

SUMMARY OF EVENTS IN LESOTHO
Volume 13, Number 2 (Second Quarter 2006)

Summary of Events in Lesotho Available on Internet

Summary of Events in Lesotho is now available on the internet at www.trc.org.ls, the website of the Transformation Resource Centre in Maseru. This has been made possible by Peter Lahann, a German volunteer working with TRC, who undertook the transfer of hard and electronic copy into the website.

Apart from the most recent issues, the website includes an archive of earlier issues. The present issue is the 50th since the periodical began in the First Quarter of 1994. *Summary of Events* originated as a 5-page news sheet of very limited circulation attempting to explain then current political events in Lesotho. In January 1994, the main story was the breaking up of the Lesotho Defence Force into two factions which were fighting each other, with neither side issuing statements as to why they were fighting. The first issue attempted to describe and explain this serious development, and for the first two years subsequent issues were concerned mainly with political events. By 1996, the periodical had evolved into its present format with coverage of a broad spectrum of events relating to Lesotho.

Director of Police Training School Murdered

A senior policeman, **Acting Assistant Commissioner Mpatluoa Letuka**, aged 44, was shot and killed on the night of 12 March 2006, at Village Gate near Ha Tšosane in the suburbs of Maseru. His death apparently followed an altercation between himself and another male motorist.

Letuka was Director of the Police Training College and his death occurred only a few days before the passing out parade on 24 March 2006 for new recruits to the Lesotho Mounted Police Service. At the parade, despite the fact that the Commissioner of Police, 'Malejaka Letooane, is a woman, there was a considerable gender imbalance with the new recruits to the service being 33 women and 167 men.

Senior Superintendent Letuka was buried at his village of Matukeng near Hlotse on the following day, 25 March 2006, and at his funeral, the Commissioner of Police, 'Malejaka Letooane, said that every effort was being made to apprehend the suspect believed to be responsible for Letuka's death. At that point the revolver which had fired the fatal shots had been recovered from the house of Mrs Tankiso Masao Nkeane of Upper Thamae. Her husband, who was the principal suspect, was initially not to be found. Rantlali Nkeane, aged 31, was however later arrested in South Africa, brought before the Ladybrand magistrate on 5 April 2006, and deported to Lesotho where he was charged with the murder before the Maseru magistrate on 10 April 2006. He was remanded on bail of M500.

15 Years Gaol for Participant in Murder of German Tourist

On 17 March 2004 on the road to Malealea, a German tourist, Tobias Horsten, was attacked and killed by two men, one of whom, Qenehelo Lillane was subsequently beaten so badly by villagers that he died from the injuries. The survivor, Keketso Lekota, was charged with murder in the High Court and in the judgment given at the end of March 2006, he escaped the death penalty because it was considered that because he had not fired the fatal shot, he had played a lesser role in the brutal killing. He was sentenced to 15 years in gaol.

New Clothing Factory Opens

The textile industry at the end of 2004 had suffered many factory closures. However, on 29 Mach

2006, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mpho Malie, opened at Maputsoe a new clothing and textile factory which is expected to employ 3 000 workers. The Taiwanese Company, World Knitting, has invested US\$6 million in the factory, known as Kopano Textile. It will make T-shirts and jeans for export to the USA. The new factory occupies premises previously occupied by the firms Lesotho Haps and Vogue Landmark.

Semano Sekatle Only Candidate Nominated in By-Election

The by-election for the Constituency of Lebakeng in Qacha's Nek District was due to take place on 22 April 2006. However, it was not necessary because on Nomination Day, 21 March 2006, for the first time ever in a Parliamentary election, there was only a single candidate nominated. This was **Semano Sekatle**, representing the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy. He had most recently been Secretary to the Public Service Commission.

Lebakeng is one of the remotest constituencies in Lesotho, entirely mountainous and dissected by the Senqu river, across which there is no bridge. It has no roads and virtually no access tracks. Semano Sekatle himself originally comes from the constituency, from the remote village of Beselateng in the valley of the Lebakeng, a tributary of the Senqu.

Semano Sekatle's wife, Pontšo Sekatle is already a Member of Parliament and is Minister of Local Government. She represents the Qacha's Nek Constituency, which includes the town of Qacha's Nek, which she won in the 25 May 2002 election with 72.4% of the vote.

The new member of party took the oath of allegiance at the National Assembly on 25 April 2006.

Maseru City Council to Create New Waste Disposal Facility at Tšoeneng

The Maseru City Council currently uses for waste disposal a site at **Tšosane** just below Lancers' Gap, 5 km east of the city centre, where a wide dolerite dyke, quarried in the past for road building material, has left a large trench into which waste can be conveniently disposed. It is far from an ideal site. For a start it is in what has become a built up area, with houses located within 25 metres of the dumping area and its offensive smells. Secondly, the dump frequently catches fire, either as a result of deliberate action or from spontaneous combustion of decaying waste matter. On still days, the smoke spreads slowly across neighbouring housing areas creating a health hazard, both for those with respiratory complaints and also because burning plastic materials can generate carcinogenic dioxins. A third hazard comes from the runoff from the area, which occurs when heavy rain causes runoff from the site. The rain water filtering through the many different discarded materials, ranging from car batteries to factory waste, becomes a toxic solution which feeds into the Maqalika Reservoir, Maseru's water supply.

The Tšosane site was in use long before the Maseru City Council came into being, and the Council has long been aware of its problems. However, finding an alternative solution is not easy for dealing with what are estimated annually as some 38 800 tons of solid waste, not to mention 11 700 tons of highly hazardous toxic sludge produced by factories.

The matter is discussed critically and in some detail by Tracy Irvine in a publication of the Lesotho Council of NGOs, *NGO Web*, vol. 7, no. 12 (January - March 2006), pp. 8-10. The writer reveals that plans are advanced to create a new waste disposal site for Maseru at **Tšoeneng**, close to the new Masite to Kolo tarred road. The site overlooks the Maseru-Mafeteng boundary, the Tsoaing river, and is about 40 km from Maseru. It seems that the Lesotho Council of NGOs has been involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment for the new site, which has already been bought by the Maseru City Council. It is indicated that the Environmental Impact Statement for the project at this point has some fundamental flaws (although these are not specifically stated) which the Maseru City Council needs to address. The writer calls for Lesotho to have high standards of waste

disposal which can be used as an asset, because companies buying textile products from Lesotho (the Levi jeans company is given as an example) want assurances that waste is maintained sustainably, before they would consider moving operations to the country.

Extrajudicial Killings Occur in Maseru and Mafeteng

According to *The Mirror* of 5 April 2006, a 50-year old woman, Moliehi Tšoeunyane, of the Maseru suburb of Ha Abia was killed on suspicion that she was a witch. She died in hospital in Maseru after being brutally battered the previous day.

In another incident reported in the same paper, 58-year old Masilela Mokhele, who was out on bail on a murder charge, was himself shot dead by four unidentified men in Mafeteng on 31 March 2006.

Major Bribery Trial Set Down to Begin on 30 October

The trial of **Reatile Mochebelele**, Lesotho's senior representative on the Highlands Water Commission (formerly known as the Joint Project Technical Commission) has been set down to take place in the Lesotho High Court from 30 October to 8 December 2006. Mochebelele is being charged with receiving bribes along with his deputy, **Letlafuoa Molapo**. It appears that at the trial, officials of Lahmeyer International, Germany's largest engineering company, will now be on the other side of the court. Two years ago they were fined M10 million on bribery charges. This time they will appear on behalf of the prosecution.

LCN Honours the Late Sister Veronica Phafoli, Founder of DPE

Sister Veronica Phafoli worked for much of her life as a Catholic nun, but she eventually broke out from the confines of a religious order to found a movement in 1987 called **Development for Peace Education**. This movement set out to organize and mobilize local communities to address poverty effectively. In her lifetime, Sister Veronica worked with this aim in a number of communities.

She died on 3 April 1993, but her ideas did not die with her. Most recently the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) held a one day symposium in Maseru on the anniversary of her death, on 3 April 2006. Also recently, DPE has itself launched a magazine, bilingual in English and Sesotho, called *Puisano: Dialogue*, the first issue of which covers the quarter January to March 2006. Much of the first issue is devoted to the problems of AIDS and in particular AIDS orphans. The policy of the Lesotho Defence Force not to recruit persons who are HIV positive is attacked as discriminatory. There is also considerable discussion on the appropriate name for AIDS in Sesotho. A radio newsreader, the late Mohlomi Ramonate, had called it *koatsi ea bosolla-hlapi*, which means essentially, 'anthrax from where the fish roam', or anthrax from beyond the ocean. The late King Moshoeshoe II had called it *mokakallane oa setlabocha*, linking it with the killer influenza pandemic of 1919 (Mokakallane in Sesotho), but describing it as newly arrived, so the name has the effective meaning of 'contemporary mass-killer disease'. More recently, the name *chaiḽi* has emerged of not very certain derivation, but used widely, even by the Prime Minister. However some believe this name belittles and stigmatizes the infected and is inappropriate. No alternative, however, seems to be available except the name AIDS itself, which has occasionally been seen creeping into Sesotho texts as *eitsi*.

MKM Funeral Services Sponsors Largest Ever Initiation School

Whilst most initiation schools take place far from towns and are relatively small institutions, an exception has been a school supported by **Lebuajoang Thebeeakhale** of the MKM Burial Society, Lesotho's largest funeral business. No less than 113 *makoloane* or new initiates, the largest ever recorded number, graduated when their initiation lodge was ceremonially burned at Maqhaka

mountain, after which the initiates toured their villages exhibiting their skills in traditional praise poetry until a formal dispersal on 2 April 2006.

The school together with photographs taken at the graduation were the front page story of *Lentsoe la Basotho* of 6 April 2006. Although, not mentioned in the article, it is generally believed that Lebuaajoang Thebeeakhale himself pays the fees for many of those attending the initiation school, and in return they are expected to work for him after graduating.

IEC Commissioners' Terms of Office Extended

The terms of office of the Independent Electoral Commissioner Chairman, **Leshele Thoahlane** and one other member, **Limakatso Mokhothu**, were renewed for a further two years after a meeting of the State Council on 5 April 2006. There will be a General Election in 2007, and the extended contracts of the IEC members will now cover this period. A third member still has to be appointed to replace Mokhele Likate, who did not seek an extension to his contract.

Section 67(3) of the Constitution requires a new constituency delimitation to be undertaken not less than eight years and not more than ten years after the previous delimitation, which took place at the end of 1997. Under the *Second Amendment to the Constitution Act 1997*, it is the Independent Electoral Commission which is charged with responsibility for constituency delimitation. As can be seen from the legal constraints imposed on it, the IEC can apparently hold a new election without changing constituency boundaries, but if it does so, it must have a new delimitation soon afterwards.

Minister of Culture Quizzed on King Moshoeshoe's Top Hat

As reported in the National Assembly *Hansard* of 6 April 2006, the Minister of Tourism, Environment & Culture, the Honourable Lebohlang Ntšinyi, replied to a question by Mr Thaabe Letsie (BNP PR MP) as to where King Moshoeshoe's uniform, including his top hat could now be found.

The reply was that she had no idea, and that according to custom, when a person dies, clothes would be divided amongst relatives by a senior member of the family. The clothes of the late King Moshoeshoe had not been brought to a place where they could be preserved, probably because of the absence of a National Museum.

Although King Moshoeshoe owned several military uniforms, he is only known for certain to have worn a top hat in two photographs taken at Aliwal North in 1860, when he travelled there with 300 of his followers to meet Prince Alfred, the youthful second son (he was only 15 at the time) of Queen Victoria. Prince Alfred was touring southern Africa with the Governor, Sir George Grey.

His visit to Aliwal North provided the only occasion when King Moshoeshoe is known to have been photographed. Two photographs have survived, and been much copied. One is of King Moshoeshoe alone, and in the other he is with a group of chiefs and counsellors. The photographer was Frederick York, and it seems that the top hat may well have been one of the props used by him when taking photographs in his mobile studio. There seem to be no accounts of King Moshoeshoe wearing such a hat on any other occasion. Nevertheless, because of the photographs, it has become very much associated with his image.

Arts and Crafts Centre Opened at Ha Kome, Berea District

The village of **Ha Kome** near Pulane in Berea District includes a sandstone overhang under which a number of modern cave dwellings of striking design have been constructed, and are home to some four families. Because of the unique nature of these homes, they have become known more widely, and a significant number of tourists to Lesotho have been visiting the village. The Ministry of Tourism has responded to this development by providing the village with a thatched workshop and

sales area for handicrafts. The new **Kome Visitors Arts and Crafts Centre** was officially inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Mr Pakalitha Mosisili, at a pitso held at the village on Friday 7 April 2006.

Eighteen Die in Horror Road Crash as Bus Flattens Minibus Taxi

On the evening of Friday 7 April, a minibus taxi bound for Teyateyaneng was involved in a head-on collision with a bus carrying schoolchildren back from a trip to Katse. 18 people died in the accident in which the taxi became embedded in the front of the bus so that none of its occupants survived. It seems that the accident occurred when the bus was overtaking other vehicles and the combined speed of the vehicles could have been as high as 200 km/h. The bus with a mass some ten times that of the taxi was subjected to a far lower rate of deceleration, and the 50 schoolchildren from Maseru LEC Primary School in the bus had a lucky escape, with only one or two having to be treated in hospital for light injuries.

Those who died were mainly from Teyateyaneng and villages nearby, although one body was still unidentified a week later. The scale of the accident was such that money was quickly collected for a monument and this was unveiled exactly one week later beside the road at the place where the accident occurred between the Seqonoka river and the village of Tsereokane. The monument bore the names of the seventeen identified victims and left a blank space for the name of the unknown man who was the eighteenth casualty.

2006 Census Undertaken

Enumerators carrying out the 2006 Populations Census began work throughout Lesotho on Sunday 9 April 2006. The work was expected to be complete by Saturday 22 April 2006. Most enumerators were primary school teachers and they arrived at houses armed with a long questionnaire in very small print, with essentially the same questions as in previous censuses. There was still no question on mother tongue which might have helped to ascertain the numbers of children disadvantaged by not knowing Sesotho, and which might also have helped to establish the size of the Chinese community, the largest non-indigenous minority group in Lesotho, but of unknown numbers.

In the event, the census took longer to complete than expected, and some enumerators were employed into a third week. Some statistics relating to the census were provided in an answer to a parliamentary question reported in the National Assembly *Hansard* of 22 March 2006. It was reported that there were to be 4 250 Enumerator's Areas, demarcated so that those in the Lowlands had 100 to 150 families, and those in the Foothills and Maloti, 80 to 100 families. Each Enumerator's Area would have a single enumerator, and there would be one census supervisor for each 4 enumerators. Assistance in training, equipment and funds was being provided by the United Nations Development Programme, Development Cooperation Ireland, the European Union, and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

Interviewed by *Public Eye* in its issue of 19 May 2006, Liengoane Lefosa of the Bureau of Statistics reported some of the difficulties the census had faced. She indicated that at the end of the initial exercise, areas had been discovered that had not been counted. These were mainly in remote areas without roads and a special effort had had to be made to include them after the main counting.

Lesotho to Employ 200 Nurses from Kenya

As reported in *Public Eye* of 14 April 2006, Lesotho is to employ 200 nurses from Kenya in the near future and also 16 doctors from India. The Kenyan nurses will partially meet a current shortfall of 600 nurses in Lesotho as a result of which most hospitals and clinics are unable to function effectively. This is the first time that Lesotho has employed a significant number of foreign nurses, and it is not quite clear what arrangements have been made to help them with language difficulties. Communication with the majority of patients in Lesotho is through Sesotho, and foreign nurses and doctors inevitably need translators. It is also not clear what the current situation is in Kenya, which

it seems likely has its own shortage of qualified medical staff. A majority of Basotho nurses are now working in South Africa, although significant numbers are also working overseas.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization's *World health report 2006* has some grim statistics. Sub-Saharan Africa has 11% of the world's population and 24% of the world's burden of disease but only 3% of the world's health workers. It urges countries to develop plans for increasing the health workforce and for donor countries to assist crisis countries with their efforts to improve and support the health workforce.

Central Bank Governor Reports on Decline in Lesotho's Economic Growth

Speaking at a meeting of Southern African Development Bank Governors in Maseru in April, the Governor of Lesotho's Central Bank, E. M. Matekane, reported that Lesotho's economic growth had fallen from 3.1% in 2004 to only 1.2% in 2005. The main factor in this drop had been the ending of the Multifibre Agreement, which had had a severe impact on the textile industry which had contracted from having over 50 000 employees to just 37 500 in 2005. The projected economic growth rate for 2006 was 1.7% due to continuing poor performance in manufacturing and agriculture.

Airport Visitors to Enter Lesotho by Palm Tree Avenue

Although Tree Planting Day is no longer a public holiday in Lesotho, it is still observed annually with parliamentarians and civil servants taking time off from normal duties to plant trees. On 31 March 2006, the main tree planting, led by the King and cabinet ministers was at Mekaling in Mophale's Hoek District.

There was a second tree planting occasion on Thursday 20 April 2006 on the road from Maseru to the Moshoeshe I International Airport when 2 000 young trees were planted, being a mixture of two very different trees, the Canary Island Palm, *Phoenix canariensis*, and the Chinese Maple, *Acer buergerianum*. As reported in *Bang!* of 25 April 2006, the Government Secretary, Tlohang Sekhamane, said that these two species had been chosen because they were short, and as a result would not attract birds to nest in them. Birds could be a hazard to planes near an airport.

The Canary Island Palm is almost the only palm tree which is sufficiently frost resistant to grow in Lesotho. Although relatively slow growing it can reach a height of some 6 metres within 30 years. The Chinese Maple is a much faster growing tree with very distinctive leaves consisting of three triangular lobes. It can reach a similar height of 6 metres or slightly more. It is deciduous and the leaves have attractive autumn colours.

Although many trees are planted in Lesotho annually, many fail to survive because they are not provided with water in their early stages so that they can get established. It is to be hoped that those along the airport approach road will receive appropriate care.

Chinese Charged with Selling Pirated Music

As reported in *Public Eye* of 21 April 2006 and *Lentsoe la Basotho* of 4 May 2006, three Chinese were charged on Tuesday 18 April with selling pirated music. The three charged are Yeng Shi Long (35), his wife Yeng Wong Hong (29), and their employee Zhai Cheng Xian (24). The three are charged under the *Copyright Act 1989* with selling pirated music from the Newland Internet Café on Kingsway, Maseru. Local musician, Selomo Lebajoa had initiated the original complaint on finding that a pirated version of his own album was being sold at the internet café. The case was adjourned until 9 June 2006, and in the meanwhile the Newland Internet Café remained closed.

Senior Superintendent Mpotla Nthako was reported as having said that several other internet café businesses were also being investigated in the matter of pirated music.

Suspected Cattle Thieves Killed and Villagers Suffer Casualties at Ha Mokhohla near Roma

The police newspaper, *Leseli ka Sepolesa* of 21 April 2006, reported that two men who were suspected of being in possession of stolen cattle, were confronted by villagers at Ha Mokhohla, midway between Popa Ha Maama and Mokema. The men fled and hid in two different village houses. One of them, Lebajoa Mokoenehi, eventually came out and fled to a donga, where he was caught by the villagers and beaten and stoned to death. The other man, Lehlohonolo Seakhi, found an axe in the house where he was hiding, and came out fighting, seriously injuring two men from the village. He was eventually overpowered and suffered the same fate as Lebajoa Mokoenehi.

Police were called, but Ha Mokhohla is some distance from the Roma Police Station and when the police reached the village they found both suspected cattle thieves dead. The two villagers seriously injured in the fight were taken to hospital, but one died of his wounds while the other was making a successful recovery.

The newspaper reported that the dead men were from the villages of Ha Seqoma and Khobeng in the Roma valley. No arrests had been made and the matter was still under investigation.

Appeal Court Increases Sentences on Baholo's Killers

Appeals from High Court judgments can result in acquittals or lighter sentences. But they can also result in stiffer penalties being imposed. This was discovered to their cost by the three soldiers, Lenkoane Molelle, Lijane Kaloko and Tankiso Majoro. Molelle and Kaloko had originally been sentenced by the High Court to sentences of 12 and 10 years imprisonment for their parts in the murder of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Selometsi Baholo, in April 1994. Majoro, who was a driver in the simultaneous kidnapping of four cabinet ministers, had been sentenced to a fine.

The Court of Appeal sitting in April reviewed the sentences and increased Molelle's sentence from 12 to 17 years. and Kaloko's from 10 to 14 years. In the case of Majoro his fine was to be repaid to him and substituted with a sentence of 6 years imprisonment.

Maseru City Council to Build Civic Centre

Maseru City Council, at present mainly housed in Development House on Kingsway, Maseru, has announced plans to build its own Civic Centre. Advertisements in newspapers in April 2006 showed a model of the proposed new building which consists of two linked eight and six storey blocks to be erected in the garden of the Chief Justice's House facing Moshoeshoe Road. An environmental impact assessment of the proposed development was currently being undertaken and members of the public were invited to express any concerns or comments.

The Chief Justice's House has, apart from the Royal Palace, the largest grounds of any single residence in Maseru.

New Shopping Centre Opens in Hlotse

On Thursday 27 April the first shop in a new modern shopping complex at Hlotse opened to customers. The following day, the largest of the ten shops in the complex opened, a Shoprite supermarket. The complex which has parking for up to 70 cars is built on land in the centre of Hlotse formerly occupied by the Rectory of the Anglican Church.

New National Library and National Archives Building Opened

The new National Library and National Archives Building was officially opened on Friday 28 April 2006. Situated on Kingsway, Maseru, the **State Library**, as it is now called, occupies the site of the previous National Library, which was demolished in May 2003. For some three years the books of the National Library had been held in storage pending erection of the new building.

Speaking at the opening of the new building, the Chinese ambassador, Qiu Bohua, indicated

that his government had contributed M25 million towards the new building and that bilateral relations between Lesotho and China would be further strengthened as China proposed also to fund the new Parliament Buildings to be constructed on the Mpilo Hill above the Lesotho Sun Hotel.

Speaking on the same occasion, the Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili, said he was pleased that the new library would be accessible to everyone including persons with disabilities. However, he cautioned that the library could become a 'white elephant' unless it was operated by competent people who were enthusiastic about their work.

The new three-storey State Library building has two striking bright green roofs in the shape of square-based pyramids. Its otherwise rectangular features contrast with the other green-roofed building in central Maseru, the Dutch-gabled single-storey former Secretariat Building on the opposite side of Kingsway, which now houses the Ministry of Defence.

In the photograph provided, the two most prominent tower blocks are the Lesotho Bank Tower on the left and the Post Office Building on the right. In the foreground are government buildings, Finance House on the left and Africa House (a name, however, rarely used) on the right, behind which is the new State Library building. The comparatively inconspicuous single-storey Secretariat Building, built in 1911, and now the oldest building on Kingsway, is across this road in the bottom right hand corner of the picture.

Shootout Leaves One Dead at Lesotho Bank Cathedral Area Branch in Maseru

On the morning of Friday 28 April, the Lesotho Bank Cathedral Area branch in Maseru was the scene of a shootout. Two security guards of the Fidelity Cash Management Services delivering money to the bank were attacked. One of them was shot and died on the way to hospital. The second guard returned the fire and wounded one of the attackers, but he was dragged by the robbers into the getaway vehicle, together with an undisclosed sum of money. According to *Leseli ka Sepolesa* of 2 June 2006, the amount of money stolen in the raid was M3.1 million and some eight robbers were involved.

Prince Harry Launches Sentebale Charity at 'Mantšase Children's Home

Prince Harry on 28 April 2006 launched the Sentebale charity to help AIDS orphans in Lesotho. The charity was launched by him personally at 'Mantšase Children's Home at Qhalasi in Mohale's Hoek District where Prince Harry had also stayed and worked in the past. Qhalasi is a comparatively remote Lowlands village and can only be reached by a dirt track.

The charity has been co-founded by Prince Harry, third in line to the British throne, and Prince Seeiso, heir to the Lesotho throne, who is a friend of Prince Harry and currently Lesotho High Commissioner in London. The name 'Sentebale' means 'forget-me-not' in Sesotho, and the name is intended to be in memory of both their mothers, Princess Diana, who died in 1997 and was herself a supporter of AIDS victims; and Queen 'Mamohato, who died in 2003, and had also been a great supporter of children's charities.

In 2004, a documentary film made by Prince Harry about Lesotho was shown on television and raised more than £1 million. This money has been administered as a Red Cross Lesotho Fund and used to assist the 'Mantšase Orphanage, to support a crop-sharing scheme at Nokong in Berea District to help feed vulnerable children, and amongst 18 other projects elsewhere in Lesotho to build a storage hut for a child-counselling centre, to purchase kitchen furniture for a home for teenage mothers, and a buy a computerised Braille machine for blind teenagers.

Catholic Priest Killed at his own Church

On the afternoon of Sunday 30 April, **Fr Peter Seakhi** (51), of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Koro-Koro, was attacked outside his office and stabbed to death. Immediately after the incident, his alleged assailant, Sekhebetlela Maime (27) gave himself up and was taken to the nearest police

station at Ha Mofoka. Bystanders stated that the incident occurred immediately after Maime's wife had been spending time with the priest in a locked office. Mrs Maime ran away immediately after the incident. Sekhebetlela later appeared in the Maseru magistrate's court charged with murdering the priest.

Construction of Mohale to Thaba-Tseka Tarred Road to Begin Shortly

As reported in *Lesotho Today* of 11 May 2006, more than M165 million has been allocated and construction will begin shortly on tarring the 85 km of road from Mohale (Likalaneng) to Thaba-Tseka. The work has been divided into three Phases and the contract for the first phase has already been signed with Rumdell Construction (Pty) Ltd.

With the recent completion of the tarring of the Southern Perimeter Road to Qacha's Nek, Thaba-Tseka is now the only district headquarters remaining which does not have a bitumenized road connecting it with Maseru.

Conditions at Qoaling Clinic Bring Home to Cuban Minister Poor Health Service Delivery

The Qoaling Filter Clinic, situated in Maseru's densely populated south-east suburbs, is a modern building designed to provide basic health services so that most patients can be treated on the spot, and only selected patients needing specialized care need to be referred to Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. If working properly, QFC has a staff of at least two doctors and at least six nurses.

However, as reported in *Lesotho Today* of 11 May 2006, when the Cuban Deputy Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, Mr Ramon Diaz, visited the Clinic, there were 200 people waiting in a queue and no doctor was in sight. People started queuing for service at 3 a.m., and each day the queue was cut so that late comers got no service.

Cuba is already helping Lesotho by providing doctors and it seems from the report that it will soon also be sending nurses.

The *Lesotho Today* reporter 'Matšepo Mohau interviewed the Senior Nursing Officer at QFC, Mrs 'Mathabiso Molefi. She indicated that shortage of staff was the main problem, but the clinic was also suffering particularly on the night shift because of lack of transport and no available telephone.

***Lentsoe la Basotho* and *Lesotho Today* to be Closed Down**

A news story in both the newspapers *Lentsoe la Basotho* and *Lesotho Today* on 11 May 2006 indicated that the Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Mr Tom Thabane, had announced that both newspapers were to be closed down. He said that 'experience has shown that communication is now mainly through the internet and there is a need for print media to follow suit and disseminate information through the latest modern technologies, which are crucial in every day life'. No date was set for the close down of the newspapers, and they were still appearing a month later.

The announcement resulted in a scathing attack on the Minister by Ntsau Lekhetho in *Public Eye* of 26 May 2006. Under the headline 'Newspaper shutdown makes minister into figure of fun', he described the Minister as myopic and wrote 'Someone in his position should know better that the subscriber base in Lesotho for internet customers remains extremely small and that only a few internet service providers exist in the country'. He went on to criticize the content of the Government newspapers and suggested that *Lesotho Today* is crying for a private investor who will turn it into a quality weekly newspaper.

It may be that history is repeating itself. In January 1997, the then Minister, Monyane Moleleki, announced the closure of *Lesotho Today* for similar reasons to those given by Tom Thabane. However, there was clearly a need for it, and it re-emerged in May 2002 printed inverted

back-to-back with *Lentsoe la Basotho* which has remained the position until the present time. This is despite a letter from a female reader who complained of the indelicacy consequent from her having to stand on her head to read the Sesotho text while the main subscriber to the paper was reading the English text.

Rock Star Bono Visits Lesotho; Multifibre Agreement Forum Discusses Lesotho's Options

The Irish Rock Star, Paul David Hewson, better known as Bono (45), visited Lesotho in May to promote a new labelling scheme to harness sustained funding from top commercial brands and consumers to fight AIDS in poor countries. The initiative is known as 'Product Red' and involves giving products special red labels. American Express, for example, had already signed up and would be giving 1% of money spent using its cards in the new scheme. Bono's visit was also linked to a Multifibre Agreement Forum and the launch of a new initiative to combat HIV/AIDS in Lesotho's textile industry which is called Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFA). This is one of a string of initiatives to which Bono has given his support including Live Aid, Red Nose Day, Comic Relief, Make Poverty History and his own recent Product Red.

During his six day visit accompanied by his wife, Ali Hewson, Bono received an accolade from the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mpho Malie, who said Bono had the power to effect change in Lesotho because of his influence. Bono in fact said many of the right things, and in particular said that the IMF's failure to give Lesotho debt relief was scandalous. Lesotho was being punished for being a good borrower.

Amongst places visited by Bono was Butha-Buthe, where he went to the only major employer in the town, a textile factory run by Nakadi Jabbie, where he sourced T-shirts for a new fair trade line being sold in the USA. Nakadi Jabbie was reported by the BBC as saying that ordering the clothes has been much more help than providing aid. At Butha-Buthe Hospital, Bono observed that the hospital was too small for its HIV work. Moreover, a vital piece of equipment, a CD-4 counter, was not available and could only be found at the Leribe Hospital.

The end of the Multifibre Agreement put severe strains on Lesotho's textile industry at the end of 2004. Amongst those who were at the Forum was Belinda Edmonds of the US clothing company Cool Ideas. She warned that there is another problem looming. Currently under the US *Africa Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) Lesotho gets duty-free access into the US market, but this is subject to conditions, one of which is the country of fabric provision. Currently this is unrestricted and fabric is mostly procured from Asia, but from next year, the third-country provision will expire and fabric will have to be purchased either from AGOA-compliant countries, or very much expensively from the United States itself.

Seleso Vendetta Leads to Further Deaths

The practice of Lesotho courts of allowing those charged with murder to be released on bail and then delaying for years the hearing of the cases (indeed some are never heard) leads very often to further murders as people take the law into their own hands.

A sad example is what has happened at the village of Ha Seng, where the Seleso Lesotho Evangelical Church primary school principal, Soulo Nkonyana, his wife and another teacher were gunned down on 28 April 2005 (see *Summary of Events*, vol. 12, no. 2 (Second Quarter 2005)). Apparently Nkonyana had been out on bail on a murder charge, and the person he is alleged to have murdered was the mother of one of the three men who were later arrested for his own murder. They were in turn given bail, but the case was apparently not heard. According to *Moeletsi oa Basotho* of 14 May 2006, a third set of murders has now occurred, with one of those who was out on bail for the murdering of the teachers, Molai Tsunyane (27), being found shot together with his uncle, Molai Boy Tjamela (46). Both men were from the village of Ha Salemane, but their bodies were found

some distance away by the Senale stream near the village of Liphakoeng.

Maloti Blanketed in Snow

Cold weather with low cloud and rain occurred over Lesotho on 16-20 May, and when the clouds lifted the Maloti was blanketed with snow down to about an altitude of 2100 m. Further snow fell at lower altitudes on 24 May. The first killing frost at Roma was on the night of 21/22 May 2006. The rainfall total at Roma for the month of May was 58 mm making it the fifth consecutive month with rainfall above average. However, June was completely without rain.

Outbreak of 'Rabbis' at Mantšonyane

The National Assembly *Hansard* of 24 May 2006 included a question from the Hon. J. M. Lekhanya MP to the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security about an outbreak of 'rabbis' at Mantšonyane. Lest the imagination might wander to wonder about how so many bearded gentlemen in black hats and prayer shawls could have appeared at Mantšonyane, one hastens to mention that the answer to the question makes it clear that what had happened at Mantšonyane was an outbreak of rabies, *bohlanya-ntja* in Sesotho.

The answer to the parliamentary question was that the Ministry was indeed aware of the outbreak and had so far inoculated 912 cattle and 113 dogs to prevent the spread of the disease.

University of the Free State Stages Inaugural King Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture

A Moshoeshoe Lecture has been held annually in Lesotho on Moshoeshoe's Day almost every year since the series was inaugurated with a lecture by Mrs Helen Suzman in 1973 on 'Moshoeshoe the statesman'. In 2006, the lecturer was Moloantoa Martin Lelimo, who holds an MA in History from the University of the Free State, and his lecture had the title 'Thaba-Bosiu: centre of African political gravity in the second half of last century'. [The lecturer apparently had not moved with the times sufficiently to have noticed that the 19th century is now the last century but one.]

Interest in King Moshoeshoe is no longer the monopoly of Lesotho, and in 2004 the University of the Free State as part of its centenary celebrations and as a contribution to the 10th anniversary celebrations of South Africa's democracy, launched a Moshoeshoe Heritage Project. Amongst the early achievements of the project was a television documentary film about King Moshoeshoe, *The Renaissance King*, directed by Max du Preez with Kalosi Ramakhula as Lesotho coordinator. (For a review, see *Summary of Events in Lesotho*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 2004)).

In 2006, UFS marked Africa Day, 25 May, with an **Inaugural King Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture** held in the Wynand Mouton Theatre at the university and attended by a full house of over 1000 persons. Large banners of the familiar portrait of King Moshoeshoe in a top hat graced the approaches to the venue and were a backdrop on the stage. The occasion included introductory speeches by Professor Frederick Fourie, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State; Chief Mathealira Seeiso, younger brother of the late King Moshoeshoe II (who was representing King Letsie III); and Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, the South African Minister of Defence. Mr Lekota revealed that the Cabinet, in recent discussions on appropriate names for a new generation of submarines, had decided to name them after prominent African women, and the first would be named after Mmanthatisi, the Queen of the Batlokoa, whose realm had encompassed much of the area of the present eastern Free state in the early nineteenth century.

The King Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture itself was given by **Professor Njabulo Ndebele**, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, and a former student, Head of the English Department and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Lesotho. He subsequently became Chair of the Department of African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, Vice-

Rector of the University of the Western Cape, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the North in South Africa. Alongside these distinguished administrative positions, he had become also an established author, with his most recent novel, *The cry of Winnie Mandela* having received considerable critical acclaim on its appearance in 2003. This carefully crafted novel, original in concept and construction, juxtaposes the plight of the women of South Africa and Lesotho with absent husbands against the ancient legend of Penelope of Homer's *Odyssey* who waited nineteen years for her husband's return.

Njabulo Ndebele chose as the subject of his lecture, 'Perspectives on the leadership challenges in South Africa', and the lecture was marked by his characteristic thought-provoking originality. He noted that the venue of Bloemfontein, which had become a hundred years ago a railway junction, made it the site for meetings such as the Bloemfontein Conference of 8 - 11 January 1912, at which the African National Congress was founded. Amongst those attending the Conference were Chief Maama (representing his nephew, Paramount Chief Letsie II) and Philip Modise (personal secretary to Paramount Chief Letsie II). It was significant that Philip Modise from Lesotho was elected chairman of the conference from the second day onwards. Two years later Bloemfontein was also the site for the founding of the National Party, but that party was now dead, while the ANC was still very much alive.

Moving to both the more distant and more recent past, Professor Ndebele made reference to 'counter-intuitive' leadership as practised by King Moshoeshoe and also Nelson Mandela who, when he assumed power, had met the generals of the South African Defence Force, and particularly General Viljoen. Mandela acknowledged that General Viljoen could use his power to destroy what had been achieved, but with an end result that there would be little left of worth to either side. This skill in buttressing the self-esteem of the opponent prior to manipulating the situation to one's own advantage had been much earlier practised by King Moshoeshoe.

Njabulo Ndebele then spoke about the contemporary crisis in South Africa, where seemingly none of the country's organisations was in control of the situation, and where a complex democracy could not survive under a single authority. It was the mark of maturity of that authority if it could contemplate the time when it was no longer overwhelmingly in power. In seeking conditions for a true renaissance the methods and achievements of King Moshoeshoe were an example. In the face of formidable challenges, King Moshoeshoe formed friendships and alliances, weighing options and proposing unsuspected solutions. The unknown is creative - it offers possibilities.

The lecture was followed by a Gala Dinner in the UFS's Centenary Complex for some 300 of those who had attended the lecture. Presentations were made to the speakers, and the 'Three SA tenors' who together with Bochabela String Orchestra had opened and closed the lecture, continued to perform during the dinner with arias made familiar by Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras.

Moleleki Shooting Incident Repercussions Continue

The incident in which the Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Monyane Moleleki**, was apparently shot in the arm in the early hours of Sunday 29 January 2006, continued to have repercussions, but with no apparent light thrown on the key matter of who was responsible for his injury.

The Minister's two guards, Privates Taole Mokhesuoe and Phetetso Motšoehli of the commando unit, had to face a court martial, charged with failure to perform their military duties in that they had not adequately protected the Minister. Monyane Moleleki also testified at the hearing, and at one time was in tears. He said that the shooting had taken place outside his house and not elsewhere, and also that, as reported in *Public Eye* of 2 June 2006, 'the police were determined not to find his attackers'. It transpired during the hearing that the two soldiers had been tortured prior to the court martial hearing, and they in turn laid a lawsuit against the Commissioner of Police for M500 000 each for damages following alleged torture by 10 Criminal Investigation

Department members at the Pitso Ground police post. They alleged that this had been carried out on them to get them to change an earlier statement and to make a false statement against the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

By June, Moleleki was being guarded by a six-man bodyguard and there was clearly friction between Moleleki and the police. Indeed Moleleki had apparently engaged two handpicked security officers from South Africa to investigate the matter. *Public Eye* of 16 June 2006, quoted the Lesotho Mounted Police Service public relations officer, Inspector Pheello Mphana, who indicated that he was aware of this development, but he complained that the police still did not have a copy of the medical report on the Minister's injury. Although they could see that the car in which the Minister was travelling and also the neighbour's house had been shot at, they could not say for certain that the Minister was shot, because they had no medical report which said so.

Committee of Privileges Reports to Parliament; Opposition MP Bereng Sekhonyana Murdered

An unfortunate sequence of events began somewhat innocently in the year 2005. The Speaker of the National Assembly had been asked to nominate a delegation of two persons to attend a SADC Parliamentary Reform Conference in Botswana on 22-23 September 2005. The Speaker duly appointed two persons, one of whom was the then Secretary-General of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, Sephiri Motanyane; while the other was **Bereng Sekhonyana**, a proportional representation member representing the Basotho National Party.

It is appropriate here to provide some background detail. Bereng Sekhonyana, a former diplomat and principal secretary, had in 1998 been Acting Leader of the BNP during the illness, followed by the death of his brother, the then BNP Party Leader, E. R. Sekhonyana. At the March 1999 BNP Party Conference, **Justin Metsing Lekhanya** (who as Major-General J. M. Lekhanya had led the 1986 Military Coup *against* the then BNP government) became the Party Leader and Bereng Sekhonyana, the Deputy Leader. Bereng Sekhonyana subsequently played an important role, representing the party in the Interim Political Authority in 1999. He became co-chairman of the IPA, and on 3 December 1999 was one of the three co-signatories (the others were Lekhetho Rakuoane of the Patriotic Front for Democracy (PFD), the second co-chairman; and the Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili) of the Memorandum of Agreement between the IPA and the Lesotho Government. In the 2002 General Election Bereng Sekhonyana stood for the Maseru Central constituency and came second, receiving 30.6% of the votes. However in 2003, friction developed between himself and party leader Lekhanya, and at the Party Conference in March 2003, he was replaced as Deputy Leader by Joseph Mollo. He nevertheless remained a BNP MP.

The nomination of Bereng Sekhonyana to go to the Botswana conference resulted in a letter dated 16 September 2005 from Lekhanya to the Speaker asking her to reconsider the nomination and in the event that this was not done threatening the mounting of a protest. The protest duly occurred after the conference in the form of demonstrations at Parliament by the BNP Youth League and Women's League on 10 October 2005. Those picketing Parliament demanded an immediate reply (which they did not get) to a letter by Tšepo Monethi, Secretary of the BNP Youth League. The letter objected to the Speaker's nomination without consulting the BNP Chief Whip, and also demanded that all BNP Members of Parliament attend a debriefing meeting at Party Headquarters, failing which they would be considered as having forfeited seats in Parliament.

The response of Parliament to these events was Motion No. 92 of the National Assembly on 14 October 2005 which read:

'That this Honourable House, following the Hon. Speaker's statement to the House on Wednesday 12th October condemns unreservedly and in the strongest possible terms the actions of the BNP elements responsible for bringing this Honourable House into disrepute by, *inter alia*, seeking to (i) intimidate the Hon. Speaker; (ii) interfere with the smooth running of the business of the House and the office of the Hon. Speaker; and requests and requires them to desist forthwith from such further actions. Furthermore, this Honourable House takes a very dim view of the leadership of the BNP for condoning and abetting such actions and in consequence thereof resolves to refer: (a) the matter; (b) the 'reliable reports' mentioned in one

of the letters addressed to the Honourable Speaker as per attachments to the petition; to the Committee of Privileges for further investigations, and duly report back its findings to this House to take such further action as may be necessary.'

When the 8-member Committee of Privileges under the Chairmanship of M. M. Moeno MP, duly met, it decided at the beginning that one of its members, Mooki V. Molapo MP, should stand down from the Committee because he had already made clear his stance on the matter in a letter to *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, dated 30 October 2005.

The Committee of Privileges finally tabled its report to the National Assembly on 17 May 2006, and its findings included that there had indeed been threats and intimidation against the Speaker and 'the Committee took a very dim view of the BNP leadership for effectively masterminding the whole spurious campaign and smear propaganda against the Honourable Speaker'.

The Committee recommended that the House should take remedial measures and these were specifically that Hon. J. M. Lekhanya, Leader of the BNP, should be suspended from the proceedings of the House for ten months without pay, five months of which would be suspended provided he does not breach any of the privileges of the House and its committees for those ten months. Four other BNP MPs, Chief Ranthomeng P. Matete (the BNP Secretary-General), A. M. Hanyane, Lekhooana Jonathan and S. J. Thabisi should be similarly suspended from Parliament for six months, but with three months of the suspension suspended under the same terms as for J. M. Lekhanya.

An at times heated and wide ranging debate on the Committee of Privileges Report began in the National Assembly on Wednesday 24 May 2006 and continued on Monday 29 May, Tuesday 30 May and Wednesday 31 May 2006. On the first day of the debate, the BNP Leader, J. M. Lekhanya, stated that the Report of the Committee of Privileges was incomplete. It had not taken account of the fact that the persons invited to the seminar in Botswana were to have been Secretaries-General and Chief Whips of political parties. While the then LCD Secretary-General, Sephiri Motanyane [now the Deputy Speaker] was nominated by the Speaker to attend, the other person nominated was not an office-holder in any political party. [The previous BNP Chief Whip, Morapeli Motaung, had at the time recently died.] Lekhanya went on to say that the Report of the Committee of Privileges was incomplete, null and void, and must be withdrawn forthwith.

Bereng Sekhonyana, MP, spoke at length on the last day of the debate, but his views were clear right at the beginning of his speech when he said about the Report 'I accept it in its totality, all of it without reservation, because, Sir [addressing the Deputy Speaker], it is a Report deriving from a Motion which was made by this House long ago'. The National Assembly at the end of the debate adopted the Committee of Privileges Report and the five BNP members mentioned therein were duly suspended from Parliament.

Only two days later on 2 June 2006, Bereng Sekhonyana was dead. He was gunned down in his car late in the evening as he waited for his daughters to open the gate of his house, in Lethole Road in the Maseru suburb of Ha Hooхло. Eighteen bullets had been fired from three different guns, but there were no immediate arrests.

Prime Minister Inaugurates Library, Post Office and Roads in Qacha's Nek

As reported in *Lesotho Today* of 1 June 2006, the Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili recently officially inaugurated several new developments in his home district of Qacha's Nek. Amongst these was a new Qacha's Nek District Library and a new two-storey post office building. The opportunity was also taken to officially open the new tarred road linking Qacha's Nek to Mphaki, and thus providing continuous tar all the way to Maseru. This road had already been in use for a few months.

Three Die near Peace Monument

The Peace Monument unveiled at Ha Tšiu near Ha Mofoka in Maseru District on 20 May 2005 was supposed to mark the end of feuding which over the years had led to the deaths of some 56 people in the area. The area is apparently still not peaceful, however. As reported in *Moeletsi oa Basotho* of 18 June 2006, **Senior Inspector Ntšala Nqosa** of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service was gunned down by assailants at Qhuqhu not far from the peace monument on Saturday 3 June 2006. The following day, one of the suspects was shot and killed, and another suspect was also shot and killed soon afterwards. A third suspect is reported to have fled.

Likhopo are Premier League Champions but LDF Wins Buddie Top-4 Football Final

Football in Lesotho mirrors football in England to the extent of having a Premier League of 16 teams who during the season play a total of 30 matches against each other. At the end of the season the two teams at the bottom of the league are relegated to the First Division while the best two First Division teams are promoted to the Premier League. In each match three points are awarded for a win and one point for a draw. In the event of a tie in points in the league table, the goal difference (goals for less goal against) determines which team takes precedence. Rather interestingly, the football season mirrors that of the Northern Hemisphere as far as the months when games are played. As a result, games in Lesotho are played through the heat of summer, rather than through the winter as happens in England.

By the end of May all 30 league games had been completed and the four teams at the top of the Premier League were **Likhopo** with 64 points; Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) with 63 points and a goal difference of 29 goals; Lioli also with 63 points but with a goal difference of 21 goals; and Linare with 59 points. As a result, Likhopo successfully defended the League Championship which they had also won in 2005.

At the bottom of the league, School Boys with 24 points and Lifefo with 17 points are relegated to the First Division, and the two top First Division clubs, Joy and Mafeteng LMPS (Lesotho Mounted Police Service) join the Premier League for next season.

There is also a Buddie Premier League Top-4 Football Tournament, which was staged at the Setsoto Stadium in Maseru on the weekend of 3-4 June 2006. A new knockout system for this tournament was introduced in 2006 so that in the first round on Saturday, the matches were between the teams that came first and third, and those that came second and fourth in the Premier League table. Then on the Sunday there was a match between Saturday's losers followed by the final between the two winners. This brought about a different result from the Premier League, because the winners on the Saturday were LDF and Lioli. On the Sunday, Likhopo had to be content with third place in a 3-0 win over Linare. The final itself was marred by violence which held up play for 20 minutes and in which at least 11 people sustained injuries from flying missiles such as bottles. In the final match, the **Lesotho Defence Force** team beat the Teyateyaneng based team, Lioli, by a score of 2 goals to one.

Proposals for New Flag Designs Unveiled

Lentsoe la Basotho of 8 June 2006 displayed on its front page four new possible designs for Lesotho's national flag. As stated by the Deputy Prime Minister, Lesao Lehohla in Parliament on 6 June, these were the four short listed designs from many which had been submitted, and it was now the turn of the public to express an opinion on the designs. Three of the designs have a white triangle enclosing a brown Basotho hat at the hoist. The fourth places the hat in the centre of a horizontal white band. Apart from white and brown, two of the flags have green, blue and white horizontal bands, while the others also have a black band either instead of or in addition to white bands.

If one of the designs is adopted for its new flag, Lesotho will set something of a record in changing the design of its flag twice since Independence. The Independence flag was designed by a local architect, Peter Hancock, but its original yellow Basotho hat was changed to white deliberately

by the then government so that its original colours would coincide with those of the Basotho National Party. Because of this political association, the Military Government which came to power in 1986 commissioned a new design, and the present flag, designed by Sergeant Retšelisitsoe Matete of the Lesotho Defence Force, was introduced in 1987. It now seems, however, that a Basotho hat or *mokorotlo* is more favoured than the coat of arms which appears on the present flag.

If a new flag is introduced it will deprive schoolteachers of a simple geometrical exercise posed by the present flag which has a blue trapezium and a green triangle in the triangular lower right half of the flag. According to the legal description (although most real flags fail this requirement), the blue and green portions of the flag have to be of equal area. If this is the case, what is the ratio of the blue and green lengths on the lowest side of the flag?

Factory Burns in Mafeteng: 2 500 Employees Affected

A clothing factory in Mafeteng, **P & T Textile (Pty) Ltd**, caught fire shortly after the night shift had left at 5 a.m. By the time the fire brigade had been summoned from Maseru, the fire had got such a hold that little could be done and the factory building was gutted. Only the warehouse and cutting room escaped the fire. Some 2 500 persons were formerly working at the factory.

New Envoys Appointed

His Majesty King Letsie III on Wednesday 7 June commissioned three new heads for Lesotho's overseas diplomatic missions. **Ms Motšeo Senyane** is due to reopen the Office of the High Commissioner to Canada in Ottawa which has been closed for some time. **Mr Jonas Malewa**, who until 2004 was Commissioner of Police, becomes the new Ambassador to Italy taking over an Embassy which has also been closed for some time. The third appointment is **Dr Makase Nyaphisi** who becomes Ambassador to Germany in place of Mr Seymour Kikine. Dr Nyaphisi worked for a number of years in the then Environmental Division of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. More recently he has been a medical practitioner in Mokhotlong.

Death of Professor J. M. Mohapeloa

A pioneer Lesotho educationist and the first Mosotho to be promoted to the rank of Professor, **Josias Makibinyane Mohapeloa** died after a short illness on Friday 9 June 2006 at his home in Maseru at the age of 92.

Josias Makibinyane Mohapeloa, who later became known to his many friends as 'Mak', was born on 23 May 1914 at Molumong in Mokhotlong District. A Motaung oa 'Mamaloisane by clan, he was the son of Rev. Joel Mohapeloaane Mohapeloa and Candace Sehoroeane Matong. Joel Mohapeloa was a pastor of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (now the Lesotho Evangelical Church), and not long after his ordination in 1906 was posted into the Maloti to the Molumong Mission. This mission had been founded in 1893, close to the village of Chief Rafolatsane Letsie, by the very first Mosotho ordained minister, Rev. Carlisle Motebang, scarcely ten years after the first Basotho had settled there. By 1906, Carlisle Motebang was unwell and asking to be allowed to return to the Lowlands, and Joel Mohapeloa was sent to be with him and within a year to take over from him. In this remote spot, several days on horseback from the Lowlands of Lesotho, Joel Mohapeloa brought up a family of ten children, a number of whom were later to distinguish themselves in different ways. The first born later became the Rev. Kaibe Mohapeloa of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; while the third, Joel Thabiso Mohapeloa (1905-97), became a Lecturer in Commercial Subjects at Fort Hare (1930-43) and later first Treasurer of the Basotho National Treasury, and then successively a senior civil servant in the colonial administration and Chairman of the Public Service Commission. The fourth child, Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa (1908-82) became Lesotho's best known composer, and his songs are still widely sung throughout southern Africa.

Mak Mohapeloa was the sixth child, and spent his first years in the Maloti where he attended the primary school at his father's mission. The family moved to Mohalinyane in Mafeteng District

in 1929, but by this time Mak had already entered the Morija Training College, following which he went to Fort Hare University College in South Africa where he completed his secondary education. After teaching briefly in primary schools at Qhalasi and Peka, he taught for over a year at Morija Training College. His subsequent teaching career took him to teach at Modderpoort and Adams College in South Africa for short periods. Back at Fort Hare, he studied both History and English and became the first Mosotho to obtain a Master's Degree which was in the subject English. 1947 found him back in Lesotho where he taught at the then Basutoland High School, initially for two years. After periods of study at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York and at Oxford University, he became an Education Officer in the Department of Education. However, he found himself seconded from this post for the years 1951-5 to be Headmaster at Basutoland High School.

His pupils called him sometimes *Rangoane* (uncle) and sometimes 'Johnny Walker' from his precise upright gait. He clearly made an impression on them and when one of them, Makhokolotso Mokhomo, became the first Mosotho published woman poet in 1958 (the poems in her collection had been written at least five years earlier), she dedicated a nine stanza poem to her former teacher, full of exuberant praise. One of the stanzas in her book, *Sebatso* (A wonderful thing) is as follows:

*O haotse linaha mor'a Mohapelo,
A b'a fihla Amerika naheng ea mahlale,
A fihla moo ho pheloang ka metsi a linotši;
Boliba o bo fofile e se letlaka,
A hoballa sa phakoe e ubella lithaha—
Ihlo le nchocho, ihlo la Basotho,
Molomo o khutsitse ho bua lipampiri.*

He traversed lands, this son of Mohapelo,
He arrived in America, land of knowledge,
He came to where the people live on honey;
Though not a vulture, he flew over the depths of the ocean,
He flew straight as a hawk swooping down on finches—
Sharp-eyed, the eye of the Basotho,
His mouth silent as he speaks through his writings.

Over the period 1955-65, when he continued his service as an Education Officer, one of Mak Mohapelo's main responsibilities was to inspect primary schools, work which most often required travelling on horseback. In the logbooks of many primary schools to this day, one can find entries in his neat handwriting, offering valuable advice. In 1963, he was appointed Chief Inspector of Schools and in 1965 he became Permanent Secretary for Education, the post he held at the time of Lesotho's Independence.

There then began a long period of association with the University at Roma. Mak Mohapelo was Government representative on the Council of the University from 1965, and by 1967 was Chairman of the Council. Following the rules established during the colonial period, civil servants retired at 55, and when he reached this milestone in 1969, he joined the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland as a Senior Lecturer in Education. He was promoted to Reader in 1972 and Professor in 1975. From the mid-1970s, he was appointed first Acting and later substantive Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University, a position which he held until 1978. He was also at times Dean of the Faculty of Education. He finally retired from what had by now become the National University of Lesotho in July 1980. In 1987, the University awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Amongst the many professional organizations with which Professor Mohapelo was associated was the *Lekhotla la Sesotho* or Sesotho Language Academy. He was a co-founder and served as president from its foundation in 1972 to 1995.

Professor Mohapelo's long service as a teacher and administrator was paralleled by his writing, which he also actively pursued during his retirement. In Sesotho he published two books of poetry, *Mosikong oa thabana ea Borata* (On Borata's hillside) (1954) and *Tilinyang meropa* (Sound

the drums) (1971); a book of short stories, *Ifo, lapeng* (By the hearth at home) (1968); a play, *Sefofane, sholu la metebong* (Sefofane, the cattle-post thief) (1988); and a novel, *Phephi, oa maticha!* (Sorry, teacher!) (1999). Apart from many articles on education in Lesotho, including an account of its history, Professor Mohapeloa produced two major books on Lesotho history, *Government by proxy: ten years of Cape Colony rule in Lesotho 1871-81* (1971) and *Tentative British imperialism in Lesotho 1884-1910: a study in Basotho-Colonial Office interaction and South Africa's influence on it* (2002). He also published in 1985 a cautiously and thoughtfully written history of the Lesotho Evangelical Church, spanning the period when it gained (in 1964) full autonomy. This book had the title *From Mission to Church: fifty years of the work of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and the Lesotho Evangelical Church 1933-1983*. It was a sequel to an earlier work by Victor Ellenberger, which had covered the first 100 years of PEMS work in Lesotho.

Mak Mohapeloa in 1944 married Dorcas Masemola of Warmbad (now Bela-Bela in Limpopo Province) whom he had known at Fort Hare. A qualified nurse, she eventually became the first local President of the Lesotho Red Cross. Their family grew to four sons and two daughters. The Mohapeloa household, unusual in Lesotho in those days, was known to be one where the medium of communication was English. Dorcas died unexpectedly from viral hepatitis in 1989, and Mak Mohapeloa in 1991 married one of his wife's nursing colleagues, Glory Macbeth Lukhele. He is survived by his second wife, eight grandchildren and a number of great-grandchildren.

Mak Mohapeloa was known for his urbane manner and quiet efficiency, his impeccable taste, and his total command of written and spoken Sesotho and English. Following an event hosted in his honour by the Morija Museum & Archives on 15 February 2006 (see *Summary of Events*, vol. 13, no. 1 (First Quarter 2006)), the Lesotho Government also gave him recognition during Education Week at an event chosen to coincide with his 92nd birthday on 23 May 2006. On this occasion he was made Knight Commander of the Most Meritorious Order of Mohlomi by His Majesty King Letsie III.

The newly dubbed knight made an acceptance speech in which he said that teaching for him had been not just a job but a call and a privilege. He paid tribute to his wife, the late 'Mamohapeloane Dorcas Mohapeloa, who had contributed greatly towards his achievements. He also paid tribute to his present wife, Glory Macbeth Mohapeloa. He mentioned that both wives had been nurses by profession and had looked after him very well.

Professor Mohapeloa's funeral was held at the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Maseru on Friday June 16, and was followed by interment at the cemetery in Maseru West.

Irish President Visits Lesotho

President Mary McAleese of the Republic of Ireland paid a State Visit to Lesotho from 11 to 14 June 2006. Her visit closely followed the upgrading of the position of the Irish Consul-General, Paddy Fay, to full Ambassadorial Status on 18 May 2006 when he presented his credentials to His Majesty King Letsie III. Lesotho already has an Ambassador accredited to Ireland and resident in Dublin.

Mary McAleese (54) followed Mary Robinson in 1997 as Ireland's second woman president, and was re-elected in 2004 for a second term of office. She is the first Irish President of Ireland to come from Northern Ireland and has an impressive academic background as a lawyer which includes teaching and senior administrative posts in both Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College, Dublin. She has served as a barrister in Northern Ireland; as Professor of Criminal Law, Criminology and Penology in Trinity College, Dublin; as a journalist and television presenter for Radio Telefis Eireann; and back in Belfast as the first female Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Queen's University in the years immediately before assuming the Irish Presidency. Mary McAleese was accompanied to Lesotho by her husband Dr Martin McAleese, who by profession is a dentist. They have a son and two daughters.

During her busy programme, the Irish President travelled by helicopter and visited the Mohale Dam, the Rapokalana Primary School in the remote Jorotane valley, and Mafeteng Hospital.

At a State Banquet on Monday 12 June 2006, President McAleese alluded to Lesotho's links with Ireland which go back as far as Joseph Orpen, who was born in Dublin in 1828 and who effectively succeeded Eugène Casalis as Foreign Minister to King Moshoeshoe. For his pains and support of the Basotho he was made *persona non grata* in the Orange Free State. Another Irish-born person was Francis Balfour, commemorated by a monument in Maseru and also by a road named after him. He served as an Anglican missionary in Lesotho for the years 1877-1923 and was appointed the first Anglican Bishop of Lesotho in 1910.

At a reception the following evening, Mary McAleese also mentioned some of Ireland's more recent devoted workers in Lesotho, the missionaries. Present on that occasion and specifically mentioned by her by name were two veteran missionaries, **Father Denis O'Callaghan**, aged 85; and **Sister Mary-Joseph Hannon**, aged 90. Father Denis is a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and has worked in Lesotho over 60 years, many of those years spent teaching at St Theresa's Seminary in Roma. Now resident at the Oblate House in Maseru, he regularly visits patients at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. Sister Mary-Joe, as she is known, has an even longer record of service. She arrived in Lesotho as a member of the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux as long ago as 1936. Amongst her responsibilities was the founding of St Mary's Training College for women teachers at Roma in 1941. She initially mounted the three-year Basutoland Primary Teachers' Course from a building known as Mud Castle, which had already been condemned 35 years earlier in an education report! Fortunately better premises were soon to follow.

In her speech at the reception, Mary McAleese spoke eloquently of Ireland's past when her own people suffered crushing poverty. The people of Ireland understood for generations what it was to be poor and not to have opportunities. Ireland's involvement in Lesotho is a friendship, and in a friendship one does not cut ties. Ireland was committed to stay and to help Lesotho make the most of its opportunities. Ireland, like Lesotho, has few natural resources, and indeed like Lesotho, its main natural resource is water. However, the true main resource of Ireland is its people, who have today collectively risen above their impoverished past. It is also true that the main resource of Lesotho is its people. Poverty can result in many responses. Those who suffer from poverty may resort to fatalism, anger or cynicism. However those who can rise above it have the opportunities for altruism, and to support their own people. She recognised that those present at the reception included many who had indeed taken such a path.

New Roads to Parliament Under Construction

As recorded in *Lesotho Today* of 15 June 2006, two new roads are already under construction to the ridge on which the new buildings of the Houses of Parliament will soon be constructed.

The three hills which rise behind the Lesotho Sun hotel have at different times had various names, and during the Gun War, when they sheltered attacking troops, they were christened The World, The Flesh and the Devil, with The Devil being the highest and most imposing. An Anglican deaconess later sponsored a suggested renaming to Faith, Hope and Charity ('... but the greatest of these is charity' as in *I Corinthians*, *xiii*, 13). The renaming did not endure.

In Sesotho, the highest hill is normally called Qoatšaneng, a diminutive from Qoaling, the even larger mountain close by, whose name is ultimately derived from a *Seroa* (San) word for wild cats. However, the part of the hill nearest to central Maseru is also called Mpilo, a name whose origin is in some doubt, although it is paralleled by its corresponding diminutive, Mpilonyane, the name given to the hill with the regimental badge which rises behind the Ratjomose Barracks. In Zulu and Xhosa it seems that *mpilo* is the word for 'health' (a missionary coinage according to Bryant in his *Zulu-English dictionary* of 1905). Could it perhaps have something to do with the hospital being on its lower flanks, and/or have been named by the many Xhosa-speaking Fingos who were the backbone of the Basutoland Mounted Police in the early days? (Perhaps Desmond Mpilo Tutu, once Anglican Bishop of Lesotho could throw some light on the matter?) Whatever the explanation, the name is now well established through the naming of the dual carriageway Mpilo Boulevard which cuts into the side of the hill so savagely that the hill from time to time responds by rolling rocks down onto the road.

No doubt the hill will soon be known as *Thaba- ea-Paramente*, Parliament Hill. The new roads which will eventually be tarred have already scaled the heights to The World and The Flesh (Faith and Hope) where the Parliament buildings will be situated. One road ascends the hill from between the gate of the Lesotho Sun Hotel and the Friebel Estate; and is joined by the other which makes its ascent from near the National University of Lesotho's Institute of Extra-Mural Studies.

Reported Rape Statistics Show Disturbing Increase

Public Eye of 16 June 2006 quoted figures given by Motšelisi Mosotho, a member of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service **Child and Gender Protection Unit**. Reported rapes between January and March 2006 had been 484, compared with 501 cases in the whole of 2005. According to Ms Mosotho, gender rights campaigns have encouraged people to report rapes, and this has contributed to the jump in the number of reported rape cases.

Funeral of Bereng Sekhonyana Becomes Large BNP Rally

The funeral of **Bereng Sekhonyana**, gunned down on Friday 2 June 2006, was held, like many recent funerals of prominent people, at the Machabeng College grounds on Sunday 18 June 2006. The leader of the Basotho National Party, Justin Metsing Lekhanya, and members of the Party Executive were conspicuous for their absence. Nevertheless there was a large BNP party attendance with many party flags in evidence. Amongst those who spoke were His Majesty King Letsie III; the Deputy Prime Minister, Lesao Lehohla; and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ntlhoi Motsamai.

Bereng Sekhonyana, aged 63, was a descendant of the highly educated son of King Moshoeshoe, Nehemiah Sekhonyana (1825-1906), who had been named after the Ndwandwe chief Sikhunyana, son of Zwide. In the period c.1825-6, Sikhunyana had been a formidable but ultimately unsuccessful opponent of the Zulu chief, Chaka. King Moshoeshoe named several of his sons after famous warriors.

The name Barend (which in Sesotho becomes Bereng) was first given to Bereng Letsie, the second son of Paramount Chief Letsie. He was born about 1838 and named after the Griqua chief Barend Barends, who lived in Lesotho from 1833 to 1838. Because of the practice of naming people after relatives, Bereng thereafter became a popular name, particularly in the Royal Family, where seven different Principal Chiefs have borne the name Bereng. Finally in the matter of names, Bereng Sekhonyana was known to many as Selala. This is because the original Mosotho bearer of the name, Bereng Letsie (1838-98), became a famous warrior, with a regiment named Lilala, 'the ambushers', which, as recorded in praise poetry, served with distinction in the Gun War of 1880-81. Anyone serving Bereng Letsie was a Selala, and this became a praise name by association for any subsequent person named Bereng, including His Majesty Moshoeshoe II, who in his youth was commonly called Selala, because his original names had been Constantine Bereng Seeiso.

Bereng Sekhonyana himself had had a distinguished career as both a diplomat and civil servant, rising to the post of Principal Secretary before taking over BNP responsibilities on the death of his brother, E. R. Sekhonyana, in 1998. He is survived by his wife, his mother and six children. As his coffin was taken to the cemetery adjoining Kokobela Village, large numbers of BNP Youth League members accompanied it, shouting party slogans and singing party songs.

Migrant Worker Numbers Decline

The *Central Bank of Lesotho Quarterly Review* is commonly published about five months in arrears. The issue for December 2005 provides statistics for Basotho miners in South Africa. The average number employed suffered what is probably the largest annual decline on record when it dropped from 58 014 in 2004 to 52 450 in 2005 (the figures had been 61 416 in 2003 and 62 158 in 2002). Despite the decline, miners still contribute greatly to the Lesotho economy. Not only are there more than twice as many miners as factory workers, but their average earnings at between M40 000 and M45 000 per annum are more than four times factory worker wages.

Of course not all of miners' earnings are remitted to Lesotho, and the proportion is diminishing as miners of five years or more standing are exercising the right to settle with their

families in South Africa near their places of work. This is perhaps reflected in the Deferred Pay total which declined by 42% from M293 million in 2004 to M169 million in 2005. This was only partly offset by remittance payments which rose by 27% from M132 million in 2004 to M167 million in 2005. This perhaps means that many miners no longer come home, but that they still feel they have sufficient responsibilities towards their extended families to send a part of their earnings to support them.

University Tightens Security and Suspends Staff; New Buildings Come into Use

Recent developments at the **National University of Lesotho Roma Campus** have included the completion of a new security fence comprising a metal palisade along the west, north and east sides of the campus. On the north side, this fence encloses additional fields acquired in the past two years and used by the Faculty of Agriculture. There are now only three official entry points, pedestrian gates on the north and east sides of the campus and the main entrance for pedestrians and vehicles on the south side. With effect from 1 June 2006, visitors now have to provide identification and are issued with visitors' cards. Staff and students have to carry identification cards.

Relations between the main university administration and some of its staff have deteriorated in recent months. After the dismissal of Nthakeng Selinyane of the Department of Development Studies (a matter which has been challenged in the High Court, but on which a judgment has not yet been given), disciplinary proceedings have also been instituted against a number of other staff, particularly after they were severely critical of the Vice-Chancellor and the university management in the Radio Lesotho phone-in programme *Seboping* and also on Lesotho Television. As announced by the Registrar in a circular to staff dated 19 May 2006, three further staff have been suspended pending disciplinary hearings.

Three major new buildings have been under construction during the past academic year. One of these, the three-storey extension which virtually doubles the size of the Thomas Mofolo Library is now nearly complete, and books were being moved into it by June 2006. Much less complete is the four-storey building for the Faculties of Agriculture and Health Sciences which, despite the contractor working at night, looks unlikely to be ready before the next academic year. There is also a new hostel complex, on the north side of the existing main hostels area, and this is planned to be ready by the new academic year in August.

ATMs Cause Problems; Lesotho Bank to Merge with Standard Bank

Thieves, believed to be from South Africa, have discovered methods of inducing Automatic Teller Machines to improperly retain customers' ATM cards, after which the thieves have apparently managed to recover them and draw cash. The problem arose at the Lesotho Bank branch at the Industrial Area over the weekend, 3-5 June 2006, and it has been announced that this branch will now only be open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eight customers who lost money have been compensated by the bank.

Another problem is the inadequate numbers of ATM machines. This becomes acute at the end of the month when factory workers wish to withdraw salary money paid into their accounts. The practice has developed that when there are very long queues at all the Maseru ATMs, people take the taxi from Maseru to Roma, where the two ATMs are usually less congested. However, on 30 June 2006, so many adopted this strategy that there was a queue several hundred persons long which snaked out of the University gate and a hundred metres along the road. The Roma minibus taxis, normally fairly idle during the university vacation, had a day of unusually good business.

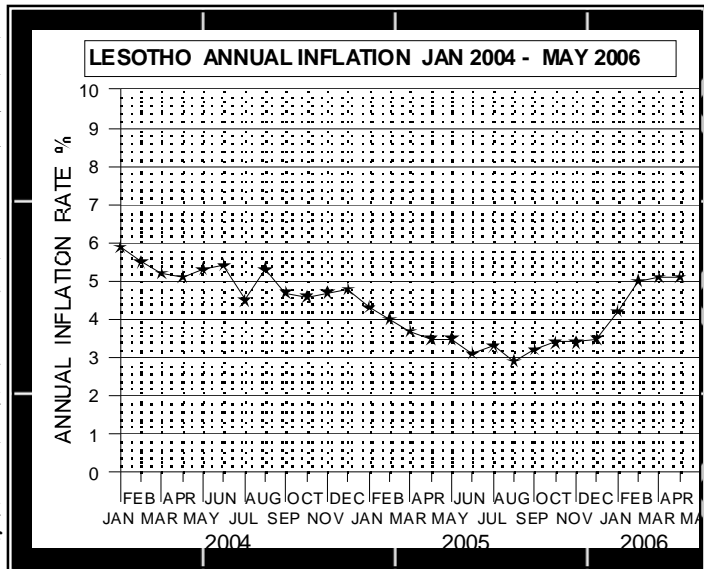
Since 1999, management of Lesotho Bank has been in the hands of Standard Bank. In July 2006 there will be a complete merger and the new bank will be called **Standard Lesotho Bank**. The changeover is planned for the holiday weekend 15-17 July 2006.

Inflation Increases and Stabilizes Around 5%

[Please note that the inflation rates for November and December 2005 (and the commentary thereon) as published in the last issue of *Summary of Events* were incorrect. They appear correctly in the graph below.]

Inflation rates in Lesotho have been rising steadily since a low of 2.9% in August 2005. The steepest rises were from 3.5% in December to 4.2% in January and then to 5.0% in February. In the following months inflation was virtually static, rising to 5.1% in March and remaining the same in April 2006. At the time of going to press the May 2006 inflation rate was not available.

Meanwhile in South Africa, the inflation rate as measured by the most comparable index, the CPIX, was 4.3% in January, 4.5% in February, 3.8% in March, and 3.7% in April 2006. The subsequent trend was likely to be upwards, the result of high oil prices combined with the recent decline in the value of the rand against major currencies.



Summary of events in Lesotho is a quarterly publication compiled and published by David Ambrose at the National University of Lesotho, P. O. Roma 180, Lesotho.