

FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

METSOALLE EA LESOTHO

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APRIL 1993

Lesotho Elections Rescheduled

The long-awaited general elections in Lesotho, which were originally scheduled for November 28, 1992, have been rescheduled for March 27, 1993. The announcement of the date was made in early January by the Chairman of the six-man ruling Military Council in Lesotho, Major General Phisoana Ramaema. As of this printing there is no information about whether or when the nomination date occurred, but at this time there are twelve political parties which have been confirmed to participate. They are: the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), Basotho National Party (BNP), Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP), Popular Front for Democracy (PFD), Lesotho Labour Party (LLP), Kopanang Basotho Party (KBP), Lesotho Education Party, Hareeng Basotho, Liberal Party of Lesotho (LPL), United Democratic Party (UDP), National Independence Party (NIP), and the United Party.

The elections, which will be the first held in the country since 1970, were postponed at the end of last year due to computer problems and difficulties surrounding the compilation of an accurate list of voters and constituency boundaries. A final list of voters was scheduled for publication at the end of December and the election date was to be set shortly thereafter. The ballots for the election are being printed in Copenhagen, Denmark as a gift from the Government of Denmark.

On the issue of migrant workers and the vote, it was decided that Basotho citizens working outside the country will have to come to Lesotho to cast their votes, the exception being those Basotho who are working in diplomatic missions abroad. An existing electoral law, which prohibited the holding of an election in Lesotho on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday was altered in order to make it possible for migrant workers to return home and vote.

(February 19, 1993 – In a conversation with a spokesman at the Lesotho Embassy today, it was confirmed that the March 27 date still stands and that preparations for elections on that date are in progress. ED)

UPDATE: As this issue goes to press, we have learned that the official nomination day for the upcoming elections was January 28, 1993 and the process went well. According to the Lesotho Embassy information, only BCP and BNP fielded candidates from all 65 constituencies. The other parties

fielded candidates as follows:

MFP - 51	UP - 2	UDP - 9	LEP - 1
KB - 4	LLP - 4	NIP - 2	
HB (Hareeng Basotho) - 13	Liberal Party of Lesotho - 1		
PFD (Khoetsa ea Sechaba) - 17			

There are seven independent candidates.

Also in preparation for the elections and what the Military Council intends to be a "smooth handing over to the newly elected administration," it was decided that the Council of Ministers should be dissolved. As of 10 February 1993, nine members were to have completed their duties. Maj. General Ramaema expressed his appreciation to all outgoing Ministers, especially for service during a time of such difficulty. He also stated that all outgoing Ministers will receive their full terminal benefits. New ministerial allocations were announced as follows and will exist until the election has been decided:

Hon. Col. A. L. Jane: Water, Energy & Mining, Agriculture, Cooperatives and Marketing, Justice & Prisons, Law, Constitutional & Parliamentary Affairs

(continued on page 2)

King Letsie Speaks Out

King Letsie III says he was forced against his will to ascend the throne and that he is just temporarily holding the position while the country's leadership is recovering. The 30-year-old King sent letters to the Head of Churches and the police force, in which he claimed, "It was not the will of the Basotho nor my will. The King of this nation and the Head of this country is my father, King Moshoeshoe II, and I believe the nation shares the same view." According to a recent article, Maj. General Ramaema has called on all politicians to advise the government on what to do in response to the King's statement. [The Mirror, 22 January 1993]

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

It was hoped that this newsletter would be full of information about a successful election and peaceful transition to democratic rule in Lesotho but that is unfortunately not the case. Instead you will find information about some of the FOL-supported projects and the little bit of information that is available leading up to the March elections. Fortunately, there is nothing alarming to report on drought conditions, since relief efforts have been helpful and some rain has fallen. The long term prospects are still quite uncertain. Hopefully, we will receive information from the embassy about an improvement in this year's growing season for the next newsletter.

The Board would like to acknowledge the efforts of Brad Rea for his work as the Lesotho Highland Water Project contact person and Wade Dallagrana for his work with Trickle-up. The last Board meeting was like a breath of Lesotho mountain air, with the members having a chance to expand into discussions of fundraising and future goals now that the burden of maintaining some of these projects has shifted. It is good to feel that the base of operations is expanding and including more people.

The Board is currently looking for someone who is willing to be the liaison between FOL and the Lesotho Embassy in trying to maintain a list of Basotho currently in the U.S. Please call or write to Don or Scott and offer your time! We are also looking for members who are knowledgeable and/or experienced in fundraising as we begin to think about raising outside money to support our efforts. The Board would like to start increasing our contributions, particularly to projects like the scholarship program, and would like to see more money coming to us in the form of contributions or earnings from fundraising events or marketed Lesotho-related items. An FOL member, Mr. Emmett Woods, arranged to receive a matching grant from his employer for a contribution made to an FOL-supported project. If your place of business has an employer contribution program, please keep Friends of Lesotho in mind!

I am always looking for articles, creative writing and interesting stories from Lesotho to print. Letters to the Editor and comments/suggestions about Board activities are also encouraged. For those members who wrote on your membership forms of your willingness to contribute to the newsletter, I hope to be contacting you in the spring for help with the summer issue. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

The idea of a Friends of Lesotho event; a reunion of sorts, is constantly raised. If you have any ideas or suggestions about how this might come to pass, speak up. It is nice to think about our growing membership all coming together.

Balang hantle,
Lisa Labella Mitchell

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome!

We have learned from the Lesotho Embassy that 'Ntate T. E. Kitleli arrived in the United States and became the new ambassador from Lesotho on January 11 1993. FOL anticipates a continued co-operative and friendly relationship with the Embassy and the new ambassador. Welcome to Washington to Ambassador Kitleli and his family!



Regrets

FOL regrets to announce that 'Ntate Tseliso Thamae will not be returning to his position as the Lesotho Ambassador to the U.S. 'Ntate Thamae was involved in a serious automobile accident in Lesotho late last year and is undergoing rehabilitation in the U.S. for injuries received in that accident. I'm sure I can speak for the membership in wishing 'Ntate Thamae a speedy recovery and the best of luck in his future endeavors.

Lesotho Elections Rescheduled

(continued from page 1)

Hon. Col. M.V. Mokone: Tourism, Sports & Culture, Interior Chieftainship Affairs and Rural Development, Trade and Industry

Hon. Lt. Col. Habi: Lesotho Highlands Water, Health
Hon. Major L.P. Malefane: Employment, Social Welfare and Pensions, Information and Broadcasting, Works, Transport and Communications

Hon. Mr. A.L. Thoahlane: Finance; Planning, Economic and Manpower Development, Foreign Affairs, Education

It was announced that the remaining members of the Council of Ministers would "return to the barracks after the elections or retire."

[FOL appreciates the detailed and timely updates from Councillor P.J. Makhetha of the Lesotho Embassy.]

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

Quiet Road

Driving a one lane path at 9,000 feet
twelve hours to destination

Scattered one and two room houses of mud and thatch
people spading the hopeless soil - ever renewing faith.

At each homestead a couple of chickens, perhaps a donkey, a garden that has not
come alive in these drought years.

Flagged down. "Lumela, Ntate, u phela joang, u ea kae?"
A chat for the sake of it.

Looking up 500 feet a man dressed in Basotho blanket on his way. Where is he
going? The next little group of mud and thatched houses is two hours. It will lay
deep in a glen or be scattered along a narrow ledge overlooking a sheer rock face that
falls away for a quarter mile.

Three miles further on - at ten miles an hour - a lone herd boy dressed in loin cloth,
Basotho hat, carrying a staff. Barefoot. He cannot be more than seven. Six hungry
cows mind his sharp whistles and well-targeted stones. Where is he from ? Where is
he going ?

For the summer he will stay up here (eating wild plants, drinking from shrinking
springs and sleeping in caves).

If only it would rain. The boy's little herd goes further and further in search of
pasture. He smiles broadly and waves.

Thirty miles on, the road has taken us via switchbacks to a point in a canyon 300 feet
over the region's dying river,
two hundred feet wide with the remaining shallow stream a narrow meandering path.

Sack laden donkeys crossing under the watchful eye of an old man. Where are they
going? From whence have they come? A slowly shouted and distinctly pronounced
"Lumela Morena." It rolls and echoes its way upward.

Ten miles on at eight miles per hour - another vehicle
some jockeying, some backing, some edging in 4-wheel drive. We get by without the
outside rig plunging 2,000 feet to a rocky grave.
Smiles, waves, "Kea leboha, sala hantle 'Ntate."

Fifteen miles on. A little girl waves us down.

"Lumela sir, u phela joang ? " "Lumela ausi, u ea kae?" To the clinic sir.

Why ? My leg.

We carry her for an hour. Here sir. Here ? "Ea 'Ntate."

The clinic; mud and thatched and round. "Kea leboha 'Ntate. "

Twenty miles on - a view of 100 miles. Endless blue skies, clean, still, pure.

The grandeur of it; striking, regal, majestic southern
Africa

incredible cliffs, glens, gorges and sheer rock islands rising 500 feet out of the dry
canyon floor.

Destination in darkness

St. Francis Mission. Assisi 1000 years ago, the Name of the Rose.

Sudden student greetings in the pitch dark.

Further on, Sisters and Peace Corps teacher.

A meal by candle light in the rectory, prepared in the night just for a guest.

Morning.

Look, look from this roof top of Africa

look from this cathedraled pinnacle in the Mountain Kingdom.

Look from Lesotho down the silent canyons toward Transkei, toward Natal, toward the northeastern Cape.

Listen, listen to the wind,

Listen to revered ancestors watching over their people and whispering of the new arrival.

Two days of celebration and thanks

special masses, gifts, traditional dances, choir upon choir singing especially composed tributes. Powerful rhythms, flawless harmony - a cappella.

Testimonies, smiles, hearty laughter, thank you, thank you, thank you for the two years this Peace Corps teacher has selflessly given. The things that really count, can't be counted.

Village women coming and going - gifts carried on their heads for the celebration.

Slow, deliberate, gently swaying steps. A chicken, some maize, peaches, cabbages, steamed bread and mealie meal.

Ever spontaneous smiles and love sentences spoken in song, accompanied by muffled drums.

Eyes, eyes; eyes

eyes of the holy Sisters and Fathers, eyes of the fellow teachers, eyes of the grounds keepers and cooks, eyes of the visiting villagers and most of all eyes of the students. The greatest of these is love.

Full and overflowing tears

One by one shyly getting me aside, "we love her sir, she has walked these places with us, she has taught us so well, we call her Angel. Sir, she doesn't want to leave with you, bring us another just like her. "

As the hours progress the shy expressions of student pride - "do you like our beautiful church, do you like our pretty uniforms?" "I am going to pass my exams, sir." "My English is good because she taught us well."

Ancient words come back - "If anyone would be first, they must be the very last and the servant of all."

I am proud, very proud of this Peace Corps teacher. Indeed, I am proud of all Peace Corps Volunteers scattered throughout this Mountain Kingdom.

Permanent Christmas in the hearts of these people on the edge of the great Maluti and on the edge of life.

Grace, Gratitude, Joy and Innocence.

Love in the winds of this place in the sky.

Listen, listen to a people and a place where

people have time for each other and

there is security in family and community.

respect and courtesy are alive between the generations and

sharing is still a virtue.

Life is a spiritual thing and

being is as important as doing and having.

The high Maluti

putting our worries, wants, pride, possessions and rivalries into perspective.

Showing us the humanness of which we are capable.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Donovan and Carol Russell

Update: FOL Supported Projects

FOL BOARD MEMBERSHIP ELECTIONS

As is required by the FOL by-laws, we will be holding elections for membership to the Board of Directors in October 1993. The Board is asking all members to submit nominations by May 1, 1993. You may nominate yourself or someone other than yourself, but please provide a bit of information about your nominee so we can put it in the summer newsletter. According to the by-laws, nominations are made for Board members and the Board itself decides who will assume the different positions. Some of the elected members will be at large, and may not necessarily live in the Washington area. There are seven Board positions and they are filled in the present as follows:

Don Spicer: President, Treasurer
Scott Brumburgh: Vice President, Secretary
Lisa Labella Mitchell: Newsletter Editor
Bill Dunn: Membership Data Base
Mantai Murray: at large
Corey Bent: at large
Ian Duncan: at large
Ted Hochstadt: legal advisor
Tom Carroll: former Board member

Please make your nomination(s) and send to FOL by May 1, 1993.



TRICKLE-UP

FOL received a letter from Don Delahanty in early January, acknowledging the 1992 \$500 donation to TU and thanking FOL for its continued support. Mr. Delahanty described a recent meeting with Ntate Kaleb Sello, the executive director of the Lesotho Council of NGOs, in which they discussed strategies for expanding the work of Trickle-Up in Lesotho. Mr. Sello agreed to distribute information about TU to interested parties and programs in Lesotho and to talk with the people at UNDP about enhancing TU's efforts. Mr. Delahanty enclosed a business report describing how contributions are distributed to projects in Lesotho. Included was an application for a second \$50 "grant" from a fruit and vegetable project which has demonstrated growth and hopes to expand. (Update on TU activities was provided to me by Wade Dallagrana, the Friends of Lesotho/Trickle-Up project person. Wade assures me that dealing with one project takes very little of his time and is satisfying to him. Please come forward and volunteer your time. . .there's lots to do! -ED)

BOITEKO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

After many months of silence, FOL President Don Spicer has finally heard from this well-known and well-established Basotho women's association. It is hoped that this new dialogue will produce information and ideas that we can review and perhaps support with contributions. Don will hopefully have detailed information for the next newsletter.



VOLUNTEER LIAISON COMMITTEE/ WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR PROJECT

FOL received a REPORT TO CONTRIBUTORS from the WID Calendar Project which announces the printing and distribution of the calendar of "Outstanding Basotho Women". This calendar, which includes photographs as well as text in both English and Sesotho, will be distributed free to 80 primary and secondary schools reaching 20,031 students, 14,167 of whom fit the target market of young Basotho girls who will be making decisions about life choices. The following Basotho women were featured in the calendar:

- Mrs. Mamliboho Mphuthing: a teacher at St. Mary's
- Dr. Mphu Ramatlaping: possibly the only Mosotho female physician
- M'e Manthoto Koela: founder of Harantsilonyne, a women's association which aids needy children and the elderly
- M'e Mankomo Mohlapiso: a nutrition assistant
- M'e Mpho Mofolo: an attorney practicing law in Lesotho
- M'e Matsoanelo Mothamahane: nurse and village extension worker

Peace Corps Partnership has allocated additional funding for a second printing of this calendar, providing enough calendars to actually sell. They have been sold at the Peace Corps office, the Lesotho National Council of Women Vocational School, Women In Business Office, the American Embassy and in a few small villages near Maseru. Don Spicer is looking into the possibility of FOL having these calendars available to buy but, realistically, this won't happen until well into 1993. FOL will also investigate making a contribution to a 1994 calendar and the possibility of being supplied with an order to make available to the membership. Write or call FOL for more information, and leave a message on the machine if you are interested in placing an order.

UNDP STAFF EDUCATION

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UNDERWAY, 4 EXEMPLARY STUDENTS CHOSEN

by Scott Brumburgh

FOL has initiated a long-term scholarship program with the Lesotho United Nations Staff Education Fund (UNSEF). The initial funding of \$1,000.00 for 1992 is supporting four students selected from the numerous candidates requesting assistance through UNSEF.

UNSEF is supported by the entire UN system, the Lesotho government and the Diplomatic Corps. It was begun in 1989 with three students sponsored by donations from individuals and private business. In 1991-2, 30 students were funded. The Fund focuses on students moving from grade 7 into Form A and those progressing from Form C into Form D, where the drop off rate is the highest according to statistics. Capable and financially needy students, primarily from rural areas are targeted.

Scholarships are provided for one year and renewal is based on maintenance of good academic standing. UNSEF and FOL are therefore committed to supporting sponsored students through to completion of studies if the students continue to do well. All four students below are aware that FOL is their sponsor. Reports on their progress in 1992 is due soon, and results will be printed in a subsequent newsletter.



Student's Name: MOTOAI SIMON MAKHANYA
Student's School: BERENG HIGH SCHOOL, MAFETENG
Background Information: A 16-year-old boy (1992) with two brothers and a sister. Attended school at St. John's Anglican Primary School in Mafeteng, where he went up to Class 7, passing with distinction. Father retired from the mines in S. Africa and unable to provide further education fees for Simon. With the grant from FOL, Simon's high school education can now continue. When we last heard from the UN Staff Education Fund representative, Simon was sitting for Form 3 exams.



Student's Name: LIKHANG RAMONYATSI
Student's School: BETHESDA HIGH SCHOOL, MAPHUTSENG, MOHALE'S HOEK
Background Information: An 18-year-old boy with three brothers and two sisters. The eldest child and the only one attending school. Attended St. Stephen's Primary School in Mohale's Hoek up to Class 7. Due to financial difficulties, was forced to leave classes in 1987. Father unable to continue in the mines; family split up making Likhang in charge of caring for his siblings. Has proven himself by his activi-

ties in his village, working closely with a UN volunteer in the communal gardens. Noted as a hard-working and brilliant student. Is now performing well in Form C.



Student's Name: THABISO SEKHOBE
Student's School: MASERU HIGH SCHOOL
Background Information: A 17-year-old boy, the middle one of five children. Attended Itekeng Primary School where he was a first class scholar. Mother a widow, struggling to re-establish a machine knitting business begun by her husband. Thabiso is in his final year of high school and hopes to attend the University or the Centre for Accounting Studies.



Student's Name: QUEEN SEKHOBE
Student's School: MASERU HIGH SCHOOL
Background Information: A 14-year-old girl, younger sister to Thabisco. Also attended Itekeng Primary School, obtaining a first class pass in 1990. Has been sponsored by UNSEF for two years; is presently in Form B. Likes science and book-keeping and wishes to train to be a doctor.

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LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT

by Brad Rea

Bill Phelps, an Oregon Wisconsin hydro-geologist and former PCL Volunteer, and I have agreed to alternately research and contribute articles on the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) to the Friends of Lesotho (FOL) newsletter. Although brief, this initial effort is intended to provide individual access to LHWP information for those with more than a passing interest in the project, and to illustrate the scope of the system as it exists today.

The last time I saw Lesotho was in early 1984 as my wife Beth and I hiked down into Natal from the Sani Pass border post. In those days, to uninformed PCV's as us, the LHWP was just another long-rumored international development scheme. Today, the LHWP seems to be well past the design phase, and has progressed into the initial construction phase.

The accompanying project map should provide some insight as to how large of an impact the project will have on the interior regions of Lesotho. For example, Tunnel 1 of Phase 1A is planned to be 35 kilometers in length and will have a diameter of 4.5 meters. This tunnel will be cut primarily from

sandstone and siltstone formations which underlay both Lesotho and the RSA. The Katse Dam, which will supply water to the tunnel, will be 180 meters high at its crest, with a crest-width of 700 meters. The volumetric supply rate from the dam to the tunnel is listed as 18.2 cubic meters per second (cms, m/s). Final plans call for a total LHWP system delivery capacity of 70cms. The Phase 1A hydropower station is intended to have an initial capacity of 70 MW. The estimated project cost in 1987, referenced to that time, was 2.82 billion U.S. dollars (\$2,820,000,000).

The purpose of the project is twofold: to ultimately divert and deliver 70 cms to agricultural regions in the southern Transvaal in exchange for substantial annual royalties to the Government of Lesotho (GOL), and to produce for virtually all of Lesotho's electrical power needs. These objectives are intended to be met by utilizing the principal renewable resource which Lesotho possesses, water, the bulk of which will be provided by the Senqu River flow system.

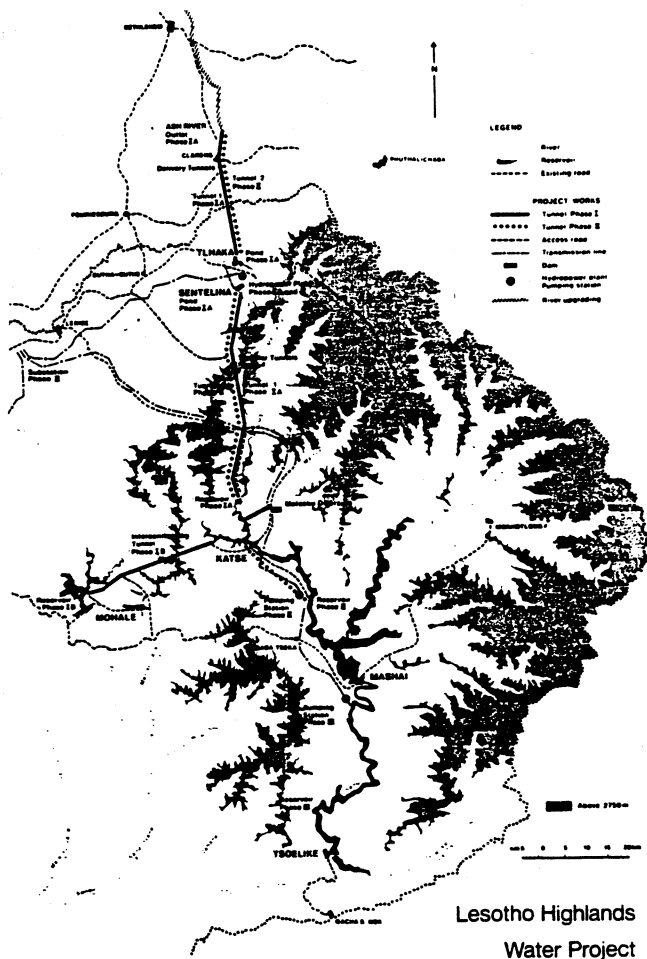
Currently, the LHWP information which I possess is limited to various GOL publications and brochures designed to publicize and promote the project and its expected benefits to Lesotho. The targeted readership of these publications appears to include funding and investment agencies, donor governments, engineering groups, and other interested persons both inside and outside of Lesotho.

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) publishes a quarterly update on the LHWP which is called *Mehloli/Sources*. The four (4) issues which I have are glossy, full of color photography, bi-lingual, informative but non-technical, and very memory provoking. Each issue of *Mehloli/Source* stands alone in its description and overall review of the LHWP to date. For those who may be interested in subscribing to this publication, the cover price is one-maloti (M1.00) per issue. Inquiries may be addressed to:

The Editor, Mehloli
Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
P.O. Box 7332
Maseru, Lesotho
Southern Africa

The most recent issue of *Mehloli/Source* which I have is Vol. 3, No. 3, Third Quarter 1991. The editor at that time is listed as Sello Sephoko. The circulation manager is listed as Motumi Ralejoe, telephone 322-440.

It is assumed that with the "vast" readership enjoyed by the FOL newsletter, an individual with reasonably current, and hopefully first-hand, LHWP information may be identified. Perhaps a PCV has been detailed to an in-country assignment specific to the LHWP in an engineering, environmental impact, or economic development capacity. If you are such a person, please feel free to contact me at (H) 907-272-9714 or (O) 907-271-4700. I welcome any input and information which will make this column more informative to both FOL newsletter readers and myself concerning the LHWP.



UNDP Staff Education Scholars



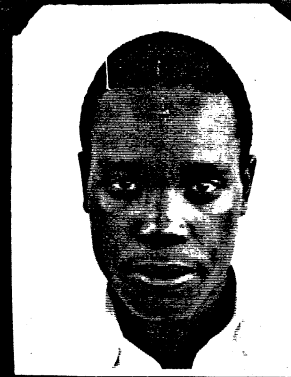
Queen Sekhobe



Thabiso Sekhobe



Motoai Simon Makhanya



Likhang Ramonyatsi

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