

OFFICIAL RECORDS PERTAINING TO BLACKS IN THE TRANSVAAL, 1902 – 1907

by

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Submitted as partial requirement for the degree
MAGISTER ARTIUM in HISTORY (Coursework)

in the

**Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
2001**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I would like to thank and dedicate this thesis to my dear mother. Her hardships always inspired me to work harder in order to achieve success which I hoped would soothe her and make her feel proud and happy.

My love for my two beautiful daughters, 'Makwena and 'Maphuti, and their loving mother, Nape, helped to lessen the strain of the long hours of research work. I know that they have been deprived of my full attention during my study period, but I hope they'll appreciate its worth.

My younger brother, Kwena, and *Mmane* (aunt) Selina, have been very supportive, and I thank them.

I received valuable support and encouragement from my friends Nkgapele Monyepao, Mmaphuti Matlala, Kgabo Mahwai and particularly Mapoko Mashele. Mr. S.M. Mochosa has always been my source of inspiration and I want to thank him as well as all my ex-colleagues at Raleledu High School.

For this study, my sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor K.L. Harris. I don't think I will ever have enough words to be able to describe what Professor Harris did for me. After lecturing me at UNISA at junior degree level, she warmly welcomed me at the University of Pretoria and with her courage, generosity and patience, she guided me through. I literally owe everything to her because she did not only look after my academic interests, she also took a keen interest in my welfare.

I also want to thank Professor J.S. Bergh, head of the Department of History, UP, for guidance and giving me valuable assistance with his extensive knowledge and experience in my field of study. I also thank everybody at the Department, especially Lizé Kriel, who always cheered me up and was always ready to assist me. Mrs Charlotte van Niekerk was also very helpful.

Professor Greg Cuthbertson of UNISA also assisted and helped me to believe in myself and remain positive and optimistic.

Official records pertaining to Blacks in the Transvaal, 1902 - 1907.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

ANC - African National Congress.

ANPU - African Native Political Union.

BMS - Berlin Missionary Society.

EC - Executive Council.

Gov. - Governor.

LD - Law Department.

PWD - Public Works Department.

SANAC - South African Native Affairs Commission.

SANNC - South African Native National Congress.

SNA - Secretary of Native Affairs.

TAB - Transvaal Archive Depot.

TBC - Transvaal Basotho Committee.

TNC - Transvaal Native Congress.

TNVA - Transvaal Native Vigilance Association.

ZAR - South African Republic.

SUMMARY.

Historians use different types of sources when reconstructing the past. Of the two major categories of sources, the primary sources are of major importance for attaining information, as they are contemporary to the period which is being researched. They are often more reliable than the other category, namely secondary sources, which are literally second-hand information. However, all possible sources, both primary and secondary, must be approached critically so as to obtain a balanced version of the past.

In the South African situation, for an extensive period of time, most of the historical writing on the early periods was based on the records which were made by the European-originated Whites who had the advantage of being able to put their accounts in writing. This led to the European-White perspective dominating and monopolising the historiographical stage for quite a long time. The perspective of the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa had been overshadowed owing to their inability to read and write.

The written sources on the Blacks in South Africa date back to the time when the first Europeans set foot here. The early European travellers (traders, hunters, natural scientists, etc.) came into contact with the Black communities and they made records on them. Obviously these travellers based such records on their own interests and also wrote from a Eurocentric position, with cultural differences as well as racial prejudices and superior attitudes towards the Blacks. The missionaries, who were mostly of European origin, also made records about the Blacks among whom they worked. The missionaries also had their own agenda, although different from that of the travellers. The records which they kept mostly reflected their "fight" against what they thought were barbaric and backward ways of the Blacks' lifestyle.

In addition to the records made by the early travellers and missionaries about the Blacks, there were records which were made by the Boer and British government officials. In this study the official records pertaining to the Blacks in the Transvaal between 1902 and 1907 are discussed. Firstly, a historiographical overview is presented and secondly, the official records themselves are analysed and evaluated. The importance of those records as sources of information on the Blacks in the Transvaal, especially the Northern Sotho, is evaluated by using different criteria, including the principle of internal criticism. There are numerous flaws and limitations found in these records about Blacks such as cultural differences, subjectivity, prejudice, bias, etc.

However, even though these records contain such flaws, they are still important sources of information. Their most

important value is that they form the basis and point of departure from where historical reconstruction is made. Research, even in future, would still heavily depend on these records as sources of information. But, as already pointed out, the information obtained in them has to be tested by different criteria in order to detect the limitations, so that a more balanced reconstructions can be achieved.

1. INTRODUCTION.

There is a lot of research which still needs to be done on the South African Blacks in general, and the Northern Sotho chiefdoms in particular. The writing of the history of the Blacks in South Africa has been disadvantaged by various factors. According to historian K. Smith, before World War II, those who wrote histories of Africa based their accounts almost entirely on written materials. As a result, they only concentrated on the activities of the Europeans in Africa and to them "African societies were seen as static and unchanging, they had no history"¹. And again, the scarcity of documents about African societies strengthened these writers' resolve to neglect the history of Blacks. However, this situation was corrected in the last couple of decades when the artefacts that have long interested archaeologists, together with oral evidence, were brought into the historian's fold. The historians' use of oral evidence and other disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, sociology and linguistics, led to the uncovering and reconstruction of the pre-colonial history of Blacks. This was also done by adding the accounts of early European travellers and missionaries.

This reconstruction of the history of Blacks was done by Whites and they inevitably wrote from their own Euro-centric perspective. According to another historian, C. Saunders:

Until very recently, there were no professional Black historians. Had Blacks had the same opportunities to write about the South African past as Whites, the body of historical literature we possess would almost certainly have been different².

The end of the 19th century tensions between the Boers and the British, which resulted in war in 1899, almost overshadowed events concerning Black communities. This is reflected in historical literature which mainly focused on those hostilities. Even after the war, much was still written on how both White communities made peace and then worked together on how to solve the "native problem". As a result, much of the literature on the so-called "reconstruction period", is White-centric in that it mainly concentrated on how the new British colonial administration grappled with finding better policies, especially on Black issues. The administration tried to address "native problems" regarding labour shortage, land tenure, etc., by measures such as the Location Commission and the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC).

¹ K. Smith, The changing past, p.10.

² C. Saunders, The making of South African past, p.4.

As a result of this concentration on White issues, there is a lack of literature on how the Blacks themselves felt during and after the war. There is a gap, for instance, of how Milner's reconstruction policies affected various Northern Sotho chiefdoms, such as Bahananwa, Bapedi, Bakone, etc. The only time these chiefdoms were written about, was when they resisted White intrusion and had to be "punished" for refusing "to obey the laws". It is therefore important for historians to trace how the SANAC (1903 - 1905) recommendations directly affected, say, the Bakwena of Moletši, Bakone of Matlala, Balobedu of Modjadji, etc. How did the Location Commission (1903) affect the Banareng, Batlokwa, Babirwa, etc.? There is therefore still room for research to determine how the Northern Sotho chiefdoms fared and reacted to the land tenure policies and racial policies of the reconstruction period. How did they come to live with the system of the purchase of land, for instance because later they made massive land purchases?

Before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899 (also referred to as the South African War or the Second War of Independence), the area known as the Transvaal was an independent Boer state, formerly called the South African Republic or ZAR. The ZAR was established in 1852, but with the defeat of the Boers in 1902 this area was annexed by Britain and was ruled as the Transvaal Crown Colony.

The replacement of the Boer republican government by that of the British, implied both a change in policies as well as the structures of the administrative systems. From the outset, the question of the administration of the Blacks had been problematic to the ZAR government as it had never been easy for it to establish its authority over the independent chiefdoms. It often took serious armed confrontations to subdue chiefdoms but even after they were defeated, some of these communities continued to resist and defy the Boer authorities. Therefore, the new British colonial government which was established after the declaration of peace, inherited a system in which the Boers were not able to administer the Blacks in an effective way.

In this thesis, the official records pertaining to Blacks which were compiled by the government officials in the Transvaal Colony between the years 1902 and 1907 will be discussed and special reference, where possible, will be given to the information provided on the Northern Sotho. The date 1902 has been chosen as a starting point of this work for two reasons. First, it was the year in which the British officially took over from the former Boer republican government after the conclusion of the Peace of Vereeniging. Secondly, it was the year in which the Native Affairs Department, the department specifically established to deal

with Black issues, commenced its duties in the Transvaal. The discussion ends in 1907 with the start of representative government in the Transvaal, but more particularly because the last publication discussed in this essay (Native Strongholds and Locations) was published in that year. After 1907 there were efforts in all the British-controlled colonies to establish a central government. Each colony no longer pursued its own policies, and this also applied to Black issues. This process of uniformity eventually led to the unification of the four colonies of Transvaal, Orange River, the Cape and Natal into the Union of South Africa in 1910. However, periodisation in this discussion is not rigid because it is always difficult to determine time frames, as Paul Maylam observed: "The southern African historian, like all historians, is forever bedevilled by the twin methodological problems of periodisation and creating suitable categories of analysis".³

This thesis is divided into two main categories. The first part is a historiographical overview in which the available literature is considered. In general the Blacks in the Transvaal between 1902 and 1907 are focused on. Information on them is hidden among the accounts which focus mainly on the history of the Whites. Information on Blacks is peripheral in most of these works because the bulk of them were written from a Eurocentric perspective, as already pointed out.

In this section of historiography, the secondary works which deal specifically with this topic are discussed. Different approaches (trends) in South Africa's historiography will be briefly discussed to contextualise the discussion of historiography in this thesis. The secondary works on the topic will then be discussed according to their contribution and relevance to the theme of the thesis. There are some works which provide much content on the topic, while others merely give background information. The researched works by government officials, which are mainly made from a White, Eurocentric perspective, will also be discussed. On the other hand, there are those authors who wrote from the perspective of Blacks, in order to try and rectify the gap which was created by the writing from a Eurocentric position for such an extensive period of time. Specialised works which focused on the Northern Sotho will also be discussed.

In the second part of this thesis, the importance of the official records as sources of information on the Blacks in Transvaal, and in particular the Northern Sotho, will be assessed. Although focus will be on published official records, archival material has also been consulted. The official records which were written during the period under

³ P. Maylam, A History of the African people of South Africa: From the early iron age to the 1970s, p.136

discussion include publications, reports (periodical and annual), letters, notices and other forms of correspondence. Firstly, the records which were made by the Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs, District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners between the years 1902 and 1907 will be discussed. Secondly, the documentation of the South African Native Affairs Commission (1903 - 1905) will be considered. Thirdly, a publication by the Transvaal Native Affairs Department, the Short History of the Transvaal (1905) will be evaluated. This will be followed in the fourth instance by an analysis of two publications emanating from the British Office, namely, The Native Tribes of the Transvaal (1905) and Native Strongholds and Locations of the Transvaal (1907). In view of the limited extent of this thesis, the documents and report of the Location Commission have not been included.

All these records will then be evaluated by using internal criticism and other relevant criteria to determine the credibility of the information and evidence. According to R.J. Shaffer, the principle of internal criticism must begin with the understanding of the words in their literal sense and must also seek to evaluate the usefulness of the evidence as a source of information.⁴ Therefore when assessing these official records questions such as these will be asked: Are we able to understand what is written in these documents? Or are we inhibited by the language problems such as odd spellings, lack of punctuation, or the use of abbreviations? Are there any common sources of error made by the authors such as ignorance, bias or cultural difference? What was the physical ability (sight, hearing, illness, etc.) and social ability (familiarity with the subject and willingness to observe) of the authors? What was the time of composition, as well as intent (purpose) of composition? These are all important components of internal criticism against which all these official records will be evaluated. Other criteria such as objectivity, subjectivity and content analysis will also be considered.

In this thesis, original and contextual terminology and concepts will be adhered to as much as possible in order to retain the authenticity and actual meaning of the content. For instance, the word "native" is so pervasive in all the documents consulted, because these records were made at a time when this word was generally used and accepted. Therefore its replacement would dilute or obscure the actual meaning of content. Although this word is no longer used or acceptable today, it will be inappropriate to replace it in this thesis and talk about, say, "Black Affairs Department" when referring to the then Native Affairs Department. Therefore this word will constantly be used in this work when

⁴ R.J. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.152.

referring to specific titles and names such as Native Affairs Department, Native Commissioner, etc, and will be in inverted commas where its usage is compelling. N.R. Gunning encountered a similar problem of reference in his M.A. thesis⁵ in which he preferred the term "Bantoe" to "kaffir" or "naturel":

Opmerklik by beide regerings, nl. dié van voor en dié van na 1902, is dat die Bantoe aangespreek is as 'n "kaffir" of "naturel". Dit moet gesien word teen die tydaggergrond waarteen hulle beweeg het. In hierdie studie word die term "Bantoe" deurgans gebruik, behalwe in direkte aanhaling - waar die oorspronklike teks nie verander is nie, of waar 'n kommissie onder die term bekend was.⁶

Again, the usage of the word "tribe" has been avoided by most writers. W.D. Hammond-Tooke even asked his colleagues in the book he edited, to replace the word "tribe" with the term "chiefdom" for the political units under chiefs because of its vagueness and ambiguity.⁷ Therefore, in this thesis, the term "chiefdom" will be preferred to "tribe". Another problem of reference is about the 1899 to 1902 war which is commonly referred to as the Anglo-Boer War. Some authors call it the "South African War" while others refer to it as the "Second War of Independence". Most of the authors who are not comfortable with the reference, Anglo-Boer War, argue that the war did not only involve the British and the Boers. They maintain that other nationalities and population groups, and especially the Blacks, were also directly and indirectly involved in the war, hence the necessity to refer to it in an inclusive manner. In this work, all the terms will be used interchangeably.

Another point related to the text, which needs to be clarified, is the overlapping of categories in the records consulted. For example, it is variably said that the Transvaal was divided into "districts" which are sometimes referred to as "divisions" or even as "wards". In this work, all these references will be used to mean the same thing, but the term "division" will be preferred to the others. The naming of different divisions in the Transvaal can also confuse readers. There are divisions of the Transvaal which are referred to by different names. For instance the Northern Division is also referred to as the Zoutpansberg, the North-Western Division as Waterberg, while the Eastern Division is

⁵ N.R. Gunning, Die Britse Bantu-Administrasie in Transvaal, 1902 – 1906, M.A. tesis, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1966, pp. i-121.

⁶ Ibid, p.3.

⁷ W.D. Hammond-Tooke, The Bantu-speaking peoples of southern Africa, pp. v-vi.

sometimes referred as Lydenberg. The reader may be confused if such exchangeable references are not understood.

Also, the titles Commissioner for Native Affairs, District Commissioner, Sub-Native Commissioner, are not clearly distinguished throughout the consulted records. The administrative head of the Transvaal Department of Native Affairs is referred to as the Native Commissioner, and again the head officials responsible for "native" affairs in various divisions of the Transvaal, are also referred to as Native Commissioners. This creates confusion. In this thesis, for the purpose of clarity and consistency, the term, "Commissioner for Native Affairs" will only refer to the administrative head of "native" affairs in the whole of Transvaal. The term, "District Commissioner" will be used to refer to the officials who headed "native" affairs in each of the Transvaal divisions, with the "Sub-Native Commissioners" as their assistants.

The government officials who made these records often had to use orthography and spellings at their own discretion. This was mainly because when these records were made, almost all Black languages were not up to the standard of written languages. As a result some names are misspelled according to today's standardised orthography. In this work, such misspelled names will be put in inverted commas and the correctly spelled ones placed in parentheses.

As already indicated, this thesis focuses as much as possible on the Northern Sotho. In terms of distinction, there is still no consensus as to who actually comprise the Northern Sotho. For the purpose of this discussion the term Northern Sotho will refer to the chiefdoms which mainly occupied the northern parts of the area previously called the Transvaal. These chiefdoms exclude the Southern Sothos (those related to the Basotho of Moshweshwe) and the Western Sothos (Batswana). The term Northern Sotho is thus a consensus reference which is a bit more inclusive than the narrow and vague ones such as "Bapedi" and "Transvaal Sotho". In Hammond-Tooke's book, one of the contributors, N.J. van Warmelo, wrote that in addition to using their tribal names, all the people called the Northern Sotho, also call themselves Basotho, without qualification and that the name "North Sotho" was used as a counterpart to "South Sotho"⁸.

However, the term Northern Sotho does not refer to a homogeneous group as it comprises divergent chiefdoms such as the Bakone, Bahananwa, Bakwena, Bapedi, Batlokwa and many others. There are also some non-Sotho communities which became to a large degree assimilated (*sothonised*) by living for longer periods amongst or next to the Northern Sotho. For

⁸ W.D. Hammond-Tooke, The Bantu-speaking peoples, p. 76.

example the Northern Ndebele are originally Zulu and Van Warmelo refers to the "Nguni in the interior" as Transvaal Ndebele, Amandebele or even Matebele. On how they were *sothonised* he says, "[s]urrounded as they were by various Sotho tribes, they could not avoid being influenced considerably by Sotho culture and language"⁹. The Balobedu are of a Venda origin. The people of Seleka and the Bahananwa have all originated from the Batswana of Botswana. There are still many other examples of assimilated communities. In his article which deals with the origins, tribal relations, movements and immigration of the Sotho chiefdoms in the northern parts of Transvaal. J.D. Krige¹⁰, who distinguishes between the lowveld and the highveld Sothos, maintains that some Sotho, especially in the lowveld, "have become wholly *Vendaised* while some outposts of the Venda, have in turn been *Sothoised*."¹¹ Some of the communities lost their original identities to the Northern Sotho, especially when the National Party Government introduced the homeland system during the fifties, sixties and seventies. These non-Sotho groups found themselves living within the "borders" of Lebowa homeland which was created for the Northern Sotho.

⁹ W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *The Bantu-speaking peoples*, p. 67.

¹⁰ J.D. Krige, "Traditional origins and tribal relations of the Sotho of the Northern Transvaal", *Bantu Studies*, 4(XI), 1937, pp. 321 – 357.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 322.

2. HISTORIOGRAPHY.

The discussion on historiography in this study has been mainly approached by first discussing and evaluating the works which focused mostly on the topic, and secondly, considering those which merely provided background information. The discussion of the historical writing in this study could have been done by using the different approaches of South African historiography. In his 1988 work¹², K. Smith mentioned five broad trends in historical writing (British imperial, settler, Afrikaans, liberal and radical), but he is quick to admit that this division might not be the only one¹³. On the other hand C. Saunders identified four approaches¹⁴. The first is that one of G.M. Theal (settler) which showed "full-blown racism" in which superiority and inferiority of races were believed in, while conquests and dispossessions were justified; followed by the liberalism of W.M. Macmillan and C.W. De Kiewiet who believed that Blacks should be considered with sympathy but paid little attention to Black societies; thirdly, later liberal Africanists who accorded Blacks equal attention; and finally the radical revisionists of the 1970s who argued that racial categories were wrong¹⁵.

Although the historical writings of the authors referred to in this study may not squarely fit in the above categories, it can be noted that some of the writings display historiographical features mentioned by Smith and Saunders. For instance, the works of E.H. Brookes and H. Rogers can be said to have followed "British imperial" and "settler/colonial" approaches as they mainly justified the British "native" policies and administration. Most authors - R.F.A. Hoernlé, T.R.H. Davenport, S.B. Spies, and D. Denoon - followed a liberal trend of recognising the presence of the Blacks, but wrote very little about them.

According to Smith, the two-volumed Oxford History of South Africa of M. Wilson and L. Thompson, which appeared in 1969 and 1971, was a major landmark in South African historiography¹⁶. It:

"for all time dispelled the myth that South African history had begun when the Portuguese discoverers rounded the Cape in 1487 - it demonstrated that Africans had indeed had a history before the coming of the White man"¹⁷.

¹² K. Smith, The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing.

¹³ Ibid, p.6.

¹⁴ C. Saunders, The making of South African past.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.198.

¹⁶ K. Smith, The changing past, p. 139.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 139.

The Afrikaner approach is represented by the scholars who, D.R. Burton observed, made valuable accounts on the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), viz., P. van Biljon, N.J. Rhoadie, F.A. van Jaarsveld and D.W. Kruger¹⁸. These authors felt that the Afrikaners were unjustifiably neglected by the SANAC. The Afrikaans-speaking scholars who produced relevant academic theses and dissertations - N.R. Gunning, L.S. Kruger, C. Hanekom, P.S. Hattingh, M. Boersema, J.J.C. Botha, etc.¹⁹ - also followed this approach.

The historical writing which emerged in the 1970s has variously been labelled "revisionist", "radical" or "Marxist"²⁰. This trend took the perspective of Blacks as it:

seeks to demonstrate that Africans, contrary to popular belief, were able to respond with great effectiveness to changes in their economic and natural environment. This is a very different picture from that painted earlier of static and unchanging societies unable to act effectively when they came into contact with the Whites moving into the interior²¹.

Z.K. Matthews justified this approach from the perspective of Blacks in the early 1950s by declaring:

I do not know if it is possible to approach history without bias. But if it is necessary to accept that all history is biased, the important thing is that all biases are represented, and it is high time that African history, written from the African point of view, takes its place on library shelves²².

In this study the authors who followed this approach are S.M.Molema, P.Maylam, R.H.Du Pre, A.Odendaal, S.Marks and S.Trapido²³.

¹⁸ D.R. Burton, The South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 – 1905: An analysis and evaluation, p.10.

¹⁹ N.R. Gunning, Die Britse Bantoe-Administrasie, 1902-1906; L.S. Kruger, Die Makgoba (Magoeba) oorlog: 1894 – 1895; C. Hanekom, Die huidige stand van die tradisionale Godsdienstpatron by die Mamabolo; P.S.Hattingh, Die probleem van bestanvoering in 'n beperkte gebied: Die Modjadjilokasie; M. Boersema, Die malopokultus by die Kgaga van Maake; and J.J.C.Botha, Die gesagstruktuur van die Pulana en die funksioneering daarvan op regterrein.

²⁰ K. Smith, The changing past, p.162.

²¹ Ibid, 196.

²² Ibid, p.220.

²³ S.M. Molema, The Bantu past and present; P. Maylam, A History of the African people of South Africa: From early iron age to the 1970s; R.H. Du Pre, The making of racial conflict in South Africa; A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu: The beginnings of Black protest politics in South Africa in 1912; and S. Marks and S. Trapido, The politics of race, class and nationalism in the twentieth century.

Some secondary works comment on and analyse the original official publications, such as reports. These secondary reports are in the form of books, theses, etc., and they are important in helping to evaluate the official records as sources of information. For instance, D.R. Burton²⁴ made an in-depth and thorough study of the Transvaal Blacks between 1902 and 1907 - the period under focus in this thesis - by specifically analysing the SANAC of 1903 - 1905. His comprehensive research which is thorough and detailed, is a very important source for the topic of this thesis. Burton explained that his dissertation attempts to provide an analysis of the "native policy" followed by the British Administration during the years of reconstruction, 1902 to 1907²⁵. It particularly focuses on the circumstances surrounding the creation of the SANAC and examines the resolutions adopted by the Commission. While occasional reference is made to the various British colonies in South Africa, the emphasis is placed on the Transvaal.

What makes Burton's work to be so comprehensive and balanced, is his extensive consultation of the SANAC. In his work he refers to the views of different scholars and authors who also made studies on the SANAC. He begins by referring to scholars which he said were among the first to comment on the SANAC, and these were W.B. Worsfold (a British journalist), E.H. Brookes (a writer, scholar and politician), L.E. Neane (a liberal journalist), C.M. Tatz (an academic), R. Hotwitz (a political economist), E. Walker, W.K. Hancock and the three South African historians, T.R.H. Davenport, J.A. Benyon and S.B. Spies²⁶. According to Burton, the major weakness of these authors was that they underplayed or ignored the issue of labour. He believed that the scholars who have placed greater emphasis on economic factors and who have been more aware of the significance of labour, have tended to provide more plausible explanations of the SANAC.

Burton then indicates that the scholars "who have been more aware of the significance of labour"²⁷ include J.A. Hobson (a radical journalist), D. Denoon, M. Legassick, S. Marks, S. Trapido, P. Rich, J.W. Cell and M. Lacey²⁸. According to him, the strength of the argument of these scholars is that they focused on the overriding concern of the supply and/or the shortage of Black labour in South Africa. He also commended these scholars for showing how segregation policies, recommended by the SANAC, especially restriction and

²⁴ D.R. Burton, The SANAC.

²⁵ Ibid, p.1.

²⁶ Ibid, pp.3-6.

²⁷ Ibid, p.6.

²⁸ Ibid, pp.6-10.

segregation on land, have weakened the ability of Blacks to prosper.

Although Burton's work is very important on the study of the Transvaal Blacks between 1902 and 1907 as it is extensively researched, its apparent shortcoming is that it concentrates only on the SANAC. It therefore approaches the Black issues from the SANAC as its main point of departure, thereby neglecting other aspects and spheres about the Black communities. Also, Burton's work is general as it does not refer to specific Black chiefdoms and how they were individually affected by the SANAC. This was because the SANAC was a countrywide body and it is therefore not surprising to find no particular references to the Northern Sotho chiefdoms in Burton's thesis.

Another author whose work is of relevance to this study is N.R. Gunning who deals with the administration of Blacks by the British in the Transvaal between the years 1902 and 1906 in his 1966 M.A. thesis²⁹. Like Burton, Gunning presents a comprehensive and well-researched work which is crucial in any study on the Transvaal Blacks during the first few years of the 20th century. Gunning first grappled with the problem of periodisation in his thesis. He justifies his selection of the 1902-1906 period by saying that it can be considered as a transition phase in which the new authorities (the British) were beginning to administer the conquered territories properly by making the political systems of the various colonies similar:

Daarom kan die tydperk 1902 tot 1906 as 'n oorgangsfase beskou word, wat gekenmerk word deur die feit dat die nuwe bewindhebbers 'n administrasie moes daarstel om die nuutverowerde gebied ooreenkomstig hul politieke beskouinge behoorlik te administeer.³⁰

Gunning further justifies his choice of the 1902-1906 time frame by pointing out that it was the period within which the British, according to the Peace of Vereeniging, promised to establish responsible governments in the conquered colonies:

Omdat die bepalinge van die Vrede van Vereeniging ook die belofte ingehou het dat die Britse regering so gou doenlik verantwoordlike bestuur aan die nuutverwerde kolonies sou toeken, kan die jare 1902 - 1906 dan ook beskou word as 'n tydperk van voorbereidheid.³¹

Gunning's work begins with an introduction³² in which background information of the administration of the Blacks in

²⁹ N.R. Gunning, Die Britse Bantoe-Administrasie.

³⁰ Ibid, p. i.

³¹ Ibid, p. i.

the Transvaal before the Anglo-Boer War is briefly outlined. From here Gunning divides his chapters as follows: "Die stigting en ontwikkeling van 'n department [van] Bantoe-administrasie"³³ (The establishment and development of a department for Bantu administration); "Herverstiging van die Bantoe (1902 -1903)"³⁴ (Resettlement of the Bantu [1902 -1903]); "Welsynsdienste"³⁵ (Welfare services); "Die administrasie, beheer en afbakening van lokasies in die Bantoegebiede"³⁶ (The administration, control and division of locations in the Bantu areas); "Politieke regte van die Bantoe in Transvaal (1902-1906)"³⁷ (Political rights of the Bantu in Transvaal [1902-1906]); "Bantoesakekommissie (1902-1905)"³⁸ (Bantu Affairs Commission [1902-1905]); and "Die ontwikkeling van Bantoeadministrasie (1905-1906)"³⁹ (The development of Bantu administration [1905-1906]).

As a secondary source, Gunning's work helps in evaluating the official sources which were written during the period under discussion, especially sources which were made by the commissioners who were appointed to administer the Blacks. The then called "natives" commissioners made various reports which are valuable sources of information on Blacks. Gunning distinguishes the SANAC as the most important commission of that period because, according to him, it did not only investigate the situation of the Blacks, but it also made important recommendations which would enable the formulation of uniform policy on Blacks in future:

Die belangrikste kommissie in hierdie tydperk was sg. "S.A. Native Affairs Commission" (1903-1905) wat nie net 'n ondersoek dwarsdeur S.A. gedoen het oor die Bantoe en sy lewensituasie nie, maar ook aanbevelings moes maak met die oog op 'n eenvormige Bantoebeleid in die toekoms.⁴⁰

Just like Burton, Gunning also neglected the perspective of Blacks by only emphasising the SANAC as the point of departure. No specific Black chieftoms were referred to. Gunning's well-researched and detailed work is constrained by the language factor because many potential researchers may not be competent in Afrikaans.

³² N.R. Gunning, Die Britse Bantoe-Administrasie, pp. 1 - 2.

³³ Ibid., pp. 1 - 27.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 28 - 43.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 44 - 67.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 68 - 131.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 132 - 146.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 147 - 149.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 176 - 195.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. v.

Apart from the thoroughly researched historical theses of Burton and Gunning on the Transvaal Blacks between 1902 and 1907, there are anthropological, ethnographic and linguistic works available that deal with the aspects of the ethnic history of the Transvaal Blacks, including the Northern Sotho – the central focus of this study.

The publications of the ethnographer and anthropologist, N.J. van Warmelo are prominent among these works. According to Van Warmelo, the Blacks found in South Africa are the descendants of the Bantu-speaking communities which migrated from northern and central Africa. They are divided into the Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda. The Northern Sotho forms part of the Sotho division. The "tribes" of the Sotho form a well-defined group and the term "Sotho" is used in Bantu philology as a purely linguistic designation⁴¹. The Sotho also display common ethnological features such as totemism, the possession of cattle, a type of a round hut with a conical roof, and a pre-emptive right to marry the maternal cousins⁴². However, the fact that the Sotho chiefdoms belong to the same division and speak variants of the language which is more or less the same, does not mean that they are actually from one stock and origin, or have come into the country by the same route.

The Sotho group is further subdivided into various chiefdoms. The classification of the Sotho is done differently by various authors and this creates confusion as to whose categorisation is correct. This problem of classification is compounded by the fact that these various authors use different criteria such as ethnological, geographical, linguistic and historical grounds, to classify the Sotho chiefdoms. According to Van Warmelo, the classification of the Sotho is "necessarily a compromise ... as it is neither exclusively ethnological, nor geographical nor linguistic"⁴³. He also made it clear that he cannot claim that his classification was final as much research was still required⁴⁴. On the other hand, D.P. Lombard (et al), in their 1985 work⁴⁵, said that the subdivision of the Sotho is based on historical and geographical grounds⁴⁶.

Van Warmelo classified the Sotho into seven groups, viz., South Sotho, Western Tswana, Eastern Tswana, Central Sotho, Eastern Sotho, North-Eastern Sotho, and Northern Sotho⁴⁷. This grouping is rather confusing and it is mainly based on geographical grounds. The fact that some groups were found in the "west", for instance, did not make it a convincing

⁴¹ N.J. van Warmelo, A Preliminary survey of the Bantu tribes of South Africa, p.96.

⁴² Ibid, p. 96.

⁴³ Ibid, p.97.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.97.

⁴⁵ D.P. Lombard, Introduction to the Grammar of the Northern Sotho.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.5.

⁴⁷ N.J. van Warmelo, A preliminary survey, p.97.

criteria to group them together. However, van Warmelo departed from this classification and in his 1952 Language Map⁴⁸, he classified the Sotho into the South Sotho, Tswana and North Sotho⁴⁹. This improvement can perhaps be attributed to the 1946 census about which he says: "A great advance was therefore made when the census of 1946, at the instance of this Department, incorporated in the census form certain questions designed to produce the desired information"⁵⁰. This latter classification is plausible and it is also used almost universally in literature, and it will therefore be followed in this study.

Authors also differ with regard to the subdivision of the Northern Sotho. The Northern Sotho are a group of the Sotho who are found in the northern and eastern parts of the former province of Transvaal, hence they are referred to by some authors as Transvaal Sotho (Transvaal Basuto)⁵¹. The Northern Sotho are also often mistakenly referred to as the Bapedi or the Pedi in which some authors such as P.L. Breutz, even claim that all the Northern Sotho have their official language as Sepedi⁵². This point will be elaborated on when dealing with the Bapedi chiefdom, later in this thesis. The former homeland of Lebowa was specifically meant for the Northern Sotho. According to L.J. Louwrens (et al), the term Northern Sotho is actually "a geographical term denoting the area where a specific variety of Sotho dialects are spoken... [a]nd it is therefore debatable whether a geographical term is suitable for designating the name of the language"⁵³. The authors also observed that the geographical location of the Northern Sotho is within the boundaries of:

an imaginary line stretching from Pretoria through Middelburg, Groblersdal and Lydenburg to Sabie. From Sabie the line runs along the Sabie River and then north through the Bushbuckridge and Klaserie areas, across the Olifants River, then westwards as far as Louis Trichardt, and northwards again as far as Messina. From there it stretches westwards to Botswana border and then southwards through the Potgietersrus district, through Warmbaths back to Pretoria⁵⁴.

The classification of the Northern Sotho is problematic because it involves so many chiefdoms – about 123⁵⁵ – which

⁴⁸ N.J. van Warmelo, Language Map of South Africa.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.1.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.1.

⁵¹ British War Office, The Native Tribes of the Transvaal, London, 1905, p.45.

⁵² P.L. Breutz, The south-eastern Bantu cultural province, p.35.

⁵³ L.J. Louwrens(et al), Northern Sotho.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.1.

⁵⁵ T. Malan and P.S. Hattingh, Black Homelands in South Africa, p.177.

do not have the same historical origin. According to Van Warmelo's 1935 classification, the Northern Sotho chiefdoms fall under the Central Sotho, Eastern Sotho, North-Eastern Sotho and Northern Sotho. The Central Sotho chiefdoms were once under the rule of the Bapedi of Maroteng and they are, the Bapedi, Batau, Bakwena, Bantwane, Bakone, Batswako, Banareng, Ba ga Mohlala, Ba ga Moraba, Ba ga Mphogo, BagaNkwane, and Baroka⁵⁶. The Eastern Sotho, according to Van Warmelo, are only the remaining representatives of the Sotho population of Swaziland and most of them live in the Pilgrimsrest district and they are the Bakutswe, Bapai and Mapulana⁵⁷. The North-Eastern Sotho are the Baphalaborwa, Ba ga Mašišimala (Ba ga Šai), Ba ga Mametša, Ba ga Mahlo, Ba ga Letswalo, Balobedu, Ba ga Mmamabolo (Dikolobe) and Bagaga⁵⁸. The Northern Sotho division of Van Warmelo comprises the Bakgaga, Bakone, Ba ga Molepo, Batlou, Babirwa, Batlokwa, Batlhaloga, Bakwena (Ba Moletši) and Bagananwa⁵⁹.

The classification of the Northern Sotho which was made by P.L. Breutz⁶⁰ is similar to that of Van Warmelo, because Breutz also divides the Northern Sotho into the Central Sotho, Eastern Sotho, North-Eastern Sotho and Northern Sotho⁶¹. The slight difference is that in the last sub-division, Breutz omitted the Bagananwa and the Bakwena of Moletši.

Differing from Van Warmelo's and Breutz's classification, is T.Malan and P.S.Hattingh's division of the Northern Sotho into Central, North-Eastern and Eastern "tribes"⁶². The Central chiefdoms, according to these authors, "are generally known as the [Ba]Pedi of Sekhukhuneland and the Pokwani district...".⁶³ The Bapedi subjugated their neighbouring chiefdoms such as the Baroka, Batau, Bakone and Bakwena. In the Pietersburg and Haenertsburg districts are several Bakone chiefdoms as well as Bakgaga, Ba ga Dikgale, Ba ga Mphahlele, Ba ga Chuene, Ba ga Mathabatha and Ba ga Matlala⁶⁴. The North-Eastern Sotho are Baphalaborwa, Ba ga Mašišimala, Ba ga Mametša, Ba ga Letswalo, Ba ga Sekororo, Bakgaga, Ba ga Mmamabolo and Balobedu⁶⁵. The Eastern subsection consists of the Bapai, Bakutswe and Mapulana and according to the authors, they are found in the vicinity of Pilgrimsrest, Nelspruit and Lydenburg⁶⁶.

⁵⁶ N.J. van Warmelo, A Preliminary survey, pp.108-110.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.111.

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp.113 – 114.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp.115 – 116.

⁶⁰ P.L. Breutz, The South Eastern Bantu cultural province.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.36.

⁶² T. Malan and P.S. Hattingh, Black Homelands, p.178.

⁶³ Ibid, p.178.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.178.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.178.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.178.

S.J. Botha (et al) classified the Northern Sotho into four sub-groups, according to "cultural and linguistic differences"⁶⁷, viz., the Lowveld Sotho, the Plateau Sotho, "tribes" from Sekhukhuneland, Nebo and Moutse, and the Eastern Sotho. The Lowveld Sotho are further subdivided into the Kolobe chiefdoms which have a *kolobe* (bush pig) as their totem, and they are those of Mmamaila, Mamabolo, Sekgopo and Rakwadu. The Nareng chiefdoms of Letswalo and Sekororo (Mahlo) have *nare*(buffalo) as their totem. The Bakone of Mametša, Bakgaga of Maake, Batlhabine of Mogoboya and Baphalaborwa also form part of the Lowveld Sotho⁶⁸.

The Plateau Sotho are the Bakgaga chiefdoms of Maake, Mphahlele, Mothapo, and the Bakone chiefdoms of Maja, Chuene, Mathabatha, Molepo, Matlala, Dikgale and Maserumule. In the north-western side of Pietersburg, Bahlaloga, Bagananwa and Babirwa chiefdoms are found⁶⁹. The third division of the Northern Sotho, according to Botha (et al) is the chiefdoms from Sekhukhuneland, Nebo and Moutse. The authors begin this subdivision by discussing the early history of the dominant chiefdom, the Bapedi of the Maroteng royal family. The other chiefdoms are the Bakone, Batau and Baroka and they were once under the rule of the Bapedi⁷⁰. The final division of the Northern Sotho according to Botha (et al) is the Eastern Sotho which consists of the Bakutswe, Bapai and Mapulana⁷¹.

J.D. Krige acknowledged the problem of classifying the Northern Sotho by saying that:

The Sotho of the northern Transvaal are an enormously complex group of tribes. Very diverse as to ancestry, and lacking the homogeneity of the Venda, they are divided into numerous small independent tribes ... and usually have distinctive names. Each tribe consists of individuals of widely different ancestry, indicated by the tribal origin or foreign totem of the individual⁷².

Krige then broadly classifies the Northern Sotho chiefdoms into the Kolobe people, the Phalaborwa and the Šai, the "Narene" (Banareng) and the Thabina, The "Koni and the Khaha" (Bakone and Bakgaga), The Batlokwa and Babirwa as well

⁶⁷ S.J. Botha (et al), A Proposed national development plan for Lebowa, p.159.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.161.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 165.

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp.167 – 170.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.171.

⁷² J.D. Krige, "Traditional origins and tribal relationships of the Sotho of the Northern Transvaal, Bantu Studies, Vol. XI, No. 4, 1937, p.327.

as the "Moletše" (Bakwena ba Moletši) and "Xananwa" (Bagananwa)⁷³.

It is clear from the above discussion that the classification of the Northern Sotho chiefdoms is problematic and it lacks finality. However, there are a few similarities displayed by the above classifications. For instance all the authors referred to group the Bapai, Bakutswe and Mapulana as Eastern Sotho. And except for Botha (et al), all of them mention the same chiefdoms under the Central Sotho. Even though these authors may differ in grouping the Northern Sotho chiefdoms, what is important is that they cover and discuss almost all of them. This is confirmed by van Warmelo:

Regarding enumeration, there is little to say, except that it may be taken as complete. It is unlikely that any important tribe recognised by the administration, or not recognised but known to the administration, have been missed⁷⁴.

One of the most interesting and salient features in the historiography of the Transvaal Blacks - and the Northern Sotho in particular - has been the Bapedi factor. The Bapedi chiefdom is singled out from the other Northern Sotho chiefdoms because it enjoyed a lot of ascendancy over the others in all spheres. It once established a powerful empire which reached its zenith during the reign of Thulare (about 1790-1824)⁷⁵. Its influence was so extensive that other chiefdoms even came to recognise its paramountcy. The Bapedi were also one of the earliest chiefdoms to have the missionaries working among them. The Berlin missionaries brought about rapid development within the Bapedi, more than in any other Northern Sotho chiefdom. The most important of all the developments was of course that of committing the Bapedi dialect, Sepedi, to writing. The written Sepedi grew and it came to cover the chiefdoms which were non-Pedi because most of the early literature - including the Bible - was written in that dialect. When the Northern Sotho were grouped by the National Party government into the Lebowa homeland, the Pedi dialect was almost regarded as a standard language for all the Northern Sotho in that homeland. Therefore, to those who are not familiar with the historical background of the Northern Sotho chiefdoms, the term "Pedi" is equivalent to Northern Sotho.

In his 1967 work entitled The Pedi, H.O. Monnig observed that the term "Pedi is used extremely loosely as some authors call all the Sotho in the Transvaal, the Pedi"⁷⁶. Peter Delius noted that "the term Pedi presents a number of problems [as]

⁷³ J.D. Krige, "Traditional origins, pp.329 - 355.

⁷⁴ N.J. van Warmelo, A Preliminary survey, p.6.

⁷⁵ S.J. Botha(et al), A Proposed national development plan, p169.

⁷⁶ H.O. Monnig, The Pedi, p. v.

it has been used variously to indicate virtually all the Sotho-speaking peoples of the northern and eastern Transvaal"⁷⁷. However, despite this incorrect usage of the term Pedi, both writers resolved to use it correctly in their accounts to refer to the chiefdom under the Maroteng dynasty as well as the population under its hegemony.

As already alluded to in the above paragraphs, Monning and Delius are the authors who made extensive and thorough studies of the Bapedi chiefdom, specifically. However, there are still accounts of the Bapedi by other authors, but these are mostly done as overviews and general works in which such authors touch on the Bapedi, without dealing deeply with the chiefdom as Monnig and Delius do. Monnig pointed out that he was motivated to do a thoroughly researched work on the Bapedi because he wanted "to fill the gap in South African ethnographical literature"⁷⁸. This statement shows how scarce the literature on the Blacks in the Transvaal was and Delius confirmed this statement by saying that the writing of the Bapedi history appears scarce as compared to that of the Zulu or even the Southern Sotho⁷⁹. However, Delius acknowledged that although the secondary literature on the Bapedi is limited, it is far better than that of the other Northern Sotho chiefdoms in the Transvaal.

Delius further pointed out that until the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was no major study undertaken on the Bapedi except "a series of ethnological articles which were published in the 1920s and 1930s"⁸⁰. According to Delius, the most comprehensive work to appear on the Bapedi was Monnig's "useful compendium on the Bapedi culture"⁸¹. However, Delius criticised Monnig's work for describing the traditional and typical Bapedi society and excluding the study of social change. This, according to Delius, has resulted in an idealised, systemised and normative picture of the Bapedi⁸². The historical writing of the Bapedi, and other Black communities, according to Delius, was enkindled in the 1960s by an increasingly important Africanist dimension to liberal historical writing. And the 1970s witnessed the development of a historiography which sought to fuse Africanist concerns with more materialist ones. While Monnig's aim was to fill the gap in ethnological studies, Delius's aim was "to examine the changing nature and distribution of power within the Pedi polity and explores internal economic, political and ideological struggles"⁸³.

⁷⁷ P. Delius, The Land Belongs to us, p. ix.

⁷⁸ H.O. Monnig, The Pedi, p. v.

⁷⁹ P. Delius, The Land Belongs to us, p.2.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.4.

⁸¹ Ibid, p.4.

⁸² Ibid, p.4.

⁸³ Ibid, p.7.

Monnig observed that what usually hampers research on the Northern Sotho, including the Bapedi, was that within the existing literature, it is not always quite clear which "tribe" or group of "tribes" is being described. And again the literature is scattered through many journals in articles or short notes. This is also worsened by the fact that much of the literature is not easily obtainable and is published variously in French, German, Dutch and various Transvaal Sotho dialects, languages which only a few students are conversant with. However, Monnig expressed the hope of being able to overcome these impediments.

Delius divided the historical literature on the Bapedi into two main categories. First, that which is principally based on extensive archival research in the records of the ZAR and the British administration. This literature, together with that drawn from the Missionary Society records, according to Delius, is marred by uncritical use of sources in relation to the Bapedi society. It also lacks "any systematic attempt to explore the nature of economic and political process, struggles and transformation within the polity, thereby fails to explore the internal dynamics of the polity"⁸⁴.

The second category of the Bapedi historical literature, according to Delius, consists of accounts of which the authors drew primarily on their own and earlier collections of oral tradition, but supplemented them with largely published and secondary sources. Delius criticised these sources for having a tendency to mistaken the language of the argument for the substance of conflict and to assume that political norms determine the instance of outcome and struggles for power⁸⁵. However, Delius admits that to point to flaws in the existing literature does not suggest that it is without value or has not benefited his account. "If critically used", he concluded, "[the literature would] yield important material and provide suggestive insights"⁸⁶.

After tackling the issues regarding the availability and the authenticity of literature on the Bapedi, both Monnig and Delius then proceed to consider the actual documentation of the accounts of that chiefdom. Delius only dealt with the history of the Bapedi up to the period when the Bapedi were finally subjugated by the British (1879). Therefore his account, as far as content is concerned, is not relevant to this study which focuses on the first few years of the twentieth century. However, the relevance of Delius's study's to this study is significant as it laid the foundation for the understanding of the Bapedi chiefdom.

⁸⁴ P. Delius, The Land Belongs to us, p.2.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.2.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.3.

After tracing the history of the Bapedi from the pre-colonial era, Monnig then proceeded into the twentieth century. He noted that after the conclusion of the South African War, the Bapedi, as did all the South African Blacks, became subjects of the British crown. This meant, among other things, that they were subjected to taxation, and also to the administration of the Governor of the Transvaal who was appointed Paramount Chief of all the Blacks of the Transvaal. A specific department, the Department of Native Affairs, was responsible for the administration of all the Blacks and Commissioners were appointed as local representatives of the Government, and for the regional administration of its affairs. Two such local Commissioners had their seats in Bopedi: the Commissioner for Sekhukhuneland and the Commissioner for Nebo⁸⁷.

Monnig continues by mentioning the split into a number of groupings of the "once powerful and united Pedi tribe" at the turn of the century⁸⁸. On the issue of labour supply, Monnig observes that many young men became periodic wage-earners outside Bopedi, particularly on the South African mines. And mention is made of an epidemic of East Coast Fever which swept the whole of Bopedi from 1906, which led to the eventual loss of 20 000 head of cattle⁸⁹. This loss resulted, for a time, in the re-introduction of the hoe for tilling the soil instead of ploughing with cattle. Later large numbers of donkeys were brought into Bopedi to replace the cattle as beasts of burden.

As already noted in this essay, there are over a hundred Northern Sotho chiefdoms. Among these, the Bapedi have enjoyed prominence and as a result captured a lot of attention and accumulated an extensive amount of literature. Other Northern Sotho chiefdoms have received scant attention and their accounts are very limited. Few of their accounts appear in the colonial records of the missionaries as well as in the Boer and British administration documents. The extensive studies on these chiefdoms, similar to those of Monnig and Delius on the Bapedi, are very rare. As already noted when discussing the Bapedi, as far as the period 1902 to 1906 was concerned, what was mostly written about was how the Black chiefdoms were administered by the new British Crown Colony government. Focus was on formulating the best "native policies" especially on how the Blacks were to be coerced into working in the mines as unskilled labourers.

The origins and pre-colonial accounts of the other Northern Sotho chiefdoms are traced in ethnological and anthropological works, of which Van Warmelo can perhaps be regarded as having made the greatest contribution by laying

⁸⁷ H.O. Monnig, *The Pedi*, p.35.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.36.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.37.

the foundation. Van Warmelo is also among the authors who wrote specialised works on the non-Bapedi Northern Sotho chiefdoms. In his 1953 ethnological volume⁹⁰, he specifically focused on the Batlokwa and Babirwa. This work has already been discussed earlier in this essay and will not be repeated here.

Other Northern Sotho chiefdoms which received some form of attention were, for example the Balobedu of Rain-Queen Modjadji, Bahananwa of late Chief Malebogo, Bakwena of Moletši and Bakgaga. It is also remarkable that there are a substantial amount of Afrikaans studies on some of the Northern Sotho chiefdoms. These studies are mainly academic theses and dissertations which were undertaken perhaps as a desire by the previous National Party authorities to know more about their Black subjects. Among these Afrikaans works on the Northern Sotho chiefdoms are, L.S. Kruger, Die Makgoba (Magoeba) oorlog: 1894-1895, M.A. Tesis, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1955; C.V. Bothma, Die Verwalskapsbasis van die politieke struktuur van die Bantšhabeleng of Mothopong, D.Phil., Universiteit van Pretoria, 1957; C. Hanekom, Die huidige stand van die tradisionale Godsdienspatroon by die Mamabolo, M.A. Tesis, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1965; P.S. Hattingh, Die probleem van bestaanvoering in 'n beperkte gebied: Die Modjadjilokasie, D.Litt. Proefskrif, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1974; M. Boersema, Die Malopkultus by die Kgaga van Maake, M.A. Tesis, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1984; J.J.C. Botha, Die gesagstruktuur van die Pulana en die funksioneering daarvan op regterrein, Verslag, 1985; and many others.

These works are very useful in that they are academically researched and that they focus on the Northern chiefdoms which were not written about before. However, the main shortcoming of these works is the language factor. The treasures lying in these works will remain untapped and therefore valueless to research students who are not conversant with Afrikaans. Except for this impediment, as already mentioned, these works help to cover the chiefdoms which were neglected in earlier literature.

Among the authors who focused on the Balobedu chiefdom of Modjadji was E.J. Krige. In this 1980 work⁹¹, Krige noted that the Balobedu chiefdom - which is referred to as a kingdom in that study - had the largest influence and was the most stable in the north-eastern Transvaal Lowveld⁹². The fame of the queen was widespread and the Balobedu chiefdom grew not by conquest or by force of arms, "but was built upon the ritual powers of a ruler and the security that this

⁹⁰ N.J. van Warmelo, Die Tlokwa and die Birwa van Noord Transvaal.

⁹¹ E.J. Krige, African techniques of domination and state formation: Their relevance today.

⁹² Ibid. p.5.

afforded in a particular historical period and geographical setting"⁹³.

In addition to this publication, Krige also has other works made on the Balobedu chiefdom: "Property, Cross-Cousin Marriage and Family Cycle among the Lovedu"⁹⁴; "Woman-marriage, with special reference to the Lovedu - its significance for the definition of marriage"⁹⁵; and the "Divine Kingship, Change and Development".⁹⁶ The mystery surrounding the Rain-Queen has undoubtedly resulted in curiosity which led various authors to focus on the Balobedu.

The Bahananwa is another Northern Sotho chiefdom which also received some coverage. The available literature on the Bahananwa is mainly on the chiefdom's war against the Boers in 1894. Much of this literature drew from Christopher Sonntag's diary in which almost all the events of the war were documented. T.J. Makhura, who showed much interest in the Bahananwa chiefdom, wrote extensively on it. In his 1993 thesis⁹⁷ he criticised the traditional White-centric view of the 1894 war and he presented the Hananwa view of the War as an alternative. Makhura's thesis does not fall within the scope of this study because it ends in 1896 while this study focuses on the period 1902 to 1907. However, Makhura's royal genealogy tree of the Bahananwa⁹⁸ shows their chiefs from Chief Motebele, who broke away from Bahurutse around the 16th century. The genealogy runs through to Chief Malebogo who was captured by the Boers in the 1894 war until he was released in 1900, in which he continued to rule the Bahananwa until his death in 1939.

Lizé Kriel made an analysis of the sources of the 1894 war between the Boers and the Bahananwa in her 1997 study⁹⁹. In this work, Kriel reckons that there is a wide range of sources available on the Boer-Bagananwa War¹⁰⁰ - here she is specifically referring to the primary archival sources. For her study, Kriel chose the categories of sources "with highest concentration of relevant information" and she considers Christopher Sonntag's diary as "solid and relatively reliable, but has been discovered fairly recently by researchers "¹⁰¹.

⁹³ E.J. Krige, *African techniques*, p.5.

⁹⁴ R.F. Gray and P.H. Gulliver (eds.), *The Family Estate in Africa*, London, 1964.

⁹⁵ *Africa*, 44, 1974, pp.11-37;

⁹⁶ M. Fortes and S. Patterson, *Studies in African Social Anthropology*, 1976, London.

⁹⁷ T.J. Makhura, *Bagananwa polity in the North-Western Transvaal and the South African Republic, c 1836 - 1896*, M.A. thesis, University of Bophuthatswana, 1993.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. ii.

⁹⁹ L. Kriel, *Die Boer-Hananwa-oorlog van 1894: 'n Bronne-ontleding*, M.A. Tesis, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1997.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.167.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.167.

In his 1979 study¹⁰², P. Becker in one of his chapters, focussed on the Bakwena of Moletšhi, which he says are often mistaken as one of the Bapedi tribes – he claims that they are in fact of the Tswana stock¹⁰³. After this brief look into the origin of the Bakwena, Becker then narrated his 1975 visit to their area. Therefore Becker's study, although focusing on one of the Northern Sotho chiefdoms, says nothing about the period 1902 to 1907.

Hammond-Tooke focused on the Bakgaga chiefdom in his 1981 study¹⁰⁴. This is not a historical study but rather "the study of the cosmological system" which seeks to understand the values and symbols that underlie the Sotho worldview in general, and the Bakgaga in particular.¹⁰⁵ Hammond-Tooke quoted the documents prepared by the Department of Native Affairs officials, including Van Warmelo, in which the four early chiefs of the Bakgaga are mentioned: Mokoni, Mampuru, Mabwakudiša and Molobe¹⁰⁶. Hammond-Tooke observed that the present day Bakgaga only remember as far back as the fifth chief, Monyewede. Mokoni was obviously their legendary figure. Hammond-Tooke's work also does not write anything about the period 1902 to 1907.

As it has already been shown in this essay, the classification, "Northern Sotho" does not refer to a homogenous group with the same origins and historical background. Within the so-called Northern Sotho, there are some communities which are completely non-Sotho, but have either been influenced or totally assimilated by the Northern Sotho. This happened because these non-Sotho communities either sought refuge under the Northern Sotho chiefdoms, were subjugated by the Northern Sotho, or lived closer to the Northern Sotho until they eventually lost their cultures and adopted the ways of life of the Northern Sotho. This process is referred to by some authors as *sothonisation* or *sotho-ization*. For instance, the Bahananwa originated from the present day Botswana and it came to be part of the Northern Sotho. The Balobedu are also of the Venda origin, but they are now one of the Northern Sotho chiefdoms.

The Ndebele of Transvaal perhaps provide a good example of communities which were influenced or assimilated by the Northern Sotho. According to A.O. Jackson¹⁰⁷, the Transvaal Ndebele, who comprise the Northern and Southern Ndebele, entered the Transvaal from the Hlubi of the Natal Nguni linguistic cluster in two migratory streams during the period

¹⁰² P. Becker, Inland tribes of Southern Africa.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.98.

¹⁰⁴ W.D. Hammond-Tooke, Boundaries and Belief: The structure of the Sotho world view.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. xi.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁰⁷ A.O. Jackson, The Ndebele of Langa.

about 1650¹⁰⁸. Jackson's work is undertaken under the auspices of the Ethnological Section of the Department of Co-operation and Development of the South African Government in his capacity as a departmental ethnologist. The Southern Ndebele consists of the Manala and the Ndzunza and did not find themselves as close to the Northern Sotho as did the Northern Ndebele.

According to Botha (et al) there are also three Swazi-originated chiefdoms which have been *sothonised* by living with the Northern Sotho¹⁰⁹. These three, according to the authors, fled from the Swazi King Mswati at the end of the nineteenth century and the Bapedi ruler, Sekhukhune, offered them asylum and accommodation. The three chiefdoms are the Nkosi (Dhlamini) of Shobyane, the Sigawule and the Langa¹¹⁰.

One of the earliest authors to write about this period, referred to as the "reconstruction period", was E.H. Brookes. In his book, The History of Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the present day¹¹¹, published as early as 1924, Brookes looks closely into how the Blacks were governed by successive White governments. He points out that the subject of his book is "the manner in which Europeans have striven to rule the Bantu, since the first date that they came into contact with them".¹¹² By this Brookes justifies his White, Eurocentric perspective. In this study Brookes justifies himself for carrying out a dual role of both a historian and a political scientist. He maintains that there is a very close connection between history and political science and therefore "History without political science has no fruit; political science without history has no root"¹¹³.

Turning to the subject, Brookes observed that it was Lord Milner's hope that a common "Native" Policy should be worked out in all British-controlled colonies before his anticipated federation. It was also felt that the Transvaal, whose policy was rather mixed and inconsistent, should receive some guidance from experts in other colonies. As a result, after the Peace of Vereeniging, which ended the South African War, Milner appointed the SANAC in 1903. Brookes felt that this was one of the most "brilliant" gatherings of the "Native" Administrators ever brought together in South Africa. However, he pointed out its "only defect" as "the inadequate representation" of the Dutch-speaking population¹¹⁴. This further illustrates his Eurocentric perspective since the

¹⁰⁸ A.O. Jackson, The Ndebele of Langa, p. i.

¹⁰⁹ S.J. Botha(et al), A Proposed national development plan, p.175.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.175.

¹¹¹ E. H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the present day, Cape Town, 1924.

¹¹² Ibid, p.2.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.1.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.11.

absence of Blacks on this Commission was apparently not considered by him as a "defect".

In summarising and concluding his work, Brookes takes a political stand. His political pronouncements prevent his thoroughly researched work from being a reliable historical reference as it leaned heavily towards the Whites. He believed that:

[t]he future destiny of Europeans in South Africa is something which must be discussed if the Native problem is to be solved. Europeans have every right to be in Africa, a 'black man's country' and they will always be resident in South Africa.¹¹⁵

Brookes's bias and one-sidedness is emphasised by his reference to "the future destiny of Europeans" vis-à-vis "the Native problem". To him, all that was important was the future destiny of the Whites while the Blacks were only a problem. Brookes also revealed his racist and paternalistic tendencies against Blacks:

We must make it our aim, then, to preserve the independent existence of a pure White race. It is a positive duty to civilise as well as to control, to develop as well as to protect [Blacks]¹¹⁶.

At the end, Brookes made recommendations in which he advocated White supremacy, paternalism for Blacks and racial segregation. These recommendations are in Chapter XXIII and are arranged under six headings: (i) Administrative, (ii) Legal, (iii) Political, (iv) Economic, (v) Cultural, (vi) Social and General¹¹⁷.

Despite the shortcomings of writing from a Eurocentric perspective, Brookes has helped to shed more light on how the Blacks in general were administered under the British colonial authorities. However, there are very few cases in which he mentions the specific chiefdoms by name, such as the Northern Sotho. Therefore, a researcher often has to make deductions and conclusions using other available information.

Brookes's study of 1974, entitled, White rule in South Africa, 1830 - 1910, is almost a replica of his 1924 one, The History of Native Policy in South Africa. Just like the 1924 work, the subject of the 1974 study is still the institutions and how the successive White governments attempted to govern

¹¹⁵ E. H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy, p.502.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.504.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 510-515.

Blacks. The author still repeats what he wrote in his 1924 book by referring to Milner's aims of procuring a federation as well as his hope to formulate a common "native policy" in the British-controlled colonies. The author also reiterates his reference to the formation of the SANAC, its hearings and its 1905 Report in which he still regards the recommendations on land tenure, labour and representation as the most important. He also explains, exactly just like as he did in 1924, why the SANAC produced few results for the South African policy.

It is surprising that Brookes decided to repeat the same content after fifty years (1924 to 1974) and give it a new title. However, in the preface to his 1974 book, he points out that his 1924 work, which he published at "the ripe age of 27", was "ambivalent" and was a "political treatise [which] in general supported, with moderation but not decisively, the doctrine of differentiation or separate development."¹¹⁸ Brookes says that his views changed between 1927 and 1929 and he then recanted his earlier views and began to move "steadily in the direction of a policy of equal rights in a united South Africa"¹¹⁹. He also claims that he did not replace his earlier political view with better ones, but instead "has as far as possible confined himself to an objective history of the period 1830 ... to 1910..."¹²⁰. Brookes's claim that he had "confined himself to an objective history" is definitely not true given the fact that the Blacks in his work were still marginalised. One would have expected the 1974 work to have been "objective" - as he claimed - departing from his early White, Eurocentric perspective. However, his work provides useful background information to the study of Blacks during the period 1902 to 1907.

R.F.A. Hoernlé, in his 1939 work,¹²¹ also dealt with the subject of "Native" policy but he looked at it from a "liberal" perspective and at the same time acknowledges the negative reaction he might receive from his fellow Whites:

For a member of a White group to be concerned about the impact of White domination on non-European population ... is to earn himself the title 'negrophilist', 'kaffir-boetie', or - most scathing of all - 'liberal'¹²².

From his point of view, Hoernlé noted that the fundamental fact in the South African scene was the domination of Whites over Blacks and to maintain that domination was the "deepest

¹¹⁸ E.H. Brookes, White rule in South Africa, 1830 - 1910, p.7.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.7.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.7.

¹²¹ R.F.A. Hoernlé, South African Native Policy and liberal spirit.

¹²² Ibid, p. vii.

aim of South African Native Policy"¹²³. That policy had other aims such as to protect White South Africa against "the Native Danger" - "die donker gevaar" or "die swart gevaar"¹²⁴. Hoernlé concluded his study by analysing the techniques of White domination over Blacks by differentiating that domination into political, educational, economic, social and sexual¹²⁵.

Hoernlé's approach of challenging and exposing the domination of Whites over Blacks was very rare during that period. Most of the writings at that time justified that domination and saw it as a "God-given right", as we have seen with Brookes and Rogers, who also believed that Whites were superior and that they were on a "civilising mission".

As this study focuses mainly on the Transvaal Blacks, Hoernlé's work has minimal relevance in this regard as it generalises the policy of all Blacks in South Africa under the British rule. However, his study is essential in providing information on Blacks during the years between 1902 and 1907.

Among the authors who drew from the official records pertaining to the Blacks in the Transvaal between 1902 and 1907, there were those who emphasised Milner's role in formulating the British policies in South Africa in general, and "native" policy in particular. These authors argue that Milner played a crucial role during the period of reconstruction which followed the South African War, mainly because "he was in a position to influence opinion both in Johannesburg and in London"¹²⁶. For this study, these authors provide background information on the Blacks in general during the administration of Milner who had tremendous influence on the British policy towards Blacks during the period of reconstruction. However, the most striking shortcoming of the works of these authors is their one-sided Eurocentric approach. One such author is eminent historian, S.B. Spies, who in his article entitled, "Reconstruction and unification", maintains that:

Lord Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner for South Africa and the Governor of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, was chiefly responsible for the framing and implementing British policy in South Africa from the war up to April 1905¹²⁷.

¹²³ R.F.A. Hoernlé, South African Native Policy and liberal spirit, p.1.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.1.

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp.2 - 56.

¹²⁶ D. Denoon, A Grand illusion: The failure of imperial policy in the Transvaal Colony during the period reconstruction, 1900-1905, p. xiii.

¹²⁷ C.F.J. Muller(ed.) Five Hundred Years, p.362.

According to Spies, Milner regarded the Transvaal as the key to the southern African problem and one of his first tasks was to repair the ravages of war in the conquered territories. The war had widely dispersed the former inhabitants of various colonies and the problems of repatriation and resettlement were enormous. For the Blacks, the British rule under Milner did not bring any marked social and economic reforms and they were disillusioned as a result. The disillusionment of the Blacks was shown among others, by their reluctance to work in the mines.

Spies continues to emphasise Milner's role by pointing out that he was responsible for the appointment of the SANAC in 1903, "the first attempt to consider the so-called Native question from the point of view of South Africa as a whole"¹²⁸. However, Milner hesitated to take a stand on the race question and in May 1903 he explained why White supremacy should prevail:

One of the strongest arguments why the White man must rule is because that is the only possible means of raising the black man, not to our level of civilisation - which it is doubtful whether he would ever attain - but to a much higher level than that which he at present occupies¹²⁹.

In the subsequent sections of his work, Spies only concentrates on the White issues such as "The Afrikaner revival and reaction against imperialism", "Movement towards the Union", "The National Convention", etc¹³⁰. The issues relating to Blacks are completely neglected in these sections. The only Black issue to be mentioned - in passing - is the Bambata rebellion of 1906 which was sparked by the imposition of poll tax in Natal in 1905. Spies does not refer to the Transvaal Blacks or the Northern Sotho in particular, but rather deals with the Blacks in South Africa in general. The theme of this thesis is therefore located within the broad framework of Spies's work.

In their 1971 study, historians Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson¹³¹ also emphasised Milner's role in influencing the British policy in South Africa in general, and on the Transvaal Blacks in particular. They observed that Milner's ultimate aim was to create a "self-governing White community, supported by well-treated and justly governed black labour from Cape Town to Zambezi"¹³². To achieve that, Milner believed that the Afrikaners had to be swamped and

¹²⁸ C.F.J. Muller(ed.) Five Hundred Years, p.366.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p.366.

¹³⁰ Ibid, pp.366-384.

¹³¹ M. Wilson and L. Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, p.330.

¹³² Ibid, p. 330.

denationalised and then self-government could be granted and all South Africa could be safely joined together in a federal dominion. In the subsequent sections, the authors neglected the issues affecting Blacks by only concentrating on the transfer of power to the responsible governments, conciliation between White groups, and the formation of the Union (by Whites only)¹³³. However, even if the authors neglected most of the issues on Blacks in general - the Transvaal and the Northern Sotho in particular - their work takes into account the perspective of Blacks.

T.R.H. Davenport, in his 1980 study¹³⁴, also emphasises Milner's role. He however points out that the Blacks were effectively cut off from full citizenship during Milner's era. The author argues that Blacks were even worse off in the new colonies than they had been in the old republics before the war. In December 1901 Milner had privately rejected the desirability of political equality with Blacks and only recommended that they should be represented in the legislatures by Whites because they were "low on the Great Chain Of Being"¹³⁵.

As regards Milner's desire to achieve uniformity in "native" policy, and the appointment of the SANAC in 1903, Davenport observes that the SANAC was an almost exclusively English-speaking body. In 1905 it produced a report which formalised the idea of segregation and envisaged the territorial separation of Blacks and Whites as a permanent principle¹³⁶. This is an important observation given the fact that racial and territorial segregation in South Africa had been exclusively blamed on the Afrikaner nationalists for an extensive period of time. Like the other authors who wrote from the a Eurocentric perspective, Davenport merely provides background on the Transvaal Blacks in general, and the Northern Sotho in particular.

While the authors discussed above wrote about the reconstruction period by variously emphasising the British policies on Blacks and their administration, as well as putting emphasis on Milner's role, historian Donald Denoon, on the other hand, investigated why the imperial power in the Transvaal declined from its dominant position of 1902 to its predicament in 1905, in his 1973 study¹³⁷. According to Denoon, one element which explains why imperial power declined was that the two White communities (British and Boers) preferred to run the risk of losing the war, rather than unleash a possible social revolution by mobilising Black

¹³³ M. Wilson and L. Thompson, The Oxford History, pp.333 – 364.

¹³⁴ T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History.

¹³⁵ Ibid, p.207.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.207.

¹³⁷ D. Denoon, A Grand illusion.

allies¹³⁸. Similarly, in the political contest which followed the war, each side preferred the risk of loss to the alternative of enfranchising Black voters. As a result, the British preferred to empower the Boers and that in itself eventually led to the decline of the imperial power in the Transvaal (and the Orange River Colony).

The 1899 – 1902 war, according to Denoon, underlined the interests of all White groups as members of a White community and they agreed in principle that “non-Whites” should not be used in the resolutions of White contests¹³⁹. And there was a substantial agreement that Blacks were a problem and that the solution of this “native problem” should be devised by, and for the White community. The imperial plan affected various communities in the colonies differently.

Denoon shows that while the White racial groups collaborated, Blacks were regarded as inferior and backward vis-à-vis Whites and the latter were given preferential treatment. For instance, one Magistrate in Zoutpansberg stated that “the average Kaffir ... is a highly odorous and dirty savage, with less intelligence than it is possible to conceive...”.¹⁴⁰ Again, the stereotyped notion of inferiority of Blacks was shown when the White farmers in the northern Transvaal instigated a rumour that Blacks were about to rise against them. In that instance, the administration immediately issued arms to the White farmers while Blacks were not armed against a threat of Afrikaner military action¹⁴¹. In another instance, when the director of prisons in the northern Transvaal was found guilty of assaulting an African prisoner, he was only reprimanded, but not dismissed¹⁴².

Denoon also discusses how the White administrators also could not believe that Blacks could benefit from academic instruction. They thought that Blacks were only capable of technical and manual training exclusively. Emphasising that point, Sir Godfrey Lagden, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, said: “A study of physiognomy of the masses shows plainly that [they] lack intellect ... [and gives] the impression of [them] being not unlike baboons”¹⁴³. Lagden then recommended, for the syllabus of Blacks, that their reading be deferred until standard four (by which time most of pupils had left school), and instead of “frills” such as literacy, the pupils would be taught the singing of hymns learned by heart, physical drill, needlework, beadwork, mental arithmetic, and local history and geography read to them by

¹³⁸ D. Denoon, *A Grand illusion*, p. ix.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 98.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 99.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, p. 99.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 100.

the teacher¹⁴⁴. However, even if Denoon's work contains references to a lot of cultural differences and prejudices against the Blacks, it is still essential for research purposes as a source of information on the Transvaal Blacks. These shortcomings are overcome by applying relevant techniques which are meant to determine the credibility of sources.

Denoon concluded his study by commenting on the protests of Blacks - including those of Coloureds and Asians - against the "imperial project". He felt that those protests were neither massive, violent, united nor radical. Blacks were only allowed to hold large assemblies if the Supreme Court permitted. The Transvaal government was even suspicious of organised petitions. Petrus Mpanda's letter to the Rand Daily Mail of 10 June 1904, that the time had come for full racial equality, since the Japanese defeat over the Russians, provided ammunition for the Mail's "Black peril" scare¹⁴⁵. The Editor took up the theme which described "the typical Kaffir as a curse to himself and a nuisance to the community" while pointing to the "disgrace of allowing [Blacks] to walk on pavements", as well as commenting on the government's failure to deal with Blacks who raped White women¹⁴⁶. Black protest was also mounted by the newly formed Transvaal Native Congress which, in 1906 reviewed the achievements of the Crown Colony period, and then concluded that discriminatory legislation had not been modified.

There were those authors who, while writing on the Transvaal Blacks during the period 1902 to 1907, specifically focused on the supply of Black labour to the mines, a factor which they saw as crucial to the British policy makers and authorities, particularly Milner. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido emphasised the theme of Black labour supply in their 1981 article entitled, "Lord Milner and the South African State".¹⁴⁷ In this article they argue that it was within the political economy in which Milner expressed his vision of creating "a self-governing White community ... supported by a well-treated and justly governed labour force from Cape Town to Zambezi"¹⁴⁸. However, the authors "doubt" the precise definition of "well-treated and justly governed".

According to Marks and Trapido, the goal of the British policy in southern Africa - whatever the rhetoric of the war years - had little to do with the granting of political rights to Blacks, or freedom of justice. Imperial goals were rather determined by the interests of imperial ends. The war and the reconstruction which followed it were intended to

¹⁴⁴ D. Denoon, A Grand illusion, p.100.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p.100

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.117.

¹⁴⁷ P. Bonner (ed.), Working papers in Southern African Studies, Vol. II, pp.52 - 98.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.53.

transform the nature of the class structure by hastening the development of a capitalist state, which would be more fully capable of fulfilling the demands of the mining industry¹⁴⁹. Therefore, the labour needs of mines led to the mining industry making important demands upon the state. The Chamber of Mines vigorously pressed the state for labour and the liberal anti-imperialist, J.A. Hobson, even concluded that Britain's aim during and after the war was the "one all-important object of securing a full cheap, regular, submissive supply of Kaffir labour"¹⁵⁰. Although Marks and Trapido generalised about all Blacks in South Africa in their article which focused on labour, the fact that the Blacks in the Transvaal - including the Northern Sotho - became migrant labourers, makes their article relevant to this study.

In his 1967 article¹⁵¹, Denoon explained why there was such a high demand for labour and why there was such a huge shortage of labour in the Transvaal gold mines at the start of the twentieth century. He observed that at the beginning of the reconstruction period, capital and White labour were available in abundance, but unskilled Black labour - "the indispensable base of the industrial pyramid"¹⁵² - was scarce. Denoon then proceeded by advancing some reasons for the shortage of Black labour, although he acknowledged that it is impossible to establish the relative importance of each reason. According to Denoon, it proved very difficult to recruit Blacks after the war because wages were cut during the war, conditions for mine-workers were extremely unpleasant in which the mortality rate was 79.8 per 1000 per annum, and Blacks were able to opt for other employment such as in railway construction, road-building and harbour improvement¹⁵³.

With such a high shortage of Black labour, it was up to Milner to devise some means to rectify the problem. As a result of his appreciation of the importance of the problem, the High Commissioner transferred his office from Cape Town to Pretoria, "to supervise the transformation of an unstable republic into a stable colonial society"¹⁵⁴. J Benyon, in his 1980 study¹⁵⁵, argues that although Milner appointed the SANAC "to treat the 'native' problem on a substantial basis, its approach was affected by the persistent labour crisis, which had partly caused the depression of the post-war years"¹⁵⁶. This view that the SANAC was appointed as a result of the

¹⁴⁹ P. Bonner (ed.), Working papers, p.54.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.68.

¹⁵¹ D. Denoon, "The Transvaal Labour crisis, 1901 - 1906", The Journal of African History, Vol. VIII, No.3, 1967, pp. 481 - 494.

¹⁵² D. Denoon, "The Transvaal Labour crisis, p.481.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.482.

¹⁵⁴ D. Denoon and B. Nyeko, Southern Africa since 1800, p.131.

¹⁵⁵ J. Benyon, Proconsul and paramountcy in South Africa: The High Commission, British supremacy and the sub-continent, 1806 - 1910.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 299.

prevailing labour crisis is strongly advocated by D.R. Burton and will be fully discussed later in this essay.

Because of the labour crisis, Milner continued to look for solutions, with "greater or lesser success"¹⁵⁷. According to Benyon, Milner did not attain the great object which he undertook: a "safely British Transvaal that could serve the core of the local and general imperial union"¹⁵⁸. Despite all the difficulties, one of Milner's attempts to address the labour crisis involved the securing of a huge army of Chinese workers to replace the Blacks who resisted and withheld their services. The controversial importation of Chinese labour was envisaged in the Importation Ordinance of 1904. The arrival of the Chinese undermined the bargaining position of Blacks, whose average monthly salary began to decline, whereas it had steadily increased before¹⁵⁹.

These authors who focused on the supply of Black labour, mostly concentrated on the Transvaal gold mines where the bulk of the labour was made up by the Transvaal Blacks. Therefore, the works of these authors are important sources of information on the Transvaal Blacks, and on the Northern Sotho in particular, as they touched on how the labour system affected those communities.

Another category of authors in the historiography is that of the writers who were government officials who also wrote researched studies. These authors also wrote from a purely White, Eurocentric perspective. One such author was Herbert Rogers who dealt with the issue of "Native" Administration in his 1933 work¹⁶⁰. Rogers's work was a result of a desire by the Government officials - particularly J.F. Herbst, the then Secretary for Native Affairs - to inform the public about the functions of the Department of Native Affairs. Herbst explained this in the preface of Rogers's book, which he wrote in Pretoria, on May 9, 1933:

The general public h[as] only a very limited knowledge of the wide range of functions of the Department of Native Affairs. To give the general public authoritative information on this subject, and to form a valuable vade mecum for officers of the Department in the country districts, I instructed Mr. Howard Rogers, B.A, LLB, one of our young men in the Department ... to prepare the necessary material on the lines followed in this compilation¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁷ P. Bonner, Working papers, p.68.

¹⁵⁸ J. Benyon, Proconsul and paramountcy, p.295.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 295.

¹⁶⁰ H. Rogers, Native Administration in the Union of South Africa.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. vi.

Therefore the subsequent study was made by a government official and was meant to describe the organisational structure as well as the functions of the Department of Native Affairs - the department which was exclusively created to run the day-to-day issues affecting Blacks - for the public. Rogers began by providing background information on the Transvaal - together with other colonies - stating that prior to the Union each had possessed its own Department of Native Affairs with the permanent head, the Secretary for Native Affairs, subordinate to a responsible Minister of the Crown. As already mentioned earlier, the district administration of Blacks fell into the hands of the Native Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners, depending on the density of Black population of each area.

Just like Brookes - and many White authors who wrote on Blacks - Rogers believed that the Europeans were rendering a valuable civilising mission to the Blacks (through the Department of Native Affairs):

The essential function of the Native Affairs Department is to assist, guide and ... protect the ...underdeveloped... inarticulate Native population, which is emerging from barbarism and is in the process faced with the necessity of accommodating itself to a novel and highly complex environment, while at the same time its own tribal organisation, control, discipline, customs and traditions are rapidly and inevitably breaking down with the ever increasing impact of European ways and standards of life¹⁶².

This self-appointment and justification of White domination over Blacks, manifested itself at the very first contact between these racial groups. It obviously originated in Europe because when Europeans came to Africa, they already imagined themselves as having the responsibility to take the Black nations out of "darkness" by smashing their "barbaric" ways of life, as Brookes emphasised:

Much has been done by the White races for Blacks. Undoubtedly it has been a blessing, not a curse, for the Bantu of South Africa that they have gradually come under European control¹⁶³.

This stereotype that the Whites "saved" the Blacks, sharply contrasts with later writings which, as we shall see in this essay, indicate that the Europeans brought nothing, but

¹⁶² H. Rogers, Native Administration, p.17.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p.17.

misery to the Blacks by, for instance, dispossession and assault of the traditional ways of life of Blacks.

Rogers continued to describe the functions of the Department of Native Affairs which entailed the administration of a wide variety of statutes specifically affecting the lives of Blacks, including their acquisition and tenure of land as well as control of their movements in some areas by pass laws. It was also the business of the Department to secure loyalty, confidence and goodwill of the Blacks¹⁶⁴.

On the administration of land of the Blacks, Rogers pointed out that in the Transvaal, prior to the annexation to the British Crown in 1877, no definite locations had been set aside for the Blacks. After the South African War, many questions affecting locations in reference to boundaries, mineral and trading contracts, control, compensation due to private landowners and to missionaries, forced themselves upon the attention of the Crown Colony Government. On 19th August 1905, a Location Commission was appointed, and in May 1907, the Commission submitted final reports dealing with locations throughout the Transvaal and by Executive Council Resolutions, the reports of the Commission were adopted¹⁶⁵.

As regards the Transvaal, Rogers indicates that the Pretoria Convention of 1881 prescribed that the grant or transfer of land should be made to and registered in the name of the Native Location Commission in trust for the natives concerned. The Republican Government subsequently appointed a Superintendent of Natives to become trustee of land for Blacks and according to this arrangement, no Black person could hold land in his name in the Transvaal. This view was, however, exploded by the decision of the Supreme Court in *Ex parte Tsewu* (1905 T.S.C 130) which definitely established the right of individual Blacks to acquire and take transfer of immovable property in the Transvaal. From that date until the passing of the Natives Land Act of 1913, there were no restrictions upon the Blacks to purchase land in the Transvaal, except for minor individual cases¹⁶⁶.

The principle of territorial segregation or separation of land rights between European and Black races in South Africa was, after careful consideration, strongly and almost unanimously advocated by the SANAC, 1903-5. The passing of the Natives Land Act, no. 27 of 1913, was the initial step in the direction of the practical application of that principle¹⁶⁷. But this link between the SANAC and the Act is often missing in most studies.

¹⁶⁴ H. Rogers, Native Administration, p.18.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.119.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.165.

Another government official who produced extensive publications on South African Blacks, and who was already referred to in another context, was Van Warmelo. He was a tireless Government Ethnologist who was said to have used a donkey cart to travel in all Black areas, from Cape Town to Messina, in order to do physical enumeration and studies.¹⁶⁸ His works comprise 29 volumes, on ethnographical studies of Blacks in South Africa, produced during the period spanning from 1930 to 1953. Van Warmelo's volumes which will be referred to in this study, as they are relevant to it, are Number 5, A preliminary survey of Bantu tribes of South Africa (1935), Numbers 10 - 16 which were bound together (1944); Numbers 17 - 22 which were also bound together (1944); Number 27, Taalkart van Suid Afrika/Language map of South Africa (1952); and Die Tlokwa en Birwa van Noord Transvaal (1953). The rest are considered not relevant to the present study as they deal with different subjects and chiefdoms such as the Ndebele, Venda as well as Natal chiefdoms.

The fact that Van Warmelo did a lot of studies as a government official, is very apparent in his work because all his volumes carry an official coat of arms and their covers are boldly captioned: UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE AFFAIRS, ETHNOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS. (Afrikaans ones: UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA, DEPARTMENT VAN NATUTELLESAKE, ETHNOLOGIESE REEKS). All his volumes were printed by the Government Printers in Pretoria while they all carry this designation: By N.J. van Warmelo, Government Ethnologist.

Van Warmelo's most important study was A preliminary survey which serves as an important foundation for the study of Black chiefdoms as it covers almost all of them. The author also made efforts to classify those chiefdoms. This volume will not be discussed here, but will be discussed in full later under the section which deals with specialised works.

Van Warmelo's volumes numbered 10 to 16 were bound together into a single publication in 1944. Each volume concentrates specifically on a certain chiefdom: no.10 = Baletswalo ("Banarene" [Banareng]), no.11 = Batlhabine of Mogoboya, no.12 = "Bakoni" (Bakone) of Maake, no.13 = "Banarene" (Banareng) of Sekororo, no.14 = "Banarene" (Banareng) of Mmutlana, no.15 = Bakone of Mametša, and no.16 = Batubatse of Mašišimale. Under each of these chiefdoms, Van Warmelo discusses the same issues of names of chiefdoms, district, totem (*go bina*) /oath (*moano*) /praise (*sereto*), language, history/genealogy, and sources of information.

The next volumes are numbered 17 to 22 and were also bound together in 1944: no.17 = Bakgatla ba ga Mosetlha, no.18 =

¹⁶⁸ N.J. van Warmelo, A Preliminary survey of the Bantu tribes of South Africa, p.108.

The Ndebele of J. Kekana, no.19 = The Bahwaduba, no.20 = The chiefdoms of the Vryburg district, no.21 = A genealogy of the house of Sekhukhune, and no.22 = History of Ha Makuya. Of all those volumes only numbers 17 and 21 are relevant to this study. These volumes will not be discussed now, rather, their contents will be referred to later in the discussion in the section on specialised works concerning the Bapedi.

The last volume of Van Warmelo was no.29, Die Tlokwa and die Birwa van Noord Transvaal, published in 1953. On the Batlokwa, Van Warmelo noted that it was a Northern Sotho chiefdom which was by then split into those of Bamokgopa and Matok while there were still the Batlokwa which were related to the Batswana and Southern Sotho respectively:

Die Batlokwa van die distrik Pietersburg behoort tot die Noord Sotho. Hulle het vandag twee reserwes, Ramokgopa en Matok (verdraaing van Batlokwa), wat hulle as twee onafhanklike stamme bewoon. Daar is egter ook Batlokwa wat vandag kultureel en taalkundig onder die Tswana en Suid-Sotho val, maar die aard van die verwantskap met hulle is nie meer bekend nie¹⁶⁹.

In his research on the Batlokwa, Van Warmelo visited their area in 1937 and obtained their history, including the genealogies of their previous chiefs. In addition to English and Afrikaans in which this volume is written, there are Sotho texts and the one about the Batlokwa, written in a Tlokwa dialect, was written by Charles Machaba as Van Warmelo says: "Hierdie teks het Charles Machaba van Uitkyk vir my omgesit in die Setlokwa wat vandag in gebruik is"¹⁷⁰. In this Setlokwa text, the writer, Machaba, pointed out that the text is about the Batlokwa who have their totem as *nkwe* (tiger), their chiefdom, their chiefs as well as how mighty God is in changing the people's lives:

Puku [ye ke] ya ditaba tša Batlokwa ba binaho nkwe le dikgosi tša bona le bohosi bja bona...
Homme ka yona ke rata ho bontšha motho yo mongwe le yo mongwe seo Modimo a se diaho pelone ya motho...¹⁷¹ (This book is about the Batlokwa, their chiefs and their chiefdom. Their totem is a tiger. With it I want to show what God can do to a human heart...)

In this narration, Machaba went through the Batlokwa chieftaincy in which he mentioned Mafisa as the first chief because *bakgalabje* (old men) and *direto tša naha* (praises of

¹⁶⁹ N.J. van Warmelo, Die Tlokwa and die Birwa van Noord Transvaal, p.3.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.5.

the chiefdom) all show that¹⁷². The genealogy tree of the Batlokwa chiefs (STABOOM VAN TLOKWA-KAPTEINS)¹⁷³ also indicate Mafisa as the first chief.

The second section of Van Warmelo's 29th volume is on the Babirwa of Tauyatswala. His work is a valuable contribution to the historical writing because the history of the Babirwa, like many other Northern Sotho chiefdoms, is often not extensively documented. Van Warmelo traced the history of the Babirwa up to the present in which most of them are found in the Potgietersrus district. Their totem is a nare (buffalo) and to them *go ila* (avoid) is for *leeba* (dove). Their language on the whole is similar to that of the Bahananwa, indicating their similar historical origin. The Babirwa originated from the vicinity of Tzaneen and they spent some time in the present Botlokwa and then moved to the Bahananwa country in Blauwberg. They later broke into two sections. The first section, known as Ba ha-Motlepa, roamed around Blauwberg and in 1922 they bought Gemarke farm under their leader Tšale. They recognised Malebogo's overlordship. The second section of the Babirwa was led by Chief Ngako (son of Motšhabi) and later Kgobuki became chief. Kgobuki died in 1907 and left his son, Moyahabo Tauyatswala who went to school in Mmakgodu (Kalkbank). Later the Babirwa were offered land on the Mogalakwena River at Steilloop. They were then transported there in 1942. Samson Moyahabo Tauyatswala, the son of Kgobuki who was born in 1901 and became chief in 1926, was still chief in 1953¹⁷⁴.

In addition to the research on the Batlokwa and the Babirwa in this volume, Van Warmelo briefly touches on two other chiefdoms in passing, the Batau of Selwane, Bakgaga of Mothapo and Bakone of Maserumule. He dealt with their histories in short. Despite the shortcomings mentioned already, research on the Blacks would have been hampered without the background information provided by works such as the above-mentioned studies of Van Warmelo.

There were a few authors who were able to write to a larger degree from the perspective of the Blacks. It may be argued that the subjectivity of the authors who chose to write from the perspective of the Blacks, was their attempt to counterbalance the historical writing which had been monopolised by those who wrote from the White perspective. Their bias was deliberate as they wished to express the side of the story which had long been neglected or unfairly written about.

One of the earliest authors to write about the period after the South African War from the perspective of Blacks was S.M.

¹⁷² N.J. van Warmelo, Die Tlokwa en die Birwa, p.5.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p.4.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p.45.

Molema. It is obviously not unexpected that Molema, as a Black himself, would write from his people's perspective as he points out in the preface of his 1920 study¹⁷⁵: "So I have hoped to present to the public some facts about my people, the Bantu. To the member of the governing race, some knowledge of the governed race, their mind and manners, seem necessary. For knowing with whom one has to deal will often decide how to deal"¹⁷⁶. Molema continued by expressing his hope that his book might be an incentive to the Blacks to collect and record history of their own people. Although Molema had already explicitly revealed his subjectivity, he still claims to be objective in his approach: "I have endeavoured to eliminate all conscious bias in one way or the other, and to tell the story as faithfully as I know it"¹⁷⁷.

Molema attacked the pass system imposed on the Transvaal Blacks as "obnoxious ... which is a standing insult to the self-respecting Bantu ... and such is the 'native' policy of the Northern states - repressive and inhumane"¹⁷⁸. He also went on to respond to "the much debated question of whether the Bantu are lazy and indolent people"¹⁷⁹:

But what are the facts as they stand? The gold mines of Johannesburg and the diamond mines of Kimberly are worked by, and depend entirely on the lazy Kafir. The labyrinth of railways throughout South Africa is constructed by him. He it is that tunnels mountains, breaks down the rocks to make roads. In farms he is indispensable. By his help all the cities of South Africa are built... In short as the SANAC put the matter succinctly 'the native supports the whole economic fabric on his despised and dusky back'¹⁸⁰.

Molema also rejected White paternalism as well as the justification for forced labour. He also dismissed claims that the Blacks were saved from extinction by the Europeans who stopped their internecine wars. He again rejected calls that the Blacks should be forced to work in return for "the good services of being protected against foreign invasion and for being educated and civilised by the British"¹⁸¹. To him all "these statements are not unimpeachable, the deduction is false - a most lame and impotent conclusion"¹⁸².

¹⁷⁵ S.M. Molema, The Bantu Present and Past.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. vii.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. viii.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.243.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p.254.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p.254.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.254.

¹⁸² Ibid, p.258.

In justifying his decision to write from the perspective of Blacks, P. Maylam, in his 1986 study¹⁸³, said that:

there are legitimate reasons for adopting a specifically African focus. In many histories of South Africa, with some recent exceptions, Africans have appeared as shadowy figures in the background of the White historical experience. Africans have tended to come into the picture only when they blocked the path of a White expansion or rejected White authority. For the readers of such histories, their perception and knowledge of African history would probably amount to little more than a series of conflicts and confrontations - the Cape eastern frontier wars, the rise of Shaka, the Battle of Blood River, etc¹⁸⁴.

Maylam then declared the intention of his study: "[I]n this history it is the Whites who appear as shadowy background figures, and therefore this book does not purport to be history of South Africa"¹⁸⁵.

R.H. Du Pre who also wrote from the perspective of Blacks, accused the "guilt-ridden" British of denying the Blacks rights in order to "salve their consciousness" by offering "the Afrikaners a generous peace"¹⁸⁶. Du Pre believed that by the 1902 Peace of Vereeniging, the British sacrificed the Blacks "to compensate the Afrikaners" and "to dampen their hostility" and as a result the political and economic price of reconciling the Afrikaner and British was about to be paid by Blacks.¹⁸⁷ Still on the Peace of Vereeniging, Du Pre referred to how the hopes of Blacks were dashed by the failure of the British to bring them economic and political advancement after standing by them during the war. The rejection to enfranchise Blacks was perhaps the most important setback and again the Milner regime came to implement racial policies as were recommended by the SANAC. According to Du Pre, in the Transvaal, Milner's administration had already been putting segregation policy into practice. Here the formal segregation of Blacks in locations was authorised by municipalities in which the Municipalities Ordinance of 1903 denied Blacks the municipal franchise¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸³ P. Maylam, A History of the African people of South Africa: from early Iron Age to the 1970s.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid p. vii.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. vii.

¹⁸⁶ R.H. Du Pre, The making of a racial conflict in South Africa, p.29.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, pp.29-30.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.138.

The most striking relevance of these authors - Molema, Maylam and Du Pre - to this study is that they acknowledged and attempted to address the gap which existed for an extensive period of time by writing from the perspective of Blacks. In their works the Blacks are regarded as having equally participated in the making of South African history. Their works are also important in studying the Blacks as they focus mainly on their ways of life, experiences, etc. Their accounts reflect a better picture of Blacks than the works of those who wrote from a Eurocentric perspective. As they focus on Blacks, the Transvaal chiefdoms, including the Northern Sotho, are covered in their works. This makes their publications very relevant to this thesis.

Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido - who were earlier referred to for having focused on the supply of Black labour - also wrote from the perspective of Blacks. They were mainly concerned with trying to explode the myth of racial superiority and how it influenced the British colonial policies, especially those related to the supply of unskilled, coercible, cheap Black labour. In their 1987 study which they jointly edited¹⁸⁹, they analysed and provided arguments to explain why the whole colonial ideology was based on racial superiority of Europeans vis-à-vis inferiority of Blacks. Focusing on the issues of race, class and nationalism in South Africa, the authors argued that "social Darwinism" and eugenics became legitimating tools after the mineral discoveries. The post-Darwin conception, they continued, that the contest of human races entailed the struggle for existence leading to the survival or dominance of the fittest, became "a late Victorian shibboleth, ... provided a convenient rationalisation for denying political rights to the 'biologically inferior' Blacks"¹⁹⁰. Then "scientific racism" emerged as a fully-fledged colonial ideology in the early twentieth century and it suffused a developing English-speaking South African identity, which assumed that the British were racially superior and therefore had the right to carry on with their imperial mission.

According to Marks and Trapido, one individual who epitomised British "race patriotism" and racial ideology of social control, was Lord Milner. They referred to his speech which he made in Johannesburg in 1903 in which he said that the White man must rule because "he is elevated by many, many steps above the Black man..."¹⁹¹. They also pointed out that it was during Milner's reconstruction period that segregationist policies and future guidelines were consolidated by, among other things: allocation of African reserves and their

¹⁸⁹ S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), The politics of race, class and nationalism in the twentieth century South Africa.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p.7.

limitation; control of urban influx through pass laws; and manipulation of chiefs as agents of colonial state¹⁹².

Marks and Trapido also related Milner's programme to material conditions in South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century. They argued that most of Milner's policies and actions were influenced, to a large extent, by the attempts of the mining industry to wrest vast quantities of unskilled, cheap and coercible labour out of conquered African chiefdoms. This led to the development of an African migrant labour system.

In his article in which the main theme is about agrarian history and society¹⁹³, Trapido focused on material conditions in Transvaal in the early years of the twentieth century, by concentrating specifically on the relationship between landlord and tenant. In this article, Trapido observed that when a landlord rented land to a White farmer, he only did so on conditions that "he retained the right to Kaffers living there"¹⁹⁴. Some examples of this were given: Johannes Rissik, sometime Surveyor-General of the ZAR and later Minister of Lands in Louis Botha's cabinet, was reported to have had 95 Black families on his three farms; Louis Botha told the 1903 Transvaal Labour Commission that before the South African War, he was usually able to call upon the labour of 30 to 35 men; in 1903 the Native Commissioner of Central Division of the Transvaal, H.M. Taberer told the same commission that he thought the White-owned farms in his district had double the number of men that they required¹⁹⁵.

Most of the authors - even those who wrote from the perspective of Blacks - have written about how the Blacks have been governed by the White authorities and how they have been ill-treated, oppressed and dispossessed. However, very little has been said about the reaction of Blacks to how they have been governed and treated by the Whites. Most authors have also pointed out the disillusionment of Blacks after the war, but little has been written about what the Blacks actually did about their predicament. This failure to capture what the Blacks really did about their plight, often gives a wrong impression that the Blacks just meekly accepted everything which was imposed on them by the White authorities. The withholding of their labour after the war - which resulted in the importation of Chinese labour in 1903-4, was one of the indications that the Blacks were constantly aware and were even able to protest against the treatment which they felt was unfair to them.

¹⁹² S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds.), *The politics of race*, p.7.

¹⁹³ S. Trapido, "Landlord and tenant in a colonial economy: The Transvaal 1880 - 1910, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1978, pp. 26 - 58.

¹⁹⁴ S. Trapido, "Landlord and tenant, p.29.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29.

A. Odendaal, in his book with a catchy, Zulu phrase in its title, "Vukani Bantu"¹⁹⁶, which literally means "Wake up, people!" considers how the Blacks reacted to the White policies imposed on them, from a political point of view. The author traces the emergence of Black protest back to the 1902 Peace of Vereeniging which he said was "a rude shock" for the Blacks¹⁹⁷ because their interests were ignored while the Afrikaners were favourably treated. Odendaal argues that at that time Britain needed the Afrikaners as a collaborating group, while Blacks were thought to be powerless and of little real use as a political and economic collaborating group. The failure of the Blacks to attain economic and political advancement led to the disillusionment against which the Black political activity burgeoned in the first few years of the twentieth century. Odendaal shows how a network of political organisations and newspapers emerged throughout all colonies¹⁹⁸.

Odendaal's work's relevance to this study is immense because there are many instances in which he directly refers to the Blacks in the Transvaal. Specific chiefdoms - including the Northern Sotho- are directly dealt with in his work. He pointed out that in the Transvaal, under the new post-war British administration, educated Blacks began to organise themselves into formal political associations to protect their interests and to articulate their views for the first time. Within a few years more organisations had emerged in the Transvaal than in any other colony. He shows that the first organisation to come to the notice of the authorities was the Zoutpansberg Native Vigilance Association which soon broadened its activities and developed into the Transvaal Native Vigilance Association (TNVA). The Zoutpansberg area was mostly populated by the Northern Sotho and therefore the TNVA comprised mainly the Northern Sotho chiefdoms. This makes Odendaal's work more relevant to this thesis. The TNVA was founded during the course of 1902 and it applied for government recognition in December of that year. P.A. Masebe was its first chairman while many of the principal chiefs became members, although the authorities were unwilling to allow the TNVA to call these chiefs together for meetings¹⁹⁹.

According to Odendaal, the TNVA espoused the cause of political and civil rights for every civilised man irrespective of colour, and the full privileges of British citizenship for all. In 1903 the TNVA launched its newspaper, Leihlo la Babatsho (the Eye of the Blacks). However, after a year, it was discovered that the editor, Levi Khomo, had become mentally deranged and had squandered the Association's

¹⁹⁶ A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu: The beginnings of Black protest politics in South Africa to 1912.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p.37.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p.40

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, p.50

hard-earned finances. The paper was forced to close down a few months later²⁰⁰. When Simon "Molisapoli" (probably Modišapudi), Khomo's successor as the Association's Secretary and editor of Leihlo, attempted to convene a meeting to investigate the state of affairs, Sir Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, refused to sanction such a gathering. Lagden later detailed the Native Commissioner of the Northern Division to be watchful of Khomo's political activities and even said of him:

The best way to deal with a mischievous man, if this man be so, is to employ him and I should be glad if you saw your way to give him some kind of work.²⁰¹

Another political organisation, referred to by Odendaal, which reflected the aspirations of the Blacks was the Transvaal Native Congress (TNC) which was established in Johannesburg on 16 May 1903 as the branch of the Cape-based South African Native Congress. Later meetings of the TNC were attended by delegates from throughout the colony stretching as far afield as Pietersburg. The TNC was multi-ethnic in composition and its main aims were to protect and promote the rights of Blacks with regard to the surveying of lands, education and religion, as well as to lay grievances before the authorities and suggesting alternatives to the Government. The TNC was a general organisation which did not only serve specific chiefdoms such as the Northern Sotho. However, it also included the Northern Sotho chiefdoms.²⁰²

According to Odendaal, the most important organisation next to the TNC was the Transvaal Basotho Committee (TBC). In 1904 it was represented before the South African Native Affairs Commission by its chairman, Paulus "Malatye" (probably Malatjie) and eight others. On this occasion, Malatjie, who had been born in the Transvaal and grew up there, called for Blacks to be permitted to own land and complained about the ill-treatment meted to them in Johannesburg, and about taxation and curfew regulations imposed on them. The TBC sought to protect the interests of the Blacks or as it was put in the vernacular, "*go ba monna wa bahlologadi le go ba tatago difofu*" (to be a husband of the widows and father of the blind")²⁰³. The use of this Northern Sotho aphorism and the fact that the TBC was a "Basotho" organisation, suggest that it can be linked to the Northern Sotho and therefore makes it relevant to this thesis.

²⁰⁰ A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, p.50.

²⁰¹ Ibid, p.51.

²⁰² Ibid, pp.51 – 52.

²⁰³ Ibid, p.51.

Odendaal also focuses on another organisation, Iliso Lomzi (Transvaal Native Landowners' Association) which consisted of Edward Tsewu, moderator of Independent Presbyterian Church, and some leading members such as Tyesi Gunuza, D.H. Hlati and James Ngubane²⁰⁴. Tsewu achieved prominence in 1905 when he successfully brought a court suit against the Registrar of Deeds on the question of African land rights. The judgement decided that the relevant Republican legislation was invalid and that there were no legal impediments to prevent the registration of property in the name of Blacks in the Transvaal²⁰⁵. The court decision was a triumph for Blacks.

Odendaal also discusses other Black organisations in the Transvaal such as the Bapedi Union and the African Political Society. The former was established by one of the main Northern Sotho chiefdoms, the Bapedi. These bodies all resented the inferior status of Blacks and they persisted in trying to alleviate their position. They expressed grievances on wide-ranging issues such as taxation, passes, education, religion, trading rights, labour, land tenure, travelling on railways, ill-treatment in towns where they were prohibited to use pavements and tram cars, and lack of protection against physical abuse²⁰⁶.

From Odendaal's account it appears that on the whole the government was tolerant towards the development of Black associations. Often grievances submitted by these bodies were passed on to relevant departments for consideration and representations were sometimes replied to in great detail. However, in the final analysis, although the organisations were tolerated, their demands went largely unheeded.

According to Odendaal, on 6 December 1906 the Letters Patent were issued by an order-in-council in which Transvaal was granted responsible government. This move spurred the Black political organisations to protest and a massive petition was forwarded to the British government in April 1905 by the United Native Political Associations - a grouping of all Black political organisations in the Transvaal. The petition referred to the deterioration in the position and status of Blacks since the British occupation and it was signed by no less than 46 chiefs and 25 738 other people²⁰⁷. However, Lagden played down the strength of the feeling that existed. Here Odendaal, more than any other author referred to thus far, deals with the manifestation of Black protest against White authority. This is a significant observation made by an author who wrote from the perspective of Blacks.

²⁰⁴ A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, p.53.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p.53.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, pp.74 - 75.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p.72.

During this period of protests by Blacks, another organisation was formed in 1906, the African National Political Union (ANPU). One of its aims was to unite all Blacks into one body, socially and politically. The ANPU was led by Sefaka Mapogo Makgatho, who later became President General of the African National Congress from 1917 to 1924. The ANPU was soon active throughout the Transvaal, and its strongholds were at Mphahlele's Location near Pietersburg where Makgatho, son of a chief, was born and in Pretoria, where he and the Secretary of ANPU, Phillip Maeta, were attached to the teaching staff of the Kilnerton Institution, run by the Wesleyan Methodist Church.²⁰⁸ Besides Chief Mphahlele, many other chiefs in the northern Transvaal became members. These included Chiefs Sehkukhune, Matlala, Kekana, Dinkwanyane and Phaswane,²⁰⁹ who mostly represented Northern Sotho chiefdoms. Makgatho, who spent three years studying in England before teaching at Kilnerton between 1887 and 1906, was also founder of the Transvaal Teachers' Association which became one of the strongest Black organisations in the country.

By mid-1907, according to Odendaal, while there was a growing spirit of "South Africanism" in which unification of British colonies was contemplated, the idea of Black political unity was also taking shape. The programmes of some Black organisations embodied aims for a broad unity among Blacks. The main organisations in the Transvaal had joined forces in 1905 and 1906 - in the form of United Native Political Associations - in order to petition the Imperial Government in connection with the granting of a responsible government. This spirit of unity among Black political organisations culminated in the formation of a national body in 1912, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) - renamed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923. This happened after the Blacks were formally left out of the political mainstream when the Whites-only Union of South Africa was established in 1910. Odendaal shows how the Blacks were beginning to organise and unite in reaction to what they viewed as White domination.

As already pointed out, the authors who wrote from the perspective of Blacks are directly relevant to this study because they provide information on Blacks that was hitherto neglected. The common sources of error, such as cultural differences and prejudice against Blacks, do not appear in these works as much as they do in those written from a Eurocentric perspective. These works make it easier for any research on Blacks, including those in the Transvaal, because they correct most of the distortions, myths and stereotypes which had been created by Eurocentric writings, particularly

²⁰⁸ A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, p.75.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.75.

those of the early travellers and missionaries as well as numerous other secondary works.

3. OFFICIAL RECORDS.

3.1. Commissioners' Reports.

3.1.1. Records from the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs.

There is an extensive amount of records produced by the office of the Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs. Most of the records are correspondences which were made between this office and the junior commissioners in various districts. There are also records which were produced by this office which were correspondences with other departments, as well as periodical and annual reports made by this office. These records do not deal specifically with the main focus of this essay, the Northern Sotho chiefdoms. They rather refer to the Blacks in the Transvaal in general. However, these records are included in this essay because they form the basis for an understanding of the subsequent reports made by other junior commissioners specifically on the Northern Sotho. They are important to the reader to obtain a background understanding of the running of the affairs affecting Blacks under the Transvaal Native Affairs Department. For the reader to have a clear understanding of the demarcation of the Transvaal (for the purpose of the administration of Blacks), division of duties among senior and junior commissioners, as well as how various commissioners compiled their records, it is necessary to systematically begin by looking at the general records from the headquarters, and then logically proceed to the records at districts (divisions) which were occupied by the Northern Sotho. Those divisions were Northern, North-Western and Eastern.

The question of the administration of Blacks was one of the big challenges which faced the new British colonial government, after the Anglo-Boer War. Consequently, a specific department was established to deal exclusively with "native" issues, i.e., the Department of Native Affairs. This department had a Secretary who was a permanent head, while the Commissioner for Native Affairs acted as an administrative head. The first Commissioner for Native Affairs in the Transvaal was Sir Godfrey Lagden, with W. Windham as Secretary. For the purpose of the administration of Blacks, the Transvaal was divided in 1902 into five districts (divisions), viz., Eastern, Northern, North-Western, Western and Central. In this essay, focus will be on the first three divisions as they were occupied by the Northern Sotho. Each division was headed by a representative of the Department working under the Native Commissioner,

i.e., District Commissioners who were assisted by Sub-Native Commissioners.²¹⁰

Lagden was appointed by the British High Commissioner, Lord Alfred Milner, in 1901. He was directly accountable to the High Commissioner with whom he corresponded and made periodical as well as annual reports. Following in this discussion will be an assessment of records from the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs during the period 1902 to 1907. In all those records, the issues which the Commissioner for Native Affairs focused on included: the state of Blacks; land; disarmament; taxation; liquor traffic; police; labour; education; social customs; and many other issues on Blacks.

In order to assess these records, it is necessary to examine who the authors were, the conditions under which they produced such records, as well as the various purposes of their records. The records in the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs were mostly made by the Commissioner for Native Affairs and the Secretary. As the first Commissioner for Native Affairs of the Transvaal, the main thrust of Lagden's task was to ensure that the new British colonial government had full control over the Blacks. Although Lagden was a European, he had the ability to report on Blacks because, according to E.H. Hogge, the District Commissioner in the Eastern Division in 1903, he (Lagden) was experienced in dealing with "native" issues and had a wide knowledge in that regard.²¹¹ In addition to his familiarity with the subject matter, Lagden was well educated and was thus in a good position to make reliable records. Besides schooling in Britain and serving as a clerk in the postal service in that country, Lagden also served in various administrative positions in South Africa where he settled in 1878. He was given a clerical post in the Transvaal administration before becoming private secretary to the administrator, Sir W. Owen Lanyon and in 1884 he became government secretary.²¹² He was a capable man and as a result "[t]he success of his works induced Lord Milner to consider Lagden as a possible lieutenant-governor for Orange River Colony, before appointing him commissioner of 'native' affairs in the Transvaal in September 1901".²¹³ His capabilities also saw him becoming chairman of the 1903-1905 SANAC. He wrote in English which was his mother tongue and therefore language did not create any difficulty in understanding the records he made.

However, there is at least one aspect which jeopardises Lagden's records from being totally reliable: distance. Most

²¹⁰ British War Office, The Native Tribes of the Transvaal, London, 1905, p.94.

²¹¹ Report by the Eastern District Commissioner, Pietersburg, 1903, p.110.

²¹² J.D. Denoon, "Sir Godfrey Yeatman Lagden", In Human Sciences Research Council, Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol. 1, p.457.

²¹³ Ibid, p.457.

of the time he was stationed in his offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria and was therefore detached from the events of his subject matter: the Blacks. This means that most of the records produced from his office were based on second-hand information which he got from his subordinates, the District Commissioners and the Sub-Native Commissioners. And he was thus heavily dependent on the quality of observing and reporting of these officials. Also, according to the principle of internal criticism, information which is passed on through more than one hand, is likely to be distorted by those who handle it.²¹⁴ Therefore when using such records as sources of information, such limitations should be taken into consideration.

Lagden was appointed as Commissioner for Native Affairs of the Transvaal when things were still chaotic as a result of the Anglo-Boer War. There was relatively little law and order and the Blacks were scattered and confused. As could be expected, the records from his office mainly reflect his intention to resettle them. As a government official and the head of the Department of Native Affairs, he had to implement government policies and also had to ensure that the responsibilities entrusted to him and his department were carried out. However, the duties of the Commissioner for Native Affairs were made difficult by the fact that the previous ZAR government left few district records, and the records at the headquarters were scattered and confused. This is another factor which also made Lagden's records relatively unreliable.

As a head of the department and as a leader, Lagden often motivated his subordinate officers by praising them. This is often evident in his correspondence with them. He constantly encouraged the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners on "their challenging duty of 'native' administration" and even referred to them as "the backbone of the administration of the affairs affecting the 'natives' of this colony."²¹⁵ Therefore, when assessing records from his office as sources of information, it must always be borne in mind that they are sometimes consciously written to encourage his subordinates.

In his reports - periodical and annual - referring to how the Blacks reacted to government policies, for instance on disarmament, taxation, the Black police, census, etc, the Commissioner for Native Affairs showed his quest to implement his mandated duties. According to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, Blacks were disarmed following the proclamation of Ordinance No.13 of 1902 and compensation was given for weapons handed in. On taxation it was reported that the

²¹⁴ R.J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method*, p.152.

²¹⁵ *Annual Report of the Transvaal Native Commissioner*, Pretoria, 1903, p.92.

collection of taxes was postponed until 1 April 1903 and the support of the chiefs was sought in order to help preparing Blacks to pay taxes.²¹⁶ The Commissioner for Native Affairs emphasised the value of the Black police whom he said were the messengers who acted as channels of communication between the officials and the Black communities. They were also valuable to the government as they executed warrants, aided in the preservation of game, escorted prisoners and carried out other duties. According to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, census for the Black population was scheduled for April 1904 but provisional enumeration of Blacks had been carried out during the tax collection and approximate figures were found: men 144,146(24%); women 156,272(26%); and children 305,248(50%) - Total:605,666²¹⁷

All this information and statistics reveal that these reports were compiled by a government official who was eager to show how competent he was in carrying out his given tasks. With his reports the Commissioner for Native Affairs also wanted to impress his authorities by showing them that he was fully executing his duties as expected, hence he emphasised how he meticulously dealt with issues such as disarmament, taxation, Black police and census. Therefore when using his reports as sources of information on Blacks, the intent(purpose)of those documents should be kept in mind.

In his 1904 report which was specifically on land acquisition by Blacks²¹⁸, the Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs began by briefly outlining the situation in which the Blacks found themselves after the Anglo-Boer War, particularly with regard to their land occupation. He pointed out that there was confusion among Blacks and this prompted the appointment of Native Commissioners who "received instructions to inquire into the past history, distribution and general condition of 'Natives' and to furnish information with regard to the location of various chiefdoms and to the lands in their occupation".²¹⁹ The difficulty in this undertaking, Lagden noted, was enhanced by the fact that practically no district records had been left by the previous ZAR government and the "records at headquarters were neither systematically preserved nor complete, such as there were being scattered and confused".²²⁰ The scarcity and confused manner of those records, render them to be less reliable sources of information on the Transvaal Blacks. However, in spite of these limitations, the Department of Native Affairs, according to Lagden, helped to facilitate the work of those commissioners by - among other things - compiling a

²¹⁶ Annual Report of the Transvaal Native Commissioner, 1903, p.93.

²¹⁷ Ibid, p.95.

²¹⁸ Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs relative to the Acquisition and Tenure of Land by Natives in the Transvaal, 1904.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p.2.

²²⁰ Ibid, p.2.

memorandum on the subject of land acquired by Blacks during the period 1836 and 1899, as well as drawing a map showing the lands principally occupied by the Blacks throughout the Transvaal colony. But these documents were "created" by the Department with the sole purpose of facilitating what was required at that time, i.e., more information on Blacks. Therefore, this also affects the value of such information.

In this report Lagden briefly described the general terms of occupation of land by Blacks in the Transvaal under the following subheadings: Farm Tenancy (in which Blacks were tenants on farms occupied by Europeans as arranged with the owner); Crown Lands (in which the Government as land lord is paid annual rent of one pound); Government Locations (where location lands are held by Government in Trust); Land owned by Blacks (in which the title of such property is vested in the Commissioner for Native Affairs in trust for owners); and Undefined Locations on Private Land (in which this land is mostly owned by large companies, hiring Blacks).²²¹ Lagden's feeling was that this form of land occupation should not be disturbed as that "would tend to place a good deal of land out of cultivation [and would also] drive away across our borders very many people who contribute to the labour supply".²²² However, he acknowledged the lack of a universal and uniform land tenure system in the South African colonies.

Although Lagden felt he did not want to pre-empt the investigations of the 1903 Inter-Colonial Native Affairs Commission, he, however, had a "few vital principles to which [he] desire[d] unreservedly to commit [him]self". He expressed his views about the land tenure for Blacks in which, as a government official who was working for stability and good governance, advocated ideas which would help to calm down the Blacks and therefore make them easily governable. He criticised the previous ZAR policy which was meant to "scatter" the Blacks. He also referred to the Anglo-Boer War as having been responsible for disturbing the occupation of land by Blacks. His quest for good governance - as a government official - is emphasised by his assertion that if:

a population be driven from pillar to post, with no fixity of tenure, ... it must always be a menace to peace of the country and be detrimental to its best interests.²²³

For these reasons Lagden advocated the settlement of Blacks which would give them a sense of security. Lagden's sense of keeping peace was not new, and it could be said that it grew in him when he was working among the Basotho before 1885 because it is said that:

²²¹ Report on the Acquisition of Land pp.4-5.

²²² Ibid., p.5.

²²³ Ibid., p.6.

he developed a considerable aptitude for reserving the precarious peace in Basutoland [while] in 1897 he also performed a delicate task of persuading Moiketsi to surrender and submit for trial, without recourse to arms.²²⁴

His quest to preserve peace among the Blacks sounded as if he had their welfare and interests at heart. However, these humane ideas sharply contrasted with his statement that "[i]t should be the policy of the Government to facilitate ... and promote the best relations between master [Europeans] and servants[Blacks]".²²⁵ This means that when he called for a peaceful settlement of Blacks on land, that was purely for pragmatic considerations of a ruler who only wanted stability and peace, not human rights such as equality between Blacks and Europeans. Lagden also felt that it was "neither useful nor reasonable that 'Natives' should be endowed with land in such quantity and on such terms as [to]enable them to live at leisure".²²⁶ What the Commissioner for Native Affairs recommended was a system of individual land tenure. Again here he did this for pragmatic reasons as a government official because he disregarded the communal tenure system which was a traditional way of life of Blacks. Besides pragmatism, the element of cultural difference - Lagden was a European - was another factor which influenced his judgement in opting for the individual tenure system rather than the communal one.

This report on the acquisition and tenure of land by Blacks in the Transvaal, besides Lagden's observations and recommendations, had also appendices attached to it. The first appendix is the Memorandum on the subject of land acquired and occupied by Natives during the period, 1836 - 1899.²²⁷ As the date of this appendix indicates, it is outside the scope of this essay because it deals with the acquisition of land by Blacks prior to the end of the nineteenth century. However, it provides background knowledge on how land was previously occupied by the Blacks in the Transvaal from the early 1880s, through the ZAR period to the period of the British occupation, until the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century.

The next appendices are a Map of the Transvaal: Government locations as actually established and an Index key to that map.²²⁸ The map shows almost all locations which were occupied by Blacks and the key to that map is divided into four horizontal columns: District and Location, Number of Farms;

²²⁴ J.D. Denoon, Dictionary of South African Biography, p.457.

²²⁵ Report on Acquisition of Land, p.7.

²²⁶ Ibid, p.7.

²²⁷ Ibid, p.11.

²²⁸ Ibid, p.79.

Name of Farm; and Extent of Farm included in Location. The categorisation in the index is not consistent because sometimes the word "Division" is used while it sometimes overlaps with "District". For instance the reader is confused by this inconsistent sequence under the column, District and Location: NORTHERN DIVISION, LYDENBURG DISTRICT, MIDDELBURG DISTRICT, CENTRAL DIVISION, LICHTENBURG DISTRICT, WESTERN DIVISION and WATERBERG DISTRICT.²²⁹ This confusion is compounded by the fact that the names of locations (e.g., Sekhukhuneland, Phokwane, etc.) are sometimes mixed with names of chiefs (e.g. Hendrik Bakenberg, Hans Masebe, Valtyn Makapan, Zebediela, etc.,) under the same column.²³⁰ This leads to uncertainty as to whether the name is of a locality, chiefdom or a chief!

Another appendix - List of farms held in trust by the Commissioner for Native Affairs, of which title deeds are filed in this office²³¹ - gives only names of farms without classifying them under "districts" or "divisions". With the name of the chief and the "tribe", it is easy to deduce whether the land was occupied by a Northern Sotho chiefdom or not. For instance, one can certainly say that the farm, Doornvlei, was occupied by the Northern Sotho because the name of the chief against it is Mphahlele while the "tribe" is Bapedi. The last two appendices attached to this report are Lists of farms held for "natives" in trust, the title deeds of which have not been received at this office; and List of farms held for "natives" in trust by missionaries, of which title deeds are filed in this office. These two appendices are more or less similar to the fourth one in content and structure.

The names of most of the divisions, districts, locations and farms in this report are in Dutch. This is because most of the allocation of land to the Blacks took place mainly during ZAR rule. For instance, Zoutpansberg, Waterberg, etc. (divisions); Pietersburg, Spelonken, Blauwberg, etc. (districts); Bloubel, Diepkloof, Vygeboomspruit, Welgevonden, (farms) etc.²³² There is hardly any farm which bore an African name. Where an attempt to use an African name was made, that name carries with it a European suffix or prefix: Matjieskraal (Matši's kraal), Magaliesberg (Mogale's mountain), Magobaskloof (Makgoba's kloof)²³³, etc. Where African names are used, they are mostly misspelled. This occurred mainly with the names of chiefs and chiefdoms: "Sekukuni" (Sekhukhune), "Sekopo" (Sekgopo), and "Ramagupa" (Ramokgopa)²³⁴. The problem regarding language in this

²²⁹ Report on Acquisition of land, p.79.

²³⁰ Ibid., p.79.

²³¹ Ibid., p.96.

²³² Ibid., p.86.

²³³ Ibid., p.88.

²³⁴ Ibid., pp. 54 - 57.

report, may confuse the readers and researchers who are not familiar with the African languages. But these misspellings are not unexpected because those who gave and wrote these names were strangers to the African languages. However, in spite of these language problems, this report is still an important source of information on the Blacks.

The above-discussed reports, which were made by the Commissioner for Native Affairs, also reflected his intention to be as cautious and tactful as possible on the issues affecting Blacks. As sources of information on their projects, researchers must view the Commissioner for Native Affairs' reports as having been written to show how he could best administer the Blacks. He also appeared to have been prepared to appease the Blacks, but more as a tactic than a genuine intention of addressing their plight. He warned that:

the 'native' population is a large one and sensitive to violent changes. It therefore required to be managed by men who understand them and who are sympathetic, otherwise trouble may be expected.²³⁵

This tactful and appeasing approach in return for stability and good governance, is also revealed by his support of the idea that the Blacks be compensated for the losses they sustained in military operations in the Transvaal, during the Anglo-Boer War. He was also against the labour recruiting methods which exploited the Blacks, especially in the mines.

Common sources of error which might be committed by a witness or author of a document include ignorance, bias and cultural difference.²³⁶ All these make evidence one-sided (subjective). Some of these common sources of error are found in these reports made by the Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs between 1902 and 1906. On the issue of education, for example, the Native Commissioner was biased in favour of his government as he insisted that education of Blacks be put under government control. Black education was hitherto run by the missionaries and he argued that for the effective provision of education for Blacks, that should be the task that should be under state supervision.

As the Transvaal colonial government was British, the Native Commissioner also showed bias by advocating a government policy in education in which English would be used in simple arithmetic and other elementary subjects. Each Black school sponsored by government should be under a White missionary or other European person recognised by government as competent. Government-aided school syllabi should conform and satisfy

²³⁵ Annual Report, 1903, p.95.

²³⁶ R.J. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.155.

the government inspector. This kind of bias is not unexpected because there was no way a government official could take an opposite line against the government he/she is serving. This should however be noted by those using these documents as sources of information.

The Commissioner for Native Affairs showed a lot of prejudice and cultural ignorance in his reports, particularly on the issues of traditional, social and moral customs of Blacks. He was completely negative about their traditional way of life, particularly, polygamy and payment of dowry in marriage ("lobola" in Nguni and "magadi" in Sotho). Instead of acknowledging and appreciating that it was the way these people lived and they were content with that, the Commissioner for Native Affairs felt that the Blacks lived a "heathen", "barbaric" and "savage life". As a European with different belief systems, customs and values, the Commissioner for Native Affairs expectedly made such subjective judgements, whereby anything different from his own culture, was wrong. He then expressed the hope that the "heathen" customs would be slowly destroyed by education and Christianity. He also recommended that traditional marriages of Blacks should not be recognised unless they were solemnised by a Christian minister or were officially registered.

The common source of error of cultural difference in the Commissioner for Native Affairs' reports was compounded by his prejudice against some of the ways of life of Blacks. He maintained that their agricultural methods were backward and that as a "lower race", the Blacks should realise their true position, and the Whites, as a "higher race", should recognise their obligations to the "lower race".²³⁷ According to the colonial law, the Blacks were also not allowed to buy spirituous liquor and in his view "their habits, housing, mode of living and general intelligence [were] inferior."²³⁸ The Commissioner for Native Affairs' superiority complex drove him to conclude that the Blacks should be saved from their "savagery" and "barbarism". This is a marked characteristic of the writings of most of the early Europeans who came into contact with the Blacks. This was undoubtedly the foundation upon which the whole notion of White supremacy was founded. However, through the principle of internal criticism, such common sources of error, committed by the composer of a document, can be exposed.

In addition to the reports, there is also an extensive amount of correspondence from the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs. Most of the correspondence is found in the South African State Archives and it is mostly unpublished. In

²³⁷ Annual Report, 1903, p.98.

²³⁸ Annual Report, 1902, p.9.

the Archives such records are massive but are systematically arranged to be easily used by researchers and any other interested members of the public. There are various sources from where the Commissioner for Native Affairs' records were obtained, e.g., the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), Law Department (LD), Public Works Department (PWD), Executive Council (EC) and the Governor (G). It must be pointed out from the outset that the vastness of the records in these sources becomes a huge job when trying to retrieve information from them. Another problem about collecting information from records in these sources is that some files are missing and this is clearly acknowledged in such sources. The missing of some files creates gaps which are difficult to fill. Again most of the documents in the Archives are old and fragile while some records appear in illegible handwritings, some with misspellings, particularly African names. These are some of the handicaps faced by researchers trying to collect information from official records pertaining to Blacks.

As already mentioned earlier, most of the correspondence from the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs was made between this office and other departments. All correspondence of this office is done through the Secretary of Native Affairs and as a result, all in-coming correspondence is addressed to him while the out-going ones have his signature appended. There is an extensive amount of correspondence from other departments made during the period under discussion (1902-1907) and therefore only a few examples will be discussed. The correspondence from other departments to the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs was mainly about the day to day issues affecting the Blacks, and very often, one subject would involve a huge amount of correspondence to and from the office. For instance, the issue of raising "native wages" took a lot of letters and notices between the Department of Public Works and the Commissioner for Native Affairs' office before it was exhaustively concluded²³⁹. Regarding this issue, the Department of Public Works was concerned that it was losing Black labourers due to low wages, and therefore recommended increases. However, the Secretary of Native Affairs declined to approve such increases.

Correspondence regarding the amalgamation of the office of the Sub-Native Commissioner and that of the Resident Magistrate, was another example in which the Secretary of Native Affairs exchanged letters and notices with the Law Department²⁴⁰. According to the bulk of records on this

²³⁹ TAB(Transvaal Archives Depot) SNA(Secretary of Native Affairs) 59 NA2072/ 02, Part 1, Director of Public Works. Suggestion to raise wages in Department of Public Works, 08 - 10 - 1902.

²⁴⁰ TAB, SNA 512 NAC6/ 04, Part 7, Secretary of Native Affairs. Correspondence with Law Department: Amalgamation of Sub- Native Commissioner's office with that of Resident Magistrate, 23 - 04 - 1904 to 17 - 05 - 1904.

matter, most of the Sub-Native Commissioners were retrenched as they handed their jobs to the Magistrates. Another example of lengthy correspondence was in connection with the Ministers of the Bapedi Lutheran Church who paid their respect visit to Sir Godfrey Lagden, Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs²⁴¹. These Ministers, Martinus Sebushane, Johannes Madingwane, Johannes Rakganye, Joseas Mogadime, Jacobus Mokgabudi, Samuel Mabuse, Thomas Selepe and Elias Nkwane²⁴², met Lagden in Johannesburg. One of them, Madingwane, produced a letter from the Reverend J.S. Winter, authorising him to purchase six bottles of wine for sacramental purposes while Selepe could not purchase the wine as he did not have the approval letter. Later Lagden, through the Secretary, confirmed meeting the Ministers.

When assessing such correspondence between the Secretary of Native Affairs and when using it as a source of information on Blacks, it should always be born in mind that the officials in the Department of Native Affairs were entrusted with the duty of running the day to day affairs of Blacks. Therefore when corresponding with other departments, those officials ensured that the issues concerning Blacks were addressed according to the government policy guidelines. The Secretary, as the senior official in the Department, was responsible for implementing government's "native policies" and therefore all these correspondences from his office should be assessed in that context.

Another important point to be taken into consideration when assessing the records accumulated in the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, was that this office was at the top of all the matters concerning administration of Blacks. Although the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners were on the ground dealing with the day to day matters which affected the Blacks, they had to refer to the Commissioner for Native Affairs before taking important decisions. In some instances, the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs would overrule the junior commissioners - and in most cases other departments' decisions were overturned.

One example in which the Native Commissioner demonstrated his power over the matters affecting the Blacks was when the District Commissioner of the Northern Division, C.A. Wheelright, expressed his concern about the Native Vigilance Association led by Levi Khomo. Wheelright asked Lagden to authorise the prohibition of the meetings of this organisation alleging that it incited Blacks into disobedience, citing Khomo's letter which he sent to Lagden.

²⁴¹ TAB, SNA 170 NA2108/ 03, Part 1, Ministers of the Bapedi Lutheran Church called to pay their respect to Sir Godfrey Lagden, 1903.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 35.

However, in a reply contained in the Minute Paper No. 937 of 1903²⁴³, Lagden, through Secretary Windham, stated that he found "nothing seditious" in Khomo's letter and that Wheelright should rather employ Khomo if he found him to be mischievous²⁴⁴. Lagden saw no problem in the meetings of the Native Vigilance Association, thereby overruling his junior commissioner, Wheelright, who had contemplated a ban on such meetings. When the District Commissioner of the Northern Division refused to allow a meeting of the Native Vigilance Association, the organisation petitioned straight to the Commissioner for Native Affairs. Lagden, through the Secretary, responded by instructing Wheelright to allow such a meeting²⁴⁵. That meeting did indeed take place, and according to the official detectives who were sent to keep an eye on the proceedings, the meeting was peaceful.

Again the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs showed its power when the Sub-Native Commissioner of Schonoord in the Eastern Division, Mr. Harries, refused to give Chief Sekhukhune permission to travel to Kimberly. Harries alleged that the chief would incite people there and cause trouble in the mine compounds. However, Lagden rescinded that decision and allowed Chief Sekhukhune to travel to Kimberly. Later the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs expressed satisfaction after Chief Sekhukhune's visit had no negative effects. However, Resident Magistrate of Lydenburg, in a letter dated 20 April 1906²⁴⁶, expressed concern that such a veto by Lagden's office would "have a bad effect on the native mind and tend to weaken the authority of the Sub-Native Commissioner"²⁴⁷.

All these examples show the power relations of the Commissioner for Native Affairs vis-à-vis other departments and the junior commissioners in the districts. Therefore when using the records from the office of the Commissioner for Native affairs as sources, we have to realise that we would be dealing with the information which accumulated in the highest authority over the issues affecting Blacks. Later in this essay, focus will be on the records of the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners in which the question of power relations between the offices which produced them, will also be looked into.

Despite all the limitations discussed thus far, the records produced from the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs of the Transvaal, between 1902 and 1907, remain important sources of information on the Blacks. They shed light on the history of the Blacks during that period, but,

²⁴³ TAB, SNA 124, NA937/ 03, The Secretary of Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 17 - 04 - 1903.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 154.

²⁴⁵ TAB, SNA 254, NA459/ 05, Lieutenant-Governor's office, Pretoria, 17 - 05 - 1905.

²⁴⁶ TAB, SNA 321 NA1383/ 06, Office of the Resident Magistrate, Lydenburg, 20 - 04 - 1906.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 141.

as already shown, the evidence in these reports should be critically assessed to determine its credibility.

3.1.2. Records made by the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners.

As already mentioned, the Transvaal was divided into five districts (divisions) for the purpose of the administration of Blacks. Each division was headed by a District Commissioner who was assisted by a number of Sub-Native Commissioners, depending on the vastness of the area and the number of Blacks which lived there. The Northern Sotho did not occupy all five divisions of the Transvaal. They were mostly found in the Northern, North-Western and Eastern Divisions. In this section assessment will be made of records of the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners in the divisions occupied by the Northern Sotho between 1902 and 1907. An attempt will be made to refer to specific Northern Sotho chiefdoms, but this is hampered by the fact that the records usually did not refer to specific chiefdoms, but just dealt with Blacks in general. Therefore, by using knowledge of where different chiefdoms lived during the period under discussion, deductions are made as to which chiefdoms are being referred to in the various commissioners' records.

The District Commissioners were directly accountable to the Commissioner for Native Affairs and their subordinates were the Sub-Native Commissioners who assisted them in obtaining information on Blacks. The District Commissioner would then pass this information to the Native Commissioner who would transfer it to the High Commissioner. As already indicated, this type of information, which passed from one hand to the other, was likely to have distortions because of different perspectives of various officials who handled it along the way. This makes such information doubtful and less reliable. The information in the records of the District Commissioners is made less reliable by the fact that they usually wrote from second-hand information which they obtained from the Sub-Native Commissioners who were stationed among the different chiefdoms. The District Commissioners thus did not always observe events which they wrote about themselves. But in this regard, they were closer to the events about Blacks than the Commissioner for Native Affairs who was stationed in Johannesburg or Pretoria. Therefore, as far as distance is concerned, the District Commissioners were better positioned than the Native Commissioner and this makes the information of the latter less reliable than that of the former.

Except for the difference regarding distance, the content of the records of the District Commissioners and those of the Commissioner for Native Affairs were generally similar. The District Commissioners' records also contained the same

issues on Blacks such as political aspects, progress and civilisation, social and moral conditions, taxation, disarmament and important events. Just like the Native Commissioner, the District Commissioners, as government officials, also made sure that they reflected their intent of implementing government policies in their records. They also wanted to impress those in higher authority by assuring them that they were executing their duties diligently.

Among the three Transvaal divisions of Eastern, North-Western and Northern, the latter had the largest population of the Northern Sotho and the most vast area: "Zoutpansberg is about 26,000 square miles, with the 'native' population of up to 400,000 souls."²⁴⁸ (This population figure includes the Bavenda and the Tsongas which were referred to as "Magwamba", "Tshanganas" or "Bathonga"). The District Commissioner in this division from 1902 was C.A. Wheelright. One of the principles of internal criticism, which is applied in evaluating the credibility of information from sources, is to know the producer or the composer of a document. By knowing the author of a record, we will be in a better position to understand the information derived thereof, and we will be in a position to be able to analyse and determine the credibility of such information. Wheelright was one of the government officials who produced extensive official records during the period under discussion, and therefore it would be appropriate to know who he was. His background, especially his previous involvement with and experiences with Blacks, and their way of life, are essential in evaluating all the correspondences and reports he has made.

Charles Apthorpe Wheelright, before coming to the Transvaal, worked in Zululand between 1890 and 1902 as a clerk, interpreter, Chief Magistrate and as a Resident Commissioner²⁴⁹. He worked for many years among the Blacks while in Zululand and therefore "he acquired an intimate knowledge of Natives"²⁵⁰. According to the record showing qualifications and experiences of the commissioners, Wheelright's judicial record was very good and he could speak Zulu fluently and Dutch slightly²⁵¹. His long time service among the Blacks made him have a broad knowledge about their way of life and, to a certain extent, an understanding of their culture. As a result, we can safely assume that the records he made on Blacks are more reliable as sources of information than if they were made by a White official who never worked among the Blacks. His competence to speak Black languages, as with Zulu, further enhanced the reliability of

²⁴⁸ Report by the Zoutpansberg District Commissioner, 1903, Pietersburg, p.103.

²⁴⁹ TAB, SNA 113 NA533/03, Native Affairs Department: Return showing the qualifications and experience of Officers appointed to the posts of Native Commissioner and Sub-Native Commissioner, 1903.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 89.

²⁵¹ SNA 113 NA533/03, Native Affairs Department: 1903, p. 89.

the records he made because it appears that he had the willingness to dig deep into the Blacks' lifestyle.

Wheelright was appointed as District Commissioner of the Northern Division on 22 June 1902, just after the end of the Anglo-Boer War. He compiled massive records (correspondence, reports, etc.) during his District Commissionership. At the time of his appointment to this position, the Blacks were still scattered by the war and one of his first principle challenges was to resettle them in his division and to ensure their smooth governance. In his 1902 annual report he mentioned that some of the first things he had to do were to establish more sub-district offices and to "quieten the Blacks who were unsettled by the war [and that the Blacks] cheerfully obeyed".²⁵² As a government official, the intent of this claim was to give the authorities a positive impression that he was willing, prepared and able to successfully carry out his duties.

In that report Wheelright continued to paint a good picture about the area under his authority by further mentioning that "the 'natives' there [were] quiet, loyal and easily governed as they appreciated the change to the British Government".²⁵³ Taxation and disarmament were also reported to have been going smoothly. Therefore, when using this report as a source of information, his quest to satisfy and impress those above him should be taken into consideration since the purpose of the composition of the document is important in determining its reliability.

On the tribal and political affairs of the Blacks of his area, Wheelright mentioned in his 1906 report that the effects of the 1906 Bambata rebellion in Natal reached all parts of districts under his jurisdiction and the Blacks showed interest in the news of the rebellion. He attributed the rapid spread of the news to the progress of Blacks in education, their press, and easier and cheaper means of transport. Here the District Commissioner's intent was to show his concern about the effects of the rebellion upon the Blacks within his own jurisdiction.

Other political and tribal aspects which Wheelright reported on included the 1904 tribal quarrel at "Matshatshana's (Mashashane's) Location. Mashashane was one of the Ndebele chiefdoms which were *sothonised* by living closer to the Northern Sotho chiefdoms. According to him, as a result of this conflict, "Ngelikedhlana" (Nkidikitlana), an "illegitimate son" moved to settle in the Waterberg District, thus breaking away from the Mashashane.²⁵⁴ He also reported on how the government intervened to install "Seiseho" (Seshego)

²⁵² Zoutpansberg District Commissioner's Report, 1903, p.103.

²⁵³ Ibid., p.102.

²⁵⁴ Zoutpansberg District Commissioner's Report, 1906, p.45

to the Moloto chieftaincy after a quarrel during the regency of Seripa.²⁵⁵ The Moloto is part of the Bakwena of Moletši, the Northern Sotho chiefdom north west of Pietersburg. In all these instances, Wheelright, as a government official, was trying to demonstrate how his government decisively intervened to quell the tribal conflicts. This is not unexpected from a report composed by someone who wanted to make a good impression on the people who paid his salary. There was no way the District Commissioner wouldn't have wanted to show that he was still in control of the situation.

On the issues of progress, civilisation, social and moral conditions of Blacks, Wheelright, as a European, like Lagden, showed bias, ignorance, prejudice and cultural difference – the common sources of error mentioned earlier. Because he did not intimately understand the culture of Blacks, despite his previous experience in this regard. He wrongly concluded that their customs, particularly polygamy, payment of *magadi* and circumcision, were “evil, barbaric and backward”²⁵⁶. He even expressed the hope that those customs would be destroyed by Christianity and education. He went on to claim that “we have reduced witchcraft if we have not totally stamped it out.”²⁵⁷ His ignorance, bias, prejudice and cultural difference are acutely shown by this sweeping statement he made: “‘Natives’ have no active shape of religion, but customs are their form of religion.”²⁵⁸ This claim that Blacks were neither religious nor spiritual, I think, reduced them to the level of mere animals.

In addition to the reports made by District Commissioner Wheelright, there is also an extensive amount of correspondence accumulated by his office in his day to day running of Black issues. Most of such correspondence was between his office and other departments and the headquarters of “native” affairs in Johannesburg. As a District Officer, he constantly wrote to his seniors about developments in his division. Most of such correspondence consisted of notices, requests and suggestions which were made to the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs which were intended to ensure effective governance of Blacks. There were also notices of problem areas which the District Commissioner had to solve as part of his official duties.

Some of the examples in which District Commissioner Wheelright made suggestions and requests to head office included his recommendation that Mr. K.E. Whitehead be appointed as Sub-Native Commissioner in one of his districts, in a letter dated 17 May 1905²⁵⁹. In another instance,

²⁵⁵ Zoutpansberg District Commissioner's Report, 1906, p.47.

²⁵⁶ Zoutpansberg District Commissioner's Report, 1903, p.108.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p.108.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p.108.

²⁵⁹ SNA 517 NAC8/ 05, Part 2, Native Commissioner Pietersburg, 17 – 05 – 1905.

Wheelright requested the addition of a "native" police force working in his division²⁶⁰. He cited the size of the area and the long distances to be travelled as reasons for his request and he asked 12 men to be placed under each Sub-Native Commissioner, while additional 6 should be allowed to his office²⁶¹. Later the Secretary for Native Affairs, W. Windham responded favourably to Wheelright's request in which a Supplementary Supply Bill would make available a sum of 6 400 pounds for an estimated cost of 2 000 "native" policemen²⁶².

Again District Commissioner Wheelright requested the establishment of a "native" hospital in Pietersburg in a letter to the Commissioner for Native Affairs²⁶³. The Secretary of Native Affairs replied and stated that that issue should be referred to the Resident Magistrate to be submitted to the Colonial Secretary for consideration²⁶⁴. Wheelright also asked for the extension of jurisdiction of the District and Sub-Native Commissioners so that they could have more power, in order to be able to administer justice among the Blacks²⁶⁵.

Some of the examples of the problem areas which Wheelright encountered and then reported to head office, include a substantial amount of correspondence about John Jacobs, a "native who was causing troubles wherever he was"²⁶⁶. John Campbell, the owner of a general store in Mashashane Location, alleged in an affidavit that Jacobs had a bad influence on the local chief, Maraba Mashashane²⁶⁷. In a letter to the Commissioner for Native Affairs, Wheelright stated that Jacobs was a Korana who gave himself as having been a private secretary to Lobengula before the Ndebele rebellion in Rhodesia²⁶⁸. Wheelright then recommended that Jacobs be removed from the Northern Division as he had influenced the chiefs to disobey authorities, especially Chiefs Seripa Moloto, Hans Masebe and Maraba Mashashane.

Another example of the problems obtained in Wheelright's correspondence is that which concerned the death of Chief Matlala of the Bakone in 1902, allegedly as a result of poisoning, and Wheelright indicated that there was not

²⁶⁰ TAB, SNA 44 NA1417/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Zoutpansberg – reports that he will require a considerably larger native police force to work his district, 1902.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁶³ TAB, SNA 59 NA2074/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Zoutpansberg. Native hospital at Pietersburg, 1902.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁶⁵ TAB, SNA 113 NA575/ 05, Part 1, Native Commissioner Zoutpansberg. Extension of jurisdiction of Native and Sub-Native Commissioners, 1903.

²⁶⁶ TAB, SNA 528 NAC16/ 06, Part 1, Native Commissioner Northern Division. Complaint Re Native named John Jacobs, 26 – 05 – 1906 to 27 – 10 – 1906.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁶⁸ SNA 528 NAC16/ 06, Part 1, Native Commissioner, 26 – 05 – 1906 to 27 – 10 – 1906, p. 11.

sufficient grounds that Matlala had died of poisoning²⁶⁹ and that there was no reason for a post mortem²⁷⁰. He stated that he heard from the indunas and headmen that the chief had died of natural causes and that his death might have been hastened by the fact that he was a heavy drinker. Another problem still involved the death of another Bakone chief, Selaki Matlala, who was a regent on behalf of Sekgwari, who was still a student at Kilnerton College in Pretoria²⁷¹. As a government official who was entrusted with the duty of running the affairs of Blacks, Wheelright called the Bakone indunas and headmen in order to appoint a new leader on 17 October 1905. Sephuti Matlala, half brother of the late chief, was appointed as regent because Sekgwari was still a minor.

There is still a huge amount of correspondence accumulated by District Commissioner Wheelright. The ones discussed above are just a few examples. Such requests, suggestions and notices, were made as part of the District Commissioner's duties of administration of the Blacks. Therefore that intent of producing such correspondence should be remembered when using these records as sources of information on Blacks.

When making records on the Blacks, Wheelright sometimes had to use their languages, especially when he had to refer to names. Here the question of language usage becomes problematic, particularly when it comes to spelling. Apparently the District Commissioner spelled words and names according to how he heard them and as a result he made spelling errors. For instance, throughout all his records, Mphahlele is spelled a "Mphahlela"; Moletši as "Maletsie"; Matlala as "Mathala"; Sekhukhune as "Sekukuni" and Mashashane as "Matshatshana". This language problem can easily hamper effective research, especially for those researchers who are not familiar with the Northern Sotho language and therefore cannot readily detect the misspelled words and names.

As already mentioned, in addition to the Northern (Zoutpansberg) Division, the Northern Sotho also occupied the North-Western and Eastern Divisions. The District Commissioners in those areas also produced records which are important sources of information. Their records were similar to those made by their counterpart in the Northern Division in that they also reported on the same issues of political and tribal affairs, progress in civilisation, social and moral conditions of Blacks, taxation, disarmament and other important events. Their offices also produced extensive amounts of correspondence like that of the Northern Division

²⁶⁹ TAB, SNA 86 NA2905/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Zoutpansberg. Report implying that the late Chief Matlala met his death by poisoning, 1902.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

of Wheelright. The District Commissioners in North-Western and Eastern Divisions also reported on aspects of health, food supply and trade. This addition is valuable in that it sheds more light on those aspects and that adds to the importance of such records as sources of information. It is interesting and worth noting that the records of the District Commissioners in those two divisions, particularly the reports, were similar to those of the District Commissioner in Zoutpansberg in that as government officials, they wanted to create a good impression to their authorities. That is why in their reports they always painted a positive picture that they were in control and that they were able to execute their duties well. Their reports in particular, resemble those of their Zoutpansberg counterpart in that they showed common sources of error such as ignorance, bias, prejudice and cultural difference, especially with regard to social customs of Blacks. Misspelling of Black words and names is also the main language problem evident in these records.

The District Commissioner of the North-Western Division from 1902 was Stuart Wilfred Jocelyn Scholefield. According to the record showing the qualifications and experience of the Commissioners²⁷², Scholefield worked among the Batswana in Botswana (then called Bechuanaland) from 1891. He could speak Dutch and Tswana fairly well. His experience in working among the Blacks, helped him to understand their culture and therefore his records can be regarded with more reliability when used as sources of information.

Among the chiefdoms which were reported about by the North-Western District Commissioner, were those of Hans "Masibi" (Masebe), Hendrik Bakenberg Masebe, Valtyn Makapan, "Zebedela" (Zebediela) Kekana and "Selika" (Seleka). These were all the Northern Ndebele chiefdoms who were to a large degree sothonised and they all lived in the Waterberg Division. In his 1902 report, Scholefield mentioned the constant friction between the chiefs in his area, but that most of them supported and assisted government initiatives, except chiefs Makapan and Kekana. Some of the day to day events about which he reported, included the deaths in 1905 of chiefs Charlie Eland and the "notorious" Hans Masebe, who usually picked up trouble with the authorities. Eland was succeeded by his brother Lucas while Hans was succeeded by his brother Marcus.²⁷³

There is also a substantial amount of correspondence accumulated by the office of the North-Western District Commissioner, and that is mostly found in the State Archives. One example is that on the 1902 border dispute between rival brothers, Chiefs Hans Masebe and Hendrik Bakenberg Masebe,

²⁷² SNA 113 NA533/03, Native Affairs Department, 1903.

²⁷³ Report by the North-Western District Commissioner, Potgietersrus, 1906, p. 102.

just outside Potgietersrust²⁷⁴. In a letter to the Secretary of Native affairs dated, 16 December 1902, regarding that dispute, Scholefield mentioned the fact that he had proposed to both factions that they should observe the boundary that was determined by the previous District Commissioner of Waterberg, Piet Potgieter²⁷⁵. He then requested the Commissioner for Native Affairs to approve the erection of a wire fence between the factions' territories. However, in a reply dated 27 December 1902, the Secretary of Native Affairs indicated that the boundary between the territories between those rival chiefs should be marked by beacons, not by fences as Scholefield suggested²⁷⁶. Scholefield was then instructed to punish those who encroached on the other one's territory.

The District Commissioner in the Eastern Division from 1902 was Edward Huthewaite Hogge. The credibility of his information on the Blacks is enhanced by the fact that he served as a magistrate among the Blacks in the Transvaal and before then he occupied a position in which he dealt with the Blacks in the Cape Colony.²⁷⁷ Here is where he "acquired an intimate knowledge of natives"²⁷⁸. His experience and knowledge of Black issues was also increased by his work among the Bapedi of Sekhukhune in the Eastern Transvaal. This greatly enhanced the understanding of the subject of his records, the Blacks. Therefore such records are more credible and reliable as sources of information. As a District Commissioner, he worked hard and he ensured that he carried out his duties diligently. He was also so obsessed in making a good impression on his seniors that he even mentioned that he took the matter of disarming the Blacks in his area "in his hands", i.e., he went out to disarm them himself.²⁷⁹ His intention to impress those in authority was also proved by his mention of the fact that in his division "in each and every case the 'native' received strict justice."²⁸⁰

The issue of the disarmament of Blacks, already alluded to in Hogge's 1903 report, is also pervasive in his correspondence with the office of the Commissioner for Native Affairs. As required by Circular No. 313 of 22 December 1902, District Commissioner Hogge submitted a detailed report on the whole process of disarmament of Blacks in which he even informed Lagden that that exercise went on smoothly²⁸¹. Accompanying that report was a graphic representation of the number of

²⁷⁴ TAB, SNA 87 NA2863/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner, Waterberg: Border dispute between Chiefs Hans and Hendrik Masebe, 1902.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 55.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 56.

²⁷⁷ Minutes and Evidence of the South African Native Affairs Commission, Volume IV, Cape Town, p. 454.

²⁷⁸ SNA 113 NA533/ 03, Native Affairs Department, 1903, p88.

²⁷⁹ Report by the Eastern District Commissioner, Pietersburg, 1903, p.109.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.109.

²⁸¹ TAB, SNA 39 NA1299/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Lydenburg. Disarmament of Natives, 05 - 02 - 1903 to 26 - 03 - 1903.

weapons, and their values, in each of the eight sub-districts of the Eastern Division: Middelburg, Lydenburg, Sabie, Sekhukhuneland, Carolina, Ermelo, Barbeton, and Wakkerstroom²⁸². When using this kind of record as a source of information, its intent of executing duties by a government official should be taken into account. This record reflects the official's implementation of the government's policies and should be assessed and interpreted as such.

After receiving the disarmament report from Hogge, Lagden went through it and passed it to High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner. Lagden stated, "I forward to Your Excellency copies of 5 very interesting reports dealing with the question of disarmament in the Transvaal"²⁸³. Milner also had to pass that report to the Executive Council and the Governor. The credibility and reliability of such a document is limited because as it passes from one hand to the other, some of its contents is either lost or distorted by individuals who handle it.

When passing that report to Milner, Lagden assured the High Commissioner that "the surrender [of weapons] was mostly successfully carried through" with 50 488 guns, valued at 60 990 pounds, handed in²⁸⁴. Lagden emphasised his assurances to Milner, "We are now in a position of having nothing to fear from a rising [of Blacks] in the [Transvaal] Colony..."²⁸⁵. It must be remembered that Lagden was making these assurances from his office in Johannesburg to Milner who was in Cape Town, about the situation in the Eastern Division. Lagden's intent was to show his senior that he was capable of executing his official duties diligently and that he was still in control of the situation. Besides noting the intent of that report, the question of distance must always be analysed in this case. Lagden was in Johannesburg, but he was giving assurances to Milner about the situation in the Eastern Division, hundreds of miles away. When evaluating Lagden's report to Milner against the distance factor, it is obviously less reliable as a source of information, because his physical ability to observe is questionable here.

Still on this report on disarmament in the Eastern Division, Lagden wrote back to his junior commissioners on the ground, appreciating what they had done:

I have much pleasure in forwarding to you the enclosed copy of a letter which I have received from His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor, expressing his appreciation of the

²⁸² TAB, SNA 39 NA1299/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Lydenburg. Disarmament of Natives, 05 - 02 - 1903 to 26 - 03 - 1903, p. 9.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

admirable manner in which the disarmament of the natives in the Transvaal has been effected by the Native Commissioners of this Department.²⁸⁶

Here Lagden intended to motivate the officials under him after having accomplished the task of disarming the Blacks. This was his duty as their senior, and this intent must also be noted.

The correspondence made by the Sub-Native Commissioners – the officials who were closest to the people – were mostly about the day to day events in the areas where they were stationed. The correspondence obtained from the Sub-Native Commissioners in the Eastern Division include the one made by E. Manning, on behalf of M. Knight who was on leave. In this letter, dated 15 December 1902, Manning reports of Chief Sekhukhune, whom he said had complaints which he wished to report at head office in Pretoria²⁸⁷. Another example of correspondence by the Sub-Native Commissioner in the Eastern Division was a letter dated 29 July 1905 from the Acting Sub-Native Commissioner of Schonoord, to the Resident Magistrate, clearing rumours that Chief Sekhukhune was joining the universal uprising of Blacks²⁸⁸. These rumours were based on the arrival in Sekhukhuneland of a Xhosa clergyman from Pretoria; the visits of Swazi chiefs, Shoppiane and Nkobe; and the presence of amaTonga at Chief Sekhukhune's country²⁸⁹. The purpose of this correspondence – to explode the rumours – should be established when using it as a source. In the Eastern Division there were also periodical and annual reports which were made by the Sub-Native Commissioners, in addition to the letters and notices. For instance, the Sub-Native Commissioner of Sekhukhuneland in 1906 was L.C.R. Harries, and that of "Pokwani" (Phokwane) T.C. Isteid. They made reports which were structurally similar to the ones discussed thus far. The contents of their reports are generally like those made by the District Commissioners and the Native Commissioner.

With these few examples of reports and other forms of correspondence produced by the various commissioners at different levels, it must be re-emphasised that the Sub-Native Commissioners were closer to the events they reported about than the District Commissioners and the Native Commissioner. Therefore, by taking into account the principle

²⁸⁶ SNA 39 NA1299/ 02, Part 1, Native Commissioner Lydenburg, 05 – 02 – 1903 to 26 – 03 – 1903, p. 15.

²⁸⁷ TAB, SNA 85 NA2856/ 02, Part 1, Departure of Chief Sekhukhune with five followers on a visit to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 1902.

²⁸⁸ TAB, SNA 519 NAC24/ 05, Part 1, Resident Magistrate Lydenburg, Forwards Report by Acting Sub-Native Commissioner Sekhukhuneland with reference rumours that Chief Sekhukhune has been Approached as co-operation in an universal native rising, 29 – 07 – 1905 to 17 – 08 – 1905.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

of "physical ability to observe"²⁹⁰, we can conclude that the records of the Sub-Native Commissioners are the most reliable of them all, compared to those made by other senior commissioners who were situated far away from the subject matter: the Blacks. And again, it is important to note that the District Commissioners and the Native Commissioner mostly used the original evidence of the Sub-Native Commissioners' records to compile their own records, probably causing some distortions along the way. The first-hand information of the Sub-Native Commissioners is therefore more credible than the rest.

By means of the examples of the records - reports, letters, notices, - made by the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners discussed thus far, it is apparent that such records are massive, especially the old correspondences which are mostly housed in the State Archives. Again it has been shown that the records of the District Commissioners and the Sub-Native Commissioners, follow more or less the same pattern as those of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, discussed in the previous section. However, the records of the Commissioner for Native Affairs reflect authority over those of the District and Sub-Native Commissioners. The importance of these records as sources of information on Blacks cannot be overemphasised, despite the flaws and limitations which were pointed out.

²⁹⁰ R.J. Shafer, A guide to Historical Method, p. 156.

3.2. Documentation of the South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903 - 1905.

In September 1903 Lord Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, appointed the inter-colonial commission - the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) - in order to look into all matters concerning the Blacks in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, Orange River Colony, Southern Rhodesia and Basutoland. The Commission included commissioners from those territories and was chaired by Godfrey Lagden, while H.M. Taberer was its secretary. The Commission's report covered the period 1903 to 1905 and it was delivered to the House of Assembly in Cape Town on 30 January 1905 and was directed to His Excellency, the High Commissioner.²⁹¹

The terms of reference on which the Commission was instructed to report on included the status and conditions of the Blacks; land tenure by Blacks; law and administration of Blacks; sale of liquor to the Blacks; and Black social customs such as marriage and circumcision.²⁹² The Commission was thus constituted to gather accurate information about Blacks and to offer recommendations to the governments of the various colonies in southern Africa with the object of arriving at an understanding in formulating common policy on Blacks among those territories. This uniform approach regarding Blacks was deemed necessary because unification of those territories was already anticipated. Therefore when assessing the contents of this report as a source of information, the intent (purpose) of its composition should be borne in mind.²⁹³

The Commission was specifically appointed for a particular task to investigate and then recommend on how best the Blacks could be administered in the British Colonies in southern Africa. It was then given a certain time and resources to carry out that duty. It was therefore empowered to dig as deep as possible in order to achieve its purpose. That is why it was able to gather "full oral and written evidence from each [one of] the Colonies and Territories."²⁹⁴ The Commission was also able to do extensive consultation and field work because:

[t]he witnesses invited to give evidence represented the views of officials, politicians, ministers of religion, missionaries, lawyers, educationists, land owners, farmers, traders, municipalities,

²⁹¹ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, Cape Town, 1905, p.1.

²⁹² Ibid, pp. 1- 5.

²⁹³ R.J. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.157.

²⁹⁴ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.1.

other public bodies, employers and 'natives' of all classes.²⁹⁵

With such extensive consultation, the report of the Commission as a source of information on Blacks, can be said to be more reliable than if consultation was limited. Again what counts positively in favour of the reliability of the report is that the Commissioners were apparently selected on merit, probably on their familiarity with the subject matter (issues affecting Blacks); their sound education; their good health conditions, as well as such related aspects which made them physically able to observe. For instance, as already pointed out in this essay, Lagden, the Chairman of the Commission, had an extensive knowledge and experience in issues relating to Blacks. The Commission's report was also composed from first-hand information which they collected on the ground from various witnesses, and that also enhanced its credibility.

Witnesses in the affected territories and colonies were called before the Commission to give evidence. In the Transvaal Colony many witnesses appeared before the Commission and they included W. Windham (Secretary for Native Affairs in the Transvaal); E.H. Hogge (Magistrate and District Commissioner in the Eastern Division); Reverends M.M. Mokone, J.Z. Tantsi and S.J. Mabote (Black Ministers of the African Methodist Episcopal Church); J.B. Mama and M.M. Mokone (Blacks); as well as many other witnesses²⁹⁶. Nine chiefs also appeared before the Commission to give evidence: Seripa Moloto (Bakwena chiefdom, Moletši Location, Zoutpansberg District); Solomon Makapan (Bakgatla chiefdom, Makapanstad, Pretoria); Kibi Lebogo (section of Bahananwa chiefdom, Zoutpansberg District); Daniel More (Bakwena chiefdom, Rustenburg District); Malekutu (Bapedi chiefdom, Middelburg District); Dedrick Mogale (Bepo chiefdom, Rustenburg District); Herman Selwane (Bakwena chiefdom, Rustenburg District); August Mohatle (Baphokeng chiefdom, Rustenburg District); and David More (Bakwena chiefdom, Rustenburg District).²⁹⁷ Of all these chiefs, only three were heading chiefdoms amongst the Northern Sotho - the core of this essay: Seripa Moloto, Kibi Lebogo and Malekutu. The hearings of the evidence in the Transvaal were held in Pretoria and Johannesburg between the 3rd and 18th October 1904. The witnesses were questioned on different issues which were selected as terms of reference which the Commission was appointed to investigate. The witnesses were directly interrogated and examined by a panel comprising Sir Godfrey Lagden (its Chairman), Mr. S.O. Samuelson, Hon. Marshall

²⁹⁵ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.2.

²⁹⁶ Minutes and Evidence, pp. iv-v.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. v-vi.

Campbell, Captain Q. Dickson, Mr. J.C. Krogh, Mr. H.C. Sloley, Mr. W.E. Stanford and Mr. F.R. Thompson.²⁹⁸

The first item of reference which the Commission acknowledged to have been the most important - as it pervaded every other question - was land tenure by Blacks. The Blacks had been scattered by the Anglo-Boer War and the Commission was appointed by the government in the quest to find suitable policy strategies for Blacks. The first witness on this issue was Mr. William Windham, then Secretary for Native Affairs in the Transvaal. He suggested that a system of individual tenure system should be established for the Blacks in the Transvaal Colony. This, he argued, would have an effect of introducing individual responsibility which was lacking in their communal system. His assessment and suggestion could be regarded as credible because he had a considerable experience about matters affecting Blacks as he had worked among them in Natal and Zululand before coming to the Transvaal.²⁹⁹

Another witness, Mr. E.H. Hogge, a former magistrate and District Commissioner in the Transvaal Eastern Division, concurred with Windham's suggestion of individual tenure system for Transvaal Blacks. However, the chiefs who were called to give evidence showed that the Blacks still preferred their communal tenure system. All nine chiefs gave evidence that they lived communally on lands purchased by their people, except Chief Seripa Moloto who said that his people still lived on Government Locations. Those chiefs also asked the Government to allow them to purchase more land where they would continue to live communally with their own people.

At the end, in their report, the commissioners recommended the adoption of individual tenure system by Blacks. As Europeans, the commissioners recommended this system because it was the one which was part of their culture, while Blacks practised communal tenure system in which everybody in the community shared grazing, water and cultivation of land. The commissioners thus committed the common error of cultural difference in which they believed that the communal tenure system of Blacks was backward and should therefore be changed to individual tenure system.

Still on the question of land tenure, the commissioners further made these recommendations: Blacks holding land individually should be assured permanent occupation subject to forfeiture for rebellion, treason and other offences, or failure to pay rent; squatting by Blacks should be restricted; certain restrictions be made on purchase of land by Blacks; and that land belonging to Blacks should be vested

²⁹⁸ Minutes and Evidence, p. 427.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 427.

in respective government trusts.³⁰⁰ Again these recommendations were intended to change the cultural way in which Blacks occupied land. Therefore when evaluating this report as a source of information on Blacks, this cultural difference should be noted.

On the question of law and administration of the Blacks, the Commission found that the main feature was the tribal system in which a chief was the centre of tribal organisation. They also observed that the tribal system was being displaced by, or gradually being brought under statutory and administrative European control. Windham gave evidence to the effect that the Blacks in the Transvaal lived under old tribal law and then he suggested that their laws be written in a Code system.³⁰¹ Hogge, on his part, believed that tribal system was good for Blacks and nothing should be done to improve on that. He argued that it was easy to govern Blacks through their chiefs, like when collecting taxes, than if their tribal system was destroyed.³⁰² On their part, the chiefs who gave evidence asked the Government to support their chieftaincy and to leave their tribal system as it was. They even rejected the suggestion that their laws be reduced to writing, in a book form.³⁰³

Although the Commission viewed the European system as important and desirable, however, it did not recommend the abrogation of the powers of chiefs. Such powers, according to the Commission, should be regulated by parliamentary enactment.³⁰⁴ The powers of the chiefs were viewed as important for the control of Blacks and the Commission recommended that the government of each colony should select representatives which would help to inform the formulation of policies on Blacks in those governments. This again reflects the intention of the composition of this report in which the Commission was primarily appointed to help in formulation of policies regarding Blacks.

On social and moral customs, as well as family life and habits of Blacks, the Commission observed that the Europeans were a "superior governing race" while Blacks were a "subject race of heathen superstitions."³⁰⁵ The Commission also felt that the social customs of Blacks - particularly the ones related to marriage (polygamy and *magadi*) - would soon fade away because of contact with Europeans. The Commission then recommended that Blacks be exposed to European education and Christianity as much as possible. Education, which was hitherto offered by missionaries, would then be under state

³⁰⁰ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.13.

³⁰¹ Minutes and Evidence, pp.432 – 433.

³⁰² Ibid, p.58.

³⁰³ Ibid, p.716.

³⁰⁴ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.25.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p.55.

control and religious instruction - actually Christian instruction- would be taught to Blacks.³⁰⁶ The report of the Commission, just like other reports discussed earlier, shows how its authors were biased against the social and moral customs of the Blacks. The authors of this report viewed the way of life of Blacks from their European perspective and as a result found that the way of life was "backward", "barbaric" and thus unacceptable³⁰⁷. With these errors of cultural difference, prejudice and ignorance (already discussed) this report becomes a less reliable source of information on Blacks. However, with the knowledge that this document contains such errors, a researcher can still deduce information from it. Showing little or no understanding of Black customs, the Commission further recommended that marriage by Black customs should not be accorded the status of a Christian marriage or civil marriage. They also observed - with dismay - the Church Separatist ("Ethiopian") Movement in which Christian Blacks desired to free themselves from European churches.³⁰⁸ The Ethiopian Movement was a separatist branch led by Blacks who broke away from the mainstream European churches as they desired to preach the Gospel according to how they thought was compatible with their African way of life³⁰⁹.

On the subject of liquor, the two Blacks who gave evidence before the Commission through an interpreter - James B. Mama and John Makue - felt that the prohibition of spirituous liquor on Blacks was not desirable "because liquor is needed".³¹⁰ Hogge pointed out that its prohibition in the Transvaal was effective and the chiefs who gave evidence, requested the Government not to allow liquor traffic.³¹¹ At the end, in its report, the Commission unanimously passed resolutions that the sale or supply of spirituous liquors to Blacks should be prohibited, and that the manufacture of "Kafir" beer containing not more than 4% of spirit be permitted only for home consumption and its sale be prohibited. This point illustrates how ignorant the commissioners were of the socio-economic and religious significance of African beer to Blacks. Besides being socially significant on special and ritual occasions and celebrations, African beer was also economically important as it was traded for sorghum, money and other mediums of exchange. Therefore the resolution that the sale of African beer be prohibited exposed the commissioners' ignorance. And their resolution that sale of spirituous liquor be barred from Blacks, shows that the Blacks were regarded as "semi-human", or at least irresponsible. This point was emphasised

³⁰⁶ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p. 46.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 46.

³⁰⁸ Minutes and Evidence, pp. 462 - 463.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 462 - 463.

³¹⁰ Ibid, p. 646.

³¹¹ Ibid, p. 467.

by those Blacks who gave evidence as they argued that there were "good Blacks" who could behave after taking liquor as much as there were "bad Whites" who could still misbehave after taking liquor!³¹²

The terms of reference of the SANAC also included Black labour. The Commission realised that the Blacks were mainly pastoral and had families and worldly possessions, and that it would be unreasonable to expect the entire Black population to leave their homes in search of work. The Commission then recommended the supplement of labour by importing labourers from China, India and other parts of Africa. Labour compulsion, according to the Commission, should be deprecated, but compulsion in the form of labour tax, with remission to works, was recommended.³¹³

As regards taxation, Mama and Makue felt it was very heavy for Blacks in the Transvaal and that it was worsened by payments of rent, dog tax and removal of rubbish.³¹⁴ The chiefs requested the Government to reduce tax on their people.³¹⁵ The Commission then recommended that the governments in colonies and territories should collect complete data in order to create full and reliable records of the Black population. Statistics, if true, might throw great light on the path of administrator and legislator, who were involved in administration of Blacks. The Commission then recommended taxation of two kinds: direct (paid by Blacks to the government, such as hut, poll and dog taxes) and indirect (by means of purchase of goods on which customers or other duty or tax is levied).³¹⁶

The Commission also looked into the question of representation of Blacks. Windham made known that the Blacks in the Transvaal had neither political nor municipal franchise. He expressed the view that the Blacks were unfit to have a vote like the Europeans, but should be given a special representation until they developed through education and civilisation. Hogge put this point more blatantly:

Personally, I do not think that it is right that a black man should vote at the same booth as a White man, but I think that some form of representation should be given to him...³¹⁷

On the other hand, Mama and Makue felt that the Blacks should be given franchise as it was "the only safety for us to have

³¹² Minutes and Evidence, 646.

³¹³ Report by the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.35.

³¹⁴ Minutes and Evidence, p.646.

³¹⁵ Ibid, p.716.

³¹⁶ Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.30.

³¹⁷ Minutes and Evidence, p.460.

the right to vote".³¹⁸ This sentiment was also echoed by the chiefs who gave evidence before the Commission. In its report, the Commission warned against the danger of possession of franchise by Blacks. It only recommended a system in which Blacks voted separately to elect their representatives so that White supremacy would not be threatened.³¹⁹ This stance, by a Commission which wholly comprised Europeans, is not unexpected because the commissioners themselves, as Whites, did not want to be "swamped" by the Black majority. So, in using this report as a source of information, this element of prejudice should not be overlooked.

The observations and recommendations on labour, taxation and representation discussed above, reflect the purpose for which the SANAC was appointed, namely, to investigate various aspects relating to the Blacks, in order to help the governments in the British-controlled territories and colonies to formulate uniform policies on Blacks. So, when using this report as a source of information on Blacks, it is important to bear the intent of its composition in mind.

It is also worth noting that this Commission was appointed to look into Black affairs in all the British-controlled territories and colonies, rather than only focusing on the Transvaal, where the Northern Sotho were living. However, despite the conscious and unconscious errors pointed out in this report, it still serves as an important source of information on Blacks and should therefore be used with such shortcomings in mind.

There are also a few language problems - especially in the Minutes and evidence of the SANAC - which may hinder an effective use of this document as a source of information. Most of the Black names are misspelled: "Mulota" (Moloto), "Mlechi" (Moletši), "Seboch" (Lebogo) and "Makone" (Mokone). These errors may create problems for readers and researchers, especially those whose mother tongue is not Northern Sotho. However, this is not unexpected because the authors of this document - the commissioners - were of European origin and were not familiar with Black languages. Again, the Black witnesses mostly gave their evidence through interpreters, and this might have compromised the actual meaning of their evidence to a certain extent because of the language differences. So, when using this document, this should be noted. However, despite these language shortcomings, the evidence presented before the SANAC, as well as its subsequent report, are a valuable source of information on Blacks in general, and the Northern Sotho in particular.

³¹⁸ Minutes and Evidence, p. 645.

³¹⁹ Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, p.30.

There are numerous secondary works in the form of books, theses, etc. which deal with the SANAC and as such, are important in helping to evaluate the minutes, evidence and reports of the SANAC. As already shown in the section of historiography, Burton thoroughly dealt with the SANAC in his 1985 M.A. thesis. Because Burton's work has already been already referred to in this thesis from historiographical perspective, only the main features, important arguments as well as salient points will be emphasised here. As already shown, Burton's study is well researched, and because of the fact that it is a recent work, it drew heavily from earlier works on the SANAC and added valuable perspectives which were neglected or overlooked by earlier authors. This makes it a balanced and rich work that takes into account different issues and perspectives. The main focus of Burton's dissertation is to analyse the "native policy" followed by the British Administration during "the years of reconstruction, 1902-1907"³²⁰.

Earlier in this essay, it has been pointed out that the SANAC was appointed to investigate aspects concerning the Blacks who were scattered and dislocated following the Anglo-Boer War. It was further stated that the aim of the appointment of the SANAC was to find ways on how common policy on Blacks in British-controlled colonies and territories could be formulated. However, when analysing the circumstances surrounding the creation of the SANAC, Burton, on his part, found that the main objective of the appointment of the SANAC was to find solutions on the issue of the shortage of labour, particularly in the Transvaal:

A major problem experienced by the Transvaal between 1902 and 1907 was the acute shortage of African labour in the gold mines. The Bloemfontein Conference of March 1903 recommended the appointment of a Native Affairs Commission to investigate the 'native question' throughout South Africa ...Its major concern was the framing of resolutions which provided large numbers of Africans for the mines.³²¹

Therefore, throughout this thesis, Burton argues that the shortage of labour, particularly in the Transvaal was the principal objective for the appointment of the SANAC. According to him the formulation of uniform policy on Blacks among British colonies and territories was a secondary motive for the appointment of the SANAC. However, his argument is to a certain extent unconvincing when he singles out that shortage only in the Transvaal, while on the other hand he

³²⁰ Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission, p. 1.

³²¹ D. R. Burton, The SANAC, p. i.

acknowledges that the commission originated at "an inter-colonial customs conference in Bloemfontein, March 1903".³²² Burton goes on to justify his standpoint (including his choice of the Transvaal among other British colonies and territories) by pointing out that when beginning with this research work, he was faced with two possible alternatives:

One, an investigation of one of the topics over the whole of South Africa, or two, an investigation and analysis of the whole report with specific reference to one of the colonies. I decided upon the latter course because I felt that to isolate any other topic from the others would lead to distortion and misrepresentation. A further point was that I suspected Transvaal conditions and labour requirements were the major reasons for the commissioning of the SANAC [and that] all the SANAC recommendations were directly applicable to the Transvaal [due to] ...its economic power... [because] of the gold mines.³²³

After analysing the circumstances surrounding the origins of the SANAC, Burton touches on the terms of reference in the same way as they have been referred to earlier in this essay. Therefore they will not be repeated here. Burton's wide-ranging research is made clear and profound by his reference to scholars (including historians, journalists, etc) which he says the SANAC received considerable attention from. He goes on to discuss the views of these scholars whom he acknowledged held differing views. As already mentioned under historiography, Burton sharply criticised those authors and scholars who underplayed or ignored the issue of labour in the SANAC. He also analysed the liberal authors, as well as the Afrikaner ones, while expressing his amazement at the lack of interest on the part of the Black authors regarding the SANAC.

In his analysis, Burton also pointed to some aspects of the SANAC which he referred to as "complete failures" or "unfortunate features". These included the Commission's failure to look into the process of urbanisation. But he is quick to point out that at that time "[t]here was no real urgency to evolve urban policies as workers were to be housed in industrial compounds whilst working temporarily in White areas"³²⁴. Other aspects which did not go down well with Burton were that many witnesses did not possess specialised knowledge on Blacks; no Afrikaner provided evidence; only

³²² D. R. Burton, The SANAC, p. 1.

³²³ Ibid, p.14.

³²⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

elite Blacks gave evidence; and that the Chamber of Mines did not provide witness or evidence to the SANAC³²⁵.

In his conclusion of this work, Burton still emphasised his argument that "a prime reason for the SANAC was to provide a permanent solution to the African labour shortage experienced over most of South Africa, and particularly on the mines of Witwatersrand [in the Transvaal]"³²⁶. Burton's labour issue is also closely linked to the land question, because land and labour are interrelated. Therefore it is not surprising to see almost all of Burton's work dealing with the issue which he argued was at the heart of the SANAC - labour (including land). This is quickly evident to the reader by the titles of his dissertation's chapters: almost all of them revolve around labour and land, except of course, INTRODUCTION at the beginning and EVALUATION at the end³²⁷. However, the importance of Burton's work in helping to evaluate the SANAC cannot be overemphasised. Its credibility is greatly enhanced by the fact that it took into account different perspectives from various scholars and authors in order to balance his work on the SANAC.

³²⁵ D. R. Burton, The SANAC, p. 14.

³²⁶ Ibid, p. 168.

³²⁷ Ibid, p. i.

3.3. Publication of the Transvaal Department of Native Affairs: SHORT HISTORY OF THE TRANSVAAL, 1905.

This short history of the Blacks in the Transvaal was published by the Department of Native Affairs in 1905. As a government department which was specifically charged with the running of Black issues, one of its duties was to gather and organise information on Blacks. The intent of that department when publishing this document was that of executing one of its duties. This publication was also intended to give as much information as possible about the Transvaal Blacks to the government so that "appropriate" policies could be formulated regarding the Blacks. So when using this publication as a source of information on the Transvaal Blacks in general, and the Northern Sotho in particular, it should always be borne in mind that it was put together by government officials who were charged with a duty of yielding as much information as possible on Transvaal Blacks in the context of a colonial infrastructure.

This short history was composed by using information from local and personal investigations conducted by officials who were stationed in every District of the Transvaal. Therefore as far as distance is concerned, this publication can be regarded as reliable, because those officials were physically able to observe the events where they were stationed. In the preface of this publication, dated 15th August 1905, the Transvaal Secretary of Native Affairs, W. Windham, praised the contributions of the Native Commissioner, Sub-Native Commissioners and District Commissioners:

...and especially Mr Knothe, who elaborated the memorandum at headquarters, and whose intimate knowledge of the aboriginal races of the Colony has added materially to the value of [this] history.³²⁸

This statement favours the credibility of this document as a source of information, because in addition to the better positioning of the officials who composed it, there were also officials who had "intimate knowledge about the aboriginal races", such as Knothe.

However, the observation by these officials was handicapped by, among other things, the limited time they had because of their other duties and also because of the lack of written data which could be placed at their disposal.³²⁹ This was because the pre-literate Black communities did not keep written records. The information which was mostly used by the Commissioners to compose this publication, was mainly

³²⁸ Transvaal Department of Native Affairs, Short History of the Transvaal, Pretoria, 1905, p.3.

³²⁹ Ibid, p.3.

obtained from oral accounts while in some cases assumptions and conjectures were relied upon, as we shall see in the discussion. However, despite the time factor and the lack of records, these officials were obliged to carry out their duties as government officials. This means that they had to compose something even if written records were not available. This, to a certain extent, limits the reliability of this document as a source of information on Blacks. With such constraints, it is not unexpected that this publication contains flaws. But these flaws cannot only be attributed to the lack of both adequate time and records, given the fact that these officials, who were foreigners, did not fully understand the relationship and grouping of various Black chiefdoms.

The categorisation of Black chiefdoms in the Transvaal is one of the most apparent flaws in this publication. Categorisation is unclear and rather confusing. In Part I of the Index, it is not clear as to whether the bold topic **BECHUANA AND BASUTO TRIBE**, is all embracing or not. It cannot be clearly defined who were the "Bechuana tribes" and who were the "Basuto tribes." Are these two references (Bechuana and Basuto) similar or overlapping? Their relationship is not made clear because under that heading, names of chiefdoms are given, as already mentioned, without stating that this was a "Bechuana tribe" or a "Basuto tribe". This confusion is compounded by the title of Chapter IX: **THE BASUTO AND THE BAPEDI TRIBES**.... Here one does not understand whether the Bapedi were another separate group in addition to the "Basuto" and the "Bechuana".

What further confuses the categorisation of the Transvaal Black communities in this publication is the deviation from grouping the chiefdoms according to their names and beginning to group them according to the area from where they originated. This deviation occurs halfway and it causes confusion. For instance chapters I to V are titled according to the names of the chiefdoms under discussion: chapter I:BAROLONG; II:BAHURUTSI; III:BAKWENA; IV:BAKGATLA; and V:BAPEDI OF SEKHKHUNELAND AND MALEKUTU. Halfway, the above pattern changes in which chapter VI is entitled: "MALABOCH", ZOUTPANSBERG. Here the authors deviated from using the name of the chiefdom in the title and instead used the name of the chief and the division (district). Therefore, following the original pattern, chapter V should have been simply entitled: BAHANANWA. So to a researcher who does not have the slightest knowledge of the Transvaal Black chiefdoms, might take "Malaboch" to be the name of the chiefdom, not the name of a chief, as he/she would have been misled by following the pattern of the first five chapters.

Chapters VIII and IX completely deviated from the pattern as the former is entitled: **BECHUANA AND BASUTO TRIBES WHO**

ORIGINATED FROM THE WEST AND SOUTH and the latter: BASUTO AND BAPEDI TRIBES WHO CAME FROM THE NORTH-EAST. In these two chapters the Transvaal Blacks are now grouped according to the direction from where they came. This categorisation is unreliable because different chiefdoms might have entered the Transvaal from the same direction, but that does not necessarily make them a homogeneous group. Here the composers should have been consistent by retaining their original categorisation by using the names of chiefdoms, to avoid such a confusing approach.

Part II of this publication is divided into two chapters. Chapter I is sub-divided into A:ZULUS; B:AMANDEBELE; C:THE BLACK AMANDEBELE OF MAPELA; and D:AMANDEBELE OF S.KOBE OF WATERBERG. Chapter II is sub-divided into: BATSONGA (MAGWAMBA), SWAZIS, BATAU, BAVENDA, BALEMBA, BUYS PEOPLE, and VALPENS. The categorisation in Part II is not as confusing as in Part I, except that the origin of all the Amandebele chiefdoms, as well as their relationship with the Zulus, should have been clarified. The adoption of the Amandebele groups of the Sotho customs and the shedding of their *Zuluness* (*Sothonisation*), is not pointed out in this publication. The relationship of the Batau chiefdom which was mentioned in Part I and the Batau mentioned in Part II is not explained - if ever there was any connection between them.

However, despite the complicated categorisation in this short history of the Transvaal Blacks, it would be naive to totally dismiss it as not being an important source of information on the Transvaal Blacks, and especially, the Northern Sotho. It is a valuable source for research purposes although, as already mentioned, there are some flaws. With the advantage of hindsight and the abundant reference works at our disposal today, we are able to acutely see the flaws in such a publication which was composed with little or no reference works. With the present advantage the inconsistent categorisation of the Transvaal Blacks is discernible and according to most recent publications, it is usually put as: the Sotho, Venda, Tsonga, Swazis, Balemba, Buys people and Valpens. The composers of this publication also did not use the conventional grouping of the Sotho into Southern, Western (Tswana) and Northern Sothos. They should have named and discussed various chiefdoms under these divisions and sub-divisions.

The Short History of the Transvaal provides extensive and valuable information on the history of Blacks in the Transvaal. The historical background and the "present" state of many chiefdoms are documented in this publication. Because this publication was completed in 1905, "the present" situation, chiefs and all statistics mentioned, would be referring to that particular period. The Northern Sotho

chiefdoms whose histories and "present" conditions are dealt with in this publication, which are focused on in this essay, are the Bakwena of Moletši, Bapedi of Sekhukhune, Bahananwa, Batlokwa, Banareng, Bakwebo, Batlhalerwa, Bakone and other communities under the so-called petty chiefs. The *sothonised* Ndebele chiefdoms are also extensively discussed.

In this essay, these chiefdoms will be discussed in a more logical manner, without following the categorisation of the Short History of the Transvaal, which has been shown to be confusing. When analysing the accounts on these chiefdoms, the intent of the authors of this publication - to gather as much information as possible on the Transvaal Blacks - will always be born in mind. The accounts of these authors about these chiefdoms in this publication will also be evaluated with relevant criteria in order to establish their reliability as sources of information.

The information on the Bakwena of Moletši is very slight and was also gathered in 1904 or 1905 when Regent Seripa Moloto was acting as chief, on behalf of his nephew, Seshego Moloto³³⁰. The Bakwena, who are also referred to as the Batlhaloga, are said to have come from the vicinity of Pretoria where they left because of the ill-treatment of the Matebele.

Among all the Northern Sotho chiefdoms, the Bapedi is the one whose history is the most extensively documented in this publication. There are various reasons, as shown in the section of historiography, which explain why the records on the Bapedi are more abundantly available than any of the other Northern Sotho chiefdoms. These reasons will not be repeated here. It will suffice to say that some of those reasons are related to the early contact the Bapedi had with the missionaries, the Boers and the British. In this publication, the history of the Bapedi is begun from the secession of a small section from the Bakgatla, one of the Sotho sections³³¹. This secession was caused by controversy surrounding Diale, whose child was crying inside his wife's womb. Eventually, that child - Lellela teng (one who cries inside) - was born among that group which broke away, which adopted the name Bapedi, and the totem, *phuti* (duiker) and later, *noko* (porcupine), abandoning the *kgabo* (monkey)³³².

Kotope and Morwamotšhe succeeded each other as chiefs of this group while Thulare became Paramount Chief, with extensive power and influence. Thulare is still revered by the Bapedi, a factor that was compounded by the fact that he died on the day of a Solar Eclipse in 1824. He was succeeded by his son, Mmalekutu. Mzilikazi, the Matebele chief appeared on the

³³⁰ Short History of the Transvaal, p.19.

³³¹ Ibid, p. 31.

³³² Ibid, p. 31.

scene and after bloody clashes, the Bapedi were defeated and Sekwati, Thulare's young son, assembled some followers and took refuge in the Zoutpansberg. He later returned to the Bapedi country and reunited his nation. Sekwati is still remembered and praised by his people for his wisdom and providence³³³.

In about 1840 the Bapedi encountered for the first time the Boer Voortrekkers under H. Potgieter. Shortly before he died, Sekwati chose his son, Mampuru, to succeed him. However, his other son, Sekhukhune, won the people onto his side and succeeded to expel Mampuru, and proclaim himself Paramount Chief of the Bapedi. Because of disputes over land and borders, Sekhukhune went to war against the Boers in 1876 and he was finally defeated by the British in 1879 and was taken prisoner in Pretoria. While Sekhukhune was in prison, Mampuru succeeded in establishing himself as chief and when Sekhukhune was released, he also claimed chieftaincy. Mampuru, with the aid of the Mapoch chiefdom of Nyabela, secretly assassinated Sekhukhune, but he was later captured and hanged. In 1905, the year in which this publication was made, there was a lot of factional strife among the Bapedi. This was compounded by the European authorities who wished to divide - and thereby weaken - the Bapedi. At that time, Sekhukhune II was chief with a large following³³⁴.

As already mentioned, the Commissioners of the Department of Native affairs who composed this publication, had a lot of written records at their disposal about the Bapedi, probably from the missionaries, early Boers and British who came in contact with the Bapedi. This can be seen from the logical and extensive account of this chiefdom as compared, for instance, to the Bakwena of Moletši, whose account in this publication was extremely slight. Therefore the fact that the authors of this publication had abundant reference material when writing on the Bapedi, should be noted, and that the accounts on the Bapedi in this publication should be regarded as reliable as sources of information³³⁵.

Another Northern Sotho chiefdom whose information was gathered by the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners in compiling the Short History of the Transvaal, was the Bahananwa. Again here, the limited amount of accounts on this chiefdom as compared with the Bapedi is striking. However, on the Bahananwa, the Commissioners drew most of their information from the writings of the missionaries, especially with regard to the 1894 Boer war against that chiefdom³³⁶.

³³³ Short History of the Transvaal, pp. 31 - 51.

³³⁴ Ibid, pp. 31 - 51.

³³⁵ Ibid, pp. 31 - 51.

³³⁶ Ibid, pp. 31 - 51

The Bahananwa are said to have originated in North Africa from the Bahurutse who later settled in Botswana (then called Bechuanaland)³³⁷. The first chief of the independent Bahananwa was Lebogo and their totem is *tšhwene* (baboon). The Bahananwa crossed the Limpopo from Botswana and settled along the Blauwberg mountains where they are still found today. After Lebogo's death, his wife, Pulabošego, acted as regent, until her son, Matome, came of age. When Matome was proclaimed as chief, his uncle, Ramatho claimed the chieftainship. A struggle ensued in which Ramatho was defeated. He then left with his followers and settled on the eastern side of the mountain³³⁸. When Matome died in 1880, his son, Kgalushi, also known as Malebogo, became chief. In 1894 war broke between Bahananwa and the Boers.

Another slight account, as compared with that of the Bapedi, is that on the Batlokwa. When using this account on the Batlokwa as a source of information, the element of uncertainty on the part of the authors should be noted because they are unsure of the actual origin of this chiefdom:

They are likely related to the Mantati of Chieftainess Mantatise and her son Sikonyela, and thus would also be related to the Makololo of Sebetoane who migrated to the North and settled somewhere near the Zambezi River.³³⁹

This is one of the examples in which conjecture and assumption were used by the authors of this publication, when they were unable to establish the true facts about some chiefdoms. Therefore these uncertainties reduce the reliability of the document, although it was the best thing these authors could have done given the lack of any reference material. As a result, the researchers have to be aware of such cases, and it is easy to deal with them where they are clearly stated as conjectures, and not facts. But even though such uncertainties reduce the reliability of such a source, the information is still important, especially if it is critically used and analysed by relevant criteria and also corroborated against other available information.

Mosima was the chief who was said to have brought the Batlokwa to Zoutpansberg. He died at Warubi and was succeeded by his son, Kunwana, who moved with his people to Dwars River Drift³⁴⁰. Before his death, to avoid any quarrelling amongst his sons, Kunwana divided his chiefdom into two portions, the

³³⁷ Short History of the Transvaal, p. 37.

³³⁸ Ibid, p. 37.

³³⁹ Ibid, p. 39.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 39.

one under his eldest son, Serane, and the other under his second son, Ramokgopa. In 1885 the Boers attacked the Batlokwa who fled and took refuge under Chief Sekhukhune for twenty years. When the Batlokwa returned from Sekhukhune's country, Ramokgopa II and Masanyane quarrelled for chieftainship. Ramokgopa left with his followers and settled along Dwars River, while Masanyane remained at the Matok kopies. These two brothers never lived in peace with each other until in 1879, when Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Administrator of the Transvaal, decided that they both be recognised as independent chiefs³⁴¹.

According to the authors of the Short History of the Transvaal, the Banareng chiefdom entered the Transvaal from Bechuanaland and proceeded to the Haenertsburg, where they are represented by three chiefdoms, Sekororo, Mamatlhola and Selebulu³⁴². The people of Sekororo are said to have settled in their "present" location between Selati and Olifants Rivers under their chief Sekororo, whose name is hereditary, i.e. descending from chief to chief. The Mamatlhola section was said to have been founded by Sekukunuku, who had three sons, Serubela, Selebulu and Maota³⁴³. After the death of Sekukunuku, his second son, Selebulu, left and founded the Selebulu section while Serubela became chief. In 1894 the Mamatlhola joined Makgoba in his rebellion against the Boers in which Moshuti and Mamatlhola were taken prisoners to Pretoria.

Another Northern Sotho chiefdom whose history was documented were the Bakone. They are said to have originated from somewhere near the Zambezi and entered the Transvaal at Phalaborwa from where they split into three sections³⁴⁴. One portion went to Middelburg, another one remained at Bokgaga country, while the third and the largest group moved to the Matlala location between Pietersburg and Piet Potgieter's Rust. Here they found a small Ngwepe chiefdom which they easily subjected, but allowed it to move to Makgabeng. The chief of the Bakone took a hereditary name Matlala and one of his sons, Rakodi, went to settle at Makgabeng. Chief Matlala attacked Rakodi as he thought that he wanted to establish himself as an independent chief. A great number of people were killed and Rakodi's sons, Mathekga and Mojela moved away and separated. Mathekga settled in the Zoutpansberg Mountains while Mojela occupied the country along Mogalakwena River.

Another section of the Bakone were those of Dikgale, and they were known as *diphiri* (hyenas) as they were said to be great cattle thieves. The Bakone who remained in the Bokgaga

³⁴¹ Short History of the Transvaal, pp. 39 – 41.

³⁴² Ibid, p. 41.

³⁴³ Ibid, p. 42.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 48.

country were represented by Maake and Mahupa,³⁴⁵ while those who moved to Middelburg were those of Kotole, Phokwane, Tisana and Baphuting³⁴⁶.

As can be noted about the accounts on the Bakone, there is more information on the Matlala section than the ones which settled in Middelburg and Bokgaga country, respectively. Apparently this could have been because the Commissioners came across a certain source of information on the Bakone of Matlala, probably the missionaries or a good oral source.

The Bakwebo chiefdoms are also referred to as the Kolobe, taking the name of their totem, (wild pigs). These chiefdoms are represented by the Modjadji, Sekgopo, Mamabolo, Kgopa and Mogoboya³⁴⁷. The Modjadji section speaks a mixture of Venda and Sotho and as a result, they are sometimes often regarded as a Venda people who were *sothonised*. Their earliest known chief was Mohale who came from Mashonaland. The Chieftainess Modjadji was appointed by her father Mokoto, who feared that his sons would quarrel over chieftainship. She was famous throughout South Africa for her rainmaking powers. Even the Zulus came and asked for rain, bringing girls, ivory and tusks as an offering³⁴⁸. Modjadji II succeeded after the death of the first one in 1830. Modjadji II was said to be cruel and vengeful, although she was clever and a good organiser³⁴⁹. Anything savouring of "civilisation" was forbidden in her territory. In 1881 she caused a petty chief named Khashane to be killed, with his 40 followers for having become a Christian³⁵⁰. In 1890 Modjadji II attacked the Boers who had come to occupy her country. General Pretorius made peace with Modjadji but after the war with Malebogo in 1894, General Piet Joubert confronted Modjadji. The "present" (1905) chieftainess, Modjadji III, married Mokoto³⁵¹.

Another section of the Bakwebo is the Sekgopo, the name which is passed from chief to chief. The first Sekgopo was the son of Phetole who succeeded Mohale, the first chief of the Modjadji³⁵². The Sekgopo section speaks the same dialect as the Modjadji. In 1905 their chief was Mmakubi Sekgopo. The Mamabolo section of the Bakwebo are mostly referred to as the Kolobe. They have been part of the Modjadji, whom they left, and then settled along the Thabina and Letsitele Rivers under Chief Manamele³⁵³. He was succeeded by his son Selwana Mamabolo, from whom the chiefdom took the name. Selwana was

³⁴⁵ Short History of the Transvaal, p. 48.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁵¹ Ibid, p. 49.

³⁵² Ibid, p. 50.

³⁵³ Ibid, p. 50.

succeeded by his son Maiba, who had two sons, Mankweng and Sekwala. After Mankweng was appointed future chief, Sekwala felt aggrieved and founded the Sekwala section with his followers. In 1880 Mankweng died and was succeeded by his son Nkoshilo, who died in 1886. Sehломola was too young to rule by 1905 and his uncle, Legadima, was ruling on his behalf as regent³⁵⁴.

There was very little known to the Commissioners who compiled this publication about the Kgopa and the Mogoboya sections³⁵⁵. This is one of the shortcomings which appear in this publication. The authors of this publication often came across chiefdoms which they had no information about, but because they had been instructed to gather information at that time, they could not wait to fill that gap. However, as already pointed out, such a limitation cannot detract from the importance of this publication as a source.

The Batlhalerwa chiefdoms - which took the name of their totem, *letlhalerwa* (leopard) - live in the Woodbush near the Molepo and Mathabatha chiefdoms. Under Chief Makgoba, the Batlhalerwa settled at Makgoba's Kloof in about 1800³⁵⁶. In 1894, Chief Makgoba, according to the authors, "rebelled" against the Boers³⁵⁷. This view is subjective in favour of White Europeans by White authors (the Commissioners) which is often noticeable in publications of this kind. The authors regard Makgoba as a "rebel" against the Boer "authority" without taking into account the fact that the Boers were the ones who had violated Makgoba's people's independence. This one sided reporting is evident with all the chiefdoms who had been attacked by the White "authorities", like Malebogo, Sekhukhune, Mapela, to name just a few. However, such subjectivity will be discussed in full in the next section, on The Native Tribes. During the Makgoba "rebellion", General Piet Joubert attacked him with the help of the Swazi who killed women and children as well as Chief Makgoba, whose head they brought back to Joubert. In 1905 Makgoba's daughter was chieftainess and most of her people were residing on the Haenertsburg farms. Chief Lucas Shongwane's people in Waterberg are also regarded as the Batlhalerwa, but the Commissioners are not sure if they are related to those of Makgoba³⁵⁸.

There are various chiefs who were regarded as "petty chiefs" by the authors. This was mainly because of the small numbers in their chiefdoms. These were Klein Makgato (Tau), whose adult male population numbered only 300, and spoke the Batlokwa dialect; Mojapelo; Mothiba and Klein Mothiba, whose

³⁵⁴ Short History of the Transvaal, pp. 50 – 51.

³⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 51.

adult males numbered 220 and 200 respectively, and adopted the Moletši dialect; as well as Chuene and Maja, who adopted the Molepo dialect.³⁵⁹

The authors of the Short History of the Transvaal made an observation that although all the chiefdoms which originated from the North belonged to the same family as those found in "Basutoland", they did not have one powerful ruler who could have formed them into one nation. In other words, the authors wondered why the chiefdoms, who are regarded in this essay as Northern Sotho, couldn't be united under one ruler, like King Moshweshwe had done with the other Sotho section. This is a rather difficult question given the diverse origin of the chiefdoms who are now merely grouped and referred to as the Northern Sotho. However, the authors appear to attribute this "failure" to be able to unite to the inferiority of the Northern Sotho, which they say "are considerably inferior in all respects to their brethren of Basutoland who had moved further South"³⁶⁰. These authors show the racial superior-inferior theory which has characterised most of the early works by Europeans. When using this publication as a source of information on Blacks, this stereotype of believing that there are some races which are superior to the others, should be taken into consideration. This becomes apparent when the author say:

Ethnologically speaking, all the Bechuana and Basuto are inferior to the Zulu races as regards physical development; but mentally, they seem to be superior to the latter, as they are keen traders, and possess great adaptabilities for learning in general, and especially with regard to languages. Although not as cruel as the Zulus, they are said to be of a more treacherous disposition and therefore not so reliable, and also not so reserved in character.³⁶¹

In the Short History of the Transvaal, the Commissioners also gathered information on the other chiefdoms which were originally non-Sotho, but were assimilated by the Sotho by either living among them or living next to them. This process of *sothonisation* has been discussed in the section on historiography with reference to the Ndebele chiefdoms which had a Zulu origin from Natal. Therefore the details about the historical background of these chiefdoms, how they came to settle in the Transvaal and how they were *sothonised*, will not be repeated here.

³⁵⁹ Short History of the Transvaal, p. 51.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁶¹ Ibid, p. 51.

As already pointed out, this short history on the Blacks of Transvaal, is an important source of information on the origin, history and development of the Blacks in general, and the Northern Sotho in particular, despite the shortcomings which were discussed thus far. There is however another aspect of this publication which also needs to be considered. By the time of its publication, there were no standard written Black languages like today. As a result the orthography of the words and names of the Blacks were made by the authors at their own discretion. Such words and names, according to the present language standards, are regarded as misspelled. But it should be born in mind that, even though we are able to detect the incorrectness of such words and names with the advantage of hindsight, the circumstances under which those Commissioners - among pre-literate societies - should be remembered. However, it is important to note that this language problem can hamper research and effective use of this publication as a source of information. For instance, the user may be unable to know which chiefdom is being referred to if he or she cannot recognise it because of misspelling.

In this publication there are quite a substantial number of words which are regarded as misspelled according to the present language standards. Here are some of them (with the correct ones in brackets): "Moletshi" (Moletši)³⁶², "Basuto" (Basotho), "Moramotshe" (Morwamotšhe), "Tulare" (Thulare), "Sekwatie" (Sekwati)³⁶³, "Malaboch" (Malebogo), "Tshoene" (Tšhwene), "Mathome" (Matome), "Gabush" (Kgaluši), "Tietatsalu" (Tauyatswala), "Mapeng" (Mapene)³⁶⁴, "Musima" (Mosima), "Sekop" (Sekgopo),³⁶⁵ "Palabora" (Phalaborwa), "Noepe" (Ngwepe), "Matekga" (Mathekga), "Modyela" (Mojela), "Lekgali" (Dikgale)³⁶⁶, "Mutaleroa" (Motlehalerwa/Batlhalerwa)³⁶⁷, "Kekaan" (Kekana), "Mashashaan" (Mashashane)³⁶⁸, "Masibi" (Masebe), and "Magopane" (Mankopane)³⁶⁹.

This is very problematic to a user of information or researcher who is foreign to Black languages. To the speaker of the affected languages, the problem is not serious because their familiarity with the words and the names referred to, may help them to know exactly what is being referred to. Related to this issue of misspelling of words, is the usage in this publication of references which are no longer

³⁶² Short History of the Transvaal, p. 19.

³⁶³ Ibid, p. 31.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 36.

³⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 39.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 48.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 54.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 55.

acceptable today. For instance, throughout the publication the Blacks are referred to as "natives" and the word "tribe" is also extensively used. The word "Kaffir" which is regarded to be offensive is also used in this publication. For example, "Entered into by the Committee appointed by the Honourable 'The Volksraad of Lydenburg Republic,' and the 'Matlatee **Kaffir** Chief, Sekwati',³⁷⁰.

In evaluating the Short History of Transvaal as a source of information, there are numerous secondary publications which can help. These secondary publications were written in various fields and they include anthropologists (e.g., W.D. Hammond-Tooke), academics (e.g., J.D. Krige) and historians (e.g., P. Maylam, P. Delius, H.O. Monnig and many others). While the authors of the Short History of Transvaal were officials who were inclined to execute government policies and further the interests of those who were in power, the authors of secondary publications were mainly interested in reconstructing the past and they did so by trying to be as objective as possible. The authors of the secondary publications used sources, such as the Short History, in order to reconstruct the past. Some of these secondary works (particularly those of Delius and Monnig) have been discussed in the section of historiography and therefore detailed descriptions will not be repeated here.

As already mentioned in the historiography, on the availability of literature on the Blacks in the Transvaal, Peter Delius observed that the writing of the "Transvaal Sotho" history appears sparse when set besides that of the Zulu or even the Southern Sotho.³⁷¹ He then divided the historical literature of the "Transvaal Sotho" into two main categories, which have been explained in the historiography section. Delius also emphasised the value of the literature on the Transvaal Sotho, despite its shortcomings: "Despite the flaws in the existing literature, it does not suggest that it is without value - ...if critically used, [it can] yield important material and provide suggestive insights".³⁷²

On the other hand, Monnig pointed out the difficulties encountered when using literature to reconstruct the past. Although he acknowledged that the literature of the "Transvaal Sotho" is fairly extensive, he maintained that it is not always quite clear which "tribe" or group of "tribes" is being described.³⁷³ He further stated that the literature is scattered through many journals or short notes and that hampers research.³⁷⁴ He pointed to the problem of language in which he says, much of the literature is in English, French,

³⁷⁰ Short History of the Transvaal, p. 32.

³⁷¹ P. Delius, The Land Belongs to Us, p.2.

³⁷² Ibid, p.3.

³⁷³ H.O. Monnig, The Pedi, p. v.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, p. v.

German, Dutch, Afrikaans and various "Transvaal Sotho dialects".³⁷⁵ This, according to him, results in most material being ignored or laboriously translated as few students are well conversant with these languages.

³⁷⁵ H.O. Monnig, The Pedi, p.6.

3.4. Publication of the British War Office: THE NATIVE TRIBES OF THE TRANSVAAL, 1905.

This publication was compiled in London, Britain, under the orders of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of South Africa and was prepared for the General Staff in the War Office. The military perspective from which this publication originated, immediately raises this question: for what purpose was it composed? This publication was composed in 1905, shortly after the Anglo-Boer War, when Britain was trying to consolidate her authority over her newly acquired territories in southern Africa. One of her main challenges was how best to control the Blacks who were by then not totally subjugated by the previous Boer governments, despite numerous wars which the Boers waged against Black chiefdoms³⁷⁶. The Blacks were regarded as a threat to any White government, hence the publication of this kind of document was deemed to have been necessary. This was compiled to guide any future military campaigns against the Blacks and to ensure that any threat by Black chiefdoms was eliminated. The information provided in this publication was to enable the White authorities to deal with any possible threat which might be caused by the Blacks, and (White) security was thus one of the principal purposes of this publication.

The first chapter of this publication is on the earliest distribution of the Blacks in South Africa. What is striking here is the Eurocentric approach which the authors displayed. They regard the arrival of Europeans as "the commencement of the historical period in South Africa"³⁷⁷, implying that there was no history before then, or the Blacks did not have history prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

The authors also maintained the European stereotype of racial superiority in which they regarded the "Bushmen [to be] very low down in the scale of civilisation"³⁷⁸. The authors continue with this obsession with racial division by saying that "the Bantu themselves show nearly all shades of physical and mental characters, intermediate between the pure negro, or Ethiop, and the much higher Hamitic or Semitic (Caucasian) types of mankind"³⁷⁹. The authors claim for example that the first Queen Modjadji was a light-coloured woman and that she was good-looking, and because of that, they believe that she probably had some European blood in her veins³⁸⁰. This racial theory of the authors of this publication is pointed out here in order to be able to evaluate this publication knowing the attitude and the perspectives from which the authors wrote.

³⁷⁶ The Native Tribes of the Transvaal, p.43.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 50.

The authors seem to have had very scant knowledge on the Black communities in South Africa as their categorisation reveals that. They divide the Blacks into the "Coast Tribes" which are also referred to as the "Zulu-Xhosa" or "Zulu-Kaffir", the "Interior Tribes" and "the Bantu living between the Kalahari and the Atlantic"³⁸¹. This categorisation is not convincing because the criteria used in categorising the Blacks are not clarified. However, the categorisation of Blacks will not be repeated here as it has been fully discussed in the previous section.

The authors of this publication admit that they know very little about the "native history during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries"³⁸². Because of this lack of knowledge unknown facts are often "conjectured", as in this case:

The exact connection between these Transvaal Basuto and those of the Basutoland cannot be definitely determined, nor is it known for certain whether the latter are indeed, as is generally supposed, descended from an offshoot of the Bechuana-Barolong family.³⁸³

Another case of uncertainty of the authors is shown regarding the whereabouts of the Bakwena of Moletši:

It is not certain whence [they] came, but as a crocodile(kwene)[sic] is their totem, it is possible that they are an offshoot of the Bakwena... in language and customs they differ from the Bechuana tribes far more than from the Basuto of Basutoland, and it therefore seems right to class them as true Basuto³⁸⁴.

What these authors know about the Blacks are the myths created by earlier Europeans of "internecine wars ... of the 'Mantatis' and the Zulus [who were] exterminating all the tribes in proximity ... under the military despotism of Chaka".³⁸⁵ This negative attitude towards the Blacks runs through this publication and should be born in mind when using this publication as a source of information. Every thing "Black" is regarded as evil and backward, while every thing done by the Europeans is regarded as good and progressive. For instance, regarding the struggles between the Boers and the Black chiefdoms, in 1879 the British came to "save" the Boers³⁸⁶ - because they were White Europeans.

³⁸¹ The Native Tribes, pp. 7 - 8.

³⁸² Ibid, p. 8.

³⁸³ Ibid, p. 45.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 47.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 8 - 9.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 10.

Regarding King Dingane's murder of Piet Retief and his party of 700 in 1837, these authors stated that they were "treacherously massacred"³⁸⁷ without balancing this with the fact that Dingane was concerned about protecting his land and people.

As already mentioned, one of the main aims of this publication was to provide information on the Blacks so that any possible security threat to the Whites could be prevented. One important thing in that regard was statistics on the Blacks. This publication provides statistics which would enable the White authorities to deal with any given threatening situation which the Blacks might cause. In this regard, the authors used the returns of the 1904 census in which they found that the total Black population in the Transvaal was 811 753 men, women and children³⁸⁸. The Blacks who were employed in "labour centres" were 133 285, of which 29 615 were from the Transvaal³⁸⁹. The Blacks in the Waterberg Division were 61 138³⁹⁰, 321 615 in the Northern Division³⁹¹ and 137 354 in the Eastern Division³⁹². To assist the White authorities to be able to gauge the military strength of the Blacks, sometimes the authors even gave statistics about the fighting men: 2 000 in the Northern Division³⁹³ and 30 000 in the Eastern Division³⁹⁴

Given the problem of categorisation, other problematic aspects regarding a selection of chiefdoms will be focused on. Writing on the Mapela chiefdom in the Waterberg (North-Western) Division, the authors again showed their anti-Black and pro-White attitude when referring to the "treacherous massacre of a party of immigrants in 1854"³⁹⁵. Encroachment and invasion by the Whites on the Black land is never regarded as wrong, but Black self defence is regarded as treachery. The Waterberg chiefdoms are generally regarded as having "a reputation for turbulence and treachery and they are still somewhat sullen in their demeanour"³⁹⁶. The "Basuto" (Basotho) of the Northern Division are said to resemble those in other parts, being distinguished by cunning rather than bravery in war, preferring to achieve their ends by diplomacy rather than hard fighting³⁹⁷. They are, however, of considerable intelligence, and readily assimilate modern civilised ideas to their own advantage, and in physique they are well built, though not so tall and powerful as Zulus and

³⁸⁷ The Native Tribes, p. 10.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁹¹ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁹² Ibid., p. 73.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 40.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 45.

Shangaans³⁹⁸. The authors give tips about the security and military perspectives in the Waterberg Division:

They are somewhat discontented, and would probably need but little provocation to give trouble, and the intricate and broken nature of the portion of the Waterberg which they inhabit might render their chastisement a matter of some difficulty.³⁹⁹

When using this publication as a source of information, it must always be borne in mind that the authors intended to provide information and guidelines about the chiefdoms which might give trouble to the White authorities. There were also those which were commended for being well-disposed to the Whites. Those who were likely to give trouble, were regarded as such mainly from previous experiences, and they should be watched. The Makgoba chiefdom needed to be watched, according to the authors, as "[t]hey have been warlike", and in 1858 they fought and defeated the Shangaans, while they have also repulsed an attack by the Modjadji and they also "rebelled" against the Boers in 1894⁴⁰⁰.

The Mmamathhola section of the Banareng chiefdom are said to have had a warlike history in which they obtained their place of residence by driving out its former inhabitants in 1840⁴⁰¹. The rapid increase of the number of the Bahananwa because of the return to Blauwberg of those who were scattered in 1894 war, was a source of concern to the authors of this publication. They were afraid that the Bahananwa would become as strong as they have been prior to the war and that fear was compounded by the fact that the Blauwberg range "is a natural fortress of great strength"⁴⁰². Just like the Bahananwa who gave the White authorities difficulties in 1894, the authors also regarded the Bapedi with the same fear. They felt that Chief Sekhukhune was likely to cause trouble because he was not satisfied as he was no longer regarded as the sole ruler of the Bapedi, as the British colonial government had recognised "Marichani" (Marishane) as an independent chief⁴⁰³.

The chiefs who were commended by the authors for being well-disposed to the White authorities, included Seripa Moloto, whose people were "well-behaved and content, and they evinced strong British sympathies during the war [of] 1899-1902"⁴⁰⁴. Chief Selaki Matlala of the Bakone, although he was said to

³⁹⁸ The Native Tribes, p. 45.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴⁰² Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

be addicted to drink, was friendly towards the Europeans and was said to be able to manage his people "satisfactorily". His people are said to be well-disposed to the government⁴⁰⁵. Chieftainess Modjadji II was also regarded as well behaved and had never shown trouble since the annexation of the Transvaal.

Besides providing information from a military and security perspectives, the authors of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal also focused on the administration of the Blacks. Chapter VIII⁴⁰⁶ focused on that subject and is subdivided into (A) Organisation of the Native Affairs Department⁴⁰⁷, (B) System of Land Tenure⁴⁰⁸ and (C) System of Taxation⁴⁰⁹. The running of the issues which affected the Blacks through the Department of Native Affairs, their land tenure and system of taxation, have all been discussed earlier in this essay under the records of the Commissioners as well as under the section of historiography. As a result, they will not be repeated here.

In the chapter entitled NATIVE WARS (Chapter IX), the authors refer to numerous armed conflicts by the Whites authorities (Boer, and later British) against the Black chiefdoms. Some of the conflicts referred to are outside the scope of this discussion as they involve the chiefdoms which are not focused on here, such as "Boer campaigns against Moselikatse"⁴¹⁰; "Expedition against Setyeli"⁴¹¹; "Swazi attack on Mapoch"⁴¹²; "Fruitless expedition against Katlakter, Baramapulana clan of Bavenda Tribe (Makhato's), 1865"⁴¹³; "Expedition against David Massow, 1885"⁴¹⁴; and "Campaign against Mpefu, 1898"⁴¹⁵. The attacks by the Whites on the chiefdoms which are relevant to this discussion are those against the Makapan's people (1854), Ba-Mapela (1858 and again 1868), Bapedi (1875-1879), Bahananwa (1894).

The detailed events of these campaigns will not be narrated here. What is striking in the authors' accounts is the complete subjectivity in favour of the White authorities in their attack on the Black chiefdoms. This pro-White/ anti-Black approach in this publication should be born in mind when using it as a source of information. The conscious bias of the authors further strengthen their intent of giving the Whites some guidelines about any possible threat by the

⁴⁰⁵ The Native Tribes, p. 49.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 94 – 99.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 94 – 95.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 96 – 98.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 98 – 100.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., p. 100.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 104.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 105.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 115.

Blacks. The attacks by the Whites were justified while the actions of the Blacks, whether carried out in retaliation or in self-defence, were never regarded by the authors as justifiable. For instance, in 1854 a hunting party of men, their wives and families, under Hermanus Potgieter, were killed by the Makapan's people.⁴¹⁶ Here the authors do not mention what could have led to that tragedy. Whether those Whites were encroaching on the Makapan's people's land or whether they were threatening it, is not mentioned. Even though the authors failed to hint or at least speculate on what could have driven the Makapan's people to kill those Boers, the authors felt that they were "treacherously murdered"⁴¹⁷. Therefore, they found it justifiable for Commandant General Potgieter - later joined by Commandant General Pretorius, and then Paul Kruger - to attack the "hostile natives" who were also "rebellious"⁴¹⁸.

Subjectivity in favour of the White authorities is also evident when it is said that in 1852 Chief Sekwati of the Bapedi, had been "punished" because his "tribe became more and more arrogant" against an "independent republic"⁴¹⁹ (that of the Boers in Lydenburg). To the authors the "independence" of the Bapedi is less important than that of the Boers, while the Bapedi deserved to be punished, regardless of the circumstances under which they had acted. The authors also pointed out that the failure to defeat Sekhukhune in 1879 by the British would have been a "scandal"⁴²⁰. The taking of sides by the authors is made vivid when referring to the Bapedi as "the enemy" against which all the attacks were "successful" in which "[o]ur loss was: two officers killed and four wounded,..."⁴²¹

The naked bias in these accounts also raises the suspicion of the accuracy of the statistics provided by the authors, particularly with regard to war casualties. In addition to the above loss which they regard as theirs, during the 1868 conflict involving Ba-Mapela chiefdom, the authors mentioned that only two "burghers" were killed and eleven wounded, while at least 300 of Mapela's men were killed⁴²². In the first conflict with the same chiefdom (1858), the authors reported that one Boer was killed while the Ba-Mapela lost about 800 men⁴²³. Although it may not be said with absolute certainty that these figures were not accurate, there are sufficient reasons to doubt them, given the blatant bias

⁴¹⁶ The Native Tribes, p. 103.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p. 103.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, p. 103

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, p. 107.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, p. 108.

⁴²¹ Ibid, p. 109.

⁴²² Ibid, p. 106.

⁴²³ Ibid, p. 104.

shown by the authors' accounts. This is what needs to be taken into consideration when using this publication.

The authors also provided final guidelines and tips regarding future actions against the Blacks under the sub-topic, CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN⁴²⁴. This is one of their principal purpose in this publication. These conclusions are based on the campaigns waged against the Black chiefdoms. One of the authors' conclusions is that of the "feeble resistance" and "lack of combination" of the Black chiefdoms in the Transvaal⁴²⁵. This conclusion is based on the fact that at the end, almost all the Black communities were subjugated. But this is rather misleading because the authors do not mention some factors which caused that "feeble resistance" of the Blacks, such as disarmament, the help which other Blacks gave to the Whites, etc. Another conclusion drawn by the authors is that, in a war, the Blacks continue to resist if they are still in possession of cattle⁴²⁶. If the cattle of a chiefdom are captured, the authors noted, that chiefdom would have no reason to continue fighting. As a result, the authors recommended that, when fighting the Blacks, the White authorities should always strive to capture the cattle from where they have been concealed⁴²⁷.

The authors of this publication also focused on the social customs of the Blacks in the Transvaal. This will not be discussed here because the subject has been fully discussed under the records of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners⁴²⁸. There is also an appendix in this publication on the strongholds⁴²⁹ in Black localities which were regarded as important in the event of wars against the Blacks. Discussion of this subject will be left to the next section which is on the publication, Native Strongholds and Locations of the Transvaal.

⁴²⁴ The Native Tribes, p. 116.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, p. 116.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, p. 118.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, p. 118.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, pp. 119 – 134.

⁴²⁹ Ibid, pp. 139 – 143.

3.5. Publication of the British War Office: NATIVE STRONGHOLDS AND LOCATIONS, 1907.

The preface of this publication indicates that it is similar in purpose and origin to the one discussed above (The Native Tribes of the Transvaal). This is because it was also compiled under the orders of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa, from the latest information available⁴³⁰ and was prepared for the General Staff, War Office. Therefore its authors recommended that it should be read in conjunction with the Native Tribes.⁴³¹ Compiled also from a purely military perspective, this publication was intended to provide information about the geographical locality of important Black strongholds (position for approach), tactics of the Blacks (attack, defence, etc.) and the previous experiences about how the Blacks resisted White invasion. This publication was intended to be used by the British colonial government in the Transvaal in order to facilitate the subjugation of Blacks by revealing their strengths, namely, their strongholds and defensive tactics. Therefore when using this publication as a source of information on Black chiefdoms of the Transvaal, and where possible, the Northern Sotho, it should be borne in mind that the authors were merely interested and focusing on strategic issues more than any thing else. As far as physical ability of the observers is concerned, this publication was made by the military experts as well as "foot soldiers" who had first-hand information about those strongholds. "This pamphlet has been compiled from reports furnished by reconnaissance parties and it gives account of some of the best known native strongholds."⁴³² This makes it credible and reliable as a source of information.

As already hinted, most of the strongholds described in this publication are those which had been scenes of wars between the White authorities and Black chiefdoms. The "Malabokh's" stronghold in the Blauwberg Mountains in the Northern Division, is famous for having been a scene of fighting in 1894, during the Malebogo-Boer War. The authors of this publication described the physical and topographical features of this stronghold by also describing the Eastern and Western sections of the Blauwberg range. The slopes, ridges and the geographical features of the range are clearly described. This was done to guide the White authorities in case a conflict erupted between them and the Bahananwa. Also of strategic importance, and therefore mentioned, were the sources of water. The two important streams are Bosetlha and "Geva-le-Muhlari"⁴³³. The authors provided this important information about water because the cutting off of the

⁴³⁰ British War Office, Native Strongholds and Locations of the Transvaal, London, 1907, p. iii.

⁴³¹ Ibid, p. vi.

⁴³² Ibid, p. iv.

⁴³³ Ibid, p. 11.

Bahananwa from their source of water in 1894, contributed to a certain extent, to their defeat.

Further information about that stronghold which the authors provided included:

The range is certainly rugged and broken, and almost impracticable for wheeled carriages, but there are certain approaches by which roads fit for guns and light carts could be made without great difficulty, while pack animals can traverse most of the native paths, and the hills are passable in many places by men on foot.⁴³⁴

This security related information is obviously essential for the accessibility to and mobility in this Bahananwa stronghold. The authors continued to describe the place by pointing out the chief's kraal, which they said was built on the northern side of the hill which is to be the only entrance to the interior⁴³⁵. Around the royal kraal there are caves which are covered with almost impenetrable bush which are said to be places to hide cattle and grain, and they are also wrapped with mystery as no one is allowed entrance. Therefore an important tactical tip, according to the authors, is to capture these caves which are used to conceal the national treasure.

In addition to providing information on the physical features of the stronghold which was at the disposal of the Bahananwa, the authors then described how to approach the Blauwberg. To reach Blauwberg, they pointed out two main routes, the one from Pietersburg via Senwabarwana, and the other one from "Piet Potgieters Rust" direct to Matlala's Location via Biltongfontein⁴³⁶. The authors also mentioned the paths used by Blacks which traversed the mountains, which could be used by packed animals and that easy roads fit for guns and carts could be made without any difficulty. They wrap up with tips regarding climate which they said was healthy in all seasons, except for malaria in summer months. Heavy fogs are said to have been prevalent and that was one of the factors which impeded the "Boer operations" in 1894⁴³⁷. It is interesting to note bias in observations in which the Boers' operations are said to have been impeded, as if those of the Bahananwa were facilitated by those climatic conditions. The subsequent narration about the 1894 war will not be repeated here, except to say that the description of the stronghold which was used by the Bahananwa in this publication, was necessitated by that very war.

⁴³⁴ Native Strongholds, p. 12.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, p. 13.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, p. 14.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, p. 19.

The stronghold in the Matlala's Location, according to the authors, is formed by a group of mountains dominated by a conical peak which rises to a height of "2 400 feet" above the surrounding plains⁴³⁸. Water is plentiful around the area. The stronghold can be reached from "Piet Potgieters Rust" via Hans Masebe's Location. The authors continued by giving strategic information about the area:

[T]his tribe, which is of Basuto origin, could put into the field over 2 000 fighting men, from those living in the location itself, while another section of the tribe, which could provide another 1 000 men, lives to the northward in the Blauwberg District on the [Mogalakwena River]... The number of firearms in their possession is very small... [and] the men are bad shots... A few bows and arrows would be used... the great majority of the natives would rely on firearms.⁴³⁹

Another stronghold to be described is that in Hendrik Masebe's Location, situated on the upper reaches of Mogalakwena River. The head kraal stands on the extremity of a spur, near the middle of a well-wooded valley⁴⁴⁰. The stronghold can be approached from "Piet Potgieters Rust" by the road which leads north-west through Hans Masebe's Location.

Another stronghold, the one in Modjadji's Location, is said to be situated between the Great Letaba and Middle Letaba Rivers, at the eastern foot of the northern continuation of the Drakensberg. The Molondozi River is described as having plenty water which is always available and grazing in the area is good for cattle. The principal roads traversing the area around the stronghold, are given: the main Buffels road from Pietersburg to the Birthday mine; the road which leads from the Birthday mine, crossing the Letaba River; the road leading southwards to the Molondodzi River; the road leading from the end of Modjadji's Nek over Letaba River; the road leading through Modjadji's Nek across Buffels to the Mayfield; and a wagon road leaving Buffels crossing over Mosunguluzi stream⁴⁴¹. These roads, according to the authors, "are passable for wheeled transport without any serious difficulty"⁴⁴².

⁴³⁸ Native Strongholds, p. 30.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, p. 31.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 33.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 35.

⁴⁴² Ibid, p. 36.

The most historically famous stronghold in the Eastern Division are those found on the "Luluberg" (Leolo) mountains. This historical significance was acquired by these strongholds as they were used by the Bapedi chiefdoms in their wars against the Whites. The authors describe Leolo Mountain as a range of some 40 "miles" in length, situated in the north-western portion of the Lydenburg District, between Steelpoort and Olifants Rivers⁴⁴³. The authors then described the historical importance of the strongholds in the Leolo range and the reason why they felt it necessary to provide information about it:

This range, which is the headquarters of the Ba-Pedi tribe, under the chieftaincy of Sekhukhuni, is of historical interest, as being the scene of several native wars, and of some severe fighting in the past, and, containing as it does, many natural fortresses which would very likely be used as a place of refuge by natives in future wars, it merits somewhat detailed descriptions⁴⁴⁴.

From the above quotation, the intent of the authors by this whole publication is made very clear, that they provided information in anticipation of future wars against the Blacks. This is very crucial when we use this publication as a source. After describing the peaks and the passes on the Leolo range, the authors mentioned the principal sources of water around Leolo as Lepellane River, Geluk's spruit, Mohlaletsi River (Seopele) Sand spruit, the Olifants River and the Steelpoort River⁴⁴⁵. The climate around Leolo was reported to be healthy with frequent heavy rains between October and April. In the higher parts of the mountains, horse sickness was unknown. This is important information which the attacking White authorities could use if hostilities broke out against the Bapedi.

The last stronghold of relevance to this essay is that in "M'Phatlele's (Mphahlele's) Location which is situated on the left bank of the Olifants River, immediately opposite the Bapedi country. This area is poorly watered and the sources of water are "Chunie's" (Chuene's) and Mphahlele's Rivers. The authors provided very little information on this area, mainly because it was not a scene of major wars like those of the Bahananwa or Bapedi. There are caves north-west of Naauwpoort which were formerly used for refuge by the Mphahlele chiefdoms. These caves were described as large and roomy, and had unlimited water supply⁴⁴⁶.

⁴⁴³ Native Strongholds, p. 37.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 37.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 41.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 104.

Under all the strongholds discussed thus far, the authors of Native Strongholds and Locations of the Transvaal, provide tactics which could be used by the White authorities in order to dislodge the Black chiefdoms from these trusted strongholds. These tactical tips are suggested under the sub-topic, TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS (NOTES), at the end of the description of each stronghold. The tactical suggestion given to those who might be attacking the Bahananwa in Blauwberg is that the best point for a base on the railway are either Pietersburg or "Piet Potgieters Rust"⁴⁴⁷. The Leokeng caves, where cattle and grain would probably be hidden, should be seized as early as possible and that there should be measures to prevent the Bahananwa from sending his cattle to his friends on the Mogalakwena River and also to prevent escaping. Communication could be maintained with the base at Pietersburg or Piet Potgieters Rust by means of heliograph, in which Loskop would be a suitable transmitting station⁴⁴⁸. If the operations on the mountain were to be protracted, aerial flights from cliff to cliff would prove most useful for sending supplies, water, ammunition etc., to various posts⁴⁴⁹.

For the Matlala Location stronghold, the capture of the peak that dominates the whole series of hills would demoralise the fighters there, as it was regarded with awe as the private property of the chief. The capture of cattle would probably lead to the abandonment of the location, according to the authors, and they felt that it was advisable to attack the enemy by surprise⁴⁵⁰. As for the stronghold in Hendrik Masebe's Location, the authors observed that the area was not in a defensible position and that the Blacks there, if attacked, might either cross the Mogalakwena River and take refuge in the Waterberg range, join his half-brother's (Han's) chiefdom, or they might retire northward into the mountains east of Mogalakwena⁴⁵¹. On the stronghold in Modjadji's Location, the authors believed that the best sites for camps were at the Molondodzi, Patata, Great Letaba and Nuanetsi Rivers⁴⁵². As far as the strongholds in the Leolo Mountains are concerned, the authors had this to say:

If it were possible to select the season of the year for an expedition, it would be advisable to arrive in the neighbourhoods of the mountains in May, when the country is healthy for men and horses and water completely plentiful... it would best not to operate in this district between November and

⁴⁴⁷ Native Strongholds, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 29.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 29.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 32.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, p. 33.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p. 36.

April, on account of the prevalence of malaria and horse sickness⁴⁵³.

About the transport which could best be used in attacks in the Leolo strongholds the authors said:

The transport of a force would naturally fall under two headings: First, that for use on the roads leading to the mountains, and secondly, that for use among the mountains and away from the main roads... The former would be wheeled transport of the ordinary South African type... For the second type, pack animals would be necessary⁴⁵⁴.

As already mentioned earlier, when using this publication as a source of information on the Blacks, its military and security perspectives should be born in mind. Its intent (purpose) to serve as a guideline to the White authorities for any possible attacks on Blacks, should also be noted.

The Short History of the Transvaal (1905), the Native Tribes of the Transvaal (1905) and the Native Strongholds and Locations of the Transvaal (1907), as already mentioned, were all published by the British officials following Britain's victory over the Boers in the South African War. The British as the new rulers, wanted to gather as much information as possible, including on the Blacks, in order to be able to formulate appropriate policies. All the three publications were specifically on the Blacks and emphasis was placed on how they could best be governed.

The Short History was published by the Department of Native Affairs, using the information gathered by the officials of that department. It gives background history of almost all the Black chiefdoms in the Transvaal, thereby enabling the British authorities to formulate appropriate administrative measures when dealing with those communities. The Native Tribes and the Native Strongholds are more or less similar in purpose as they have the same origin. Both were compiled by the War Office in London and their military perspective suggests that White security was the main aim of their composition. The previous military campaigns against the Black chiefdoms are used as lessons for the future White authorities in order to be able to deal with any threat posed by Blacks. This is clearly emphasised in the Native Strongholds in which the details of defence systems and military strategies of different Black chiefdoms are provided.

⁴⁵³ Native Strongholds, p. 45.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 49.

As already mentioned, there are numerous flaws in these publications, especially the problem of language and the errors of cultural differences. This, as already indicated, was because of their White, Eurocentric origin. However, despite these shortcomings, these publications are still very important today for any research work on the Blacks. They provide important background information on Blacks and how they reacted to early attempts to be placed under formal White authorities.

4. C O N C L U S I O N.

In this thesis, focus was on the records which were made by the government officials on the Blacks in the Transvaal between the years 1902 and 1907. Where possible, the Northern Sotho chiefdoms have been used as examples. The period under discussion was when the British had just defeated the Boers during the South African War and took control of the ZAR (together with the Orange River Colony) which was then ruled as a crown colony. The British administrative system and structures then supplanted the republican administration of the Boers.

New mechanisms were also put in place in order to administer the Blacks who were scattered by war and had to be resettled. The Department of Native Affairs was established in 1902 with the principal aim of Black administration. The Blacks who had been loyal to the British by fighting on their side against the Boers during the war, had high expectations as they hoped that the British, now in power, would reward their loyalty by taking care of their interests. The Blacks also hoped that the British would, on their behalf, retrieve the land which the Boers had forcefully taken from them. However, the expectations and hopes of the Blacks melted as the two White nations, the Boers and the British, began to move closer together, leaving out the Blacks. The closer co-operation between the two white communities led to the granting of the so-called "responsible government" to the Transvaal in 1907. The whole process of co-operation and uniformity among the previously British colonies and former Boer republics, led to the establishment of a central government in 1910, in the form of the Union of South Africa. This was an exclusively White government.

The records made by the British officials during the period 1902 to 1907 on the Blacks in the Transvaal consisted mainly of letters, notices, publications and reports. These were mostly made by the officials of the Department of Native Affairs, particularly, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, the District Commissioners and Sub-Native Commissioners. There were also records from other departments which also affected the Blacks.

Prior to the British take over of the Transvaal in 1902, the administration of Blacks was the responsibility of the Boer republican government. This means that the official records made on the Blacks at that time were made by the ZAR officials. Most of the records at that time were in Dutch which was the official language in that republic. Other records which are available on the Blacks in the Transvaal - as well as in other territories - in addition to the official ones made during the ZAR and British administrations, are

those which were made by the early European travellers (hunters, traders, etc.) and the missionaries.

All the records referred to were made from a Eurocentric perspective because the early travellers, the missionaries as well as the ZAR and British officials, had European origins. In addition to their Eurocentricism, each of those groups made records which were in line with their own pursued missions and interests. Therefore it was inevitable that the perspective of Blacks was greatly down-played in all these records. The role of Blacks as having equally participated in the making of history is lacking in these European-centred records. The Blacks were reduced to the periphery of history in which they were only referred to when they stood in the way of "White civilisation", and therefore had to be subjugated in order to be "shown the way". This Eurocentric perspective was perpetuated for an extensive period of time because the Blacks did not keep written records as they were not literate in the pre-colonial era. Their oral tradition could not match the White man's written word which endured for long periods and was always available for reference.

As already pointed out throughout the thesis, there were flaws and limitations evident in the official records which were discussed. Such shortcomings which involved subjectivity, cultural differences, language problems, distance and many others, were discussed and it was shown how they could affect the credibility and reliability of those records as sources of information. However, having said that, it does not mean that these records can just be dismissed as useless because of the shortcomings. They form an important historical foundation because, in addition to those of the early travellers, the missionaries and ZAR officials, they are the only documented primary sources of information on Blacks.

It has been seen in the section of historiography that there were some authors such as Odendaal, Maylam, Molema, Du Pre, Marks and Trapido, who took upon themselves the task of counter-balancing the Eurocentric perspective by writing from the perspective of Blacks. Among all the Sotho chiefdoms in the Transvaal, most secondary works are on the Bapedi. Other Northern Sotho chiefdoms received scant attention. There are historical reasons for this and some of them are mentioned in the section on historiography. The official records discussed in this thesis also greatly contributed in the massive accumulation of records on the Bapedi.

The Bapedi caught the attention of earlier record makers mainly because it was one of the first - if not the only one then - among which the missionaries, particularly those of the BMS, worked. The records of missionaries on the Bapedi, made this chiefdom to be known and gave it a special

importance. This attention later led to the colonial agents - the Boers and the British - to target the Bapedi. The Boer and British campaigns on the Bapedi also led to a lot of literature being written on this chiefdom, thereby further enhancing and spreading its name. That is why today there is a lot of material - primary and secondary - on the Bapedi of Chief Sekhukhune. Most authors then regarded the Bapedi as a paramount chiefdom to almost all the Northern Sotho chiefdoms. When the National Party formulated its "homeland" policies, the importance of the Bapedi was still apparent as their dialect, Sepedi, almost became a lingua franca of Lebowa (a homeland designed for the Northern Sotho chiefdoms). Sepedi, which was highly developed by the missionaries and became a written language before other dialects, overshadowed the other dialects and became equivalent to Northern Sotho. There are still other people who mistakenly refer to Northern Sotho as Sepedi. Therefore, the record should be put straight that in addition to the Bapedi chiefdom, which appeared to tower above the others because of the historical factors already discussed, there are other Northern Sotho chiefdoms such as the Bakone, Bahananwa, Balobedu, Bakwena, Batau and many others who were discussed throughout the thesis.

This case of the Bapedi is an example in which the abundant availability of sources on a particular subject can create a false impression that that it is the only element, or at least the only important thing. On the other hand, the lack of (or scant) records on the other chiefdoms, makes them non-existent or less important. This boils down to the one-sidedness of the historical writing in South Africa in general. It is not surprising that the Whites, with massive written records which were kept since the first Europeans landed here, have had so much space in history textbooks than the Blacks whose ancestors only passed their history from mouth to mouth. Those who were able to keep records, i.e., the Whites, were able to manipulate history in their favour, against those who only relied on human memory. However, it was only recently that it was proved that not only a written word can be regarded as an authentic source of information in reconstructing the past (after all many written records contain flaws). The archaeologists' excavations and the study of the artefacts have greatly contributed to uncovering much information, especially about the communities who did not keep written records. Such developments debunked most of the myths and helped to straighten some distortions which were consciously or unconsciously built into most historical writings.

These official records discussed in this thesis, have played a crucial role as sources of reference for the reconstruction of the past. The historical writing in South Africa drew heavily - if not entirely - from these records. The

historians had to apply certain techniques in order to sift information which they were using in their reconstructions. This process was helped to a large extent by the application of other social disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, archaeology and linguistics. Evidence obtained by methods from other disciplines also helped to fill the gaps, correct the distortions and explode the myths which were contained in earlier records. Therefore the importance of these records as the basis for the reconstruction of the past cannot be underestimated.

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