

https://dspace.org/

Tshedeki Khama and Mining in Botswana: 1929-1959

Crowder, Michael

1985-06
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8599

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
to be presented in RW
4.00pm JUNE 1985

Title: Tshedeki Khama and Mining in Botswana: 1929-1959.

by: Michael Crowder

No. 172

TSHEKEDI KHAMA AND MINING IN BOTSWANA : 1929-1959

In 1966 when the Bechuanaland Protectorate became independent as the Republic of Botswana it was counted among the twenty poorest countries of the world. Its Gross Domestic Product at current prices was a mere £30 million. Its per capita income was under £60. Half its public expenditure was financed by Britain, its former colonial ruler. There were no all season roads and there seemed little future for a country that consisted largely of the Kalahari Desert.

Botswana's remarkable economic progress over the past two decades has been described as a "miracle; one of the few success stories of Black Africa."[1] In the first fifteen years of independence Gross Domestic Product rose at an annual average of 13% in constant prices. Exports that were valued at just over £6 million in 1966 were worth thirty times more fifteen years later. Over 1,400 kilometres of roads were tarred. The number of children at primary school nearly trebled while secondary school enrolment increased seven-fold.[2] At the heart of this 'miracle' lie Botswana's extensive mineral reserves, in particular its copper-nickel and diamonds,[3] which are being exploited under agreements that in terms of the benefits they bring to Botswana have been seen as models of their kind. These agreements owe much to the efforts of a remarkable man who died seven years before independence and sixteen years before production began at the Selebi-Phikwe copper mine: Tshekedi Khama, Regent of the Bangwato for his nephew Seretse from 1926-1949, and a major figure in the politics of the Bechuanaland Protectorate until his death in June, 1959.

A few days before Tshekedi died, the Bangwato, whose territory includes Selebi-Phikwe and Orapa, where diamonds were to be discovered in exploitable quantities in 1967, signed an agreement with the Rhodesian Selection Trust Group. This gave the mining group the right to prospect for minerals over 42,000 square miles of Gammangwato. As Sir Ronald Prain, the RST's chief negotiator with the Bangwato, wrote in his autobiography, the agreement was unique in that the Bangwato had initiated the negotiations not the Company, and while hitherto there were few cases where Africans "had materially benefited from the concessions they had been persuaded to give", in this agreement there was clear provision for the Bangwato to participate

in any benefits that might result from exploitation of minerals in their territory.[4] At the time the agreement was being signed on 2nd June, 1959, Tshekedi, who was the chief architect of the agreement, lay mortally sick in the London Clinic. Nevertheless, for him it was the realisation of a long-standing dream that the natural wealth of Gammangwato would be developed for the benefit of its people. And yet, thirty years before, as Regent of the Bangwato, he had led a bitter battle against the exploration and exploitation of the mineral reserves of his territory. His struggle from 1929-1932 with the British South Africa Company and the British Administration who favoured that company's plans for exploration and exploitation of the mineral wealth of the Bangwato was to teach him much about the mining industry and the problems as well as benefits it might bring to his people. The knowledge he gained in this struggle was to serve him well in his negotiations to secure the agreement with RST.

1 : THE ORIGINS OF TSHEKEDI'S STRUGGLE

In 1887 Tshekedi's father, Khama III of the Bangwato, had entered into an agreement with the Northern Gold Fields Exploration Syndicate of Cape Town giving them the sole right to prospect for precious stones and minerals in his territory. The Syndicate then submitted the proposed Concession to Sidney Shippard, Administrator and Deputy Commissioner for British Bechuanaland, who wrote to Khama: "I can hardly suppose that you.... intended to give away to one company all the minerals and precious stones that may ever be found in your territory."[5] He suggested that the document be cancelled and that in the interests of both the Company and Khama all such documents in future be sent to him "as I understand the precise meaning of the legal terms used and will take good care to protect your interests and deal fairly by both parties."[6] Khama confirmed to Shippard that he had most clearly and distinctly stated that he would grant no concession or right of any kind to dig anywhere in his country. "I said I would give them the right to go and look for gold, and when they found it then we would talk about digging. I refused absolutely to agree about any money payment...."[7] The Syndicate accordingly submitted a new agreement to Shippard who was not happy with it and so prepared a form of concession which he suggested Khama might use both for this and any future concessions he might make.[8] The words sole and exclusive were carefully omitted from

it.[9] The agreement was signed by Khama on 16th December, 1887, and the Syndicate formed the Bechuanaland Exploration Company. Though there was no time clause in the agreement, Khama made it clear that it was to run for two years only.[10] In March 1890, as a result of fears that the Company were arrogating to themselves rights over the disposal of his land, Khama served notice of termination of the Concession. The British High Commissioner in Cape Town intervened with Khama to allow prospecting by the Company to continue while he looked into the dispute assuring him that he could rely on him "to see his rights are upheld."[11] Khama acquiesced in the continuation of exploration by the Company while the Government investigated the matter but insisted that he had inserted the words in the Concession "with the consent of the Chief" for the "very purpose of reserving the right of saying where prospecting and digging was to be carried on in my country."[12]

Meanwhile the British South Africa Company, which had been given its Charter by the British Government in 1889, took over the Concession of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company and set about its re-negotiation. This time the British administration were not so solicitous of Khama's interests and Khama signed a Concession with the British South Africa Company on 25th July 1893, which the Secretary of State for the Colonies approved, the very course Shippard, who was now Resident Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, had advised Khama against six years before.

The Concession in practice remained in abeyance but its terms clearly continued to worry Khama for in 1923 when he was on his deathbed he had asked the Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Sir J.C. Macgregor, to look into the matter of the Concession with a view to its cancellation.[13] Macgregor in the event reported to Khama's elder son and successor, Sekgoma II, who was also anxious to terminate the Concession. He informed him that Mr. Justice Feetham, the Legal Adviser to the British High Commissioner for South Africa, who had overall responsibility for the administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate as well as Basutoland and Swaziland, was of the opinion that it could be terminated by giving notice. However he advised that thereafter the Company should be given an option in the form of an undertaking that Sekgoma would not grant any concession to anyone else and that if he did think of granting one he would

offer it to the Company first. Sekgoma suggested to Macgregor that six months notice to the Company would be fair and was informed that the matter was being referred to the Secretary of State.[14]

No definite action was taken before Sekgoma, who was Tshekedi's half-brother, died in November 1925. Sekgoma's son and heir, Seretse, was only four years old at the time, so Tshekedi, as the uncle closest in line of succession, was called on to act as his Regent. Tshekedi was himself only twenty at the time. He had been brought up in a strict Christian household which abhorred drink. He had been sent to school at Lovedale but was expelled along with other Batswana boys after a riot over poor conditions. He was then privately educated before going to Fort Hare to study for his matriculation. Tshekedi had not been prepared for the task that now fell to him. Sekgoma had seemed to be a strong and healthy man when he came to the throne. Their father had ruled until he was over ninety. Sekgoma was only in his late fifties and there was no reason to suppose that he would not live long enough for his own son Seretse to reach his majority. Despite his youth and lack of experience, Tshekedi took firm control of the reins of power in Gammangwato, and quickly demonstrated to the Bangwato as well as to the British administration that he was his own master. For the first ten years of his reign he was locked in constant battle with the British over issues as small as responsibility for the construction of a borehole in Serowe or as large as Proclamations designed to codify and as Tshekedi saw it reduce the administrative and judicial powers of the chiefs. In his opposition to these proclamations he with his friend Bathoen II, Chief of the Bangwaketse, even took the British High Commissioner to court in 1936. If his relations with the British were turbulent, those with members of his family, both close and distant, were even more so. An attempt by two nephews-in-law to assassinate him in kgotla only two months after he was installed was followed by a series of attempts by members of the extensive royal family to undermine his position. On top of this he had to deal with challenges to his authority by minority groups such as the Bakhurutshe and the Bakanswazwi.[15]

The issue on which Tshekedi really cut his teeth in learning how to deal with the British administration was that of mining. At only twenty-three, still slight of build with rather a wistful look about him, educated only

to the level of Matriculation, this extraordinary young man took on the British Resident Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the British High Commissioner to South Africa and the Secretary of State for the Dominions himself in his determination to protect his people from a mining concession that he was convinced would bring them only trouble.

II THE REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN MINING IN THE BANGWATO RESERVE

The issue of the concession was revived without any prior warning to Tshekedi in January 1929 when, almost as an afterthought, at an interview in Cape Town on another matter, Captain the Hon. Bede Clifford, the Imperial Secretary of the British High Commission, handed him a revised agreement with the British South Africa Company to sign. Tshekedi refused to do so without having time to consider it. The new agreement would limit the Concession to 20 years and give the Bangwato £50 instead of £25 a month. Furthermore they would have a 5% share in any profits resulting from mining.[16] On Tshekedi's return to Serowe he handed the revised agreement to Revd. Haydon Lewis, the resident missionary of the London Missionary Society, and asked his advice. Lewis immediately sent a message to the Revd. Ferguson in Cape Town requesting copies of all Proclamations relating to mining in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, even though these were available locally in the Resident Magistrate's Office. In the Government's view he followed this course because he wanted to discuss them with the Chief without the Administration's knowledge.[17] Soon afterwards, Tshekedi left for Cape Town where he was put in touch with Douglas Buchanan, who was to become his advocate for the next twenty-five years. So irritated were the Administration by the interference of Lewis with their plans to get mining started in the Bangwato Reserve that they pressured the LMS, with success, to transfer him to Kanye.[18] This did not deter Tshekedi who, with the backing of the Bangwato, made it clear that he opposed any form of mining in his Reserve because of its potentially disastrous social consequences. For their part the British authorities believed that mining would provide the poverty-stricken Bechuanaland Protectorate with revenue and contribute to its development by reducing migration and establishing a local market for cattle. To this end they were drafting Mining Proclamations to cover those reserves which did not already have a concession agreement such as the Bangwato had with the BSA Co. "The weight

of public opinion in South Africa", Lord Athlone, the High Commissioner, wrote to Amery, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, "would be directed against any policy designed to prevent the exploitation of the mineral resources of the Protectorate." Indeed, it would lead to "an increasing demand that the Territory should be handed over to some other government able and willing to develop it."[19]

On 20th April Tshekedi informed the Imperial Secretary through Buchanan, now his lawyer, that as Regent and trustee for Seretse during his minority it was not in the interest of the Tribe* to sign another agreement and that he desired to give tweleve months notice of cancellation to the Concession in terms of legal opinion given him. He also gave notice that he would oppose the application of the new Mining Proclamation since in his view the Proclamation transferred powers to the Administration that were properly the Chiefs', especially those over land and water resources.[20] In a joint memorandum four days later, Tshekedi, and 'his Missionary', Rev. A. E. Jennings of the London Missionary Society, together with Buchanan, wrote that the need of his people is not along the lines of mineral development of his country, but along the lines of agricultural and pastoral development of his land and resources including animal husbandry and dairy farming.[21]

Though the British authorities repeatedly protested that their only interest in the matter was to obtain a fair deal for the Tribe from the Company, Tshekedi was convinced they were trying to force mining on him. In May Buchanan tried to seek assurances from the Imperial Secretary that this was not the case, suggesting that if "you think an interview with the High Commissioner might be effective in postponing the introduction of mining into the Territory we would welcome same, but if you regard this as a waste of time, it seems that the only alternative will be for the Chief to proceed to London to interview the Secretary of Sate on this point."[22] Only the month before, in response to rumours that Tshekedi wanted to go to London to see the Secretary of State, Nettelton, the British Resident

---

* The term Tribe was used both by the British Administration and the Tswana Chiefs including Tshekedi. In Setswana, the equivalent is morafe though this is more accurately translated as "nation". In Botswana, the word Tribe does not have the pejorative connotation it has in other African countries.

Magistrate at Tshekedi's capital at Serowe, had assured Dutton, the Government Secretary in Mafeking, that he never believed Tshekedi's reported intention of going to England. "He was only being encouraged by some hangers-on who thought a free trip overseas would be very desirable as long as the Tribe paid."[23] Meanwhile Amery had on the advice of Lord Athlone declined to agree to an interview with Tshekedi. Althone, himself, however did see Tshekedi on 7th August. But Tshekedi's fears were not assuaged and on 8th August, therefore, he formally requested an interview with the Secretary of State for Dominions to discuss what he called the new policy of the Imperial Government with regard to mining and other matters such as his fears about the possibility of Britain agreeing to the Incorporation of his country in the Union of South Africa,an eventuality provided for in Section 151 of the South Africa Act of 1909,[24] and one which Tshekedi perceived as being tied up with "the larger subject of the future relationship of my country with the Union of South Africa."[25]

Athlone followed up Tshekedi's request with a long letter the following day agreeing to place it before the Secretary of State although he did not see what purpose would be gained by such an interview,[26] an opinion he communicated to the Dominions Office. There the matter rested until January 1930, though Tshekedi continued to make his opposition and that of the Tribe to mining clear. Lord Athlone, who "feels that the welfare amd progress of the Territory and the Natives is so bound up in the mining question that it would be most unfortunate if owing to a caprice of a man like Tshekedi the Company's offer were to be refused", had meanwhile come to the conclusion that Tshekedi was showing "an increasing tendency to disregard the advice that has been given him" in this and others matters.[27] The Resident Commissioner, Daniel, to whom these remarks were addressed, defended Tshekedi against the charge of caprice over the mining question and other matters: "Every important matter is referred to his Councillors and on special occasions the whole tribe is called to the Kgotla for the purpose of discussion. As you know he is most careful not to do anything for which he will not be able to account in a satisfactory manner when the time comes to relinquish his regency.".[28]

Tshekedi continued to press to see the Secretary of State. He considered that the Administration of the day had advised his father badly when he signed the agreement with the British South Africa Company in 1893, especially in the context of the advice Shippard had given over the original agreement in 1887. Since the local Administration were apparently unwilling to rectify matters, his only course was to appeal above their heads to London.

Then on 20th January 1930 he was summoned to the Imperial Secretary's Office in Cape Town. According to Tshekedi, Clifford, the Imperial Secretary, told him that he had kept the High Commissioner waiting for his decision for far too long. Tshekedi had then replied that he had come to Cape Town on private business and not to see the High Commissioner and "I could say that I was not either going to give notice to cancel the concession or sign the new one but I was going to take entirely a different course ....." adding "I would be telling the High Commissioner a lie if I were to say that I believe mining was going to bring any benefit to the Tribe."[29] Tshekedi then wrote a letter to Athlone virtually accusing the Government of compelling him to allow mining in his reserve and forcing him to accept the new agreement with the Company.[30] 1. "The Government says that it will <u>not</u> order me to open the Bamanwato Country to Mining," but 2. "The Government intend proclaiming Mining Regulations to:" "Compel me to allow Mining in my area under an existing Concession which my father wished to terminate," or "Force me to make a new agreement with the British South Africa Company agreeing to Min ng forthwith," or "Take away my rights to grant or withhold Mining Concessions and vest same in the administration", and 3. "The Government has decided to do this early in March without giving me the opportunity I have previously requested of laying our views and maintaining my rights before the Secretary of State in person. This letter was handed to Athlone at an interview a few days later. Clifford, who was present, accused him of "intentionally disregarding what the Government said" and his "action was equal to saying the Government was telling a lie."[31] Clifford then turned to face the High Commissioner and declared that Tshekedi's attitude was one of no confidence in the High Commissioner. "To this remark," Tshekedi reported, "I replied that I had heard the Imperial Secretary saying so on several occasions that it was a serious charge on me - I therefore wish to make it clear

to His Excellency that I have every confidence in him but have at times felt that I did not feel so in regard to the Administration",[32] - a snide jab at Clifford.

Clifford considered the letter as "one without precedent in the relations between the High Commissioner and the Chief."[33] As a conciliatory gesture Tshekedi withdrew the letter on 29th January as "I cannot allow such a false view of my utmost confidence in Your Excellency and my unswerving loyalty to the Imperial Government to remain on record."[34] Meanwhile Tshekedi was still set on an interview with the Secretary of State. It was not, however, until February that the Dominions Secretary, who had been subjected to intensive lobbying on Tshekedi's behalf by the London Missionary Society and the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, reluctantly agreed to see him.

III THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE DOMINIONS SECRETARY

In London the young Chief Tshekedi, now but twenty-three years old, had two interviews with the new Dominions Secretary, Lord Passfield, better known as Sidney Webb, Fabian Socialist and husband of Beatrice. In great detail Tshekedi outlined his case against mining in his territory, demonstrating that he had done a great deal of research on the background to the Concession his father had signed with the British South Africa Company.[35] He reiterated his conviction that his father had been badly advised by the British and that mining would bring no good to his people, especially as the areas where he understood it was most likely to take place were those with the best water resources in his otherwise arid country.

> "I can see quite clearly," he told Passfield, "that if mining is started in this portion of the country and if any minerals in great quantity are found, towns like Johannesburg will spring up just as Kimberley has sprung up. If towns like Johannesburg spring up it means that we have lost the country."[36]

With regard to the alleged benefits in employment the mines would bring he spoke

> "With full knowledge of the fact that there is not one of them who ever returns from the mines with anything. The money that they earn at the mines they spend in food. So far as I can see their wages are inadequate ..... I was invited by the Chamber of Mines to go and see the mines and see there how the natives were treated ... in fact when I visited the Johannesburg mines, I felt more afraid than ever of having mines in my own country - if mines spring up in my country, I am concerned about the women of my Tribe. I know what happens if Europeans of the mining class enter into a native country. Another thing which springs from mining is intoxicating drink..... If mining begins, it is not that we shall be enriched by it. The large portion of the wealth obtained from the mines will go to other people, the Europeans. What we are asking is that we should be protected in this matter and be given an opportunity of benefiting by the riches of our own country. The time will come when we shall become more like a European country."[37]

Tshekedi's passionate arguments, which cover 8½ typed foolscap pages of the transcript, seem to have made little impression on Passfield. At the second interview he clearly expected to pass judgement without having it questioned. He did not accept Tshekedi's arguments that the British had failed to advise his father properly, nor did he agree that the Government had any power to terminate the Concession. Only Tshekedi, as Khama's successor, could do that and then the Company might take him to Law. The government had only been trying to help by negotiating an agreement that was more beneficial to the Bangwato than the original one. And it was certainly not, as Tshekedi had alleged, putting pressure on him to have mining in his country.[38]

When Passfield has finished, Tshekedi asked if he might "speak a few words."

"Yes, but it must not take long," was the reply.

More than half an hour later the interview ended with Tshekedi reiterating his belief that if mining began in his territory "we are done for." However, he suggested that if it had to be, perhaps the Bangwato could be compensated with Crown Lands. He was told to discuss this with the High Commissioner back in South Africa. The only satisfaction Tshekedi got from Passfield was assurance that the British Government was not discussing the transfer of the High Commission territories to the Union.

The interview ended with Tshekedi refusing to travel back on the date fixed by the Dominions Office. He would travel back in his own time, since he had many friends of his late father to see in Britain. Accordingly he spent the next month seeing a variety of people - missionaries, parliamentarians, journalists and humanitarians -- who were to serve him well in his later battles with the Administration.

IV CONCESSION AND COMPROMISE

While he was still in England Tshekedi wrote to Passfield with a new suggestion. Since the British Administration had been effectively able to cancel the Company's concession in those parts of Khama's territory that had been subsequently ceded to it, could they not make the same arrangement for the Bamangwato who would then pay back to the Company all the rents they had received less the value of the minerals extracted to date? [39] Soon after his arrival back in Cape Town on 12th May, he put this same suggestion to the High Commission and then asked Athlone to write to the Company to see whether they would agree to terminate the Concession on this basis. [40] Meanwhile, back in Serowe a kgotla* was being arranged to welcome him. Athlone expressed his hope that both the new Resident Commissioner, Charles Rey, and the Resident Magistrate at Serowe would attend it to make sure that Tshekedi explained to his people just what the Dominions Secretary had told him in London. Nettelton, the Resident Magistrate, advised strongly against this course on the grounds that their presence might be misunderstood and accentuate current feelings of distrust of the Administration. [41] On 26th May Tshekedi returned to his capital and, according to Nettelton, was "welcomed by the biggest meeting of the Bamangwato Tribe which has assembled in Serowe for a considerable number of years." [42]

In the meantime Athlone approached the Company to see whether they would accept Tshekedi's proposal. On 8th August the Company, which had been prepared to revise the Concession further in favour of the Bangwato, replied that they were definitely not prepared to cancel it on the terms suggested by Tshekedi. The £3825 they had already paid the Bangwato was

---

* Kgotla = the forum where justice was dispensed, administrative decisions were made, and public meetings were held. It was presided over by the Kgosi (chief) and until the 1950s was restricted in attendance to adult males.

"of relatively minor importance as compared with other disbursements incurred..." [43] Even though the Chief had promised to give the Company first option on a new Concession, were he to agree to mining in his country, this was not acceptable to them. If he now cancelled the Concession they would contest the validity of his action in the courts.

Both Athlone and Rey were worried that if the matter were taken to law it would end up with an appeal to the Privy Council and that the Tribe would incur heavy costs that it would find difficult to meet without a levy on the Bangwato. Rey, who was convinced that Tshekedi had not in fact told the Tribe the full facts of the matter and that the majority were in fact in favour of mining but were too afraid to speak, eventually persuaded Tshekedi to hold a kgotla at which Rey himself would explain the situation. [44] At the kgotla held on 18th and 19th November, the Resident Commissioner went into great detail about the advantages mining could bring and the consequences for them if they embarked on what he later described as "the slippery slope of legal proceedings." [45] Nevertheless, only three young men spoke in favour of mining. Tshekedi himself ended the proceedings with "a lengthy speech directed not only against mining, but against practically all forms of European penetration, and, indeed, generally anti-European in tone," Rey reported to Athlone. The High Commissioner, who did not share Rey's conviction that the Bangwato were only opposed to mining because they feared to cross Tshekedi, replied that he thought Tshekedi's "opposition to European 'penetration' quite comprehensible," and "indeed I myself should be opposed to any European 'penetration' into native reserves of a permanent nature." [46] Rey even went down the mines himself to check on conditions and assure himself that Tshekedi's fears were ungrounded. He came away thoroughly impressed by the treatment the miners received. [47] But the visit was to be fruitless as far as dissuading Tshekedi from his chosen course of action was concerned.

Though Rey had reported to Athlone after the kgotla that Tshekedi and the Tribe had decided to give the Company notice, matters did not come to a head until 25th December when Tshekedi wrote to the Company cancelling the agreement with effect from the 31st December of the following year, and informing them that he would no longer accept payments of rent from

them.[48] The Company responded on 16th January, 1931, by denying Tshekedi's right to cancel the Concession and indicating that the question of the validity of the Concession would now have to be settled in court. Meanwhile they would continue to pay rent.[49] Each month their cheque for £25 arrived in Serowe on the due date; each month Tshekedi had it returned unpaid.

Both Tshekedi and the Company were in fact anxious to avoid a prolonged court case. The British Administration itself also wanted to avoid this eventuality and continued to do its best to arrange a compromise between the two parties. Nevertheless Tshekedi prepared himself for a legal battle and repeated an earlier request to the High Commissioner for copies of letters connected with the original Concession. Some of these could not be found; others involved a long search, and in one case the Acting High Commissioner saw fit to excise a paragraph referring to the Marquess of Ripon's despatch of 20th December, 1892, for though it had been printed in a Parliamentary Paper "I deemed it expedient to avoid drawing Tshekedi's attention to the proposal put forward nearly 40 years ago, when entirely different conditions prevailed, that Government Officers should assist the Company to obtain concessions in the Bechuanaland Protectorate."[50]

At the end of April the solution to the problem was found in principle though in practice it took another eight months to achieve. Tshekedi reiterated his willingness to consider signing the new agreement if he were given Crown Lands that had once been Bamangwato territory in compensation.[51] The Government, still trying to play the role of impartial mediator, agreed to this provided that the Company would in turn compensate it for its loss.[52] Finally it was agreed that the Company should give the Administration lands that it owned in the southern part of the Protectorate in exchange for the land that would be ceded to Tshekedi in the North. The only problem was that Tshekedi drove a hard bargain asking for much more land than the Government thought reasonable.[53]

After much haggling Tshekedi, who had personally inspected much of the land the Tribe was to gain on horseback, signed the much-revised agreement on behalf of the Tribe in March, 1932. From Tshekedi's point of view it was as good a deal as he could have obtained in the circumstances. He was handsomely compensated with land, he gained access to the waters of the Limpopo; strict regulations were to be enforced in relation to the proximity of mining to Serowe and cattle posts, and Tshekedi would have

a say in the importation of non-Bangwato labour; the lease would run for 25 years and the rent would be £50 a month with a 10% share in profits.

For the administration and in particular Rey who saw mining as a means to developing the Reserve, this was what he habitually described as a 'triumph' in his diary.[54] But it was a hollow one for the Company found no deposits worth exploiting and abandoned prospecting in the Reserve two years later.

V TSHEKEDI'S INITIATIVE

Tshekedi may in the end have been forced to accept mining in his territory against what seemed his better judgement. But he obtained for his people terms that were a considerable improvement on those he had been offered by the Administration three years before. In a review of Mary Benson's Tshekedi Khama published in The Spectator, Philip Mason asked why Tshekedi "was right to resist development by one mining company in the Twenties and sign agreement with another in the Fifties? He probably was, but these and other questions might usefully be discussed."[55] The key to the apparent conundrum lies in the fact that Tshekedi not only realised that mining would be inevitable, especially if the threatened incorporation into South Africa took place, but that he realised that it could bring benefits to his people if only it were carried out under his strict supervision with an appropriate share of the profits allocated to the Tribe.

This explains why much earlier than the Fifties Tshekedi was to be found once more involved in mineral negotiations.

Although the British South Africa Company abandoned the search for minerals in 1934, other companies and individuals showed interest in the possible wealth that might lie below the soil of Gammangwato. In 1938 for instance a Colonal Sir Llewellyn Anderson requested permission from the District Commissioner of Serowe as Mining Commissioner to prospect in Gammangwato "subject to Chief Tshekedi's consent." When this was not forthcoming he asked to know what grounds for the Chief's refusal: this, he was told by the District Commissioner "was not open to questions."[57] As it was the Chief was in the midst of negotiations for a Concession to a British Company Mineral Properties Investigations Ltd., a subsidiary

of Rio Tinto Zinc, with whom he signed an agreement the following year. That Tshekedi himself initiated the negotiations and only referred them to the Administration when they were sufficiently advanced to require its sanction shows that he was not as irreconcilably hostile to mining as his earlier opposition to the BSA Concession might suggest. Indeed, he now proved impatient to get the Agreement signed as speedily as possible since events "both in and out of Europe" were "marching too rapidly .... that it is imperative for us to get British capital invested in our Territory without delay."[58] In his expressed preference for British capital lies the clue to his change of heart. As Arden-Clarke, the Resident Commissioner who succeeded Rey, wrote to the High Commissioner, Tshekedi had told him he realised that he and "the Tribe cannot stand out indefinitely against the development of the mineral resource of their country" and that in the eventuality of a transfer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the Union he would rather be covered by a mineral concession to guard against possible expropriation of the mineral rights of the Tribe, and he would prefer that this concession be with a British Company rather than a South African one which might be in a less strong position to resist encroachment on its rights.[59] The threat of incorporation was an ever present one during the Thirties and Tshekedi had been at the vanguard of opposition to it in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.[60]

As far as Tshekedi and the Tribe were concerned the terms he had negotiated with Mineral Properties Investigations Ltd. "were very satisfactory" and the concession "was a far better one than that which was concluded with the British South Africa Company in 1932".[61] The High Commissioner himself felt that the terms Tshekedi had negotiated were "favourable to the Tribe."[62]

Although the agreement was signed on 15th September 1939, and an advance paid to the Bangwato, it was to lead nowhere. The Company abandoned exploration less than a year later largely because, even if they were to find minerals in exploitable quantities, the exigencies of war would make it impossible to obtain the necessary mining equipment. The Company therefore gave notice that it was cancelling the agreement. After much haggling Tshekedi who remained in his own words, "always suspicious of anything

pertaining to mining"[63] persuaded them merely to suspend the agreement until after the termination of the war. Nevertheless, once the war was over they abandoned it and Tshekedi began to look for alternatives.

By the time he was forced into exile in 1950 as a result of the crisis over the marriage of his nephew to an English women which led to the British excluding Seretse from the Bangwato chieftaincy, he had had no success. A hiatus then ensued, for though there were many applications to prospect in the Bangwato Reserve, because of political reasons and legal difficulties caused by the absence of a Chief it was not possible for the Administration to permit exploration for minerals.

Not until 1956 was the question of mining in Gammangwato raised again, this time by Tshekedi himself, at the time of his visit to London in July of that year when he helped secure the agreement of the British Government for the return to the Bechuanaland Protectorate of Seretse, with whom he was now fully reconciled. Whilst he was still negotiating with the Dominions Office over this, he approached Sir Ronald Prain through the intermediary Chairman of Minerals Separation Limited, John Buchanan, the brother of his lawyer, and asked his advice as to how his country's mineral reserves could be exploited in such a way that the Bangwato themselves would share in the profits that might be realised. Tshekedi was clearly impressed by the quality of Prain's advice for at the end of the meal he asked whether his Group would be interested in an agreement under which they would search for minerals.[64]

A little under three years later the agreement was signed. This time the delays did not come from haggling by Tshekedi but from a nervous British Administration[65] that wished to ensure that in approving the agreement it could not be subject to any criticism; since the marriage crisis the Bangwato had become a very sensitive area of colonial politics. The agreement itself gave the Group a ten-year concession to carry out prospecting and, if this were successful, 15% of the gross profits of the resulting operations were to be paid to the Tribe. The real innovation came with the agreement that the Tribe would have 15% free participation in the equity of any company formed under the agreement and be able to nominate two directors to the Board.

Mining under this agreement did not finally take place until 1973-74 when the copper mine at Phikwe came into production. In the meantime diamonds had been discovered in the Bangwato territory at Orapa, and though the copper mine has never proved profitable because of the low world prices for copper, the proceeds of mining do not all go out of the country, as Tshekedi had feared they would when he led his opposition to mining in the early Thirties. Rather they have provided roads, health services and schools for a population that on the eve of independence had not one tarred road and only one secondary school. The underground riches have not been used exclusively for the Bangwato on whose land they were found but, on the insistence of Sir Seretse Khama when he became President of the Republic of Botswana, for the benefit of the country as a whole, which from being one of the poorest nations in the world at independence in 198 had the Xth highest per capita income in Africa.[66]

NOTES

1. M. A. Oommen 'Botswana' in Africa South of the Sahara 1984-85, London, 1984, p. 236, citing an unnamed official of the United States Agency for International Development.

2.

3. Mineral exports accounted for 69% of the value of Botswana's exports by 1979 as compared with meat at only 20%. Jack Parson Botswana: Liberal Democracy and Labor Reserve in Southern Africa, Boulder, Colorado and London, 1984, p. 3.

4. Sir Ronald Lindsay Prain Reflections on an era: 50 years of mining in changing Africa, an autobiography. Worcester Park, 1981, p. 180.

5. B(otswana) N(ational) A(archives) D(istrict) C(ommissioner) S(erowe) 11/15. 'Tshekedi's visit to England in connection with Mining: B.SA Co. Concession' S.G.A. Shippard, Deputy Commissioner to Chief Khama, 30.4.1887. From documentation assembled by Chief Tshekedi Khama 'An outline of mining concessions in Khama's Territory' handed in to the Dominions Secretary 28.3.1930.

6. ibid.

7. BNA DCS 11/15. Khama to Shippard 30.5.1887., cited by Tshekedi from Blue Book C.5237, p. 30.

8. ibid Shippard to Khama, 4.11.1887.

9. ibid observation by Tshekedi.

10. ibid Khama to Messrs. Johnson and Heaney of Cape Northern Gold Fields Exploration Syndicate, 17.12.1887.

11. ibid High Commissioner to Administrator, Bechuanaland Protectorate, telegram of 5.4.1890.

12. ibdi Khama Northern Gold Fields Exploration Syndicate, 13.5.1890.

13. ibid Macgregor to Khama telegram 19.2.1923.

14. ibid Macgregor to Sekjoma II, 28.3.1923.

15. See Michael Crowder 'Tshekedi Khama and opposition to the British Administration in the Bechuanaland Protectorate', 1926-1936' Journal of African History, (in press). See also Mary Benson Tshekedi Khama, London, 1960 and also Harold H. Robertson 'From Protectorate to Republic: the Political History of Botswana', Ph.D. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1978.

16. BNA DCS 11/15 Tshekedi's own account of the interview: 'After continuing and finishing the events of the meeting held yesterday Chief Tshekedi was on the way to leave the room when the Imperial Secretary called him back and in his hand the Imperial Secretary had a document which he explained was a copy of the 1893 concession with certain alterations in favour of the Bamangwato (Sic) Tribe embodied by the Government'.

17. BNA S.466/4 Notes by Captain the Hon. Bede Clifford, Imperial Secretary, on conversation with Rev. G. P. Ferguson.

18. ibid Clifford to Nettelton, Resident Magistrate, Serowe, 6th February, 1929, and Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 8th February, 1929 reporting on discussions with LMS in London concerning the transfer of Lewis. The High Commissioner, the Earl of Athlone, nevertheless wrote to Lewis after his transfer had been secured to express "my appreciation of the services you have rendered the Bamangwato during your Ministry there....."

19. Athlone to Amery 28th February, 1929, cited in Robertson 'From Protectorate to Republic' p. 54.

20. DCS 11/5 D. M. Buchanan to Imperial Secretary, 20.4.1929.

21. ibid Memorandum from Chief Tshekedi, Douglas Buchanan and Rev. Albert Jennings to Imperial Secretary, 24.4.1929.

22. ibid Buchanan to Imperial Secretary, 14th May, 1929.

23. DCS 10/18 'Mining in the Bechuanaland Protectorate' Nettelton to C. L. O'B Dutton, 18.4.1929.

24. DCS 11/5 Tshekedi to High Commissioner, 8th August, 1929.

25. Athlone to Passfield, 16th August, 1929, cited by Robertson 'From Protectorate to Republic' p.56.

26. DCS 11/5 Athlone to Tskekedi, 9th August, 1929. Athlone's agreement to forward Tshekedi's request was almost immediately followed up by a letter from the London Missionary Society's Foreign Secretary to the Under Secretary of State at the Dominions Office to "request the Secretary of State to grant the interview. S.O.A.S. Council of World Mission Archives Africa Odds I: F. H. Hawkins to Dominions Office, 12th August, 1929.

27. BNA S46/18 Chief Tshekedi. Attitude towards Administration. Imperial Secretary to Lt. Col. R. M. Daniel, Resident Commissioner, 5th November, 1929.

28. ibid Daniel to Clifford, 7th December, 1929.

29. Correspondence (1930-1931) relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner for South Africa 1: Mineral Concessions and Mining Proclamations in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (D. 14944/29) 10141/20 Travers Buxton and John H. Harris of Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society to Dominions Office, 19th February, 1930 encl. Memorandum of 20-21 January, 1930, by Tshekedi Khama, pp. 7-8.

30. ibid 10141/27 encl. in Despatch No. 16 to Dominions Office by High Commissioner of 7th February, 1930, Tshekedi Khama to Athlone, 24th January, 1930.

31. BNA DCS 10/18 'Interview between Chief Tshekedi Khama and the High Commissioner, 24th January, 1930'. As recorded by Tshekedi Khama.

32. ibid

33. Cited by Robertson 'From Protectorate to Republic', p. 61.

34. DCS 11/15 Tshekedi to Athlone, 29th January, 1930.

35. The documentation which Tshekedi collected together and on which he based his arguments is contained in DCS 11/15 and comprises sixty-four typed foolscap pages.

36. BNA S. 63/9 'Transcripts of Tshekedi Khama's interviews with Lord Passfield, Dominions Secretary, London, March and April, 1930.' Interview of 27th March.

37. ibid

38. ibid Interview of 1st April, 1930.

39. Correspondence relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner for South Africa 10141/58 Tshekedi Khama to Passfield, London, 10th April, 1930, p. 45.

40. ibid 10141/72 encl. No. 2. Tshekedi Khama to the Assistant Imperial Secretary, 13th May, 1930, and to Athlone, 19th May, 1930. encl. No. 3.

41. BNA S 63/11 'Minerals-Ngwato Reserve. Interviews between S. of S. and Tshekedi, London' Nettelton, telegram to Resident Commissioner, 5th May, 1930.

42. BNA DCS 10/10 'Tshekedi's visit to England in connection with Mining: BSA Co. Concession.' Nettelton, Resident Magistrate, Serowe, to Government Secretary, 26.5.1930.

43. Correspondence relating to the Territories Administered by the High Commissioner for South Africa, 10141/82, C. N. Maude, Assistant Secretary, BSA Co. to High Commissioner, 8th August, 1930.

44. S. 175/11 'Tshekedi, Chief. Interview with Resident Commissioner, 27th and 28th October, 1930'. 'Note of Interview,' p. 3. Rey, incidentally, was fully aware of the concern felt not only by Tshekedi but also British liberals about the mining concession since he had been sent relevant correspondence by Lord Buxton, former High Commissioner to South Africa, soon after he arrived in the Protectorate. Rhodes House Library. Mss. Brit. Emp. S.384 Box 5/1, Sir. Charles Rey. Buxton to Rey 30.7.1929.

45. Correspondence... 20285/2 Encl. 1 to Despatch No. 54 from High Commissioner to Secretary State, Rey, Resident Commissioner, to Athlone, 24th November, 1930.

46. ibid Encl. 2. Athlone to Rey. 26th November, 1930.

47. Sir Charles Rey Monarch of all I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929-1937, Botswana Society, Natinal Museum, Gaborone. (These are being prepared for publication by Neil Parsons and Michael Crowder). Entry for 28th November, 1930. "Just think of it - regular work, good wages, promotion for the smarter man to be boss boy, as much excellent food as he can eat, medical and hospital attendance, clean sleeping cubicles, bathing and lavatory arrangements of the most up to date character - arrangements for his wages to be banked and sent home if he likes - etc. etc. what more could be wished for? And yet these damned missionaries are doing their best to stop my introducing mining into the B.P. where the people are verminous, half-starved and where most of them, probably ninety per cent, suffer from venereal disease."

48. BNA DCS 10/10 Tshekedi Khama to British South Africa Company, London. 25.12.1930.

49. Correspondence... 20285/7 Encl. 1 in Despatch No. 57 from High Commissioner to Secretary of State, Sir Drummond Chaplin to Tshekedi Khama, 16th January, 1931.

50. ibid 20285/9. As. High Commissioner to Secretary of State.

51. ibid 20285/11 Telegram from High Commissioner to Secretary of State 28th April, 1931, reporting that in an interview with the Resident Commissioner Rev. Jennings had reported "that he throught that the Chief would accept the revised Agreement if certain lands which his Tribe occupied in Crown Land north of the Botletle, and which are at present being grazed by their cattle, could be surrendered to them in the event of mining taking place in that part of the Reserve lying between Shashi and Macloutsie River."

52. ibid 20285/11 Telegram to High Commissioner for Secretary of State 12th May, 1931.

53. BNA DCS 10/10 High Commissioner to Dominions Secretary, 16th September, 1931.

54. Rey diaries. Entry for 28th March, 1932. Rey's entry recording the end of the long wrangle was curiously muted: a mere bracketed comment, 'By the way I forgot to mention that Tshekedi had signed the Agreement for mining with the Chartered Company on Tuesday and I had told Oppenheimer so - he was fearfully excited and I think that things will now move'. Entry for 22nd March. But his next entry is more characteristic, giving himself full credit for pushing the Agreement through. Entry for 28th March, 1932.

55. Philip Mason review of Mary Benson Tshekedi Khama, The Spectator 30th December 1960.

56. BNA S 64/8 'Mineral Concession: Bamangwato Reserve. Abandonment by British South Africa Company.' British South Africa Co. to Administrative Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner, 8th August, 1934.

57. BNA DCS 10/18: 'Mining in the Bechuanaland Protectorate' V. Ellenberger, District Commissioner, Serowe, to Lt. Col. Sir Llewellyn Andersson, Johannesburg, 16th January, 1939.

58. BNA S 649/1 'Mineral Concessions in the Bamangwato Reserve' Tshekedi Khama to Resident commissioner, 7th February, 1939.

59. BNA S 649/3 'Mineral Concession: Bamangwato Reserve.' Arden-Clarke to High Commissioner, 30th August, 1938.

60. See for instance his 'What the Protectorates fear' News Chronicle, 31st July, 1935; 'Native Standpoints: Against Transfer' South African Journal of Race Relations, II, 3, 1935, pp. 152-156, and A Statement to the British Parliament and People, Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, London, 1935, pp. 19.

61. ibid Tshekedi Khama to Arden-Clarke, 5th November, 1938.

62. BNA S 64.9/1 W. H. Clark, High Commissioner, to Sir Thomas Inskeep, Dominions Office, 10th February, 1939.

63. BNA S 64.9/2 'Mineral Concession: Bamangwato Reserve'. Rough notes on conversation in District Commissioner's Office, Serowe, 9th April, 1940. Present, Resident Commissioner, District Commissioner, Chief Tshekedi Khama.

64. Rhodes House Library, Mss. Afr. S 1514(2) Mary Benson papers. Transcript of 'Interview with Sr Ronald L. Prain, O.B.E., on Association with Tshekedi Khama.' pp. 1-2. See also Benson Tshekedi p. 276 and Prain Autobiography pp. 183-5.

65. Tshekedi Khama Papers, Pilikwe: Box 59: File: Mining: RST 57-59. R. A. Mackay, Geologist, to Tshekedi, 25th July, 1958, wrote that he considered that the Administration in Mafeking while not being obstructive were "through over-conscientiousness over-stepping their duties."

66.