

## **A New Motswasele? Leetile Raditladi's Troubled Tenure as Batawana Tribal Secretary, 1946-1952**

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### **Abstract**

This article details the tumultuous five-year period when the renowned Tswana author Leetile Raditladi served as tribal secretary of the Batawana. During this period Raditladi became the de facto leader of the Batawana, working in conjunction with the female Regent Elizabeth Pulane Moremi. Raditladi's autocratic behaviour and his sexual liaison with the regent led to the emergence of a secretive faction known as the 'Malcontents' who took steps to end his tenure. After several years of intrigues, the Malcontents eventually removed Raditladi from the Batawana Reserve by force. Given that Raditladi's most famous work, *Motswasele II*, is a critique of chiefly tyranny, his very own actions during the only time in his life when he held real power are highly ironic.

### **Introduction**

Leetile Raditladi (1910-1971) is still regarded as one of the Tswana language's foremost poets and writers, being particularly renowned for his epic historical drama, *Motswasele II*, published in 1945. Not only was he Botswana's first published fiction author, but he also achieved many other distinctions during his lifetime. He was one of the first Batswana to graduate from university after attending Fort Hare, and later became the highest-ranking African member of the Bechuanaland civil service during the 1940s. In 1959 he formed the country's first nationalist political party, the very short-lived Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party. His accomplishments also went far beyond these spheres. Raditladi also spearheaded the formation of the country's first football and tennis leagues in both the southern and northern parts of the country, while he also promoted numerous public cultural events. Although we have only the bare bones of a biography to go by in the form of Boikhutso's 1985 BA research essay, it is nevertheless clear that he was among the most eminent Batswana of his era and was a major figure across colonial Botswana (Bechuanaland Protectorate). On a personal level, he was well-dressed, athletic, dashing and witty, and was a real ladies' man.

In the context of Raditladi's writings, only two individual episodes in his life stand out as having relevance to his major writing themes. One of these was in 1937, when, fresh out of university, he was accused of having slept with and having impregnated the wife of his cousin, Tshekedi Khama, and then conspiring with her to bewitch the Mohumagadi –Tshekedi's mother. He was possibly guilty of the former charge, but definitely not the latter (Crowder 1988 and Peires 1979:168). Due to Tshekedi's control of the judicial machinery of the Bangwato Reserve, Raditladi and other family members were found guilty and was expelled from his homeland until the 1950s when the former was removed from the regency (Crowder 1988). This set of events is generally seen as having motivated Raditladi to translate Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Setswana and also to write *Motswasele II*. Both of these works deal with royal despotism and the perverted results of such tyranny (Cole 1947 and 'Scrutator' 1960).

Events during Raditladi's tenure as tribal secretary of the Batawana, from 1946 to 1951, were critical to shaping his later writings, such as *Sefalana Sa Menate*, and *Dintshontsho Tsa Lorato* (Raditladi 1950 and Raditladi 1957) as well as his political journalism. In later writings themes such as lost love, failure, and regret come to the fore (Manyapelo 1998; Ntsonda 2009 and Van Staden 1985).

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If the events covered below have not been written about in much detail (Boikhutso 1985:11-12 and Murray 1987) they probably account for the shift in his writing style in the second part of his career. During his five-year period in Ngamiland, Raditladi established himself as the most powerful man in the reserve and sought to promote an ambitious reform agenda. His actions during this period, in the eyes of his Batawana opponents, the so-called Malcontents, were tyrannical and at variance with established custom. In short, they accused him of being exactly the same kind of leader that Raditladi had portrayed Motswasele II as being, and they eventually forced him out of the territory at gunpoint.

The existing documentation in the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS) dealing with these events is detailed, and contains a number of intelligence and general reports by colonial government officials who understood events clearly. One important aspect of the situation, which is, Raditladi's sexual relationship with Elizabeth Pulane Moremi (1947-64), is only addressed in indirect terms. Nor is it particularly clear why Raditladi left Ngamiland in the records. Neither the Malcontents nor the British wished to discuss these issues openly, and as a result the intensity of the conflict and the rationale behind it seem somewhat puzzling. While doing research in Ngamiland in 1993-1994, I sought out a number of former Malcontents, many of whom seemed to regard these matters as laying in the realm of 'secrets', especially since Pulane was still alive. One of the leading Malcontents, Modisang Modisang, who was closely involved in these matters, however, was willing to discuss the entirety of the saga.

### **The Appointment of Raditladi as Batawana Tribal Secretary**

The roots of Raditladi's move to Ngamiland lay with his friendship with Kgosi Moremi III of the Batawana (1937-1946), a distant relative. During the 1930s the two got to know each other in the southern Protectorate when the latter was doing police training and attending school at Tiger Kloof in South Africa. Both were expert horsemen, crack shots, and had a fondness for European liquor. Although they did not spend considerable time together during their various vacations, by all accounts they were boon hunting and drinking companions (Interview with Pulane Moremi 1985 (hereafter just Moremi)).

During the early 1940s Moremi pressed the British to bring Raditladi to Ngamiland to run the Tsetse Fly Control ('Skwatta') scheme—a critical operation to save Maun from the spread of tsetse. A lack of senior British personnel during the Second World War hampered this effort, and Moremi lobbied the colonial administration to assign Raditladi to Skwatta instead (Morton 1996:172-174). Almost all of Moremi's senior advisors were against the move (Interview with Modisang 1994), given Raditladi's past history with Tshekedi, but Moremi brushed their advice aside. Once in Ngamiland, Raditladi renewed his friendship with the volatile Moremi, who was by this time increasingly troubled by schizophrenia and alcoholism and living an extremely libertine lifestyle (Segolodi to Gugushe 12 November 1940, BNARS, S 214/11). Raditladi was not one of the kgosi's daily companions, and instead won some praise for his extensive construction and hunting operations to combat the spread of tsetse in the Maun area.

When Moremi returned chastened from a short banishment in 1946, he asked Raditladi to consider leaving the Skwatta operation and to become his tribal secretary instead. Raditladi, who was dissatisfied with life as a Motswana in the segregated civil service (Interview with Moremi 1985), was enthusiastic about the appointment, and penned a detailed proposal to both Moremi and the local British administration about a development plan for what was seen as the most backward area of the Protectorate. In contrast to some of his later writings eulogizing Tswana culture, the young Raditladi unapologetically sought to modernise the area by eradicating a number of customary practices. Raditladi's utopian vision included building 'a good school', abolishing the construction of traditional reed huts and mandating the use of modern housing, eliminating witchcraft, prohibiting beer-brewing,

and reorganising the Batawana Tribal Administration. In order to achieve these ends he proposed to curtail individual rights ‘for the benefit of the whole organization or association,’ and, for instance, planned to prosecute the sick who did not seek medical treatment. Adult males who failed to attend kgotla meetings would also face sanctions.

Such an aggressive plan, he argued, was necessary to combat what he viewed as the increasing degeneration of the Batawana. ‘The Batawana are gradually losing their social instincts, the reason may be the influences of the lower types finding the higher types incapable of resisting contamination’ (Raditladi 1946, BNARS, DCMau 4/12). Moremi was pleased with this proposal and processed his appointment, further noting that it would soon ‘be opportune for us to put our wishes and aims into practical effect’. Unfortunately, early into Raditladi’s tenure Moremi died. After having ventured to Johannesburg to purchase two new trucks for the tribal administration, Moremi and his coterie engaged in wild debaucheries, got into constant trouble with the South African police, and were eventually killed in a violent car crash in the Gaborone area in 1946. Among those who died was Gaorewe Modisang, his senior advisor, who had been sent to bring the party home safely.

Moremi’s death left a massive void in the bogosi (chieftaincy) of the Batawana. Both of Moremi’s male heirs were barely of school going age. Nor did he have any brothers, who were typically opted for as regents in such cases. As a result, the most senior-ranking royal in Ngamiland was Moremi’s uncle, Moshuga Moremi, who had acted in this capacity for short periods in the past. By all accounts Moshuga was regarded as as weak, lazy and alcoholic. He had squandered a considerable herd of cattle and survived mainly by begging from his friends and local traders. ‘He was, like most sons of chiefs, useless’, Pulane recalled later in life (Interview with Moremi 1993), while British administrators described him as ‘spendthrift, spineless, senile, decadent, and pleasure loving’ (Government Secretary to Administrative Secretary to the High Commissioner 24 April 1947, BNARS, S 285/3/1).

In the face of this situation, the British decided they had no choice but to appoint Moremi’s widow, the South African-born Elizabeth Pulane Seeco Moremi, as regent. Seen as ‘the only influential progressive person in Ngamiland,’ the new regent’s administrative experience amounted to a span of two years working as tribal treasurer after her predecessor had been jailed for looting public funds (Morton 1996:237). British officials, accustomed to sloth and venality in the position, were apparently pleased with her performance. Seeking to prevent a reoccurrence of ‘a dismal repetition of maladministration by a succession of corrupt regents culminating in the fiasco of Moremi’s rule,’ they appointed her in early 1947.

### **The Establishment of the Raditladi-Pulane Regime**

The Raditladi-Pulane regime clearly faced momentous obstacles as it got underway in early 1947. On the one hand, both Raditladi and Pulane were unpopular with the traditional elite –especially the Batawana minor royalty and the Basimane or headmen who controlled the various wards in the sprawling reserve. Of the royals, only the late Moremi’s mother backed Pulane as regent, feeling that nobody else could be trusted to look after the well-being of her grandchildren (Interview with Moremi 1993). On the other hand Raditladi only had the backing of a single headman (Interview with Modisang 1994). Nor did the two have any real ties with the subject populations who made up the majority of the population, such as the Wayeyi, Hambukushu, and Ovambanderu. The two were reliant principally on British support as well as, strangely, Tshekedi Khama, the powerful regent of the Bangwato and staunch enemy of Raditladi. Tshekedi would constantly rebuff entreaties from the Batawana conservatives in their bid to install another regent (Tshekedi Khama nd, BNARS, BTAdmin 9/4).

Another significant problem the two faced was that, not being from the Batawana Reserve, they looked down on the local population. Raditladi’s views regarding the Batawana have already been examined, and Pulane’s were no more favourable. She had arrived in Ngamiland in 1937 as a

South African nurse, but despite being a Morolong she knew no Setswana as she had been brought up speaking English and Afrikaans. Pulane disdained the uneducated and unsophisticated women who were expected to be her companions, and kept away the expected constant streams of visitors who typically attended to the Mohumagadi. 'It would seem she is in the unenviable position of practically having no friends among the Batawana', noted the district commissioner (District Commissioner to Mackenzie 26 June 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2). He continued, 'she despises them and makes no secret of it. One of the reasons is that they don't wash regularly!' Moremi, who tried hard to integrate her into the community, essentially became estranged from her after a few years as her aloofness continued. He often sent his favorite mistress to go and cook for Pulane in order to humiliate her (Interview with Segolodi 1993).

An even bigger potential roadblock the two faced was their strong mutual sexual attraction. This can be explained by the fact that Raditladi had been separated from his wife and children during his earlier escapades in Gammangwato, and remained a charismatic figure while in Maun. He organised the area's first football teams and league, as well as the Ngamiland African Recreational Association, and was prominent at various local events (Nkape 1947; Kgari 1947 and Shabaa 1952). Pulane was definitely attracted to the well-educated, handsome, published author and senior civil servant, who she later referred to as 'the witty man from Fort Hare,' in a rare moment of candour (Interview with Moremi 1993). For his part, Raditladi undoubtedly found the regent attractive. Not only had she been a spectacular beauty in her younger years, but she had an urban background in South Africa and was the best-educated woman in the reserve. By the end of 1947 an affair had started. They kept up professional appearances at the office, but Raditladi was often seen leaving the royal compound early in the morning that their liaison became an open secret. This romance broke all known protocol. The kgosi's widow was expected to take one of her husband's close male relatives as a spouse or sexual companion, and such matters were typically arranged by senior members of the royal family through consensus. This arrangement is known as seantlo. Moshuga, Moremi's senior relative, clearly sought to exercise the prerogatives of seantlo personally, but was summarily rebuffed by the regent. In a somewhat prophetic letter to the district commissioner, Moshuga complained that 'If I am to be ruled by the woman who is in fact my wife, has any other man the right to enter her bedchamber? Will I be committing a crime or not if I should kill any man whom I might see getting out of her bedchamber early in the mornings?' (Moshuga to District Commissioner, May 13 1947, BNRS, S 285/3/2).

In 1947 Moshuga's claims to the regency were backed by the aging Motawana rebel, Moanaphuti Segolodi, 'who was surprised to hear that the Batawana were ruled by a woman... this showed that the Tawana Chieftainship had fallen low' (Case 44 of 1947, BNARS, S 232/16). Moanaphuti brought in 'a specialist consultant witchdoctor' from Johannesburg and began holding public meetings in Maun demanding Moshuga's installation. This brazen attempt to unseat Pulane using boloi (witchcraft) failed, and she had Moanaphuti arrested and tried for 'Disorderly Conduct,' banished from the reserve, and sentenced to hard labour even though he only had one leg. To keep Moshuga quiet after Moanaphuti's failure, he was given a salaried sinecure in the tribal administration. After this naked display of force, Pulane and Raditladi's Batawana opponents were more circumspect about voicing their concerns.

During 1948 Pulane and Raditladi faced further protests from an unexpected source –the Wayeyi. Subjected to Batawana rule in the nineteenth century, the Wayeyi consisted of a large plurality of the Ngamiland population. Until 1948 they had been divided up and generally exploited by a host of Batawana headmen –whose very descendants were now the opponents of Pulane and Raditladi. In the face of demands by the Wayeyi for better representation and justice, Pulane and Raditladi, although arresting and prosecuting many of the agitators, eventually opted to give in to several of their key wishes. They authorised the creation of new Wayeyi wards free of Batawana control, while also elevating a number of Wayeyi men as headmen (Kebiditswe 1983; Moremi 1983 and Sekikao 1984).

Additionally, educated Wayeyi were brought into the tribal administration in various capacities. The upshot of this move for Raditladi and Pulane was that they gained a modicum of support that could be relied on independently of the old Batawana elite.

Even so, Pulane and Raditladi continued to be unpopular. Not only did her affair with Raditladi rankle many, but so did her educational plans for her sons. Her first-born son Letsholathebe, the heir, was sent away from Maun to stay with her brother in Bloemfontein (South Africa) and attend a mission school there. His younger brother and sister later followed. They rarely returned home for vacations, with Pulane preferring to see them in South Africa. This plan was consciously done to separate the children from the Batawana elite (Interview with Moremi 1993). The enforced absence of the heirs, combined with the ongoing relationship between Raditladi and Pulane, meant that many Batawana such as Moremi's mother began to fear that the two dictatorial foreigners were plotting a coup to take over bogosi. When the two made a joint application for a trading license, rumours began to circulate about the two seeking to formalise their relationship.

With the Wayeyi agitation dealt with, the new-look Batawana Tribal Administration began to take shape. Raditladi did not go through with the plan he had sent Moremi. Instead, he and Pulane concentrated heavily on improving the court system and the tax collection system. Court cases began to be recorded for the first time, combined with an increasing use of fines in order to improve tribal revenues. Although established headmen could not be replaced, a new set of appeals judges were appointed who were loyal to Raditladi. New tax collectors, meanwhile, were brought in from outside the old guard. These two emphases hit hard at the old elite, which had thrived on non-interference in the past. Moreover, the elite had managed for many decades to shield itself from the tax collection system, generally using its influence to keep family members, cattle herders, and malata (serfs) from registration (Morton 1996:103-8). Members of the old guard who opposed the new measures were subject to surveillance from the police, and were often charged in court and fined. Raditladi did not bother to consult the senior headmen about these and other policies, and nor did he care to engage in the slow, deliberative, consensus-oriented manner that decisions had traditionally been arrived at.

### **The Rise of the Malcontents**

During 1950 a group of some sixty 'Malcontents' or 'the 58' began to organise against Raditladi and Pulane. The leaders of this Batawana group were the sons of recently-deceased senior headmen. Having mostly been closeted Moanaphuti Segolodi supporters in 1947, the Malcontents understood that open protests would fail and would lead to fines, banishment and imprisonment. They, therefore, operated in secret and sought to bypass the tribal administration by communicating directly with British officials. Ultimately, the group would succeed in ousting Raditladi.

The unlikely leader of the Malcontents was a schoolteacher, Modisang Modisang, who had only recently returned from boarding school. The son of Moremi's deceased senior advisor, Gaorewe Modisang, he was also a nephew of Moanaphuti Segolodi and therefore, had strong links to Raditladi's enemies despite his relative youth. He and other teachers and young headmen began to meet late at night under the auspices of the most senior headman, Molatlhegi Dithotho of Mapako ward (Interviews with Dithotho 1994 and Modisaemang 1994). Usually the group had sympathetic female supporters brew beer on the other side of Maun on meeting nights, and made sure local police were invited in order to keep them distracted.

Initially the group had three main complaints. First, it objected to the Raditladi-Pulane sexual relationship, an 'unpalatable revelation' (Modisang 1952) which they blamed on the former given his past behavior in Gammangwato. Raditladi, they claimed, was an unscrupulous interloper seeking to sleep his way into the bogosi. As further evidence of his desire to usurp bogosi, they cited his taking the role of inflicting floggings following court cases when such punishment was mandated. This

action was typically the prerogative of the kgosi (Boikhutso 1984:12). Second, they were highly upset that Raditladi had passed several livestock-related laws without their approval. One of these allowed cattle guards to make unilateral decisions regarding artificial insemination and to make decisions about livestock in the absence of the owners (Mhapa 1984 and Modisang 1952). Raditladi also legalised the purchase of hides by traders in the countryside. This practice had been outlawed for over a generation, since it allowed unsupervised herders to kill cattle, eat the meat, and then sell off the hides for personal profit. Losses could then be reported to the owners as due to sickness or predation, and the Malcontents believed their cattle posts were hemorrhaging as a result (Interview with Modisang 1994).

Third, the Malcontents accused Raditladi and Pulane of hiring their own supporters, ‘puppets’, and then covering up tax collection abuses perpetrated by them. Newly-appointed court officials, meanwhile, were seen as weaklings who took decisions based on orders from above rather than from honest appraisals of the case at hand (Modisang 1952). If these accusations about corruption appear somewhat dubious in hindsight, the Malcontents nevertheless believed strongly in their case (Interview with Modisang 1994). According to the Malcontents, when they tried to bring these issues up with the regent, she refused to listen, and soon had them put under constant surveillance. After some time, Moshuga joined in the Malcontents’ agitation, and the group supported his claims to the regency although the members were never fervent supporters of him personally.

Raditladi did not, at any stage, try to address the Malcontents’ concerns. Modisang, he maintained, ‘was not well educated’, had ‘quite limited thinking capacity’, and was ‘associated with a very dangerous group’ (Raditladi 1952). He and the other Malcontents had never properly studied ‘chieftaincy and its benefits and governance as a whole’, and hence were ‘not enlightened enough to take an informed stand’. In addition to being merely unintelligent, Raditladi maintained his opponents had a ‘non-existent Tswana nature’ and thereby ‘tried to mislead the Batawana’ (Raditladi 1952). The Malcontents ‘and their crew are against the Kgosi’s ruling and they pretend as though they sing praises about the chieftaincy and the Kgosi too’ (Raditladi 1952). As a result of all these factors, Raditladi believed that the Malcontents ‘intended to dethrone Queen Pulane Moremi’.

So instead of responding constructively to the Malcontents, Raditladi and Pulane instead fired them from positions in the tribal administration, and remaining appointees were asked to indicate their support for Raditladi in writing. All who refused were also let go. Any Malcontents seeking to complain over these issues were denied free speech in the kgotla and were escorted out when they spoke up.

In December 1950 matters eventually exploded, although in a way that never made its way into official records. Pulane had by this time fallen pregnant, and went to South Africa to see her children, take a vacation, and otherwise take stock of the situation. According to Modisang’s version of events, she returned to Maun with an ‘abortion agent’. On the night that she took it, she fell desperately ill and was apparently close to death. Rescued from her residence by two senior-ranking women (including the mother of Modisang Modisang), she was subsequently nursed back to health (Interview with Modisang 1994).

Chastened by the experience, Pulane decided to go and see Moshuga when she recovered. In euphemistic terms she asked for ‘the keys of nature’, or permission from her most senior relative to cohabit with her future husband, Raditladi (District Commissioner Maun to Government Secretary 6 June 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2). Sensing an opportunity for political gain, Moshuga leaked the request to the Malcontents. Moremi’s mother, meanwhile, was outraged, and decided to back Pulane’s enemies for the first time. After a daytime meeting at the grave of Moremi III, a delegation was sent to Pulane’s house to demand the expulsion of Raditladi. The regent, however, threw the Malcontents out, and according to one, ‘said we were the dogs belonging to her late husband which were barking at her’ (District Commissioner Maun to Government Secretary 6 June 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2). The district commissioner, always keen to contain potential threats to law and order, intervened soon

after, and ordered a kgotla meeting for the next day at which he promised the Malcontents could air their grievances openly. At this meeting Moshuga then publicly recounted the request for the 'keys of nature'. In Raditladi's view this behaviour deserved serious punishment. The Malcontents had 'coaxed Moshuga to disrespect and humiliate the kgosi in the presence of the DC, hurling insults which any uncle in their right mind in respect of the Tawana culture could not say to a Kgosi in the presence of its subjects and the tribe in general' (Raditladi 1952). Pulane, though, decided it was time to end her lover's tenure as tribal secretary. 'What you have said in general appears to have been motivated by jealousy, untrue stories, and hatred. As you hate [Raditladi] I say today I give him notice that at the end of the financial year he should leave the administration' (Kgotla Meeting 8 June 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2).

Postponing a fight to keep Raditladi, Pulane now moved to punish Moshuga. She hauled him up in court for holding an illegal kgotla meeting, defaming her, and threatening a breach of the peace. After calling him a 'nonentity', she fired him from his job in the tribal administration. Subsequently, her court found him guilty of these charges, and fined him the enormous sum of £275 or banishment to a remote village. The Malcontents, meanwhile, outraged by Raditladi's sexual conduct and the justice meted out to Moshuga, raised £350 in two days. After paying his fine off, they set the appeals process in motion and hired a South African lawyer (Interview with Modisang 1994). To meet with this setback, Pulane asked the colonial government to condone a round of mass arrests so that she could reassert her authority. 'Your honour, I am a woman,' she wrote to the resident commissioner, 'I have no manly power to suppress reactionary elements without the assistance of government' (Moremi to Resident Commissioner, 19 September 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2).

In the face of malcontent organisation, Pulane worked on building up her coalition to support the retention of Raditladi. After embarking on a tour of the countryside in late 1951, she held discussions with the leaders of the Wayeyi, Herero, and Mbanderu wards. Members of these groups were awarded permanent places on the Batawana delegation to the African Advisory Council. Using these and other votes from sympathetic headmen, she had the kgotla vote in late August 1951 on whether to keep Raditladi in office (Raditladi 1952). Wayeyi votes gave her a slight majority in the vote, although Raditladi himself seemed unwilling to renew his contract.

Once again the malcontents regrouped to oppose Raditladi, using their legal representation to write another petition. Since the document avoided dealing with sexual issues openly, it demanded Raditladi's dismissal on other grounds. The tribal secretary had, they maintained, 'adopted an arrogant, overbearing and insulting attitude towards members of the Tribe instead of behaving in a manner expected from a servant of the tribe and has usurped powers beyond the scope of a Tribal Secretary' ('To the Regent of the Batawana Tribe', [September 1951], BNARS, S 285/3/2). Pulane dug in her heels again. In a letter written for her by Raditladi, she told the colonial authorities that 'I can only conclude that my powers are questioned because I am a woman' (Moremi to Resident Commissioner 19 September 1951, BNARS, S 285/3/2). She asked to imprison those who had 'defamed' her. 'African primitive mentality cannot be suitably compare to the European's state of mind and standard of reaction which have been fortified by a solid educational background and through comprehension of the vicissitudes of the subject of politics and political manoeuvre', she wrote.

Although the authorities did not support the draconian measures advocated by Pulane, it backed her consistently through the end of the year. In December the district commissioner held another kgotla –during which he openly stood by Pulane, described the petition as 'weak', and ratified a new group of advisors chosen by the regent. The Malcontents, outraged at being denied any sort of voice at the meeting, went straight to the DC's office, where they were summarily expelled by the policemen on duty (Interview with Modisang 1994).

Angered yet again by their treatment from officialdom, the Malcontents took decisive action

against Raditladi that very same day using vigilante tactics that do not appear in official records. In the words of Modisang, Raditladi, sick in the local hospital with malaria, soon received a delegation of four gun-wielding Malcontents who gave him one day to leave town. One of the district commissioner's clerks gave Raditladi a ride home, and then shipped him out of town the next morning on a transport lorry some three months before the end of his contract. (Interview with Modisang 1994).

Pulane tried to rehire Raditladi in 1952, perhaps feeling that she had the support to do so. Further threats against him led him to having 'a change of heart', and he left Maun only a few days after his return. During this second episode 'the tribe threatened an uprising to the extent that Raditladi had to be taken to protective custody at the District Commissioner's camp all night' (Modisang 1952). After becoming the victim of what Shabaa (1952) referred to as 'a sociological hurricane', Raditladi's business with the Batawana was over.

Pulane herself struggled constantly with the Malcontents through 1952, due to constant attempts to remove her from the regency in favour of Moshuga. The slow process of hearing Moshuga's appeal from his £275 fine meant that the Malcontents had plenty of reasons to lobby British officials, either directly or indirectly through their lawyers. They also went around the country, unsuccessfully trying to get other dikgosi to back their cause. Moshuga lost his first appeal in a packed court room in Maun in August 1952, before eventually winning in the High Court later in the year in front of judges who could not be influenced by government administrators. Despite Moshuga's court victory, the Malcontents were never brought back into the tribal administration by Pulane. Only in 1964, when her son Letsholathebe came of age, were any of them reinstated.

### **Raditladi and Pulane Outside of Ngamiland**

Raditladi and Pulane met occasionally in the last five years of his life (he died in 1971), after she left Ngamiland permanently and took a job in Francistown. They were no more than friends. Following his abrupt departure from Ngamiland, Raditladi's writing seems to have changed. Events there clearly hurt him deeply, leading him to believe that his reputation had been smeared. Moreover, his ejection by the Malcontents forced him to relive his earlier expulsion from Gammangwato and to link the events closely. In 1952 he wrote that 'It is quite deceiving to read about a situation where one has been denied his father's name, belittled in the society and even denied the right to call his brother's children his. It is in human nature to deny someone their right because of something they did. Take for example, Seretse and Tshekedi; Sebele, Isang and Molefi –chiefs and sons to chiefs, who were denied their positions in the society, but we still respect their status in the society'.

In Raditladi's future writings the translations of Shakespeare and the resolute historical dramas such as *Motswasele II* now vanished. In its place were a corpus of new, introspective poems and stories often dealing with wistful and somber themes (Raditladi 1950 and Raditladi 1957). As to how much of this writing refers to his lost love, Pulane, and their aborted child, one can only conjecture. Further research will surely clarify the picture.

### **Conclusion**

Leetile Raditladi's experiences in Ngamiland are highly ironic given the nature of his most famous work, *Motswasele II*. Whereas Raditladi made an enduring name for himself with his searing critique of chiefly power run amok, he himself proved no better a leader than the legendary tyrant *Motswasele II*, who was assassinated by his Bakwena in 1821. By letting his superior intellect and educational credentials get to his head, Raditladi tried to impose an authoritarian reform agenda on the local population. His arrogance led him to ignore important protocols in sexual matters, even as he derided his critics' 'non-existent Tswana natures'. Whereas *Motswasele* was ultimately assassinated by his people after alienating them, Raditladi was twice forced out of Ngamiland at gunpoint by his opponents and was never able thereafter to return.

A second point that can be drawn from these events is that they changed Raditladi and his writing. He would never again regain the considerable swagger and confidence that marked his early career. His later writing is far more self-centered and even more self-pitying, and does not really contain any evidence that he had learned from the many mistakes he had made.

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