

Should this be so ? and should the Boers not prevent him ? I know that they would at once attack me if I follow him in pursuit over the line for they seek a quarrel with me. I wish therefore that you should represent these things to His Excellency the Governor at Cape Town and to the Boer leaders, and explain to the latter the danger they are incurring of provoking a war with all the Bechuana tribes, by allowing Moshete to attack me from the Transvaal. Let them send him quite out of the Transvaal or else keep him quite within its boundaries..."

The British Resident immediately made representations to the Triumvirate (Pretorius, Kruger and Joubert) who thereupon issued a Proclamation of Neutrality on the 21st of October 1881.

Montshiwa's letter to Hudson had hardly been sent off, when by way of revenge or reprisal for Montshiwa's assault on Lotlhakane in May, Moshete and Matlaba attacked him at his principal village of Sehuba on the 17th of October. Montshiwa, however, repelled the attack easily.

At this time, Molema earnestly advised Montshiwa to abandon Sehuba and to come and make his headquarters among the rocks hitherto known as Molema's town. Here there was a perennial stream - the Molopo River running through the village, masses of huge stones, large boulders and gigantic rocks all along the valley which was thickly wooded with a variety of trees - willows, acacias, karris, syringas, mimosas, camelthorn and hookthorn. Not only was the place picturesque from a scenic point of view, but what was more important just then was that it was beautifully adapted for defensive purposes, and was in every way far superior to the open, bare, windswept, defenceless and comparatively waterless terrain of Sehuba.

Montshiwa had realised all this since his arrival from Moshaneng three years previously and was only kept back from going to settle among the rocks alongside Molema by conscientious scruples and by taboos. He was restrained by social sanctions enforced by fear or respect for public opinion. "Tlou ya mmadi" is an universal Tswana axiom which means 'First come, first served' or "ownership to him who pegs first". It is a maxim of honour which high-principled Batswana respect and observe, and Montshiwa was not the person to disregard it. Molema had come to Mafikeng first; Molema had pegged Mafikeng first, so Mafikeng must remain Molema's town. Then there were, if possible, even more cogent reasons and wellnigh insurmountable difficulties. Montshiwa was restrained also by sanctions enforced by fear of supernatural punishment. In Tswana tradition, it is taboo for one of higher status to live in a house or town built by one of lower status, or as the Batswana say: "To warm yourself at the fire kindled by your junior."



Violation of this law unavoidably brings a curse and subtle supernatural punishment upon the defaulter. The punishment may be physical, such as death or disease; it may be mental, such as insanity or idiocy, or it may be social, such as pauperism, constant ill-luck with loss of prestige leading finally to exchange of positions so that the senior is degraded to the position of the junior, while the junior is elevated to the position of the senior. Montshiwa was senior, and if he broke these immutable laws of his ancestors, what might not happen to him? It had been whispered into Montshiwa's ear that Molema was scheming to usurp the chieftainship or else secede to found an independent clan. Against all these vague suspicions and fears, Molema calmed Montshiwa's mind, and assured him of his loyalty in all but spiritual matters.

If Montshiwa had been in any doubt about accepting Molema's advice and invitation, that doubt was thoroughly dispelled by events which soon happened. There had been quietness for about three weeks after the last attack on Montshiwa's village of Sehuba - the proverbial lull before the storm, - and now, early in November, hostilities were resumed. 600 men of Moshete and Matlaba under Seleka Letsapa and Motuba the youngest brother of Matlaba, openly assisted by the Transvaal burghers attacked Sehuba in the early morning. They approached it from the Rooigrond direction, quickly penetrated it, set it on fire and forced the inhabitants to flee to the rocks of the Molopo River. Montshiwa, however, with his guard took his stand on a high stonewall enclosure, and successfully defied his assailants until his precarious situation was noticed by his retiring men when they rallied and forced the enemy back. In the ebb and flow of the battle, Montshiwa's younger brother - Selere - exposed himself unduly by riding far in advance of his regiment to exploit a point of advantage, and was shot dead by a Griqua in the enemy's rank. *and had just killed Keagile Seapo somewhat treacherously when he was himself* Montshiwa's men caught the Griqua and literally cut him to pieces. In the final result, Montshiwa was defeated and had to retire to Molema's town at the rocks of Mafikeng. Among his men killed were Mothoko Thwane, Mahube and Tsietsso Madibane, while large numbers of his cattle and horses were captured by the enemy and driven into the Transvaal. Montshiwa finally evacuated Sehuba and came to live permanently at Molema's town, which was from this time known only as Mafikeng - Among the Rocks, and became the centre of the Tshidi Barolong life, and because of its position, one of the most important places in the country.

Montshiwa having complained to the British Resident that despite the Transvaal Proclamation of Neutrality armed Boers were openly assisting Moshete and Matlaba against him, the British Resident remonstrated with the Transvaal Government, and at the same time <sup>sent</sup> Captain Nourse with the Transvaal delegate Commandant H. Greeff to investigate the complaint <sup>to</sup> and report.

Captain...../



Captain Nourse reported that not only the Transvaal burghers, but also the Transvaal Government themselves were assisting Moshete and Matlaba by (1) allowing them to use the Transvaal territory as a safe base for their military operations, (2) allowing them to drive the cattle and horses captured into the Transvaal and grazing them there, (3) supplying them with as much ammunition as they required (4) not only giving them military assistance, but by actual participation of the Transvaal burghers, including members of the Volksraad in the war on behalf of Moshete. Captain Nourse concluded his report by stating that Moshete was acting under the direction of Commandant Greeff (C.3381 pp.5, 33-43; C3486 p.61).

Just as the British emissary reported <sup>adversely</sup> of the Transvaal burghers, <sup>adversely advised</sup> the Boer emissary reported to his Government about the English volunteers with Montshiwa.

Montshiwa had but shortly arrived in Mafikeng to settle there permanently when he was called upon to mourn the death of his second brother within a short period of the death of the first. This was Molena, who died on the 21st of January 1882 after a life-long battle with asthma. He was a man of powerful personality, simple life and one who always spoke his mind. His contribution to the life of his people is incalculable and has multiplied itself many times over with succeeding generations. In the course of the following months, the Reverend Owen Watkins, Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in the Transvaal came specially from Pretoria to Mafikeng to condole with the Tshidi Barolong over the loss of their spiritual leader for nearly fifty years, and referred to him as "a man of stainless life, great devotion and untiring energy... wise too to know the seasons and what was good for the nation." (Wesleyan Missionary Notices 1883. p.112).

Again there was a cessation of hostilities for about a month, and then on the 21st of February 1882 the belligerents took up arms again. Matlaba <sup>II</sup> assisted by about 80 Transvaal burghers under Carl Webber and provided with three ship's guns made an attack ~~on~~ upon Mafikeng. There was a sharp fight for about six hours, and heavy casualties were inflicted on both sides - twenty among the assailants, including three Boers, and about thirty casualties among Montshiwa's people.

With the help and guidance of his English volunteers, of whom there were about twelve altogether, Montshiwa now fortified Mafikeng by having trenches dug and "schanzes" or petty forts built in and around the town.. ~~This made the town impregnable to the then available armaments.~~ This made the town impregnable to then ~~available~~ <sup>the then available</sup> armaments.

Moshete and Matlaba's forces, under Seleka Letsapa and Motuba ably assisted by the Transvaal burghers, being men from Rooigrond, Vleyfontein and Lichtenburg made a laager or fort about two miles to the east of the Barolong town. ~~This made the town impregnable to the then available armaments.~~

and ~~the~~...../



and from it made frequent sorties, night attacks and raids against Montshiwa's town. This kind of thing went on for months and months during 1882, with varying fortune, but always with loss of life.

In one of these assaults Carl Weber and Harclas Coetzee, leaders of the Moshete-Matlaba volunteers as they called themselves, were killed, while on Montshiwa's side, one of his European partisans James Scott McGillivray was captured by the Transvaal burghers, bound hand and foot, cruelly nurtured and was never heard of again.

In August the besiegers captured hundreds of Montshiwa's cattle sheep and horse, halfstarved the beleaguered Barolong and made things very unpleasant for them. To make things worse, dysentery broke out in the village and carried many of Montshiwa's people off including two of his strong councillors Mokholokholo Motshegare and Legalatladi Lekoma.

In February 1882, the High Commissioner issued a proclamation warning British subjects against the breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and many English men who were helping or intended to help Montshiwa were thus prevented from personally participating in the war.

At the end of January, a patrol of Boers and Moshete's men attacked Montshiwa's substation of Disaneng under Jan Masibi 24 miles to the west of Mafikeng, surrounded 19 of Masibi's men who surrendered and were disarmed, tied up and were taken away to the laager at Rooigrond.. A few days after, these men were removed to Khunwana, and on the way 15 of them were murdered. This shocking incident occasioned considerable correspondence between the British Resident and the Transvaal Government, but was never satisfactorily settled, as the Transvaal Government declined to collaborate in investigating it, but it damaged their name irrevocably with Montshiwa.

In March 1882, Commandant General Piet Joubert, and Commandant Ferreira with a small commando visited Marico and fined Ikalafeng, chief of the Bahurutshe at Linokana hundreds of cattle to the value of £21,000 for being "permantig" (cheeky). Ikalafeng's crimes were that he was in sympathy with Montshiwa - the pet aversion of the Transvaal, and had assisted him in May 1881 against Matleba. In addition he had given refuge to Englishmen during the Transvaal War of Independence. In particular he had protected John Maffat, (son of the famous missionary) against being disciplined by the Boers. The Commandant General also addressed to the chief Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse and the old 'friend' of the Transvaal Chief Sechele of the Bakwena letters of warning "against British adventurers, traitors and poison-strewers" (meaning Colonel Moysey).

This...../



These activities became known to the British Resident who at once drew the attention of the Transvaal Government to the 18th article of the Pretoria Convention, whereby he was the only rightful medium of communication between the Transvaal and African chiefs.

Montshiwa now found it impossible to procure ammunition, and his adversaries got the upper hand of him more and more.

In June Sir Hercules Robinson, by no means a negrophilist, gave it out as his considered opinion, in which the Earl of Kimberley, Secretary of states concurred that "it was hard that a friendly chief should be debarred from obtaining ammunition in self-defence, and it was worthy of consideration whether he should be so debarred." (C.3419 p.63). But like most other lofty ideas, this remained just a pious thought, and Montshiwa realised the bitterness of being left in the lurch.

The period between February and August was taken up mostly with correspondence between the Transvaal Government on the one side and the British Resident, the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State on the other on the deplorable state of affairs on the western border.

In March, the British Government urged the Transvaal Government strictly to observe the boundary line as laid down by the Pretoria Convention, and to let African tribes beyond the line settle their own differences without the intervention of Europeans.

To this the Transvaal Government replied that the whole cause of the trouble on the western Transvaal was "the unfortunate boundary line by the Pretoria Convention, "which they had protested in vain against."

In May the Secretary of State requested the Transvaal Government to take effective steps in implementing the Proclamation of Neutrality, to prevent Transvaal burghers from encroaching on African territories, and suggested the arrest of burghers who were found so trespassing with a view to stopping adventurers and unprincipled white men from taking advantage of dissensions between tribes by taking service under one chief with the object of appropriating to themselves the land and cattle of another chief. He cited Gey v Pittius (L.V.) Member of the Volksraad & C.B. Otto (L.V.) as examples.

In August and September Montshiwa was hard pressed. His village was besieged, there had been no ploughing and therefore no harvest, the gaunt spectre of famine stalked through the land, and disease made its appearance first among the very young and the very old; the morale of the fighting men was low, and there was a grave shortage of ammunition among Montshiwa's men while Moshete's men and their Boer partisans had an abundance of it, and the latter brought a cannon to bombard Mafikeng.

Montshiwa's...../



Montshiwa's counsellors therefore advised him to try to come to terms with his enemies. But who were his enemies? Whom was he to approach? Matlaba or Moshete or Gey van Pittius?

On the 16th of October 1882 the Transvaal Government while professing to have no interest in or connection with the doings of the Transvaal burghers who formed Moshete's and Mossweu's volunteer army nevertheless accepted the territory ceded by Mossweu to the volunteers (C.3486.35). It had been vehemently denied, but was now proved to the hilt that the volunteers, or freebooters as they were generally called, were in fact emissaries of the Transvaal, and that any land they acquired, whether by cession, treaty, purchase, conquest or by any means whatsoever, was to be a province of the Transvaal, to be annexed thereto in due course. Such had been the case with New Republic on the Swaziland border, and so Sir Hercules Robinson the High Commissioner found in December 1882 "that if Montshiwa and Mankurwane were absorbed by the Transvaal, other Bechuana chiefs - Bonokwane and Makgobi of the Ratlou tribe, Barekin of the Batlharo would soon share the same fate. Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse and Sechele of the Bakwena would come next. So long as there were native cattle and native lands worth appropriating, the absorbing process would be repeated; tribe after tribe would be pushed back and back upon other tribes or would perish in the process until an inhabitable desert or the sea were reached as the ultimate boundary of the Transvaal" (C.3486 p.52).

The war was ostensibly between Montshiwa and Moshete, and as Moshete was dissatisfied with its conduct and was receiving nothing of its spoils and trophies he was also tired of it, and it would have been the best thing in the world for the two chiefs to come to some agreement and terminate it. But the war was in fact carried on against Montshiwa by the Transvaal burghers on the border on behalf of the Transvaal Government, and the consent to an armistice and the nature of the peace were matters entirely in their discretion. Accordingly, therefore, Montshiwa sent his councillor Motsaalore Marumulwa to Commandant J.P. Snyman of Marico, requesting him for a treaty or to act as mediator between him and Moshete and his volunteers. An armistice was agreed upon to last from the 7th till the 24th of October. On the 24th of October, Commandant Snyman presented the terms of the peace ostensibly between Montshiwa and Moshete, as dictated by Moshete's volunteers:

"Treaty of Peace

24th October 1882

Deed of conditions of peace and terms thereof laid down and agreed upon between us the undersigned chiefs and our captains and counsellors on the 24th of October 1882.

Art. 1. We lay down our arms on both sides and conclude a peace under the conditions following.

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2. Each of us Moshete and Montshiwa shall be captains respectively of his own tribes, independent of, and not subject to each other but shall henceforth be rulers and managers within our borders over our own subjects and possessions, and as such only subordinate to the laws and orders of the Government of the South African Republic and under its protection;
3. Each of us shall be obliged within the time of two days after conclusion of this peace to leave our present fortified town or position and to destroy and raze to the ground all defences or positions (or schanzes) or occupied places.
4. Inasmuch as we henceforth place our territory and all our possessions under the laws and protection of the Government ~~to~~ the South African Republic, we each bind ourselves mutually and severally that no fortifications or works or position shall be made within our limits or afterwards be erected without the permission of the above-named government.
5. It is hereby understood that neither of us will ever henceforth undertake any hostilities against each other or against any other person within or beyond our territory without the previous knowledge of the Government of the South African Republic.
6. Every difference that may hereafter arise or be occasioned between us and our subjects and which we are not able to arrange in an amicable manner and without expenses shall be submitted to the final decision of the Government of the South African Republic. No war shall exist in respect thereof without the consent of the aforesaid Government.
7. Under no circumstances whatever shall either of us individually or jointly resort to any other state or Government with complaints or anything, except and exclusively to the Transvaal or South South African Republic aforesaid, whose decision shall be decisive and binding in all matters.
8. It is distinctly understood that all engagements or debts made or contracted by each of the respective parties before this date must be acknowledged and duly honoured and are here acknowledged by both parties to have been incurred by each.
9. Grounds which have been promised by the two parties or either of them to his or their hired white volunteers

are...../



are certainly and distinctly secured and awarded to the said volunteers, and by consequence are hereby fully acknowledged by both parties.

10. In order to award these ground properly and fully to the lawful appearers, and to cause them to be put in possession thereof, a commission shall be chosen and appointed, viz two persons by the two chiefs, and a third person shall be appointed and chosen by the lawful volunteers by a majority of votes.
11. The Commission shall go out and begin its labours within two months from this date. This Commission shall beacon off these grounds according to previously agree-upon regulations. And no farm shall be or be made of greater extent than 3,000(Three thousand) morgen.
12. "Grond briewen" or Documents of Ownership shall be issued in the form and terms, and under the conditions such as are used by the South African Republic, and shall be signed and registered by the Government in the names of the lawful owners thereof.
13. All white inhabitants of our land shall be governed by the Government of the South African Republic, and shall in regard thereof stand under the laws thereof.
14. In order to ~~restore~~ perpetual peace and rest, a line shall be settled ~~between the territories of~~ each of the chiefs and his people, which appointed line shall never for everlasting be trespassed over or violated.
15. These lines shall run as herein distinctly described. Beginning at the point of the beacon of the South African Republic at Ramatlabama thence in straight line up to Molopo River where a beacon shall be placed at a distance of one mile or 1,700 yards on the upper side of Mafikeng - the old town of Molema, otherwise the present defended town of Montshiwa. Thence a line shall run with the Molopo stream up to the point where the same or its directions touches the line or lines of other chiefs living beyond the territories of our tribes.
16. All grounds lying to the north or north-west of this line shall henceforth and for the future indicate the territories of the chief Montshiwa and his people. All grounds lying to the south or south-west shall be or indicate territories of the chief Moshete and his people.
17. All ground which is owing and ~~must~~ be given to the volunteers of both sides shall be taken and inspected within the lines as ~~he~~ hereinafter described: viz: From the beacon



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on the Molopo River which as has been said is at 1,700 yards or paces on the upper side of the town or positions now occupied by Montshiwa (Mafikeng) and thence along the Molopo River to the south-western side to where the same runs into the river Setlagole, thence with this Setlagole River to the source thereof, and thence up along the most south-westerly spruit to the source thereof, and thence in a straight line up to the outside of the established line of the South African Republic, and thence with the same line which runs the great wagon road which goes from the Saltpan and along the Transvaal line up to the beacon on the Roigrond by the clump of trees, and thence along that line to the beacon at Buurmansdrift, and then to the point of Ramatlabama, and from the point Ramatlabama, back in a straight line to the beacon to be erected 1760 (1,700) yards above the side of the town Mafikeng, while in addition shall be excluded the place Rietfontein which be given to Machavi.

18. Both undersigning parties assent hereby after the passing of this agreement to hold themselves strictly not to accept any new inhabitants or natives at present beyond this territory, or to cause them to come or live in it without the previous knowledge and concurrence of the Government of the South African Republic, nor shall any white inhabitants be allowed within our land unless they will take the oath of allegiance to the South African Republic.
19. Seeing that the now too-long waged war has not only occasioned great injury, laying waste, bloodshed in consequence of which a great amount of debt liability has been incurred by the Great Chief Moshete and his people, it is hereby agreed that the Captain Montshiwa binds himself and his people to pay for war expenses the sum of Sixteen thousand pounds (£16,000) sterling, in which is included £4,000 which has been incurred by Moshete and occasioned by an armistice distinctly asked for by Montshiwa and concurred in by us. This amount shall be paid by Montshiwa within one month from date in good current money or real value.
20. All cattle and goods which have been taken in booty during the war by the hostile parties shall remain the lawful property of the possessors but all stolen cattle or goods taken from persons who have not been connected with the war shall be immediately given or the value thereof paid to the owner, with such reasonable amount for damage as shall be just and right.



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21. After the conclusion of this contract of peace, no complaints in regard to former misdeeds perpetrated before the beginning of hostilities by either of the parties shall be brought up against them but this peace shall be a sufficient and full absolution on both sides; no reproaches shall be made or any disturbances created by the Chiefs or their subjects.

Translation from Original Dutch counterpart in possession of the Chief Montshiwa at Mafikeng, and submitted to R. Rutherford, Secretary to the British Resident on the 21st November, 1882.

Briefly Moshete and Montshiwa are made to pledge themselves and agree:

1. To keep the peace towards each other, and place themselves under the laws and protection of the South African Republic.
2. That the Boer volunteers of Moshete be rewarded by farms of 3,000 morgen each, being land expropriated from Moshete, but by far the larger part of it from Montshiwa
3. That nearly three-quarters of Montshiwa's land, and that the best part of it containing arable ground be taken from him.
4. That both chiefs utterly decline to have any dealings with the British or any other Government, and under no circumstance to resort to them with their complaints.
5. That Montshiwa breaks all fortifications in Mafeking and raze them to the ground.
6. That Montshiwa will keep as lawful booty all cattle and goods captured during the war from Moshete, and vice versa, but that he will restore all cattle and goods (or their equivalent value) taken from people unconnected with the war, that is the Transvaal burghers and volunteers.
7. That the internal and external (or foreign) relations of the chiefs such as quarrels, immigration and entry of outside natives, and war with other tribes will be controlled by the South African Republic.
8. That Montshiwa shall pay reparation or a war indemnity of £16,000 within one month.

It is doubtful whether Montshiwa understood the involved provisions of this peace treaty, whether he and his counsellors accepted them and signed the Document. There are conflicting statements on those points. According to the Reverend J. Mackenzie (Austral Africa Vol. 1 p.68) and the report of the Land Commission



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