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Further appreciations from the "THE TIMES" (London) of 15th June, 1959.

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The Rev. Michael Scott, honorary director of the Africa Bureau, writes:-

A unique testimony to the character of Tshekedi Khama is to be found in the very divergence of tributes which are paid to him from opposite sides of the lines which separate people of one colour, creed or political party from another and which divide official from unofficial people. This was not of course due to any facile capacity for being "all things to all men," for he was a man of great determination and was possessed by an energy which drove him and those associated with him, often including his opponents, towards the objectives he believed to be necessary and right.

Many who had occasion to oppose him, whether Government officials, traders, or missionaries, came often to respect his reasons and often to discover in the end that he was right. He was an African who had experienced himself the disadvantages in which his people were placed when they came to England on deputations, partly through the fact that the officials and the white people of Africa have so many relatives and friends in the Government, the Press and influential social positions, and this ensures that their views are widely expressed and understood, whereas those of Africans are at a corresponding disadvantage. It was for this reason that Tshekedi Khama was one of the first honorary presidents of the Africa Bureau, which owed much to his inspiration and insistence on the need for facilities to be provided in Britain to enable Africans to speak for themselves, not to one section but to the widest possible sections of opinion in Britain. It was he who had first prompted the attempt to ensure that the voices of African people in the South West African Mandate were heard at the United Nations in spite of their being physically prevented from attending themselves, and it was a joy to him during the last few days of his life to hear that a young Herero tribesman had escaped from South West Africa and had been given a hearing at the United Nations.

The respect which Tshekedi Khama has won for himself and his people is in part due to his adamant insistence on Africans' rights to hold and express their own opinions. Yet he was never arrogant and had no patience with those who judged the value of opinions by reference to race or countered white racialism with black racialism. A man was a human being; whatever his opinions, he was entitled to respect, not on account of the racial or social origin of those who held them but on their own inherent merits.

Whenever he had to bear insults from arrogant Europeans, as Africans often do in his part of the world, and sometimes too in Britain, his own views would be strongly but always politely expressed. When replying to a bus conductor, taxi driver, or railway porter, he would address him as "sir", leaving it in no doubt that he respected the dignity and worth of a person, whatever his job or his status, and that he expected the same himself, not because he was a great chief but because he was a man.

Underlying the driving purposefulness which permeated every moment of his waking life there was a profound belief in the deeper purpose of his Creator which brooked no denying or rebellion from him. And it was against the background of this purpose that his own actions and motives and those of his opponents would be judged.



Mr. Clement Davies writes:-

All who knew him and all who desire to see Africans and Europeans cooperating together in true partnership will regret the passing from our midst of Tshekedi Khama.

Tshekedi Khama was a remarkable man. General Smuts said of him: "He is the greatest African I have ever met." Those of us who came into close contact with him can for ourselves endorse that statement. He was a born leader, wise, fair minded, just, kindly, yet decisive and determined. He was a good listener, anxious to hear everything that would bear on the question coming before him for his decision. Then, having made his decision, he would act on it and, when necessary, defend it and explain it in clear, concise terms.

One would not only wish that he had been spared a few more years to continue his work on behalf of his people but one more deeply regrets that advantage was not taken of his abilities, character, fairness and vision during his lifetime in a much wider area than that of the Bamangwato people or even Bechuanaland. We have lost a statesman who, had it been permitted to him, in a larger field would have rendered great and lasting service to Africans and the future of that great continent.

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