

## President Sir Seretse Khama's Botched Localisation of the Botswana Police Service, 1965-1975

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### Abstract

Despite concerted efforts by his government and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Seretse Khama's localisation of the Botswana Police would ultimately fail in its objective during the period under study. Using archival material obtained from the National Archives of the United Kingdom and some secondary sources, this article explores the localisation programme in the Botswana Police, placing it within the context of similar projects in other African police and military forces during the decolonisation and immediate post-independence periods. It argues that the localisation programme of the Botswana Police was undermined by two factors. Firstly, the absence of adequately trained Africans in the force, which was the result of the Colonial Office's lack of foresight while preparing Botswana for independence. Secondly, the response of some British expatriate officers following the President's announcement of the localisation exercise were counterproductive.

**Keywords:** Botswana Police; expatriate officers; gazetted ranks; inspectorate; independence; localisation.

### Introduction

The history of policing in Botswana just like many other African countries can be traced to the colonial period. The conquest and rule of African territories by European powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were consolidated through the creation of para-military police forces to operate as agents of colonial control and to maintain foreign/European rule. The responsibility for state security was, therefore, borne by the colonial police forces, and in some cases, by the military which operated as a reserve. In most cases, colonial police and military forces were considerably small and highly dependent on the participation of the colonised people to make up their numbers (Anderson and Killingray 1991; Killingray 1986). However, it should be noted that Botswana (Bechuanaland Protectorate) became a British territory peacefully in 1885 without a single shot fired.

To better understand the quest for localisation in the Botswana Police, it is important to first understand the issue of race and its place in the colonial system. In the colonial police and militaries of Africa, Asia, and other British dependencies, there often existed stark racial inequalities between the personnel of the forces. There developed in these police and militaries, a racial hierarchy between the European and the local members. The colonial police forces of Botswana (Bechuanaland Protectorate) just like those of other territories comprised European officers and a predominantly African rank-and-file. It was an accepted axiom in British colonial police and militaries that these forces should always be under European supervision (Killingray 1994). This axiom was later enunciated in a 1946 annual report of the Kenya Police with the words: 'Naturally, as the supervising staff is mainly European'. (Wolf 1973: 403). Therefore, for the simple reasons of power and practicality, the Europeans considered it only 'natural' that white police should supervise Africans, which underscored European ideas of racial superiority (Wolf 1973). This was born out of a racial ideology that developed in mid-nineteenth century Europe. The Europeans believed that as a 'civilized' people, their race was superior to any other. Out of this belief, as well as the economic and strategic motivations behind colonialism, the Europeans embarked on a civilizing mission to other parts of the world. Because of their belief in 'white superiority', the

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Europeans placed themselves in charge of their newly acquired colonies (Bush 1999). One of the cost-effective ways in which this racial hierarchy was maintained, was through the policy of indirect rule in the case of British territories including Botswana (Makgala 2001). This was a system through which the Europeans controlled their colonies through pre-existing indigenous power structures. The colonial society was, therefore, entwined with racism from the onset (Mamdani 1996). Nonetheless, economic imperatives and administrative expediency also determined the adoption of indirect rule.

A result of the racial hierarchy was that during the decolonisation period, as many African colonies gained independence, many of their police and militaries still comprised a significant number of Europeans in the higher ranks. The British government and the soon-to-be independent countries, therefore, were faced with the challenge of handing over the command of the former colonial police and militaries to Africans. As it shall be demonstrated below, this transpired at different degrees and speed, usually depending on the political developments on the ground in different territories.

### **Pre-Independence Efforts towards Localisation**

The localisation of higher ranks in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police (BPP) represented a contentious issue between the Bechuanaland Protectorate and British governments. First, it must be made clear that the term localisation in the context of Botswana refers to what in other territories has been called Africanisation. However, the Bechuanaland administration and indeed the post-independence president, Sir Seretse Khama, with his moderate politics and affinity to the British government, preferred the term 'localisation' because it was seen to be non-racial and less radical. Following the constitutional review conference in November 1963, the Bechuanaland government had committed itself to submitting a White Paper setting out the steps to be taken for the localisation of posts in the police force and the civil service proper (Resident Commissioner to Secretary of State 14 September 1964, The National Archives (TNA), DO. 1048/796). By September 1964, the government was under pressure from local politicians to speed up localisation in the BPP which unlike other colonial police forces, still had many expatriate Europeans in the inspectorate and gazetted ranks. The police force of Bechuanaland, like those of other colonies, had a three-tier structure. First, there were the gazetted ranks, which included the assistant superintendents up to the rank of commissioner. The second level was that of non-gazetted ranks or the inspectorate, comprising the assistant inspectors up to the senior inspectors. Lastly there was the rank and file, who held the rank of constable (Clayton and Killingray 1989). The recruitment of expatriate officers into the BPP was, therefore, ceased, while the Bechuanaland government devised ways of promoting Africans to the gazetted ranks and increasing those in the inspectorate cadre (RC to Secretary of State 14 September 1964, TNA, DO. 1048/796).

One way that Resident Commissioner Peter Fawcus considered for localising the police force included the promotion of senior rank-and-file personnel men, who although lacking the educational requirements for inspectorate ranks (O' Level), could be considered based on their long service, practical experience as well as good character and leadership (RC to Secretary of State 14 September 1964, TNA, DO. 1048/796). The Colonial Office, however, thought it better if the BPP would create a small number of supernumerary or shadow posts to which African candidates would be appointed on probation and sometimes on an acting basis for eventual absorption into the established posts. The system of creating supernumerary posts for African officers was common practice in many colonies and the Colonial Office's assumption that it could be applied to the Bechuanaland Protectorate was a natural one (RC to Secretary of State 23 November 1964, TNA, DO. 1048/796). Therefore, two supernumerary posts of assistant superintendent were created and filled by the African inspectors Bokowe and Motlhatlhedi. It was intended that after nine to 12 months, two other superintendent supernumerary posts would be created, to which

Bokowe and Motlathledi would be advanced, and their places filled by two other African police (Colonial Office to RC 27 November 1964, Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) OP/47/2). By November 1965, there were still no African gazetted officers in the BPP despite the adoption of the supernumerary approach. Difficulty in finding suitable men with the requisite academic qualifications was cited by the High Commissioner as the reason for the slow-paced localization of the police force (HC's Note on the Police 24 November 1965, TNA, DO. 1048/796). This represented a major contradiction on the part of the British government because the supernumerary approach was adopted to circumvent that very challenge. It appeared, therefore, that the Colonial Office was disingenuous about their commitment to localizing the gazetted ranks of the BPP.

It was only in August 1966, following an official tour and recommendations by the deputy inspector general of the Colonial Police, that the Colonial Office became clear that the expatriate officers of the BPP would be retained until after independence scheduled for 30 September 1966 (Colonial Office to RC 23 August 1966, BNARS OP/47/8). At the request of Prime Minister Seretse Khama and Police Commissioner Bailey, who was a British expatriate officer, the Colonial Office agreed to save two places per leadership course at the West Riding Police Training School in Wakefield, England for Botswana men. It was thought that by the end of 1967, 12 Botswana would have completed advanced police training courses, which would help accelerate the progressive localisation of command posts in the BPP (Colonial Office to RC 23 August 1966, BNARS OP/47/8). This, however, was later than the Protectorate administration had hoped for. It also revealed an inconsistency in the Colonial Office's attitude towards the British High Commission Territories (Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland) especially because the Basutoland Mounted Police had already made strides in its localisation of gazetted ranks through the same supernumerary approach. By November 1964, the Basutoland Mounted Police had 11 African gazetted officers out of an establishment of 28. These were one assistant commissioner, three superintendents, and seven assistant superintendents (Report of the Inspector General of Colonial Police, November 1964, TNA, FCO. 141/963). Although there is no available evidence of how many African gazetted officers were in the Swaziland Police by August 1966, it was clear that the Bechuanaland Protectorate would go into independence without any, while Basutoland (Lesotho) had 11 of them two years before its independence. It is also possible that the British government's slow paced towards the issue of localisation in Bechuanaland was enabled by the moderate and pro-British nature of President Khama's ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which probably did not mount enough pressure as it should have to achieve the objective of localisation.

Compared to several other British colonies, the Bechuanaland Protectorate represented an unusual case as it went into independence without a single African gazetted officer in its police force. Within the context of the post-war colonial reforms, some of the larger police forces in Africa began appointing African gazetted officers as early as the late 1940s. In 1947, for example, 13 years before Nigeria became independent, the Nigeria Police Force had 10 African assistant superintendents. In Uganda, the first two African assistant superintendents were appointed in 1957, and by 1959, just two years before independence, there were 18 of them. In 1948, when the Kenya Police created its Emergency Company (renamed General Service Unit in 1953), it comprised one European assistant superintendent and 81 rank and file. By 1951, 12 years before the independence of Kenya, the Emergency Company had four European and five African gazetted officers (Clayton and Killingray 1989). While the Gold Coast (Ghana) Police had two African gazetted officers and 120 Europeans in 1948, these numbers were almost the reverse in 1960, just three years after independence. By the independence of Tanganyika (Tanzania) in 1961, its police force had four African superintendents. In Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), the localisation process was delayed by the Central African Federation and yet, by 1963, just a year before independence, the police force had a handful of African gazetted officers (Sinclair 2006). While the territories mentioned here admittedly had

far larger police forces and populations compared to the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the early localisation of their gazetted ranks raises doubts about the British government's commitment to do the same with the BPP.

### **Seretse Khama's Resolve after Independence**

As pointed out above, in 1966, Botswana became an independent country without a single African gazetted officer in its police force. During the country's self-government period between 1965 and 1966, the Colonial Office had insisted on retaining expatriate officers in the then BPP for some time while arrangements were made with the British government to provide the necessary training for Botswana men at the West Riding Police Training. By the end of 1969, however, three years after independence, there were nine African gazetted officers in the Botswana Police. These were Assistant Superintendents Baletloa, Mogatle, Ntsape, David Mophuting and Mompoti Merafhe; Superintendents Bokowe, Ndubiwa, Kgakge, and Senior Superintendent Simon Hirschfeld. The police force, however, still had a sizeable cadre of European gazetted officers. Four of these expatriate Europeans occupied the top four command posts of commissioner, deputy commissioner, and the two assistant commissioner ones. All four expatriates in these command positions were approaching the end of their careers as their contracts were set to expire between late 1970 and 1971 (Commissioner of Police's Note 10 December 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

Despite the nine African gazetted officers in the Botswana Police, President Khama was still anxious to accelerate the process of localisation in the whole force, starting with the top four command posts. In October 1969, Khama's government brought in two advisors from the Ford Foundation namely DA Anderson and FJ Glyn to review the administration of the country and advise on localisation and training in Botswana's public sector (Mentz 1985). With the Ford Foundation being an American organization, Khama's decision to engage its services reflected a slight change in orientation from the former colonial power. While consulting for the government, Anderson was requested by the president to meet with Police Commissioner Bailey to discuss the issue of localisation in the Botswana Police (Note on Discussion with Bailey 12 October 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Anderson directed Bailey to formulate a comprehensive programme for the localisation of the top four command posts as well as most of the superintendent and senior superintendent ones by the end of 1971. For the top four posts, a corresponding number of African gazetted officers was to be nominated one at a time, to attend a three-months command course in Britain in April, July, October 1970, and January 1971. After these command posts were filled, African non-gazetted officers (inspectorate) were to be sent two at a time, to Britain for the same course before promotion to gazetted ranks (Note on Discussion with Bailey, 12 October 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

Senior Superintendent Hirschfeld and Assistant Superintendent Merafhe were earmarked to be the first African commissioner and deputy commissioner of the Botswana Police. Upon return from the command course in Britain, the 35-year-old Hirschfeld was to be promoted to the rank of assistant commissioner in July 1970, then deputy commissioner in February 1971, and ultimately police commissioner by October 1971 at Bailey's retirement. Based on his perceived aptitude, 34-year-old Merafhe was to skip the rank of superintendent and be promoted to senior superintendent upon his return from Britain in 1971. Thereafter, he was to become assistant commissioner briefly and then deputy commissioner in September 1971. The two assistant commissioner posts were, therefore, to be occupied by Ndubiwa and Kgakge (Commissioner of Police's Note 10 December 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

In drawing up the required localisation scheme in 1969, Bailey took heed of the president's wishes regarding the four command posts but dismissed many other areas of localisation as impractical. Particularly problematic to Bailey, was what he saw as a crash localisation of the Botswana Police, especially in the specialist branches of the force such as the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), the Special Branch, and the Police Mobile Unit (PMU). Bailey argued that the premature replacement of Europeans

by inexperienced Africans in the higher ranks of these branches could have an adverse effect on their efficiency (Permanent Secretary to the President to Commissioner of Police 29 December 1969, TNA, FCO 45/429). The CID for example, had no African gazetted officers in 1969, and Bailey claimed that the five expatriate officers heading it would be required for some years to come as was the case in the even larger police forces of Kenya, Zambia, and Malawi. He denigratingly believed that 'the Batswana did not have the capacity to gain the knowledge it took to head the CID because of the sophisticated nature of the crimes and investigations involved' (Commissioner of Police's Note 10 December 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

In the PMU, there were five European and two African gazetted officers. For this branch too, Bailey argued for retaining the Europeans for their invaluable para-military and administrative duties. The Special Branch had four European and one African gazetted officer. Although he emphasized the need for the branch to retain expatriates, Bailey was prepared to promote Assistant Superintendent Mophuting to the rank of superintendent and make him the deputy head of Special Branch. Because the Special Branch was also involved in national security issues involving incursions by Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) freedom fighters in the northern parts of the country, there were sovereignty implications in having it led by British officers and yet, Bailey chose to keep John Sheppard, an expatriate, as head of the branch (Commissioner of Police's Note 10 December 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

Although reluctant to replace gazetted Europeans in the specialist branches of the Botswana Police with Africans, Bailey's localisation scheme did propose the promotion of three inspectorate Africans to gazetted ranks. Inspectors Tebele, Gareforolwe, and Isaacs, were all to rise to the rank of assistant superintendent. The promotion of Tebele and Gareforolwe, both 50 years old, was based not on their academic qualifications, but their long service in the force. The 35-year-old Isaacs was deemed suitable for gazetted rank if he could complete a command course by 1971. Even with all the envisaged changes, Bailey's scheme would still leave eight expatriate gazetted officers holding general duty positions such as district and sub-district command posts in various parts of the country (Commissioner of Police's Note 10 December 1969, TNA, FCO. 45/429). This was a relatively unusual case because as mentioned above, many former British colonies had fully localised their police forces by independence or shortly after. The situation in Botswana was almost like that of Malawi, where President Banda had encouraged the European expatriates in the police force to stay on after the country's independence. The Malawi Police, therefore, relied on European gazetted officers until the early 1970s (Sinclair 2006, Clayton and Killingray 1989). The difference here was that unlike Banda, Khama had called for localisation before independence.

However, President Khama was unimpressed with Bailey's localisation scheme. Although it went some way in meeting the objectives of the president, especially with the top four command posts, the scheme did not go far enough in other areas. It was criticized by the Office of the President for being too vague on the issue of localisation at district and sub-district levels (PS to Commissioner of Police 29 December 1969, TNA, FCO 45/429). Moreover, the scheme argued for retaining expatriates in the specialist branches of the Botswana Police but provided no plans or recommendations for their eventual localisation except for the promotion of Mophuting to superintendent and deputy head of Special Branch. While the government accepted that some expatriates, especially those in the specialist branches would have to remain for some time, they were going to be expected to train their African inspectorate officers and groom them to take over the command of those branches (PS to Commissioner of Police 29 December 1969, TNA, FCO 45/429).

By 1970, President Khama was convinced that Bailey was intentionally dragging his feet on the question of localisation to buy some time for the expatriate officers in the Botswana Police. It was reported that the morale of the expatriate officers had been low since the beginning of 1970 because Bailey had

been informing them that full-scale localisation was imminent and that there was no future for any of them in Botswana. Bailey's actions also dissuaded those expatriates who were planning to take on Botswana citizenship (British High Commission to Macoun 10 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). On 23 February, President Khama had a private, unofficial meeting with Overseas Police Advisor (formerly Inspector General of Colonial Police), Michael J Macoun, in Gaborone to discuss the question of localisation. To the president's relief, Macoun pointed out that by that time (four years after independence), the only expatriate officers remaining in the force were supposed to be those at headquarters engaged in training the locals or performing some highly specialised roles for which there were no qualified Africans (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 26 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Macoun also expressed the importance of immediately withdrawing all expatriate officers in the field engaged as commanders in the districts or PMU platoons, where they could find themselves involved in law-and-order operations against African nationals. This could have undesired political consequences, especially in an independent African country (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 26 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

After assuring Khama of his full support, Macoun met with Bailey the next day on an official capacity where he directed the latter on what was to be done with the question of localisation in the Botswana Police. Apart from the 10 expatriate officers whose contracts or tours were set to end in 1971, including the top four command posts, Macoun recommended the dismissal of a further six. The six officers, all of whom were in general duty posts, were to be forced into retirement through six months' notice for the permanent and pensionable ones, or by termination and/non-renewal of contracts for the others (Macoun's Memorandum on Localisation 24 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Successful execution of Macoun's recommendations would mean that 16 of the 32 expatriate officers in the Botswana Police made way for Africans to take over. This exercise would, however, depend on the successful completion of training courses by the respective African gazetted officers (Macoun's Memorandum on Localisation 24 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

With the confidence gained from Macoun's recommendations, President Khama resolutely accelerated the localisation process. On 20 March 1970, he summoned all available European and African gazetted men of the Botswana Police to the officer's mess at the PMU headquarters in Gaborone to make his big announcement. In December 1969, he had addressed the conference of the Botswana Teachers Union at Lobatse to explain to them government's intention to embark on a large-scale training, localisation and recruitment process aimed at national development ('Address by the President' 20 March 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). After addressing the executive board of the Botswana Civil Service Association (BCSA) on the same matter in February 1970, Khama felt it was now time for all gazetted officers to hear his plans regarding localisation in the police. He explained to them that localisation, which did not only apply to the police force but to the public service and the commercial sector, was essential to achieving one of Botswana's key principles, namely, self-reliance. The other national principles were democracy, unity, *botho* ('civility') and development. The independence of Botswana would, therefore, be superficial if the country relied indefinitely on non-citizens to perform all the work critical to national development ('Address by the President' 20 March 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

One of the main political objectives of Khama's government, dating back to the formation of his BDP in 1962, was the creation of a non-racial and 'egalitarian' society in Botswana. Unlike the radical Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), Khama's party had promised to uphold liberal and democratic freedoms once in power, and this was what made it more acceptable to the colonial administration (Kirby 2017). In line with this objective of multiracialism, Khama explained that a 'Motswana' did not simply mean someone whose mother tongue was Setswana, but rather a person of any racial and linguistic background who resided in Botswana and was a citizen by birth, marriage, or immigration. As such, localisation in

government's terms, meant the replacement of non-citizens by citizens, whatever their race or ethnicity ('Address by the President' 20 March 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

After expressing his gratitude to all expatriate officers for their service in the Botswana Police, Khama announced that by the end of 1971, the top four command posts would be vacated by the incumbent officers and occupied by Batswana. Furthermore, in the course of 1970, about 16 of the currently serving expatriate officers would receive letters from the Office of the President requesting them to retire either through non-renewal of contracts or a compensation scheme for the permanent and pensionable ones (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 26 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Besides the expatriate officers who would be retained for some time for purely training responsibilities and specialised roles, the general duty posts were to be localised as rapidly as possible over the course of 18 months from the time of the president's speech in March 1970 ('Address by the President' 20 March 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429).

### **Expatriate Officers' Reaction to Localisation**

The president's speech did not come as a surprise to many British officers as Bailey had long told some of them about the imminent localisation of the police. There was, however, a risk of some of the expatriate officers developing feelings of resentment towards government and possibly neglecting their responsibilities to retard the efficiency of the police force before the completion of localisation (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 26 February 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Although the president's speech had not included the names of the Batswana men who were to assume the top four posts in the Botswana Police, many of the expatriate officers appeared to have a good idea of who these men were. This was possibly due to Bailey's indiscreetness but also the low numbers of high-ranking Africans in the force which made it easy to guess. In the days following Khama's speech, some of the expatriate officers began to endear themselves to Hirschfeld and Merafhe and bad-mouthed one another. As Hirschfeld would later recount, one of them desperately told him that, 'These buggers are horrible, and when you fire them, please spare me. I am the only one who is good', (*The Monitor* 15 February 2016). Hirschfeld later discovered that the same European officer had approached Merafhe with the same plea. As Merafhe explains in his memoirs, it was not that difficult to tell who the first citizen commissioner of police and his deputy would be, as he and Hirschfeld were regarded by many in the force as stars in the ascendant (Merafhe 2015).

By June 1970, the general mood among the expatriate officers had become despondent. British High Commissioner GA Anderson, who sympathised with the outgoing Europeans explained that the low spirits in the force were caused by President Khama pushing localisation too fast and thoroughly while there were no competent Batswana to take up the responsibilities in the police force (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 17 September 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). Possibly embittered by the imminent departure of their fellow Europeans, some of the expatriate officers whom government had intended to retain for another two to three years had chosen to decline this offer and resign from the Botswana Police. About six out of the 16 men had given their notice to resign, while three more were still wavering (Bailey to Macoun 24 September 1970, TNA, FCO. 45/429). The expatriates in the Botswana Police had become disillusioned with the force and the government at large, and with their decision to resign, Khama's localisation programme stood a chance of backfiring.

High Commissioner Anderson also believed that the departure of those expatriate officers the government had wished to retain would render the Botswana Police, especially the specialist branches, ineffective. This in turn, would force government to embark on a crash recruitment programme, which could be futile as no expatriates would likely want to come to Botswana following Khama's localisation programme (HC's Note on Discussions 17 December 1970, TNA, FCO 45/429). On his farewell call to the president, outgoing head of Special Branch, Bill Grant claimed that, despite being succeeded by a

European officer, the Branch was still headed for a state of decay unless government recruited three new European expatriates and sent African junior officers overseas for training (HC's Note on Discussions 17 December 1970, TNA, FCO 45/429). Overseas Police Advisor Macoun dismissed these claims as nonsense and expressed disappointment in the behaviour of the expatriate officers who did not seem to realise that the localisation of the Botswana Police was necessary. Macoun was, however, optimistic about the future of the Botswana Police as all the Botswana men who had gone for command training courses in Britain had done and continued to do well. Because some expatriate officers had declined the government of Botswana's offer to keep them in the force for some more time, Macoun approached the British Ministry of Overseas Development and asked them to recruit willing expatriates to come into the force as contracted training officers. As for those expatriate officers who declined the Botswana government's offer to retain them, Macoun would investigate getting the British Ministry of Overseas Development to recruit willing expatriates who could come into the force as contracted training officers and prepare more Botswana to eventually take over (Macoun to British High Commission 30 December 1970, TNA, FCO 45/429).

After Hirschfeld and Merafhe succeeded Bailey and Clarke respectively as the first Botswana commissioner and deputy commissioner in 1971, they soon experienced challenges in the performance of their duties. They took over a force which still had a small number of European officers who as it seemed, expected them to fail (Merafhe 2015). After his retirement, Bailey allegedly set out to frustrate his successor by withholding vital information about the job despite the president's orders for the outgoing officers to work closely with the incoming ones to ensure a smooth transition. Hirschfeld later deduced that Bailey's intention was to set him up for failure, which would force the president to bring him back in as a police advisor (*The Monitor* 15 February 2016). This, however, never happened.

The behaviour displayed by Bailey and the other expatriate officers had been meant to render localisation a botched exercise. As Macoun explained, Bailey and his senior officers had done nothing by way of preparing the force for localisation until after the president pushed the matter, just as the Colonial Office had done nothing prior to independence. The Botswana Police had, therefore, become home to a cadre of expatriate officers so professionally inbred that localisation was anathema to them (Macoun to British High Commission 30 December 1970, TNA, FCO 45/429). Some of their actions, such as the reluctance to train their successors and the spiteful decline to continue serving in the force when offered the opportunity to do so, ultimately brought more challenges to the Botswana Police.

### **Post-Localisation Challenges in the Botswana Police**

While the African officers appointed to the top four command posts of the force had successfully completed command training courses in Britain, most of the newly appointed African gazetted officers had not. For those of them in specialist branches such as the PMU and Special Branch, who took over command from embittered predecessors, there was a great deal to learn about the job. Although the Botswana and British governments worked together to bring in some training officers in the early 1970s, the challenges only became worse, which raised questions about the merits of Khama's localisation program (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 28 December 1973, TNA, FCO. 45/1508).

In March 1973, Major Montgomery and Warrant Officer Price of the British Army were seconded to the PMU on an 18-months tour as part of the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT). This was part of the broader military advisory missions that Britain provided to various countries throughout the twentieth century. Kenya, Zambia and after 1979, Zimbabwe were all provided with BMATT assistance (Whitaker 2014). The objective of the BMATT in Botswana was to help improve the efficiency of the PMU. By December 1973, the team was frustrated by what Major Montgomery called 'weakness at the top levels of command'. Blaming the rapid localisation programme, Montgomery noted that six African inspectors had been promoted to gazetted ranks even though they were far from physically fit. The two



company commanders were both 50 years old while the platoon commanders averaged 45 years. It was claimed that the men gave the impression of being at a stage in their careers where they were reluctant to learn new things and, therefore, content with the low standard of the PMU (BMATT to British High Commission 12 December 1973, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). As a para-military unit responsible for the internal security of Botswana, the standard of the PMU was unsatisfactory. (Botswana did not have an army until 1977.) Montgomery suggested the appointment of an expatriate officer as senior superintendent of the PMU with executive command of the unit. Such a man would have authority over the Botswana company and platoon commanders who Montgomery saw as the problem (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 28 December 1973, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). Convinced that there was little hope for the PMU to become an effective para-military organisation, Montgomery requested that the BMATT be allowed to cut their tour short. Having taught everything they could to all the ranks in the unit, Montgomery felt that 'no real change could be effected on the PMU unless drastic changes were taken with regards to the higher levels of command' (BMATT to British High Commission 12 December 1973, TNA, FCO. 45/1508).

Macoun acknowledged that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was aware that the PMU in Botswana was led by men who lacked motivation and that there was a need to replace them with more active and younger officers. He, however, vehemently discouraged the idea of appointing an expatriate senior superintendent as executive commander in the PMU. This would in effect, mean that the Botswana Police had an expatriate officer leading its para-military unit in operations against African freedom fighters from neighbouring territories and possibly their state security forces too (Macoun to British High Commission 7 March 1974, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). This would lead to criticism not just from Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa, but much of the international community. As a military man, Montgomery was criticised for expecting a lot too quickly from a police unit. Macoun suggested, instead, that a suitable officer with a police background could be recruited from Britain and engaged in the PMU as a support and training officer (Macoun to British High Commission 7 March 1974, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). It is not clear what a police support and training officer could do for a para-military unit that the British Army training team could not but, the fact that both Montgomery and Macoun felt that there was need for another expatriate officer in the PMU appeared to counter the whole localisation exercise.

After his visit to Botswana in May 1974, Macoun recommended the training of up to 14 Botswana non-gazetted officers at the British Army School of Infantry at Warminster, England. In September 1974, the PMU requested seven places for 1975 and seven more for 1976 in the platoon commanders battle course at the school (Report and Recommendations by Macoun 14 May 1974, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). Since the platoon commanders battle course was fully booked for 1975, Macoun managed to secure just four places for the PMU men in the 1976 course and four more for the following year (Foreign and Commonwealth Office to British High Commission 11 October 1974, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). Although this meant it would take two years to get the PMU in the desired state, it appeared to be the only course of action available.

In the meantime, the government of Botswana found itself forced to revert to dependence on expatriate officers, although not to the same extent as before localisation. Through British Crown Agents, the Botswana Police recruited two expatriate officers from Britain who were appointed to the PMU as senior staff officer and assistant force communications officer respectively in October 1974 (Ministry of Overseas Development to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 29 October 1974, TNA, FCO. 45/1508). This was a huge blow to President Khama's localisation programme which sought to end reliance on non-citizens for the development of the country. It was four years since localisation took place and yet, the Botswana Police still needed more expatriates to help in the force.

In April 1975, British expatriate John Sheppard announced his resignation from the post of head of Special Branch in the Botswana Police. Although there was a suitable African officer to succeed Sheppard,

the resignation caused a lot of concern in the government and necessitated the recruitment of yet another expatriate officer (Hirschfeld to Macoun 7 April 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). Sheppard's resignation became controversial because it followed a major disagreement with Police Commissioner Hirschfeld on how to deal with Assistant Superintendent Balosang of the Special Branch after he had allegedly stolen money used by the Botswana Police for paying informers. Balosang had been found guilty and sentenced to two years in prison for stealing government funds (*Botswana Daily News* 16 May 1975). Before going away for the Easter Weekend, Sheppard had warned Hirschfeld against prosecuting Balosang as it would reflect badly on the Special Branch if a member were dragged through the courts. He suggested instead that Hirschfeld explore other internal disciplinary measures and avoid bringing the work of the Special Branch into the public light. Although Hirschfeld had given his word, when Sheppard returned to work, he learnt that Hirschfeld had informed the president and the matter was in court. Infuriated by Hirschfeld's actions, Sheppard immediately submitted his notice to resign (British High Commission to Macoun 14 May 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). However, this also demonstrates President Seretse Khama's intolerance to malfeasance in the government service. Sir Ketumile Masire, Seretse's vice president (1966-1980 and then president (1980-1998), writes in his memoirs that when Seretse's close relative was accused of having misused government funds for personal gain, upon Masire notifying the Seretse, the president said, 'well he is your civil servant' (Masire 2006). This meant that the wrong doer had to be dealt with accordingly regardless of him being a relation to the president.

Sheppard later told Macoun and High Commissioner Eleanor Emery, that the case of Balosang had been one of many incidents where he felt that Hirschfeld behaved irrationally. He further claimed that 'Hirschfeld seemed to be under a lot of stress and never seemed to know what he was doing' (British High Commission to Macoun 14 May 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). Although Sheppard's anger may have led him to exaggerate, the incident between himself and Hirschfeld represented what Macoun called a crossroads in the role and functions of expatriate officers in the Botswana Police. Hirschfeld's decision to prosecute Balosang despite his promise not to do so, was influenced by his determination to be seen to be in command and not being told by expatriate officers how to run the police force (Macoun to British High Commission 22 May 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). It is also possible that Hirschfeld's decision was informed by his loyalty to the president, which is why he informed Khama of Balosang's offence before taking him to court. Taking Sheppard's advice about dealing with Balosang through strictly internal disciplinary measures may have involved withholding such information from the president, something which Hirschfeld was likely unwilling to do. Political scientist Alice Hills has asserted that there is a special relationship between African presidents and their police commissioners, whereby the latter are retained for as long as they are useful to the former and dismissed once they disappoint or offend (Hills 2007). Hirschfeld, therefore, would not have wanted to be seen to be hiding anything from the president as this would have had a negative impact on his career.

Sheppard's resignation, however, posed a problem of staffing in the Special Branch. Although the president decided on Superintendent David Mophuting to succeed Sheppard, he instructed Hirschfeld to fill the post of deputy head of Special Branch with an expatriate recruited in Britain (Hirschfeld to Macoun 7 April 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). The decision to seek an expatriate officer to assist Mophuting not only reflected the sensitive work of the Special Branch, but it also implied that the president himself was not confident enough to have the branch fully run by a Botswana police officer. By the middle of 1975, President Khama was in fact reported to be increasingly worried about the Botswana Police because of the staffing challenges the force was facing. Apart from recruiting an expatriate for the post of deputy head of Special Branch, Hirschfeld was ordered to find more Europeans to fill the posts of head of CID, Officer Commanding Criminal Records Bureau, and Senior Staff Officer at the police headquarters in Gaborone. Khama expressed disappointment over his government's continued reliance on expatriate

officers but pointed out that this would have to remain the case until the right standard of local policemen could be obtained (British High Commission to Foreign and Commonwealth Office 3 July 1975, TNA, FCO. 45/1706). These challenges represented a failure of the president's localisation programme, which had been meant to end the Botswana Police's reliance on non-citizens. Although it would take some more years before the total localisation of the force, much of the challenges discussed above were a result of the Colonial Office's lack of decisive planning before Botswana's independence.

In the end, Khama's enthusiasm about the localisation of the Botswana Police died down, as he conceded to the reality of reliance on expatriate officers in the force. In fact, the failure to localise posts in the Botswana Police should be understood in the context of localisation in the public service at large. At the recommendation of DA Anderson and FJ Glyn of the Ford Foundation, Khama's government established the Presidential Commission on Localisation and Training on 16 August 1971 (Mentz 1985). Presented in the following year, the commission's findings included the absence of appropriate training facilities as undermining localisation. To achieve an optimum utilisation of students graduating from secondary and post-secondary levels, the commission recommended a modification of the education system of Botswana to include secretarial practice, bookkeeping, home economics and development studies in the syllabi (Mentz 1985). The commission also recommended that in-service training be provided across all government departments to equip serving candidates for various posts within the civil service. For those posts that required university or technical training, which the civil service was unable to provide in-service training for, it was determined that their localisation would depend on the output of Botswana graduates by the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (UBLS). The government of Botswana accepted the 1972 commission's recommendations as a blueprint for the localisation of the civil service and began their implementation. However, due to the lack of a proper governing body and other measures to ensure the complete implementation of the commission's recommendations, the localisation of the civil service in Botswana failed, and it would take about 15 more years for it to be achieved (Mentz 1985).

### Conclusion

On the eve of Botswana's independence, the Colonial Office had done very little to train the African members of the police force to take command. This meant that at the country's independence, the gazetted ranks of the Botswana Police were exclusively held by European expatriates. To reduce the country's reliance on non-citizens, the government of Botswana embarked on a localisation programme in the police force and other sectors of administration in the early 1970s. In the Botswana Police, the localisation exercise saw the replacement of Europeans in the top four command posts by Africans.

Although more Africans or indigenous Botswana were promoted to gazetted ranks and assumed general duty posts in the districts and sub-districts, the force still did not have qualified Africans to command the CID, PMU companies and platoons as well as the Special Branch. For this reason, the government resolved to retain the services of 50% of its expatriate officers who, however, declined the offers and undermined the localisation exercise. The government of Botswana was, therefore, forced to recruit and rely on expatriate officers for some years to come while more efforts were made to train the Africans and prepare them to take command of all branches of the force.

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