

AIDE-MEMOIR.

We thank the Secretary of State for granting this interview. The time allocated is too short to enable me to develop my scheme for the reorganisation and integration of the Bamanwato under "Indirect Rule" and the total and immediate abolition of "Direct Rule".

With the very limited time at our disposal I can only make a bare outline of the disabilities and persecutions under which those who hold the same view as I do on Seretse's marriage have lived and are still living under the present regime.

At this interview I propose to deal with only three points namely, an introduction, my personal position and the political situation.

Before proceeding, Sir, I should like to have my petition, as well as those of the headmen at Rametsana and of the headmen still living in the Bamangwato country read to you, unless you have already perused same. I should then like Mr. Buchanan to make a few remarks on the general position before I come to the particular issues involved.

My remarks herein will refer to the actions of several people whom I shall mention by name later, and would have much preferred that they should be present, to hear what I have to say. If any detrimental statements were made against me at your meeting with the Bamangwato tribe, Sir, I deeply regret that I was not allowed to be present at the Kgatla at Serowe to refute in your presence, and that of the whole Tribe any allegations made against me.

An Introduction.

Dealing with the first point I wish it to be noted, Sir, that those who hold the same view as I do on the marriage of Seretse can neither be accused of having acted aggressively against anybody, nor can a single illustration be given where we have disobeyed the instruction of the Government, refused to co-operate with the authorities, incited people to resort to acts which can reasonably be interpreted as acts of rebellion against or opposition to the British Government. Further, we have never at any time by threats and confiscation of property induced people to adopt a feeling of hostility towards us or one another which can have the only one result, that is the splitting of the tribe into warring factions. We challenge anybody to prove the contrary.

On the other hand we wish to record, Sir, that the people who hold the same view as Seretse, whom the Authorities today call Seretse's supporters or his followers, led by the descendants of Sekgoma-a-Kgari, namely, Keaboka Tsametse Kgamane Sekgoma; Setlohle Kaelo Kgamane Sekgoma; Serogola Gagoitsege Seretse Sekgoma; Petlo Mokhutshwane Sekgoma; Masetsane Ikitsen Sekgoma; Manyaphiri Ikitsen Sekgoma; Ngwato Moloi Sekgoma, and Radiphofhu Moloi Sekgoma, have been responsible for :-

- (i) the boycott of the meeting which was attended by the High Commissioner,
- (ii) advice to people not to pay their taxes, which advice was accepted,
- (iii) advice to the people not to co-operate with the Government Veterinary staff by refusing to present their cattle for inspection, which advice was followed, (I should explain here, Sir, that in view of the prevalent cattle diseases our cattle have to be continually inspected by.../

by the Government Veterinary Staff so as to enable us to send these cattle to the markets in the neighbouring governments. The economic position of the country depends on the cattle and this action was more serious than it was apparently realised).

- (iv) advised the people not to attend meetings which the District Commissioner convened.
- (v) In addition to these acts of aggression against the Government of the country, these very Sekgomas have been and continue to be responsible for acts of victimisation, confiscation and/or attempted confiscation of property of the people who hold the same view as I do now called by the local officers Tshekedi's followers, people or supporters. I have recorded these cases of victimisation, confiscation and/or attempted confiscation of property in Annexure "A" hereto. These acts were resorted to in order to intimidate the people from boldly expressing the view that the marriage of Seretse to Ruth was not in accordance with Native Law and Custom. These acts have continued to this present day in spite of the Government's decision on the case of the marriage of Seretse to Ruth. We can understand the attitude of the Sekgomas in the opposite camp to Seretse and myself, but when the District Commissioners themselves confiscate our lands as they have done even this year we are at a complete loss, and we ask you, Sir, what redress we have to this persecution and loss of property and rights, due to official action;
- (vi) advised people not to make contributions to the fund required for the building of the Bamangwato College and even took away and gave back to the contributors the cattle which the individual members of the tribe had donated to the College. Some of the above actions were foretold in a statement signed and handed to the Administration on or about the 13th March, 1950, signed by Keaboka Kgamane, Setlohile Kgamane, Serogola Seretse, Petlo Sekgoma, Manyaphiri Ikitsen and Walter S. Pela, (the last named is not a Monwato).

There is also the case of arson of my personal dwelling house in Serowe. This house was left to me by Chief Khama in his Will and all claim to it by Seretse was abandoned when we settled our civil action. I should also point out that Chief Khama built this house in 1920, the Native Treasuries were only established in 1932, the house was not built with any tribal money but with Chief Khama's private money. This fire could not possibly have been accidental as it started before daylight and there was nobody living in the house and the fire did not spread from outside. I have made several unsuccessful attempts to get the report of the police, if not the whole then the conclusions as to whether they had formed the opinion that it is connected with the present political trouble or not. My verbal discussions with the local officer who was in charge disclosed that strong suspicion was that it was political. This view is strengthened by the fact that within less than 200 yards and in full view Keaboka held a Kgotla and no attempt was made to put the fire out or save the contents until the native Policemen arrived.

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In view of the foregoing I am at a complete loss to understand how his Excellency the High Commissioner can have come to give you, Sir, the information contained in your letter of 14th December, 1950, to Rev. Mr. Scott - Annexure "B" - more so as I had drawn the attention of the Government to the unsettled state of the tribe by addressing a letter to the District Commissioner dated 11th October, copy marked Annexure "C". Shortly after which my house was deliberately burnt on the 17th October, and within a few weeks after my house was burnt six women, the wives and children of men holding my view were badly assaulted at Mahalapye by a group of Mahalapye women the assault went on for three days, but the aforesaid Manyaphiri, the representative of the Native Authority at Mahalapye did nothing to protect them, on the contrary in the presence of an African Policeman of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police he publicly said that it was high time these people left for Rametsana otherwise this type of thing would continue. So far no action has been taken against Manyaphiri or these women. I have never ceased to report to the Government that Manyaphiri was responsible for the never ending disturbances in Mahalapye district and I have given proof of these, I was promised in November by no less a person than His Excellency the High Commissioner that Manyaphiri would be re-moved from office at the end of December, but so far this promise has not been fulfilled and Manyaphiri has been creating more trouble by inciting people to protest that we should not be allowed to plough.

It was these Sekgomas who conveyed to the people that my refusal to accept Ruth as the queen of the tribe and mother of the Chief-to-be was really an excuse to claim the Chieftainship of the tribe as against Seretse. In this they were afterwards supported by the Assistant Government Secretary in the public meeting of June 1949. This allegation is false and is the only reason for the present hostility which exists between the people who ~~accepted~~ hold two opposite political view points, namely, those who accepted Ruth as the queen and those who refused to acknowledge her as the queen. If there is any other reason I ask to be confronted with it and to be given the chance to defend myself.

The descendants of Sekgoma appear however to have succeeded in convincing the authorities that I am a rival claimant to the Chieftainship and that I was not wanted. These people are entitled to their opinions as long as such opinion is not acted upon by those in power to the detriment of the one they falsely accuse without giving him any chance to defend himself. Indeed, in giving the decision on the Seretse case the Secretary of State has said my "rule has been firm and enlightened but more recently it had become increasingly unpopular" and that the tribe had become anxious lest I "would become their permanent Chief, an event which they were determined to avoid at all costs."

I record, Sir, that no such evidence was given either at the Commission of Enquiry or in any meeting which I attended; it could therefore only have come from the local officers of the Government who are privileged to submit reports to their government confidentially. I am strengthened to make this assertion, Sir, because in all cases of disabilities under which we have suffered and continue to suffer the local officers of the Government not only remain inactive to our appeals but today they are themselves resorting to these very acts of intimidation against us. We believe in order to force me to leave the Bamangwato country and to force those who imposed self exile with me in protest against the marriage to desert me.

2. The Personal.

I shall now deal with my personal case. In protest
against.../

against Seretse's marriage being contrary to Law and Custom I betook myself from the Bamangwato country, and as far as I am concerned the solution was the prohibition of Ruth, not Seretse, from entering the country, but the British Government did not accept this solution and their solution was the exclusion of Seretse. They alone are responsible for the exclusion of Seretse; but it is for this very action of the Government that I am being penalised and an order of banishment served on me.

In removing myself from the Bamangwato I never at any time had any intention of removing all my property, e.g., my house and my cattle, except the cattle which I required for my domestic needs whilst in exile, e.g., oxen for ploughing my lands and milk for me and my dependants' use, etc. My property in the country was to remain and I was to have free access to it and to look after it. This Sir, is not peculiar, it is the common practice for members of other tribes to have cattle in the other tribal areas as long as they obey the regulations made to control the running of cattle, etc., e.g., the payment of cattle taxes to the Tribal Treasury of that area. If Seretse had been installed there would have been no difficulty in making all these arrangements. Also if there was true "Direct Rule" again there would be no difficulty. But today there is neither "Native Administration" nor "Direct Rule". There is actually nobody taking any responsibility for the administration of the country nor is there any law court to which civil cases between native and native can be brought, and the authorities are very reluctant to take any criminal prosecution against those who hold the view held by Seretse, especially those whom they have placed in positions of "quasi" authority like Keaboka, Manyaphiri, Setlohile, etc. Consequently my property is being destroyed, my house was burnt down, my servants interfered with and induced to desert my cattle, and in this country where there is no fencing I am losing considerable property. This is a further contradiction of what has been reported to you, Sir, e.g., Annexure "B". On top of this I am a big rancher and had big undertakings and commitments, and, today, as I cannot attend to my personal affairs and properly arrange my business I am very often forced to sell my stock indiscriminately in order to meet my obligations. Also I am losing a lot of stock from diseases which could have been avoided, shortage of water which could also have been prevented, strays from bad herding, intimidated herders being afraid to look for these cattle, etc. Nothing short of my freedom being restored to me to enable me to attend freely to my personal affairs will stop all these ruinous losses. This is the main reason for requesting the immediate termination of my banishment.

Removal of my cattle from their present to other areas is impracticable. Many of the present herders will not leave their native areas and it will not be possible to find herders for such a number of cattle; the changed conditions very often result in high mortality in cattle before they are acclimatised, this has already happened amongst the cattle moved to Rametsana. With the insufficiency of herders my losses will be increased instead of minimised. No reason has been given me as to why it is necessary that I should abandon the excellent grazing areas and leave them unoccupied and then come to crowd out the Bakwena in their much smaller area compared to the Bamangwato. It is also impossible for provision of water being made for these cattle in any area within a short period even if I had the means to do so, that is, the making of boreholes and equipping these with water pumping plants, construction of reservoirs, and the construction of dams, etc. It is impossible to accomplish the removal of my stock within five years, let alone one year. By the end of five years we hope the Government will have given its verdict on Seretse's marriage, and all cattle removed would then have to track all the way back to their former grazing areas.

3. The Political.

The only point of friction as far as we know and are concerned, is that those who hold my view, namely, that Ruth can never be Queen and mother of the Chief-to-be refused to change their attitude. But they are in the minority. Most of the people have changed their original view and now hold that Ruth can be Queen and mother of the Chief to be. Few as we are our contentions have been upheld by the Government, because for this marriage alone the British Government did not find it possible to instal Seretse. This stand which we have made is the only one which has created a feeling of hostility between us and the rest of the tribe and if there are any other charges we have not been made aware of them and given opportunity to answer them. Our maintaining this standpoint would however appear to be forfeiting our rights of citizenship to our country. Attempts have been made to form administrative councils and to appoint "quasi" chiefs representatives without our having any say thereon. Our fields have been confiscated and we are prevented from ploughing at reasonable places which would make ploughing beneficial to us, and we are being forced by the Government to plough at places quite inconvenient to us. We wish to bring to your notice, Sir, that in several cases the officers of the Government themselves have confiscated our fields with corn in them without any enquiry being made into the merits of the case but merely on the reports they receive from the descendants of Sekgoma, without our knowledge, ~~without~~ and without our being given an opportunity of answering whatever is in the reports. No arrangements have been made to compensate us for these losses we suffer at the hands of the Government. The Government is adopting the attitude of regarding us as aliens with no rights in our country and placing us at the mercy of the people with whom we have differences. This is leading to greater and greater difficulties and confusion and will result in broken tribal organisation, the end of which may result in annexation to neighbouring states, or at best "Direct Rule", as a Crown Colony. In either case the end of the Protectorate.

The only point of divergence in the Tribe is whether Ruth is Queen Mother or not. As the British Government appears to have banished Seretse solely because of his marriage to Ruth the present propaganda by the Government particularly through the District Commissioner to divide the tribe between Seretse and Tshekedi destroys the basis for the banishment of Seretse by the Government and is thoroughly dishonest if it be not the intention of the Government to instal Seretse with Ruth as Queen immediately the Tribe is united thereon.

We warn you, Sir, that the present attitude of the Protectorate Government in inciting people to divide on this issue of Ruth is very dangerous - it is apt to raise vigorous national consciousness which may force those in the minority to accept Ruth as Queen and the lesser of two evils i.e. the setting up of a Puppet Chief who has no sense of responsibility but is merely the mouthpiece of the District Commissioner - the worst form of "Direct Rule" where nobody takes responsibility or accept the children of Ruth as the Chiefs of the tribe under "Indirect Rule".

I should like to give as my personal opinion the submission that in their anxiety - that the return of Tshekedi into his own country should be avoided at all costs and their attempt to protect the Sekgomas the local officials of the Government seem not to realise that they are playing completely into the hands of the Communists. It should be clear to them that the present methods where all acts of aggression against

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undefended and powerless people are credited to no individual but just to the tribe are foreign to both African Tribal and Western Democratic principles of administration.

I have been forced to resort to political action as all other remedies to minimise my losses are closed to me. For a year now I have remained quiet in the hope that the British Government would realise the injustice and inhumanity of their banishment of myself.