

# FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

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# METSOALLE EA LESOTHO

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SEPTEMBER 1993

## Lesotho Holds First Multiparty Elections in Over 22 Years



**O**n elections described by international observers as free and fair, the citizens of Lesotho elected the 74-year founder of the Basutoland Congress Party, Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle, as its new Prime Minister. On March 27th, approximately 720,000 people in 65 constituencies made their mark in over 1,700 polling stations throughout the country. The results of the election brought Dr. Mokhehle and his Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) party to power and returned the Lesotho military to its barracks. In what some observers described as a "landslide," the BCP won all of the 65 constituencies and roughly 55 percent of the popular vote. Lesotho news reports indicated that the BCP won 400,000+ votes while its main rival, the Basotho National Party (BNP) only received 120,000 votes. The BNP leader, Chief Ret'selisitsoe Sekhonyana lost even his home constituency of Mount Moorosi. The remaining 100,000+ votes were shared by other political contenders, including the Marematlou Freedom Party, the Popular Front for Democracy, and the Hareeeng Basotho Party.

Despite post-election claims by the BNP of vote-rigging and widescale fraud, the military leaders headed by Major-General Phisoana Ramaema, Chairman of the Lesotho Military Council, handed back power to the popularly elected government of Dr. Mokhehle in a swearing-in ceremony in the national stadium on April 2nd. A crowd estimated at over 30,000 people attended the ceremony.

Lesotho press reports indicate that on the eve of the official "handover" ceremony, Major-General Ramaema was

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## New Cabinet Formed

**U**nder the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle, the new BCP Government has formed a cabinet of twelve Ministers. The swearing-in ceremony took place on April 8th at the Royal Palace in Maseru. Also during the ceremony, the Queen-Mother, Her Majesty Queen 'Mamohato Bereng Seeiso swore allegiance to the Constitution and "not to involve the monarchy in politics or take sides in political affairs..." (The King of Lesotho, King Letsie III,

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## International Monetary Fund Notes Lesotho's Economic Growth

**L**esotho has been granted approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for another loan worth about 10 and a-half million dollars under a continuing economic program.

The IMF says Lesotho has achieved its major objectives under the program, which began in 1991. The country has changed its budget from large deficits to a surplus and achieved economic growth of 2.4 percent, despite drought.

But the IMF says Lesotho's inflation rate remains at 17 percent. It blames the high rate on the cost of goods from South Africa and drought-induced food price increases.

In the coming fiscal year, Lesotho hopes to boost economic growth to 7 percent, reduce inflation and increase international reserves. It also plans to implement agricultural reforms in a bid to increase food production.

*(IMF/Lesotho Press Release - 8/3/93)*

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

**T**he bulk of the writing in this issue of *Friends of Lesotho* has been done by Mike D'Adamo, a former PC/Lesotho volunteer and an 8-year employee of Catholic Relief Services. Mike very graciously agreed to contribute these articles since the newsletter was already very much delayed (and the editor was not making any headway!). Thank you, Mike, for your hard work and for your timely arrival back to Baltimore. And for myself, many apologies for not disseminating this information in a more timely manner. We have all been hard at work and are desperately shorthanded here at FOL headquarters! Please let us know what you can do to help us out.

In the week prior to the final printing of this issue, Scott Brumburgh and Lisa Labella had a productive and enthusiastic meeting with Ambassador Kitleli, Councillor Lithebe, and First Secretary Lekhala. An in-depth article and some ideas inspired by it will follow in the next newsletter. Of particular note is that Ambassador Kitleli has reported our grassroots efforts to support the Basotho people to Lesotho's new government. He is anxious to perpetuate the cooperative relationship that has been established between the Lesotho Embassy and FOL. Ntate Kitleli described an air of cooperation and compromise in Lesotho during this time of transition and great pride. This year's October Independence Day festivities will be memorable, indeed!

A few corrections from our last issue:

- The names of Queen Sekhobe and Thabisco Sekhobe, two of the UNDP Staff Education Scholars were inadvertently switched under their photographs.
- In the article about the "Women In Development" Calendar, the description of Dr. Mphu Ramatlaping as possibly the only female Mosotho physician was incorrect. There are, in fact, others. Many apologies.

Lisa Labella, *Editor*



From left: M'e Lisebo Khoali-McCarthy, former President of Lesotho Council of NGO's, and Ambassador Kitleli at a recent informal gathering at the home of Scott Brumburgh and Carolyn Long.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *10-Year Reunion Planned!*

RPCV's, PC staff, and trainers who participated in the December 1981-February 1982 training program in Roma, Lesotho and/or in the Lesotho CAST held in Capahosic, Virginia during the week of November 1st, 1981, are invited to the first official 10-year reunion of this distinguished group. Bill Boeddiker (Roma, 1981-1983) has agreed to organize the event but needs your help in getting the ball rolling. If you have any suggestions on where, i.e. east or west coast, the reunion should be held or during what season, please contact Bill as soon as possible. Bill can be reached at (415) 775-1847. You can also write to him at 1683 Hayes Street; San Francisco, California 94117. You should know that Bill is already pushing for Easter Weekend, 1994, in San Francisco, for obvious reasons.

### *Congratulations!*

It has been widely reported that the Embassy of Lesotho is one of only two embassies in Washington, DC that consistently pays its parking tickets! Helang!

## FOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Angola or Kazakhstan: Which Way Peace Corps?

by Mike D'Adamo

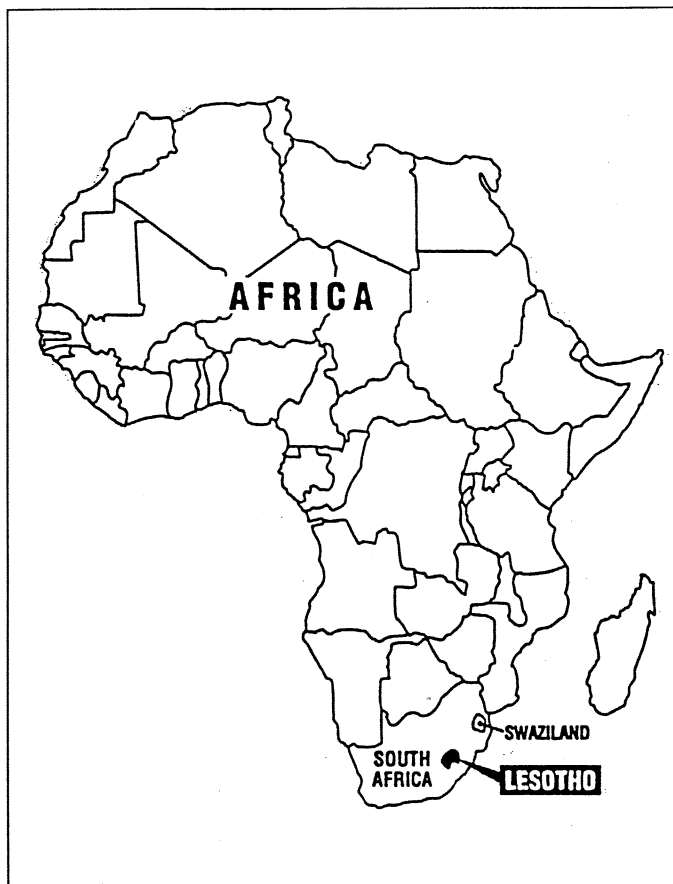
**O**n a recent edition of InterAction's "Monday Developments," Peace Corps advertised openings for Country Directors in 17 countries in eastern and central Europe, and in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the size of Peace Corps programs in Africa, including Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, has continued to shrink since the late 1980's. Those familiar with Africa's crying need for institutional development and human resource development view Peace Corps' apparent shift away from Africa and towards Europe with justifiable concern.

Despite evidence to the contrary, RPCV's have held firmly to the notion that Peace Corps was not simply another agent of the U.S. Government; the mission of the Peace Corps

somehow transcended foreign policy interests and served the noble purpose of building human bridges between the north and south. Of course, I remember receiving Ronald Reagan's Christmas letter when I was a PCV in southern Africa in the early 1980's; his description of PCV's as "the human face of U.S. foreign policy" was as unnerving as it was predictable. But still, in our own little corners of the Peace Corps world, we felt removed and protected from the geopolitical shenanigans of the Reagan era.

America's interest in Africa ended with the Cold War in the waning months of the Bush administration. The enemy [Soviets and Cubans] disappeared, and the U.S. redefined its strategic interests. "Democratization" became the foreign assistance buzz-word, and "free market creation" and "enterprise development" became the high-priority program areas.

The link between the U.S. State Department's new strategic policy and Peace Corps' emergency support in the newly independent states is compelling. The new AID Director, J. Brian Atwood, recently announced that 58 out of 108 AID missions would soon be closing. Africa will be hit the hardest. Atwood also suggested that AID might get more bang for its foreign-assistance buck in Russia by opening sub-missions in provincial towns. Peace Corps, too, has adopted a similar strategy with sub-offices in Vladivostok and Saratov. I suppose the strategy makes sense when you consider the challenge of supervising more than 500 PCV's in an area larger than the United States.



Peace Corps' escalating investment in eastern and central Europe is worrisome for several reasons. First, to the extent that the new focus on Europe results in a diminished presence in the traditional areas of Africa, Latin America and Asia, some RPCV's feel betrayed and disillusioned. Peace Corps' identity, and so much of our own, is grounded in the work we carried out in village schools in southern Zaire, or in coastal cooperatives in Kenya, or in mountain clinics in Lesotho. Second, even if Congress continues to appropriate adequate financial resources to support new programming in Europe, Peace Corps' human resource capacity to staff new offices and to train new volunteers is, by all accounts, stretched beyond the breaking point. Lowering management

and accountability standards in the rush to establish itself in so many new locations will almost certainly create long-term credibility problems for Peace Corps. Third, the level of training and experience required of new PCV's headed for Europe — where many are engaged in sophisticated privatization programs — has created a new type of volunteer; some prefer the more professional titles of "consultant" and "advisor."

Peace Corps has a new director. Perhaps Carol Bellamy will be able to create an environment more favorable to Peace Corps' traditional target areas. Long-term strategic planning based on a global analysis of basic needs and potential impact would be a good place to start. U.S. foreign policy interests should continue to inform, but never direct, Peace Corps investment decisions.

A final thought on criteria to apply in selecting Peace Corps countries. Perhaps special consideration should be given to those countries that suffered the greatest damage as a result of our government's role in the "proxy" wars of the 70's and 80's. Angola gets my vote.

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*Mike D'Adamo served as a PCV in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland from 1981-1984. He has worked for Catholic Relief Services in various positions in Africa, including Ghana, Angola, and Somalia, since 1985.*

## Financial Activities of FOL in 1992

Opening Balance of Funds On Hand – 1/1/92  
\$4,444.26

**+ Revenue:**

Dues	1,955.00
Extra Contributions	695.00
Interest of Bank Accounts	107.51

**Subtotal Revenue: + \$2,757.51**

**- Expenses:**

Operating Expenses	1,284.61
(Postage, Envelopes, Newsletter Costs, Duplicating, Supplies, etc.)	

**Subtotal Expenses: – \$1,284.61**

**- Donation**

PC/Lesotho Volunteer Committee	500.00
Trickle-Up	500.00
Scholarship Fund	2,000.00
Centre for Hope	550.00
Boiteko Women's Association	300.00

**Subtotal Donations: – \$3,850.00**

**ENDING BALANCE – 12/31/92** **\$2,067.16**

### COMMENTS:

1. The \$2,000 for the scholarship fund represents \$1,000 for the 1992 school year which we paid in January 1992 and \$1,000 for the 1993 school year which we paid in December 1992 in order to meet school fee deadlines. From here on we will make one donation per year around November.
2. We are trying to hold our operating expenses down as much as possible and actually spent over \$250 less in this area than in 1991. Two-thirds of the costs are postage.
3. In order for us to continue donating to the groups we are helping now and in the hopes of increasing some of our donations for 1993, please be generous with any extra contributions you can give.

If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact Don Spicer at (H) 301-890-1003 or (W) 202-452-3195. You can also write to the FOL address with your inquiry.

## Elections

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compelled to thwart an attempted coup mounted by junior officers unhappy with the prospects of a civilian government coming to power. It was reported that the entire military council was dispatched to the barracks to head off the impending military uprising.

Lesotho's last democratic elections were held in 1970. They were declared null and void by Prime Minister and BNP leader, the late Dr. Leabua Jonathan. Jonathan also suspended the 1966 constitution and established an "interim Parliament." Following the declaration of a state of emergency, Dr. Mokhehle and his followers went underground and waged a guerilla war against the BNP government with the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) operating from South Africa.

Dr. Mokhehle and his followers returned to Lesotho under a Law of Reconciliation passed by the military leaders that deposed the BNP government in a coup in January 1986.

In his first public statement to the Basotho people after winning the national election, Dr. Mokhehle said, "We have a lot of work ahead of us than to waste time about the past. One of our priorities is to soon release our plan of action which is based on our party's manifesto. We also must adjust the present government administration and turn it into a democratic one."

## New Cabinet Formed

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has made the same pledge, but did not participate in the April 9th swearing-in ceremony.) The new Cabinet Ministers are:

<b>Defense &amp; Public Service</b>	Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle
<b>Finance &amp; Economic Planning and Manpower Development</b>	Selometse Baholo
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>	Molapo Qhobela
<b>Trade, Industry &amp; Tourism and Labor &amp; Employment</b>	Shakhane Mokhehle
<b>Agriculture, Cooperatives &amp; Marketing</b>	Ntsukunyane Mphanya
<b>Home Affairs</b>	Lesao Lehohla
<b>Education and Training, Sports &amp; Culture and Youth Affairs</b>	Pakalitha Mosisili
<b>Health and Social Welfare</b>	Khauhelo Raditapole
<b>Natural Resources</b>	Monyane Moleleki
<b>Works, Transport, Posts and Telecommunications</b>	David Mochochoko
<b>Information and Broadcasting</b>	Mpho Malie
<b>Justice &amp; Human Rights, Law &amp; Constitutional Affairs</b>	Vacant

## Clinton and Christopher Address Returned Peace Corps Group

*"Many who don't serve often sympathize with people in poverty, but you've done more. You've lived with them, and you've worked for them. You've learned to sing the songs; dance the dances; tell the stories that define and unite people all over this world...The great untold story, however, is that you continue to serve after you return home...."*

Bill Clinton

**A**t the recent annual conference, the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers changed its name to the National Peace Corps Association. NCPA President Charles Dambach noted that, "The name change is more than a new cover on an old book. It represents a new determination to include Peace Corps staff plus families of volunteers and anyone else who shares a commitment to the mission and values associated with Peace Corps."

The new name was introduced at the National Conference of RPCV's in Berkeley, California. Featured speakers at the conference included Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Senator Harris Wofford as well as Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope. Wofford was among the first Peace Corps country directors and Pope was a volunteer in India.

President Bill Clinton addressed the conference via videotape. "Many who don't serve often sympathize with people in poverty, but you've done more. You've lived with them, and you've worked for them. You've learned to sing the songs; dance the dances; tell the stories that define and unite people all over this world," said Clinton. "The great untold story, however, is that you continue to serve after you return home. Through the National Peace Corps Association and its 105 affiliated groups, you are the vanguard of vital, progressive activities here at home. You teach hundreds of thousands of children about the world through your global education programs. You help to build low income housing. You create youth service programs, and you help clean up our environment."

Christopher described aspects of the Clinton administration's foreign policy aimed at shaping a new world committed to democracy, prosperity and environmental responsibility. He also applauded the Peace Corps volunteers who are helping people in the former Soviet Union make the transition to freedom and free enterprise.

President Clinton noted that Peace Corps was an inspiration for his National Service Program. And he announced that with the confirmation of Carol Bellamy, that Peace Corps will have, for the first time, the benefit of a director who is a former volunteer.

*Reprinted from InterAction's  
"Monday Developments," July 19, 1993.*

# The Embers of Africa

by Sally V. Eacock

*Someone asked me recently about the most poignant memory I have of Lesotho, the small country in Southern Africa where I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1980 to 1982. It cannot be reduced to one experience. Living in Lesotho was another dimension of life on our planet, and another dimension of me at the same time.*

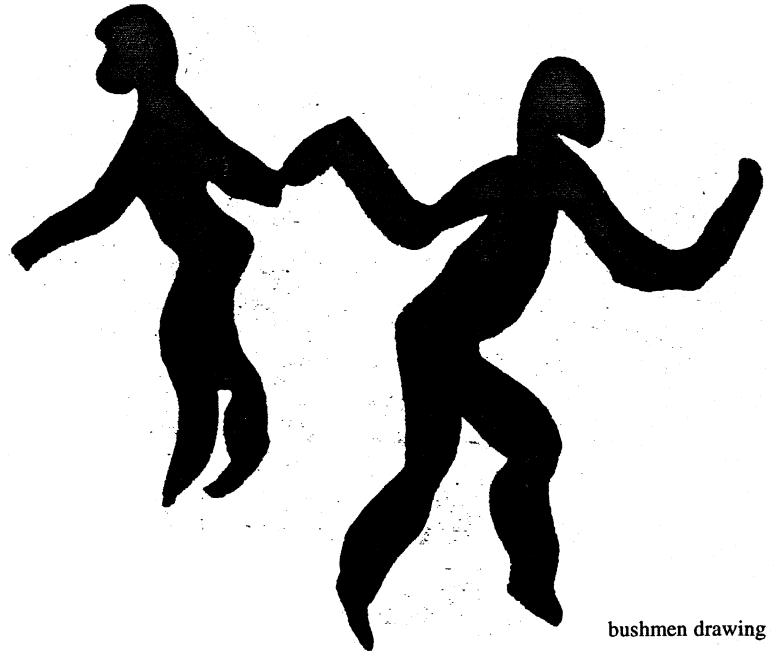
Lesotho was children saying in English,  
"Good morning, madam, five cents, please;"  
And Lesotho was me struggling to explain  
To high school students  
Why most Americans don't have a totem  
Or pay a dowry.

Lesotho  
was viewing A Man For All Seasons at the local cinema  
With the reels out of order;  
And Lesotho was observing protocol in court  
By wearing a borrowed dust rag on my head,  
Since I had no hat with me.

Lesotho was an unfamiliar woman  
Praying for my health  
With a twig held over my head;

And Lesotho was a village chief  
Providing shelter from a cloudburst,  
Offering dinner to a friend and me.

Lesotho was feeling the pulse of the earth  
Washing my hair in a fresh rain puddle,  
Hiking until parched enough to drink warm Coke;  
And Lesotho was drumming the rhythm of rain and  
drought.



bushmen drawing

Lesotho was singing the song of life  
In joy with young children,  
In celebration at weddings,  
In mourning at funerals;  
And Lesotho was dancing the dance of life  
At the disco,  
At the vender's market,  
While tilling the soil.

In Lesotho  
The singer never stops singing;  
And in Lesotho  
The dancer never stops dancing.

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