colonialism ultimately failed to subvert or destroy.”⁶⁶ One dimension of Chikowero’s argument is that the African hymn was to a significant extent a means for Africans to re-center their marginalized African episteme. Colonialism subjected these men to cultural ambivalence, self-doubt, and inferiority. They invited and rejected colonialism in what is known as the colonial malady, or the concept Du Bois deemed “double consciousness.” Thus, as Chikowero indicated, Africans employed European cultural capital,

⁶³ John Knox Bokwe, *Amaculo ase Lovedale. Lovedale Music* (Lovedale, South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1922).

⁶⁴ Grant Olwage, “John Knox Bokwe, Colonial Composer: Tales About Race and Music,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 131, (2006): 1-37.

⁶⁵ Ntongela Masilela, “Rueben Caluza,” Pitzer College website, New African Movement, <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/nam/newafre/writers/caluzacaluzaS.html>

⁶⁶ Mhoze Chikowero, *African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015), 4-5.

like the hymn, as a means of self-crafting, which affirmed and disrupted colonial modernity.⁶⁷ Africans produced hybrid musical compositions, including hymns, that can be read for how they fashioned identities and how they engaged with pertinent social and political debates. Through the medium of the hymn, they asserted their equality despite the attempts of colonial social engineers to construct them as backward.⁶⁸

African missionaries and teachers who performed and taught music produced much of their material in response to European discourses of “African incivility” and “primitivity.” The Christian hymn was one way for Africans to speak to power and to embrace elements of the colonizing machine while critiquing that which they condemned. Southern African musical genres were inspired by and connected to the Black Atlantic. They were a means to supplant local colonial and racial limitations with the imagining of the “overseas” or the prospect of future possibilities.⁶⁹

Along with other new African intellectuals, Motsete was both informed by and participated in the hymnal musical genre of the 1930s. He was a member of the Tiger Kloof Mutual Progressive Debating Society and at their grand concert in 1917 he sang “Come Merry Comrades,” a secular choral march for men’s voices by Vincenz Ernst Becker. At the debating Society’s December 1916 concert, Motsete recited the song “the Gottingen Barber,” by Brewer & Co., from *the Comic Song Book*. This whimsical tale is about a barber at a college who has a frightening encounter with the devil only to realize he was actually dreaming. Motsete was the only one who recited song lyrics as if they were a poem. Everyone else performed a musical number. Choosing to perform “the Gottingen Barber” in

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 13, 17, chapter six.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

this manner demonstrates Motsete’s remarkable sense of humor, his unconventional manner, and his inventiveness.⁷⁰

As a musician and a performer of African culture, Motsete contested and decentered the racialized essence of colonialism. Music was only one means by which he and others of his generation struggled against racism and oppression. Another was to utilize education in the literature and histories of the Greco-Roman Classics to undermine Eurocentric and colonial historical narratives.

The Classics, Global Civilization, and African History

Motsete and his contemporaries in Southern Africa emphasized the Classics to establish themselves as authorities on debates about culture, politics, race, and society. The Classics were a means they employed to highlight Africa’s contributions to global civilization and assert alternative histories of the African continent.⁷¹ Africans who had been educated to the secondary level likely possessed some familiarity with the Classics, specifically, Greek and Latin history and literature, and therefore using the Classics indicated that someone was highly educated. Michael Lambert characterized D.D.T. Jabavu, who taught Latin in the late 19th century to students at Fort Hare, not only as having “internalized the voices of empire” but also as having “[used] his colonial education in the Classics to subvert the very

⁷⁰ Council for World Mission (CWM), CWM/LMS/Africa Odds/Box 22, “Programme: Tiger Kloof Mutual Progressive Debating Society’s Concert to be Held on the 8th of December 1916”; J.E. Carpenter, *The Comic Song Book* (London, 1864).

⁷¹ Willoughby, DA49/1/2/334(F383), K.T. Motsete, “The Life of a Bantu Student in England.” *Tiger Kloof*, 13 (December 1931); E. G. Malherbe, *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society: Report of the South African Education Conference Held in Capetown and Johannesburg in July 1934, Under the Auspices of the New Education Fellowship*. (Capetown: Juta & Co, 1934): 479; Richard Victor Selope Thema, *From Cattle-Herding to Editor's Chair: The Unfinished Autobiography and Writings of Richard Victor Selope Thema* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2016), 33; “Read before the Conference of European and Bantu Christian Students Associations Held at Fort Hare in 1930,” in Alfred B. Xuma, *Bridging the Gap Between White and Black in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Lovedale Press, 1930).

discourses into which he had been socialized.”⁷² Well aware of the paradox of appropriating the discourse of classicists in the struggle for equality, Africans, such as Jabavu formed a distinct relationships with the Classics based on contesting or subverting Eurocentric interpretations.⁷³

Classical histories were foundational in arguments for African self-determination because they were based on the idea that relations between Africa and ancient Greece and Rome predated European imperialism and therefore colonial historical narratives. In the early 20th century, there were systematic attempts to withhold classical education from Africans, in part because Africans’ command of the classical canon was by and of itself a critique of European authority. Educated Africans used the Classics to display their academic prowess and impress and intimidate Europeans, who were for the most part far less accomplished academically.⁷⁴

Africans used the Classics to develop an Afrocentric historical disposition and for arguing that Africa made a significant contribution to global civilization. Africans displayed their knowledge of the classics to argue that first, ancient Egypt was predominantly an African civilization, and secondly, that ancient Ethiopia was an example of the interaction between ancient Africa and other civilizations. These arguments were based on the writings of Greek historian, Herodotus, and Greek geographer, Strabo. Beginning in the 1960s, Afrocentric scholar, Cheikh Anta Diop used these sources for one dimension of his groundbreaking argument for the African origin of ancient Egyptian civilization and to

⁷² Michael Lambert, *The Classics and South African Identities* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 9, chapter three.

⁷³ Margaret Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 5.

⁷⁴ Barbara E. Goff, *‘Your Secret Language’: Classics in the British Colonies of West Africa* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 2.

suggest that African civilization was the basis for human civilization itself.⁷⁵ Afrocentric histories suggested cultural continuity throughout the continent and challenged compartmentalized ethnic or national constructs.⁷⁶

Africans' historical claims regarding Kush and Nubia (now Ethiopia and the Sudan) had two significant implications. First, those civilizations were intimately connected with ancient Egypt, further substantiating the claim for continuity across the notorious "sub-Saharan" European construct and throughout the African continent. Secondly, officially Christian since 330 CE, Abyssinia (now Ethiopia and Eritrea), claimed to be the oldest Christian country in the world.⁷⁷ According to Ethiopia's founding mythology, the first-born of the tribes of Israel came to Ethiopia accompanying Menelik I, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. As African Jews, they converted to Christianity. Therefore, Ethiopians considered themselves the embodiment of Judeo-Christianity. The leader of the Ethiopian State was known as "King of Kings from the tribe of Judah," Ethiopia used the star of David as its national symbol, and the Ethiopian royal family based their right to rule on this dynastic line.

For Blacks throughout the African diaspora in the 1930s, Ethiopia was symbolic of ancient African civilization, the African origins of Christianity, and self-determination in contempt of European aggression.⁷⁸ Led by Emperor Menelik II, Ethiopia defeated the Italian

⁷⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*; Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization* (Paris, Présence Africaine, 1954.)

⁷⁶ Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959).

⁷⁷ Abba Abraham Buruk Woldegaber and Mario Alexis Portella, *Abyssinian Christianity: The First Christian Nation? The History and the Identity of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Christians* (Pismo Beach, CA: BP Editing, 2012).

⁷⁸ Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994).

Nadia Nurhussein, *Black Land: Imperial Ethiopianism and African America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019).

invasion in 1896. His son, Emperor Haile Selassie, led Ethiopia in its fight against the second Italian invasion in 1935. Although the Italians occupied the country from 1936-1941, Ethiopia was a global symbol of African independence, because it was the only African country other than Liberia not colonized by Europeans.

Africans claimed Africa's own classical tradition, independent of European imperialism. They drew on the classical tradition, including accounts of Africa's contact with ancient Greece and Rome.⁷⁹ Africans drew inspiration from the Black American civil rights campaigners and abolitionists who employed the Classics in their battle for liberty and equality in the United States. The Classics were indeed a powerful weapon for resistance.⁸⁰

The classical view of civilization was cyclical and not linear. Classical writers promoted a cyclical version of history whereby ancient civilizations rose and fell. This view negated the Darwinian evolutionary theories of hierarchical civilizations used by Europeans to argue that Ancient Africa was void of civilization.⁸¹ According to the classical view, civilizations rose and fell and were built on earlier civilizations. Global civilization was not European but was instead the product of an historical process. It was the culmination of earlier civilizations: Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman. For Africans, the Classics were not just a means to resist and circumvent colonialism, racism, or Eurocentric historiographies, they were a vehicle to claim Africa's connection to global civilization and the shared achievements of humanity.

Many English-speaking intellectuals of Southern Africa used the term "civilization" to show the relative fragility of European power in the African colonial territories. Based on

⁷⁹ Abba Abraham Buruk Woldegaber and Mario Alexis Portella, *Abyssinian Christianity*.

⁸⁰ Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics*, 4.

⁸¹ Paul B. Rich, *Hope and Despair: English-Speaking Intellectuals and South African Politics, 1896-1976* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 120.

the cyclical nature of empire and on the notion that transgressions would spell Europe's demise, Africans bolstered by the Classics argued that injustice and oppression would only expedite the inevitable end of European imperial power.⁸² This idea underpinned Nigerian intellectual Nnamdi Azikiwe's warning in *Renasant Africa* that oppressing Africans would have dire consequences for European nations. He suggested that in view of the problematic situation in 1930s Africa, it would be useful to study the history of the world and the reasons for the emergence of new orders out of the wake of bygone empires.⁸³

Classical interpretations of history, and especially the idea of the rise and fall of empires, was the basis for "Regeneration of Africa," the monumental speech made in 1906 by Pixley Seme, founder of the African National Congress. Seme argued that the world was witnessing an African awakening generated by new notions of the glory of African history and Africans' contribution to civilization. Inspired by Africa's great history, Seme's idea of the regeneration of the continent signaled Africa's rise to prominence.⁸⁴

Motsete was one of a number of African intellectuals who used the Classics to imagine an idealized African future. In one example, Motsete redeployed classical Greek philosophy and connected it to an African proverb to argue for the importance of supporting the British Empire. Motsete quoted Epicurus, "A beneficent person is like a fountain watering the Earth and spreading fertility," arguing for the notion of a benevolent and even altruistic empire spreading civilization to the world.⁸⁵ His connotation was that British imperial guidance could foster development for Africa and therefore the world. By adding a

⁸² *Ibid.*, 169.

⁸³ Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa* (Accra: the author, 1937), 42.

⁸⁴ Pixley Seme, speech, "The Regeneration of Africa," April 5, 1906, South Africa History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/regeneration-africa-speech-pixley-seme-5-april-1906>.

⁸⁵ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, "The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute," November 20, 1933.

SeTswana saying, “*Mo ntsanaisa bosigo ke me rata bo sele*” (He that guides me by night, I shall love by day), Motsete implied that Africa cherished European guidance.⁸⁶

Thema proposed that Africans would rise from obscurity to the heights of civilization in a manner similar to the British. He justified the negative consequences of British rule as a necessary stage in Africa contributing to global civilization. While studying history at Lovedale, Thema learned the idea of cyclical empires, observing that invading Romans had brought civilization to the primitive British who subsequently advanced to a point of power well beyond that of their predecessor. This was one way that Motsete and others drew parallels between the British Empire and their imagining of a boundless African future.⁸⁷

Africans who obtained European style education commonly accepted imperialism as inevitable and as a necessary evil in Africa’s enduring role as a participant in global civilization. This attitude of acquiescence fixed these Africans in a reformist mindset. Instead of taking on a subversive position, they focused on how Africa could meet the challenges associated with imperialism, or even colonialism. The critical dimension of imperialism they sought to reform was the alleged European superiority. Azikiwe supported what he called “emulative” imperialism, Africans as critical agents in the process of amalgamating and adjusting to imperial culture. This implied challenging overt racism, oppression, and the dogma of European superiority.⁸⁸

Promoting the idea of cyclical empires did not diminish Africans’ understanding of the catastrophic historical realities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism. In the 1930s, most African intellectuals educated in European-style schools considered the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Richard Victor Selope Thema, *From Cattle-Herding*, 33.

⁸⁸ Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, 66.

European colonial invasion of Africa as a great historic defeat. They responded by trying to appropriate the very technologies which had enabled Europeans to triumph, and this meant reshaping things such as European-style education and Christianity for their own ends.⁸⁹

Z.K. Matthews, a prominent academic and Botswana's ambassador to the United States in the 1960s, understood that Africans wanted European-style education in order to learn how Europeans perpetrated slavery and colonialism. His parents told him, "Education was the weapon with which the white man had conquered our people and taken our lands... [His father] would insist that the real reason for our defeat was the white man's education and the black man's lack of it. Only by mastering the secrets of his knowledge would we ever be able to regain our strength and face the conqueror on his own terms."⁹⁰ For African intellectuals, European-style education was the primary means by which they planned to resist European power and produce an African renaissance.

African Christians understood that their faith was shared across time and space. Regardless of their social class, they shared a belief that their Christian identity signified a connection to the wider world and that Africa held a place in global civilization. Africans commonly sought the support of Christian missionaries and their international networks in the struggle against colonial nationalist, racist, and segregationist policies.⁹¹ Africans had a long history of wrestling with the meaning of Christianity in Africa and criticizing Europeans who claimed themselves religious authorities. Christianity was thus an attractive means to critique colonialism, empire and European supremacy.

⁸⁹ Ntongela Masilela, "The 'Black Atlantic' and African Modernity in South Africa," *Research in African Literatures*, 27,4 (1996): 88-96, 90.

⁹⁰ Z.K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People: The Autobiography of Z.K. Matthews, Southern Africa 1901 to 1968* (London: R. Collings, 1981), 14.

⁹¹ D.D.T. Jabavu, "The South African Problem," *International Review of Mission*. 15,3 (1926).

In 1930, at the Fort Hare African college in the Eastern Cape, A.B. Xuma, the first Black South African to become a medical doctor and president of the African National Congress in the 1940s, gave a speech titled “Bridging the Gap” at the Conference of European and Bantu Christian Students Associations. “Bridging the Gap” is an example of the fusing of Christian civilization, global civilization, and African liberalism.⁹² Xuma argued that civilization was a cooperative achievement of mankind, the culmination of the efforts of all countries, races, and creeds through all of the ages. Xuma proclaimed, “[Civilization] is the most wonderful thing that the world has ever seen, and it is the result of the common efforts of the human family.”⁹³ His goal was to replace colonial or local constructs with a global or Christian disposition. Xuma’s message was that Christianity and global civilization transcended the various national and racist ideological boundaries separating people. He hoped to bring together the leaders of all people into common understanding and sympathy, arguing that the only way to preserve civilization in South Africa was to adhere to liberal Christian morality and the path of justice, brotherhood, and cooperation.

Thema insisted that Africa had a role to play in the saga of the evolution of global civilization. He declared that the race problem required “the spirit of humanity” and “each race of mankind has a right to work out its own destiny.”⁹⁴ The African “has a place in God’s scheme of creation. Not to occupy a position of servitude in the affairs of mankind” but to “make distinct contributions to the gathering achievement of the race.”⁹⁵ Thema’s idea of

⁹² “Read before the Conference of European and Bantu Christian Students Associations Held at Fort Hare in 1930,” in Alfred B. Xuma, *Bridging the Gap Between White and Black in South Africa*.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ R.V. Selope Thema, “The Race Problem,” *The Guardian*, September 1922, South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/race-problem-article-guardian-r-v-selope-thema-september-1922>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

mutual understanding and cooperation between what he referred to as “races” was based on his understanding that Africa was a contributing participant in global Christianity and to the ongoing evolution of global civilization. Citing the death of millions in the First World War and the arrogance of European supremacy, Thema challenged European claims to hold a monopoly on civility and warned that such transgressions would ultimately destroy European imperialists just as they had claimed the lives of ancient civilizations and dismantled former empires.⁹⁶

Many Africans became proponents of African centered articulations of history and were well grounded in the positive aspects of African culture.⁹⁷ Motsete and his new African intellectual contemporaries rejected what they considered outmoded in African culture and promoted the aspects of European civilization they considered worthwhile.⁹⁸ Hybridizing culture was complex, precarious, and problematic. Especially because above all else, the awakening of a new unitary African national consciousness depended on advancing Africans’ opportunities for self-determination.

This chapter traced the formative years of Motsete’s life and the ideologies that shaped him as an adult. He and his colleagues maintained a liberal and non-racial political position, contesting what they defined as overt oppression and racism, and advocated a philosophy of uniting African self-determination with British imperial rule. In addition to having been raised in a Christian multicultural family experienced in reconciling African and Christian traditions for the African context, the non-racial liberalism espoused by L.M.S. missionaries and the BaNgwato chieftaincy in Serowe shaped Motsete’s attitudes in his

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Richard Victor Selope Thema, *From Cattle Herding*, xxvi.

⁹⁸ Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement in South Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2013), chapter 2; Richard Victor Selope Thema, *From Cattle-Herding*, xxvii.

formative years. Serowe, the BaNgwato capital, governed by BaNgwato Chief Khama III exemplified a balance of racial cooperation and African self-determination.

Motsete engaged with missionary paternalistic discourses as part of his education at L.M.S. schools. Although he accepted British rule and a form of paternalism, their standing depended on how successfully the government promoted African socio-economic advancement. He considered missionary paternalism as the best alternative to deal with the colonial imposition and accepted the responsibility as an associate of European paternalists to critique the negative consequences of colonialism and work towards creating a better African future.

Motsete studied the classical canon which Africans used to dispel European nationalist and racist frameworks and reinforce their own enduring place in and contributions to global civilization. Classical histories of the African continent proved Africa's contributions to global civilization and negated the European notion that Africa was historically uncivilized. Classical histories were formidable ammunition in the fight against colonialism and the dogma of European supremacy because they were based on historical conceptualizations that predated colonialism. In addition, the classical view of the rise and fall of civilizations challenged European ideas about linear evolution and were used by Africans to suggest global civilization was not European but was the amalgamation of earlier empires such as Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman. Motsete and his colleagues became proponents of African-centered historical narratives and positive aspects of African culture. These ideas about the history of Africa and the world underpinned their scheme to hybridize culture, awaken a new African consciousness, and create more opportunities for Africans to realize self-determination.

Chapter Three

An Experience Abroad: Modeling Self-Determination (1923–1930)

When Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete returned to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1929, he had obtained a higher level of European-style education than anyone else living in the country and was among the elite group of highly educated Africans living on the continent in the 1930s. Despite years of schooling and decades of interaction with European culture, Motsete expressed the precarious cultural and social position of the African intermediate. Shortly after his return to the Protectorate, he explained to Resident Commissioner Charles Rey that he was,

At present occupying the unenviable position of a sort of “go-between,” for I am through my training and my life abroad either black and white, or neither black nor white. I am as close to the one as to the other, capable of being regarded as a friend or foe by either, but I hope never by both.¹

Having spent seven years schooling in England, Motsete was thirty-one years old and eager to pursue his professional calling. He offered Rey his services as an interpreter or intermediary capable of solving the existing problems between Africans and Europeans. He explained that the original purpose of his return to his own country was to serve the country and people under the administration. Although Motsete’s letter to Rey gives the sense that Motsete felt culturally convoluted, it shows that educated Africans used cultural ambiguity to position themselves politically. This chapter traces the influences Motsete engaged with in England and the ideas that led to his envisioning himself as an employee of the imperial government.

¹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to the Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, December 5, 1930.

Motsete engaged with the complex amalgam of ideas circulating in the Black Atlantic and Southern Africa, such as Pan-Africanism, Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee model, Christian universalism, and African cultural nationalism. These ideas reinforced those of the African liberalism he adopted in his formative years. Motsete employed these ideas to critique the British Empire, colonialism, and the dogma of European supremacy. They ultimately furthered his sense of his responsibility to champion African self-determination and influenced how he shaped the political and educational philosophies that he actualized in the 1930s and beyond.

As is generally the case, the colonial archive does not contain much of the historical context that motivated educated Africans in the 1920s and 1930s. It is impossible to know for certain what Motsete understood about the historical figures he referenced in his writings or the specific ways that he interpreted prevailing discourses. Thus, some of the connections drawn out in this chapter are to some degree speculative. However, this chapter contextualizes the references to historical figures and prevailing discourses that Motsete strategically embedded with complex and sometimes clandestine subtexts.

This chapter is organized chronologically and covers 1919 to 1923, when Motsete worked as a teacher in Natal, South Africa and 1923 to 1929, when he schooled at Hackney and New College in London. First, there is a discussion of historical figures Motsete referenced in his writings: British thinker John Ruskin and by proxy Mahatma Gandhi, principal of Hackney and New College Alfred Garvie, Arthur Wellesley (The First Duke of Wellington), and philosopher John McKenzie. These historical references are the entrance point for exploring the politically motivated subtexts embedded in Motsete's writings. Motsete's references to Ruskin and Gandhi further demonstrate how he forged his critique of

the British Empire and African education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The ethical disposition Motsete cultivated while growing up in the church and schools of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) was substantiated by Garvie's theological treaties on Christian ethics and Christian universalism. Motsete's references to Wellesley and McKenzie are evidence that in the time he spent studying in London, his ideas about the African continent and his critique of the British Empire enhanced his sense of the importance of African self-determination.

The second section details the debates African students engaged in while studying in London in the 1920s. Historical sources pertaining to the West African Students' Union (WASU), the most prominent of the African students' unions in Britain, showed that WASU leaders promoted forms of African liberalism and cultural nationalism. Based on Simbini Mamba Nkomo, a Zimbabwean history teacher at Tuskegee Institute, Africans in the Black Atlantic held no contradiction in combining the idea of "self-help," associated with Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute model with pride in the Black race and in Africa. Nkomo proves that Africans in the 1920s Black Atlantic vigorously critiqued Washington's Tuskegee and the Phelps-Stokes models of education. Participating in the Student Christian Movement contributed to strengthening Motsete's commitment to the non-racial African liberal political position. Because Christian internationalism sought to transcend the nationally constructed racial regimes of various countries and colonial territories, it was a means to promote equality for Blacks throughout the world.

The third section is a discussion of the socio-economic and political shifts which took place in the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1920s. Motsete believed that conditions had significantly deteriorated in the decade he was outside the Protectorate and that the

government had abandoned the trajectory for advancing Africans set forth by Khama III. His thinking was influenced by the newly emergent liberal historiography of William Macmillan and by the schools directed by the BaNgwato and BaKgatla *dikgosi* (chiefs). All of these influences underpinned the social and political schemes Motsete undertook in the 1930s.

Durban, the Black Atlantic, and Hackney and New College in London

Motsete's life was shaped by his encounter with the Black Atlantic intellectual tradition as a student in London in the 1920s.² Instead of diluted hybrid Africans caught between accepting African or European realities, the Black Atlantic suggests African intellectuals invented their own ideas about Africa based on their experience as active participants in the trans-continental exchange of ideas between people living in Africa, the Americas, and Europe. The 1920s Black Atlantic shaped Motsete's understanding of the role of an educated African in the colonial system, his pedagogical philosophy, and his political orientation. These ideas were intertwined with his experiences on the African continent, his understanding of the Southern African social and economic conditions, his knowledge of the African past, and his perceptions of Africa's historic role globally.

Biographies of Africans in London in the 1920s show that educated Africans compared their experiences with racism in Europe to those in Africa.³ Personal experiences with racism at the hands of Europeans was hard to accept for proud and accomplished young

² Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³ Davidson D.T. Jabavu, *The Black Problem: Papers and Addresses on Various Native Problems* (Lovedale: Book Department, Lovedale Institution Press, 1920); Brian Willan ed., *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Witswatersrand University Press, 1996), 144; Jane Valerie Starfield, *Dr. S. Modiri Molema (1891-1965): The Making of an Historian* (Ph.D. diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2007), 181,197; Selope Richard Victor Thema, *From Cattle-Herding to Editor's Chair: The Unfinished Autobiography and Writings of Richard Victor Selope Thema* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2016), xii.

Africans. Educational attainments did not exempt them from racist treatment, which was especially common in public spaces such as the city street or the railroad.⁴ Personal encounters with racism prompted determination to seek justice in Europe for themselves and their fellow Africans. At home and abroad, they molded themselves as well-educated, responsible, cool-headed leaders and role models.

In colonial Africa, racialized regimes were especially difficult for schoolteachers like Motsete because of the social, moral, and personal challenges of the work. Teachers were alleged by colonial officials to be the models and agents of the civilizing mission. Certainly, they held significant influence in their communities. However, schoolteachers faced a persistent battle to secure decent salaries so that they could maintain high standards and gain respect and prestige in the communities within which they worked.

After graduating from Tiger Kloof, Motsete taught school in Durban, South Africa for three and a half years (1919-1923). He worked at the primary Depot Road Government Indian School for boys (previously known as the Natal Railway Government Indian School), in Durban. The students were from Indian families that lived in barracks and worked for the railway. The Magazine Barracks housed people of Indian decent and the Depot Road Location housed male African laborers working at Durban's railway and harbor. The area was multicultural and urban, squeezed between the railway tracks and the ocean. The Indian and African workforce living in the area hailed from diverse religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These workers were subject to racial segregation and labor exploitation. The

⁴ BNARS, BNA KOMA, Kenneth Koma, *The Botswana National Front, Its Character and Tasks, Pamphlet no. 1, The Basic Document of the Botswana National Front* (Mahalapye, Botswana, Political Education Committee, [no date specified]), 22.

area exemplified Durban's reputation as a multi-cultural port city.⁵ It is likely that growing up among the diverse inhabitants of Serowe prepared Motsete for the multi-culturalism he encountered in Durban.

In "The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," a key source for examining the basic tenets of Motsete's education program at the Tati Training Institute, he quoted British philosopher and educator John Ruskin.⁶ Ruskin influenced Mohandas Gandhi, the South African non-violence movement, Christian socialists and English educational philosophies. It is unclear if Motsete learned about Ruskin in Durban in the early 1920s or while studying in London later in the decade. However, we can assume that while in Durban he became acquainted with Gandhi's long struggle for the rights of Indians living in South Africa, especially since he worked closely with the families of rail workers. Motsete likely knew that Gandhi was profoundly influenced by Ruskin and it is possible that he knew Gandhi had translated Ruskin's *Unto the Last*.⁷ By quoting Ruskin, Motsete connected himself to Gandhi's struggle against the British Empire. Ruskin and Gandhi's writings can be read along multiple levels of social and political meaning. Motsete skillfully connected his critique of the British Empire to the complex writings of Ruskin and Gandhi to flex his academic muscle and show that his engagement was intricate, multifaceted, and discernable on multiple levels.

In "Educational Revolution," Motsete suggested that the goal of the Tati Training Institute was altruistic spiritual and moral development of students as expressed in a Ruskin

⁵ Thembisa Waetjen, "School Days in the City of our Childhood," KZN HAAS website, archive of the history and African studies seminar, <http://www.kznhaas-history.net/>.

⁶ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, *The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute*, November 20, 1933.

⁷ John Ruskin and Oliver Lodge. *Unto This Last: & Other Essays on Art and Political Economy* (London: J.M. Dent, 1907).

quote. “Education is the leading of human souls to what is best and making what is best of them. The training which makes men happiest in themselves also makes them most serviceable to others.”⁸ Motsete added, “We aim at developing the character and the intelligence of the boy so that he may adjust himself to exploit his social and economic environment with a view to enriching not only his own personality but also the life of the community and country in which he lives.”⁹ Ruskin’s edict contained a spiritual element and the notion that education strengthened moral fortitude and thus, people’s commitment and ability to serve others.

In Ruskin’s writing, the spiritual component in education was a response to the secularization of education in England. Motsete’s invoking of Ruskin could have been a way to resist the state’s mandating of adapted and industrial education. By deploying the discourse of “love of God,” Motsete strategically positioned himself in a way that appealed to the missionaries without being antithetical to the British administration which accepted what they referred to as European-style education “under Christian auspices.”¹⁰

Colonial officials used the discourses of “morality,” “character development,” “citizenship,” and “community” as references to the adapted education policies supported by the British administration. Adapted education emphasized an industrial and vocational curriculum and was ultimately designed by its colonial architects as a means to address the problem of how to develop the African reserves in the context of territorial segregation.

⁸ BNARS, S.243/16, Motsete, K.T., The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute, November 20, 1933; K.T. Motsete, “An Educational Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” *Oversea Education: A Journal of Educational Experiment and Research in Tropical and Subtropical Areas*, 5,2 (January 1943): 58-64.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933; BNB.148, Dumbrell, “Primary School Syllabus for Native Schools in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1934.”

Therefore, adapted education prioritized the community over the individual. Architects of adapted education used terms such as “morality,” “order,” and “citizenship” to mean shaping individuals to be of service to and as examples for African communities. The discourse of “character development” actually meant vocational work and performing labor for the school, the mission, or in the African reserve. However, Motsete employed rhetoric, such as those discourses associated with adapted education, to attract and resist the British administration. He used familiar discourse to present himself as accommodating the goals of the colonial state, while subtly redefining those terms for his own purposes. For example, although “service to others” can be read by proponents of adapted education as a reference to their notion that the goal of educating Africans was to tether them to their communities. It can also be read as Ruskin meant it. He implied that individuals must be stable before they can assist others. In that case, “service to others” meant that education was first and foremost for the betterment of the individual.

Motsete’s use of Ruskin carried significant socio-political connotations. Beginning in the late 1850s, Ruskin advocated for social justice and criticized capitalism. He countered the orthodox political economy espoused by John Stuart Mill, based on theories of laissez-faire and competition drawn from the work of Adam Smith. For Ruskin, all economies and societies were ideally underwritten by a politics of social justice. In “Unto the Last,” Ruskin looked at the social and economic implications of industrialization and made a strong critique of the capitalist economies of the 18th and 19th centuries.¹¹

Ruskin’s critique of capitalism led to his work on social issues and citizenship. He inspired Christian socialists and the British Labour Party in the first decades of the 20th

¹¹ John Ruskin, *Unto This Last*.

century. In her biography on Ruskin, Fabian Society member Edith Morley showed that Ruskin criticized the social evils inherent in an industrial society and believed all people had a right to education. Ruskin claimed that the country was richest when it nourished the greatest number of noble and happy human beings and that it was the state's responsibility to secure equality of opportunity for each individual.¹²

For Ruskin, equality of opportunity was the means to secure liberal cooperation. In "Time and Tide," Ruskin propounded a theory of government by cooperation and fellowship between nations and separate peoples. But cooperation was conceivable only in a world from which the evils of commercialism and tyranny had disappeared and in which all men were protected from inequalities, oppression, and misused superiority.¹³ Ruskin's ideas were akin to Motsete and his African and European colleagues, who sought to highlight the cooperative and mutually beneficial aspects of British imperial rule, and cultivate meritocratic values and racial and ethnic equality.

Ruskin's political ideas, especially those in *Unto the Last*, influenced Gandhi, who agreed with Ruskin's ideas about the state's social duties and its responsibility to improve conditions for the poor. Gandhi translated *Unto the Last* into Gujarati (1908) under the title *Sarvodaya* (well-being of all or universal uplift). The ideas in *Sarvodaya* were foundational in Gandhi's political philosophy. They influenced his 1906 non-violent campaign that forced Jan Smuts, the Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, to make concessions, including passing the Indian Relief Act in 1914.¹⁴ Gandhi's achievement encouraged the critics of the British Empire and of South African settler colonialism. It also inspired 1930s Southern African

¹² Edith J. Morley, *John Ruskin and Social Ethics* (Westminster [London]: Fabian Society [etc.], 1917).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa," GandhiSouthAfrica.net website. <http://gandhi.southafrica.net/>

liberals to maintain their faith in reformist politics and non-violent resistance.

After Motsete taught in Natal, South Africa, for three years, L.M.S. missionary A.M. Chirgwin arranged for Motsete to receive an L.M.S. sponsorship to attend Hackney and New College in England (1923–1929). Despite the sponsorship, Motsete’s father was responsible to contribute to Motsete’s support even though he was a minister with limited financial resources. Motsete was likely on a shoestring budget during his years in London. Tantamount to his experience at Tiger Kloof, Motsete’s social status would have differentiated him from most of the African students in London because most descended from wealthy or influential African families. Having experienced life as a teacher, Motsete understood the economic and social challenges facing African professionals. A lack of resources may have contributed to why he claimed to spend the vast majority of his time in London studying.¹⁵ Motsete may have found refuge in applying the ideas of self-help and thrift circulating in the mission schools of his youth, or in maintaining faith in the meritocratic ideals, morality, and character building expounded by his former principal Willoughby.

Congregational minister and theologian Alfred Garvie, principal of Hackney and New College when Motsete attended, espoused a version of Christian ethics based in Christian universalism.¹⁶ As head of the school, it is likely Garvie’s philosophies influenced Motsete. Garvie’s version of Christian ethics was similar to the ideas Motsete promoted after he left the school and returned to Africa.

¹⁵ Hubert William Peet, “A Bantu’s B.D.,” *Southern Workmen*, 57,12,lvii (December 1928): 516-517.

¹⁶ Alfred E. Garvie, *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead: Or, the Apostolic Benediction as the Christian Creed* (New York: George H. Doran, 1926); Alfred E. Garvie, *The Christian Ideal for Human Society* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, Limited, 1930); Alfred Ernest Garvie, *The Christian Belief in God in Relation to Religion and Philosophy, System of Constructive Theology Volume 3* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935).

Christian universalism was a central theme in Garvie's prolific writings on Christian ethics. He considered his role as a Christian theologian as being a synthesizer of the "absolute eternal values" latent in the world's religions.¹⁷ Thus, he considered Christianity as transcendent of any country or continent. Garvie believed that the League of Nations were the purveyors of peace and international Christian morality, an ethical framework transcendent of capitalism and nationalism. He juxtaposed European nationalism and racism against Christian universalism, which he defined as morality and progress for all mankind.¹⁸ Thus, Christian universalism was a response to the First World War and the negative consequences of nationalism. Garvie's ideas likely made sense for Motsete who sought to shape notions of British trusteeship along the lines of the League of Nations mandate that European colonial powers were obligated to develop indigenous peoples. In addition, Motsete espoused a version of Christian universalism similar to Garvie's as part of his scheme to transcend racism and colonialism in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

In the first chapter of *The Christian Belief in God*, Garvie's extensive work on Christian ethics, he detailed the history of the non-European Christian roots of ethics.¹⁹ Garvie, in line with European and African liberals, espoused internationalism and Christian universalism as amenable to the development of nation states. Fixed in the missionary paternalistic dogma of the 1920s, Garvie temporarily accepted racism and segregation, although he maintained that the Darwinian theory of the common origins of man proved that

¹⁷ Giles C. Watson, "Garvie, Alfred Ernest (1861–1945), Congregational Minister and Theologian." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 Sep. 2004.

¹⁸ Alfred E. Garvie, "The Danger of Reaction, Theological and Ethical," *The American Journal of Theology*, 21, 3 (1917): 325-338.

¹⁹ Alfred Ernest Garvie, *The Christian Belief in God*.

there was ultimately no difference between people. Garvie took this to mean that ethical Christians had a responsibility to elevate all people.²⁰

While in London, Motsete advanced his ideas about the African continent and his critique of the British Empire. In his writings, Motsete embedded meaningful subtexts underneath more obvious inferences. He used well known historical figures such as Wellesley and McKenzie to critique the British Empire. These references show that he formed a complex and multifaceted approach to speaking to colonial power by forming arguments that could be understood on multiple levels.

Motsete quoted Arthur Wellesley's statement, "Educate men without religion, and you make them but clever devils."²¹ He defined Mackenzie's phrase, "a certain absolute devotion to what is recognized as highest and most valuable," as "the love of God and devoted service for one's fellowmen."²² At first glance, the rhetoric of religion and devotion may seem like Motsete was simply pandering to proponents of Christianity or capitulating to the importance of religious or moral education. However, these references conveyed multiple layers of meaning. Applying the writings of Wellesley and McKenzie had social and political overtones. They were historically important in matters which concerned Motsete at that time such as religious freedom, liberation, and citizenship.

Wellesley was a critic of the British Empire and a proponent of Irish Catholic emancipation. He fought for the granting of almost full civil rights to Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland under the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829. In a speech to the House of

²⁰ Alfred E. Garvie, *The Christian Ideal for Human Society*.

²¹ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, "The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute," November 20, 1933; Maturin Murray Ballou, *Treasury of Thought: Forming an Encyclopædia of Quotations from Ancient and Modern Authors* (Houghton, Mifflin, 1894).

²² *Ibid.*

Lords in 1828, Wellesley did not discriminate between Catholic and Protestant soldiers. He argued that they all fought for freedom and against oppression and proclaimed,

Entrusted with the command of two Catholic armies, I soon found that, with similar advantages, they were quite equal to our own. The same hatred of tyranny, the same love of liberty, the same unconquerable spirit, pervaded both the soldier and the peasant of those two Catholic states.²³

Motsete embraced Wellesley as a symbol of equality in religion, race, and social class under the British Crown. He implied that just as former rival Catholic and Protestant soldiers worked together to liberate Ireland, Africans and the British could cooperate in the advancement of Africa.

John Stuart Mackenzie (1860–1935) was a representative of the later phase of the neo-Hegelian school of British idealistic philosophy. He lectured on socialism and his experience witnessing the poverty and devaluation of the slums of Glasgow. His lectures were published as *An Introduction to Social Philosophy* in 1890. The book anticipated much of the following social legislation dealing with Britain’s industrialized labor force. On the political side, Mackenzie and the British idealists refuted what they regarded as the disparate form of individualism espoused by liberal philosopher Herbert Spencer.²⁴ Invoking Mackenzie was a means for Motsete to criticize Spencer’s social Darwinism and the European settlers who used it to promote laissez-faire capitalism in Southern Africa.²⁵ According to British idealists, Spencer and his followers did not adequately recognize the inherent social aspect of human beings. Therefore, invoking idealistic philosophy suggested

²³ Arthur Wellesley, the First Duke of Wellington, “Speech to the House of Lords,” 1828; Sir Thomas Lawrence, “Wellesley, Arthur, First Duke of Wellington (1769–1852),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (September 23, 2004).

²⁴ J.W. Scott, “Mackenzie, John Stuart (1860–1935), philosopher,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2012).

²⁵ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

the need to fuse the liberal individual of the European episteme with the existing social obligations of Africans to their families and communities.²⁶

Motsete used his academic prowess and the ideas of the Black Atlantic to critique British imperial practices. He claimed African identity by refashioning elements of European history and philosophy for the African context. Although it is hard to gauge the impact Garvie had on Motsete or how Motsete understood Ruskin, Wellesley, and Mackenzie, it is inconceivable to think that Motsete used these figures in his writings without being aware of the associations that were so relevant to his own circumstances. Because of the lack of direct historical sources related to Motsete's time schooling in London, the next section of this chapter employs the WASU historical materials because they are the richest means to gain insight into the ideas that intrigued and challenged African students in London in the 1920s.

A Student in London:

The West African Students Union, Pan-African Education, and the Student Christian Movement

There is a direct link between Motsete and the various African student unions in London in an article he published shortly after returning to Africa.²⁷ In it, Motsete endorsed the Union of the Students of African Descent, the predecessor to WASU. It is extremely likely that Motsete not only spent time with WASU members but that he was influenced by their ideas. WASU membership was not limited to West Africans. South African A.B. Xuma noted the compatibility, friendship, and comradeship between Southern Africans and the

²⁶ J.W. Scott, "Mackenzie, John Stuart (1860–1935)."

²⁷ William Charles Willoughby Papers, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England, (Willoughby), DA49/1/2/334 (F383), K.T. Motsete, "The Life of a Bantu Student in England," *Tiger Kloof Magazine*, 13 (December 1931).

members of WASU.²⁸ WASU members were from British colonies and protectorates, such as Gambia, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. They were keen on critiquing the problems of British protection and the system of indirect rule. The WASU historical sources are the premier means for exploring how African students in London engaged in debates and developed their ideas for advancing African communities once they returned to the continent.

Hakim Adi showed that the Union of Students of African Descent (the predecessor of WASU est. 1926) fought a successful battle with the British Colonial Office and the press regarding racist presentations of Africans at the 1924 Empire Exhibition held at Wembley, near London.²⁹ The Nigerian Ladipo Solanke, founder of WASU, protested the press' presentation of Africans at the exhibition as curios on show.³⁰ Solanke's reaction to the unfavorable patterns of race relations existing in London at that time is an example of the commonly narrated experiences of racism faced by Black students in England.³¹

It is very likely that Motsete attended the 1924-25 Empire Exhibition. Imperial relations were increasingly subject to international influences and forces from the colonial peripheries, so British officials used the Empire Exhibit to bridge the ideas of Victorian self-confidence with the new discourse of "imperial progress." They sought to create among the British public a new sense of optimism and commitment to the empire.³² Assuming Motsete attended the exhibition or at a minimum was cognizant of the public rhetoric, the exhibition

²⁸ Alfred B. Xuma and Peter Limb ed., *A.B. Xuma: Autobiography and Selected Works* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2012), 69.

²⁹ Hakim Adi, "West African Students in Britain, 1900-60: The Politics of Exile," in David Killingray, ed., *Africans in Britain* (Portland, OR: F. Cass, 1994).

³⁰ Phillip Garigue, "The West African Students' Union," *Africa*. 23 (1953): 55-69, 56.

³¹ Joshua Nkomo, *Nkomo, the Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984), 17.

³² Daniel Stephen, *The Empire of Progress: West Africans, Indians, and Britons at the British Empire Exhibition 1924-25* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

likely reinforced his faith in the non-racialism of late Victorian Cape liberalism and the fortitude of the British commitment to preserving the empire in Africa.

WASU's criticism of the Empire Exhibit of 1924 and the citizenship and colonial reform debates that emerged in the following years were about WASU fighting notions of the dark continent, epitomized in the way African people were exhibited as primitives. In order to do so, the reformist WASU leadership, reinvented the British empire as tolerant. They proposed a form of British imperial citizenship based on identifying as both British and African. WASU writers remained loyal to the empire while criticizing the aspects they deemed predatory. They accepted the goodwill of the British administration and believed nothing could be done without their support and recognition. Because they accepted liberalism, WASU members engaged in debates over the legal rights of individuals and equality before the law in Africa. They sought rapid socio-economic advancement and protections on individual liberty, not revolution.³³ Their reformist political position compares to the one developed by Motsete and the progressives.

The WASU journal is filled with the liberal discourse of cooperation, cultural nationalist affirmations of African history, and debates over African advancement and development. The students felt that continued co-operation with Britain was vital for African socio-economic advancement. In their debates over development in Africa, they played on notions of British trusteeship while they prioritized self-determination.

Adi argued that this contradiction was reflected in the position of the educated elite itself, which was a product of the colonial system, too weak to end it, in some ways benefited directly from it, and was reliant upon it.³⁴ However, Adi recognized that this class of

³³ Hakim Adi, "West African Students' Union," 57.

³⁴ Hakim Adi, "West African Students in Britain," 37.

Africans was constantly thwarted in its attempts to assert itself politically, economically, and socially and was therefore compelled to struggle against racism and the conditions imposed by colonialism.³⁵ Thus, Adi makes the compelling argument that African students in London, conditioned by their experiences with oppression in Africa, furthered their understanding of anti-colonial strategies. Motsete's experience in London surely taught him a great deal more about some of the facets of colonialism and because he was exposed to a variety of different critiques, it strengthened his repertoire for criticism.

The WASU historical sources show that Africans in London in the 1920s engaged in debates over how re-conceptualizations of African history demonstrated Africa's place in global civilization. Solanke argued that long before Greek or Roman or European civilization, there was imperial Ethiopia's conquest of Egypt. Thus, the central seat of civilization was held by ancestors of Africans. Solanke's point in showing that Africa's history goes back to the dawn of civilization, was to dispel colonial justifications for European rule based on African inferiority and to justify the African demands for an opportunity to share in the rights and liberties afforded to Europeans.³⁶

Solanke advocated the paternalistic idea that for the time being Africans had to earn rights and liberties. He believed that Africans had to be educated in preparation for political emancipation. Akin to other educated Africans, Solanke believed that widening access to European-style education in Africa preceded politics.³⁷ Just as Motsete did with the BaKalanga, Solanke sought to forge unity and cooperation between educated Africans and those he referred to as "natural rulers" in the struggle to protect African land and educate the

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Ladipo Solanke, *United West Africa (or Africa) at the Bar of the Family of Nations* (London: [publisher not identified], 1927)

³⁷ Hakim Adi, "West African Students in Britain," 30.

commoners. For Solanke, “natural rulers” were the chiefs or those Feierman deemed “peasant intellectuals.”³⁸

Solanke considered educated Africans as critical players in governing people under the variants of indirect rule. They were necessary in imperial trusteeship or indirect rule as co-partners in the guardianship of Africans. For it was only through these mediators that the administration could properly understand Africans and actualize their programs.³⁹ This speaks to the paternalistic perspective that drove Motsete to partner with Kalanga leaders to establish the Tati Training Institute and extend European-style education to the community.

Solanke revised the three Rs of missionary education as restoration, regeneration, and rise. His three Rs spelled out a set of instructions for educated Africans in the Black Atlantic to return to Africa and develop programs to re-invigorate the continent and guide it towards socio-economic advancement.⁴⁰ Solanke’s three Rs likely inspired Motsete to outline the character of meaningful education in terms of three Ws (worth, work, and worship) in “Educational Revolution.”⁴¹

The first four WASU journals, published in 1926 and 1927, exhibit the prevalence of the theme of cyclical civilizations and empires. In WASU’s second publication, WASU President Abiola Akiwumi argued that the awakening of race consciousness meant developing the potentialities of Africa in order for her to cooperate in the advancement of global civilization. The human ideal required all nations working in unity; each retaining its

³⁸ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Solanke, *United West Africa*.

³⁹ Lapido Solanke, *United West Africa*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

individuality while imparting strength into the common pool.⁴² In his president's letter in 1927, Akiwumi proclaimed that it was WASU's aim to educate the people of the world that Africans aspired to claim their rightful place in the world.⁴³ In other words, Africans had a right to self-determination and a participatory role in global civilization.

African control of education played a key role in realizing mutual understanding between Africans and the outside world.⁴⁴ According to J.B. Danquah, WASU President before Akiwumi and one of the founding fathers of Ghana, the entire rationale for British protection and trusteeship was based on cooperating with England for African progress. Education was so critical for African advancement that Danquah deemed it "the soul of progress" and "the pivot on which the wheel of progress will turn."⁴⁵ According to the WASU leadership, African control of education was the key to raise the position of struggling African nations and it was the responsibility of African educators to produce a group of Africans akin to Du Bois's talented tenth, which could prove to the world that Africa was once again capable of sharing the world's affluence.

History and the teaching of history was an especially important aspect of African controlled education. Danquah showed how African historical perspectives were the foundation upon which Africans saw their own culture and their place in global civilization. By arguing that ancient Egypt was an African civilization, Danquah asserted that Blacks were capable of the highest forms of civilization and touted African contributions to global civilization.

⁴² Abiola Akiwumi, "West Africa and the World," and "West African Students' Union," *Wāsù: Journal of the West African Students' Union of Great Britain*, 1 (1926): microfilm.

⁴³ Abiola Akiwumi, "The President's Letter," *Wāsù: Journal of the West African Students' Union of Great Britain*, 3 & 4 (1927): microfilm.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ J.B. Danquah, "The Presidents Letter," *Wāsù: Journal of the West African Students' Union of Great Britain*, 1 (1926): microfilm.

Juxtaposed against the brutality of the Atlantic slave trade and European colonialism, Danquah claimed Egypt, and therefore Africa, to be at a “higher level of ethical idealism” and as having a “far deeper humanitarian conception of life.” The WASU writers fostered the idea of the tremendous potential of the African continent and its people, who were “enlivening the world with a new vitality.” According to Danquah, Black inferiority was a myth and given a fair chance, Blacks would participate in the advancements of the peoples of the world.⁴⁶ African students like Motsete accepted the WASU message. They returned to the continent armed with a new consciousness and ready to take on the responsibility of producing the programs necessary to inspire an African renaissance in the various territories in which they lived.

Historians writing about Africans’ experiences schooling in England and the United States overstate the impact of Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee model and the Phelps-Stokes program in the development agendas Africans put forth when they returned to the continent. In *Pan-Africanism and Education*, Kenneth King argued that Pan-African influences persisted in African education. That too frequently, historians indolently portrayed African education as strictly Tuskegee-like, simply because Africans used the discourses of “racial uplift” and “self-help.” Students at Tuskegee and Hampton were not void of the ideas of Du Bois, Pan-Africanists, or Marcus Garvey.⁴⁷ King’s argument is important to show that Africans combined the various forms of education into their programs for African self-determination on the continent. They redeployed discourses associated with the Tuskegee or Phelps-Stokes models not to condone those ideas but for purposeful application in a specific

⁴⁶ *Ibid*; J.B. Danquah, “Is the Negro a Dead Letter?” *Wāsù: Journal of the West African Students’ Union of Great Britain*, 1, (1926): microfilm.

⁴⁷ Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

context. Connections to or using discourses associated with the Tuskegee or Phelps-Stokes models does not mean that Africans resigned to segregation or inequality. Discourses, such as “adapted education” or “racial uplift” were powerful tools for critiquing the Tuskegee or Phelps-Stokes models while simultaneously ingratiating their programs to the international networks and colonial officials who held the power to determine the viability of their endeavors.

Kenneth King showed that historians have also overplayed the historically created dichotomy between Du Bois’s support for academic subjects and Washington’s support for industrial education by accepting the erroneous notion that Du Bois sought academic subjects and racial equality, while Washington promoted industrial education and therefore acquiescence to segregation.⁴⁸ For Africans in the early decades of the 19th century, these distinctions were not black and white. When formulating their strategies for advancing education in Africa, educated Africans drew from the ideas of Du Bois, Washington, and other schools of thought.⁴⁹

Simbini Mamba Nkomo (d. 1925), a South African educated Southern Rhodesian, taught African history with Pan-African convictions at Tuskegee. According to Thomas Jesse Jones, leader of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, Nkomo exhibited two ideologies he considered antagonistic: Tuskegee spirit and Black nationalism. King argued Nkomo and other Africans at Tuskegee held no contradiction between pride in Tuskegee and pride in the Black race and Africa. Nkomo’s African history lectures were deliberate attempts to communicate African nationalism and Black pride. Even the influential British missionary

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kenneth J. King, “African Students in Negro American Colleges: Notes on the Good African,” *Phylon* 31,1 (1972): 16-18.

J.H. Oldham, secretary of the International Missionary Council, was surprised to notice that Tuskegee Africans had an African consciousness.⁵⁰

Simbini Nkomo's autobiography, *How I found Christ in the Jungles of Africa*, is a narrative so common among African students it would be unlikely Motsete did not relate. Especially since they both descended from Zimbabwean cultures and went overseas for higher education. Nkomo describes the difficulties he encountered absorbing European-style education and Christianity, his strong desire for education, and his struggle to pay for his schooling. It is laced with discourse of "thrift" and "self-help," symbolic of the self-motivated and self-directed African student.⁵¹ Since 84 percent of graduates of Hampton became teachers, the purpose of the institution was not to train skilled workers but to inculcate into these teachers ethical values about hard work and the dignity of labor so that they would pass these qualities on to their students.⁵²

Nkomo stood up in 1921 against an address made by Dr. Moore, the Dean of Howard University, who employed the tropes of the dark continent to draw a stereotypical picture of Africans. In his rebuttal letter, Nkomo communicated his love for and faith in Africans and argued that Dr. Moore's perspective lacked historical accuracy. This was one example of how Nkomo's knowledge of African history served as the basis for his Black pride.

In 1921, as a response to the Dr. Moore incident, Nkomo issued a call from Tuskegee for African students of the world to unite to form an African students union to discuss the problems facing African people.⁵³ He had organized African student and African Christian

⁵⁰ Kenneth J. King, *Pan-Africanism and Education*.

⁵¹ Simbini Mamba Nkomo, *How I found Christ in the Jungles of Africa: The Story of My Conversion* ([Chicago?]: [publisher not identified], 1917)

⁵² James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

⁵³ Kenneth J. King, "African Students in Negro American Colleges," 22.

student unions in the 1910s, while an undergraduate at Greenville College in Ohio. For Nkomo, student unions were a means to foster connections between Africans, African Americans, and multi-national networks such as the World Student Christian Federation and the YMCA. African Student Unions were Pan-Africanist political organizations spanning the continent and the diaspora. They were associated with Christian students' organizations such as the World Student Christian Federation, a global community of Christian student movements committed to dialogue, ecumenism, social justice, and peace. The World Student Christian Federation's journal *Student World* began in 1908. Its ecumenical work operated at the national level through the Student Christian Movement divisions in various countries.

While attending Hackney and New College, Motsete participated in the Student Christian Movement of England and Ireland. He attended the 1929 Liverpool Student Christian Movement conference. The Student Christian Movement was a leading voice on ecumenism; interdenominational initiatives that encouraged greater cooperation among various Christian churches. They expanded the scope of interdenominational Christianity by working with students of other nations and races under Christian auspices. Their aim was unity of all Christians for peaceful development of the nations.⁵⁴ The Student Christian Movement was part of a post-World War One trend to develop international organizations for the promotion of peace, international cooperation, and diplomacy. Members promoted an international ideal of Christian civilization, transcendent of various denominational or racially specific national dogmas.⁵⁵ The 1929 Student Christian Movement Liverpool Conference publication shows that members of the organization had similar ideas to Cape

⁵⁴ Tissington Tatlow and Violet Latford, *The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Student Christian movement Press, 1933), 634.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 648.

liberals. Both promoted non-racialism, multi-racial cooperation, and friendship between nations.⁵⁶

The archives of the Student Christian Movement of England And Ireland showed that students studied L.T. Hobhouse's influential *Liberalism* and examined social problems as they related to industrialization in England.⁵⁷ They performed social work at local churches, engaged with emerging academic sociological theories, and visited workers and the unemployed in the poverty ridden East End of London.⁵⁸ Thus, a prevailing dimension of the organization's program was examining socio-economic problems and the ways they were addressed in England.

In England, Student Christian Movement members discussed the League of Nations and its international networks of social organizations. International missionaries, commonly from the L.M.S., spoke to the students to help them understand foreign missionary work and gain comfort with the prospect of interacting with foreigners.⁵⁹ In 1928 or 1929, a debate occurred between members of the Student Christian Movement and the Union of Students of African Descent, a sister organization to WASU, over the question of whether Christian missions were actually advantageous for Africa.⁶⁰ Although there is little information on what was actually argued, it proved that student members of two organizations engaged with missionary discourse critically and that African students were more aware that the history of

⁵⁶ *The Purpose of God in the Life of the World: Being Some of the Addresses Delivered at a Conference on International and Missionary Questions, Liverpool, 1929* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1929).

⁵⁷ SCM C76-77, Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, Report to the Executive of the Theological College Department, New College / Hackney and New College, 1920–1929.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ SCM C76-77, Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, Report to the Executive of the Theological College Department, Hackney and New College, 1928–1929.

Christian missionaries in Africa was more problematic than it was in other parts of the British Empire.

Members of the Student Christian Movement of England And Ireland networked with other international student clubs. They organized social mixers and played cricket and football with students living at the hostel for Indian students. In 1924, two African students of Hackney and New College were members of the Student Christian Movement. One was Motsete, listed as being from South Africa. The other was from Guiana. Although it is unclear, Motsete or the student from Guiana lived in the hostel for Indian students for a year.⁶¹

Motsete was listed as an attendee and a speaker at the 1929 Student Christian Movement Liverpool Conference. There is nothing remaining in the historical record as to the subject matter of Motsete's address. Listed as a Negro in the lodging book, Motsete stayed among the exquisite gardens at the Bishop's Lodge in the Mossley Hill section of Liverpool as a guest of Reverend Albert Augustus David, the longtime Anglican bishop of Liverpool. There is evidence to suggest that Motsete traveled and stayed at Bishop's Lodge with Indian student J.S. Peters who lived at the Indian Students hostel and was a member of the Indian Christian Fellowship.⁶²

Ironically, organizers of the Liverpool Conference listed Motsete as a Negro in one place and as Indian in another. This might be the result of travelling with Indian Peters, confusion resulting from Motsete's moderate complexion, or an example of Motsete race passing. Considerable anxiety existed in the United States and in Britain over the crossing of

⁶¹ SCM C76-77, Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, Report to the Executive of the Theological College Department, Hackney and New College, 1923–1924.

⁶² SCM D17-22, Register Logbook, SCM D29-35, Register Logbook.

racial boundaries between Blacks and whites as the practice of race passing became more common in the 1920s. Race passing meant crossing the color line or claiming to be a racial group other than the one a person belonged to. Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* captured the unlikely phenomenon in 1929.⁶³ Race passing demonstrated the false rigidity of socially constructed racial categories. If Motsete did pass as Indian, it is a testament to the infallible grey areas where Africans practiced subtle resistance of racial hierarchies.

The World Student Christian fellowship journal *Student World* was regularly read by members of the Student Christian Movement in England. *Student World* had numerous articles linking internationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Christianity.⁶⁴ One was Tuskegee Institute sociologist Monroe Work's "Contributions of Black People to the Kingdom of God."⁶⁵ Work touted Africa, and specifically Ethiopia's historic contribution to global Christian civilization. He argued that Christian goodwill meant ensuring Blacks equal opportunity "to the privileges and rights of a free and full life."⁶⁶ Thus, because internationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Christianity sought to transcend the nationally constructed racial regimes of various countries and colonial territories, some employed Christianity as a means to promote equality for Blacks throughout the world.

The *Student World* exposed Christian students to international missionary discourses. Oldham, who Motsete met at the Liverpool Conference, argued that Christian internationalism meant support for independent national communities. Oldham's idea was that "national variety can contribute to broaden and vitalize" the international Christian

⁶³ Nella Larsen, *Passing* ([No place of publisher], Alfred A. Knopf, 1929).

⁶⁴ SCM J10, *The Student World*.

⁶⁵ SCM J10, Monroe N. Work, "Contributions of Black People to the Kingdom of God," *The Student World*, (April 1923)

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

movement.⁶⁷ According to Oldham, the international Christian spirit meant a “world in which selfish nationalism and racism” could not “destroy the peace and well-being of mankind.” Oldham contended that the benefit of friendship between Christian students of different nationalities was the potential to “appreciate the value of the contribution which other people have to make to the common life of mankind.”⁶⁸ His goal was to inspire Christian students to integrate their national cultures under the Christian umbrella, while contributing their distinct national traditions to the historic experience of global civilization. Motsete accepted Oldham’s challenge to develop a national culture. While in England in the 1920s, he grew deeply committed to advancing the BaTswana.

Liberal Historiography, Khama III’s Trajectory for African Advancement, and African Education

Historical developments in the 1920s likely shaped Motsete’s impression of the optimal future for the Bechuanaland Protectorate. European biographers of Khama III and the new liberal historiography established by William Macmillan celebrated the life of African chiefs in ways unprecedented in African history. William Macmillan established the liberal Southern African historiography in the 1920s. Macmillan challenged the South African Natives Land Act of 1913, Hertzog’s segregationist policies, and the concept of race relations. Macmillan was the first to use social science to show the extent of African poverty. He attracted Fabian socialists and social critics in England such as Sidney Webb.⁶⁹ His

⁶⁷ SCM J10, J.H. Oldham, “The World’s Student Christian Federation Past and Future,” *The Student World*, (October 1925).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Christopher C. Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1988), chapter five.

histories of South Africa were the first by a European writer to account for a Black perspective.⁷⁰ Prior to Macmillan, European historians, most notably George McCall Theal, marginalized Africans, who appeared only in the background of their historical narratives.⁷¹

Macmillan's history was the first to suggest the liberal notion of South Africa as a single non-racial society. In his seminal *The Cape Colour Question*, he argued that Eurafricans (people of mixed African and European ethnicity) had been emancipated from slavery in the 19th century and thus, Africans could liberate themselves from colonialism in the 20th century. Macmillan suggested that just as the Eurafrican problem was solved through political means, the current problems in Southern Africa could be solved by granting legal protections and political equality to Africans. He proposed extending to all Africans the common citizenship given to Eurafricans.⁷² Cape liberalism was shattered by the South African 1913 Native Land Act, but Macmillan and the emergent liberal historiography set the foundation for re-establishing a 1920s and 1930s form of liberal reformist non-racial politics.

Liberal historians of the first decades of the 20th century depicted Khama III's as the prototypical African partner of the British Empire. Parsons argued in, "The 'Image' of Khama the Great," that against the backdrop of the tropes of the dark continent, European historians and missionaries constructed Khama's image as a progressive Christian African chief and a partner in trusteeship.⁷³ L.M.S. missionary John Mackenzie's *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, published in 1871, established the basic mythology of Khama III.

Mackenzie wrote about Khama's pertinacious Christianity, his bravery in battle, his response

⁷⁰ W.N. Macmillan, *Bantu, Boer and Briton. The Making of the South African Native Problem* (London: Faber and Goyer, 1929); William M. Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1927).

⁷¹ George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa, 1795-1834* (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1891).

⁷² Christopher C. Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past*, chapter six.

⁷³ Neil Parsons, "The 'Image' of Khama the Great: 1868 to 1970," *Botswana Notes and Records*, 3 (1971): 40-58, 42.

to new values of colonial commerce and technology, and his great determination to succeed in life.⁷⁴ By 1876, colonial writers depicted Khama III as a trusted British ally ruling the crossroads to the interior.⁷⁵ Writers in the 1880s strengthened Khama's image as a puritan and as anti-Boer. He was repeatedly referred to as "a perfect gentleman." According to his European biographers, Khama III was the exception to African primitivity, barbarity, and savagery.⁷⁶

Motsete, away for a decade and hungry for information on the status of his homeland, was especially susceptible to this kind of propaganda. The historiographical images of Khama III established a certain trajectory that those who considered themselves progressive were keen to follow. The historical propaganda machine which created the image of Khama III as a progressive chief, a friend of Europeans, a trusted partner of the British Empire, and as an expeditious implementor of European-style institutions, likely made an impression on Motsete while he was away from the Bechuanaland Protectorate for almost all of the 1920s. Motsete's reformist political agenda and the socio-economic schemes he developed after his return to Africa are evidence that he was influenced by European writers who created and propagated the trope that Khama III was the model African chief. Motsete's understanding of African advancement was connected to how he understood the trajectory of progress emphasized by European historians of Khama III.

Six years after Khama's death Motsete returned to Africa. Economic and political conditions in the Bechuanaland Protectorate had deteriorated considerably. People doubted if the young Regent Tshekedi Khama was fit to govern. In Motsete's case, it made sense to

⁷⁴ John Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River: A Story of Everyday Life and Work Among the South African Tribes from 1859 to 1869* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871).

⁷⁵ Neil Parsons, "The 'Image' of Khama the Great."

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

promote a vision of making the country great again based on his interpretation of Khama III's schemes, especially since it was an alternative to the narratives propagated by BaNgwato adherents. Motsete was not alone in making claims to be the authority on the national direction or the only one interpreting the trajectory set forth by Khama III.

A struggle emerged in the 1920s in the Bechuanaland Protectorate over who had the right to interpret history. Tshekedi Khama, Isang Pilane, and the others of the generation of young *dikgosi* battled the class of educated Africans over who was the authoritative interpreter of historical precedents. This cut to the very heart of how the various parties legitimized their claims to critique customary law and protection (detailed in chapter six). Therefore, interpretations of Khama III's legacy played an important role in the struggles over reshaping the boundaries of the relationships between the African people, the *dikgosi*, and the British.

In a 1929 interview of Motsete conducted by Herbert William Peet, Motsete referred to Khama as "a great man and ruler," and his house as a "really Christian home."⁷⁷ He claimed that he had a relationship with Khama III as a young boy. In the interview, Peet told a lighthearted story of a discussion between Khama III and young Motsete about reforms against alcohol. Peet explained that Motsete's sister was taken into Khama's household as an adopted daughter after the death of their mother.⁷⁸ This demonstrates that despite Motsete's family lacking elite social status, he claimed to have an intimate association with the *kgosi* to strengthen his claim to be an authority on the trajectory for African progress.

Based on Motsete's information, Peet alluded to the trajectory for African advancement allegedly set forth by the *kgosi*. Peet suggested that "Khama's successor

⁷⁷ Hubert William Peet, "A Bantu's B.D."

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

[Sekgoma] was not a success but the Regent [Tshekedi Khama] is carrying on the old tradition... There is a good education system” and although “there is no franchise, everyone is free to express an opinion.”⁷⁹ This shows that Motsete connected education with the legacy of Khama III’s administration. According to Motsete, progress meant maintaining the course of prohibition of alcohol, promoting Christianity, European-style education, and European-style political reforms. Interpretations of the trajectory of progress set forth by Khama III became increasingly important as debates over the direction of the Bechuanaland Protectorate intensified in the 1930s.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate to which Motsete returned in 1929 was very different from the one he left a decade earlier. The 1920s was a period of serious socio-economic stagnation in areas such as education, infrastructure, industry, and healthcare. Bechuanaland experienced a boom in the 1890s and a decline as a result of structural underdevelopment in the early colonial period.⁸⁰ The Protectorate had been developing towards a colonial trade economy in the West African model but was reduced to a labor reserve within the orbit of South Africans regional colonialism.

Khama III disliked labor migration for its disruptive social effects and advocated for cultivating industry so that the labor force could stay in the country. The cornerstone of Khama III’s economic policy was capitalizing Africans through Khama and Co., his scheme to develop pastoral related industries. However, British authorities destroyed Khama and Co.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Neil Parsons, “The Economic History of Khama’s Country,” in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1977), 113.

in 1916 and disrupted 19th century forms of African trade.⁸¹ This crippled Khama III's plan to mitigate the downward spiral of structural underdevelopment through the 1920s.⁸²

In Southern Rhodesia, legal and territorial segregation took hold in the 1920s marked by settler self-government (1923) and the Land Apportionment Act (1930). Segregation was the settlers' response to African socio-economic competition, especially in commercial farming.⁸³ Government policies to repress Africans economically resulted in a boom in European farming, a rapid decline in Africans' socio-economic position, and ultimately in the creation of the European farmer and the African peasant. Behind segregation, the settlers expropriated African land, and forced Africans to live in the reserves and to work as wage-laborers. European farming became the central feature in the settler economy in this period.⁸⁴ Europeans established a position of economic and political dominance in the 1920s. Africans had less and less opportunity for competing with Europeans on equal terms.⁸⁵ In South Africa, legislation in the 1920s furthered the implementation of territorial segregation enacted by the 1913 Natives Land Act. The 1920 Native Affairs Act established the Native Affairs Commission and the African political administration for the reserves. The 1927 Native Administration Act was designed to tether Africans' to their designated "tribe" (ethnic designation) and Bantustan (designated area or reserve). The Native Affairs Act set up a separate legal system for the administration of African law, made the designated African areas subject to a separate political regime from the remainder of the country, and made African areas subject to rule by proclamation instead of by representative government. In

⁸¹ O. Marata, "African Traders in the North-Eastern District up to 1981: The Rise and Development of an African Middle Class" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1983).

⁸² Neil Parsons, "The Economic History of Khama's Country," 132.

⁸³ Robin H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 136.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 145.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 187.

1924, J.B.M. Hertzog and Jan Smuts formed the Pact Government, which enacted discriminatory social and economic policies that entrenched European supremacy and paved the way for the eventual establishment of the apartheid state.⁸⁶

Historians of the 1970s generally argued that there was no meaningful state development in the Bechuanaland Protectorate before independence in 1966.⁸⁷ They either characterized the period as one of unremitting neglect or applied a form of Walter Rodney's famous underdevelopment theory. The *dikgosi*, and British officials like Jules Ellenberger, stood in opposition to capitalist development, especially from South Africa. They claimed capitalist development was a threat to African interests and a means to increase the likelihood of the transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to South Africa.

Revisionist historians Makgala and Steenkamp have made valuable criticisms to this perspective. The former argued that there were significant state provisions of modern services, and the latter that capitalist development was uneven and enhanced socio-economic differentiation. Despite Makgala and Steenkamp's apt analysis of the development of certain aspects of the economy, the common perception is that Botswana, in comparison to its neighbors Southern Rhodesia or South Africa, lacked significant socio-economic advancement.⁸⁸ The trope of inadequate development is extremely persistent in historical

⁸⁶ Christopher C. Saunders, Nicholas Southey, and Mary-Lynn Suttie, *Historical Dictionary of South Africa* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 120.

⁸⁷ Jack Halpern, *South Africa's Hostages: Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965); Quill Hermans, "Towards Budgetary Independence: A Review of Botswana's Financial History, 1900 to 1973." *Botswana Notes & Records*. 6,1 (1974), 89-115.

⁸⁸ Christian John Makgala, "Provision of Local Services by Tribal Administrations in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1900–1966," *South African Historical Journal* 64,4 (2012): 1-20; Philip Steenkamp, "'Cinderella of the Empire?': Development Policy in Bechuanaland in the 1930s," *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 17,2 (1991): 292-308.

narratives of Botswana prior to independence.⁸⁹ The perceived lack of development promoted fierce debates about social reforms, which took shape beginning in the 1930s.

In 1929, the British instituted the Colonial Development Fund to provide financial backing to institute their program of imperial sponsored development.⁹⁰ In that same year, British officials appointed Resident Commissioner Rey to institute a policy of rapid socio-economic restructuring centered around a program to reform the administrative system of the state and end Tshekedi Khama's resistance to South African colonial development.⁹¹ Rey tried to facilitate this through his proclamations. However, the British lacked significant coercive power over the *dikgosi*, especially Tshekedi Khama. The *dikgosi* resisted the implementation of Rey's proclamations and South African advancements because they considered them disruptive and exploitative.⁹² Tshekedi Khama was especially averse to South African mining. Along with Rey's proclamations to curtail the powers of the *dikgosi*, the mining question was central in the political struggles between the British and the *dikgosi*.

The perception that British authorities and their colonial neighbors had underdeveloped the Bechuanaland Protectorate had implications on education in the 1930s. Beginning in 1929, the British administration, specifically Rey and the newly hired Inspector of Education Henry James Edward Dumbrell, attempted to seize control over education from the missionaries. They implemented a version of adapted education based on the British

⁸⁹ Sir Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929-37* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988), prologue.

⁹⁰ Britain. *Colonial Development Act, 1929* (London: Printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, for W.R. Codling, the King's Printer of Acts of Parliament, 1929); Stephen Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy, 1914-1940* (London, England: F. Cass., 1984), chapter seven.

⁹¹ Philip Steenkamp, "Cinderella of Empire?"

⁹² Michael Crowder, *Resistance and Accommodation to the Penetration of the Capitalist Economy in South Africa: Tshekedi Khama and Mining in Botswana, 1929-1959* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1985); Michael Crowder, "Tshekedi Khama and Opposition to the British Administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-1936." *Journal of African History*, 26,2-3 (1985): 193-214.

Colonial White Paper of 1925 and instituted by settler colonial governments in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.⁹³

A fundamental difference emerged in how paternalistic liberals and conservative settlers viewed education. Paternalistic liberals framed their motivations as altruistic. Education was potentially a means to civilize individuals and advance the African population. In contrast, the survival of conservative settlers depended on limiting African access to resources, including education and land. European settlers envisioned education as an institution of colonialism designed to maintain boundaries between the races and maximize European advantages. While Africans in increasing numbers actively sought European-style schooling as a means to meet the challenges of diminishing resources ensuing from colonial policies, European settler political power successfully constrained Africans' opportunities for schooling.

Along with the network of missionary schools, Southern African governments established government schools in the 1920s such as Domboshawa and Tjolotsho in Southern Rhodesia.⁹⁴ They trained Africans for specific occupations such as policeman, teacher, and agricultural inspector because they benefited the colonial state. The new government schools had a very narrow scope. In the late 1920s, it was clear that the state and the missions were dedicated to curriculums of adapted education and vocational training and would not meet the growing African demand for European-style academic subject matter. Initially, the Bechuanaland Protectorate government was reluctant or indifferent to funding education for

⁹³ BNARS S.343/13, "Report of the Inspector of Education for the Year 1931"; Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies and William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore. *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies* (London: H.M.S.O., 1925), also known as "the 1925 Colonial White Paper on Education."

⁹⁴ B.W. Lloyd, *Early History of Domboshawa School: Period 1920-1939*. ([Place of publication not identified]: publisher not identified, 1960).

Africans. Although severely underfunded through the 1920s, the L.M.S. maintained a virtual monopoly on education.⁹⁵

Dumbrell's 1930 Report on education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate outlined the government's education agenda for the decade.⁹⁶ Dumbrell emphasized industrial training, adapted education, and non-denominational schools with a Christian spirit. Dumbrell agreed with the Southern Rhodesian segregationist claim that education had to be adapted for the needs of the African. He did not support the liberality of the Cape Colony curriculum. Although the Cape Colony code of instruction had been in use in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Dumbrell instituted the Southern Rhodesian curriculum while he developed one for the Protectorate.⁹⁷

Dumbrell's policies were derived from the adapted education concept in the British 1925 White Paper on African education and the 1929 Hilton Young Report. The 1925 White Paper institutionalized adapted education throughout the British imperial and colonial world. The Hilton Young Report emphasized British policy to unify education policy throughout the various colonial and imperial territories in Eastern and Southern Africa.⁹⁸ Part Mgadla pushed the history of adapted education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate back to the first official interventions by education inspectors Balfour, in 1905, and Sargent, in 1906.⁹⁹ Veiled

⁹⁵ Christian John Makgala, "Taxation in the Tribal Areas of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1899-1957," *Journal of African History*. 45,2 (2004): 279-303.

⁹⁶ BNARS, 1850/1 and S.294/10, Dumbrell, "Report on Education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate – January 1929 to June 1930."

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, BNARS, S.148/2, Great Britain Colonial Office, Colonial Report Annual No. 1491. Bechuanaland Protectorate Report for 1929 (H.M. Stationery Office, 1930), 32.

⁹⁸ BNARS, BNB.177. "Correspondence (1930-1931) Relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner of South Africa," 256-263; BNARS, DCS.24/1, "1936 Native School Syllabus"; BNARS, S.99/1/5, Dumbrell, "The Pula Memorandum"; Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*; E. Hilton Young, *Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies of Eastern and Central Africa*, Cmd 3234 (London: H. M. Stationery Off, 1929).

⁹⁹ BNARS, RC6/1, Sargent, *Report on Education in Basutoland, 1905-6*; Part Themba Mgadla, "Missionary and Colonial Education among the Bangwato, 1862-1948" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1986).

as a distinct nationally focused program, Dumbrell's policies were a precarious balance of regional colonial and British imperial education trends already decades old.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a few *dikgosi* founded their own schools as a means to bypass the educational bottleneck, also known as the educational pyramid. The bottleneck or pyramid took two forms. First, as was commonly the case across Africa, colonial governments severely underfunded education. There were simply not enough schools to meet the African demand.¹⁰⁰ In addition, although Africans desired European-style education, in most cases colonial governments and missionary societies offered variants Africans deemed unsatisfactory. Ultimately, the demographic reality was that there was a proportional relationship between the number of students and the level of education. When graphed, African education took the shape of a pyramid. Very few students reached secondary school and beyond.¹⁰¹

The exceptions were schools funded by African communities. Funding for African run schools in the Bechuanaland Protectorate came from levies introduced by the *dikgosi*, which began when the Hut Tax was introduced in 1899.¹⁰² Isang Pilane's BaKgatla National School (est. 1923) and Tshekedi Khama's Moeng College (est. 1926) were responses by the *dikgosi* to the educational bottleneck, the state's burgeoning control over education, and Africans ambitions for academic European-style education in English. African run schools were examples of African self-determination.

¹⁰⁰ BNARS, S.103/9/1, *Handbook of Regulations and Instructions for the Guidance of Superintendents of Native Schools and Teachers* (Pretoria: Government printer, 1938); BNARS, S.443/1/1, Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education, *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education: 1935-1936* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1936).

¹⁰¹ Toby Tafirenyika Moyana, "Creating an African Middle Class: The Political Economy of Education and Exploitation in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, 4,3 (1979): 325-346, 331.

¹⁰² BNARS, S.45/2, "Education in the Bamangwato Reserve, Proposed Appointment of a Committee."

The BaKgatla people funded the building of Mochudi National School from the earnings of male workers in the South African mines. Isang conceptualized Mochudi as a BaKgatla development plan to respond to the negative effects of the colonial incursion.¹⁰³ He was especially concerned with resources leaving the reserve as part of the system of migrant labor and hoped Mochudi would aid people to stay at home and develop their wealth.¹⁰⁴ Isang built Mochudi as a means to promote European-style education among his people and as a response to BaKgatla displeasure with mission education. In 1905 the BaKgatla had the greatest number of children in school of any group in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. However, by 1915, that number had dwindled.¹⁰⁵ Isang responded to the socio-economic decline initiated by European intrusion by building Mochudi and promoting English over SeTswana. In other words, Mochudi was Isang's plan to engage with and absorb the shock of European intrusion.¹⁰⁶

Isang ushered in a new phase of African schooling and broke the missionaries' practical and ideological bottleneck in the 1920s. Mochudi prioritized a curriculum relevant for Africans. As a result, Isang is enshrined in the public memory as the *kgosi* who implemented European-style education as a means to respond to the socio-economic changes introduced by colonialism.¹⁰⁷ Mochudi had a significant effect on the social order. Introducing education meant class mobility based on achievement not on birth. The school produced a new and prosperous class of teachers, politicians, and others who eventually led

¹⁰³ Isaac Schapera, *A Short History of the Bakgatla-Bagakgafêla of Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1942).

¹⁰⁴ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), 23.

¹⁰⁵ BNARS, RC6/1, Sargant, *Report on Education in Basutoland, 1905-6*.

¹⁰⁶ M. K. Mpatane, "Isang Pilane and Educational Innovation in Kgatleng, 1920-1941" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1980).

¹⁰⁷ Chippa Legodimo, "Bakgatla National School to Celebrate 90 Years," Mmegi Online, <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=7&aid=1406&dir=2013/July/Friday12//>.

the BaKgatla. It symbolized African adaptation in response to the needs of the society and encouraged Motsete and Tshekedi Khama to set up schools in the following years because it was an example of the benefits of self-determination.¹⁰⁸

Motsete drew inspiration from African directed schools despite his program at the Tati Training Institute being significantly different from those conceptualized by Isang and the BaNgwato. The Mochudi National School provided European-style education for the BaKgatla Reserve, and Khama Memorial served the BaNgwato in Serowe and in the BaNgwato Reserve. Neither school was fit to claim itself truly national or to serve the needs of the entire Bechuanaland Protectorate. They catered to and were funded by their respective communities. Outsiders saw regionally based schools, which restricted access to outsiders and taught in regional languages, as politically motivated channels to reinforced class and ethnic distinctions. Motsete's goal when establishing the Tati Training Institute was to balance the local and the national within the frameworks laid out by the newly established Education Department. His answer was a predominantly English curriculum and a more extensive secondary curriculum designed to attract wider interest.

The Ohlange Institute founded by John Dube in 1900 was the first European-style educational institution in South Africa founded and operated by an African. While at Tiger Kloof, Motsete would have come into contact with numerous graduates of Ohlange. Historians depict the Ohlange Institute as an industrial school, based on self-help and inspired by Washington's Tuskegee model. Ohlange was a symbol of African self-determination and Black academic achievement in the sea of settler colonialism. Motsete and Dube were examples of African leadership. As did Motsete in the 1930s as the architect of

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: MacMillan, 1997), 203.

the Tati Training Institute, Dube maintained the confidence of most European liberals and fashioned a space for combining European-style education and local customs and knowledges. Ohlange and the Tati Training Institute, produced hundreds of literate graduates who found employment in various capacities throughout the region.¹⁰⁹

When Motsete returned to Africa, he stood at the point of convergent aspirations and had the necessary skills to facilitate numerous agendas. What Motsete brought back to Africa was the knowledge gained from obtaining a European-style education and the experience of having engaged in the debates circling in the Black Atlantic. He intended to put his knowledge to use for the advancement of the BaTswana. For the better part of thirty years, beginning in 1929, Motsete earned his living as an educator. Teaching was much more than a job to Motsete. It was his calling to discharge European-style education as an instrument for advancing Africans socio-economically.

Motsete encountered various ideas circulating in the Black Atlantic and Southern Africa in the 1920s, such as British paternalism and Christian socialism. They reinforced the critical non-racial liberalism he adopted in his formative years and considerably furthered his sense of the importance of African self-determination. The 1920s Black Atlantic shaped Motsete's understanding of his role as an educator and his pedagogical philosophy. The ideas he engaged with in the Black Atlantic became intertwined with his experiences in Africa, his perception of the social and economic circumstances in Southern Africa, and his views on African history. He drew on the discourses of racial uplift and self-help, and the emerging liberal African historiography, to critique the British Empire, colonialism, and the dogma of European supremacy. Because Motsete embedded subtext in his writings, one goal of this

¹⁰⁹ South African History Online, "John Langalibalele Dube," <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/john-langalibalele-dube>.

chapter was to detail how he used overt references to historical personalities to develop a complex critique of the British Empire. While schooling in London, Motsete encountered a number of ideas circulating in the Black Atlantic. He employed these ideas when he engaged in debates in the subsequent years. After being away for a decade, Motsete returned to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1930 and keyed in on the changes that had taken place. The independently operated African educational endeavors that arose in the 1920s were examples of self-determination. Ultimately, all of the influences Motsete encountered in the 1920s shaped the political and educational philosophies he actualized in the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1930s.

Chapter Four

The Progressives: Individual Liberty and Connections to African Culture and History

In 1937, Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete published the second of four articles in *The Laymen's Bulletin* journal. He was five years into his stint as principal of the Tati Training Institute. The school was flourishing. Motsete's rhetoric had changed little since the progressives' petition seven years prior. He claimed that the *dikgosi* (chiefs) and the British government made no room for the educated African in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and that rampant oppression and repression still existed under the dictatorship of Tshekedi Khama backed by the British government. Motsete referred to the maltreatment as "double-barreled," and contended, "whether in white or black garb, repression is repression all the same to the repressed."¹ Living in Nyewele, in the Mosojane area of the Tati District for the better part of the 1930s, Motsete was in a kind of political exile just beyond the reach of Tshekedi Khama and the BaNgwato adherents. However, this did not stop him from maintaining his appeal to the British government and European liberals sympathetic to the plight of educated Africans marginalized by the system of indirect rule. Under indirect rule, Motsete and the progressives considered educated Africans to be caught in a "double-barreled" bind between the African authorities and the European British government. This chapter examines the ideological basis underpinning the progressives and the political strategy they implemented to forge themselves a political role beginning in the late 1920s.

The progressives were Africans who acquired European-style education and in various ways, interpreted and responded to social change by reconciling culture in a forward-

¹ K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Second Article," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 84, (March 1938).

looking way. The earliest written articulation of the attitudes of the progressives is Simon Ratshosa's unpublished 275 page manuscript, *My Book on Bechuanaland Native Custom, etc.*² Completed in 1931, Ratshosa claimed the rights of what he called the "party of enlightened natives," or what is referred to here as the "progressives."³

For the progressives, the historical imperative was reconciling existing cultural norms and practices with the new, or what they referred to as "progressive" practices. As is evident in their writings, cultural fusion was the basis for how they responded to the social changes emanating from colonialism and how they contemplated, criticized, and wrote about questions pertinent to African society and its future. According to progressives, reconciling culture was the principal means for forging Africa's future. The progressives emphasized integrating European-style education and Christianity into African knowledge systems. Consequently, the vast majority had connections with the missions and promoted European-style education.

The progressives sought to heal the socio-political disjunction they attributed to ethnic and social differentiation by advocating for the political and social rights of individuals and ethnic minorities. Although they accepted paternalistic ideas as a temporary means, they distinguished between what they considered productive paternalism and crude European supremacy. For example, they criticized European missionaries for being racists, politically biased, and for interfering in the natural process of social evolution. In the 1970s, Motsete described his religious beliefs as aligned with humanitarianism.⁴ This meant that he

² Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom, etc. and Bechuanaland Protectorate and its Rulers*, in Vivien Frederic Ellenberger Papers, microfilm.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Dingaan Maphondo Mulale, "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977), 9.

believed in the need to struggle against the dehumanizing effects of racism and colonialism. Identifying as believing in humanitarianism speaks to Motsete's struggle against what he deemed the autocracy of imperialism and his dedication to promote African self-respect and dignity through human rights and self-determination.

By the 1930s, the progressives sought to reaffirm their African identities. They turned towards African culture and heritage and cultivated previously dormant loyalties with ethnic leaders who they believed shared their notions for how to advance African communities. Motsete's relationship with Kalanga communities was based on a reinterpretation of regional history and buttressed by his paternalistic historiographical claim to be responsible for the BaKalanga. Since Motsete claimed BoTalaote identity, a multi-ethnic mixture of BaKalanga and BaNgwato, he accepted obligations to multiple communities. This was the impetus for promoting interethnic cooperation and mutuality, and for the precarious balance he struck between advocating for the cultural and political rights of ethnic minorities and maintaining a concern for the future of the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a whole. The final section of this chapter examines the grievances of Motsete and the progressives to what they considered the domination of the BaNgwato ruling class led by Tshekedi Khama. Beginning in the late 1920s, the progressives aligned with disempowered members of the royal family to set forth a challenge to the Tswana ruling class.

Indirect Rule, Paternalism, and Development

Within the system of indirect rule, the British used the *dikgosi* as its central political organ. This excluded the progressives from an effective national role. In the hopes of strengthening their political influence, the progressives sought to liberate

themselves economically and politically from the Tswana *merafe* (polities) and align themselves with the British administration.⁵ They positioned themselves as belonging to the vast majority of commoners who were not part of the BaNgwato ruling class.⁶ By aligning themselves with the commoners who bore the brunt of state policies, they justified their claim to be authoritative on the problems facing the Bechuanaland Protectorate.⁷

A component of indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was the system of the eight African reserves. The delineation of the land into reserves stimulated ethnic and social differentiation within and between the BaTswana. It also greatly weakened the traditional checks and balances on chiefly power and rendered the *dikgosi* dictatorial.⁸ Compelled to hold up the system of indirect rule, the *kgosi* and British officials adjudicated disputes in favor of the *dikgosi*. Problems arose because multi-ethnic and multi-cultural populations existed within political boundaries drawn and fixed by colonial powers and governed as if they were monolithic cultural units. In the 1920s, tensions increased between the Tswana and ethnic minorities living within the reserves they governed. The progressives advocated for legal protections for ethnic minorities and illuminated the plight of discontented people under British protection. They aligned themselves with various dissenting voices to promote individual liberty and social and ethnic impartiality.

Motsete insisted that the real “African problem” in the Southern African protectorates was excluding sectors of the public politically. According to Motsete, the BaNgwato,

⁵ Neil Parsons, “‘The Idea of Democracy’ and the Emergence of an Education Elite in Botswana, 1931-1960,” in Center of African Studies, ed., *Botswana: Education, Culture and Politics: Seminar Proceedings No. 29* (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1990), 182.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ K.T. Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” *The Laymen’s Bulletin*, 83 (December 1937): 7.

⁸ Christian John Makgala. *Elite Conflict in Botswana: A History* (Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2006), 18.

traditionally believed in the principle *kgosi ke batho* (“the chief of the people” or “the people of the chief”). In other words, a chieftaincy was based on consent. A person is recognized as chief based on the general will of the people. Motsete inferred that Tshekedi Khama and the young generation of Tswana *dikgosi* serving in the latter half of the 1920s, had discarded the reciprocal relationship and slighted their people. Motsete claimed that the *dikgosi* excluded certain groups within the chieftaincy and in turn hindered socio-economic advancement.⁹ Motsete’s claim underscored his charge that the *dikgosi* neglected the majority of their subjects and strengthened his claim to the right to represent the general will of the people.

Motsete pointed out that the *dikgosi* were *primus inter pares* (first among equals), and therefore, dependent on their people. He constructed an historical narrative which contended that what distinguished the Tswana *dikgosi* from African tyrants such as the chiefs of the Zulu or Xhosa was that the *dikgosi* were merely figureheads who were reliant upon and accountable to their councils, elders, and people.¹⁰ Motsete asserted that the reciprocal relationship between the *dikgosi* and their people had significantly decayed.¹¹ He claimed that although tyranny was repulsive to the Bechuana people, the *dikgosi* were simply self-interested despots, under the cover of British power. The *dikgosi* had lost the confidence of the very people they claimed to represent by failing to tend to the socio-economic advancement of the commoners.¹²

The progressives continually justified their relationship with commoners, which hinged on the commoners’ perceiving the progressives as facilitators of socio-economic

⁹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930; Margaret L Hodgson (Mrs. Ballinger) Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, (Ballinger), Ballinger, A3.1.17 “Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti” and A3.1.18, K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

advancement. Selope Thema's "White and Black in Southern Africa" is a good example of how the contemporaries of the progressives put a positive spin on paternalistic social evolutionary theory by promising progress. The following appeal by Thema contained rhetoric very similar to Pixley Seme's monumental 1906 speech, "The Regeneration of Africa," which according to Masilela launched the new African intellectual movement.¹³

The white man should not forget that he has awakened the black man from the sleep of ages; he should not forget that he has called him out of the darkness of Africa's savage life and started him on the road to civilization. Whether the white man likes it or not, the black man is marching forward. The tramping of his feet are heard in all directions. He is mounting the ladder of civilization and will not be stopped . . . to stop the forward march of the African is as difficult as it is today as it is to prevent the sun from rising. He who formerly was slothful and sluggish, often wrapped up in dense ignorance, with the psychology of dumb animals, is today wide awake, articulate and ambitious.¹⁴

Certainly, Thema's quote is laced with colonial rhetoric and the tropes of the dark continent. Still, it gives the impression that Thema subtly mocked the colonial administration. This was strategic. By redeploying social evolutionary theory and the primitive / civilized continuum, Thema reinforced the distinction between African backwardness and civilization in the minds of colonial officials in order to strengthen the value of educated Africans as role models of and intermediaries for defining progress.

Liberal Africans, like Motsete and the progressives, were paternalistic and obligated to the creed of multi-racial trust and cooperation. Although loyal to their partnership with Europeans, they criticized what they deemed African or European tyranny and injustice. They considered cooperation as a means to reach peace and preserve the promise of a future

¹³ Ntongela Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014), 2; Pixley Seme, speech, "The Regeneration of Africa," April 5, 1906, South Africa History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/regeneration-africa-speech-pixley-seme-5-april-1906>.

¹⁴ Selope Thema, "White and Black in Southern Africa," *African Observer*, 3,38 (January 1937).

of ubiquitous humanity. Cooperation was never intended as a means to permit overt racial oppression. Liberal Africans struck a delicate balance as paternalistic reformists and persuasive agents who challenged the racial regimes of colonialism.

The progressives supported paternalism as a temporary measure and used social evolutionary theory to encourage the prospect of African socio-economic advancement. According to the progressives, history proved that Africans were speedily adapting themselves to European culture. The progressives positioned themselves as effective facilitators of and models for the process of cultural fusion. They saw themselves as coordinators of the advancement of incessant African culture and as aiding the natural progress of social evolution.

Motsete criticized the *dikgosi* for impeding in the natural process of social evolution by attempting to preserve archaic African cultural norms. In a letter to Resident Commissioner Rey in 1930, Motsete deduced,

[Africans] live in different times under different conditions owing to the growing influence from the civilized white races, and therefore we expect different treatment even from our chiefs, from the treatment enjoyed or suffered by our forefathers. We are on the whole, a law-abiding people, we hate revolutions, but like most nations, we want evolution if we are to readjust ourselves to the changed environment in the civilized modern world.¹⁵

Motsete strategically used the phrase “the changed environment in the civilized modern world” to ingratiate his message to the British officials. He also sent out a strong warning by playing on the notion that insignificant socio-economic advancement would result in insurrection. Motsete and the progressives promoted paternalistic and social evolutionary

¹⁵ BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930; Ballinger, A3.1.17 “Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti” and A3.1.18, K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.

discourse as a means to inspire African socio-economic advancement, not as acquiescence to racism or colonialism.

Motsete's short-lived employment with the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) at Tiger Kloof Institute is a significant example of how he attempted to accept paternalistic oversight but wound up challenging the margins of African self-determination. L.M.S. records show that "in this new and experimental piece of work, Motsete had an opportunity to carry out his own way and to discover for himself his best avenues for service."¹⁶ When Motsete was hired, his most visible champion Missionary A.M. Chirgwin, characterized his position at Tiger Kloof as dynamic and progressive. Chirgwin suggested that Motsete would make use of his theological training as a lecturer in the Bible School, make use of his "undoubted preaching gifts" as a minister in the Vryburg District, apply his experiences as a teacher as the supervisor of the Kuruman schools, and would "have the opportunity to develop as an organizer and leader of the African Church."¹⁷ Chirgwin reported to the L.M.S. leadership in London, "the Directors will realize that Mr. Motsete's appointment opens a new chapter in the work of the mission... The post we have been able to offer him seems to be one that will give scope to his



Figure 5; Reverend K.T. Motsete (front row center) at his London Missionary Society ordination, 1930, SOAS, Council of World Missions Archive, CWM/LMS/04/10/04/050.

¹⁶ BNARS, UCCSA Private Archives Collection, Box 4, "Minutes of Executive Meeting Held at Tiger Kloof, 23rd October 1923."

¹⁷ London Missionary Society and A. M. Chirgwin, *Reports by Rev. A.M. Chirgwin, M.A. After a Secretarial Visit to South Africa September 1930 - February 1931* (London: London Missionary Society, 1931).

unusual gifts.”¹⁸ However, Chirgwin noted that African ministers were paid a “beggarly salary” of £50 per year, which none of the younger missionaries could live on. He added that a government post possibly open to Motsete would have paid £250 per year and other Africans with training similar to Motsete’s made £150 - £450 per year. Motsete accepted the position at Tiger Kloof at £120 per year, a salary well below his expectation.¹⁹

After eighteen months at Tiger Kloof, Motsete resigned because of a “lack of scope.”²⁰ He was under the impression that he would be granted more or different responsibilities, was unsettled by his lack of self-determination, and fell victim to the economic constraints imposed by his salary. Motsete told the L.M.S. brass in London that he resigned from his position as the Theological School’s tutor for the same reason that Dube resigned from his missionary society. He deduced, “[Dube] desired service with a wider and fuller scope as compared with the restricting paternalism characteristic of the psychology of many local missionaries.”²¹ Paternalism was gaged with a discerning mind. In this case, Motsete cited Dube’s argument that it was necessary for paternalistic missionaries to abandon their support for a racially defined socio-economic glass ceiling and provide capable Africans as much opportunity and responsibility as possible.

At the time of his resignation from Tiger Kloof, Motsete openly criticized the leadership for discrimination against Africans. He argued that prejudice was adversely affecting the health of the entire mission in Africa.²² He cast the theocratic L.M.S. / BaNgwato alliance as an example of elite self-interest that cost the common people, and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ BNARS, UCCSA Private Archives Collection, Box 1, “Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive, Held at Tiger Kloof, on 1st of August 1932.”

²¹ School of Oriental and African Studies Library, Council for World Mission (CWM), CWM/LMS/Africa Odds/Box 20, Section 4: Resignation of K.T. Motsete, K.T. Motsete to A.M. Chirgwin, March 8, 1932.

²² *Ibid.*

unsound paternalism as antithetical to the peace and progress of the country.²³ Motsete believed that the problem stemmed from a lack of accountability. The L.M.S. held a virtual monopoly on education in the Protectorate.²⁴ Politically, the mission was bound to the government and the *dikgosi*. Unable to act independently, missionaries remained tongue tied in the face of social and political injustices.²⁵

Motsete asserted that because European missionaries were incapable of taking an unbiased political stand on fundamental issues, such as the dispossession of Africans' land, it was hypocritical to preach about Christian brotherhood and love on Sundays. He claimed that missionaries sacrificed their ability to carry a true Christian message because they maintained a position of *persona grata* with the African administration in order to protect their relationship with the *dikgosi*. Local European missionaries were well aware of social and political injustices but took a *laissez-faire* position and remained silent. Instead of the Christian principle of championing the causes of the weak, missionaries who alleged to be paternalistic, seemed to Motsete to be self-interested perpetrators of oppression and injustice.²⁶ Motsete critiqued the notion of "brotherliness" espoused by the alleged liberal missionaries. Because of discriminatory policies, missionaries were forced to choose between supporting European or African communities. According to Motsete, most did not exemplify morally sound Christianity. They chose the personal and social prestige of their European communities, rendered equivocal and self-contradictory messages to the Africans they alleged to serve, and exposed themselves as members of the ruling elite.²⁷

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Ballinger, A3.1.17 "Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti" and A3.1.18, K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.

²⁵ K.T. Motsete, "On the Imperfections of Missionaries," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 88 (March 1939): 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

In a letter to L.M.S. missionary Chirgwin, Motsete insisted that racism among the European missionaries had created a deep fissure between Europeans and African adherents to the church. European missionaries spoke down to Africans from the pulpit on Sundays and lacked respect their African ministers, teachers, and evangelists. The racial hierarchy weakened the prestige of the African clergy and the general strength of the church suffered because discrimination hampered unity between Africans and Europeans.²⁸ Motsete was aware that overt racism within the church thwarted cooperation and unity between Africans and Europeans and posed a threat to the liberal paternalistic ideal.

In an interview with his biographer Mulale, Motsete characterized his religious convictions as based on humanitarianism. Mulale took this to mean he advocated for racial equality and justice for all individuals before God and the law.²⁹ He noted that Motsete regarded corporal punishment, an issue the progressives fought avidly against, as “a defiance of human rights and dignity.”³⁰ Based on Mulale’s interpretation, it seems that Motsete’s identification as a humanitarian was a means to combine the spiritual with the secular in a discourse of human rights.

This aligned with Masilela’s depiction of H.I.E. Dhlomo’s understanding of humanitarianism as a synthesis of Christianity and Platonic philosophy.³¹ Dhlomo argued, “A human being, merely by virtue of being human had fundamental rights... Plato and Christ believed in a plastic and creative society of virtue and vice, good and evil, greed and cooperation, truth and error.”³² Dhlomo believed that there was no deterministic social order

²⁸ CWM/LMS/Africa Odds/Box 20, Motsete to Chirgwin, Mar 25, 1930.

²⁹ Dingaana Maondo Mulale, “The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete,” 9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Ntongela Masilela, *The Cultural Modernity of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World, 2007), 12.

³² *Ibid.*

or permanent racial hierarchy and embraced Plato's stance against state tyranny. He conceived of life and human nature as ultimately about peace, love, and harmony and not about the class conflict or strife endorsed by Marxists or others.³³

Humanitarianism is useful for connecting ideas Motsete promoted such as individual rights, liberal multi-racial cooperation, and social and racial impartiality. As a self-identified Christian, Motsete perceived a connection between Christianity and professed egalitarianism based on Christ's sympathy for outcasts, cripples, and the poor. Motsete considered all people to be equal before God regardless of wealth or social standing. Humanitarianism in Tswana communities normally operated along the lines of patronage, producing and maintaining a clear social hierarchy between clients and dependents. Motsete's claim to some variant of Christian humanitarianism was a challenge to the European supremacy espoused by the missionaries and Tswana notions of privilege and authority. It was also a critique against racial and class inequality and underpinned the progressives' struggle against what they deemed the tyranny of *dikgosi* under the veil of the system of indirect rule.

Motsete attacked the ruling elites who benefited economically under indirect rule for perpetuating underdevelopment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He argued that the self-interested ruling class benefited from the taxes collected from labor migration and they perpetuated the lack of industrial development as a means to control their people. Motsete's point was that local African and European power brokers were just as interested in maintaining the status quo as the British or South Africans who dominated the political scene.³⁴

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Second Article," 7.

According to Motsete, underdevelopment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was historically produced. South Africa and multinational corporations had exploited the Protectorate's resources and labor for their own advantage. His argument supports the underdevelopment theory propagated decades later by Walter Rodney.³⁵ Following Rodney, historians of the Bechuanaland Protectorate have confirmed his theory by placing the onus for underdevelopment of the country on South Africa's regional economic influence and its ability to construct the Southern African Protectorates as labor reserves for the South African agricultural and mining industries.³⁶

In 1929, while in London, Motsete met with British officials to investigate the South African mining question for Tshekedi Khama. Motsete uncovered that the British had lost the alleged contract between Khama III and the British South African Company that they claimed was the basis for the Bechuanaland Protectorate's responsibility to allow South African mining. He told Tshekedi Khama and warned him to be aware that the British might try to cheat the BaTswana. Ultimately, Motsete recommended developing the mining industry in the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a strategy for empowering the local economy and gaining economic self-sufficiency from South Africa.³⁷ He contended that contrary to the South African model, the mining industry in the Bechuanaland Protectorate could be properly regulated for the benefit of African workers and that the industry could be a source

³⁵ Dickson A. Mungazi, *The Underdevelopment of African Education: A Black Zimbabwean Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981).

³⁶ David Massey, "Labor Migration and Rural Development in Botswana" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1981), 100; Jack Parson, *Botswana: Liberal Democracy and the Labour Reserve in Southern Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), 25; Louis A. Picard, *The Evolution of Modern Botswana, Politics and Rural Development in Southern Africa* (London: Rex Collings, 1985).

³⁷ Ballinger, A3.1.97, Motsete to Mrs. Hodgson [Ballinger], July 9, 1934.

of revenue for developing the country.³⁸ Motsete's contention made sense based on Wazha Morapedi's thesis that labor migration was a potent means of African economic development.³⁹ However, Tshekedi Khama subsequently took a firm stance against introducing mining and the matter became a point of contention between the two men.

Motsete believed that developing mining in the Bechuanaland Protectorate would benefit the BaTswana socio-economically and mitigate underdevelopment.⁴⁰ He argued that the country lacked sufficient home industries to secure people's employment locally. This meant that labor, money, and resources left the country for South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and elsewhere. Without a sufficient home market, internal markets relied upon foreign controlled exports and imports.⁴¹ Motsete claimed to speak for commoners, including the working class. He contended that the *dikgosi* and the missionaries were perpetuating the existing economic system and resisting mining, not for security against South African or settler colonial interests, but because they profited from control over taxation, trade, and cattle.⁴²

Motsete took a strong stance against South Africa's regional influence and settler colonial development. In 1938, he published an article opposing the incorporation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate into South Africa.⁴³ He condemned the segregationist politics of J.B.M. Hertzog, whom he likened to Adolf Hitler, as a great champion of his race. Motsete argued that because Hertzog successfully achieved independence for South Africa through

³⁸ Michael Crowder Papers (Crowder), Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London, London, England. ICS123, Box 12. Motsete to Tshekedi Khama June 13, 1929.

³⁹ Wazha G. Morapedi, "Migrant Labour and the Peasantry in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1930-1965," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25,2 (1999): 197-214.

⁴⁰ Ballinger, A3.1.97, Motsete to Mrs. Hodgson [Ballinger], July 9, 1934.

⁴¹ Ballinger, A3.1.17, "Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti" and A3.1.18, K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.

⁴² K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Second Article," 6.

⁴³ K.T. Motsete, "The Incorporation Issue in Bechuanaland," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 85 (June 1938).

the Statute of Westminster (1931), South Africa was no longer accountable to the British Empire. Thus, if South Africa incorporated the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the BaTswana would be without British support and unable to control their destiny. South Africa would perpetuate conflict and inequality between Africans and Europeans by developing the land to benefit Europeans and subjugating Africans to segregationist policies and the color-bar.⁴⁴

Motsete's stance against the incorporation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate into South Africa shows that he remained loyal to the British Empire and liberal multi-racial politics, while standing firmly against settler colonial development and overt racism. It also shows that Motsete prioritized the struggle against overt racism over the underdevelopment conundrum. He contended that segregation was not what Africans feared most. Isolation could be a refuge from the negative consequences of colonialism.⁴⁵ Resisting incorporation into South Africa was vital for preserving the Bechuanaland Protectorate's ideological and political connection to the British Empire and for the struggle against settler colonialism. Thus, Motsete formed his critique of the relationship between South Africa and development of the Bechuanaland Protectorate based on differentiating between what he deemed productive paternalism and crude European supremacy.

Ethnic Minorities and the Redefining of Historical Narratives

History textbooks published in SeTswana in the protectorate era presented the Tswana as distinct groups. This contributed to reinforcing the idea that each Tswana *morafe* (polity) had its own cultural and historical character. In 1913, the L.M.S. published the first

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

Tswana school history text, *Dinwao leha e le Dipololelo kaga Dico tsa Secwana*.⁴⁶ It was used extensively through the early 1950s as a textbook in SeTswana speaking areas, at elementary schools run by the *merafe*, and at Tiger Kloof. L.M.S. Rev. A. J. Wookey wrote *Dico tsa Secwana* based on the accounts of local elders. It consisted of the histories of eighteen different groups including Coloreds and Kalanga.⁴⁷

By 1910, *Dico tsa Secwana* sparked a debate among the L.M.S. missionaries. Some, such as Willoughby of Tiger Kloof, rejected the idea that Tswana society was comprised of culturally and historically absolute groups. Willoughby and others argued that although the *merafe* were erroneously presented as ethnically monolithic units, in reality they were historically constructed multi-ethnic and multi-cultural polities which shared a significant amount of exchange of people and culture.⁴⁸

The demarcation of the reserves and the system of governing based on the eight *merafe* was the basis for the notion that the *merafe* were culturally and historically absolute groups. Ethnic minorities, such as the BaKalanga, existed under the rule of the *dikgosi* and were without a means to assert themselves politically. Erroneous historical constructions of the *merafe* resulted in problems because multi-ethnic diverse populations existed within the political boundaries drawn by colonial powers and promoted by the government as monolithic cultural and historical entities. The progressives used this circumstance to attack BaNgwato authority and interpretations of customary law which privileged BaNgwato ethnicity over ethnic minorities.

⁴⁶ Alfred John Wookey, *Dinwao leha e le dipololelo kaga dicò tsa Secwana* (Vryburg: Tiger Kloof Native Institution, 1913).

⁴⁷ Neil Parsons, "Unravelling History and Cultural Heritage in Botswana," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32,4 (2006): 667-682.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

By the late 1920s, as part of his challenge to Tshekedi Khama, Simon Ratshosa became a representative of the struggle for ethnic minority rights. In “Petty Tribes,” a chapter in Ratshosa’s “My Book,” he exposed the deteriorating position of ethnic minorities under the rule of the *dikgosi*.⁴⁹ Ratshosa argued that although ethnic minorities payed taxes and lived under the protection of the British Crown, whereby every man by British tradition was allegedly to be born equal, the government denied ethnic minorities their right to equal opportunity.⁵⁰ Ratshosa asserted that the *dikgosi* subjugated ethnic minorities through racially motivated exclusions in education, and subjected individuals to autocratic practices, such as forced labor and excess taxation.⁵¹ He sought equal treatment in all government appropriations without discrimination and impartiality. Discrimination was especially glaring in education facilities, which were severely lacking in communities outside of Serowe and a few other towns. Ratshosa and the progressives positioned themselves as representatives of ethnic minorities and attempted to establish an alliance with British officials to challenge the discriminatory policies which negatively affected those on the margins of the *merafe*.

The progressives embraced the plight of ethnic minorities because it strengthened their connection to the commoners and distanced them from the ruling class. Ratshosa claimed that the majority of Africans were “muzzled and discontented” people, unaccounted for in the *kgotla* (administrative center or African court).⁵² Ethnic minorities were a powerful example of Africans the BaNgwato alleged to be part of the *morafe* but were politically marginalized. Ratshosa emphasized the problems of ethnic minorities to bolster his allegation that the *dikgosi* did not represent the majority of the people in the reserves they governed. He

⁴⁹ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Subject Tribes.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

exploited the chasm between the *dikgosi* and commoners in order to promote his scheme to claim a political function for educated Africans in the government.

One reason for aligning with ethnic minorities was the progressives' scheme to contest the *dikgosi* by cultivating previously dormant ethnic loyalties and propagating alternative cultural and historical narratives. By the 1930s, leading cultural nationalists like Motsete turned towards African culture and heritage to reaffirm their African identities. One way they accomplished this was through the reassertion of pre-colonial African achievements and a reassessment of history and heritage. Motsete's partnership with the BaKalanga was in part based on a reinterpretation of regional history. Motsete and Kalanga leaders resisted the BaNgwato historical narrative that Kalanga communities were displaced during the Mfecane, moved west into BaNgwato territory and sought protection within the BaNgwato state. This was because the narrative discounted BaKalanga claims to land and justified BaNgwato overrule.

The BaKalanga connected themselves historically to the region to the east dominated by Zimbabwean cultures. The TjiKalanga language is one dialect in the family of languages named as Shona by Clement Doke in the 1930s.⁵³ Shona is the general term for a number of dialects spoken by the people who live in current day Zimbabwe and those who descended from the various Zimbabwean cultures throughout the region. Although the origins of the BaKalanga vary considerably, they claim to have occupied the area long before the dawn of the Tswana polities. They most commonly claim to be autonomous descendants of the

⁵³ Clement M. Doke, *Report on the 481 of the Shona Dialects: Carried Out Under the Auspices of the Government of Southern Rhodesia and the Carnegie Corporation: Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1931* (Hertford, England: S. Austin and Sons, 1931).

historical empires of Zimbabwe and inhabitants of the BuKalanga region covering the area across the Botswana and Zimbabwe colonial border.⁵⁴

Motsete buttressed his partnership with the BaKalanga by making a historiographical claim to be responsible for Kalanga communities based on being a descendent of the Royal Banyai, who governed the BaKalanga in the 18th century. Motsete asserted this claim,

In the days of my own ancestors, the Kings of the Banyai or Mashona Empire, of which the architectural ruins of Zimbabwe, Domboshawa, etc. still stand to sing the departed glory, the BaKalanga were a subject people under us. When our power was broken by the Matabele conquerors, they consequently became Matebele subjects. It is only since the subjugation of the Matebele [1890s] that the British Empire divided up the BaKalanga by artificial boundaries, some in Rhodesia, some in the Tati and others in Khama's Country.⁵⁵

Motsete understood the historical nature of the conflict between the BaNgwato and the BaKalanga. He contended that the BaKalanga living in the North Eastern District “were a comparatively new acquisition to Khama’s people by secession from the British and were not conquered by any superiority of arms.”⁵⁶ According to Motsete, African tradition might suggest that superiority of arms would justify subjugation, but as he made clear, that was not the historical reality.⁵⁷ Separating themselves from the BaTswana historically was the foundation upon which the BaKalanga established their case for self-determination. Kalanga communities invested in Motsete and the Tati Training Institute to protect their ability to remain self-determined and resist various forms of African and European oppression.

⁵⁴ Thomas N. Huffman, *The Origins of Leopard's Kopje: An 11th Century Difaquane* ([no place of publication specified], National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia, 1978); Emmanuel Ndzimu-unami, *The Rebirth of Bukalanga: A Manifesto for the Liberation of a Great People with a Proud History* (Harare: Mapungubwe News Corporation, 2012); Catrien Van Waarden, *Butua and the End of an Era: The Effect of the Collapse of the Kalanga State on Ordinary Citizens: An Analysis of Behaviour Under Stress* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012).

⁵⁵ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, “I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Richard Werbner's depiction of late 20th century Kalanga politician Richard Mannoithoko as a "rooted public cosmopolitan" is useful for conceptualizing how Africans like Motsete, descendants of multi-racial or ethnic minority communities on the periphery of the eight *merafe*, agitated for the rights of those on the margins while fostering unity at the national level. Werbner defined the phrase "rooted public cosmopolitanism" as being both an assertion of one's own ethnic origins and an endorsement of multi-culturalism.⁵⁸ This means simultaneously constructing and transcending ethnic difference.

Werbner derived his theory of rooted public cosmopolitanism from philosopher Kwame Appiah's notion of African liberalism. Appiah defined African liberalism as the harmonizing of the right of the autonomous individual to freedom of choice with the recognition that individuals frequently identify as and are tied to the social obligations of multiple social groups.⁵⁹ Werbner's understanding of the African liberal is one who is "true to a public cosmopolitan ethic. They take upon themselves a more inclusive responsibility for bettering the quality of life, not merely for people in their own country but reaching well beyond that to a wider, shared world."⁶⁰ Based on this conceptualization, African liberals were tasked with transcending the false dichotomy of favoring one or another group and simultaneously prioritizing the multiple social groups with which they identify in order to advance the greater good.

⁵⁸ Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Patriots, Ethnics and the Public Good in Botswana," in Renaat Devisch and Francis B. Nyamnjoh, eds. *Postcolonial Turn: Re-imagining Anthropology and Africa* (Bamenda: Langaa Research and Publishing, 2011); Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Patriots, Ethnics and the Public Good in Botswana," in Prina Werbner, ed., *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg., 2008), 175.

⁵⁹ Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism," 408.

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Human Rights and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," in *Human Rights at Harvard: Interdisciplinary Faculty Perspectives on the Human Rights Movement: Second Symposium Held at Harvard University on April 5, 1997* (2006), 9-15.

⁶⁰ Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism," 408.

Werbner's theoretical framework of rooted public cosmopolitanism applies to Motsete. Motsete identified as an ethnic minority and considered himself a member of multiple communities both within and transcendent of national geography and historically constructed ethnic categories.⁶¹ Werbner defined rooted public cosmopolitans in Botswana patriots because they valued diversity and advocated reforms against legal discrimination.⁶² Motsete fits Werbner's rooted public cosmopolitanism framework because he constructed difference while transcending it. Motsete saw no contradiction in asserting ethnic minority rights as part of his reformist agenda because he conceived the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a multi-ethnic and multi-racial polity where individuals were endowed rights under the British crown.⁶³ He saw no contradiction in promoting the BaKalanga as an ethnic minority, which had a participatory role in the Tswana polity, yet derived its historical and cultural capital from regional Zimbabwean cultures.

Motsete claimed BaTalaote identity, a multi-ethnic mixture of BaKalanga and BaNgwato. Accepting obligations to multiple communities was a significant reason why he promoted interethnic cooperation and mutuality. Motsete advocated for Kalanga cultural and political rights. Yet, he also engaged in issues concerning the future of the Bechuanaland Protectorate as a whole. Motsete drew cultural and historical inspiration from his Kalanga ethnic identification while maintaining a strong commitment to developing the Tswana polity.

In reality, promoting the Kalanga cause within the Tswana polity was precarious. Enocent Msindo points out that Kalanga pre-colonial identities persisted in the colonial era

⁶¹ Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism," in *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism*, 181.

⁶² Richard Werbner, "Responding to Rooted Cosmopolitanism," 426.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 410.

and beyond. In the 1930s, Kalanga communities were already politically distinct and estranged from their Ndebele and Tswana neighbors.⁶⁴ Based on the historical trajectory established by Msindo, preserving BaKalanga self-determination in the Bechuanaland Protectorate proved especially perilous. Werbner's argument that Kalanga identity was consistent with Tswana national identity is useful for reinforcing the notion that the BaKalanga were reformist nation builders, but it obscures the "cross border" ethnic relations between the BaKalanga in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, and the regionally based linguistic association and historical narratives which defined Kalanga identity. Although Motsete's Tati Training Institute was a monument to his aspirations as a builder of the nation, it was co-founded by Kalanga communities whose political and ethnic identity was shaped across international borders and out of the tensions that emerged as a result of being a subjugated ethnic minority.

Simon Ratshosa and the Council of Twelve

Simon Ratshosa established the progressives' political blueprint during his political struggle with the BaNgwato ruling class in the late 1920s.⁶⁵ Within the system of indirect rule, the progressives lost access to traditional power in BaNgwato, became malcontent, and sought an alternative method of achieving influence in the state. They argued that the state should be democratized, and restraints applied to what they considered Tshekedi Khama's autocratic rule.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Enocent Msindo. *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, 2012).

⁶⁵ BNARS. DCS.33/10, "History of BaNgwato Challenges to the Chief and Family Feuds."

⁶⁶ Michael Crowder, "Black Prince: A Biography of Tshekedi Khama," unfinished typescript, Schapera E-Library, 1988, Thuto.org. <http://www.thuto.org/schapera/etext/classic/blpr.htm#contents>, 76.

After Khama III's successor Sekgoma died in 1923, the Ratshosa brothers led what was referred to as the "Council of 12," appointed to advise the Regent Gorewang. However, Gorewang died in 1925 and later that year Tshekedi Khama became regent.⁶⁷ The Sekgoma faction, which included the Ratshosas and the Raditladis had the support of the British administration.⁶⁸ The British sought to maintain the Council of 12 as some form of advisory or oversight body that could serve as a means to undermine the power of the young regent after his installation. The Ratshosas had used the Council of 12 as a means to perpetuate the influence of the Sekgoma faction and as a means to challenge Tshekedi Khama's power.

Shortly after accepting the regency, Tshekedi Khama abolished the Council of 12 and fired Simon's brother Johnnie Ratshosa from his position as BaNgwato administrative secretary. This for all intents and purposes ended the power of the Sekgoma faction. Isolated from the majority of the BaNgwato, the Ratshosas and Disang Raditladi grew disgruntled and from then on, Simon Ratshosa took on an openly defiant attitude towards the BaNgwato ruling class.⁶⁹

Despite Tshekedi Khama disbanding the Council of 12, the British administration hoped his regency would be the beginning of a more progressive stage in the African administration. The British definition of progress was to curtail the powers of the *dikgosi* and forge a political role for the class of educated Africans.⁷⁰ As far as the British administration

⁶⁷ Michael Crowder, "The Succession Crisis Over the Illness and Death of Kgosi Sekgoma II of the BaNgwato 1925: Western Versus Traditional Medicine," in *Collected Seminar Papers / 37, The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries*, 14, 1984-86 (1988).

⁶⁸ For historical context on the Sekgoma faction, see: BNARS, DCS.27/4; DCS,27/7; DCS.40/7; S.485/1/4; Keene Boikhutso, "The Life and Times of Leetile Raditladi, 1910-1971" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1985); Jack Parson, Michael Crowder, and Neil Parsons, *Succession to High Office in Botswana: Three Case Studies* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1990), chapter two.

⁶⁹ Jack Parson, Michael Crowder, and Neil Parsons, *Succession to High Office in Botswana*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

was concerned, despite the significant number of progressive Africans, Tshekedi Khama pandered to the adherents to the *merafe*.⁷¹

On the day of Tshekedi Khama's installation in 1926, Simon Ratshosa delivered an attack on BaNgwato adherents. Despite his youth and inexperience, Tshekedi Khama demonstrated the ability to rule his people and responded by planning the downfall of the Ratshosa brothers, whom he perceived to be the main threat to his position as regent.⁷² Soon after the installation, the Ratshosa brothers ignored a request to report for regimental labor and Tshekedi Khama ordered them to be flogged for disrespecting his authority. Johnnie was beaten while Simon and Obeditse fled, only to return to the *kgotla* armed. Simon fired at and wounded Tshekedi Khama. The Ratshosa's houses were burned in retaliation.⁷³ There is an ongoing debate as to whether or not Tshekedi ordered the destruction of the Ratshosas property or if it was done by independent BaNgwato adherents.

In the days before British rule, the Ratshosas would have been put to death. But under the laws of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the British courts had jurisdiction over treason and murder cases. The British indicted Simon and his brother Obeditse for attempted murder and sentenced Simon Ratshosa to ten years imprisonment and hard labor.⁷⁴ What emerged out of the proceedings was the deep animosity the Ratshosas earned in the BaNgwato *morafe*. This foregrounded the tensions between the progressives and BaNgwato adherents that boiled over in the aftermath of the progressives' petition a few years later.

⁷¹ Michael Crowder, "Black Prince," 27.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla. *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 235.

⁷⁴ Michael Crowder, "Black Prince," 31.

At the trial, Simon Ratshosa used the issue of Basarwa servitude as a political weapon to attack the BaNkgwato ruling class. He characterized Basarwa servitude as slavery and demonized the BaNkgwato elites who relied upon the system for managing their cattle. The rhetoric of slavery caught the attention of the South African and British press and embarrassed Tshekedi Khama and the British administration. Headlines in *The Times* (London) read, “Trouble Among the Bechuana: The Threat of Civil War” and “Bechuana and Subject Races.”⁷⁵ Slavery was against international as well as British imperial law. The British administration admitted that a form of mundane servitude existed between the BaNkgwato elites and the Basarwa but was itself concerned with its reputation. The issue was already in the forefront after the League of Nations launched an investigation into slavery in 1923. It resulted in a Slavery Convention that Britain participated in.⁷⁶

Embarrassed by the bad press, the British administration’s rhetoric shifted to eradicating the Basarwa system. The Secretary of State for Colonies called for a full report on the issue. While on a visit to Serowe in 1927, High Commissioner the Earl of Athlone made what came to be known as the Athlone Declaration, whereby he defended individual liberty and condemned Basarwa slavery.⁷⁷ Athlone alleged, “Much progress has been made in the laws of civilized countries to ensure freedom for the individual. All [the King’s] civilized subjects recognize that no people, or race of people is entitled to take away the liberty or to demand compulsory service of another.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Correspondent, “The Bechuanaland Fighting,” *The Times* (London), April 13, 1926; Correspondent, “Trouble Among the Bechuana: Threat of Civil War,” *The Times* (London), April 9, 1926; Correspondent, “Bechuana and Subject Races,” *The Times* (London), June 24, 1926.

⁷⁶ International Labour Conference, *Proposed Action by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Regarding the Draft Convention and the Recommendations Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 14th Session, 10th to 28th June 1930*, Cmd, 3841 (London: Stat. Off, 1931).

⁷⁷ BNARS BT Admin 11/5, Lord Athlone, Public Speech at Serowe, 1927.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Rey and Athlone, Rey employed the “Memorandum on Native Policy in East Africa” to define liberty as being economically free to work in employment for wages in accordance with one’s own wishes.⁷⁹ Shortly after taking his post as Resident Commissioner, Rey’s speech in the BaNgwato *kgotla* typified the way he used the discourse of “liberty.” He stated publicly, “We live and work under the British flag, which stands for freedom.”⁸⁰ In response to the question of “the subject races,” Rey proclaimed, “The flag under which we live means freedom for all and justice for all.”⁸¹

In their attack on the *dikgosi*, the progressives employed Athlone and Rey’s association between individual liberty and the rights of ethnic minorities. Although the discourse of British officials reaffirmed the Government’s opposition to Basarwa servitude, nothing effective was done to enforce Athlone’s edict.⁸² In the 1930s, the British commissioned two extensive reports on Basarwa slavery. Still, the debate over the nature of Basarwa servitude persisted. Consequently, it became intermingled in the debates between the progressives and BaNgwato adherents over individual liberties and the rights of ethnic minorities.⁸³

In “A Prisoner’s Plea to the Government,” handwritten by Simon Ratshosa while in the Francistown gaol in April of 1927, he used the rhetoric of slavery to underscore debates

⁷⁹ BNARS, S.173/2, Athlone to Resident Commissioner Mafeking, Confidential Memo No. 617, December 9, 1930; Great Britain, Colonial Office. *Memorandum on Native Policy in East Africa*. Cmd, 3573 (London: H.M. Stationery Off, 1930), 12.

⁸⁰ BNARS, S.126/4, Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, Speech at the Serowe Kgotla, June 12-13, 1930.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Jeff Ramsay, “Builders of Botswana: Simon Ratshosa on Bolata,” *Sunday Standard*, March 11, 2013. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/builders-botswana-simon-ratshosa-bolata>

⁸³ BNARS BT Admin 11/5, Lord Athlone, “Public Speech at Serowe, 1927”; London Missionary Society, Alfred J. Haile, and E. S. B. Tagart. *The Masarwa (Bushmen): Report of an Inquiry by the South Africa District Committee of the London Missionary Society* (Lovedale, South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1935); Edward Samuel Brown Tagart, *Report on the Masarwa and on Corporal Punishment Among Natives in the Bamangwato Reserve of the Bechuanaland Protectorate* (London: [publisher not specified], 1932); Correspondent, “Alleged Native Slavery,” *Cape Times*, July 21, 1931.

about forced labor and individual liberty. On the heels of the assassination attempt and concerned with the legal protections on his private property and his family's cattle, Ratshosa alluded to Athlone's declaration. He attacked the BaNgwato with discursive tropes of the dark continent, such as "feudal lord," "Shaka Zulu," and "cruelty." He claimed that Tshekedi Khama had total control over the people and their property, that he ruled according to methods abolished by Khama III long ago, and that despite British protection, "oppression was just as much in vogue in the Bamangwato Reserve as it was a hundred years ago."⁸⁴ Employing the Basarwa debate as a political weapon, Ratshosa proclaimed, "Slavery cannot exist in the present period. Liberty and goodwill to men are the minimum of constitutional rights demanded by both sexes."⁸⁵ Ratshosa's rhetoric was obviously a somewhat crude ploy to attract the goodwill of the British and positively affect his legal status.⁸⁶ However, by pandering to British officials and claiming that British protection meant four decades of improving the conditions of oppressed people, Ratshosa advanced his case for imperial intervention into BaNgwato affairs.⁸⁷

Ratshosa called for the creation of a Bechuanaland national council made up of educated BaTswana, including representatives of ethnic minorities living in the territory. The council would serve as a legislative advisory body to the British administration and as a court of appeal for decisions made by the *dikgosi* in the *kgotla*.⁸⁸ Ratshosa envisioned the council as the means by which the class of educated Africans could participate politically and as a means for a check on the power of the *dikgosi*.

⁸⁴ BNARS S.11/5, Simon Ratshosa, "A Prisoner's Plea to the Government, April 1927."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, "Colonel C.F. Rey."

⁸⁸ Jeff Ramsay, "Builders of Botswana: Tshekedi and the Ratshosas." *Sunday Standard*, March 4, 2013. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/builders-botswana-tshekedi-and-ratshosas>

Ratshosa claimed to represent the dissenting voices thwarted by the *merafe*. He argued that the regiment system was of no value to young men from school whose “motives have been reformed for a better life and to acquire his earnings for something that will be of great use to him in the future.”⁸⁹ Ratshosa’s resistance to being bound by obligations to the *merafe* took shape in his discourse for individual liberty. The struggle for individual freedom was to some degree motivated by self-interest but the ensuing debates were a powerful means for the progressives to challenge the status quo and make their case for reforms.

The Ratshosas appealed to the Resident Commissioner a few weeks after Athlone’s declaration against slavery. Simon Ratshosa handed a critique he wrote titled, “How the Basarwa Became Slaves and Why the Chief’s Word is Law,” to the Francistown gaoler to be forwarded to Athlone. It had a significant impact on Athlone’s decision to reduce Ratshosa’s ten-year-long sentence to four years.⁹⁰ Athlone’s decision in Ratshosa’s favor symbolized the influence that the class of educated Africans had obtained among the British authorities. Tshekedi’s case against the Ratshosas was founded on armed rebellion and treason, the most severe crimes against the entire government. But by 1929, the British awarded the Ratshosas damages for the property they lost when their houses were burned exacerbating the tensions between the British administration and Tshekedi Khama.⁹¹

Connecting the class of educated Africans with various marginalized groups, Ratshosa highlighted the plight of discontented people under British protection. Employing the rhetoric of the autocracy of the *dikgosi*, he motivated the British officials to realize their obligation as representatives of the British Empire to protect British justice.⁹² Ratshosa

⁸⁹ BNARS S.11/5, Simon Ratshosa, “A Prisoner’s Plea to the Government, April 1927.”

⁹⁰ Michael Crowder, “Black Prince,” 31.

⁹¹ Mary Benson, *Tshekedi Khama* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 70.

⁹² Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Government System.”

pandered to a European audience well beyond the local officials. He caught the attention of British liberals in South Africa and the United Kingdom attune to ammunition they could employ in their fight against British imperial policies in Southern Africa. The following appeal is good example of the rhetoric Ratshosa employed to reach liberals of all kinds.

I appeal once more for justice which will remove the causes of this unjust treatment by constructing a new social and international order based on justice and freedom to create such a spirit to antagonism to unjust acts. In tribal interests, so could the Chief's power be limited by international law. In international interests, the country and the people will prosper, and the protection will securely be guarded. The grave autocratic power of the Chief could be abolished, and the use of force would not be required if freedom is secured.⁹³

This passage is indicative of a number of perspectives maintained by the progressives. First, they advocated for curtailing the authority of the *dikgosi* because they sought to dissociate from the *merafe*. They employed the discourse of “British justice” to encourage systemic reforms to ensure individual liberty. Second, they sought to redefine the dynamics of protection in order to reconcile the political tensions between the *merafe*, the British authorities, and the progressives. Lastly, they appealed to the British Empire, who they thought had the authority and influence to institute their reforms.

Motsete returned to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1929 after a decade outside the country and echoed much of Simon Ratshosa's reformist rhetoric. The following quote from his correspondence with Resident Commissioner Rey is evidence that Motsete focused on the underdevelopment paradigm,

Our country is lagging behind in civilization... The fear is not stagnation but real retrogression amongst the Bamangwato. When I left in Khama's time, Serowe itself was in many ways a better place than it is at present. The blame for the lack of progress seems to be sharable; it is partly on the Bechuana and partly on His Majesty's government.⁹⁴

⁹³ BNARS S.11/5, Simon Ratshosa, “A Prisoner's Plea to the Government, April 1927.”

⁹⁴ BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930.

Motsete fanned the flames already burning for reforms by employing the underdevelopment argument and highlighting the failures of the Africans and Europeans governing the country prior to Rey's arrival.

One of Ratshosa's predominant objectives for writing "My Book on Bechuanaland Native Custom" was to impress upon the British administration that the Ratshosa family, and not the *dikgosi*, were the predominant authorities on customary law. Representing the Ratshosa lineage, Simon presented an alternative account and often an alternative rationale to explain pertinent issues debated in the *kgotla*.⁹⁵ He critiqued the *dikgosi* for perpetuating disputes within the *merafe* related to customary law. First, he criticized Tshekedi Khama for reviving practices like flogging and regimental labor, which he insisted were totally abolished in Khama III's era and unfamiliar to the BaNgwato. Second, he pointed out that customary law developed in various ways among different ethnic groups. BaNgwato rulers barred ethnic minorities from power in the *kgotla* and subjected them to unfamiliar legal conventions.⁹⁶

Ratshosa's claim to be the authority on customary law was the basis for asserting that he was the rightful representative of the commoners and thus, BaNgwato as a whole. It was also an important dimension in strengthening the partnership between educated Africans and the British administration because in the minds of the British, it further legitimized the claims made by educated Africans. Claiming to be authoritative on customary law bolstered the educated Africans' political muscle and encouraged the British administration to support the progressives in their pursuit to participate politically.

⁹⁵ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*.

⁹⁶ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, "What is Bogadi," "Bogodi (Dowry): Is it Compatible with Christianity?"

Ratshosa proposed that a partnership between educated Africans and the British administration was preferable to the one between the British Administration and the *dikgosi* sustained by indirect rule. He explained this to Rey,

There are a number of well-educated native young men eager for progress and who in character, intelligence and general knowledge are better off than many of the Chiefs, but they are debarred from performing their duties like civilized men in their native land.⁹⁷

Ratshosa argued that educated Africans “sought [their] freedom based on having obtained European civilization” and that regressive and “repugnant” practices brought the *merafe* chaos, poverty, and disruption.⁹⁸ Thus, according to Ratshosa, partnering with educated Africans to curtail the powers of the *dikgosi* was progress.

After trying to shoot Tshekedi Khama in the *kgotla*, Johnny and Simon Ratshosa were released from prison and living in Francistown. Their appeal, decided by the British courts in September 1929, dictated that compensation was due for their houses and property destroyed by Tshekedi’s regiments.⁹⁹ Furious by the reversal, Tshekedi Khama appealed to the highest court of the British Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. He contended the Ratshosas had revolutionary ideas that could lead the BaNgwato to anarchy.¹⁰⁰

We will see in chapter six that Simon Ratshosa’s appeal inspired the progressives and their supporters. It proved there was an avenue to challenge what people deemed to be the unjust judgments made by the *dikgosi* in the *kgotla*. It strengthened the perception that the British maintained the ultimate legal authority and set a new precedent by restricting the

⁹⁷ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Native Advisory Council.”

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ BNARS, DCS.12/9, Resident Magistrate, “1929 Annual Report Ngwato District.”

¹⁰⁰ BNARS, S.11/5, Tshekedi Khama to The Resident Magistrate Serowe, February 25, 1927.

ability of the *merafe* to make legal claims to personal property owed outright by individuals.¹⁰¹

The Ratshosa appeals process inspired the progressives and they rode the Ratshosa's wave of political agitation. In the wake of the Ratshosa proceedings, the progressives' political scheming may have seemed like a small drop in the bucket. However, Tshekedi Khama considered his battle with the Ratshosas as one aspect in his avid fight to eliminate anything that undermined his authority in BaNgwato or in the system of indirect rule. He deemed the Ratshosas and the progressives as rebels against the chieftaincy and stood firmly by his position that he was Khama III's son and knew far more about what was best for his people than upstart African intellectuals or British officials.¹⁰²

The English Privy Council's ruling against Tshekedi Khama in July of 1931 vindicated those who supported the progressives' petition. Although the British Privy Council ruled that the burning of the Ratshosa houses and the destruction of their personal property was within customary law, they deemed the action contrary to good government.¹⁰³ This decision marked an evolution in the legal definition of private property and was symbolic of new challenges to the jurisdiction of the *dikgosi* as legislator and judge. It was especially significant for the emergent African wage-earning working class. Previously, vast majority of commoners lived on a simpler material basis, but wage labor altered their material life and established the necessity to modify customary law.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Neil Parsons, "The Idea of Democracy," 183.

¹⁰² Michael Crowder, "Black Prince," 31.

¹⁰³ Bruce S. Bennett & Alison Wallis, "Khama v. Ratshosa Revisited: The Privy Council Ruling of 1931 on House Burning," *Botswana Notes and Records*, 44 (2012): 25-33.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Volume 2* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 365-375.

The English Privy Council's ruling exposed the false perception that protection meant that the *dikgosi* enjoyed a relatively unfettered administration of internal affairs. It signified a watershed moment for the progressives because the ruling infused insecurity into the administrative system and the system of customary law. Ultimately, it was a forewarning that the British administration, using Rey's Proclamations, would unilaterally curtail the power of the *dikgosi*.¹⁰⁵

Although the progressives accepted paternalistic ideas because they considered them a means to advance African interests, they rejected overt European supremacy. Motsete identified as an adherent to the philosophy of humanitarianism. That meant that he encouraged individual rights, liberal racial cooperation, and social and racial impartiality. He challenged the dogma of European supremacy and Tswana notions of privilege and authority. In the 1930s, the progressives turned towards African culture and heritage as they sought to reaffirm their African identities. In Motsete's case, his relationship with the BaKalanga was based on a regionally focused re-interpretation of Kalanga history. His BaTalaote multiethnic identity was the bedrock upon which he promoted interethnic cooperation and mutuality, and the basis for the precarious balance he struck between advocating for the cultural and political rights of ethnic minorities and promoting an ideal for national development. The progressives followed Simon Ratshosa's challenge of the BaNgwato ruling class in the late 1920s. Ratshosa's legal appeal to the English Privy Council inspired the progressives because it further exposed the inadequacies of customary law and the systems of indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

¹⁰⁵ Bojosi Otlhogile, "Tshekedi Khama and Ano Vs. High Commissioner: The Making of the Court," *Botswana Notes & Records*, 25,1 (1993): 29-38, 29.

Chapter Five

The Progressives: African Advancement, English, and Allegiance to Empire

In 1951, twenty years after the progressives' petition, Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete wrote to the Resident Commissioner of Serowe asking the government "*Quo Vadis?*" (Where are you going?)¹ Motsete had recently returned to live in his hometown of Serowe. The Tati Training Institute closed in 1942 and afterwards, he was unable to secure a position in the government or earn a satisfactory salary as a schoolteacher in the Protectorate. He spent the better part of the 1940s pursuing teaching opportunities in South Africa and Malawi. In the letter, Motsete objected to the government's policy on African advisory councils. He complained about the government's inconsistent approach, arguing that while the government claimed to promote a representative council, it perpetuated a foolish, frivolous, and disconcerting policy of working solely with men designated by Tshekedi Khama.² Motsete's letter shows the continuity in the demands made by educated Africans in the three decades between 1930 and the late 1950s. In a discourse very similar to the assertions made by the progressives in the early 1930s, Motsete appealed to the government in 1951 for a political role for educated Africans and to break the stranglehold on power held by the *dikgosi* (chiefs) and the British under indirect rule. Although this chapter focuses on the ideological underpinnings of the progressives' political struggle in the early 1930s, indirect rule meant that the political backdrop remained fairly similar until the formation of the first mass nationalist political parties in the late 1950s and the transition to independence in 1966.

¹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, DCS.38/1, K.T. Motsete to The District Commissioner Serowe, June 18, 1951.

² *Ibid.*

In the early 1930s, the progressives promoted European-style education and schooling in English as the means to facilitate African socio-economic advancement and self-sufficiency. They attacked government educational programs differentiated for Africans or those they perceived as being overtly racist. The progressives did not acquiesce to colonialism or accept the dogma of European supremacy. They searched for knowledge to overcome colonial oppression, while simultaneously advancing African self-determination. They understood the imperative of engaging with and interpreting African history and culture to remain oriented with African communities.

The progressives' interpretations of Khama III's legacy justified their arguments for which ideas were useful for advancing African interests. For instance, Simon Ratshosa connected the discourse of "British justice, order, and good government" to Khama III's so called "progressive" reforms. Motsete and the progressives argued that allegiance to the British Empire was inherent in the way Khama III defined protection and therefore loyalty to the British Empire was non-negotiable. They understood protection in terms of *Pax Britannica*; the British provided peace and security in exchange for taxation. This underpinned the progressives' agenda to promote protections for individuals. They maintained that under the British crown, Africans were British subjects and obligated to work to pay taxes.³

The progressives depended on their association with the west and in many cases, the imperial order, but they also relied on their ability to remain connected to African communities. From a social class standpoint, the progressives were aligned with commoners more than most historians have presumed. This is especially true in their fight against racism.

³ K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *The Laymen's Bulletin*, 83 (December 1937).

Motsete considered Africans with a high degree of European-style education as posing a direct challenge to the dogma of European supremacy. Many Africans unable to obtain European-style education considered those who became educated as role models for successful adaptation to colonialism. The progressives assumed they could or should be the authorities on determining the best ways to advance the class of African commoners, but they faced challenges as leaders and social reformers. They were continuously forced to justify their own status as members of a group comparable to Du Bois's talented tenth. Educated Africans asserted that European-style education was the means to empower other Africans and was the engine for progress. Based on this logic, Motsete sought to attain the support of the British administration in extending European-style education to the greatest number of commoners possible.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate African Advisory Council

The progressives attempted to form an African advisory council to align themselves with the British administration and promote their social and political reforms. Leopold Amery, the new Colonial Dominions secretary, was concerned with maintaining British political authority and tried to enlist the loyalty of the progressives to strengthen Africans' confidence in British rule. Although British imperial officials promoted African advisory councils as a mechanism for democratizing the state within the systems of indirect rule, they were actually politically impotent and principally a means for paternalists to diffuse tensions directed at the status quo by providing a forum for the class of educated Africans to air their growing political consciousness.

By the late 1920s, educated Africans were anxious to participate politically. They considered themselves more educated and therefore more capable than the *dikgosi* to determine the best direction for progress. The system of indirect rule hampered their political participation and African customary law tethered them to the *merafe* (polities). They sought to liberate themselves by establishing a system to appeal the judicial decisions made by the *dikgosi* in the *kgotla* (administrative center or African court) and to gain political power by investing legal power in the African advisory councils.

From its inception, the only significant changes to indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate were the implementation of a system of judicial appeals in 1919, the establishment of the Native Advisory Council in 1919, followed by the European Advisory Council in 1920. The councils were inspired by the establishment of the Basutoland Native Council, established in 1898 to replace the defunct chieftaincy *pitso* (meeting).⁴ The councils were actually an attempt by the government to create a platform for the airing of grievances and dissenting opinion so that they could better gauge African opinion and aspiration. Allegedly, the British constructed African councils as the foundation for European-style democratic administrative institutions, but they were actually only advisory, purely experimental, and lacked any legal status.⁵

The Colonial Dominions Secretary Leopold Amery oversaw the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He sought to break the socio-economic stagnation of the 1920s by

⁴ William Malcolm Hailey. *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 73.

⁵ Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 203; Kenneth R. D. Manungo, "The Role of the Native Advisory Council in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1919-1960." *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 13,1- 2 (1999): 24-45.

implementing a program for colonial development.⁶ He recruited Charles Rey to replace the existing system with a variant of indirect rule based on political segregation and a dual policy of complimentary development. He perceived the role of the imperial government to be an “impartial arbitrator in case of any conflict of interest which cannot be settled by mutual agreement.”⁷ Amery concluded that although complete segregation was impossible, political segregation should be maintained as long as possible and development for Africans and Europeans should be carried out along separate lines. Amery sought to maintain British political authority, avert insurrection, attain the loyalty of the African people, and strengthen the confidence of the African people in British rule.⁸

Amery recognized the trend towards establishing African advisory councils promoted by Lugard and the Hilton Young Report. The South African government instituted councils after the establishment of the Native Affairs Act of 1920. Still, advisory councils were not a means for diffusing political power or democratizing the state. They were a stopgap measure to protect the administration under fire by dissenting opinions. As was the Bunga system in the Transkei for example, African advisory councils were organized without any real political power.⁹ Based on the Hilton Young Report, Amery planned African councils as a forum for Africans outside the existing power structure to voice their growing political consciousness.¹⁰ Though dissenting voices emerged in these councils, they had no legal

⁶ Neil Parsons, “Colonel Rey and the Colonial Rulers of Botswana: Mercenary and Missionary Traditions in Administration, 1884–1955,” in J. F. A. Ajayi, J. D. Y. Peel, and Michael Crowder, *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder* (London: Longman, 1992), 199.

⁷ E. Hilton Young, *Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies of Eastern and Central Africa*, Cmd 3234 (London: H. M. Stationery Off, 1929).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 81-84.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

authority so they were actually an instrument for gradualist segregationists to diffuse tensions directed at the status quo.

The British established councils in the African territories they colonized, but battles ensued over which Africans would participate. The *dikgosi* controlled who participated in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Advisory Council.¹¹ Educated Africans were anxious to participate politically. Based on their education, they considered themselves more capable of furthering ideas for African socio-economic advancement than the *dikgosi* and the vast majority of adherents to the *merafe*. Due to their lack of real political power, those who participated in the advisory council found themselves in a pattern of frustration. As a result, when they wished to protest government policies, they bypassed local officials by dispatching petitions directly to the Secretary of State in Cape Town or by pleading to sympathetic European liberals in South Africa or London. This pattern of circumventing local authority became institutionalized.¹²

Motsete criticized the system of representation in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Advisory Council. He referred to the council as “an aristocracy based on birth,” pointing out that participation was controlled by the *dikgosi* who appointed headmen and members of the ruling class. Motsete insisted that some of the best intellects among the commoners or what he referred to as “ordinary citizens,” were excluded from the council. Motsete told Rey, “As constituted, the council is likely to be characterized by what Plato said

¹¹ Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*. 204; P.T. Mgadla and A.C. Campbell, “Dikgotla, Dikgosi and the Protectorate Administration,” in John D. Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds., *Democracy in Botswana: The Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 52.

¹² Michael Crowder, “Black Prince: A Biography of Tshekedi Khama,” unfinished typescript, Schapera E-Library, 1988, Thuto.org. <http://www.thuto.org/schapera/etext/classic/blpr.htm#contents>, 46.

of justice, that ‘justice is what benefits the strongest.’”¹³ He insinuated that the problem was the limited representation in the council.

Motsete thought he could educate the British administration on the inherent problem in the make-up of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Advisory Council. He wrote to Resident Commissioner Rey about the benefits of including educated Africans, or those he referred to as “able ordinary citizens.”¹⁴ Motsete used the example of Basutoland as the basis for his case that educated Africans should participate in the council. Basutoland had a system of dual African advisory councils: The National Council for chiefs and the Progressive Association for educated commoners. Based on the Basutoland model, Motsete imagined the political system in the Bechuanaland Protectorate evolving into a version of England’s two-house Parliament: The chiefs as the House of Lords and educated Africans as the House of Commons.¹⁵

The goal was to replace BaNgwato adherents as the authority on matters pertaining to commoners. As Simon Ratshosa had done in the 1920s, Motsete attempted to position himself and an indispensable partner to the British administration. Although they were legally impotent, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Advisory Council was an avenue for the progressives to strengthen their partnership with the British administration and subtly assert their influence. Inspired by those in Basutoland and the Transkei, the progressives hoped the council would take on an increasingly influential political role. However, Ratshosa criticized the state because the Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Advisory Council had functioned for over a decade without any real legislative power. Although the body was

¹³ BNARS, S.96/7, “Motsete to Rey, May 8, 1930.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

strictly advisory, Ratshosa believed that if the council was representative of the people, it could act as a check on the power of the *dikgosi*.

As an ancillary scheme, Ratshosa tried to influence the British to instituting a system whereby Africans could appeal the decisions made in the *kgotla*.¹⁶ He conceptualized an appeals system as another means to effectively connect British officials to dissenting factions within the *merafe* and empower ethnic minorities and individuals seeking to disconnect themselves from obligations to the *merafe*.

Reformist Nationalism and Allegiance to the British Empire

Indirect rule created a precarious situation for the British officials because they lacked the political power to implement reforms. Their power to curtail the influence of the *dikgosi* or implement their development agenda was limited through the late 1930s. The progressives and the British administration shared an ambition to curtail the power of the *dikgosi*. However, because the British considered the progressives' agenda only so far as it served their own, the progressives clothed their socio-political reforms in the garb of curtailing the power of the *dikgosi*.

This situation underpins the contention that the progressives sought to reform and not revolutionize the African administration. Schapera argued that although revolts against individual chiefs occurred fairly often, there was never a systemic revolution or an attempt to replace the institution of chieftainship with some other kind of government.¹⁷ Thus, the

¹⁶ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom, etc. and Bechuanaland Protectorate and its Rulers*, in Vivien Frederic Ellenberger Papers, microfilm, "Progressive Native Aspects."

¹⁷ Isaac Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies* (London: Watts, 1956), 153.

progressives' actions were a rebellion against Tshekedi Khama, and possibly his position as the regent, but not a systemic revolution against chiefly power.

Prior to the 1950s, nationalism in Botswana was reformist not revolutionary. Historians Barry Morton and Neal Parsons have treated the educated Africans of the 1930s as early or proto-nationalists.¹⁸ This interpretation is useful because it is the common perception in Botswana that anti-colonial nationalism emerged in the late 1950s in conjunction with Botswana's run-up to independence.¹⁹ While it is true that mass nationalism formed in Botswana around the national political parties in the late 1950s, the roots of anti-colonial nationalism were firmly established by the writings of Simon Ratshosa in the late 1920s and the progressives in the early 1930s.

Simon Ratshosa's biographer Parsons described him as an "accommodating protestor." Ratshosa championed a unified country ruled by a national intelligentsia, democratization of chiefly powers, and the liberation of individuals from the *merafe*.²⁰ Instead of anti-colonial nationalism, Ratshosa and the progressives advocated for altering the balance of power in indirect rule by diffusing power away from the *dikgosi* and into the hands of educated Africans. Thus, they developed discourses, such as "individual liberty," "protection," and "British justice" as part of a political strategy to emphasize the urgency for political reforms.

¹⁸ Barry Morton, "Moana R. Segolodi and the Slow March of Nationalism in Botswana," paper presented at the African Studies Association, San Diego, November 19, 2015, Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/18338440/Moana_R_Segolodi_and_the_Slow_March_of_Nationalism_in_Botswana; Neil Parsons, "Shots for a Black Republic?: Simon Ratshosa and Botswana Nationalism," *African Affairs: The Journal of the Royal African Society*, 73, 293 (1974): 449-458.

¹⁹ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), chapter thirteen; Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: Macmillan Botswana, 1984), chapter twenty-four.

²⁰ Neil Parsons, "Shots for a Black Republic?", 450.

Motsete based his understanding of British protection in the Bechuanaland Protectorate around imperial *Pax Britannica*, the idea that the British had provided peace and security in exchange for taxation and imperial rule. Motsete accepted the historical narrative that British protection was established based on the agreement that Africans under protection had become British subjects and were obligated to the British crown. This meant that in exchange for taxes and British rule, the British would secure the Bechuanaland Protectorate from European colonial invaders. Therefore, Motsete took the idea of *Pax Britannica* to mean that under protection, commoners were obligated to work to pay taxes.²¹

Motsete considered work in the colonial economy as an advantageous means for African socio-economic advancement because it “widened their horizons.”²² Africans returned from work with “a new independence of individual character.”²³ Meaning, work fostered individual independence and disconnected individuals from dependence upon and obligation to the *merafe*. Motsete argued that although work maybe a benefit to the community, it was thwarted by adherents to the *merafe* who opposed independent thinking and acting.²⁴ By employing liberal discursive tropes, such as “trust” and “cooperation,” Motsete made the argument that working for wages “built confidence” in commoners and converted them from adherents of the *merafe* to “useful and loyal allies” of the progressives and the British administration.²⁵ Motsete sustained his notion that African socio-economic advancement aligned with the liberal principles of individual liberty and multi-racial

²¹ K.T. Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” 8.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

cooperation. He regarded work as mutually beneficial to Africans and Europeans, and British protection as peace, unity, and security under the British crown.

Moanaphuti Segolodi, a signer of the progressives' petition, used the notion of peace, unity, and security under imperial *Pax Britannica* as the basis for promoting legal reforms designed to protect individual rights. Segolodi came from a family of early adopters of European culture. He dressed in European clothing, ate European cuisine, went to church, and spoke English at home. He was a political insider who held positions serving the BaTswana Chiefs. He was well versed in Tswana politics and adapting customary law to indirect rule.²⁶ Segolodi considered extending British law as a potential means to “constitute the sacredness of a perfect and just peace,” remedy ethnic and class tensions, and strengthen the Tswana *morafe* (polity).²⁷

Segolodi began agitating for European-style legal reforms after his brother was found guilty of corruption while working in *kgosi* Mathiba's administration in 1924.²⁸ Segolodi's legal discourse foreshadowed the discourse he employed a few years later in the progressives' petition. He referred to “the painful oppression” of “depriving a citizen in the British Empire the right to access the court of law.”²⁹ He pleaded with the High Commissioner,

The time is ripe and the battle for freedom of speech is everywhere in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, but there will be no peace while officials, with their narrow, selfish and prejudiced outlook and attitude, try to prevent a body of civilized native inhabitants from meeting in a properly legitimate and orderly manner to voice their grievances and to improve their conditions.³⁰

²⁶ Barry Morton, “Moana R. Segolodi.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*; BNARS, S.232/16, Moanaphuti Segolodi to the High Commissioner, September 19, 1931.

²⁹ BNARS, S. 232/16, Moanaphuti Segolodi to the High Commissioner, September 19, 1931.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

By 1927, he articulated his advocacy for legal protections for individuals, which would become more relevant in the 1930s as more Africans became wage earners and acquired wealth outside of the means generally overseen by the *merafe*. Segolodi promoted adopting European-style legal reforms to disconnect those who had obtained European-style education from the *merafe*. He wrote to a friend,

[We must be] relieved from oppressive rulers and be placed under [British] rule in view of our education... We are the children of the British Government and we are growing up to be like our father in laws. The Bechuanaland Protectorate is securely protected by the King. The government laws, which are against oppression, state that no one who is advanced should be hindered.³¹

Segolodi redeployed paternalistic rhetoric to promote the idea that it was the responsibility of the British Crown to protect those who wished to free themselves from their obligations to the *merafe*. Segolodi's plea to the British to extend protections for educated individuals was to a large degree motivated by his experience being relegated to the margins of the BaNgwato *morafe*.

By 1930, Segolodi became outwardly defiant against Tshekedi Khama and the BaNgwato adherents. In defense of his personal liberty, Segolodi refused to work on the Serowe dam with his regiment. After BaNgwato officials flogged him as a punishment, Segolodi organized a protest group of about twenty-five men, including Motsete, who called themselves "the progressive party," referred to here as the "progressives."³² The group delivered to British authorities a petition, referred to here as the "progressives' petition." in October 1930 (the focus of the following chapter). In it, they critiqued the system of regimental labor, corporal punishment, and what they deemed BaNgwato autocratic rule. In

³¹ Barry Morton, "Moana R. Segolodi."

³² *Ibid.*

the subsequent months, Motsete, the eight signers, and others publicly endorsed the progressives' critique.

Barry Morton deduced that progressives Simon Ratshosa and Moanaphuti Segolodi, did not intend to undermine the existing order. However, based on promoting British common law and emphasizing individual liberty as a means for relieving themselves of their obligations to the *merafe*, the progressives were “the progenitors of radical and dissenting politics” in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.³³ Morton's characterization of the progressives as radical insinuates the significant challenge European-style legal reforms and individual liberty presented for the *dikgosi*. However, it does not imply that the office of chieftaincy was fundamentally challenged. One could be argued that the progressives were revolutionaries and not reformists but it is the contention here that African intellectuals who fit the progressives' profile were reformist because they were loyal to the British Empire and to the idea that the *dikgosi* maintained a critical role in the system of indirect rule.

Simon Ratshosa touted Khama III's program to tighten bonds with the Empire and secure protection for the BaTswana as practical means of insurance and security. He implied it was still vital for the *dikgosi* to remain loyal to the British. Ratshosa challenged Africans who claimed that Khama III was overly accommodating to Europeans or a believer in their doctrine of supremacy.³⁴ Ratshosa juxtaposed Khama III's choice for protection against a list of African leaders who were killed by Europeans, and thus, touted the political savvy of the *kgosi*. He claimed that Khama III understood that protection was the only path which could lead the African people to “peace, progress, and prosperity,” and that the *kgosi* achieved “the

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Khama's Character.”

happiness of his country” through his practical “spirit of loyalty.”³⁵ According to Ratshosa, Khama III’s strength was in understanding and cooperation with British power. Loyalty to the British was not merely a preference but an imperative.

Ratshosa connected the discourse of “British justice, order, and good government” to Khama III’s so-called progressive reforms against alcohol, witchcraft, and dowry. This strengthened his contention that furthering Khama III’s European-style reforms would mitigate conflict and promote unity and peace among the BaNgwato.³⁶ Ratshosa blamed Tshekedi Khama’s policy of squashing dissenting voices for internal upheavals and claimed that the chief’s actions were autocratic, antithetical to the spirit of the 1895 protection agreement, and incompatible with the British imperial principles of “peace, order, and good government.”³⁷ This was a component of Ratshosa’s scheme to indicate that British intervention was urgently necessary to preserve the integrity of protection.

Ratshosa claimed that regimental labor and the Basarwa system of servitude were “repugnant” and in violation of High Commissioner Athlone’s 1927 proclamation against slavery and forced labor.³⁸ The legal “Repugnancy Clause” doctrine mandated that British courts would not enforce any African customary law contrary to natural justice, equity, and good conscience.³⁹ By using the word “repugnancy,” Ratshosa demonized the *dikgosi* and encouraged the British to intervene.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Chief’s Position as Chief: Progressive Native Aspects”

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Onyeka Igwe, “Repugnancy Test and Customary Criminal Law in Nigeria: A Time for Re-Assessing Content and Relevance” (November 20, 2014), SSRN home page, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2528497> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2528497>; E.A. Taiwo, “Repugnancy Clause and its Impact on Customary Law: Comparing the South African and Nigerian Positions - Some Lessons for Nigeria,” *Journal for Juridical Science*, 34,1 (2009).

Ratshosa framed the problem as the *merafe* forcing educated Africans to participate in regimental labor schemes even though educated Africans believed that their education meant that they were no longer obligated to do so.⁴⁰ He said, “Liberty must not be mistaken for disloyalty.” Ratshosa’s point was that even though the progressives sought to disconnect themselves from the BaNgwato *morafe*, they maintained the sympathy of commoners and were compelled to resist what they perceived as the autocracy of the *dikgosi*.⁴¹ For Ratshosa, reforming the system of regimental labor was not disobedience but an act of loyalty to the voiceless commoners subdued by the *merafe*.

Ratshosa, Motsete, and their colleagues referred to here as the progressives populated the new colonial categories of middle figures examined by Nancy Rose Hunt and others.⁴² Hunt sought to understand how Africans “differently translated and reshaped the opportunities that colonial medicine offered according to preexisting logic and emerging formulas of authority and prestige.”⁴³ She referred to subjects similar to the progressives in the Protectorate as “hybrid middle figures,” and deduced that they “performed, narrated and subverted” colonial designs.⁴⁴ This was reinforced by Hellen Tilley who suggested that as the colonial governments enlisted more middle figures, the façade of colonialism began to crumble.⁴⁵ This was the case in the Protectorate where the progressives became engaged critiques of imperial policy and education destabilized colonial power. Of course, circumstances were fluid in the lives of middle figures, who were often forced into what

⁴⁰ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, “Chief’s Ambition Put Under X Ray by the Writer.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

⁴⁵ Hellen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3.

Ronald Robinson called the “bargain of collaboration.”⁴⁶ The goal here is to follow the path set forth by the writers in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks* to highlight the critical social origins and cultural strategies of the progressives and highlight how they negotiated the bargain of colonialism.⁴⁷

From a class perspective, the progressives were aligned with commoners more than most historians have presumed. Education defined the group, not their material status. Peter Lim has correctly observed that historians overemphasized the category of the African elite in Southern Africa. There was actually very little empirical basis for an elite class. Minor capital accumulation was often temporary and many of these individuals died with modest estates or in poverty.⁴⁸ Limb challenged the historical propensity to categorize in terms of social strata and to claim that the African elite sought upward social mobility. He suggested there was actually little difference between the so called African “middle” and “working” classes and emphasized social continuity between those who obtained more or less education.⁴⁹ The working class was comprised of a significant section of the population, including, teachers, domestics, government employees, police officers, administrators, agricultural workers, and mine workers.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts. eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 26; Ronald Robinson, “Non-European foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration,” in Roger Owen and Robert B. Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972).

⁴⁷ Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks*.

⁴⁸ Peter Limb, *The ANC's Early Years: Nation, Class and Place in South Africa Before 1940* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010), 12.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 30

⁵⁰ BNARS, BNA KOMA, Kenneth Koma, *The Botswana National Front, Its Character and Tasks, Pamphlet no. 1, The Basic Document of the Botswana National Front* (Mahalapye, Botswana, Political Education Committee, [no date specified]): 21.

The category known as “educated Africans” was neither a stable nor a definitive group.⁵¹ As a teacher, Motsete fits into what Alan Cobley deemed the insecure lower stratum of the African petty bourgeoisie. According to Cobley, these individuals existed in a marginal position, “subject to constant interchanges of members with various [African] ‘underclasses.’”⁵² In the case of Botswana, there was little if any material differentiation between the progressives and commoners.

Motsete was a member of the occupational elite that included African doctors, senior clerks, teachers, ordained clergy and trained nurses. They existed in the context of socio-economic insecurity. Economically the benefit of skilled labor was a higher income. However, according to Alan Cobley, in Southern Africa the average wage for Africans, including teachers, was well below the poverty line.⁵³ Motsete’s story highlights the challenges African teachers faced as a result of poor salaries and limited employment opportunities.⁵⁴

Providing scant salaries was a means by which colonial governments suffocated African education. Teachers waged a persistent battle to standardize their salaries and secure better payrates. There are numerous places in the archive where Motsete is directly associated with debates related to salaries for teachers.⁵⁵ Teachers were paid far less in the Bechuanaland Protectorate than they were in South Africa. Education Department Inspector, H.J.E. Dumbrell cut teachers’ salaries 30 percent between 1933 and 1936 before declaring a

⁵¹ Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness: The Black Petty Bourgeoisie in South Africa, 1924 to 1950* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 3.

⁵² *Ibid.* 226.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁴ Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” 11; BNARS, S.103/9/1, *Handbook of Regulations and Instructions for the Guidance of Superintendents of Native Schools and Teachers*.

⁵⁵ BNARS, S.103/9/2 and S.99/1/3 and S.99/1/7, “Minutes of the Board of Advice on Native Education.”

six-year-long freeze on salaries in 1937.⁵⁶ Poor salaries and economic insecurity forced Motsete to chase teaching jobs in half a dozen African countries in the 1940s.⁵⁷

The first national salary scale for African teachers in South Africa was established by the South African Native Affairs Commission in 1928. It sought to raise the standard of living for teachers by ensuring that schools require higher qualifications and offer longer periods of service.⁵⁸ In the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the Board of Advice on Native Education was established in 1930 to set a uniform scale for teacher's salaries. By January 1931, the government brought all African schools in the Protectorate under the control of tribal committees and standardized salaries.⁵⁹ In 1931, African teachers earned from £18- 72 annually depending on their level of education.⁶⁰ In 1937, Motsete earned £200 per year. This was lower than what someone with his qualifications made in South Africa and only £20 more per year than what highly qualified African teachers earned in the Protectorate.⁶¹ African teachers enjoyed a higher than average income, but even if they received twice the average wage, they would not have been able to support a lifestyle on a par with most unskilled European workers. In strictly economic terms, the African population was poor. The differentiation was between levels of poverty.⁶²

In, *The Black Problem*, Jabavu described the difficulties African teachers faced trying to make both ends meet,

We have adopted European habits, our wants have increased, we believe that the satisfying of those wants is a step in our evolution towards a better

⁵⁶ BNARS, DCS.29/12 and S.99/1/5, Department of Education, "Pula Memorandum on Education, 1937"

⁵⁷ BNARS, S.243/19.

⁵⁸ Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, 45.

⁵⁹ BNARS, S.294/10, Dumbrell, Inspector of Education, "Memorandum on Educational Position in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Prepared for the Economic and Financial Commission, 1932," October 19, 1932.

⁶⁰ BNARS S.343/13, "Report of the Inspector of Education for the Year 1931."

⁶¹ BNARS, S.243/18, Dumbrell, "School Report, Tati Training Institute, Visited on November 2, 1937."

⁶² Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, 49.

and fuller life, and yet they give many of us wages less than those given to many uncivilized natives in larger towns.⁶³

Jabavu strategically employed the civilized / uncivilized paradigm to appeal to paternalists who controlled pay scales for African teachers.

Paternalistic liberals frequently blamed African individuals for systemic problems. They did this by accusing Africans of being indifferent, lazy, or intoxicated.⁶⁴ In reality, African teachers faced formidable challenges. On a meager salary, they were tasked with maintaining a middle-class status, acting as authority figures in the communities where they worked, and avoiding social isolation. A teachers' standard of living had important implications on their relations with the community and with each other. They were dependent on the state for wages, so it was their duty to uphold the legitimacy of the state. At the same time, the state limited their opportunities for economic and social mobility and marginalized their personal prestige and authority through meager pay and poor living conditions.⁶⁵

In 1937, after dedicating seven years to developing education for the benefit of the country, Motsete protested his £200 annual salary. He told Dumbrell that he had a family to support, "a standard to maintain," and "obligations to Bechuanaland and the world in keeping with [his] station in life."⁶⁶ Frustrated, Motsete attacked Dumbrell for belittling him personally, and claimed that his salary was the result of "racialism" and personal prejudice.⁶⁷

⁶³ Davidson D.T. Jabavu, *The Black Problem: Papers and Addresses on Various Native Problems* (Lovedale: Book Dept., Lovedale Institution Press, 1920), 76.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 69

⁶⁵ Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, 46.

⁶⁶ BNARS, S.243/19, "A Comment on the Report of the Director of Education on the Tati Training Institute," December 14, 1937.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

In 1934, Motsete addressed his financial insecurity in correspondence with Dumbrell and Rey. He told them that when Kalanga parents were unable to obtain cash at local stores for grain and livestock, he was unable to draw a salary for his work at the Tati Training Institute. He requested that the government pay him a government salary for the work he was doing “for the country.”⁶⁸ Motsete told Dumbrell and Rey that when he was single, he could make personal sacrifices that he could not condone with his responsibilities as a married man. He added, “The quality of my family life is now to be the measure of success or failure in the pursuance of my altruistic ordeals, and money is a very potent factor in family matters.”⁶⁹ Motsete’s financial arrangement made it a struggle to balance his altruistic dedication to developing education for Kalanga communities and his country with his own meager social and personal aspirations.

Shula Marks referred to those socio-economically similar to Motsete as “structurally ambiguous” because they moved between the porous categories of the middle and working classes.⁷⁰ Even when they made efforts to identify upwards socially, they were subject to the same structural inequality as commoners.⁷¹ Social insecurity resulted in greater awareness of the structural problems of discrimination and racism. Educated Africans were elite in the sense that they possessed European-style education and certain advantages and prestige not available to others. However, materially, many were comparable to the vast majority of people who populated the categories of African working class and commoners.

⁶⁸ BNARS, S.243/13, Motsete to Dumbrell, “The Tati Training Institute,” January 31, 1934.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

⁷¹ Alan Gregor Copley, *Class and Consciousness*, 11.

In many cases, Educated Africans depended on their association with Europe and the colonial order. Nonetheless, they also relied on their ability to connect with African communities. Zachernuk wrote, “Without African interests to speak for ... without an ‘Africa’ to change, the educated community was without a purpose.”⁷² Their medial position, based more on their social or educational distinction than on their material wealth, was the basis by which they claimed to be more apt than the African ruling class to understand and define African progress. Their value to colonial officials required them to maintain their association with the population. However, as a means to maintain authority and their status as leaders, educated Africans also depended on treatment that distinguished them from the uneducated population.

In the minds of many of those who had no access to education, educated people were models for successful adaptation to colonialism. The uneducated looked to the educated to learn what Cobley referred to as their “secular secrets of survival.”⁷³ Some were invested with authority as leaders in the communities in which they lived. Nonetheless, there were gaping discrepancies between what educated Africans were taught about European social conventions and values and what they actually experienced. Leo Kuper argued that educated Africans were torn between two conflicting senses of status. One was based on the merit of individuals and the other on their racial identity.⁷⁴ Educated Africans “were pressed into a position of acute sociological marginality by their aspirations and their orientation towards individual success in a racially divided society which put an artificial ceiling on their

⁷² Philip Serge Zachernuk, *Intellectual Life in a Colonial Context: The Nigerian Intelligentsia, 1860-1960* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1991), 6.

⁷³ Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, 64.

⁷⁴ Leo Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class, and Politics in South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), ix.

achievements.”⁷⁵ In many cases, the most highly educated Africans were the most articulate protestors of oppression of Africans, in part because despite their education, which frequently made them not just equal to but superior to Europeans, they experienced ubiquitous systemic racism.⁷⁶

African educators like Motsete faced an attack on education by colonial officials who understood it to be the primary avenue for social mobility.⁷⁷ Herbert S. Keigwin led the strategy to undermine education in Southern Rhodesia and prevent the foundation of an African middle class. Godfrey Huggins, who became the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in 1933, stated that the Europeans came to Southern Rhodesia for commerce, not to uplift Africans. Even his sympathetic biographers affirmed that he “dreaded the idea of producing [an African] *babus* who could not find jobs but would read or write revolutionary pamphlets instead.”⁷⁸ The Native Affairs Department in Southern Rhodesia (est. 1923) was charged with forestalling further political rebellion by reconciling Africans to their status in the colonial order as “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” Rhodesian settlers and colonial officials diametrically opposed African social mobility and regarded an African middle class as the enemy of colonialism.⁷⁹

Dumbrell endorsed the Southern Rhodesian officials’ position in 1930. He considered that education in its current form, “prepared pupils at schools for participation in an economic and social life from which they are for the most part barred.”⁸⁰ Dumbrell assumed

⁷⁵ Alan Gregor Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, 7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 13.

⁷⁸ L.H. Gann and Michael Gelfand. *Huggins of Rhodesia: The Man and His Country* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 135, cited in West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 17.

⁷⁹ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 2.

⁸⁰ BNARS, S.148/4, Dumbrell, “Memorandum on Proposals for the Development and Organization of Educational Work in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.”

that land related pressures would result in an increasing number of impoverished communities. Africans would respond by seeking academic education to mitigate the poverty, but the lack of employment opportunities would produce political malcontents.⁸¹

Despite the colonial attack on education, the foremost vehicle for social mobility, Michael O. West argued that the African middle class in Southern Rhodesia was “held together by a unity of purpose: its members had interests, aspirations and ideas that set them apart from other social classes, and they were conscious of these differences.”⁸² Well invested in the colonial system and convinced that they were indispensable contributors, educated Africans did not take a radical stance against colonial rule. As socially elite Africans legitimized by their education, they sought to bolster Africans’ access to European-style education. They considered education a means to overcome the structural barriers that impeded their aspirations for individual and collective social class mobility.⁸³

For the most part, through the 1920s and 1930s, the political activity of those Africans who obtained European-style education remained within the 19th century pattern. They claimed a right to participate in the affairs of the state based on their education and held that racial differences demanded a uniquely African leadership capable of understanding Africans’ problems and determining a favorable path forward. In other words, they considered themselves able to oppose the political oppression exacted by colonialism and formulate social and economic policies for improving African societies.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Masilela invented a category he termed the “new African intellectuals.”⁸⁴ He referred to them as “new” because they conceptualized the African future in terms of African history, African leadership, and self-determination. They encouraged immediate African leadership in all areas where it was necessary to amalgamate African and European customs. Peter Limb described members of the African National Congress, similar to Masilela’s new African intellectuals, as having “a shared sense of British identity, respect for ‘British justice’ and cultural sharing.”⁸⁵ The prevalent use of English was one thing that defined the new African intellectuals. Even so, African intellectuals’ invoking of British values, redeploing liberal frameworks, or using English did not take place without ambiguity and subversive sub-text.⁸⁶ They may have identified as liberal or adopted the discourses and language of the colonizer, but they did so critically.

Pixley Seme evoked the basic ideological framework of the new African intellectual movement. In his 1906 speech, “The Regeneration of Africa,” Seme argued that it was a historical necessity to bring about an African future “whose central nature would be liberation and decolonization by challenging, contesting, and decentralizing” colonialism and the dogma of European supremacy and segregation.⁸⁷ The new African intellectuals understood European-style education as the gateway through which Africans learned how to use European and African culture in the colonial or imperial context.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement in South Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2013), “The Transmission Lines of the New African Movement.”

⁸⁵ Peter Limb, *The ANC's Early Years*, 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Ntongela Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014), 2; Pixley Seme, “The Regeneration of Africa,” speech, April 5, 1906, South Africa History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/regeneration-africa-speech-pixley-seme-5-april-1906>.

⁸⁸ Ntongela Masilela, *Historical Figures of the New African Movement*, 2.

South African S.V.H. Mdluli argued that European-style education was an instrument for showing Africans,

The difference between their earlier life and the present one. It reveals to him all of the pitfalls and shortcomings of his old life and at the same time acted as a pointer on the road of his future life. Secondly, it enables him to find himself a place in this world of rapid changes. It taught him what to do in order to not be left alone in this battlefield of life.⁸⁹

As Mdluli articulated, the majority of the new African intellectuals favored European-style education because they deemed it the most potent response to the colonial imposition and as the engine for African socio-economic advancement.⁹⁰ For the new African intellectuals and the Bechuanaland Protectorate progressives, European-style education and English were the best way to promote African self-determination and as the foundation for the African renaissance.

The English Language and Cyclical Civilizations

Motsete and his colleagues encouraged proficiency in the English language. They considered English the basis for European-style education the archway through which Africans had to pass before being capable of hybridizing European and African culture. In 1903, Isaiah Bud M'Belle inaugurated the idea that English was the vehicle for critical expression of the educated Africans comparable to Masilela's new African intellectuals.⁹¹ Although the 1930s marked the heated Dhlomo-Vilakazi dispute over the use of African or

⁸⁹ S.V.H. Mdluli, *The Development of the African* (Pretoria: State Library, 1931), 45.

⁹⁰ Ntongela Masilela, *Historical Figures of the New African Movement*, 2.

⁹¹ Bud M'Belle, *Kafir Scholar's Companion* (South Africa: Lovedale Missionary Press, 1903); Ntongela Masilela, *The Cultural Modernity of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World, 2007): xi.

European languages in Africa, the vast majority of educated Africans who obtained Western education preferred English.⁹²

Educated Africans preferred English because it was a potential mechanism to unite different African ethnic and linguistic groups.⁹³ Proficiency in English was necessary to incorporate advanced forms of European culture, literature, and academic subjects like science. Educated Africans hoped that English would become the lingua franca of the nationalist and Pan-African political movements.⁹⁴ English and European-style education were the core of educated Africans' sense of unity of purpose and the basis for their unity of action as they sought to create an intellectual awakening among the African people.

Motsete delivered a paper titled, "The Cultural and economic Importance of European Languages in Native Education," at the New Education Fellowship's South African Educational Conference in 1934.⁹⁵ He contended that there were educational, political, and economic benefits to teaching English in schools. European economic and political dominance demanded that Africans understood the language of their employers and their government. Motsete considered English a global *lingua franca* (a medium for communication) and a means to promote knowledge and cooperation between Africans. African languages lacked sufficient textbooks, literature, and scientific and technical jargon. Motsete argued that English provided the "open sesame" to all higher education, facilitated

⁹² David Attwell, "Modernizing Tradition/Traditionalizing Modernity: Reflections on the Dhlomo-Vilakazi Dispute," *Research in African Literatures*, 33 (2002): 94-119; Ntongela Masilela, *The Cultural Modernity of H.I.E. Dhlomo*, 76.

⁹³ Ntongela Masilela, "New Negro Modernity," 10, Pitzer College website, New African Movement, <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/NAM/>. pzacad.pitzer.edu/NAM/general/modernity.pdf

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ E. G. Malherbe, *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society: Report of the South African Education Conference Held in Capetown and Johannesburg in July 1934, Under the Auspices of the New Education Fellowship* (Capetown: Juta & Co, 1934): 479; G.W. Sneesby, "New Education Fellowship at Johannesburg," *Tiger kloof Magazine*, 16 (December 1934).

professional careers, and was the preferred language in commerce. Since Europeans were the prime employers of Africans, knowledge of English was beneficial in the workplace.

Africans who spoke English had an advantage in garnering promotions and higher wages.⁹⁶

Motsete advocated English, not because it meant accepting European superiority, but because English was the most effective way to facilitate education, professional development and forms of socio-economic advancement.

Motsete argued that the writers of the classical period looked down upon English and the languages that belonged to peoples whom they deemed subjugated and uncivilized. He suggested that it was this same logic that caused Europeans in the 20th century to regard African languages as inferior. Motsete considered the use of English in Africa as a component of the emerging African revival. Motsete encouraged the African revival by suggesting that although Europeans were once considered inferior, they eventually “made wonderful scientific and artistic progress and built world-wide empires.”⁹⁷

Motsete employed the idea of cyclical civilizations to further emphasize why African educators should prioritize English. He deduced that what some people claimed to be European culture and civilization was not actually of European origin. At the New Education Fellowship conference, Motsete asserted publicly that the European nations stood “in an apostolic succession as recipients and transmitters of [global] culture.”⁹⁸ Motsete may have been alluding to German philosopher Oswald Spengler’s well-known work published in 1926. Spengler contended that all cultures followed a cyclical pattern of rise and fall. This meant that European culture had a certain lifespan and challenged the notion that European

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

culture would invariably evolve.⁹⁹ Based on the idea of cyclical civilizations, Motsete suggested that even if Africans adopted English, eventually European empires would be displaced by a successor.

For educated Africans, the cyclical civilizations subtext is a critical component of why adopting English in Africa was the basis for a cultural revival. Dhlomo, who advocated the use of English, encouraged Africans to realize what he referred to as “the call of Africa” or the march towards the continent’s Golden Age.¹⁰⁰ In a series of articles written in the 1920s by Henry Msimang, founding member of the African National Congress, he endorsed modernity as “a hybrid civilization” of the “New Age.” Educated Africans sought to infuse European elements into what they deemed unproductive African traditions to transform them into something useful for Africa’s future.¹⁰¹ From the perspective of optimistic educated Africans, the use of English and European civilization promised to usher in a prosperous African future.

Motsete asserted that just as Europeans remained English or German despite the influence of the ancient Greek or Roman empires, Africans would remain culturally Africa after contact with Europe. Motsete’s argument was based on the idea that just as Latin and Greek were influential globally, the soul of a language could out-live the nation that used that language and remain an influence on the thought of future generations of other nations and races. Motsete contended that English was not the sole property of the British or of Europe. Instead, it was a common possession of humanity and was subject to the course of global

⁹⁹ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West: Perspectives of World-History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922).

¹⁰⁰ Ntongela Masilela, *Cultural Modernity of H.I.E. Dhlomo*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Ntongela Masilela, *New Negro Modernity*, 12.

civilization.¹⁰² Motsete considered European-style education from the same vantage. He argued that European-style education was not British. European-style education and global civilization were a “composite product of mankind,” and the “legacy of humanity as a whole ... which the [African] too rightly claims as his birthright.”¹⁰³ Motsete’s point was that no section of mankind had a monopoly on civilization, a language or a type of education.

By employing the theory of cyclical civilizations, educated Africans challenged European claims to supremacy substantiated by the notion that European civilization would perpetually advance. Intertwined were the theory of cyclical civilizations, adopting English in Africa, and the future potentialities of an African Golden Age. This buttresses the fundamental argument here that educated Africans did not acquiescence to colonialism or the dogma of European supremacy. Rather, they attained knowledge that they believed could facilitate overcoming the oppression of colonialism.¹⁰⁴ Educated Africans were themselves agents of history who actualized their own historical conceptualizations informed by the histories of their own and other societies and cultures.¹⁰⁵

Another aspect of educated Africans’ search for knowledge to overcome colonialism and racism was the idea that African societies experienced colonialism as a great historical defeat. From that vantage, it was a logical response to re-appropriate the technologies of colonialism which they believed enabled Europeans to triumph: European-style education, Christianity, and other aspects of European culture.¹⁰⁶ By the 1930s, educated Africans

¹⁰² E.G. Malherbe, *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society*, 479.

¹⁰³ Willoughby DA49/1/2/334 (F383), K.T. Motsete, “The Life of a Bantu Student in England,” *Tiger Kloof Magazine*, 13 (December 1931).

¹⁰⁴ Selby Msimang, “Bantu Destiny”, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, July 18, 1927, in Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement in South Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2013), introduction.

¹⁰⁵ Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ntongela Masilela, “The ‘Black Atlantic’ and African Modernity in South Africa,” *Research in African Literatures*, 27,4 (1996): 88-96.

avidly emphasized European languages and European-style education as a potent instrument for responding to colonialism. Z.K. Matthews wrote in his autobiography, “Education was the weapon with which the white man had conquered our people and taken our lands... The real reason for our defeat was the white man’s education and the black man’s lack of it.”¹⁰⁷ While this perspective is oversimplified because it obscures other technologies of colonialism, it shows that those who obtained European-style education emphasized it as the vital component in their strategy to master colonial technology, regain strength, and face European colonialism on its own terms.

Nevertheless, attempting to deploy European languages and European-style education in the fight against colonialism did not mean that educated Africans wanted to be European. As Sol Plaatje’s 1903 address “The Education of Children” shows, acquiring European-style education did not imply becoming European. Plaatje announced,

Truly, we do not send our children to school so they will shun their cultures and traditions and be westernized. European people teach their children to preserve their customs and values.... Botswana, my people, we are lost. We are a community of slaves and imitators without a backbone or a grounding in our own cultural heritage. Can we really be anything in the world if we do not know our own identity.¹⁰⁸

As Plaatje insisted, European-style education and English were not a means to produce mimicry or assimilation, but the instrument educated Africans depended on for re-engaging with African cultures.

Z.K. Mathews met with Tshekedi Khama in Serowe in 1937 and although touting his high level of education and claiming to feel “more European than most Europeans,” Mathews

¹⁰⁷ Z.K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People: The Autobiography of Z.K. Matthews, Southern Africa 1901 to 1968* (London: R. Collings, 1981), 14.

¹⁰⁸ S.M. Molema, D. S. Matjila, and Karen Haire. *Lover of his People: A Biography of Sol Plaatje* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 104.

argued that there was no turning the clock back to the time prior to Europe's defeat of Africa. Africans had to look forward and that meant embracing African culture and the African past. Matthews insisted, "The values of kinship, love of the land and sense of family, are not values strange to the white man. He cherishes them for himself, but he has never respected our right to cherish them too. In whatever life we build for ourselves, they will have their place."¹⁰⁹ Educated Africans confronted colonialism by developing ways to conscientiously mitigate its adverse consequences and responded to it by employing African traditions. They had to understand African identities and the issues surrounding Africa's future in order to accomplish the preeminent task of re-appropriating elements of European or other cultures for African progress.¹¹⁰ In other words, as Falola aptly stated, educated Africans "invested in the idea of progress and positioned themselves as agents of the transformation but they remained concerned with how the past could be preserved, used to define the African self, and serve as an agency of development."¹¹¹

Conceptualizations of African progress were rooted in historiographical interpretations. Educated Africans delved into the past to address present challenges. Peterson wrote, "it was precisely by cobbling together the old and the new that the elites reconceptualized the idea of tradition and their social marginality... Certain forms of modernization are not only compatible with but tend to reinforce traditional forms."¹¹² This was the case in the first decades of the 20th century.

¹⁰⁹ Z.K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 16.

¹¹⁰ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001), xviii.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries & African Intellectuals: African Theater and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press Inc, 2000), 191.

Alan Kirkland Soga published two articles in *Izwi Labantu* in 1901, which initiated the trend of Africans promoting new ideas without rejecting traditional societies.¹¹³ Educated Africans followed Soga by interpreting African history and culture based on its significance to the contemporary moment. Historiographical conceptualizations of Africa and its future were not paradoxical. Educated Africans broke down the false binary of African tradition and modernity and thought in terms of Africa's perpetual advancement, or what they and others of the era called African "progress." From this vantage, Africa's future and traditions co-existed in the same temporality and never in dialectical contrast.

The Fight Against Racism:

Commoners, the Talented Tenth, and Individual Liberty

The ubiquitous need to engage with African culture and history compelled those who had obtained European-style education to remain oriented with African communities. They were not culturally alienated from other Africans or uncritical consumers of European culture and Christianity. Instead, African forces had a profound ongoing influence on educated Africans. Cultural or class alienation does not serve to explain the dynamic process of hybridity and cultural mixing that defined educated Africans. For this reason, they considered themselves more adept at representing commoners than the African ruling class. They criticized the African ruling class for its inability to discern the challenges of the contemporary moment, and for being politically handcuffed and unable to set a meaningful course for the future.

¹¹³ Ntongela Masilela, *An Outline of the New African Movement*, 29.

sThe most significant thing binding educated Africans to commoners was their unity of purpose in the fight against racism and settler colonialism. Motsete regarded Africans who had obtained education in Europe or the United States as leaders, people who held positions of responsibility and honor among Africans. This was because gaining a high level of education was in itself a direct rebuke of the dogma of European supremacy.¹¹⁴ Motsete argued that Africans who went abroad were educated as full-fledged imperial citizens, socially equal to all others. Whereas in Southern Africa, Africans were educated as inferior “natives” and not exposed to the best of global civilization.¹¹⁵ His point was that Africans were educated in Europe or the United States to see themselves as equal to Europeans, so they had mitigated the internal psychology of racism. He referred to African who study in Europe or the United States as having “bearded the lion in his lair.”¹¹⁶ This meant that they were leaders who embodied a rebuke of the dogma of European supremacy and encouraged other Africans to follow their example.

Although educated Africans were aligned with commoners in the fight against racism, their high level of education set them apart and posed its own set of challenges. Motsete pointed out that Africans who obtained European-style education were often misunderstood by Africans who lived “strictly under tribal conditions,” and by some white people who held them in contempt because they deemed them “spoiled detribalized natives.”¹¹⁷ Motsete’s intention was to show that he accepted his disposition and also the responsibility to contest class and racial conflicts, whether they manifest as African or European. He contended that

¹¹⁴ Willoughby DA49/1/2/334 (F383), K.T. Motsete, “The Life of a Bantu Student in England,” *Tiger Kloof Magazine*, 13 (December 1931).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

educated Africans were proof that Africans could attain the highest moral and cultural positions in African or European society.

Motsete modeled himself based on a variant of Du Bois's concept of the talented tenth.¹¹⁸ African life was changing rapidly, and one consequence was the heightened emphasis on individualism. By instituting the political salience of individual rights, Motsete and the progressives encouraged colonial societies to acknowledge their social claims. They defended the elitist predisposition of the concept of the talented tenth as a means to promote themselves as examples of the advantage of a social order void of race, color, and class inequality. Motsete and the progressives were the symbolic inspirational role models for recognizing individual merit and ability and accepted the same historical mission as Du Bois's talented tenth, the redemption of the race by its exceptional men.

Motsete and the progressives' ideological basis was produced by and reliant upon the Cape liberal political tradition that they engaged with while attending mission schools. The Cape liberal political position was reinforced by mid-nineteenth-century Victorian liberalism, Christianity, and aspects of the Black struggle in America. Like Du Bois's talented tenth, it was based on the salience of individual rights for a select few and the notion that this class would serve as models for the benefits of European-style education. Comparable to Du Bois's talented tenth, Motsete and the progressives considered themselves emancipated from their previous lives. As citizens of the British Empire, they advocated for rights and protections, equal opportunity in the economy, and the gradual expansion of qualified and responsible individuals to full participation in the rights of citizenship.

¹¹⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of To-day* (New York, 1903).

Peter Walsh deduced that in South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s, educated Africans implemented a constitutional struggle based on extending the civil liberties already enjoyed by Europeans. This was based on conceding to the idea that the settler population was permanent. A constitutional struggle was the most potent reaction to the emerging segregation policies of the South African state. The Bechuanaland Protectorate progressives responded in the same way. They accepted some form of permanent imperial rule, while seeking equal opportunity for all Africans. They did not regard freedom as national independence, the African franchise, or a social or political revolution. They defined it as individual liberty, recognition of individual achievement, and the space for non-European contributions to the multi-racial society.¹¹⁹

In a letter to South African liberal Margaret Ballinger, Motsete referenced British liberal political theorists Leonard Hobhouse as he attacked the *dikgosi* for denying Africans individual liberty. Motsete quoted Hobhouse, “Despotism lays down that one man is divinely appointed to determine what is best for all others, and there with transmits arbitrary power into righteous authority and slavish subjugation into loyal service.”¹²⁰ By situating the *dikgosi* as sovereign monarchs under the auspices of God, he chastised the relationship between the *dikgosi* and the commoners as outdated and unproductive in a secular state. To underline his point that the *dikgosi* were autocratic, Motsete compared the *dikgosi* to Shaka Zulu and evoked images of African tyranny emblematic of the bygone Dark Continent.¹²¹ Carolyn Hamilton showed that among Africans and Europeans, the key aspects of the

¹¹⁹ Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 12.

¹²⁰ BNARS, S.96/7, “K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930; Margaret L Hodgson (Mrs. Ballinger) Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, (Ballinger), Ballinger, A3.1.17 “Notes Supplied by the Reverend Motseti” and A3.1.18, “K.T. Motsete to Margaret Ballinger, September 10, 1930.”

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

historical processes that created the historical symbol of Shaka had taken shape by the 1920s. By the time Motsete invoked Shaka, the Zulu King was already a powerful historical and political metaphor.¹²²

According to the progressives, chiefly despotism was possible only under the cover of the British administration's *laissez-fair* policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Motsete deduced that individual liberty was inevitable, that it evolved in every society. Speaking about the British, he declared,

They will have to learn one day the lesson from the philosophy of history, that no king, chief or government has attempted to suppress the liberty of individuals without sooner or later realizing that it is explosive and may seriously damage, if not totally wreck, the whole social and political fabric. It is not revolution we want but evolution in our social systems.¹²³

Motsete used this warning to encourage British liberals and government officials to secure rights and protections for individuals. The discourse of chiefly “autocracy” and “despotism” were one angle that the progressives took to delegitimize the *dikgosi*. It contained the compelling critique that indirect rule was buttressed by unconscionable British policy and placed serious doubts on the notion that the British administration promoted British justice and good government. Motsete placed doubt on the fundamental validity of British rule by employing the “evolution / revolution” discourse to suggest that paternalism and social evolutionary theory were justifiable only if they resulted in sufficient African socio-economic advancement.

The pursuit of individual liberty was so significant for the progressives that reformer Simon Ratshosa referred to it as a “rebellion.” This language drew the attention of British

¹²² Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹²³ *Ibid.*

officials, constantly attune to disorder and political uprisings, and captivated the British psyche. Ratshosa's suggestion was that "rebellion" in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was simply Africans demanding rights and justice in accordance with British tradition. Ratshosa depicted Bechuana society as distinctly divided between those who supported the antiquated system of chiefly autocracy and "discontent progressives" agitating for individual freedoms.¹²⁴ Based on the discourse of "justice" and "freedom," he appealed to the British to reform the system of protection and indirect rule.¹²⁵ For Ratshosa and the progressives, the measure of durability of the system of protection was its capacity to negotiate a balance between maintaining the government's authority and accommodating individual liberty. This was especially evident in the challenge the British faced to accommodate the reforms set forth by educated Africans, or those they deemed "civilized," and enforce the boundaries of individual liberty in place to maintain British authority.

By promoting individual liberties, the progressives also promoted rights for ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities, such as the BaKalanga and the Banyai, governed by the *dikgosi* but outside of the *merafe*, had little to no political power or means for venting their grievances to the British administration. This is one reason why a natural partnership emerged between the progressives and ethnic minority leaders, such as John Nswazwi of the BaKalanga.¹²⁶ Politically and ideologically aligned, they inspired each other and when possible, partnered in their pursuit to free themselves from the *merafe* and the confines of indirect rule.

¹²⁴ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, "My Vision and Destiny."

¹²⁵ BNARS S.11/5, Ratshosa, Simon, "A Prisoner's Plea to the Government," April 1927.

¹²⁶ Dingaan Mapondo Mulale, "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977), 23.

Kalanga Chief John Nswazwi led a resistance movement against BaNgwato rule beginning in 1926. Conflict emanated from increased land competition between BaNgwato cattle holders and BaKalanga farmers and the extending of BaNgwato administrative control from Serowe. The BaKalanga resisted BaNgwato-mandated communal labor and taxation. As communities on the periphery of BaNgwato rule, they demanded European-style education, full recognition of the TjiKalanga language, and a significant degree of self-determination. An inquiry by the British in 1932 resulted in Nswazwi dropping his demands for autonomy but tensions remained through the middle 1940s when Tshekedi Khama banished Nswazwi and the majority of his people to Southern Rhodesia.¹²⁷

Motsete backed John Nswazwi's position. He considered Tshekedi Khama's treatment of the BaKalanga immoral and presented the case to the British administration as if Nswazwi was irrefutably asking for simple justice.¹²⁸ Motsete employed the Nswazwi affair to gauge if Resident Commissioner Rey's new government would blindly support the *dikgosi* and attacked the British administration for not taking advantage of the opportunity to assert their authority. Motsete professed,

I humbly beg to suggest to the Government that a firm but gracious hand will do much for its own prestige in the eyes of the native Chiefs, and a sympathetic hearing of the complaints of any oppressed section of the people, it made by lawful and peaceful means, will make us all feel the reality of British protection for all.¹²⁹

Motsete sought the British administration's sympathy in the Nswazwi affair as an assertion that individual liberty, and therefore minority rights, would be prioritized in Rey's

¹²⁷ Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgadla. *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 223.

¹²⁸ BNARS, S.96/7, "K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930," "Kgosieman (Teacher at Nswazwi's Village) to the Government Secretary, Mafeking," April 1, 1930.

¹²⁹ BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930.

interpretation of protection. But the British authorities' ineptitude in the Nswazwi affair exhibited the ambiguity of the system of indirect rule and the difficulties the progressives faced in the struggle for individual liberty and minority rights.

The degree of influence the progressives maintained hinged on their ability to partner with and solve problems for African communities. Since European-style education justified the status of the class of Africans akin to the talented tenth, and it was the primary mechanism for empowering commoners. Educated Africans focused on encouraging access to education. A good number of educated Africans became educators as a means to meet their historical responsibility as leaders and social reformers. Motsete expressed his feelings of responsibility for the BaKalanga. He sacrificed material prosperity and weathered harsh conditions for their benefit. For instance, Motsete endured a bout with malaria and other illness that affected a number of his students at the Tati Training Institute in 1932.¹³⁰ He referred to himself as a "pioneer" who "had to sacrifice a great deal" for the interests of the school, the people, the government, and the country.¹³¹ Since there were few jobs for educated Africans, teaching was frequently the only way they could fulfill their aspirations to serve the African people. According to Z.K. Matthews, teaching was not just an occupation but a calling. By passing on what had been given to him, Matthews sought to "help make a wider way of the narrow path" or help satisfy the great African hunger for education and lift up as many commoners as possible.¹³²

¹³⁰ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, "I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection"; BNARS, S.243/13, K.T. Motsete, "Bakalanga Central School [later renamed The Tati Training Institute], Report for April 1932" and K.T. Motsete to Dumbrell, "The Bakalanga Central School," May 11, 1932; BNARS, S.243/14, "Report by the Principal Medical Officer on the Tati Training Institute, June 24, 1933."

¹³¹ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Magistrate Francistown, "Bakalanga Central School," May 11, 1932.

¹³² Z.K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 82.

Motsete was a member of the youth movement which appreciated its potential to effect social and political reforms. According to Zachernuk, the youth movement in Nigeria composed of educated West Africans, was built on contrasts as much as substance, new against old, action against inaction.¹³³ Young Africans were prepared to serve as advocates not because of race, class, or religious affiliation, but because their European-style education prepared them to serve as contemporary intellectuals in the ways chiefs and the older generation of African leaders could not.¹³⁴

In 1930, shortly after returning to Africa, Motsete told Rey, “I feel [education] is at present the greatest need of my people, and without [it] they cannot hope to progress in civilization.”¹³⁵ As Motsete affirmed, European-style education was the engine for African progress. Those who had obtained European-style education prioritized it as the primary measure of social status and placed it above other older social class markers such as wealth or family background. Education was especially significant for Motsete because he lacked the wealth or social status of some of his African counterparts.¹³⁶

As is exhibited in Motsete’s correspondence with Resident Commissioner Rey, African educators faced challenges as leaders and social reformers. They were forced to justify their own status, which was the very basis for their assertion that education was a means to empower other Africans. Motsete employed the civilized / uncivilized paradigm to strengthen his argument that the British administration should protect the social status of educated Africans.

¹³³ Philip Serge Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 110.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹³⁵ The National Archives, Kew, London, DO.35/451, K.T. Motsete to Rey, November 21, 1929.

¹³⁶ Jeffrey Butler and A. A. Castagno, eds., *Boston University Papers on Africa: Transition in African Politics* (New York: Published for the African Studies Center of Boston University by Praeger, 1967).

During a period of six years continual residence and work in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, I have been impressed by the fact that a highly educated Native is not *persona grata* with many of the officials of the administration and is not wanted. The laws of the territory [assume] an unreal situation, for it makes no room for the well-educated Native, but lumps all Natives together, as nothing more than kraal Natives with tastes and rights limited to that stage of development... I beg to claim it as a right that I should be treated by the administration as a civilized human being who has his duty to perform by his country and people according to the measure of my cultural and educational achievement.¹³⁷

This passage is an example of how Motsete emphasized education and personal achievement over race or class as the criteria for who was of value to and should define the parameters for African advancement. It also reinforces the argument that the progressives faced a precarious balance in asserting their authority as the educated elite while staying connected to and in service of African communities.

Educated Africans in the 1920s and 1930s defined their problems in national instead of racial terms. Constrained by the colonial bounds of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and increasingly rooted in indigenous cultures, they defined themselves less as part of the Black race against the white world, than as citizens of a polity within the British Empire. Zachernuk described the phenomenon by which the 1930s generation of educated Nigerians in the Black Atlantic shifted from an assimilationist to an adaptationist perspective, and as a result, went from Pan-Africanism to the local African context. Pan-African identity was superseded by their imagined role as liberated citizens of a particular polity within the British Empire.¹³⁸ In other words, there was a narrowing of the horizons from a racial or a Black identity to a national non-racial identity based on individual achievement.

¹³⁷ BNARS S.243/17, Motsete to the Resident Commissioner, November 16, 1937.

¹³⁸ Philip Serge Zachernuk, *Intellectual Life in a Colonial Context*, 182.

In the 1930s, Africans such as Motsete moved beyond reconciling culture towards fostering solutions for the existing development problems within the colonial African state. Individual liberty and a meritocratic system were the prerequisites for advancing European-style education and the bedrock upon which educated Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate constructed their notions of African progress.

Motsete conceived European-style education as the engine for national development and attempted to extend education to the greatest number of commoners possible. He made this point to Rey when the two men met shortly after Rey took his post as Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1930:

My objective in coming to Serowe is to try to do some educational work among people. I believe that our evolution and progress should not be merely external, that of our economic and material life only, but rather it should be first of all intellectual and moral, and the economic [is] only the outward expression of the light within. This can be done by good education.¹³⁹

In dialog with British officials, Motsete skillfully fused into his definition of education prominent elements in missionary, Black Atlantic, and British colonial philosophy. He used rhetoric, such as “morality” (missionary), “uplift” (Black Atlantic), and “economic and material” (colonial), to resist state-sponsored adapted forms of education. By amalgamating different educational philosophies and redeploying established rhetoric, Motsete sought to widen his authority and avoid alienation.

Motsete’s goal for the meeting with Rey was to assert himself as the preeminent academic and authority on matters concerning education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He hoped to position himself as an indispensable asset to the administration.¹⁴⁰ Motsete claimed that his education made him neither Black nor white” and that he could therefore

¹³⁹ BNARS S.96/7, “Notes on Interview with K.T. Motsete, May 8, 1930.”

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

serve as a “go-between.”¹⁴¹ He suggested that if the government wanted to gain the confidence of Africans, it had to understand what they “deem most worthwhile and important for themselves and their children” and that the African himself was the best judge of his own ambition.¹⁴² Motsete positioned himself as an interpreter of “the native mind” for “detached whites” and an advisor to the government on “native affairs.”¹⁴³ He told Rey that commoners in the Bechuanaland Protectorate desired European-style education and that facilitating education was the basis for how they measured the British commitment to African advancement and therefore the authenticity of trusteeship.¹⁴⁴

Motsete focused on attaining the government’s support for higher education. He proposed to establish the first college or training center in the Protectorate.¹⁴⁵ He tried to convince the *dikgosi*, the British administration, and commoners that education was ultimately an indispensable asset in their struggle for socio-economic well-being.¹⁴⁶ Upon returning to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, he was inspired to serve his people and began planting the seeds to further his agenda for developing educational facilities, which evolved significantly in the 1930s.

Although African advisory councils were politically impotent, they were forums for educated Africans to formulate and voice their growing political consciousness. The progressives understood protection in terms of *Pax Britannica*, that Africans were subjects of the British crown and obligated to pay taxes in exchange for peace and security. From a class

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ K.T. Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate,” *The Laymen’s Bulletin*, 83 (December 1937).

¹⁴⁵ BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930.

¹⁴⁶ BNARS, S.243/19, K.T. Motsete, “The Report of the Tati Training Institute for the Year, 1936/7,” January 8, 1938.

standpoint, the progressives aligned themselves with commoners. This was especially true in the fight against racism. Educated Africans assumed that they were authorities on determining the best means for advancing African communities. They promoted English and variants of European-style education because they believed that they underpinned African self-sufficiency. Africans with high forms of European-style education embodied a direct rebuke of the dogma of European supremacy. They sought to expand access to education as the means to overcome colonial oppression and usher in a more prosperous African future. Educated Africans remained oriented with African communities, cultivated African centered narratives and actualized their own historical conceptualizations and cultural forms. The progressives defended the elitist predisposition of Du Bois's concept of the talented tenth in part because they considered themselves the symbolic inspirational role models for recognizing individual merit and ability. But, in Motsete's case, the pursuit of individual liberty did not alienate him from commoners. It aligned him with ethnic minority Kalanga *she* John Nswazwi and the struggle to preserve the viability of Kalanga communities on the margins of the BaNgwato *morafe*.

Chapter Six

The Progressives' Petition:

Customary Law, African Self-Determination, and Liberalism

Seeking political refuge from Tshekedi Khama and the BaNgwato adherents in the aftermath of the government's November 1930 enquiry into the progressive party petition, Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete took employment with the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) at Tiger Kloof, in Vryburg, across the South African border. By the end of 1931, Motsete was planning the best course of action to establish a school for Kalanga communities in the Tati area. Fearful of the threats of BaNgwato reprisal, he wrote to Resident Commissioner Charles Rey asking for protection. In order to safeguard his person and the hope of establishing a school, Motsete appealed to the Bechuanaland Protectorate government to acknowledge the religious and educational freedoms he claimed existed in other parts of the British Empire. He stated, "[freedom] is a birth-right we must claim as British subjects... the government should allow people who are keen on progress to do what they can for their self-improvement."¹ Motsete's declaration is an example of three things pertinent to this chapter. First, as is evident in the progressives' petition and the testimonies at the ensuing inquiry, Motsete and other educated Africans continuously attempted to influence the British government to assure that they were able to pursue their ambitions. Secondly, they employed existing discourses such as "protection," "birth-right," and "British subject" to attract the sympathies of the British officials while subtly redefining those

¹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, "I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection."

discourses to challenge the margins of existing policy. Lastly, the progressives' petition and the testimonies given during the November 1930 inquiry are a historical record of the contentious and dependent relationship shared between educated Africans and British officials.

On October 19, 1930, the progressives petitioned the Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate protesting against practices such as unpaid regimental labor, flogging, political banishment, and the seizure of private property.² The progressives' petition represented a challenge to BaNgwato Regent Tshekedi Khama's rule posed by a group of educated Africans, including Motsete, and disgruntled members of the royal family. Having lost access to the corridors of political power in the system of indirect rule, the progressives sought an alternative method of achieving influence. They argued for individual rights, democratization of state power, and a check on what they perceived to be Tshekedi Khama's autocratic rule. The debates which emerged out of the progressives' petition showed how various Africans formed ideas about progress.

The system of regimental labor and corporal punishment, buttressed by interpretations of customary law, was a flashpoint for conflict. The progressives used regimental labor to critique Tshekedi Khama's claims to authority over customary law and blamed the *dikgosi* (chiefs) for denying individual liberty and hindering socio-economic advancement. BaNgwato adherents accused the aforementioned of collaboration with colonial power and sabotaging the community.³ They defended the system of regimental labor as a mechanism for achieving the development and public works projects Africans desired in the reserves. For example, to advance African education, Isang Pilane's regiments

² BNARS, DCS.15/11, The Progressives' Petition to the Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, October 19, 1930."

³ BNARS, S.96/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate, April 3, 1930.

built Mochudi National School between 1921 and 1923 at the discretion of the BaKgatla *morafe* (polity). Moreover, corporal punishment was a potent means to enforce authority.⁴

A natural partnership emerged between the progressives and the British administration as both were interested in curtailing the power of the *dikgosi*. Still, Tshekedi Khama was an adept political agent who responded to the criticism while managing the state's attempts at political appropriation. He sought to influence the British administration and those sympathetic in South Africa and London and use the tensions emanating from the progressives' petition to resolve the ambiguities in indirect rule and preserve the authority vested in the *dikgosi*.

Ambiguity in Protection, Indirect Rule, and Customary Law

In 1930, a group of European British liberals, ideologically and politically intertwined with the progressives, propagated a powerful critique designed to precipitate significant reforms in the Southern African protectorates. They were a catalyst for the development of the progressives' petition. This chapter examines the impact of the tours in 1930 and 1931 of the Bechuanaland Protectorate conducted by these prominent liberal activists, Margaret and William Ballinger and Leonard Barnes. It shows that they promoted an imperial form of trusteeship which highlighted the protectorates as the regional anchor for British influence and ideology and furthered the notion among African liberals that there was a significant distinction between the imperial and the colonial.

⁴ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Serowe Resident Magistrate Potts to Mafeking, November 21, 1932.

The ideas of protection and trusteeship were ambiguous and not accompanied by any clear provision for administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.⁵ From their inception, debates swirled over their fundamental meanings.⁶ Although various parties exploited the vagueness and uncertainty of the political system to promote their own agendas, it was broadly accepted that the *dikgosi* appealed to the British for protection because they sought security against the ambitions of European settler colonial power. Thus, although various African stakeholders held differing opinions on the system of indirect rule, the progressives, Tshekedi Khama, and BaNgwato adherents differentiated the imperial from the colonial, and at least rhetorically, promoted the imperial as the option most effective for encouraging African advancement and self-determination.

In his seminal report *An African Survey*, Lord Hailey argued that from 1885, when protection was established in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the British were for the most part obligated to respect African jurisdiction and customary law. European courts did not have jurisdiction over Africans. Under customary law, the *dikgosi* dispensed legal judgements except in cases of murder, treason or African legal decisions the British regarded as repugnant. The repugnancy clause prohibited African courts from enforcing any customary law contradictory to what the British deemed “natural justice, equity and good conscience.”

The terminology, “natural justice, equity and good conscience,” used in the repugnancy clause, was based on an ideal of universal British justice. It was vague and allowed for highly subjective interpretations. Colonial officials used the repugnancy clause as

⁵ John Comaroff, “Bourgeois Biography and Colonial Historiography [Dedicated to the Late Michael Crowder],” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16,3 (1990): 550–62, 553.

⁶ William Malcolm Hailey. *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 195.

a means for asserting their authority. Historian of the Nigerian legal system Bonny Ibhawoh argued that because many African practices buttressed by customary law potentially failed the repugnancy test, the British authorities applied the measure inconsistently. This produced opportunities for Africans to present local customs as they wanted them to be and demonize those they opposed as repugnant.⁷

Ibhawoh's point is applicable to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1930s. The progressives employed a rhetoric of autocracy, oppression, and slavery in their petition and in their challenge to Tshekedi Khama in the *kgotla* (administrative center or African court). By characterizing Tshekedi Khama's judgements as autocratic or uncivilized, they sought to prompt the British administration to intervene under the guise of the repugnancy clause. Throughout the inquiry, the progressives weaponized the discourses of despotism, autocracy, and hedonism against the *dikgosi* and insinuated that practices like the destruction of private property, regimental labor, corporal punishment, and banishment, demanded that the British intervene and apply the repugnancy clause. If you accept Jean and John Comaroff's point that the destruction of private property and banishment equated to social death in Tswana culture, the progressives' claims of despotism and oppression were appropriate.⁸

In 1919, the state made provisions for Africans to appeal judgements made in the *kgotla* to the British administration. However, the 1919 provision for appeals was unclear and inaccessible until the early 1930s. Overseen by the British authorities, the *dikgosi* maintained their grip on legislating the *merafe* (polities) through customary law and lacking legal options, the progressives dubbed Tshekedi Khama an autocrat.⁹

⁷ Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperial Justice: Africans in Empire's Court* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 59.

⁸ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier, Volume 2* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 382.

⁹ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 210, 297.

Beginning in the 1950s, historians alleged that indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was parallel rule based on a balance of power between the African and British administration. Yet, in reality, the British administration was the so-called “supreme chief” over the *dikgosi* and the African population. British authorities sought to codify the system of customary law in order to shift the control of African law away from Africans and into the hands of the British administrators.¹⁰ Their goal was to reduce African input and make the law more uniform and therefore more easily applicable. The codification of customary law marked a shift in whom the British treated as experts. Local colonial officials and missionaries yielded ground to anthropologists and administrative officials.¹¹ Hence, codification of customary law delegitimized the notion that chiefs were the experts on advancement in their own societies.

Botswana’s political evolution was not about simply breaking chiefly power. In his analysis of Nigeria during the indirect rule period, Olufemi Vaughan made a strong case for the persistence of African values and practices embodied in the institution of chieftaincy and argued that indirect rule chiefs played a significant role in the process of social change.¹² This argument lends to the notion that chieftaincy in Botswana was not imagined or invented but was resilient and adaptable to changing social conditions. Because the British governed the Bechuanaland Protectorate by indirect rule, it differed significantly from its neighbors. In South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South West Africa (now Namibia), settler colonial states implemented direct rule whereby the chiefs were servants of the

¹⁰ Martin Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902-1936: Fear, Favour, and Prejudice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 249; William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, chapter two, section vii.

¹¹ Martin Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture*, 252.

¹² Karen E. Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), chapter one; Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

colonial administration, who restricted the symbiotic relationship between chiefs and the people. However, in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, chiefly power remained formidable. In the 1930s, Tshekedi Khama maintained legitimate power among the BaNgwato whom he was legitimized by and accountable to. African chieftaincy was always a site of social and political struggle where survival was based on adaptation and flexible response. Tshekedi Khama was an adept political agent who responded to the progressives' proposals while managing the state's attempts at political appropriation.

The events surrounding the progressives' petition show that customary law was comprised of both continuity and innovation and that it was formed through a process of negotiation and accommodation. Francis Nyamnjoh referred to the process of customary law in Botswana as "simultaneously modernizing their traditions and traditionalizing their modernities."¹³ Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch affirms the need to avoid falling into the rut of assessing colonial rule in African societies in terms of disintegration. She wrote, "We see that ideas of chieftaincy and custom [in Ghana] were undergoing processes of reformulation... not dissolution. Conflict did not mean disintegration."¹⁴ Vaughan posited chieftaincy as an "adaptive and resilient indigenous political structure."¹⁵ Based on the notion that chieftaincies in the Bechuanaland Protectorate were flexible, this chapter explores how the *dikgosi* used customary law as a response to the internal threat posed by the progressives and the external threats posed by the British Empire and neighboring colonial powers.

This study employs Martin Chanock's theoretical construct of the malleability of

¹³ Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Modernising Traditions and Traditionalising Modernity in Africa: Chieftaincy and Democracy in Cameroon and Botswana* (Mankon, Cameroon: Langaa Research & Publishing CIP, 2015), 14.

¹⁴ Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch, *The Politics of Chieftaincy: Authority and Property in Colonial Ghana, 1920-1950* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 13.

¹⁵ Olufemi Vaughan, *Tradition and Politics: Indigenous Political Structures in Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2005), 122.

customary law.¹⁶ Chanock emphasized the “invented tradition” argument set forth by Ranger and Hobsbawm. He examined how customary law developed, how it was used, and the ways traditions were “maintained, manufactured and presented.”¹⁷ In this model, customary law was not customary but was “an idealization of the past developed [by various players] as an attempt to cope with social dislocation.”¹⁸ Employing Chanock’s notion that customary law was fluid and malleable shifts the focus to how people used *the kgotla* as an arena for asserting their political claims. The *kgotla* was thus an arena for moral struggle and competing ideologies. With no regular norm, people used customary law as a weapon. It was a means to bolster their own ideologies, assert authority and make others capitulate.¹⁹

According to Schapera, the *dikgosi* were adept at synthesizing African and European culture. Certainly, Tshekedi Khama, Isang Pilane, and BaNgwato secretary Peter Sebina could be considered new African intellectuals because they were highly educated and engaged in cultural synthesis. Schapera argued that transformations in customary law was evidence of successfully adapting to Europeanization and the colonial intrusion.²⁰ Schapera argued that from its inception customary law was a means for affecting cultural change through the combined effort of the *dikgosi* and the British and aptly emphasized the agency and influence of the *dikgosi* in application of customary law. Rey’s Proclamations marked a

¹⁶ Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰ P.T. Mgadla and A.C. Campbell, “Dikgotla, Dikgosi and the Protectorate Administration,” in John D. Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds., *Democracy in Botswana: The Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 52; Isaac Schapera, *Tribal Legislation Among the Tswana of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, A Study in the Mechanism of Cultural Change* (London: P. Lund, Humphries & Co., 1943).

shift towards the British assuming control over customary law and significantly limiting the role of the *dikgosi*.²¹

Curtailing the influence of the *dikgosi* posed a different set of problems. Tswana authority was variable. Simon Roberts aptly argued that the authority of the *dikgosi* depended on “personal ascendancy” and “tenure of office.”²² Decisions were based on context and the influence of specific rulers. Their performance was subject to constant critical evaluation.²³ Thus, the majority of Tswana law was not a concrete set of rules or punishments. Instead, the *dikgosi* exercised their powers within *Mekgwa le melao* (social norms).²⁴ Although customary laws were not systematized or comprehensive, legal decisions were based on precedents, “embodied in the personal and traditional recollections of the people.”²⁵

Schapera characterized customary law as more simply a set of social norms, he referred to as “rules of conduct” or “established usages and observances.”²⁶ Bessie Head makes a similar assessment in her chapter “The Chief’s *Kgotla*” in her novel *Serowe*. Head depicted the *kgotla* as more than an administrative center. It was the center of the people’s moral life.²⁷ Roberts agreed that *Mekgwa le melao* constituted the “normative framework of Tswana life-world as ordinary members experienced it and the means through which the *dikgosi* exercised their domination.”²⁸ According to Roberts, all people saw themselves as having equal access to and a capacity to deploy the commonly understood principles

²¹ P.T. Mgadla and A.C. Campbell, “Dikgotla, Dikgosi and the Protectorate Administration.”

²² Simon Roberts, “The Tswana Polity and ‘Tswana Law and Custom’ Reconsidered,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12,1 (1985): 75-87,77.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Isaac Schapera. *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (London: F. Cass, 1970), 35; Isaac Schapera, “Tswana Legal Maxims,” *Africa*, 36 (1966): 121-134.

²⁶ Isaac Schapera. *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, 35.

²⁷ Bessie Head, *Serowe, Village of the rain Wind* (London: Heinemann, 1985), 65.

²⁸ Simon Roberts, “The Tswana Polity and ‘Tswana Law and Custom’ Reconsidered,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12,1 (1985), 75-87, 76.

embodied in *Mekgwa le melao*. From this vantage, customary law was less a weapon employed by the British administration to control Tswana polities than a tool the *dikgosi* used to resist British control.²⁹

The *dikgosi* were bound to propagate the common interests of the *merafe*. They consulted their councils and sought confidential advice from men of recognized standing.³⁰ The advisors and councils not only helped the *dikgosi* to determine policy, but they limited the power he could exercise. The extent to which the *dikgosi* were restrained by their advisors varied. Usually the chief yielded to the majority. According to Schapera, established and well-respected *dikgosi* like Khama III sometimes went against the generally conservative status quo in order to implement desired reforms or meet the challenges posed by the colonial imposition.³¹ However, acting against the majority contributed to his reputation as an autocrat.³² Critics of the *dikgosi* established the rhetoric of chiefly autocracy during Khama III's administration and carried it over to Tshekedi Khama's regency as both *dikgosi* responded to the colonial imposition in ways that were not necessarily popular.

Tshekedi's problems were not always of his own making. Some were based in Khama III's strong ruling style. The British administration supported authoritarian practices during Khama III's administration as a means to implement the European-style reforms they favored even though they were not necessarily popular. Political intrigues against Tshekedi Khama by the Ratshosas, the Raditladi family, and Moanaphuti Segolodi were rooted in older histories of dissent, which took on new dimensions in the 1930s. Tshekedi Khama dealt

²⁹ *Ibid.* 85.

³⁰ L.D. Ngcongco, "The Tswana Political Tradition: How Democratic?" in Holm, *Democracy in Botswana*, 44; Isaac Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies* (London: C.A.Watts, 1956), 38.

³¹ Isaac Schapera, *Government and Politics*, "Ruler and Subjects," 147.

³² Isaac Schapera, *Handbook of Tswana Law*, 86; Isaac Schapera, *Tribal Legislation Among the Tswana*, 19.

similarly with challenges to the chieftaincy, but in the 1930s dissenters had more outlets for challenging the *dikgosi*.

As Mann and Roberts argue in their seminal collection *Law in Colonial Africa*, changes in colonial law provided Africans with new opportunities to enhance their authority as well as new challenges to that authority. Colonial Law empowered some Africans at the expense of others and created new asymmetries of power.³³ Thus, customary law in the Bechuanaland Protectorate empowered subordinate groups because it served as a means for those on the margins to participate in debates about the shape of colonial law.

Peter Sebina asserted that intrigue within the *merafe* was routine. “There were [commonly] elements who desired to leave the King’s rule, to become independent, and this malady was more conspicuous among royal headmen than commoners.”³⁴ This was the case in the Ratshosa and the Raditladi family examples. Sebina added that historically it was common for vigorous challenges to emerge in the beginning of the reign of a new chief and after the death of a strong chief. If the chief was sufficiently strong, then by the end, the headmen surrendered. If not, they deserted the chief, took people with them and made their own chieftaincy.³⁵ Tshekedi Khama’s experience in the early years of his regency fit this pattern. However, because of land shortages as a result of the demarcation of the land, it was no longer possible to relieve tensions by banishing those who desired to leave the *merafe* for greener pastures.³⁶

³³ Kristin Mann and Richard L. Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991), 32.

³⁴ BNARS DCS.16/15, Peter Sebina, “Makalaka.”

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Glorious Bongani Gumbo, *The Demarcation of Reserve Boundaries in the Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Ph.D. diss., University of Botswana, Gaborone, 1986).

Even if intrigues within the *merafe* were pervasive historically, the Tswana underwent significant upheavals in the 19th century out of which emerged competing claims and moralities. Established norms were not ancient or immutable but were significantly altered by the historical context. One way to stress this point is the great diversity evident in the way the various Tswana *merafe* interpreted customary law. The progressives' petition and the responses by BaNgwato adherents were examples of dynamic distinct historiographical interpretations of customary law used as political instruments.

The progressives sensationalized age regiments as the epicenter of what they deemed “brutality” and “heathen savagery,” and used regimental labor to contest Tshekedi Khama's authority.³⁷ They framed resistance to the system of regimental labor in terms of individual liberty. They were motivated in part by the changing nature of the work being done by the regiments. Schapera showed that people concerned with their own work and livelihood grew resentful at having to work alongside the regiments and sought compensation for their lost time.³⁸

Conflicts over the use of regimental labor exposed the tensions between the *dikgosi* and the British administration under indirect rule. Inspired by the League of Nations international forced labor conventions, Resident Commissioner Rey took advantage of the tensions as a means to demonize Tshekedi Khama and the sanctity of customary law.³⁹ The

³⁷ Simon Ratshosa, *My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom, etc. and Bechuanaland Protectorate and its Rulers*, in Vivien Frederic Ellenberger Papers, microfilm, “Government Systems.”

³⁸ I. Schapera, “Labour Migration from a Bechuanaland Native Reserve.” *African Affairs* xxxiii, cxxx (1934): 49-58. Isaac Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, 110.

³⁹ International Labour Conference, *Proposed Action by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Regarding the Draft Conventions and the Recommendation Relating to Sickness Insurance Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Tenth Session, 25th May to 16th June 1927*. Cmd, 3732 (London: H.M.S.O., 1930); International Labour Conference. *Proposed Action by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Regarding the Draft Convention and the Recommendations Concerning Forced or Compulsor Labour Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 14th Session, 10th to 28th June 1930*. Cmd, 3841 (London: Stat. Off, 1931).

British and South African press publicized the Basarwa situation, regimental labor and corporal punishment as incidents of coercion, injustice and violence, in order to delegitimize the *dikgosi*.⁴⁰ The English Privy Council decided that under the cover of customary law Tshekedi Khama took action against the Ratshosas that were against the standards of “morality, humanity or natural justice” stipulated in the original arrangement of protection.⁴¹

However, Tshekedi was adept at exhibiting a significant amount of resistance within his collaboration with the British and vigorously defended regimental labor.⁴² He maintained that historically, participation in regiments was an honor, work was compulsory and unpaid, and failure to contribute was punishable by a fine or by thrashing.⁴³ Crowder aptly showed that Tshekedi Khama skillfully opposed the British administration and defended what he deemed his rights as the *kgosi*, without being deposed. In Tshekedi Khama’s era, this was a legitimate concern. Between the late 1920s and the middle 1930s, British authorities either suspended, deposed, arrested, or imprisoned Tswana *dikgosi* Gasetshware, Sebelli II, Molefi II, and Tshekedi Khama.⁴⁴ The fact that the British did not depose Tshekedi Khama is

⁴⁰ William Ballinger, “Alleged Native Slavery: An official Inquiry in Bechuanaland: Position of the Masarwa, Tribe of Servants to the BaNgwato,” *Cape Times*, July 21, 1931; William Ballinger, “Native Slave Allegations”, Crimes of Bechuanaland Administration, Mr. Ballinger Attacks British Rule, Strong Protest by One of his Audience,” *Cape Times*, November 14, 1933; William Ballinger, “Prestige Badly Lowered, British Prestige Looking Bad,” *Cape Times*, November 14, 1933; William Ballinger, “Vassal Tribes, Masarwa Children, Taxes,” *Cape Times*, November 16, 1933.

⁴¹ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 213; “Morality, humanity or natural justice” quoted from the Bechuanaland Protectorate Order of Council of May 9, 1891.

⁴² Michael Crowder, “Tshekedi Khama and Opposition to the British Administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-1936,” *Journal of African History*, 26, 2-3 (1985): 193-214.

⁴³ BNARS DCS.16/15, see: Peter Sebina, “Makalaka”; Isaac Schapera, *Tribal Innovators*, 74; Isaac Schapera, *Tswana Law and Custom*, iii.

⁴⁴ Jack Parson, Michael Crowder, and Neil Parsons, *Succession to High Office in Botswana*, “The Role of Royal Women”; Jeff Ramsay, “The Fall and Decline of the Bakwena Monarchy.” *Botswana Notes and Records*, 28 (1996): 65-86; Michael Crowder, *The Flogging of Phinehas McIntosh: A Tale of Colonial Folly and Injustice, Bechuanaland 1933* (New Haven u.a.: Yale Univ. Pr., 1988); Jeff Ramsay, “The Roots of Botswana National Politics Part 12: British Suspensions and Depositions of Dikgosi,” “Builders of Botswana Series,” *Weekend Post*, June 8, 2015.

testament to his shrewd political maneuvering and the legitimacy he maintained within the Bangwato community.

According to Crowder, Tshekedi Khama's main preoccupation during his regency was to prevent the British from encroaching on the powers of the BaNgwato chieftaincy so that he could hand it over intact to Seretse Khama.⁴⁵ He exploited the ambiguity in the system of protection for his benefit. Crowder argued that Tshekedi Khama was more knowledgeable than anyone in the British administration about Lugard and Cameron's systems of indirect rule, and that this knowledge was the basis by which he staved off the imposition of Rey's proclamations, until Rey's successor Charles Arden Clarke convinced Tshekedi to join the Native Advisory Council in 1939 and accept the reworked 1943 proclamations.⁴⁶

Indirect rule depended on the authority exercised by the *dikgosi* who constituted a second tier of authority below the British officials. However, British officials blamed the *dikgosi* for social and economic stagnation between 1919 and 1930 and claimed they were inadequate governors of their people.⁴⁷ By holding Tshekedi Khama accountable for the abuses claimed by the progressives in their petition, British authorities made a symbolic demonstration of their authority. As Malila points out, Rey penalized Tshekedi Khama as means to settle their differences.⁴⁸ Rey did not judge the progressives' petition for its inherent value or against a measure of justice. It was an opportunity to assert British dominance, punish Tshekedi Khama, and delegitimize his authority.

⁴⁵ Michael Crowder, "*I Want to Be Taught How to Govern My Country Not to Be Taught How to Be Governed*": *Tshekedi Khama and Opposition to the British Administration in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926-1930*" (Nairobi, Kenya: Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, 1985), 4.

⁴⁶ Michael Crowder, *I Want to be Taught*, 20,32.

⁴⁷ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 212.

⁴⁸ Ikanyeng S. Malila, "The Role of Punishment in the Political Subordination of the Dikgosi in Colonial Botswana," *Botswana Notes and Records* 44 (2012): 13-24.

Rey's administration began in 1930 and it ushered in an era of intense conflict with Tshekedi Khama. Rey was a throwback to the "mercenary tradition" that typified British officials in the period in and around the founding of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It was supplanted by the "missionary tradition" epitomized by officials like Jules Ellenberger. The mercenary tradition combined the law and order ethos of police origins with service to colonial interests in South Africa. The mercenary tradition opposed the missionary tradition's emphasis on the paternalistic ideologies of imperial trusteeship, protection of African resources, and advancing African interests.⁴⁹ According to Lord Hailey, the missionary tradition proved impotent for executing the British administration's development agenda, so in 1930, they reintroduced the mercenary tradition under Rey.⁵⁰ Rey's agenda was to establish law and order and facilitate a program to extend South African colonial development to the Bechuanaland Protectorate.⁵¹

Tshekedi Khama adeptly worked around Rey's mercenary agenda. He understood that Parliament held significant power over the British Empire, so he did not limit his communication to local officials. Whenever threatened by the local administration, he appealed to their superiors in London and used the press to cultivated relationships with empathetic influential British personalities.⁵² The self-interested L.M.S. leadership in London was partial to preserving the chieftaincy and constantly reinforced its relationship with Tshekedi Khama.⁵³ One example is that despite the avowal of Basarwa slavery in the Tagart

⁴⁹ Neil Parsons, "Colonel Rey and the Colonial Rulers of Botswana: Mercenary and Missionary Traditions in Administration," in J. F. Ade Ajayi, J. D. Y. Peel, and Michael Crowder. *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder* (London: Longman, 1992), 199-207.

⁵⁰ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 79.

⁵¹ Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).

⁵² Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), 45.

⁵³ A.M. Chirgwin, *Tshekedi and His People* (London: Livingstone Press, 1933).

Report (1932), the society organized their own examination into the Basarwa situation to protect the BaNgwato elite from Tagart's allegations of Basarwa slavery and his conclusion that it was necessary to reform the system of indirect rule.⁵⁴ The L.M.S. published their findings as *The Masarwa Report* (1933) and remained aligned with Tshekedi Khama on the internationally visible Basarwa question through the middle 1930s.⁵⁵

As part of his program to gain the favor of British officials in England, Tshekedi Khama travelled to London in April of 1930 to meet Sidney Webb, member of the Fabian Society and the Labour Party serving as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. At the meeting, Webb re-asserted the authority of the British authorities in Southern Africa. He announced that it was the intention of the empire to reform customary law, abolish coercive labor practices among the Basarwa (per Lord Athlone's declaration against compulsory service at the Serowe *Kgotla* in 1926), and provide Africans like Simon and Johnny Ratshosa the right to a new form of British "justice" through access to a British appeals court.⁵⁶

Webb's commitment to abolish coercive labor practices among the Basarwa was connected to the 1930 Geneva Conference on Forced Labor.⁵⁷ The League of Nations applied pressure on Britain to resolve the Basarwa situation. Webb reinforced High Commissioner Lord Athlone's 1926 declaration against slavery. "It is the right and privilege of every man to live free, and to work for himself or for others as he may choose ... no one may interfere

⁵⁴ BNARS, S.420/11; Edward Samuel Brown Tagart, *Report on the Masarwa and on Corporal Punishment Among Natives in the Bamangwato Reserve of the Bechuanaland Protectorate* (London: [publisher not specified]), 1932.

⁵⁵ London Missionary Society, Alfred J Haile, and E. S. B Tagart. *The Masarwa (Bushmen): Report of an Inquiry by the South Africa District Committee of the London Missionary Society* (Lovedale, South Africa: Printed by Lovedale Press, 1935).

⁵⁶ The National Archives, Kew, London, CO 567/16/30, "Interview Granted by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Tshekedi Khama (1930)," in Casper Andersen and Andrew Cohen, eds. *The Government and Administration of Africa, 1880-1939, Volume 4* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁵⁷ League of Nations Union. *World Labour Problems in 1930: A Record of the Fourteenth Session of the International Labour Conference* (London: League of Nations Union, 1930).

with him.”⁵⁸ Webb’s warning to Tshekedi Khama, and his connecting of the Basarwa situation to individual rights, fueled the progressives’ fire. As a member of the Labour government, Webb was more sympathetic to African liberalism and the progressives’ agenda than his predecessor Conservative Party member Leo Amery. The progressives lodged their petition to British officials six months after the meeting between Webb and Tshekedi Khama.

Locally, Rey vigorously backed Webb’s statement on regulating the power of the *dikgosi* and emphasized the need to end the regiment system, flogging and the right of the chief to take possession of or destroy his subject’s private property. Rey claimed Tshekedi was interfering “with the liberty of his people in a direction contrary to the policy of His Majesty’s Government.”⁵⁹ He declared that liberty implied “the native should be effectively and economically free to work in accordance with his own wish for employment in wages.”⁶⁰

Lord Hailey made a similar point in his analysis a few years later. He concluded that the system of indirect rule needed to be reformed to accommodate “the changing conditions of modern times,” the effects of contact with Europeans and the introduction of a money economy.⁶¹ He argued that the *dikgosi* were losing touch with the people, especially wage earners who were absorbed in efforts to improve their incomes. Hailey identified the emergence of a vicious cycle whereby support for the chieftaincy waned and the *dikgosi* grew more exploitative of commoners.⁶²

Hailey’s notion that the British administration sought to reform the system of government in the Southern African protectorates to accommodate “the changing conditions

⁵⁸ “Interview Granted by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Tshekedi Khama (1930).”

⁵⁹ BNARS S.173/2, Rey to High Commissioner Lord Athlone, December 2, 1930.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 80.

⁶² *Ibid.*

of modern times” was at best a secondary objective. The High Commissioner Athlone’s confidential correspondence to the Dominions Office in London showed that as Rey instituted his proclamations, the primary concerns were “cohesion and peace of the tribe” and “discipline among a widely scattered people.”⁶³ Therefore, the paradox facing the British was how to reconcile the internal tensions within indirect rule while broadening their authority and ability to institute their agenda for colonial development.

In a published article, Tshekedi Khama blamed administrative disorder on confusion stemming from unclear delineation of duties between the two branches of the administration. He suggested that clearly defining the roles of each entity would promote cooperation. Still, he maintained the authority of the *dikgosi* by arguing that British authorities overlooked the “personal and official rights of the chief in his community.”⁶⁴ He maintained that the BaNgwato supported the laws he enforced, that his authority stemmed from the democratic council representing the community, and that the British administration used the repugnancy doctrine as an excuse to overstep the boundary defining the two administrations and opposed his policies.⁶⁵ Tshekedi contested Rey’s Proclamations by arguing that the African legal system was more democratic than the English system and claimed the proclamations to be so revolutionary, they were akin to ending the British Parliament.⁶⁶ Standing firm by the notion that his power derived from a symbiotic relationship with his people, Tshekedi sarcastically questioned if the British authorities believed he deserved this power or if they considered him a “convenient tool,” a puppet for the British administration.⁶⁷

⁶³ BNARS, S.173/2; William Malcolm Hailey, *An African Survey*, 211.

⁶⁴ Tshekedi Khama. “Chieftainship Under Indirect Rule.” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 35,140 (1936): 251–61.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 258.

⁶⁶ BNARS, BT Admin. 12/1, Tshekedi Khama and the BaNgwato Nation, “Petition to King George, May 1935.”

⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

Tshekedi Khama argued that ambiguities in the relationship between the *dikgosi* and the British administration caused people to think that he lacked patience and tolerance and was opportunistically assuming too much power. He responded to the progressives' claim that the chiefs were acting autocratically. "I am making these statements in direct reference to the generally accepted view that a native ruler adopts high handed actions for personal gain, disregarding the educated class of his people in his pursuit of despotic rule."⁶⁸ Tshekedi Khama blamed the ambiguities in indirect rule for the internal and external challenges facing the government.

Tshekedi Khama sought to resolve the ambiguities of indirect rule based on his claim that protection was a means to preserve African self-determination. He contended that self-determination was the reason Khama III agreed to protection in 1885. He insisted, "the internal powers and jurisdiction of native tribes in the Bechuanaland Protectorate should exist concurrently with and independently of the [British] administration."⁶⁹ He argued that Khama III intended to partner with the British as a means to advance African self-determination. Tshekedi Khama sought to influence the British administration and those sympathetic in South Africa and London to accept his notion that protection meant a paternalistic arrangement between the *dikgosi* and the British, whereby the *dikgosi* remained the definitive authority on advancing African interests.

The 1930 Ballinger and Barnes Tour of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

In 1930, Tshekedi Khama and Rey encountered a group of British liberals who became ideologically and politically intertwined with the progressives. Together, the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Tshekedi Khama, *A Statement to the British Parliament and People* (London: Headley Bros., 1935).

progressives and British liberals propagated a powerful critique designed to precipitate significant reforms in the system of indirect rule that threatened the authority of the African and the British administrations. The following section examines the consequences of the tours of the Bechuanaland Protectorate conducted by prominent British liberal activists Margaret and William Ballinger and Leonard Barnes in 1930 and 1931. They promoted an imperial form of trusteeship that highlighted the Southern African protectorates as the regional anchor for British influence and ideology. Through the ongoing dialogue they shared with their African colleagues, especially the progressives, the Ballinger-Barnes group forged data for their critique of the British Empire's policies on the Southern African protectorates and were the catalyst for the development of the progressives' petition.

The ideas of British liberals in Africa became bound up with a rising climate of moral concern among British liberals in Britain. Beginning in the late 1920s, British liberals became alarmed at the direction of South African segregationist policies. Just as African stakeholders justified their allegiance to the British Empire as the most compelling option for preserving African self-determination and resisting colonialism, European liberals in Africa juxtaposed their ideas about African advancement in the Southern African protectorates against South African and settler colonial policies. British liberals sought to maintain the imperial influence in the Southern African protectorates and offset settler colonial power by connecting the Southern African protectorates to British territories in East and Central Africa. Fearful that the protectorates would be handed over to South Africa, Liberals in London, accused Leo Amery in the Colonial Office of watering down the trusteeship

provisions of the Devonshire Declaration of 1923 which stipulated the primacy of African interests in the East African territories.⁷⁰

The Ballingers and Barnes used the Southern African Protectorates as a testing ground for new ideas on social and economic development and as a means to critique settler colonialism in South Africa.⁷¹ As a result of the Statute of Westminster (1931), South Africa obtained full legal freedom from Britain. Thus, the Southern African Protectorates became increasingly important as an anchor for the British Empire's influence in Africa and for promoting the idea that the empire would mitigate settler colonial power. Employing the rhetoric of the League of Nations mandates, Barnes argued the British could intervene based on neglect of Africans' well-being.⁷² He claimed Britain was obligated to Africans, who looked to the British crown for sympathy and support in their struggle towards advancement.⁷³ Barnes blamed the British government for allowing a situation in Africa where European values were corrupted and racism ran rampant.⁷⁴

Leonard Barnes promoted an idea of trusteeship in the protectorates akin to the interpretation of the mandates by critics of the British Empire Leonard Woolfe and Norman Leys. Woolfe and Leys believed that the mandates marked an entirely new era in the relationship between the British Empire and Africa, especially economically. Woolf interpreted the League of Nations mandate system (Article 22) as a response to colonial exploitation and argued that the stated sole objective for the mandate system was "the

⁷⁰ Paul B. Rich, *White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921-60* (Greater Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 38.

⁷¹ Howard Pim, *Financial and Economic Position of the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. March 1933* (London: H.M. Stationery Off, 1933).

⁷² Leonard Barnes, *Caliban in Africa* (London: Gollancz, 1930), 221.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Leonard Barnes "The Crisis in Bechuanaland," *African Affairs*, xxxii, cxxix (1933): 342-350; Barnes, *Caliban in Africa*, 221; Howard Pim, *Financial and Economic Position of the Bechuanaland Protectorate*.

development and well-being of the inhabitants.”⁷⁵ He thought this meant that the British administration was bound to protect Africans’ economic interests. Specifically, the British were bound to safeguard the land and develop the people socio-economically. Woolf considered the mandate system as ushering in a new era in the relations between Europe and Africa and as an end to the imperialism of the 19th century.⁷⁶ Woolf railed against the spread of racist settler colonial political and economic domination, and sought to stop the settler colonial conditions of exploitation entrenched in Kenya from becoming the norm for the East African British High Commission territories as well as those such as Tanganyika mandated by the League of Nations.⁷⁷

Norman Leys focused on Britain’s duty to promote African well-being under the League of Nations mandate. He emphasized individual liberty as vital in promoting Africans’ social and economic development. The terms of the League of Nations mandate explicitly promoted aspects of individual liberty such as freedom of religion and the suppression of forced labor. The League of Nations mandate required that European colonial powers recognize people’s national status as citizen and that there should be no disabilities based on religion, descent, or color. Ley’s interpretation of citizenship and individual rights under the League of Nations mandate posed an especially difficult challenge in the context of trusteeship underpinning indirect rule.⁷⁸

Barnes wrote that trusteeship meant abandoning the old idea of the 18th century colony for relations with colonial peoples that prioritizes their socio-economic advancement

⁷⁵ Nele Matz, “Civilization and the Mandate System Under the League of Nations as Origin of Trusteeship,” *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*, Vol. 9 (2005): 47-95.

⁷⁶ Leonard Woolf, *Mandates and Empire* (London: League of Nations Union, 1920).

⁷⁷ Leonard Woolf, *Imperialism and Civilization* (London: Leonard and Virginia Woolf at The Hogarth Press, 1928), 92-114.

⁷⁸ Norman Maclean Leys, *A Plan for Government by Mandate in Africa* (London: League of Nations Union, 1921).

rather than European material gain.⁷⁹ Barnes sought to raise the standard of living of Africans by giving them access to a larger share of the wealth produced by their country.⁸⁰ Barnes and Woolfe came to the same conclusion; the only way to boost the economic position of a colonial territory was to alter the parasitic nature of the colonial relationship. This meant using the resources of a territory, including labor, for the benefit of that place instead of extracting them for the benefit of Europe or South Africa.

Barnes spoke to the problems of promoting individual liberty in the context of indirect rule. He believed that the imperial relationship fostered African authoritarianism and it resulted in the BaTswana suffering a significant loss of their personal freedom.⁸¹ Barnes was in dialogue with a class of Africans comparable to the progressives who promoted what he referred to as “new notions of economic and political liberty” and a “new spirit of individualism.”⁸² He argued that protectorate policies “unwittingly cut off the rule of chiefs from the democratic forces which once helped in guiding it” and rising autocracy was less desirable in the socio-economic context.⁸³

Former trade union leader, William Ballinger and his future wife Margaret Hodgson, a history professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, made their first tour of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1930. They sought to gather evidence of British neglect as part of a larger project to assess the reasons for economic stagnation in the Southern African

⁷⁹ Leonard Barnes, “The Empire as a Sacred Trust: The Problem of Africa,” *The Political Quarterly*, 9,4 (1938): 503-515, 504.

⁸⁰ Leonard Barnes, “The Empire as a Sacred Trust”, 513.

⁸¹ Leonard Barnes, *The New Boer War* (London: Leonard & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1932), 169-176.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.* P.T. Mgadla and A.C. Campbell, “Dikgotla, Dikgosi and the Protectorate Administration,” in John D. Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds., *Democracy in Botswana: The Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Gaborone, 1-5 August 1988* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 52.

protectorates.⁸⁴ Leonard Barnes, critic of empire, former official at the British colonial office and subeditor of the *Johannesburg Star*, joined Ballinger and Hodgson on a second tour in 1931, made for similar reasons. The 1931 tour took place as the British administration was considering its decision on the progressives' petition and was especially troublesome for Tshekedi Khama and his supporters who viewed the Ballinger-Barnes group as a threat to the government's authority and its ability to maintain order.

After the 1931 tour, Barnes published a series of eight articles in the *Johannesburg Star* critical of British policy.⁸⁵ Topics included the degeneration of the African administration, accounts of slavery among the Basarwa and British administrative failures. Silas Molema responded to Barnes's critique by arguing that although educated Africans had no place in the system of indirect rule, they were far from revolutionary, and could be of "ample help and service" to the *merafe*.⁸⁶ In ardent opposition to the incorporation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate into South Africa, the Ballingers and Barnes reinforced the arguments for the administrative reforms made by British liberal Howard Pim in 1933.⁸⁷ The Ballingers argued that despite indirect rule, Britain had a history of regulating the power of Africans and the local British authorities and was thus able and responsible to enact reforms in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Leonard Barnes, "Bechuanaland 1931," *Botswana Notes & Records*, 6,1 (1974): 215-218.

⁸⁵ Special Correspondent [Leonard Barnes], "Affairs in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *The Johannesburg Star*, August 21, 1931 – September 3, 1931, (part i: "Detribalization and the Waste of Man Power," part ii: "The Problem of Material and Mental Poverty," part iii: "Some Difficulties of the European Farmer," part iv: "The Problem of the Powers of Chiefs," part v: "Degeneration of the System of Tribal Rule," part vi: "The Position of the So-Called Slave Tribes," part vii: "The Administrative Failure.").

⁸⁶ Observer [Silas M. Molema], "The Bechuanaland Protectorate, More Native Comments," *The Johannesburg Star*, September 12, 1931.

⁸⁷ Howard Pim, *Financial and Economic Position of the Bechuanaland Protectorate*; Fred Morton, Jeff Ramsay, and Part Themba Mgodla. *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 40.

⁸⁸ Margaret L Hodgson (Mrs. Ballinger) Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, (Ballinger), Ballinger, A3.1.3; Margaret Ballinger and William Ballinger *Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Lovedale, C.P., South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1932), "Matters of Joint Concern, Work on the Protectorates, Britain in Southern Africa".

Margaret Ballinger's longtime association with liberal historian W.M. Macmillan, whom she worked under at the University of Witwatersrand, had a strong influence on her politics. Both were social democrats of the Fabianism type. Fabianism promoted a philanthropic social evolutionary model, whereby the privileged and the state cooperated in direct political action and practical work to improve the position of the underprivileged.⁸⁹ Fabianists were to the left of most South African liberals whose ideas were rooted in the Lockean tradition which opposed state interference.⁹⁰ In the 1930s, the vast majority of South African liberals were much more conservative than the Ballingers and Macmillan and considered them radical. Macmillan and the Ballingers fought against conservative liberal members of the Joint Councils Movement such as R.F.A. Hoernle, J.D. Rheinallt Jones and C.T. Loram. Macmillan and the Ballingers advocated an economic based analysis whereas the Joint Councils preferred a non-political approach based on anthropological studies focused on cultural contact and racial difference.⁹¹ Radical liberals accepted the premise that the economic interests of Africans and Europeans were inextricably intertwined, thereby making segregation an impractical fallacy. Hence, Macmillan and the Ballingers focused on promoting African socio-economic improvement.⁹²

The Ballingers advocated a paternalistic social evolutionary position. They argued that a gradual process of constitutional reforms would eventually make South Africa into a "just and democratic country."⁹³ By 1937, at her first political appointment, Margaret

⁸⁹ F.A. Mouton, "Margaret Ballinger: Opponent of Apartheid or Collaborator?" *South African Historical Journal*, 18,26 (1992): 136-153, 138; F.A. Mouton, "'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?' Margaret Ballinger's Liberalism and her Relationship with South African Liberals, 1926-1968," *African Historical Review*, 33,1 (2001): 45-60.

⁹⁰ F.A. Mouton, *Voices in the Desert: Margaret and William Ballinger: A Biography* (Pretoria: Benedic Books, 1997), 12.

⁹¹ F.A. Mouton, "Margaret Ballinger," 148.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹³ F.A. Mouton, "Only a Liberal," 60.

Ballinger advocated for the abolition of the color bar, the extension of the political rights existing in the Cape Province throughout South Africa, equal access to land, equal education facilities, and a living minimum wage for African workers. She envisioned reforms as steppingstones to uniform rights for all people.⁹⁴ In retrospect, Ballinger may seem *naïve*. She had limited political muscle and the reforms she proposed after the Second World War fell on the deaf ears of the conservative majority in power. However, in the 1930s, Ballinger and Macmillan's underlying fault was not ideological. It was political isolation. They had no employable power base to facilitate their agenda.⁹⁵

This leads to the ongoing debate among historians over the nature of liberalism in Africa. Historians suggested that Margaret Ballinger was a collaborator in European domination of Africans.⁹⁶ They argued that Ballinger's work to reform the segregationist system "gave legitimacy and credibility to segregation and contributed to the maintenance of white domination."⁹⁷ In their view, liberals gave Africans the illusion of political power and "ensured black political apathy." They upheld the mechanisms of social control because they attempted "to resolve the contradictions of segregation rather than challenge its premise."⁹⁸ This is a legitimate critique. Barnes crashed into a brick wall politically after learning that imperial rule in Southern Africa was not susceptible to the African or Cape liberal reformist strategy. As a result, he left Africa in 1932.⁹⁹ His publications, *the Duty of Empire* (1935) and the widely read *Empire and Democracy* (1939) are evidence that he was clearly disillusioned

⁹⁴ Margaret Ballinger, *From Union to Apartheid; A Trek to Isolation* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 45.

⁹⁵ F.A. Mouton, *Margaret Ballinger*, 139.

⁹⁶ Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Martin Legassick, "Race, Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa: The Case of R.F.A. Hoernle," *African Affairs*, 75,299 (1976): 224-239; Paul Rich, *White Power*; Mouton, "Margaret Ballinger," 136.

⁹⁷ F.A. Mouton, "Margaret Ballinger."

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 136.

⁹⁹ Anthony McAdam, "Leonard Barnes and South Africa (1)," *Social Dynamics* 3,2 (1977): 41-53, 49.

with the idea that trusteeship fundamentally altered the political or economic colonial relationship. In fact, he wrote that it was intended only to “mitigate a few of its most obvious ill-effects.”¹⁰⁰

Despite the very real political disillusionment of African and Cape liberals, the goal is to understand why and how liberals understood their ability to influence indirect rule and less about if they actually succeeded. Also, the Ballingers and Barnes stood far left of and more radical than virtually all of the Southern African liberals, so their story is especially illuminating as to the contours of settler political power and the limits of liberalism in the territories in Southern Africa colonized by the British.

Margaret Ballinger’s papers reveal that when the Ballingers made their tours, she was well informed of the contentious issues within the Bechuanaland Protectorate. They learned that Moanaphuti Segolodi, their informant, translator, and signer of the progressives’ petition was a member of a group of disillusioned royals challenging Tshekedi Khama.¹⁰¹ Simon Ratshosa provided them with a comprehensive list of the subjugated ethnic minorities in the protectorate and Motsete provided a copy of the transcript of the meeting between Tshekedi Khama and Webb, which detailed the Basarwa debate and the Ratshosa appeal.¹⁰² During their first tour, Segolodi likely directed the Ballingers to the Serowe Dam where they witnessed what Tshekedi Khama’s critics judged to be the inefficiency of the regimental laborers engaged in the clean-up project. He also likely informed them that in the preceding days, he narrowly escaped being flogged for refusing to participate in the dam work.

¹⁰⁰ Leonard Barnes, *Empire or Democracy? A Study of the Colonial Question* (London: V. Gollancz, Ltd., 1939), 157.

¹⁰¹ Ballinger, A3.1.33. Margaret Ballinger Papers, University of Cape Town, (Ballinger UCT), Ballinger, Margaret Ballinger diaries 1930-1932.

¹⁰² Ballinger, A3.1.26, “A Protest,” The Ratshosa Brothers to Resident Commissioner Rey and High Commissioner Stanley, August 1930 and Ballinger, “Important Notes Ratshosa.”

The Inquiry into the Progressives' Petition

On October 19, 1930, a few months after the Ballingers' first tour, the progressives petitioned Charles Rey, the Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate protesting against such practices as unpaid regimental labor, flogging, political banishment, and the seizure of private property. Following is an excerpt,

We have many wrongs, tortures and grievances, which we submit to from time to time. We are chained up under the habit of slavery and oppression here in Serowe... Your Honor: We look upon these things as extremely malicious and wicked, for we presume that we have taken a step forward in civilization, and to chain us up to these barbarous customs would be extreme cruelty... Your Honor: We do not lay our petition before you with any intent to rise against the government itself. We do not seek anarchy and confusion; and we do not seek to oppose the regular execution of the laws; but we only appeal to Your Honor for the sake of freedom and peace, for it is only upon public opinion that world peace depends... It is for this reason that we at present have decided to appeal to the government to liberate us, so that we should not have cause to tempt any assumption of power into our own hands.¹⁰³

Eight men including Segolodi and Kesebonye signed the progressives' petition. Motsete was not a signer but translated part of the petition into English.¹⁰⁴ Without access to political power in Bamangwato, the progressives sought an alternative method of achieving influence. They argued for democratization of state power, a check on what they perceived to be Tshekedi Khama's autocratic rule, protections for ethnic minorities, and individual liberties.

Gerald E. Nettleton, the Resident Magistrate of Serowe, held an inquiry into the progressives' petition in the Serowe *Kgotla* on November 13, 1930. In his diary, Rey described the Serowe *kgotla* as "a most picturesque scene, in the open ... under some high

¹⁰³ BNARS, S.485/1/3 or DCS.15/11, The Progressives' Petition to the Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, October 19, 1930."

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

rocky hills, in the midst of big trees.”¹⁰⁵ Kgotla meetings were attended by somewhere between twenty-five and a couple thousand people arranged in a circle. Adult males, advisors to the *dikgosi*, headmen, and those who had undergone initiation were required to attend.¹⁰⁶ When it was pertinent, women attended and spoke at the kgotla. Speakers generally spoke in SeTswana, which was translated into English and two African languages. At the inquiry into the progressives’ petition, at least forty men and no women appear in the transcript produced by the British administration. It is likely that the meeting was attended by a few hundred people, mostly or all men.

The following discussion on the British inquiry into the progressives’ petition is based on the three hundred-page typed record of the inquiry housed at the Botswana National Archive and Records Service.¹⁰⁷ Three main themes emerge from the inquiry. First, conflicts centered around the African administration’s antithetic viewpoints on whether to prioritize the rights of individuals or the majority opinion of the *merafe*. Second, in order to justify their assertions, various players made claims to be an authority on subjects like customary law, history, and Christianity. Lastly, the various players framed their arguments based on their historical interpretations of the system of protection and in relation to their ideas about advancing African self-determination. They negotiated their various positions through debates on the nature of the power of the *dikgosi*, the practices of regimental labor and corporal punishment, freedom of speech, and private property rights.

The most obvious distinction between those behind the petition and those who supported Tshekedi Khama was that they differed on the means to ensure peace, order, and

¹⁰⁵ Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929-37* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988), 29.

¹⁰⁶ L.D. Ngcongco, “Tswana Political Tradition: How Democratic?”, 45.

¹⁰⁷ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition.

security in the BaNgwato *morafe*. The petitioners prioritized the rights of individuals, while Tshekedi Khama and BaNgwato adherents claimed the authority of the majority.¹⁰⁸ Isang Pilane declared that the rights of the majority were the central concern in the preservation of the vitality of the *merafe* and that selfishness and individualism would bring about its destruction. The first day of testimony concluded with Isang triumphantly challenging the Bamangwato to support Tshekedi Khama as a unified body in peace. The crowd at the *kgotla* responded with emphatic chants of “Pula! Pula!! Pula!!! (Rain! Rain!! Rain!!!).”¹⁰⁹

The tensions that arose as a result of the petition were much more complex than simply polling the people. The testimonies of supporters of the progressives’ petition, Segolodi, Motsete, and Kesebonye, showed that perspectives on history shaped ideas about customary law. Kesebonye, a headman in the BaNgwato Reserve and descendent of Khama III, Sekgoma, and Phethu, claimed that Tshekedi Khama had perpetuated an historical injustice and violated his rights as an elder. Because Kesebonye had bad eyesight and was crippled, he expected to be relieved of his obligation to perform regimental labor.¹¹⁰ Tshukudu, a signer of the petition, was also too elderly for labor, according to Nettleton’s findings.¹¹¹

Segolodi claimed that the BaNgwato were strengthened by Khama III’s respect and inclusion of the downtrodden classes. He perceived the BaNgwato past in terms of inclusion and argued that Tshekedi Khama’s violent exclusion of subordinate classes was a bastardization of customary law.¹¹² Segolodi demonized Tshekedi Khama for corporal

¹⁰⁸ BNARS, DCS.15/9, “Chief Tshekedi and Bamangwato Statement in Kgotla, Serowe, December 13, 1930.”

¹⁰⁹ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition, 114.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹¹ BNARS, S.173/9, “Serowe Inquiry, Captain Nettleton’s Findings.”

¹¹² BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition, 38.

punishment, punishing his subjects without a trial, burning people's huts, and controlling people's property. He argued that these practices were in violation of the very nature of protection and that the British forbade such things after they established the Protectorate. Segolodi argued that "descendants of one hundred years of Christianity, should [not] still be governed by ancient laws... This is the first request for reform, that our present mode of life cannot go side by side with our forefathers' customs."¹¹³ Segolodi cited sections 7, 8 and 9 of the June 10, 1891 Proclamation, "against all acts of violence practices amongst people."¹¹⁴ Segolodi asserted that corporal punishment resulted in diminishing the respect for the *dikgosi*, was antithetical to the unity of the *merafe* and was a source of division and disorder.¹¹⁵ Segolodi considered protection to mean peace, unity, security, and abstinence from violence.

Motsete reinforced Segolodi's notion that the British were responsible to maintain order under protection. During the inquiry, he read in English and offered to translate into Setswana section 9 of the June 19, 1891 Proclamation. It stated that if the British found customary law "incompatible with peace, order and good government," the European court could decide the matter.¹¹⁶ Motsete employed terms like "autocracy" and "hedonism" to encourage the British authorities to intervene.

Motsete argued that customary law was controlled by the *dikgosi* for their own political gain. He claimed that prior generations did not practice regimental labor and capital punishment and that Tshekedi Khama reintroduced them as a tool of administration.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 57-64.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Motsete critiqued Tshekedi Khama's rigid interpretation of customary law and his use of it as a weapon to punish his advisories. By maintaining an alternative interpretation, Motsete argued that customary law was fluid and in a process of historical transformation. He denied Tshekedi Khama's authority and bolstered his case for his own interpretive space.

Motsete framed his critique of customary law based on what he deemed beneficial for African advancement. Based on his historical interpretation, Motsete argued,

Our master, Chief Khama, found that things were tying us down and preventing us from adopting Christianity ... [Now, we are tied to customary law] despite the fact that the mode of living of the people has changed and the cattle on which we once depended on for our living [does not] get a [satisfactory] price. If native custom alone is allowed to tie us down, there will always be trouble.¹¹⁸

Motsete disarmed Tshekedi Khama by asserting that customary law was markedly altered in the past and that his implementation of customary law was outmoded and unproductive.

Motsete attacked what he deemed Tshekedi Khama's autocratic rule. Employing the virtues of the separation of powers in European-style political philosophy, Motsete condemned Tshekedi Khama's rule, whereby all of the functions of government were confined to one man. He argued that under protection, there was no separation of powers or system of checks and balances. The *dikgosi* were in charge of the legislative, executive, and judicial aspects of government. Employing his knowledge of English history, he professed that the English Civil Wars ended the Stuart's defense of government based on "the divine right of kings." Motsete attacked autocratic power and professed that Tshekedi Khama could no longer hold off the inevitable progress towards individual rights and the diffusion of political power.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

As the inquiry proceeded, Motsete attacked the notion that there was a symbiotic relationship between the African and European administrations in the system of indirect rule. He declared that the people were caught in between “the horns of a dilemma.” This meant that there were two contradictory systems of rule and that the chief’s laws disagreed with British law.¹²⁰ Motsete argued that unlike in the Rhodesias, the Bechuanaland Protectorate was not sovereign. He pointed to the Ratshosa appeal and the British control over South African mining in the Protectorate as evidence that the British maintained sovereignty over legal and political matters in the Protectorate. Motsete testified that the two administrations seemed like they were opposed to one another and that the petitioners’ goal was to achieve congruence by reducing one of the “horns.” He made it clear that they did not aspire to cut the chieftaincy out.¹²¹ He reinforced his argument that the petitioners did not seek a revolution against the office of the chief. His position was that the British were ultimately responsible for reforming the inconsistencies in the political system and that curtailing the power of the *dikgosi* would promote unity and order within the *merafe*.

However, Isang’s response is evidence that the *dikgosi* considered the petition as posing a significant threat to their survival. BaNgwato adherents took Motsete’s position seriously enough to deem those who supported the petition as treacherous and rebellious, if not revolutionary. Since Motsete asked for one of the “horns” to be removed, and the petition stated that the petitioners did not “intent to rise against the government,” Isang convincingly argued that Motsete and the petitioners were intent on knocking down the horn of customary law and the African administration. For the *dikgosi*, customary law, which Isang referred to

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 114.

¹²¹ *Ibid*,

as “natural law,” was not only legitimate it was an essential aspect of African political sovereignty.¹²²

BaKgatla *kgosi* Isang provided compelling evidence that Motsete’s true goal was to free educated Africans from their responsibilities to the *merafe* and produce political chaos. Isang obtained a letter Motsete wrote to his friend Tidimang, a student at Lovedale and relative of Isang being groomed to lead the BaKgatla. In it, Motsete claimed that educated Africans had advanced to the point of being able to be ruled by Europeans alone. Motsete’s friends told Isang that Motsete aspired to organize a state-wide progressive political party. Isang took this as evidence that Motsete was not pursuing peace, unity, and order under African rule, but instead sought to depose the *dikgosi* and end customary law.¹²³

Motsete took great care to argue that the progressives were not inherently a threat to the *merafe* and that he and his colleagues could in fact serve as Tshekedi Khama’s advocate. Motsete cited the ambassadorial role he played for the BaNgwato in London as an example of how educated Africans could benefit the *merafe* politically. At Tshekedi Khama’s request, Motsete met with a representative of Secretary of State Amery in 1929 to investigate the British position on South African mining in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.¹²⁴

Motsete took the same delicate approach. He critiqued the excessive use of corporal punishment and regimental labor. Motsete thought that it was reasonable to employ regimental labor in moderation but opposed forcing people’s service in times of drought and economic hardship because it diminished their ability to work towards their own ends.¹²⁵

¹²² *Ibid.*, 106-114.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 115; Michael Crowder Papers (Crowder), Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London, London, England, ICS123, Box 12, K.T. Motsete to Tshekedi Khama, December 20, 1928. K.T. Motsete to Tshekedi Khama, June 13, 1929.

¹²⁵ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition, 65.

Motsete tried to give the impression that he adhered to the chief with only modest resistance. For instance, Motsete testified that he translated into English the second section of the petition penned by Segolodi, and that he was not a signer and thus not responsible for its content. In order to maintain his reputation in the BaNgwato *morafe*, Motsete tried to distance himself from the petitioners by claiming a “third space” between the petitioners and the regent. Despite abating his role, Tshekedi Khama deemed Motsete an accomplice and a threat.¹²⁶

Rhetorically, the progressives paid close attention to reinforcing their reformist position by claiming to remain loyal to the institution of chieftainship. Pelaelo Tiro, the fourth signer of the progressives’ petition and disgruntled former member of the BaNgwato Council formed to advise Tshekedi in the early days of his regency, emphasized that although the petitioners advocated for individual liberty and freedom of speech, they did not oppose the chieftainship. Tiro argued that there was a need to reform customary law, especially regimental labor and corporal punishment, in order to conform with “the present mode of life.” Tiro blamed the *merafe* for using regimental labor and corporal punishment to prevent Africans from advancing. He declared, “We should be granted freedom to work for ourselves in peace. We should be allowed freedom of thought and freedom of speech in the *kgotla*, without fear that [the *kgosi*] will injure anyone.”¹²⁷

In a letter to Rey five years after the inquiry, Motsete maintained the position that curtailing the powers of the *dikgosi* was not revolutionary. Critical of the lack of freedom of speech and the lack of a system of checks and balances, Motsete insisted that there was no

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

democracy for the commoners.¹²⁸ The progressives positioned themselves as supporters of the people and the *merafe* but their arguments demonstrated the precariousness of claiming that their scheme for individual rights and freedom of speech did not pose a significant threat to the African authority.

Tshekedi Khama's response to Motsete's testimony is evidence that there were personal tensions alongside the political. He revealed that Motsete was a trusted advisor who had spent time in conversation at the regent's house in Serowe. Tshekedi Khama financed Motsete to return from England to Bamangwato to begin teaching at Serowe Public School.¹²⁹ Motsete admitted that he made an agreement with Sekgoma, Tshekedi Khama's predecessor, to return to help his people, but prophetically claimed that he warned Sekgoma that if the BaNgwato did not "treat him as they should and offer him proper work, he would give himself to other tribes."¹³⁰

During the inquiry, Tshekedi Khama accused Motsete of writing the petition based on documents he had seized from Segolodi's house. Motsete responded angrily, "This *boherehere* (cunningness) is what we object to." His insult caused a significant disturbance in the *kgotla*. Tshekedi replied that he had never before been called a *leherehere* (rascal).¹³¹ He ordered Motsete to pay an unprecedented twenty-five heads of cattle to the parents of a MaBoledi woman, whom Motsete had seduced eleven years prior.¹³² The following month, when Tshekedi Khama threatened to pursue Motsete's insult in a lawsuit, Motsete asked the British Authorities to exercise "special prerogatives and powers as provided by Section 8 and

¹²⁸ BNARS, S.359/8, K.T. Motsete to C.F. Rey, "Criticism of the Petition of Acting Chief Tshekedi Khama, of BaNgwato Confederation of Tribes, to His Majesty the King," January 18, 1936.

¹²⁹ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives' Petition, 82.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 85.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 68.

¹³² *Ibid*, 20; BNARS, DCS.15/7, G.E. Nettleton to the Government Secretary Mafeking, "Complaint About Chief Tshekedi Taking Away Servants," December 9, 1930.

9 of the Proclamation of the 10th of June 1891, to prevent any possible act of violence on [his] person.” Unable to pay the significant fine, he was concerned that he would be flogged in the *kgotla*.¹³³

Motsete attempted to use the British as refuge against Tshekedi Khama’s wrath in the *kgotla*. He made three claims for why he should be tried in a British court. First, he argued that people in the *kgotla* did not understand the concept of private property. The letters seized at Segolodi’s house were a person’s sacred property, which the regent had no right to confiscate without a warrant from the British authorities. Secondly, that it was unjust for the regent to adjudicate cases for which he is personally involved.¹³⁴ Lastly, Motsete was concerned that Tshekedi Khama would order him to be flogged in order to humiliate Motsete publicly and publicly demonstrate the authority of the BaNgwato *morafe*. Motsete appealed to the notion that the Bechuanaland Protectorate was under the scrutiny of the world and that acts of violence placed doubt on the nature of protection and the extent to which it afforded Africans security under the British flag.¹³⁵

BaNgwato adherents made the compelling argument for corporal punishment as integral for African authority. Othusitse pointed out that when a person talks of “*boherehere*” he means lies, if not witchcraft. Behind the threat of Motsete being punished by a flogging, Othusitse argued corporal punishment is “the foundation of the tribe ... It corresponds to circumcision in other tribes, which is also attended with corporal punishment. Should not people be flogged when they have broken the law?”¹³⁶ Corporal punishment was

¹³³ BNARS, DCS.15/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate Serowe, November 16, 1930. G.E. Nettleton to K.T. Motsete, November 17, 1930. G.E. Nettleton to Chief Tshekedi Khama, November 17, 1930.

¹³⁴ BNARS, DCS.15/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate Serowe, November 16, 1930; K.T. Motsete, “Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Second Article,” *The Laymen’s Bulletin*, 84 (March 1938): 6.

¹³⁵ BNARS, DCS.15/7, K.T. Motsete to Resident Magistrate Serowe, November 16, 1930.

¹³⁶ BNARS, DCS.15/9, Transcript of the Inquiry into the Progressives’ Petition, 143.

a state sanctioned form of disciplining criminals. Tshekedi Khama added, “If a man commits a theft, we have no goal and we thrash him. Those who rape, we thrash for the same reason.”¹³⁷

Motsete’s own family was shocked by his words in the *kgotla* and distanced themselves from him. Motsete’s uncle, K. Lesitse, avidly backed Tshekedi. He testified that after hearing Motsete’s insult in the *kgotla*, Motsete’s father Tumedisho, a long-standing L.M.S. minister, was so livid he almost died. There is certainly evidence to suggest that publicly Motsete lacked the support of his immediate family. Nor is there evidence that anyone from the BaTalaote community testified on his behalf.¹³⁸

Peter Sebina, the MaTalaote secretary for the BaNgwato, wanted to hold Motsete accountable for his actions by asserting his responsibility to the *morafe*. Motsete dismissed his use of *boherehere* as a consequence of being out of practice speaking SeTswana. However, Tshekedi Khama reminded the listeners that Motsete was raised a MaTalaote in Serowe, spoke SeTswana, and understood BaNgwato customs. Sebina dispelled the notion that Motsete’s insult may have been a result of his ethnic disposition. He asserted that Motsete was a *Mochuana* (Tswana person), his actions stemmed from being full of anger, and that they were a sign of his “emotional, primitive and uncivilized character.”¹³⁹

Sebina suggested that Motsete did not speak as a Christian, but as a heathen, and should not attempt to apologize behind the cloak of Christianity. Sebina challenged the notion that educated Christian Africans were invariably civilized and argued that Motsete,

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 219.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 160.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 74.

along with other Christians, were subject to the authority of customary law in the same manner as others in the *merafe*.¹⁴⁰

Sebina critiqued Motsete's Christian moral disposition and his claim to be in a position to direct the BaNgwato. He deemed Motsete a nefarious false prophet that had to be punished. He professed,

Christ has warned us 'to beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but are ravenous wolves'... I will explain what a native minister is. He is a heathen who is painted. I say Motsete is a painted heathen. A man who preaches peace on Sundays and disturbs the peace during the weekdays is not a Christian.¹⁴¹

Not only did Sebina attack Motsete's claim to a theological high ground, he publicly threatened to flog him for insulting the *kgosi*. For Sebina, corporal punishment was more than a tool for maintaining authority, it was the means to safeguard social norms and controlling morality. Debates emerged between the progressives and BaNgwato adherents over interpretations of Christianity and the right to claim authority of African social practices. Just as Sebina challenged the notion that educated Christian Africans were the doyens of civilization, BaNgwato adherents contested Motsete's claims to possess superior knowledge of Christianity.

According to Motsete there was a difference between the secular and the spiritual. He believed that the *dikgosi* should mandate secular matters like education, but that people should decide how they engage in spiritual matters. Secular education should be obligatory as it served a crucial social function. Schools were a substitute for certain customs phased out by Khama III, like *bogwera* (circumcision) and *bogadi* (dowry). However, Motsete contended that the state could not coerce people to pray and that true Christian ministers

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 125-129.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

opposed forcing people into prayer. He believed that Khama III abolished rainmaking and witchcraft so that people would have the choice to replace those spiritual practices with Christianity.¹⁴²

Isang posed a direct challenge to Motsete's notion that the *dikgosi* had no authority over spiritual matters. He argued that the BaKgatla still practiced a Christian form of the annual rainmaking ceremony. Isang professed, "On account of Christianity, the chief abolished [rain-making], but set aside a certain day for prayer to God as his forefathers had done."¹⁴³ Members of the BaKgatla *morafe* were obligated to participate in the hybrid ceremony.

Motsete scoffed at the notion that African authorities could simply remake African religious practices into Christianity. He testified,

According to [African religion], God is worshiped mostly by offerings, without considering the feeling of the people. According to Christianity, God is not influenced by offerings of gifts or by the number of people, etc., unless they approach Him with all their hearts. People must approach God because of their need or their love of Him.¹⁴⁴

Motsete's made a distinction between African religion and Christianity. While the former was ritualistic belief and not dependent on people's feelings, the later required authentic intention that the state could not mandate.

Based on his prerogative to synthesize African culture and Christianity, Tshekedi Khama claimed superiority in religious matters. He deemed Motsete's ideas European and disagreed with European conceptions of Christianity. He said, "There are certain customs of the white man we should adopt and others we should not ... We were not children when he

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 80-82.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 84.

found us here, we were men.”¹⁴⁵ As they did elsewhere, the two men competed over the right to claim authority on religious matters. By asserting that the BaNgwato “were not children,” Tshekedi Khama claimed a mature form of masculinity, one that challenged the claims of the progressives as well as infantilization by the British authorities.

The debate over regimental labor shows how various Africans conceived their notions of African advancement and the maintenance of self-determination. BaNgwato adherent Phethu Mphoeng testified that regimental labor was vital for African directed development projects, such as dams, churches and schools underpinning the health of the community.¹⁴⁶ Mphoeng bolstered his defense of regimental labor and customary law by juxtaposing it against European rule and colonial development. He testified that he returned from Southern Rhodesia to live under Khama III because he preferred customary law to the lack of access to land and the hardships of living under European laws.¹⁴⁷ For Mphoeng, regimental labor was a function of customary law, which meant a degree of self-determination unattainable in a settler colony. Mphoeng cited the Transvaal as an example of why Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate were averse to living under European law. He argued that the majority of the BaNgwato still desired to be ruled by their *dikgosi* and that they should not be separated because a few want European ways.¹⁴⁸ Mphoeng’s point was to preserve the existing African self-determination under indirect rule. He backed the system of customary law because it was the means by which the *dikgosi* successfully mitigated the negative impacts of settler colonialism apparent in the neighboring territories.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-93.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

After the inquiry, Tshekedi Khama intended to hold the petitioners accountable. His hands were tied because the government took seven months to publicly announce its official decision. In that time, Tshekedi Khama demanded a case be made against the petitioners based on defamation of character, denigration of state authority, sedition, and high treason.¹⁴⁹

Sebina, educated at Fort Hare University College, spearheaded a counterpetition to the British authorities in which he sarcastically challenged what he referred to as the “feigning educated class” that sprung up in the last five years and call themselves the “progressives” or the “intellectuals.” Especially after Segolodi walked through town brandishing a rifle in a manner reminiscent of the Ratshosa shooting, Sebina was convinced that the petitioners had openly defied the regent’s authority.¹⁵⁰ The BaNgwato counterpetition stated,

When we see these petitioners go about unreprieved and with no punishment at all, but instead walk in our midst with all the impudence and the spirit of defiance they can command, we fail to see justice and fair play... These people have followed in the train of the Ratshosas and John Nswazwi, etc. to stir up the populace, to desperate acts, which will perpetuate the bitterness which will work disastrously in the whole community unless arrested in time.¹⁵¹

BaNgwato adherents criticized British authorities for encouraging further provocation by reducing the Ratshosa’s sentence and not sufficiently managing the Nswazwi affair. Still, the more time the British took to announce their decision on the inquiry, the more likely they would rule against Tshekedi Khama and use the progressives’ petition as justification to further their agenda to curtail the powers of the *dikgosi*.

¹⁴⁹ BNARS, DCS 15/9, Tshekedi Khama to Sir Herbert Stanley High Commissioner, August 12, 1931.

¹⁵⁰ BNARS, DCS 15/9, “The Petition of the Members of the Bamangwato Tribe of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, March 27, 1931.”

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The 1931 Ballinger and Barnes Tour of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

In June 1931, with the British government's decision on the inquiry into the progressives' petition still pending, the Ballingers returned to the Bechuanaland Protectorate with British journalist Leonard Barnes and his wife. The Ballinger-Barnes group visited BuKalanga to investigate socio-economic conditions and education. They obtained information and voiced their grievances at secret meetings at midnight with Simon Ratshosa, Disang Raditladi, John Nswazwi and others. Allegedly, during their earlier tour, the Ballingers collaborated with the progressives to develop the progressives' petition.¹⁵²

Segolodi, the Ballinger-Barnes group's interpreter and informant, wrote to the High Commissioner, "The time is ripe, and the battle for freedom of speech is everywhere in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. But there will be no peace while officials with their narrow, selfish and prejudice outlook and attitude try to prevent a body of civilized native inhabitants from meeting in a properly legitimate and orderly manner to voice their grievances and to improve their conditions."¹⁵³ In the absence of discipline, the progressives grew more brazen.

Tati District Commissioner G.E. Nettleton reported that due to the long-deferred pronouncement on the petition, the BaNgwato *morafe* was restless with the petitioners' activities.¹⁵⁴ Rey was concerned that the party would undermine his authority.¹⁵⁵ Tshekedi declared the petitioners' actions as "open defiance" and was convinced that the Ballinger-Barnes group was fueling outright rebellion against his chieftaincy.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² BNARS, DCS.17/7, Ederwile Seretse to Resident Magistrate Serowe, June 25, 1931.

¹⁵³ BNARS, DCS.17/1, Moanaphuti Segolodi to the High Commissioner, Sept 19, 1931.

¹⁵⁴ BNARS, DCS.17/7, G.E. Nettleton, "Aftermath of Messrs. Ballinger and Co.," July 21, 1931.

¹⁵⁵ Charles Fernand Rey, *Monarch of All I Survey* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988), 41.

¹⁵⁶ BNARS, DCS.17/7, G.E. Nettleton, "Aftermath of Messrs. Ballinger and Co.," July 21, 1931.

The petitioners forged an ambiguous space, outside the practical authority of the African or British authorities. BaNgwato adherent Makgasane Osupile Gaditswane proposed that the petitioners be permanently detached from the BaNgwato *morafe* and placed under the jurisdiction of the British. The chief's inability to assert authority posed a significant challenge to the system of indirect rule. Gaditswane suggested, "Two chiefs cannot rule in one village. A sick cow cannot be kept with healthy animals." Indirect rule was based on the British sanctioning the *dikgosi* to act as the authority over internal matters. However, in this case, they were barred from responding.¹⁵⁷

After their second tour of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the Ballingers published their findings in *Indirect Rule in southern Africa, Basutoland* (1931) and *Britain in Southern Africa* (1932).¹⁵⁸ They argued that although the British rescued the Southern African Protectorates from the old colonial policy of dispossession and exploitation, they left them to the system of indirect rule and the ambiguous notion of development along their own lines. They concluded that the "old tribal chieftainship is a doomed institution, a form of government that must pass as the people develop." Their tours of the Bechuanaland Protectorate reconfirmed for the Ballingers that chiefly rule was outmoded and deprived the people of their optimal future, and that educated Africans were caught between the jealous chiefs and the inept British authorities, "unable to take up a definitive stand against the old order" and unwilling to give them the power they sought.¹⁵⁹ The Ballingers aimed their publications at British policy makers. They argued that over the course of the last half a century, Britain significantly altered their relationship with the Southern African

¹⁵⁷ BNARS, DCS.17/7, "Bamangwato Tribesmen to the Government," [not dated].

¹⁵⁸ Margaret Ballinger, *Bechuanaland Protectorate*; Margaret Hodgeson [Ballinger] and William George Ballinger, *Indirect Rule in Southern Africa: Basutoland* (Lovedale, C.P., South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1931).

¹⁵⁹ Margaret Hodgeson [Ballinger] and William George Ballinger, *Indirect Rule in Southern Africa*, 27.

Protectorates, assumed and exercised powers of internal sovereignty, and infringed on the province of the supposed African authorities. The Ballingers declared, “There is no limit to the powers that the protecting state may assume in respect to the protected.”¹⁶⁰ In other words, Africans were not sovereign, and thus Britain was responsible to define the nature of their arbitrary authority over the Protectorates.

The Ballingers argued that despite Britain’s attempt at non-interference, the encounter with Europe introduced Africans to the colonial economy and permanently altered their social life.¹⁶¹ They described the conditions of Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate as comparable to people in a “modern industrial state [instead of] an ancient tribe.”¹⁶² By arguing that Africans and Europeans were already intertwined economically and socially and Africans in the protectorate were already industrialized, the Ballingers attacked the gradualist ideology inherent in indirect rule and challenged the settler colonial dogma of racial segregation.

The Ballingers believed that in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the fifty-year alliance between the British and the *dikgosi* was being broken from within. They considered emerging discontented factions, like the progressives, to be signs of the growing pains of the society.¹⁶³ Ultimately, they questioned the very nature of British trusteeship and questioned if Africans were better off “under the active burdens of the South African system” or with the “stagnation of the Bechuanaland system.” The Ballingers concluded that trusteeship was actually “lip service” because it had not altered the British policy of “opportunism which has really so far governed its destinies.” Hence, in their final assessment, there was little

¹⁶⁰ Margaret Ballinger, *Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 31.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 75.

difference between imperial and colonial rule and Britain remained averse to protecting the Bechuanaland Protectorate from economic plunder by the *dikgosi* and the South African economy.¹⁶⁴

In August 1931, a month after the decision on the petition was announced, Tshekedi Khama met with Motsete and Resident Commissioner Rey in the BaNgwato *kgotla*. Days before, BaNgwato adherents sent a counter petition to Stanley, the High Commissioner in Cape Town.¹⁶⁵ They asserted their loyalty to the British Empire and their unhappiness with the government's decision regarding the progressives' petition. BaNgwato adherents remained resolute in their intention to punish the petitioners and attain justice for Motsete's insult.¹⁶⁶ In the meeting in the *kgotla*, Tshekedi Khama voiced his anxiety over Motsete's disobedience. "There was a certain speech made by [Motsete] in my presence... I fear it. I was listening to it. My understanding of the speech as made was not the same as when I read it ... I fear it."¹⁶⁷ The *dikgosi* held an indispensable role in the system of indirect rule but the political debates related to the progressives' petition were an ominous sign of the far-reaching changes on the horizon.

A few years later, Tshekedi Khama described the progressives' petition as one episode of the eleven-year-long civil war comprised of six petitions by the Ratshosas, Raditladis and Nswazwi.¹⁶⁸ He proclaimed, "This was an attempt to overthrow the native chieftainship of the BaNgwato nation."¹⁶⁹ Tshekedi Khama was partially correct because the

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 82.

¹⁶⁵ BNARS, S.173/7, Petition by 225 Headmen of the Bamangwato Tribe to Herbert Stanley High Commissioner, July 30, 1931.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁷ BNARS, DCS.17/7, "Resident Magistrates Notes on Serowe Kgotla Meeting, Thursday August 13, 1931," August 14, 1931.

¹⁶⁸ BNARS, S.485/1/1, "Tshekedi Khama's Statement," May 10, 1937; DCS.15/9, Sekgoma and Raditladi Petition, January 1924.

¹⁶⁹ BNARS, S.485/1/3, J. Ellenberger, "Report on the Raditladi Inquiry, Exhibit W, December 1937."

progressives' petition was connected to the decades long feud between the Sekgoma and Khama factions. However, the progressives' political platform proved much broader than a dispute over the right to direct the BaNgwato *morafe*. It exposed the fractures within the system of indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and challenged the ideas underpinning British trusteeship in the Southern African protectorates.

The debates drawn out by the progressives' petition showed how various Africans formed ideas about progress. In the Bechuanaland Protectorate, protection was ambiguous and not accompanied by any clear provision for administration. Various African stakeholders exploited the vagueness of protection to promote their own agendas. In 1930 and 1931, British liberals Margaret and William Ballinger and Leonard Barnes connected with the progressives and others who stood in opposition to BaNgwato policy. Together, they developed the progressives' petition of October 1930 and promoted a form of imperial trusteeship which highlighted the protectorates as the regional anchor for British influence and ideology. This was part of the larger scheme to strengthen the relationship between liberals and the British Empire in order to promote an array of political reforms and an agenda for African socio-economic progress.

Chapter Seven

The Tati Training Institute and Self-Determination in the BuKalanga Borderlands

Late in the day in the first week of 1938, thirty-nine-year-old Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete sat at his desk working on the seventh annual report for the Tati Training Institute. It was likely about 90° F in his one room principal's cottage. Off in the distance were the sounds of the school day. The Tati Training Institute was in its most prosperous period. It had sixty-one male and thirty-two female students.¹ Motsete typed a section of the report titled "Native self-respect enhanced."

Thus, a sense of racial self-respect is engendered by the achievement of 'doing,' faith is strengthened in the cooperative effort among the natives themselves, with their government, missionaries and other European friends. This cooperation might, with advantage, be applied to other communal interests to the enrichment of native life and the moral, social, economic and educational benefits of the Bechuanaland Protectorate until the native, too, contributes his peculiar but no less fitting and valuable contribution to the common good.²

This excerpt captures three of Motsete's fundamental ambitions for the Tati Training Institute: Employing education to develop Africans' self-respect, working in concert with supportive Europeans, and improving Africans' abilities to contribute to their country. However, in striving to reach these goals, Motsete faced the ever-present challenge to promote the school in a manner where it would generate favor in the minds of the British government and the school's European benefactors, maintain his commitment to encourage African dignity, and develop students dedicated to contributing to building the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

¹ Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, S.243/19, Inspector G.H. Franz, "Report on Visit to Tati Training Institute to Consider Proposals for Reorganization of Work," 1938.

² BNARS, S.243/19, K.T. Motsete, "The Report of the Tati Training Institute for the Year, 1936/7," January 8, 1938.

K.T. Motsete and Kalanga community leaders established the Tati Training Institute, the first secondary school in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, at Nyewele in the Mosojane area, near Tshesebe, in 1932. The school emerged out of a complex mixture of Africans' pursuit of education, resistance to colonialism, ethnic struggles, and the uncertain promises of development on the margins of the British Empire. The BaKalanga were engaged in a resistance movement led by *she* (chief) John Madawo Nswazwi (1875-1960) against the bolstering of the colonial border that violently split their community between Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. They were also colonial outliers who embraced European-style education as a means to manage their socio-economic position and retain cultural continuity in the face of emerging challenges presented by colonialism and politically dominant Africans on both sides of the border. Therefore, TjiKalanga speaking communities embraced European-style education as a means to unmake their political isolation and socio-economic marginality.³ Motsete, in partnership with Kalanga leaders, fashioned the Tati Training Institute to preserve their ability to be self-determinant and strengthen their ability to deflect colonial depredations. Motsete wielded his loyalty to the British Empire as a weapon to prop up the Kalanga struggle against the differential status of African communities living in various colonial demarcations, and promoted a vision of empire based on challenging the inconsistent treatment of people within the Bechuanaland Protectorate and by proxy, Africans throughout the region.⁴

³ M.M. Madikwe, "Western Education Among the Kalanga of Northern Ngwato District, 109-1966" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1983).

⁴ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, "I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection."

Underdevelopment and African Education among TjiKalanga Speaking Communities in the BuKalanga Borderlands

The area inhabited by a majority of TjiKalanga speaking communities was a borderland referred to here as the “BuKalanga borderlands.” TjiKalanga speaking communities straddled the colonial borders between the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia. The BuKalanga borderlands consisted of the area of the Bechuanaland Protectorate under the control of the Tati Company (now the Tati area or the North-East District), parts

of the BaNgwato Reserve (now the Central District), and Matabeleland in western Southern Rhodesia. In each place,



Figure 6; the Bukalanga Borderlands

these communities were subjected to different laws and regulations. In the first decades of the 20th century, mobility grew increasingly difficult as the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesian governments actualized a physical border between the two countries.

In the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the TjiKalanga speaking communities fell under

the governance of either the BaNgwato or the Tati Company. The Tati Company was given complete control over the BaKalanga in the area covered by its concession. The Tati Company levied taxes and controlled the use and occupation of land. The majority of BaKalanga living under the jurisdiction of the Tati Company, were in the Tati Reserve, established in 1910. The Protectorate government paid rent to the Tati Company to use the Tati Reserve. Other TjiKalanga speakers rented land outside the Tati Reserve directly from the Tati company. The BaNgwato collected taxes from the BaKalanga living in the BaNgwato Reserve and exercised authority over land and political matters.⁵

From the mid 19th century until the 1960s, the BuKalanga borderlands consisted more of Kalanga peripheries than of territory under European power. The region was the site of a unique confluence of social, economic, and political transformation. It was a place of European and imperial contestation, colonization campaigns, rapidly transforming economies, technological innovation, cultural ascendancy, variegated ethnic formation and complex identity formation. The BaKalanga were one of four significant ethnic groups inter-dispersed in the region. The other three were the Tswana, Ndebele, and Shona. Although the BaKalanga are a significant population with a distinct historical experience, studies of the BuKalanga borderlands region are few and far between.⁶ The dearth of Kalanga-centered

⁵ Changu Edith Mannathoko, "Kalanga Politics in the Context of Nationalism in Botswana: A Historical Perspective" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1978); Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga: Retrospect and Prospect* (Gaborone, Botswana: The Botswana Society for the Supa-Ngwao Museum and the Kalanga Bible Translation Project, 1991), 38.

⁶ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele Societies, 1860-1990* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, 2012); Catrien Van Waarden, *The Oral History of the Bakalanga of Botswana* (Gaborone: Botswana Society, 1988); P.J. Wentzel and Masola Kumile, *Nau Dzabakalanga A History of The Kalanga* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1983); Richard P. Werbner, *Tears of the Dead: The Social Biography of an African Family* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Richard P. Werbner, *Reasonable Radicals and Citizenship in Botswana: The Public Anthropology of Kalanga Elites* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

history is the result of over-applying nation as an analytical framework and constructing conceptual analysis around colonial boundaries.

Paul Nugent aptly argued that there is a general consensus that the colonial partition of Africa had an enduring impact. For communities like the BaKalanga, colonial boundaries severed “precolonial trade routes, cultural complexes and political sovereignties.”⁷ The BuKalanga borderlands was a frontier. However, as Martin Legassick demonstrated, the term “frontier” is not limited to the Southern African historiographical definition of the encounter between Europeans and the local population.⁸ Here, “frontier” is defined in three ways: as a region of settlement that is in part beyond state control, as a political dynamic whereby the terms of power between the colonizer and colonized are negotiated, and as a place where those who inhabit the region assume complex and convoluted identities.⁹

The borderlands are a place where the narrative of empires and colonists setting the stage for nations comes unraveled. The borderlands historiography is itself an open-ended answer to Frederick Jackson Turner’s master Euro-American narrative that the frontier was a space of narrative closure.¹⁰ Hämäläinen and Truett argue that the central insight of the Borderlands field is that “history pivoted not only on a succession of state centered polities but also on other turning points ... where the vision of empires and nations often foundered and the future was far from certain.”¹¹ In other words, in order to analyze the history of the BuKalanga borderlands, one must move beyond categories such as European colonists,

⁷ Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Life of the Borderlands Since 1914* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 2.

⁸ Martin Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780-1840* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010).

⁹ Giorgio Miescher, *Namibia's Red Line: The History of a Veterinary and Settlement Border* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 8.

¹⁰ Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands.” *Journal of American History* 98,2 (2011): 338. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1921).

¹¹ Pekka Hämäläinen. “On Borderlands,” 340.

Tswana, and Ndebele, and hagiographic historical conceptualizations. Thus, the goal is to focus is on local agency and highlight Motsete's role in the open-ended narrative of the unstable and ongoing cultural convergence of Kalanga communities and their neighbors. Motsete shaped the social formation "frontier" in the BuKalanga borderlands, and therefore had a part in defining and shaping the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the British Empire.¹²

In the BuKalanga borderlands, Motsete partnered with Kalanga chieftaincies, led by Headman John Nswazwi and others, who were already engaged in a struggle to retain their political and economic self-sufficiency despite the colonial invasion. The rich archival record of the Nswazwi people's struggle is the basis for exploring confrontations between an ethnic minority and the imperial government alongside a process of negotiation between the British Empire and regional colonial power. State power was restricted and unstable in the BuKalanga borderlands and the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesian governments were far too weak to simply impose their intentions.

The BaKalanga emerged as a borderland community around 1825, sandwiched between two more powerful African societies: the Ndebele to the east and the Tswana to the west. The coming of British colonialism and the imposition of the border between what became Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate worsened this predicament for the BaKalanga. The BaKalanga continued to make use of preexisting social and territorial boundaries long after the British established the colonial border (1895) and fixed the boundaries of the Tati Company land (1911). The British detached the Tati Concessions Land from Matabeleland, placed it under the jurisdiction of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

¹²Igor Kopytoff, *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 7.

government (1893) and annexed the Tati Concessions Land to the Protectorate via the Tati Concessions Land Act (1911).

Kalanga chiefs supported the Tati Training Institute in part because it gave them leverage to challenge unfavorable state policies, especially the expropriation of their lands and the bolstering of the colonial border. Motsete was aware of the difficulties resulting from the drawing of the colonial border. This was especially pronounced in terms of the Kalanga community's ability to promote regionally sustained institutions such as schools. Motsete contested the fundamental nature of the colonial border, which had violently divided the Kalanga community. His appeal to the colonial government was based on a broader argument that colonized Africans living in various territories in the sphere of British colonialism were due certain rights as British subjects, which superseded colonial demarcations.

Motsete advocated for continuity throughout the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He understood the root of the Nswazwi struggle against BaNgwato rule to be the differential treatment of people under the same government. Motsete pointed out that in the Tati area, the BaKalanga were not subject to regimental labor and “enjoy a liberty and freedom in self-development” denied to those under BaNgwato rule.¹³ He asserted that they “must expect dissatisfaction and trouble from the less favored section when they realize how much better off economically and socially their more fortunate neighbors are. They naturally ask for equality of opportunity.”¹⁴ By bringing to light the different conditions in the various areas, Motsete questioned the notion that there existed some consistent notion of British justice and challenged the underpinnings of imperial rule.

¹³ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, “I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Motsete's association with the rural poor makes him a remarkable case and dispels the erroneous notion that educated Africans were disconnected from African societies. Motsete founded the Tati Training Institute in partnership with Kalanga chiefs. The dialog between Motsete and Nswazwi is a fruitful thread for exploring intellectual thinking beyond the sphere of European-style education. Steven Feierman deemed African intellectuals such as John Nswazwi as "peasant intellectuals."¹⁵ Peasant intellectuals were African leaders, who may or may not have been educated in the European style. They were socially and politically connected to African communities and engaged in knowledge production for the means of addressing problems and bringing about positive social change. However, their perspectives were typically not represented in the colonial archive. Since Nswazwi's case is well documented, it provides perspective on how peasant intellectuals, at moments of historical importance, created discourse and counter-discourse through the important leadership and organizational roles they performed in society.

Peasant intellectuals and commoners were perpetually struggling to preserve self-determination. Peasant intellectuals partnered with the class educated in the European style because they believed European-style education was a means to bolster the struggle. In conjunction with schooling, Kalanga leaders established the BaKalanga Students Association in 1945 to promote the TjiKalanga language and writing in TjiKalanga in order to motivate more children to pursue European-style education. Kalanga leaders connected European-style education and the BaKalanga Students Association to the larger effort to unify the people in the struggle to regain their land expropriated by the Tati Company and the BaNgwato. Concurrently, those BaKalanga who had obtained European-style education promoted the

¹⁵ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

BaKalanga Students Association as their means to connect with commoners and unite all BaKalanga irrespective of ostensible class divisions.¹⁶

At the beginning of the 20th century, the growing class of Africans educated in the European style led to a different type of protest. Their struggle against colonial domination was based on their plan to replace the colonists without changing the structure of colonial society.¹⁷ Henderson Tapela deemed this scheme “independency,” the “conscious expression of [a person’s] ability to take initiative in the running of his affairs” and “a rejection of European paternalism.” However, Tapela argued that independency was not a rejection of European ideas. ¹⁸ For instance, European-style education was Motsete’s means to support the BaKalanga.

The concept of independency is applicable to Motsete’s objective to use education to empower the BaKalanga. Well aware of the predicament facing the BaKalanga, Motsete hoped that education could be the means to improve Africans’ socio-economic standing by facilitating further engagement in the colonial economy and challenging the politics of racial division. At least in terms of competence, educated Africans could claim equality or in some cases superiority to their European counterparts. Thus, European-style education led to socio-economic advancement and strengthened the BaKalanga struggle for self-determination.

The Tati Training Institute was the practical application of Motsete’s life experiences and emerged out of the type of cultural fusion practiced by Motsete and the progressives described in two, three, and four. As is evident by Motsete’s use of Tswana and Kalanga

¹⁶ Catrien, Van Waarden, *Kalanga: Retrospect and Prospect*, 40.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 39; Basil Davidson, *Let Freedom Come: Africa in Modern History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), chapter seventeen; BNARS, BNA KOMA, Kenneth Koma, *The Botswana National Front, Its Character and Tasks, Pamphlet no. 1, The Basic Document of the Botswana National Front* (Mahalapye, Botswana, Political Education Committee, [no date specified]): 21.

¹⁸ Henderson Mpakati Tapela, “The Tati District of Botswana, 1866-1969.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Sussex, 1976), 140.

proverbs and his Kalanga centric interpretation of the history of the BuKalanga borderlands, his sense of African cultural heritage contributed to how he conceived his program at the Tati Training Institute. His educational philosophy was based on empowering individuals and promoting self-determination for and by ethnic minority Kalanga communities. Although his assertions of Africaness were mediated through European cultural patterns such as European-style education, the English language, Christianity and European dress, Motsete maintained an African identity and a strong sense of African history.

By the middle of the 1990s, emerging social histories of African education placed Africans as central actors.¹⁹ African responses to education were based on measuring the value of an opportunity. Africans demanded schools and actively engaged with education projects. Historians reconciled debates over whether or not participating in European-style education meant abandoning African life and culture by arguing firmly that it did not. European-style education was much more than a mechanism for economic integration or for social engineering.²⁰ Historians showed that there was no link between European-style education and low wage employment in Southern Rhodesia, because the vast majority of employers preferred uneducated workers. This detached European-style education from the colonial agenda to maintain a labor reservoir.²¹ The primary reason colonists became more involved in African education in Southern Africa the 1920s and 1930s was because they sought to control and restrict its expansion. They considered limiting education as a means to

¹⁹ Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

²⁰ Sybille Küster, *Neither Cultural Imperialism Nor Precious Gift of Civilization: African Education in Colonial Zimbabwe 1890-1962*. (Münster: Lit, 1994); Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons*.

²¹ Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons*.

prevent destabilization based on the idea that independent thinking educated Africans were an imminent threat to European settler racial regimes and colonial power.

As Timothy Parsons showed in his analysis of scouting, institutions like European-style education did not produce uncritical loyalty or social control. Africans learned to understand colonial institutions and master European culture.²² Motsete was one of many Africans who used education to challenge racial paradigms and advance their claims to the full rights of citizenship. From that vantage, education was a means to contest their subordinate social status and challenge the legitimacy of the empire. Carol Summers argued that in the 1920s, the Southern Rhodesian government shifted away from the assimilation model and the idea of Africans becoming European, towards the racial segregation model which dominated the 1930s. This shift opened up more ideological space for Africans to define how separate development and African education should proceed.²³

During the 1930s, the vast majority of both Africans and Europeans preferred some form of cultural fusion to Europeanized Africans. Thus, colonial officials were dependent on African innovation. Despite the fact that educated Africans posed an inherent political critique of European power, there was an opportunity for Motsete to establish the Tati Training Institute based primarily on the urgent need for schools run for and by Africans capable of striking a balance between accommodating the parameters of the colonial administrations and promoting a number of competing African agendas. African educators like Motsete exploited the opportunity to promote their own form of cultural synthesis and ultimately, African authority turned colonial paternalism upside down.

²² Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), 1-6.

²³ Carol Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1934* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994).

The “colonial lessons” learned by the Southern Rhodesian students in Summers’s account were new forms of protest against the colonial state. The school was a space for criticizing things such as colonialism, the British Empire, and local African and colonial authority.²⁴ Therefore, the Tati Training Institute was not a space for colonial control. Teachers like Motsete did not collaborate with colonial power or indoctrinated or subjugated Africans. Rather, teachers were self-empowered critics and positive agents of the African resistance movement who posed formidable challenges to the status quo. In the case of the Tati Training Institute, the students learned “Kalanganess,” and thereby discontent and struggle against local authorities and the colonial boundary splitting Kalanga communities. At his school, Motsete established an environment for students to re-create and not simply consume education. African students did not merely ingest some form of European-centric ideology. Instead, they produced something wholly African.

Terence Ranger argued that European-style schools designed and run by Africans were an expression of an African future that ran counter to colonial racism.²⁵ The most relevant aspect of the Tati Training Institute was that it represented Africa under the control of Africans. The handful of schools under African auspices were distinct from the vast majority of mission or government schools because they typified African self-determination, which by definition demonstrated a strong critique of European paternalism in Africa.

Motsete modeled the Tati Training Institute as a means to relieve the educational bottleneck created by the growing African demand for European-style education and the dearth of schools. He positioned the Tati Training Institute as an alternative to beleaguered

²⁴ Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons*

²⁵ T.O. Ranger, *African Attempts to Control Education in East and Central Africa, 1900-1939* (Oxford, Eng: Past and Present Society, 1965), 74.

mission and government education programs. In the 1930s, the network of missionary schools did not offer the secondary schooling Africans desired.²⁶ There were no government schools in the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1930s. For decades, scholars have shown that Africans demanded schools and were keen on learning English.²⁷ In fact, Africans were not willing to accept modified or adapted versions of European-style education and insisted on curricula on a par with that being offered in Europe and elsewhere. The Tati Training Institute was equipped to offer a diverse offering of academic subjects and prepare graduates for further education at African colleges, such as Fort Hare and Tiger Kloof Institute in South Africa.

In Motsete's case, funding education and expanding Africans' access to schools was a greater challenge than managing the state regulated curriculum.²⁸ Motsete successfully designed a mixed academic and vocational primary and secondary school curriculum that transcended the limitations of existing missionary and government schools. Hence, Motsete resolved the tensions between what he and the community wanted as a program of study with those mandated by the British administration. This chapter focuses on the context in which the Tati Training Institute emerged and the school's legacy as opposed to measuring the school's curriculum against the demands of the state.

Socio-economic underdevelopment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, including the education system, can be traced to the first decades of the 20th century when the British systematically destroyed the economic system developed by Khama III.²⁹ Africans became

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ J. Mutero Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana, 1850-1910* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977); Küster, *Neither Cultural Imperialism*; Summers, *Colonial Lessons*.

²⁸ K.T. Motsete, "Native Policy in the Bechuanaland Protectorate."

²⁹ Neil Parsons. *The Economic History of Khama's Country in Southern Africa* (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1974).

attracted to European-style education because reading and writing English and training for practical purposes offered advantages, especially in terms of social mobility.³⁰ Africans wanted to be able to compete with Europeans in the emerging commercial economy. The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) held a monopoly on mission education and resisted facilitating secular education or expanding the network of missionary schools. The looming possibility of incorporation by South Africa and “imperial rule on the cheap,” furthered underdevelopment of all aspects of the Protectorate, including education, in the 1930s and beyond.³¹ By the 1980s, scholars of the underdevelopment school successfully argued that despite the African perception that education was the basis for socio-economic advancement and demand for education in English rose in the 1920s and 1930s, colonial governments throughout Africa significantly hindered African’s access to education.³²

In the first decade of the 20th century, British authorities in the Bechuanaland Protectorate asserted their policy to take control of education from the missionaries. In 1905, Edmund Beale Sargant, an education official from South Africa, made the first full colonial inspection of the Protectorate schools.³³ His influential recommendations were a blueprint for the government’s education policy until 1945.³⁴ Although the government assumed more

³⁰ BNARS, RC 6/1, Sargant, *Report on Education in Basutoland, 1905-6*; Chirenje, *History of Northern Botswana*, 184; Part Themba Mgadla, “Missionary and Colonial Education among the Bangwato, 1862-1948” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1986); E.B. Sargant, *Report on Native Education in South Africa. Pt. 3, Education in the Protectorates*. Cd, 4119 (London: H.M.S.O, 1908).

³¹ Rachel Dixey, “British Involvement in the Administration of Education in Bechuanaland, 1850-1966,” *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. 29,1 (1997): 32.

³² Ali A. Abdi, *Black Education and Underdevelopment in South Africa: A Socio-Historical Perspective* (Montreal, Canada: McGill University, 1996); Dixey, “British Involvement in the Administration of Education”; Dickson A. Mungazi, *The Underdevelopment of African Education: A Black Zimbabwean Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).

³³ BNARS, RC.6/1, BNB.5242, Sargant Report.

³⁴ Q. N. Parsons, “Education and Development in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Botswana to 1965,” in Michael Crowder, *Education for Development: Proceedings of a Symposium Held by the Botswana Society at the National Museum and Art Gallery, Gaborone, 15-19 August 1983* (Gaborone: Published for the Botswana Society by Macmillan Botswana Pub, 1984), 33.

power, between the publication of the Sargent Report (1908) and 1929, it had little ability to carry out education or any other development projects.³⁵ For two decades, the government did very little to develop African education. In 1920, a tax of three shillings per hut was levied in addition to the £1 annual hut tax to fund a meager number of schools in the reserves.³⁶ Although the education network was slowly brought under the control of the British administration, schools were especially neglected well into the 1930s.³⁷ Without a secondary school in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, people seeking higher education had to travel to South Africa or to Southern Rhodesia. Being in a foreign country posed practical and cultural challenges and contributed to why the BaTswana supported establishing facility for higher education in the Protectorate.

Tshekedi Khama's scheme to resist colonial economic development, especially mining and agriculture from South Africa, attributed to the underdevelopment of education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. His primary objective as regent was to conserve all aspects of the Protectorate until Seretse Khama took over as chief. Tshekedi Khama deemed nearly all European advancement as part of the South African settler agenda to incorporate Bechuanaland and the other Southern African Protectorates.

In the BaNgwato Reserve, Tshekedi Khama established and financed a number of schools including the Khama Memorial School in Serowe. The education initiatives benefited residents in and around Serowe but there was a growing level of discontent by taxpayers in

³⁵ BNARS, BNB177, "Correspondence [1930-1931] Relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner for South Africa, "Education in Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland," 212.

³⁶ South Africa. Office of Census and Statistics. *Official Year Book of the Union and of Basutoland, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland, No. 4, 1921* (Pretoria: Published under Authority of the Minister of the Interior, 1922.)

³⁷ Christian John Makgala and Emmanuel Botlhale, "The Challenges of Financial Responsibility in the Tribal Administration of Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1919-1966," *African Historical Review*, 40,2 (2008), 28-61. Parsons, "Education and Development in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Botswana to 1965."

the outlying areas who were paying taxes for the benefit of the capital.³⁸ Beginning in 1928, Tshekedi Khama required his taxpayers to contribute additional money towards the Native Fund. Much of the tax money was going to the establishment of schools. Through the 1930s, all except two insignificant development initiatives launched by the Bamangwato Chieftaincy were related to education. The BaKalanga, on the outskirts of the Bamangwato Reserve and embroiled in political conflict with Tshekedi Khama, sought to build their own school in part because they received no financial support from the Native Fund, not even the amount that they were contributing.

In the 1930s colonial governments began to wrestle education away from the missionaries. They promoted industrial training as an alternative to academic education as part of an ideological wave that swept over European educationists connected to Africa called “adapted” education. Adapted education gained wide currency among educationists in the settler colonies of Southern Africa after the First World War.³⁹ The premise was that European-style education had to be specifically adapted or altered for application in Africa. Adapted education, proposed by its premier proponents, Thomas Jesse Jones and his Phelps-Stokes colleagues, was the design of an education concept oriented towards family and

³⁸ Diana Wylie. *A Little God: The Twilight of Patriarchy in a Southern African Chieftaincy* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), 147.

³⁹ J. F. Ade Ajayi, *The American Factor in the Development of Higher Education in Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 1988); Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review*. 15,2 (1971): 132-45; J. Mutero Chirenje, *From Tuskegee to Fort Hare College: The Quest for Higher Education in Southern Africa, 1884-1916* ([place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1980); Douglas Henry Daniels, “Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South,” *Journal of World History*. 23,1 (2012); Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Irene Nomhle Moutlana, *The Hampton/Tuskegee Model of Industrial Education: A Curious Transplant* (Qualifying paper, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1990); Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); Michael O. West, “The Tuskegee Model of Development in Africa: Another Dimension of the African/African-American Connection,” *Diplomatic History*, 16,3, (1992): 371-388; Shoko Yamada, “Educational Borrowing as Negotiation: Re-examining the Influence of the American Black Industrial Education Model on British Colonial Education in Africa,” *Comparative Education*, 44,1 (2008): 21-37.

community life. The idea was to diminish the negative aspects they associated with educating individuals through a European-style academic curriculum and turn African education into a community development program based on vocational training.⁴⁰

Scholars designated adapted education as a racist and restrictive policy to severely limit African advancement.⁴¹ From this vantage, adapted education was about the development and implementation of a colonial technology and scholars framed their analysis on the paradigm of social control and resistance. They argued that Africans resisted adapted curriculum based on their perception that academic education was the key to obtaining gainful employment, enhancing upward social mobility and circumventing the patriarchal control of chiefs and elders. They argued that Africans continued to demand academic education because of the perceived socio-economic benefits and resisted or outright rejected attempts by colonial administrations and missionaries to transpose the principles of adapted education into practice.⁴²

Initially, my ideas were shaped by a historical narrative common in the study of the history of education in Africa. In the interwar years, the Phelps Stokes Commissions (1923 and 1925), funded by the Carnegie Corporation, transferred ideas about industrial education pioneered by Booker T. Washington in the Southern United States to Africa in the form of adapted education. Ironically, an actual connection existed between the Tati Training Institute and the Carnegie Corporation because the Carnegie Corporation provided financial

⁴⁰ Udo Bude. "The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education," *Comparative Education*, 19,3 (1983): 341-55, 341.

⁴¹ Richard W. Hull, "The Phelps-Stokes Fund, African Education, and Agricultural Underdevelopment in Southern Africa: 1903-1935," *Africana Journal*, 16 (1994): 85-101; Philip Steenkamp, "'Cinderella of the Empire'?: Development Policy in Bechuanaland in the 1930s," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17,2 (1991): 292-308.

⁴² Bude, "The Adaptation Concept," 353; Sybille Küster, "'Book Learning' Versus 'Adapted Education': The Impact of Phelps-Stokesism on Colonial Education Systems in Central Africa in the Interwar Period," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*. 43,1 (2007): 79-97, 91.

assistance to the Tati Training Institute during an exceptional economically challenging period in the middle 1930s.⁴³ It seemed logical to assume that Motsete was inspired by the ideas of the Phelps-Stokes and Washington's Tuskegee model.

Further investigation proved the Tuskegee to Africa transplant narrative to be incorrect. The roots of industrial and adapted education are older than the Phelps-Stokes Commission. Developments alongside Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee in the second half of the 19th century emerged on the African continent as well as elsewhere in the British Empire.⁴⁴ Discourses related to adapted education traversed the globe and were redeployed in specific contexts. In addition, as Michael West argued, scholars overemphasize industrial education within the Tuskegee model instead of recognizing that it was part of "a general policy for Black development ... namely, submission to duly constituted authority, Black capitalism, self-help schemes, race pride, character building, as well as education."⁴⁵

West suggested that the Tuskegee model, including the discourse of self-help commonly associated with Tuskegee, meant various things to Africans. For example, Africans employed the idea of self-help in Southern Rhodesia to promote independent African controlled schools and Black run business ventures and not industrial education or

⁴³ BNARS, S.243/16-17.

⁴⁴ BNARS, S.443/1/1 see: Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education. *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education: 1935-1936* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1936); Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana*, 159-180; Rachel Dixey, "British Involvement in the Administration of Education in Bechuanaland"; A.D. Dodd, *Native Vocational Training: A Study of Conditions in South Africa, 1652-1936* (Lovedale, South Africa: Lovedale Press, 1938); Kimberly Richards and Ephraim Govere, "Educational Legislation in Colonial Zimbabwe (1899-1979)," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 35,2 (2003): 137-51; B. Kay Shuttleworth and Great Britain Committee on Education, *Brief Practical Suggestions on the Mode of Organizing and Conducting Day-Schools of Industry, Model Farm Schools, and Normal Schools as Part of a System of Education for the Coloured Races of the British Colonies*, 1847, microfilm; Rebecca Swartz, "Industrial Education in Natal: The British Imperial Context, 1830-1860," in Peter Kallaway and Rebecca Swartz, eds. *Empire and Education in Africa: The Shaping of a Comparative Perspective* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016).

⁴⁵ Michael O. West, "The Tuskegee Model," 371.

Tuskegee politics.⁴⁶ Therefore Africans like Motsete deployed rhetoric associated with the Tuskegee model or adapted education as a means to frame their unique development agendas. From the African perspective, self-help or adapted meant an Africanized version designed for application in a specific context and was thus a positive innovation instead of an inferior alternative.

Kalanga Political Economy, the TjiKalanga Language, and Kalanga Ethnicity

Without financial and ideological support from the government, the BaKalanga sought to build their own school. The following section is a short synopsis of the Kalanga political economy and an account of the formation of Kalanganess in the decades preceding the establishment of the Tati Training Institute in the 1930s. The BaKalanga sought European-style education by the 1930s as the means to obtain gainful employment and facilitate upward social mobility.

In the case of the BaKalanga, extensive interaction with Europeans began in 1864 when the British found gold in the Tati River area, in the heart of the BuKalanga borderlands. In the following decades, Kalanga traders developed economic relationships with the mining industry, providing food and labor. The British South Africa Company established the Tati Concessions Land in 1893 for mineral prospecting and to preserve the rights of access for what would become the Rhodesian Railways. Although the BaKalanga maintained economic relationships with Europeans, they were less centralized politically than their neighbors, the Tswana and the Ndebele, both of whom developed stronger political ties to the European company. Beginning in the mid 19th century, the BaKalanga were squeezed between the

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 380.

Tswana to their West and the Ndebele to their East, both of whom considered them their subjects.

According to M.D.K. Mongwa, it is unclear which Kalanga chieftaincies initially recognized themselves as coming under Khama III's rule. Oral accounts suggest that they sought refuge from Khama III because they were in disbelief that Europeans had defeated the Ndebele, whom they considered invincible, and were concerned with European harassment.⁴⁷ However, this does not mean that they agreed to be Khama III's subjects.

Enocent Msindo marks the 1890s as the decade when Kalanga chiefs consolidated their rule against the colonial intrusion through developing strong ethnic patriotism.⁴⁸ Some Kalanga chiefs supported the British South Africa Company in the First *Chimurenga* and others did not.⁴⁹ None were recognized afterwards when the British South Africa Company government placed Ndebele ceremonial chiefs in Matabeleland (Southern Rhodesia) in the 1920s. By 1900, Nswazwi and other Kalanga leaders began to resist taxation and used the border as a refuge or escape.⁵⁰ The Ndebele chiefs lost further power and cultural legitimacy with the passing of the Southern Rhodesian 1927 Native Affairs Act. With the Ndebele chiefs having no legitimate claims to land and resources, the BaKalanga cultivated Kalanga ethnicity out of historical narratives as a means to justify self-determination.

Groups like the BaKalanga, subjugated by both the state and by African authorities, became more inclined to resist colonialism and did so in a complex manner. Feierman argued that a radical critique emerged from peasant intellectual leaders like John Nswazwi.⁵¹

⁴⁷ M.D.K. Mongwa, "The Political Struggle Between Baka-Nswazwi Under John Madawo and the Bangwato Under Tshekedi Khama, 1926-1932 (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1978), 13.

⁴⁸ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe*, 65.

⁴⁹ Samuel L. Gauthusi, "Pre-colonial History of Bakalanga of Mengwe, c.1800-c.1885" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1985).

⁵⁰ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe*, 76.

⁵¹ William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (London: James Currey; Berkeley

Terence Ranger argued that peasant consciousness was revolutionary in Zimbabwe by the 1930s.⁵² Feierman and Ranger's studies bolster the argument that African nationalism, defined as a movement in revolutionary opposition to colonialism, was fully formed by the 1930s. Thus, Kalanga leaders partnered with Motsete as part of their larger scheme to resist the colonial intrusion deteriorating the socio-economic viability of their communities and they considered European-style education as one aspect of this scheme.

The BaKalanga in the Bechuanaland Protectorate sought European-style education as a means to gain recognition in the British Empire and gain the knowledge which allowed Europeans to defeat the Matebele. Reverend Motiki opened an L.M.S. school in Nswazwi in 1899 but it closed from 1910 to 1922 because of a lack of capable teachers.⁵³ Motiki's school coincided with the opening of schools in the Mapoka and Masunga in the Tati area.⁵⁴ Primary schools taught in TjiKalanga until the 1950s.⁵⁵

The schools in the Tati area employed TjiKalanga textbooks from Southern Rhodesia. The TjiKalanga orthography was developed by Reverend M. Reed of the L.M.S. Kalanga teachers were trained at the Dombodema Mission in Southern Rhodesia where TjiKalanga was taught in the teacher training institute.⁵⁶ In 1931, Clement M. Doke published *The*

and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992); Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (London: James Currey; Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁵² Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*.

⁵³ Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga Retrospect and Prospect*, 38.

⁵⁴ M.M. Madikwe, "Western Education Among the Kalanga of Northern Ngwato District, 109-1966" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1983); Changu Edith Mannathoko, "Kalanga Politics in the Context of Nationalism in Botswana: A Historical Perspective" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1978), chapter three; M.D.K. Mongwa, "The Political Struggle Between Baka-Nswazwi" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977), 16; Kutlwano Mulale, "The Development of Primary Education in the Tati [district], 1900-1966" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1991), 6.

⁵⁵ M.M. Madikwe, "Western Education Among the Kalanga."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga, Retrospect and Prospect*, 39.

Unification of Shona Dialects as part of a movement to unify the dialects of what later became ChiShona into a literary form for official and educational purposes.⁵⁷ This included the standardization of orthography for the entire area known as Mashonaland (now Zimbabwe). Doke deemed TjiKalanga as a dialect of the newly invented ChiShona language and set the foundation for ChiShona and SiNdebele to become the only nationally recognized African languages in Southern Rhodesia.

Doke's downgrading of TjiKalanga incited an ethnically based struggle to preserve the language.⁵⁸ Msindo argued that the "TjiKalanga language debates thus came to be an essential part of the self-critiquing Kalanga ethnic community to which Kalanga chiefs owed their legitimacy and to which Kalanga commoners appealed in their resistance to government policies."⁵⁹ The demand for TjiKalanga grew after 1930 in TjiKalanga speaking communities on both sides of the colonial border. Missionaries were faced with a problematic choice of which language to teach. Although it was unpopular in many areas of western Zimbabwe, most missions adopted SiNdebele over TjiKalanga.⁶⁰

Implementing a standardized orthography and curriculum was not easy. Reverend John Whiteside, head of the L.M.S. Dombodema Mission in Southern Rhodesia, suggested that in the future, the Dombodema Mission should employ TjiKalanga rather than SiNdebele as most of the students spoke TjiKalanga as their first language.⁶¹ In 1929, Whiteside and

⁵⁷ Clement M. Doke, *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects: Carried Out Under the Auspices of the Government of Southern Rhodesia and the Carnegie Corporation: Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1931* (Hertford, England: Printed for the Government of Southern Rhodesia by S. Austin and Sons, 1931).

⁵⁸ Enocent Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe*, 117.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 120

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 125

⁶¹ BNARS, S.100/7, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Tati Native Schools Central Committee Held at Tsessebe on June 23, 1933"; London Missionary Society and A. M. Chirgwin. *Reports by Rev. A.M. Chirgwin, M.A. After a Secretarial Visit to South Africa September 1930 - February 1931* (London: London Missionary Society, 1931), 7.

Dombodema missionaries produced the first translation of the Bible and other Christian texts into TjiKalanga. This sparked the emergence of a number of literary works in TjiKalanga, including the TjiKalanga hymnal book Whiteside published in 1935.⁶² Terence Ranger noted that the Christian Bible translation into TjiKalanga was a watershed moment for the BaKalanga because they aspired to a history that differentiated them from the Tswana and Ndebele, and because the Dombodema Mission offered powerful assistance against the imposition of the SiNdebele language in primarily TjiKalanga speaking communities.⁶³

In the 1930s, some of the Kalanga teachers trained at Dombodema came back to the Bechuanaland Protectorate to teach in Kalanga schools and were surprised that TjiKalanga was not the language of instruction. Although some of the teachers still used TjiKalanga without authorization, many Kalanga children in the Protectorate, especially those in the BaNgwato Reserve (Central District), were taught in SeTswana. This contributed to the debates which arose as to whether Kalanga culture had been submerged by Ngwato or Tswana culture.⁶⁴

Differences emerged between the Kalanga communities living in the various colonial demarcations, including those within the Bechuanaland Protectorate despite people's shared sense of community based on traditions of common ancestry and shared socio-economic and political resources.⁶⁵ The BaKalanga in the various demarcated areas formed a cultural zone in which TjiKalanga was the common language. Despite being organized in autonomous

⁶² Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga, Retrospect and Prospect*, 46; Themhani Dube, *A History of the Kalanga in Bulilima and Mangewe Districts, 1850-2008* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2010), 41; Kultwano Mulale, "The Development of Primary Education in the Tati [district], 1900-1966."

⁶³ Terence Ranger, "African Local Historiographies: A Negative Case," in *A Place in the World: New Local Historiographies from Africa and South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

⁶⁴ Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga, Retrospect and Prospect*, 39.

⁶⁵ Glorious Bongani Gumbo, *The Demarcation of Reserve Boundaries in the Bechuanaland Protectorate* (Ph.D. diss., University of Botswana, Gaborone, 1986).

chiefdoms, Kalanga people possessed the same religion (*Mwali*) and claimed a common origin.⁶⁶ TjiKalanga speaking people were comprised of diverse sub-ethnicities claiming different origins and histories.⁶⁷ Colonial demarcations imposed a violence on these traditions and separated people living on the various sides of the partitioned land.⁶⁸ Socio-economic activities that previously traversed the border were broken by the new rigid mechanism of state border control. Changu E. Mannathoko argued that differential treatment of BaKalanga communities in the various demarcations was ultimately the cause of conflicts between Nswazwi and Tshekedi Khama.⁶⁹

Until his death in 1923, Khama III allowed the Nswazwi to live essentially self-autonomously in the BaNgwato Reserve. The Bangwato governed the Nswazwi indirectly through their *she*, and not by a BaNgwato governor. Khama III regarded John Nswazwi as his most trusted [Kalanga chief] even though he was not the most senior. Prior to Tshekedi Khama's rule, there was almost no conflict between the Nswazwi and the BaNgwato.⁷⁰ The Nswazwi *she* assisted Khama III with tax collection and labor organization. The Nswazwi's extremely good record of paying taxes was the foundation for their amicable relationship. This working relationship ended when Tshekedi Khama took over in 1926, appointed his

⁶⁶ BNARS DCS.16/15; Samuel L. Gauthusi, "Pre-colonial History of Bakalanga of Mengwe, c.1800-c.1885" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1985); J.T.M. Nyamupachitu, "Bechuanaland Protectorate-Southern Rhodesia International Border: Its Effects on the Partitioned Ikalanga-speaking Society" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1989), chapter one.

⁶⁷ Shathiso Pharo, "A History of the Ntombo Kalanga People (Baperi) up to 1966" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1984); Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga, Retrospect and Prospect*.

⁶⁸ Shathiso Pharo, "A History of the Ntombo Kalanga People, conclusion.

⁶⁹ Changu Edith Mannathoko, "Kalanga Politics in the Context of Nationalism in Botswana."

⁷⁰ Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana* (Gaborone, Botswana: Macmillan Botswana, 1984), 213.

own representative to govern the area, tried to enforce control over Nswazwi and his subjects, and allowed the BaNgwato to take fertile land from the BaKalanga.⁷¹

In the first decades of the 20th century, the reserves became entrenched as the only area for African settlement and thus became congested and impoverished.⁷² The congestion and the poor quality of the land resulted in the proletarianization of the people, which occurred especially rapidly in the Tati district.⁷³ This meant that people sought wage labor and no longer existed on their own subsistence. Kalanga groups had a long history of exposure to the colonial political economy. Many were dependent on labor migration to South Africa to support their way of life.⁷⁴ The “traditional” way of life, although far from disintegrating, was no longer self-sufficient in the face of inadequate land and its destruction by colonialism. The key to coping with the pressures of colonial development was education and adaptation to Europeanization. This did not mean forsaking all of the old ways, but it meant absorbing foreign social institutions and making them compatible with indigenous ones.⁷⁵

Economically, in the late 1920s and into the 1930s, the Bechuanaland Protectorate was adversely affected by two immense external problems, which exerted a powerful influence over the Protectorate’s economy: the worldwide economic downturn and the

⁷¹ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana: A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966* (Gaborone: Longman Botswana, 1987), 75.

⁷² Isaac Schapera, “The Native Land Problem in the Tati District. Report submitted to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1943,” *Botswana Notes and Records*, 5,3 (1971): 219-68; Henderson Mpakati Tapela, “The Tati District of Botswana” 108, 148.

⁷³ BNARS, S.238/4, “Native Settlement in the Tati District,” Resident Magistrate Francistown to Resident Commissioner, August 28, 1931. “Extract from Resident Commissioner’s Report of Tour of Protectorate, 4th June – 3rd July 1931.” Chief Masunga to the Resident Magistrate, August 14, 1941; Henderson Mpakati Tapela, “The Tati District of Botswana,” iv; Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1977), 136.

⁷⁴ I. Schapera, “Labour Migration from a Bechuanaland Native Reserve: Part I.” *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 32,129 (1933): 386–97.

⁷⁵ Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 32.

looming threat of incorporation into the South African Union. The South African embargo on Bechuanaland's cattle exports caused the price of cattle to plummet and devastated the Bechuanaland cattle market in the early 1930s.⁷⁶ The BaKalanga were especially impacted by a 200 mile long and five-mile wide quarantine area along the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesian border.⁷⁷ Difficulties were compounded by severe drought, famine, and an outbreak of foot and mouth disease that killed nearly half of the cattle in the Protectorate. This took a hard toll on the Tswana because their socio-economic system was based predominantly on pastoralism. Many poor BaNgwato people defaulted on their taxes. In 1928, hut tax collections were smaller than in 1917 and in 1933, the government reduced taxes from 28 to 15 shillings.⁷⁸ The economic downturn limited the number of jobs in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, so men sought employment in South Africa. An estimated 28 percent of the able-bodied men migrated annually for long periods to work as miners, servants, errand boys, odd-job men, or farm hands.⁷⁹

Despite the economic crisis, the Nswazwi were better off than others in the BaNgwato Reserve because of their tendency towards agriculture and their proximity to Tati area markets. They produced significant crops when harvests were poor elsewhere in BaNgwato.⁸⁰ They experimented successfully with new cash crops like tobacco. Despite the land shortage, the commercialization and production in the Nswazwi area occurred far earlier than in other BaNgwato dominated areas. Their commercial attitudes towards cattle were

⁷⁶ South Africa Office of Census and Statistics. *Official Year Book of the Union and of Basutoland, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland, No. 4, 1921* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1921).

⁷⁷ BNARS, BNB177, "Correspondence [1930-1931] Relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner for South Africa." C.F. Rey, "Report on a Visit to the Bechuanaland Protectorate Paid by His Excellency the High Commissioner for South Africa and Lady Stanley," September 21, 1931.

⁷⁸ BNARS, DCS.17/11, "Annual Report Ngwato District 1931"; DCS.17/12, "Annual Report Ngwato District 1931."

⁷⁹ Mary Benson, *Tshekedi Khama* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 61.

⁸⁰ Diana Wylie, *A Little God*, 165.

different from the BaNgwato. The Bakalanga were more apt to sell cattle and supply the market whereas the BaNgwato preferred to develop their herds.⁸¹

The land shortage made young Nswazwi men more inclined to seek work in the South African mines. Thousands of Kalanga men left for mining jobs in South Africa.⁸² The Nswazwi were commercially prosperous and earned money working during the economic downturn. Consequently, conflicts between the Nswazwi and the BaNgwato emerged over how tax money was spent. Nswazwi wanted schools and hospitals and felt the BaNgwato were using the money to develop education in Serowe, specifically to build the Khama Memorial School. Tshekedi Khama thwarted a missionary plan to build a hospital in the Kalanga region near Nswazwi's village.

The Nswazwi became frustrated by a lack of return on their taxes, the land shortage inhibiting their growth and the lack of education and health facilities. The BaKalanga sought to establish schools in their communities because of the growing consensus that socio-economic advancement was inextricably linked to European-style education. Education was a response to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions and education along Kalanga centric lines, especially in the TjiKalanga language, was a means to foster self-determination. The longer push for Kalanga self-determination was juxtaposed against the deteriorating political economy. This came to a head in the 1920s, most notably with John Nswazwi's clash with Tshekedi Khama and BaNgwato adherents. Kalanga ethnicity was an imagined construct based on historical interpretations. Therefore, Kalanga cultural brokers employed historical narratives to forge Kalanga nationalism and supported the Tati Training Institute as

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Nakiso M. Kubanji, "The Impact of Migrant Labour on Tutume Sub-District: A Case Study of the Villages of Sebina, Tutume and Maitengwe 1900-1950" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1992).

a means to address the perception that the socio-economic position of the community had deteriorated.

Kalanga leaders employed romanticized versions of a prosperous Kalanga past, with varying degrees of accuracy, to bolster support for their political objective to struggle against the imposition of the colonial border and the marginalization of their communities. Kalanga leaders attempted to re-define Kalanga ethnicity in relation to their Tswana and the Ndebele neighbors and sought to preserve Kalanga self-determination by seeking education as a means for socio-economic advancement.

Motsete claimed that the BaKalanga were a subject people under his Banyai / Mashona predecessors until the Matebele broke the Banyai / Mashona power and subjugated the BaKalanga. After the Matebele subjugated the BaKalanga, in the 1890s, the British Empire divided the Bakalanga between Southern Rhodesia, the Tati area, and the BaNgwato country.⁸³ Motsete's historical conceptualization of the BaKalanga bolstered three ideas. First, as a descendant of the Banyai, Motsete considered himself responsible for leading the BaKalanga. Secondly, Motsete distinguished the BaKalanga from the Tswana or Ndebele by connecting them to the Shona speakers of the Zimbabwean region. Lastly, Motsete's historical narrative made the claim that the BaKalanga living in the Bechuanaland Protectorate were a comparatively new addition to the BaNgwato and therefore challenged the idea that the BaNgwato had the outright authority to govern the BaKalanga.

⁸³ BNARS, S.243/11, Motsete to Resident Commissioner Rey, January 13, 1932, "I Beg to Lodge a Complaint and Appeal for Protection."

The Nswazwi Struggle against Tshekedi Khama and the BaNgwato

In 1929, John Nswazwi began a campaign to expose Tshekedi Khama's oppression of the BaKalanga. Nswazwi was born in Nswazwi village in 1875 and installed as the Nswazwi *she* in 1910. The Nswazwi lived in the BaNgwato Reserve relatively peacefully for over a decade during Khama III's rule but in 1926 Tshekedi Khama took over as BaNgwato regent and from that point forward Tshekedi Khama and Nswazwi became embroiled in continuous conflict. Nswazwi fought relentlessly against Tshekedi Kham's authority until his death in 1960. Tshekedi Khama exiled Nswazwi in 1947. Nswazwi and a number of his followers went into exile in Jecheni (Jetjeni) in Southern Rhodesia in 1948.⁸⁴ Nswazwi is still remembered in Botswana as a symbol of freedom from oppression and equality for ethnic minorities. He personified bravery and dared to challenge Tshekedi Khama's rule when others did not.

In 1929, Nswazwi detailed his complaints in an appeal to the Earl of Athlone, the High Commissioner in Cape Town.⁸⁵ This prompted the first of three commissions held by the British administration to investigate Nswazwi's grievances. The first was the Nettleton Commission of 1930 headed by the resident magistrate in Serowe G.E. Nettleton. The commission was marred by Nettleton's bias against Nswazwi. He dismissed Nswazwi's complaints as insignificant. A second commission headed by the Serowe District acting District Commissioner Captain J.W. Potts in 1932 also favored Tshekedi Khama. The third inquiry, the Ellenberger Commission in 1945, led to Nswazwi's exile.

⁸⁴ Albert G.T.K. Malikongwa, *History of the BaKalanga BakaNswazwi (1932-1945)* (Francistown: Mukani Action Campaign, 2002).

⁸⁵ BNARS, S.77/5 "The Complaints of the Nswazwi (BaKalanga) Tribe," November 27, 1929."

John Nswazwi's 1929 letter to the High Commissioner titled "Complaint of the Nswazwi Tribe (BaKalanga)" detailed the Nswazwi people's grievances.⁸⁶ The primary issues were land and access to European-style education. Nswazwi claimed that the BaNgwato restricted access to land that Khama III had granted the Nswazwi and that due to an increase in population, agriculture and pasture lands allocated for the community were insufficient. Nswazwi argued that his people received no return on tax money collected by the BaNgwato and that the lack of financial support made it difficult to pay for their schoolteachers.⁸⁷ During the Nettleton Commission, Motsete testified that the Nswazwi people were under the impression that the government would provide a school in return for their hut tax. However, there were no government funded schools outside of Serowe and no qualified teachers to post in BuKalanga.⁸⁸ Resident Magistrate Nettleton's report showed that teachers in the Kalanga schools were unfit and, "the Kalanga people [were] thirsting for education and progress and something should be done for them."⁸⁹

Ultimately, Nswazwi asked the High Commissioner for self-rule under the British government so that they could have free education and perpetuate TjiKalanga. Nswazwi resented that Tshekedi Khama put a tax levy on the BaKalanga to finance his trip to London to appeal the Ratshosa case to the Privy Council. Ratshosa's successful appeal inspired Motsete and the progressives in their struggle against Tshekedi Khama.⁹⁰ Nswazwi also resented that Tshekedi Khama compelled the Nswazwi people to build a fence between Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Nswazwi did not want to work

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ BNARS, S.77/5, Resident Magistrate G.E. Nettleton, "Report on the Nswazwi Inquiry."

⁸⁹ BNARS, DCS.12/11, G.E. Nettleton, "Visit to Schools in BuKalanga District," November 12, 1930.

⁹⁰ BNARS, S.77/5, "Financing His Trip to England," *Bulawayo Chronicle*, March 5, 1930.

for the BaNgwato because they were not getting any return on their taxes and bolstering the colonial border was antithetical to their movement to preserve unity among the Kalanga chieftaincies straddling the colonial border.

BaNgwato adherents considered the Nswazwi grievances and the progressives' petition part of the same political movement. BaNgwato secretary Peter Sebina's counter petition in 1931 to the High Commissioner Herbert Stanley claimed,

A small number of people from our tribe, the feigning educated class who call themselves 'progressives' or 'intellectuals' have through violence or petitioning the colonial officials shown total disregard for the chief's orders resulting in open and unbecoming defiance of his powers and authority.⁹¹

BaNgwato adherents criticized the government for postponing their decision on the inquiry. The decision remained outstanding for eighteen months and prevented the BaNgwato from enforcing their authority and punishing the petitioners.

During the inquiry, Tshekedi Khama testified that Segolodi openly refused to perform manual labor, threatened members of the chief's regiment, and walked into the Magistrate's office with a loaded rifle.⁹² Sebina's petition stated,

When we see these petitioners go about unreproved and with no punishment at all, but instead walk in our midst with all of the impudence and spirit of defiance they can command, we fail to see justice and fair-play.... They stir up the populace to desperate acts, which will perpetuate a bitterness, which will work disastrously in the whole community unless arrested in time.⁹³

⁹¹ BNARS, S.208/8/2, "The Petition of Members of Bamangwato Tribe," March 27, 1931; BNARS, DCF.2/11/7/7, "Extract from a Petition Dated the 27th of March, from Peter Mazebe Sebina."

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

The BaNgwato considered the disobedient faction, comprised of those who backed the progressives' petition, Nswazwi, and Simon Ratshosa to be an imminent threat to law and order.

Ongoing conflicts resulted in the second commission of inquiry into the Nswazwi situation headed by Captain Potts in 1932. John Nswazwi's grievances were heard at the main *kgotla* (administrative center or African court) in Serowe.⁹⁴ By the time of the second inquiry, Motsete's proposed school in BuKalanga was embroiled in the conflict. In May 1932 the government announced that it backed Tshekedi Khama on most of the points in the second inquiry. However, the government stood behind Resident Commissioner Rey's prior approval of the establishment of Motsete's school in the Tati Reserve, outside of the BaNgwato jurisdiction. The government tried to stop the BaNgwato from asserting control outside of their reserve but Tshekedi Khama persistently contested the school based in part on the government's decision that Kalanga chieftaincies living in the BaNgwato Reserve under Tshekedi Khama's jurisdiction, like the Nswazwi, had the right to support and attend Motsete's school.⁹⁵

K.T. Motsete Establishes the Tati Training Institute in the BuKalanga Borderlands

In the politically charged context of the early 1930s Bechuanaland Protectorate, Motsete not only saw himself as a potential liberator of the African rural masses, he attempted to shape British ideas of trusteeship by appealing to the idea of developing a just citizenry under the legal protection of the British Crown. The Tati Training Institute was Motsete's attempt to reconcile colonial and imperial factors with African socio-economic

⁹⁴ BNARS, S.78/3, "Report of Inquiry Held by Captain Potts."

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

advancement. Motsete's racial and cultural assertiveness was the crucial connection between the aspirations of Kalanga communities, the financial backing of European liberal philanthropists, and the imperial government's precarious goals for African education.

Motsete tactfully struck a balance between obedience and protest so as to position the Tati Training Institute to attract the financial support it received from the Phelps Stokes Fund and American philanthropic Carnegie Corporation in the late 1930s.⁹⁶ In order to strike this balance, Motsete conformed to the guidelines set forth by the British administration sufficiently enough to meet their requirements. From its outset, the British administration, especially Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, embraced the Tati Training Institute and considered it to be the most promising educational venture in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Motsete garnered the support of the British administration and educationists connected to the British Empire because they considered the Tati Training Institute as a means for operationalizing their own agenda. Local British authorities sought to break the L.M.S.'s chokehold on education in the Protectorate and develop a mutually beneficial system of secondary schooling sustained by Africans. When the Tati Training Institute was established, the British authorities deemed the school an affordable and progressive model for advancing education because it promised to serve as a means to facilitate much needed African socio-economic development and for the state to extend its authority in the BuKalanga borderlands.

British officials applauded Motsete because they deemed the Tati Training Institute as a model for the British administration to operationalize its educational agenda. After the Tati Training Institute opened, Rey reported enthusiastically that "Motsete's scheme is unassailable from an educational point of view ... I am indeed anxious to support this

⁹⁶ BNARS, S.243/16-17.

praiseworthy and courageous effort towards development and self- help. Unfortunately, we have been able to do little enough for Native education.”⁹⁷ Inspector of Education H.J.E. Dumbrell visited the school shortly after it opened. He reported, “the writer is of the opinion that Mr. Motsete’s most plucky venture is well on the way to success. He has literally started from the ground, and what he has accomplished, together with what the natives themselves have contributed, constitutes a challenge to all interested in native development.”⁹⁸ Dumbrell and Rey were enthusiastic about the Tati Training Institute because Motsete’s self-help approach was a model for advancing their own educational agenda, especially to develop African education on the cheap.⁹⁹

Resident Commissioner Charles Rey indicated to the High Commissioner in Cape Town Sir Herbert Stanley that he considered the Tati Training Institute a progressive model because the school represented the endeavors of British officials to successfully promote African self-help as a means for development.¹⁰⁰ Dumbrell referred to “the greatest problem in British Africa” as “the uplifting of the mass of African peoples.”¹⁰¹ Rey and Dumbrell’s confident endorsement is evidence that British authorities sought to collaborate with Motsete because they believed the Tati Training Institute had great potential to advance their agenda for African education.

For the British authorities, the Tati Training Institute provided great value with little investment. Rey claimed Motsete’s scheme “praiseworthy” and depicted the BaKalanga as

⁹⁷ BNARS, S.243/12, Resident Commissioner Rey to High Commissioner, March 15, 1932.

⁹⁸ BNARS, S.243/13, Dumbrell, “School Report, Bakalanga Central School [later renamed The Tati Training Institute], Visited on September 26th, 1932,” October 6, 1932.

⁹⁹ BNARS, S.148/2. Dumbrell “Report on Education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, January 1929 to June 1930.”

¹⁰⁰ BNARS, S.243/12, Resident Commissioner Rey to High Commissioner, March 15, 1932.

¹⁰¹ BNARS, BNB177, “Correspondence (1930-1931) Relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner of South Africa,” 263.

“preeminent amongst others in [their] desire for educational advancement” because African voluntary contributions funded the school operated entirely by Africans on a self-help basis.¹⁰² Rey reported that the Tati Training Institute was,

Maybe the most important development in education effort in the territory. ... It is a most valuable example of what can be done by native effort with encouragement and a minimum of financial assistance and I would urge strongly that this effort should be encouraged. It is far and away the most economical form of assistance we could give the actual work done and the moral example in the territory is of great value.¹⁰³

Rey’s conspicuous enthusiasm and his sentiments that the Tati Training Institute was a model of value and ingenuity were based not on a measuring the education provided at the Tati Training Institute or how the school might contribute to Africans socio-economically. It was based on the idea that it presented a promising model for promoting African education in a context where African socio-economic development was fraught with peril.



Figure 7; K.T. Motsete in front of the principal's cottage, the Tati Training Institute, circa 1934, BNARS, S.243/19.

¹⁰² BNARS, S.243/12, Rey to High Commissioner, March 15, 1932.

¹⁰³ BNARS, S.243/15, Rey to the High Commissioner, May 18, 1933.

Motsete described his educational philosophies and his scheme for the Tati Training Institute to British officials in “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.”¹⁰⁴ Not only did he use discourse such as “co-operation” and “self-help” to engage and attract British officials, he presented his educational philosophies in a way that made the school seem like an asset to the future of the country. For instance, Motsete argued that the school offered an opportunity to shape an educational agenda specifically for the benefit of the Bechuanaland Protectorate so that for the first time, foreign power was not dictating the education direction of the country.

Motsete framed his rhetoric of self-help and African self-determination in a way that made it attractive to European audiences beyond the British administration. For instance, he appealed to commercial interests by positioning the Tati Training Institute as a means for raising the morality of the community. He argued that by “inculcating in the young men the sense of the dignity of labor it would, through their example and influence, help the native population eventually to develop towards their own economic betterment.”¹⁰⁵ Motsete appealed to the commonly held idea among British officials that there was a connection between morality and dignity of labor, and agricultural work and the economic development of the reserves. He asserted that the school facilitated an increase in production capabilities in the African communities by teaching Africans new and improved methods of agriculture and livestock management. He reported,

The school excellently situated as it is, in a populous native reserve, and on land of great agricultural possibilities, bids fair to be a beacon of light, not necessarily European light, but of better and improved methods

¹⁰⁴ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

whether they be European or native. This is its *raison d'être* (reason for existence).¹⁰⁶

Motsete sought to convince the authorities that the Tati Training Institute would produce Africans who would contribute to increasing economic productivity.

Motsete constantly pandered to the guidelines set forth by the administration and positioned himself and the Tati Training Institute as an indispensable asset to the British administration. However, Motsete's underlying assumption was that promoting economic productivity was a means to cultivate racial equality and thus, challenge the dogma of European supremacy. Motsete argued that by developing Africans' attitudes and their skills, the Tati Training Institute could make Africans capable of competing on an equal playing field with Europeans.

H.J.E. Dumbrell worked as the Inspector of Education for the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1928 to 1935 and as the Director of Education for the Protectorate from 1936 to 1945. His educational philosophies were based on the colonial conceptualizations of adapted education commonly held among European officials in Southern Africa. Through his tenure in the 1930s, Dumbrell advocated for the adapted education model, especially the idea that the purpose of educating individuals was so that they could serve as agents of community development.¹⁰⁷ This is evident in the 1934 Bechuanaland Protectorate school syllabus he produced.¹⁰⁸ He geared primary education towards the 90 percent who did not progress beyond Standard II. He argued that community building was the basis for the work of African teachers and that they were responsible to train children, not as unrelated

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ BNARS, BNB.148, Dumbrell, "Primary School Syllabus for Native Schools in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1934."

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

individuals but as members of an African society.¹⁰⁹ According to Dumbrell, training was not merely a means for wage earners. It was a means to train Africans “[to] live more satisfactory lives, economically and culturally, and as independent citizens in their own environment.”¹¹⁰ As was the case throughout Southern Africa, Dumbrell connected the ordinary primary schools with subjects such as health, agriculture and crafts. His idea, based on the adapted education model, was that students exposed to such instruction “will later by the examples of their homes and lives do work in inestimable value in improving the general health and well-being of the Protectorate natives ... by merely living amongst them more satisfactorily and having better conducted and healthier homes and children.”¹¹¹ Thus, Dumbrell advanced education designed to rearrange African domestic and social life instead of enlighten African minds.

However, the lack of centralized authority meant that individual schools were markedly shaped by those running the school. There was no consistency in education facilities before Dumbrell took over: No definite curriculum, school code, or salary scale and no uniformity regarding textbooks. In 1931, the Board of Advice on Native Education was established to institute uniformity and all African schools in the Protectorate were under the control of Tribal Committees. The same year, Dumbrell introduced a new code for all Protectorate schools based on the adapted education and vocational model installed in Southern Rhodesia. He abandoned the fairly widespread Cape code, which pinned African education to European standards.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ BNARS, DCF.1/9. H.J.E. Dumbrell, ed. *Letters to African Teachers*. (London: Longmans, Green, 1935): 17.

¹¹⁰ BNARS, S.294/10, Dumbrell, “Memorandum on Educational Position in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Prepared for the Economic and Financial Commission, 1932,” October 19, 1932.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² BNARS, BNB177, “Correspondence [1930-1931] Relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner of South Africa, Dumbrell “Report of the Inspector of Education for the year 1929.”

Although Dumbrell promoted centralization and uniformity in education in the Protectorate, great disparity remained between various schools. Hence, Motsete had significant latitude to forge the program he enacted at the Tati Training Institute. African responses to state controls of European-style education were a component of the *longue durée* of African resistance. As the principal of an independent African run school, Motsete was in a unique position to struggle against the control of the British authorities. He accommodated some of the ideas and the discourses associated with state sponsored education as a means to draw financing and support, while mitigating the actual impact pedagogically.

Self-determination was the Tati Training Institute's motto. Motsete referred to the school as "an experiment in native cooperation work."¹¹³ Motsete's plan was to design the curriculum, in accordance with the parameters established by the education department, to have access to government funds and attract support from abroad. The curriculum combined academic and religious subjects with agricultural and manual work.¹¹⁴ In order to unite students from various areas, the primary language of instruction was English.¹¹⁵ Standards I-III were taught in TjiKalanga.¹¹⁶ The Tati Training Institute offered a secondary school curriculum equivalent to those in South Africa. In 1936, tuition was about 5£ per year, affordable for an average family. The school flourished and classrooms were full.¹¹⁷ Many of the students were from Nswazwi and the surrounding Kalanga villages in the Tati and BaNgwato Reserves.

¹¹³ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, "The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute," November 20, 1933.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Kultwano Mulale, "The Development of Primary Education in the Tati [district], 1900-1966."

¹¹⁶ BNARS, S.243/11, "The Tati Central School (Outline of Scheme)," November 10, 1931; Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana*, 205. Catrien Van Waarden, *Kalanga, Retrospect and Prospect*, 38.

¹¹⁷ Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana*, 100.

The primary aim of the school was to empower the students. Motsete reported that the aim of education was to “prepare the young student for what Herbert Spencer called ‘complete living.’”¹¹⁸ However, Motsete pandered to the adapted education goals of the British administration by connecting the individual to the idea of community development. He reported, “We aim at developing the character and the intelligence of the boy so that he may adjust himself to and exploit his social and economic environment with the view of enriching not only his own personality, but also the life of the community and country in which he lives. That is, to produce good, industrious and intelligent citizens.”¹¹⁹ Motsete took the discourse of “good, industrious and intelligent citizens” directly from Dumbrell’s official reports.¹²⁰ Motsete deployed official discourse coupled with a subtext. He intended his discourse of adapted education and community development to attract support for the school while subtly protecting his intention to shape the education he provided at the Tati Training Institute to be of maximum benefit to the African students and communities he served.

In 1933, Motsete presented more extensive details on his education philosophy. He reported that his goals were expressed in the following quote by British philosopher John Ruskin: “Education is the leading of human souls to what is best and making what is best of them. The training that makes men happiest in themselves also makes them most serviceable to others.”¹²¹ On the surface, Motsete’s use of Ruskin seemed to show that he was conforming to the adapted educational principle of connecting individuals to their community. However, by deploying Ruskin, Motsete alluded to his own intellectual prowess

¹¹⁸ BNARS, S.243/13, K.T. Motsete, “Proposed Scheme for the Bakalanga Central School,” 1932.

¹¹⁹ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

¹²⁰ BNARS, S.148/2. Dumbrell “Report on Education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, January 1929 to June 1930.”

¹²¹ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

and implied that his ideas about education, religion and social reform were far more complex than the limitations inherent in colonial constructs of adapted education.¹²²

Motsete referred to his educational philosophy as the “three Ws: Worth, work and worship.”¹²³ The three Ws spoke to the 19th century educational principles, commonly applied in Africa by European missionaries, known as the “three Rs” (reading, writing and arithmetic). Motsete infused discourses associated with self-help and adapted education in order to accommodate the state’s requirements, while propagating his own educational agenda. According to Motsete, the first W (personal Worth) meant the development of the individual’s intelligence and moral character. The second W (Work) meant earning a living through honest work, service to others, and training to do better work and be better workmen. The third W (Worship) was reverence for all that is noble and good as well as reverence and love for God. Motsete’s three Ws show that he understood education as something to empower individuals by instilling in them virtue, work ethic and spirituality. In other words, educating people meant developing the mind, body and soul.

Motsete’s understanding of the three Ws went beyond a philosophy of the essence of education. The three Ws addressed the specific concerns of each of the three different European socio-political centers: British officials, the settler community, and the missionaries. Personal Worth alluded to the discourse of morality and character building, which was a priority for the British officials concerned with order and security. Work was the priority for the settler community that employed Africans as a means to develop their commercial interests. Worship spoke to missionaries who retained considerable influence in

¹²² Robert Hewison, “Ruskin, John (1819–1900), Art Critic and Social Critic,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2016.

¹²³ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

the Bechuanaland Protectorate and were concerned with the trend towards secularizing education.

While Motsete designed his education program in terms of self-help, self-discipline and the three Ws in order to maintain European support, his primary objective was to promote African self-determination. This is most evident in his use of African proverbs to describe his educational philosophies. Motsete wrote, “While we are grateful indeed for the good that the missionaries and Government have done for us and are still doing, yet we, the natives, know too well the truth expressed in our proverb, *Mafuta o kumbila a to liga vudzi* (The fat which is always begged for does not make the hair pretty).”¹²⁴ This proverb is evidence that the primary reason Motsete established the Tati Training Institute was to support the aspirations of Kalanga communities to maintain local authority and self-determination.

In the detailed account of Motsete’s educational philosophies, he professed, “To be always spoon fed is demoralizing, or as [another] of our sayings have it, *Kgomo go thuswa e e itekang* (That cow deserves help which makes an effort).”¹²⁵ In his description of the philosophies underpinning the Tati Training Institute, Motsete employed another Tswana proverb, “*Ndzidziwa a na nunga*” (One who always receives assistance while he does hardly anything for himself can have no strength).¹²⁶ Clearly Motsete pandered to the discourse of self-help and racial uplift but ultimately, he promoted self-determination. Motsete believed that African self-help and self-discipline fostered “racial self-respect, self-confidence and a

¹²⁴ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

¹²⁵ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

legitimate pride of race.”¹²⁷ The Tati Training Institute represented an educational revolution because the endeavor was based on African initiative. Motsete used these proverbs to articulate the struggle to cultivate self-determination and break the perception that his school was overly dependent on the good graces of paternalistic Europeans. Motsete challenged the racist notion that Africans were incapable and the British officials and others across the empire who dismissed the relevance of African leadership and African self-determination.

In conjunction with these proverbs, Motsete declared that his primary objective was to empower Kalanga communities. He declared, “the scheme is therefore an educative experiment in native self-help, which as a means of self-discipline, should foster some measure of racial or tribal self-respect, self-confidence and legitimate pride of race.”¹²⁸ The rhetoric of racial uplift reinforced the notion that Africans sought to manage their own endeavors. However, African education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate existed within the confines of imperial rule and Motsete understood that African leadership and African self-determination did not mean that Africans were solely responsible for developing their own institutions.

Motsete persistently appealed to paternalistic sympathies in order to attract as much European support as possible. Europeans from a number of vantages had a vested interest in the success of the Tati Training Institute. Motsete conceded, “The natives alone, even in their united effort, are not yet equal to the task of making such an enterprise a success, because apart from the meager resources at their disposal, they are as yet like infants, needing sympathetic guidance by those who know better.”¹²⁹ Clearly, infantilization of Africans was

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933; K.T. Motsete, “An Educational Experiment in the Bechuanaland

an allusion to 19th century imagery of the white man's burden and paternalistic racism. However, Motsete cleverly positioned himself facing two directions. He sought to secure his role as a leader and innovator, while he advanced African interests, in part by attracting the sympathy of and resources from Europeans who held various degrees of racist and paternalistic views. European paternalists believed that they were tasked with supervising African education. There were no Africans in head positions in mission or government schools through the 1950s and only a handful of African run schools in the Southern African region.

Motsete employed the rhetoric of shared reliance to garner support from various Europeans while maintaining his position as principal. He appealed to friends of types for assistance: "The concerted action to cut across the barriers of tribe, race and color, by virtue of the common interest, whose ultimate issue is to enhance the common good, would be the means to bringing home to us all the fact of our mutual dependence."¹³⁰ Motsete's rhetoric of shared reliance was based in the liberal principle of multi-racial cooperation. However, as the following quote reveals, Motsete's notion of cooperation was based as much on unity between various African ethnic groups and social classes as it was on multi-racial partnership. Motsete declared, "Such co-operation is desirable to the harmonious unification of the citizens, who, while belonging to different tribes, races and cultural levels, have, by providence, been brought together to share a common destiny."¹³¹ When constructing his

Protectorate," *Oversea Education: A Journal of Educational Experiment and Research in Tropical and Subtropical Areas*, 5,2 (January 1943): 58-64.

¹³⁰ BNARS, S.243/13, K.T. Motsete Proposed Scheme for the Bakalanga Central School, 1932; BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, "The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute," November 20, 1933; K.T. Motsete, "An Educational Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate," *Oversea Education: A Journal of Educational Experiment and Research in Tropical and Subtropical Areas*, 5,2 (January 1943): 58-64.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

vision of the African future, Motsete skillfully deployed the rhetoric of shared reliance to promote unity of purpose between Africans and Europeans and between various African groups.

Motsete reinforced the notion of unity and cooperation between Europeans and Africans underpinning African liberalism. He explained,

[The Tati Training Institute], when established, will be a lasting monument in this territory of the friendly relationship that exists between white and black, being the visible sign and the embodiment of the truth of the universality of noble ideas; that the *Sommum Bonnum* (the highest good) which is social in the widest sense of the word, transcends tribal or racial limitations; that all that is beautiful, true and good is good not for one race only but for all of the races of mankind.¹³²

According to Motsete, the universal truth was human partnership and the highest good was something beyond racial and class hierarchies.

Motsete accepted the political reality of paternalistic trusteeship and pointed to the British consent to the principles of trusteeship adopted as part of the League of Nations mandate after World War One. In principle, trusteeship meant that European imperial powers were responsible for assisting indigenous peoples to work toward their advancement. Motsete justified European support for the Tati Training Institute based on the following idea.

If one race, because of it being economically, intellectually and morally in a better position, is expected to do a great deal more in bringing what is good to the less fortunate one, the weaker race will, as it realizes its indebtedness, return the gratitude to the stronger and its benefactor in loyal service and voluntary cooperation for the common good. If this is not the sum total of trusteeship, what is?¹³³

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Emphasizing the rhetoric of trusteeship, Motsete walked a fine line. On one hand, he accepted the contradiction of racial superiority inherent in trusteeship. On the other, by continually putting the Tati Training Institute in a position to garner support from Europeans, he challenged the existing racial order, which was in opposition to the notion that Africans should lead their own endeavors. This is an example of how Motsete, in an eloquent and empowered manner, conformed to European power, while subtly challenging the existing social and political constraints. He considered himself a pioneer and the Tati Training Institute an experiment, not only in education but in race relations. Because of his accomplishments, Motsete embodied the axiom that racial inequality was a farce. He built his school under the guise of the liberal precept that advancing European-style education in Africa would play a part in the subsequent unity of Africans and Europeans and ultimately contribute to the development of a multi-racial society.

Motsete's vision was significantly different from the African run schools developed by the Tswana *dikgosi*(chiefs). BaKgatla *kgosi* Isang Pilane opened the Mochudi National School in 1923 to provide European-style education for his community. The Serowe Public School served students in the BaNgwato capital. Although both aspired to be national schools serving the entire Bechuanaland Protectorate, they were regional, catering to and funded by their respective communities.¹³⁴ Regionally based schools restricted access to those outside of the community and taught in regional languages. Outsiders considered these schools politically motivated channels to reinforced ethnic and class distinctions. Motsete believed that the secondary curriculum at the Tati Training Institute could be a catalyst in the founding

¹³⁴ BNARS, DCS.14/8, Dumbrell, Circular Minute Ref. No. E.263, January 22, 1940.

of a national school that would be supported by and of service to the Bechuanaland Protectorate in its entirety.

Motsete possessed the ability to take advantage of imperial resources and deploy them for the African community that he served. His progress report on the Tati Training Institute details the numerous ways that he connected the school with a variety of outside institutions.¹³⁵ Sporting events at the Tati Training Institute were attended by numerous Kalanga chiefs, including Masunga, Mosojane and Habangana, as well as by missionaries from Dombodema in Southern Rhodesia.¹³⁶ Correspondence between Motsete and the General Manager of the Tati Company, H.S. Gordon revealed the strong relationship between the two men and the ways that the Tati Company supported the school.¹³⁷ Motsete enlisted Dumbrell's assistance to network with international philanthropic organizations, such as Carnegie, Jeanes, Beit Trust, and Arthington Trust, and stayed in contact with leading missionaries in Britain, such as J.H. Oldham.¹³⁸ Dumbrell linked Motsete to the journal *Oversea Education* where Motsete published an extensive account of his educational philosophy and designs for the Tati Training Institute in his 1934 article, "An Education Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate."¹³⁹

Motsete's correspondence with European liberals Howard Pim and the Ballingers is chock-full of Motsete's attempts to connect the Tati Training Institute to the liberal and educational networks of the British Empire.¹⁴⁰ In an attempt to garner financial support,

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ BNARS, S.243/13, K.T. Motsete, "Bakalanga Central School Report for June 1932," July 10, 1932.

¹³⁷ BNARS, S.243/16.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Motsete, "An Education Experiment in the Bechuanaland Protectorate"; BNARS, S.243/13, Dumbrell to Motsete, May 30, 1932.

¹⁴⁰ Margaret L Hodgson (Mrs. Ballinger) Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, (Ballinger), Ballinger, A3.1.35, "Motsete to Mrs. Hodgson [Ballinger], July 24, 1933. A3.1.97, "Motsete to Mrs. Hodgson [Ballinger], July 9, 1934; James Howard Pim Papers (Pim Papers), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South

Motsete petitioned Arthur Mayhew and Hanns Vischer, co-secretaries of the British Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa.¹⁴¹ Shortly after their correspondence, Mayhew, the editor of the British colonial education journal *Oversea Education*, published Motsete's article.¹⁴² Having met the influential secretary of the International Missionary Council J.H. Oldham at the 1929 Liverpool Student Christian Movement Conference, Motsete sought his financial support through correspondence in the middle 1930s.¹⁴³ Oldham worked closely with the Phelps–Stokes Fund and was integral in the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa and the development of its 1925 White Paper.¹⁴⁴ South African liberal J.D. Rheinallt Jones and his wife Edith were among the many visitors to the Tati Training Institute. J.D. Rheinallt Jones was active in what was known as the co-operative or joint council movement between liberal Africans and Europeans, founded the Johannesburg Joint Council and directed the Institute of Race Relations.¹⁴⁵ Motsete used his reputation and elements of the liberal paternalistic discourse, such as “the stronger race helping the weaker race,” to garner the sympathy of Europeans concerned with African education.¹⁴⁶ He described his methodology in establishing the Tati Training Institute as a

Africa, A881/B11, “Extract from a Letter Dated 4th of November 1933 from K.T. Motsete.” A88/Be34, K.T. Motsete to Howard Pim, October 25, 1933. A88/Be19, K.T. Motsete to Howard Pim, June 18, 1932.

¹⁴¹ BNARS, S.243/16, Motsete to Arthur Mayhew, October 16, 1933. Arthur Mayhew to Motsete, October 7, 1933. Hanns Vischer to Motsete, November 10, 1933.

¹⁴² BNARS, S.243/16, K.T. Motsete, “The Educational Revolution in the Bechuanaland Protectorate: Tati Training Institute,” November 20, 1933.

¹⁴³ Conference of British Missionary Societies / International Missionary Council Archive, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, England, (CBMS/IMC) 1234.

¹⁴⁴ Kathleen Bliss and Andrew Porter. “Oldham, Joseph Houldsworth (1874–1969), Missionary.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Ballinger, A3.1.35, “Motsete to Mrs. Hodgson [Ballinger], July 24, 1933; Charles Templeman Loram Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, A2627D, Edith B. Jones, “Education in Bechuanaland Protectorate with Special Reference to the School of Rev. K.T. Motsete.”

¹⁴⁶ Conference of British Missionary Societies / International Missionary Council Archive, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, England, (CBMS/IMC) 1234, “Proposed Scheme for the Bakalanga Central School: Under the Leadership of Rev. K.T. Motsete.”

combination of “self-help” and “cooperation” to tactfully communicate his pairing of liberal cooperation with African self-determination.¹⁴⁷

Petitioning European support was necessary because the Tati Training Institute emerged out of an uncertain context of contradiction, where the future direction of education in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was highly contested. Although Motsete’s school brimmed with promise, it faced potent complications. The 1930s marked a conservative political turn and the upsurge of racialized segregationist politics in the Southern African territories colonized by the British. As the 1930s wore on, Motsete’s position as an African founder and principal of a school became more anomalous.

External problems beyond the control of Motsete and the BaKalanga contributed to the demise of the school. Between 1933 and 1935, the worldwide depression and the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease paralyzed commerce throughout the Southern African region. Crops failed, resulting in food shortages, and financial support for the Tati Training Institute dwindled.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the school survived and in 1935 entered a new phase based on a significant five-year-long grant from the Carnegie Corporation, which began in 1935.¹⁴⁹ Motsete’s school flourished in the second half of the 1930s but closed in 1941. It lost its financial support from the Carnegie Corporation and its backing from Charles Rey who resigned his position as Resident Commissioner in 1937. Worried by his failing health and wanting to be closer to medical facilities, Motsete moved the school from Nyewele to Francistown in January of 1939.¹⁵⁰ He reported that he moved the school because he wanted

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ BNARS, DCS.17/11, Resident Magistrate Serowe, “Annual Report Ngwato District 1931,” January 19, 1932.

¹⁴⁹ BNARS, S.243/16-17.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Tlou and Alec C. Campbell, *History of Botswana*, 205.

to be in a more central and accessible location. The school was far from the railway line, lacked sufficient roads, and Motsete had difficulties accessing medical attention for the students.¹⁵¹ BaKalanga supporters of the school opposed the move and the number of attending students dropped significantly.¹⁵² Motsete planned to revive the school but was unable to do so due to the loss of official support and the financial constraints caused by the Second World War.¹⁵³

Internal tensions played a significant role in the demise of the Tati Training Institute. Mulale argued that Kalanga groups became divided on Motsete. From the time the school was built, Motsete had conflicts with local headmen over access for farming to the land adjacent to the school.¹⁵⁴ Mr. Morapedi, the elder of the family living next to the school for at least four generations, told me that their father refused to allow Motsete to use the land for farming.¹⁵⁵ Many BaKalanga criticized him for being dishonest.¹⁵⁶ There were rumors that he stole building materials allocated for the school. Members of the Tshesebe district school board, which oversaw the Tati Training Institute, claimed that Motsete misappropriated funds from charitable organizations in the United States and Britain. Suspicions were heightened by Motsete's purchase of a car and a school truck. Whether these fears were founded on truth is irrelevant. The fact is that by the end of the 1930s, Motsete lost a great deal of support

¹⁵¹ BNARS, S.243/18, "The Tati Training Institute Progress, 1935-1939," June 20, 1940.

¹⁵² Fred Morton and Jeff Ramsay, *The Birth of Botswana*, 101; Kultwano Mulale, "The Development of Primary Education in the Tati [district], 1900-1966."

¹⁵³ Modirwa Kekwaletswe, "Botswana: Man of Song – Part I." *Mmegi*, October 5, 2006; Jeff Ramsay, "Kgalemang Tumedisho Motsete (1899-1974)," *Weekend Post*, August 20, 2016 and Facebook, August 22, 2016,

https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Ramsay%2C%20%E2%80%9CKgalemang%20Tumedisho%20Motsete&epa=SEARCH_BOX

¹⁵⁴ BNARS, S.243/12, "The Tati Training Institute Report for October 1932."

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Mr. Morapedi, Mosojane, Botswana, August 25, 2017

¹⁵⁶ Dingaan Mapondo Mulale, "The Life and Career of Dr. Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete" (History and Archeology Dissertations, University of Botswana, 1977).

among local communities.¹⁵⁷ The final straw was when he relocated the school to Francistown in 1940 despite opposition by local Kalanga leaders.

Motsete founded the Tati Training Institute in 1931 and at least 322 students attended the school before it closed in 1941.¹⁵⁸ Graduates became teachers in and outside the Protectorate and were employed in a variety of other capacities such as motor-lorry drivers, storekeepers, government police, interpreters, and mineworkers.¹⁵⁹ Amos Dambe is the most well-known of the school's graduates. In the 1940s, Dambe became a headteacher in the Tati area and president of the BaKalanga Students Association.¹⁶⁰ In the 1950s, Dambe worked for L.D. Raditladi, who founded the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party in 1959. Subsequently, Dambe became politically active and was a founding member of the Bechuanaland Democratic Party in 1962. After independence Dambe occupied a number of government posts including serving as Ambassador to the United States of America from 1972 to 1976.¹⁶¹ Dambe's case is extraordinary. Nevertheless, numerous other graduates became socially and politically influential in the two decades between the Second World War and independence in 1966 and contributed to the legacy of the school.

Motsete partnered with Kalanga leaders to build the Tati Training Institute while Kalanga communities engaged in an intense struggle to preserve the continuity of their socio-economic lives amidst the mounting influence of the expanding colonial influence. Kalanga communities sought European-style education as a means to strengthen their socio-economic

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*; Madikwe, "Western Education Among the Kalanga of Northern Ngwato District, 109-1966."

¹⁵⁸ BNARS, S.243/18, "The Tati Training Institute Progress, 1935-1939," June 20, 1940.

¹⁵⁹ BNARS, S.243/17, "Report for the Tati Training Institute for the Year 1935"; S.243/18, "The Tati Training Institute Progress, 1935-1939," June 20, 1940.

¹⁶⁰ BNARS, DCF.3/7, "School Report, Siviya Native School."

¹⁶¹ John Dickie and Alan Rake, *Who's Who in Africa: The Political, Military and Business Leaders of Africa* (London: African Development, 1973); Jeff Ramsay, "Amos Dambe (1911-1991), *Weekend Post*. November 20, 2018.

position and contribute to their ability to maintain political fortitude. However, Nswazwi suffered political marginalization, and in the 1940s, the Kalanga struggle for self-determination shifted from political agitation to cultivating Kalanga cultural nationalism.

Even though demand for European-style education skyrocketed in the 1930s as Africans wanted to learn English and prepare themselves to better their socio-economic lives, the colonial governments in Southern Africa significantly hindered access to schooling. Based on the underdevelopment logic, historians most commonly attribute the demise of the Tati Training Institute to the lack of financial support as a result of the Second World War. A more complex reading shows that underdevelopment through underfunding was a reality, but that viewing the demise of the school solely from that vantage obscured the underlying issue: the incompatibility of cultivating European-style education for Africans in the increasingly segregationist context of 1930s Southern Africa. Therefore, in addition to the economic challenges, Motsete's school was a victim of the shifting political situation, especially the steady decline of the liberal platform.

Viewed from the inside, the Tati Training Institute is an example of why European-style education in Southern Africa was fraught with contradictions. Powered by the ways that various Africans envisioned their lives and those of their communities, disputes over access to European-style education and the shaping of curriculum were intimately connected to broader social and political constructs of independence, state-making and nationhood. Motsete was able to transcend the limits of the state imposed adapted education curriculum and enjoyed a high level of self-determination, in part because of the remote location of the school. Nonetheless, Motsete's school arose out of a certain moment and based on the convergence of ideas derived from self-help, African liberalism, and Kalanga nationalism.

However, in the continuously changing milieu of colonial Southern Africa, these ideas had shifted by the early 1940s, and consequently the Tati Training Institute passed into irrelevance.

Conclusion

Writers too frequently posited African intellectuals much too simply and overly applied the categories of colonial collaborator and resistor. The social histories written beginning in the 1990s set the tone for this study by asking questions related to the ambiguous and equivocal nature of African intellectuals and the ways they maintained agency in complex and challenging historical contexts. A deeper reading of the archive related to Kgalemang Tumediso (K.T.) Motsete and his colleagues shows that they critically aligned with the British Empire as part of a robust strategy of collaboration, accommodation, and resistance designed to encourage African self-determination. They challenged existing imperial structures by claiming Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate to be subjects of the British Empire. They sought British protection as a refuge from the threat of settler colonial expropriation and attempted to implement political reforms designed to heal the socio-political disjunction arising from internal ethnic and social differentiation. Ultimately, as empowered and highly educated individuals, they accepted the responsibility to protect ethnic minorities, produce self-directed individuals and strengthen African communities.

Two decades after the progressives' petition, Motsete was still promoting the political saliency of the class of educated Africans. In a letter he wrote in 1951 to the District Commissioner of Serowe titled, "Driving a Car Without Lights," he ominously warned the government that "driving a car without lights is a crime [and] that is precisely what the government is trying to do."¹⁶² He drew an analogy between a car's headlights and the class of educated Africans. He argued that the government was driving blind, or in other words,

¹⁶² Botswana Notes and Records Services (BNARS), Gaborone, Botswana, BNARS, DCS.38/1, K.T. Motsete to The District Commissioner Serowe, June 18, 1951.

attempting to move the BaNgwato people forward without a clear plan.¹⁶³ Motsete maintained that educated Africans were the “best bridge” between the European and African worlds because “the African has ordinarily more faith in an explanation by his own fellow tribesman than in that from a white official.”¹⁶⁴ “Driving a Car Without Lights” shows that between the 1930s and the lead up to independence in the late 1950s, there was continuity in the political agenda of those deemed here as “the progressives.” It alludes to the primary problem addressed here: the attempts by Motsete and his colleagues to forge for themselves a social and political identity under the system of indirect rule.

In “Driving a Car Without Lights,” Motsete contended that Africans were the best interpreters of African culture and society. His disposition is an example of the central argument presented here. While Motsete convincingly asserted the authority of the class of educated Africans, he appealed to the same political power reinforcing the boundaries of African self-determination. Motsete’s disposition as founder and principal of the Tati Training Institute derived from a claim similar to that which he made for the political role of educated Africans. Motsete vehemently embraced the idea that it was the responsibility of those Africans who had obtained European-style education to direct African education in the 1930s. He built the Tati Training Institute, in part with the support of paternalistic Europeans, but nevertheless based his education philosophy on the requisite of self-determination.

As the number of Tati Training Institute graduates grew, so did Motsete’s legacy. The impact of the Tati Training Institute stretched well beyond Kalanga villages as graduates took posts in all sectors of the economy throughout the Bechuanaland Protectorate and beyond. The school produced an assemblage of graduates influential in shaping the identity

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

of independent Botswana in the lead up to and after independence. The most well-known was Amos Dambe, former principal of the Tati Training Institute and Ambassador to the United States.

Motsete and Kalanga leaders partnered to bolster the ability of Kalanga communities to contest the differential status of communities living in various colonial demarcations. Motsete defended Africans as subjects of the British Empire and against colonial depredations. He promoted a vision of empire based on the notion that rights and freedoms transcend various colonial demarcations. He wielded loyalty to empire as a weapon to strengthen the Kalanga struggle against differential treatment of people under the same government. This was a well-thought out strategy that sought to exploit not only interwar Britain's implication in the ongoing saga over citizenship for Africans living in colonial and imperial territories, but posed a powerful critique of the system of indirect rule in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the imperial rhetoric of "British justice."

Today, Kalanga communities straddling the national border between Zimbabwe and Botswana are engaged in a struggle to reassert their own identity in the face of two hundred years of persistent subjugation. Community leaders and cultural brokers are faced with the challenges of how to preserve the TjiKalanga language and empower their communities politically through the promotion of their own cultural heritage. Their story parallels the fates of many other ethnic minorities in Africa that fought to maintain a semblance of their cultural sovereignty on the margins of the colonial (and post-colonial) states, carved out by Europeans who created the notorious Berlin Conference map of Africa at the end of the 19th century.

Scholarship on the BaKalanga is still underdeveloped. The reification of the nation-

state as an analytical framework seems to explain the dearth of Kalanga historiography. This study confronts these challenges, re-defining Kalanga history from both the borderlands and biographical perspectives. It explores an African-driven educational agenda on the margins of the colonial state through a reading of Motsete's eloquent writings in Botswana's national archives.

Motsete saw himself as a purveyor of European-style education and as a potential liberator of the commoners. He attempted to shape British ideas of trusteeship by advancing African socio-economic self-determination and by appealing to the idea of a just citizenry under the legal protection of the British Crown. Motsete's innovative educational experiment, which he deemed an "educational revolution," represented an attempt to demonstrate that African innovation and leadership could ultimately strengthen the Bechuanaland Protectorate against the persistent threat of settler colonialism.

Nevertheless, Motsete's immense education and his robust and thoughtful strategy did not overcome the inherent inadequacies of African liberalism or the dilemma of the European-style-educated African intellectual within the context of British imperial rule. Motsete engaged with and adopted variants of the liberal and paternalistic ideas he was exposed to in the missions and while schooling in England. However, those ideas were thwarted by the lack of inclusion and the rigidity of the persistent racial boundaries. Motsete's story contributes to the hordes of frustrated African liberals in the colonial and imperial setting. He grew increasingly estranged and embittered by the complications and limitations that hampered his life as an educator, a politician and a Christian. In old age, Motsete was markedly alienated and bewildered. Except for running a bar and restaurant in Mahalapye that featured contemporary musical acts, Motsete had little relevance publicly or

politically from 1966, when he lost his bid for the presidency of independent Botswana, until his death in 1974.

Motsete's political failures in the 1960s were partially due to the irrelevance of the bygone African liberal, when the winds of change blew and much of the continent became independent around 1960. However, Motsete and the progressives planted the seed of nationalism that came to flower in the late 1950s in Botswana. According to Peter Limb, A.B. Xuma's *Claims in South Africa* was "a pivotal document of nascent African nationalism" because it called for "peace, self-determination, the removal of the color bars, better labor standards, and no annexation of the British Protectorates by South Africa."¹⁶⁵ The political platform put forth by Motsete and his progressive colleagues was similar to Xuma's and others of that generation. Their nationalism formed out of a reformist critique of and not an uprising against imperial rule. Motsete and his colleagues sought to improve socio-economic conditions for Africans and secure the Southern African protectorates from South African aggression. In 1960, Motsete formed the Bechuanaland People's Party. However, by the early 1960s, Motsete's moderate political stance and his inability to support a radical program of action rendered him politically inept. The more radical approach put forth by the young crop of African National Congress influenced nationalists had seized the day. Motsete's political clout ended after the split in the Bechuanaland People's Party prior to Botswana's first Presidential election in 1966.

In his biography of Motsete's contemporary Thompson Samkange, Terence Ranger argued that Samkange of Southern Rhodesia was not an uncritical apologist for the Christian

¹⁶⁵ Alfred B. Xuma and Peter Limb, *A.B. Xuma: Autobiography and Selected Works* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2012), xi.

elite or a “hero of nationalism.”¹⁶⁶ Instead, Samkange made many political mistakes and his career ended in disillusion and irony.¹⁶⁷ Motsete’s entire generation experienced political marginalization. This was why the subsequent generation of African intellectuals insisted on political independence after World War II. History is clear on Motsete’s frustrations, as it was for many of his contemporaries, but he was not a victim of the times.

Motsete was a trailblazer, compelled to forge new ground in politics and education in the 1930s. His political dispositions and his writings reveal ideas and emotions emerging in a rapidly transforming context. Motsete challenged himself to gain perspective on the pertinent issues of the moment: empire, protection, trusteeship, African advancement, and self-determination. When reading the archive on the Tati Training Institute, one surely feels Motsete grappling with his ambition to pattern the school to achieve an affirming vision of African culture, or what W.E.B. Du Bois termed a reflection of Motsete’s “self-conscious manhood.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, his undertaking to merge those things fractured within himself and achieve his goals in the onerous colonial context.

Motsete was among the non-elite. Although his surviving writings are related to his professional life and his commentary on the social, economic, and political circumstances, just beyond the surface, there is what Karen Barber referred to as an evident imagining of “personhood.” Barber suggested, “Literacy embodied aspiration, and aspiration was founded upon lack – a sense of personal inadequacy associated with an education perceived

¹⁶⁶ T.O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men?: The Samkange Family & African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64* (Harare: Baobab, 1995), viii.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903.

incomplete.”¹⁶⁹ Motsete’s writings give the sense of his ambition, his challenges, and his unrealized potential.

Motsete’s ideas were complex and ambiguous. He is an example of those who broke down the rigid barriers between cooperation and insurgence. Kevin Gaines argued that for educated Blacks in the United States, freedom was complicated by Black’s sense of “dissemblance,” the “shame of being at the mercy of whites” and the “guilt of having internalized codes of white supremacy.”¹⁷⁰ This is very similar to Du Bois’s formulation of the “double consciousness,” whereby educated Blacks viewed themselves through falsified white images of Blacks. Dissemblance and double consciousness express the psychological challenges faced by Motsete and his colleagues as they attempted to reconcile pursuit of African self-determination and acceptance of paternalistic liberalism as a scheme for promoting emancipation in the face of colonial racism and brutality.

Falola argued that African intellectuals were always compelled to address the impact of European colonialism on Africa. Falola contended, “No [African intellectual] has been able to move away from the framework of alienation.”¹⁷¹ In this regard, Motsete was engaged in his own search for truth and to produce insights into the myriad of problems arising out of European colonialism in Africa. Motsete was one individual in the *longue durée* of African intellectuals who to some degree accepted European culture, grappled with how to defend Africa from European predatory exploitation, and sought to find a means to re-shape the continent’s encounter with European colonialism to produce a better African future.

¹⁶⁹ Karin Barber, eds. *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 5.

¹⁷⁰ Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 8.

¹⁷¹ Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001).

Despite the optimistic sense that African intellectuals struggled to maintain, Motsete's attempts at forging African self-determination captures the dismal outlook for Africans in the context of strengthening settler colonial domination in Southern African in the 1930s. This story contributes to the historical corpus which details the challenges African liberals faced attempting to fuse European-inspired social and political schemes into the African colonial setting.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the entire British Empire was embroiled in the ongoing saga over whether or not to extend citizenship to colonial subjects. Motsete's understanding of British colonial citizenship was shaped by debates over the League of Nations Mandates, imperial trusteeship, indirect rule, and the Statute of Westminster (1931). The archive pertaining to Motsete and the Tati Training Institute shows that he was an active participant in this debate. It is unclear if he sincerely believed that British citizenship was achievable for African inhabitants of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. However, set against the rising tide of settler colonial politics in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, Motsete's appeal to the British for legal protections for individuals and ethnic minorities was a means to challenge regional British and colonial authority as well as his foes in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Finally, my intention is to draw the reader's attention to an historically rich and critical period in Botswana's history and to uncover the life story of Kgalemang Tumediso Motsete. It demonstrates that Motsete faced the bitter contradiction between lofty personal ambitions and the suffocating realities of his circumstances. Nonetheless, his story is one example of the human experience: the ideas, outlooks, aspirations, struggles, and achievements of people and their communities in the context of historically challenging times.

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