

**A REPORT ON THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF
NDOWANA'S PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES ON
ITEMS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN
HAENERTSBURG AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

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THE EFFECTS NDOWANA'S ADVANCED PROSPECTING PROGRAMME MIGHT HAVE ON HISTORICAL RELICS OF THE STUDY AREA

Prospecting with the possibility of eventual mining in this area will most probably have an effect on the following:

Pre-Historic Sites

The oldest evidence of pre-historic habitation can be seen in some remote ravines of the Wolkberg (not on the proposed prospecting sites though). Here some of the oldest rock engravings were left by very early stone age people. Although these sites are not within the proposed prospecting area it still is relevant to mention them because once mining activities have started it might spread further into the mountain in time to come.

Some of the best-preserved stone structures of early iron age in the country are to be seen on the farm Doornhoek. These very impressive, extensive, undisturbed stone walls dates back to early iron age (\pm 600 to 700 years ago) and were most probably the dwellings of the first black people who settled in this area. The Mamabolo tribe was, as far as is known, the first black tribe to settle here. (See Appendix 2). The Mamabolo people stayed in the area that today encompasses the farms Forest Glens, Fountainhead, Paeroa, Doornhoek and Brighton. They still visit the indigenous forest on Forest Glens to worship and they come from far to fetch water from the Broederstroom, which they believe is sacred and healthy to them. To them this is the sacred land of their ancestors. It is being considered to apply for these stone structures to be declared a national heritage site. Already this area has been spoiled by afforestation and lately also by a charcoal burning operation. The envisaged prospecting and eventual mining in this area will most definitely have a very negative effect on this historical site. These sites are even closer to the relevant area than the previously mentioned ones. The Mamabolo people did not stay on Doornhoek alone but all over, including the relevant farms. Today they claim that their ancestral graves are on Paeroa and Colberg but that it was destroyed by afforestation and cannot be

found anymore. There might be a great deal of historical remains on these farms that need to be rediscovered (Also see comments in my Conclusion)

Modern Historical Sites

As related in the historical overview (Appendix 1 on p. 6), the first white people, the Voortrekkers, just passed through. The place where they crossed over the mountain into the lowveld in 1838, not far from Haenertsburg, can still be seen – not only is there a little monument indicating the place, there are also a few places where one can still see where the Voortrekkers made a road of sorts.

The next white people came to this area in the 1860s because of the hardwoods in the indigenous forests of this area. There are still a few such forests left in our area of which two are within or close to the envisaged prospecting site: the forest on the farm Forest Glens and Black Forest on the farm that was originally registered as Leliefontein. Of great significance are the saw-pits that can still be seen in these forests where the old woodcutters had, more than a hundred years ago, felled trees and where they had used the saw-pit method to cut the trunks up in planks before loading them onto the wagons.

The next people to arrive in the area were prospectors and gold-miners. They came in the late 1870s and soon horizontal shafts were dug into the mountain. The majority of these early mines were on some of the farms that are today earmarked for the proposed prospecting and eventual diamond mining. The discovery of gold was also the reason for the founding of the village in 1887. The mining era did not last very long. By the turn of the century most of the mines have closed down simply because the gold on the Witwatersrand was of a better quality and also in greater quantity. The old shafts and the remains of some of the buildings can still be seen. It is the ideal of the people of Haenertsburg to restore some of these mines so that it can be used as a tourist attraction. Modern prospecting with eventual mining in the area will of course make this impossible and spoil the site. The old mining shafts on Paeroa are today rather dangerous because they are collapsing one after the other and the buildings are fast deteriorating. It has been an ideal to restore some of these old buildings and shafts and to make them safe for tourists to see.

Haenertsburg also saw some warfare in the area. In 1894-96 a war was fought between the republican forces and the local Makgoba people. A few years later the war between the Boer republics and England broke out. Both wars left relics behind that today have become tourist attractions. One of these is the battlefield on top of the Wolkberg that was the last encounter between the warring parties in the Anglo-Boer War.

Contemptory Culture

Haenertsburg stagnated after the gold-mines stopped to function. As part of the then government's land settlement schemes land was made available on the deproclaimed goldfields. The new landowners brought with them new farming methods and eventually also afforestation of the area.

Today there is a definite upswing in the tourist market for Haenertsburg. Most villagers agree that we should not, however, lose our small town image since that is what mostly attracts the tourists. There is also a consensus that we must keep our frontier cum early gold-mining town image. Some modern developments have, for this reason, used the building styles of that early gold-mining period. **Prospecting with the possibility of modern mining in the area might spoil that image completely.**

For a more detailed overview of the history of the area see Appendix 2 on p.8.

CONCLUSION

If there are diamonds in large enough quantities in this area to make it viable to spend money on opening a mine why didn't those early explorers and prospectors with all their knowledge about geology not find them. In my research I could not find any indication or reports to prove that at any time in our history did they find diamonds in their extensive prospecting. When they first came into this area to prospect they were not necessarily looking for gold only. They prospected for rich minerals as such but found only gold. Many of them came from the diamond mines in Kimberley where

they must have gained knowledge about diamonds. The fact that there is kimberlite in the area does not necessarily imply that there should be diamonds. The fact that the old miners did not find diamonds here but only gold is very significant – it is part of our history.

It is believed that there could still be undiscovered historical remains in this area, even pre-historical. As explained above, the Mamabolo people stayed on these farms. The historical evidence of their sojourn still needs to be rediscovered and recorded.

As indicated above, prospecting with the aim to eventually start mining will most definitely have a negative impact on our historical heritage.

It is my considered opinion that it will be a mistake to go ahead with the proposed prospecting that might lead to mining operations in this area.

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APPENDIX 1:

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF HAENERTSBURG

1840 – Before this date the Mountain was inhabited by the Batladi and Mamabolo.

1840 – For the next 20 years the Mountain was annually visited by woodcutters.

1860 – First white farmers and woodcutters settled on the Mountain.

1867 – First village founded – named Houtboschdorp.

1871 – Gold discovered on the Mountain by Carl Mauch.

1873 – First census conducted in the South African Republic (Transvaal): 29 360 whites.

Soutpansberg district (Northern Transvaal): 573 whites. The Mountain: 72 whites.

1878 – First mission station established by the Berlin Mission Society at Mphôme (Kratzenstein) near Houtboschdorp.

1880 – First Government Forester appointed to protect indigenous forests.

1886 – Land Occupation Law no.8 promulgated – made it possible for more whites to obtain farms on the Mountain.

1887 – The Houtboschberg-goudvelden proclaimed.

1887 – 13 September: Founding of **Haenertsburg** village – named after Carl Ferdinand Haenert.

1888 – Haenertsburg connected to Pietersburg by telegraph.

1888 – to 1895 – Wars between the Boers and Makgoba, Modjadji and other smaller tribes.

1889 – The establishment of a postal coach service from Pietersburg via Haenertsburg to Leydsdorp by Doel Zeederberg.

1889 – The first school established in Haenertsburg – corner of Rabe and Kerk Streets.

1890 – to about 1899 – Haenertsburg gold boom till the gold mines on the Witwatersrand exceeded the output of the small companies further afield.

1895 – First District surgeon, Dr Laxton appointed – succeeded in 1897 by Dr WC Cavanagh.

1895 – The first road down Magoebaskloof to the lowveld built.

1899 – to 1902 – The Mountain involved in the Anglo-Boer War.

1901 – 30 April – Last of the Long Tom guns destroyed near Haenertsburg.

- 1901 – The Breaker Morant incident occurred in the vicinity.
- 1902 – John Buchan as a member of the reconstruction team after the war visited Haenertsburg a few times and wrote about it in his “The African Colony”.
- 1902 – An outpost for the South African Constabulary established in the village – the old Police Station built.
- 1903 – Government land around Haenertsburg, originally proclaimed goldfields, deproclaimed and made available to new immigrants under the Land Settlement Scheme – many English speaking landowners arrived.
- 1904 – New crops like apples and potatoes introduced by the new landowners.
- 1904 – AK Eastwood appointed the first Government Forest Ranger for the Mountain.
- 1906 – First Motorcar arrived in Haenertsburg from Pietersburg.
- 1906 – to 1925 – Exotic plantations (pine and eucalyptus) introduced on the Mountain.
- 1952 – A Community Hall built in the village.
- 1957 – Ebenezer Dam completed.
- 1959 – Founding of the Mountain Aquatic Club – in 1969 split into the Yacht Club and the Power Boat Club – tourism became an economic factor.
- 1966 – The Haenertsburg Trout Fishing Association established on the premises of the Iron Crown Sailing Club that came to an end.
- 1968 – Administration of Haenertsburg taken over by the Board for the Development of Peri-Urban Areas located in Pretoria.
- 1970 – The village connected to the electrical power system of Escom.
- 1972 – Haenertsburg Garden Club formed – soon started with the annual Spring Festival.
- 1975 – A communal water system established for the village from the Ebenezer-Pietersburg pipeline.
- 1982 – The new Police Station inaugurated.
- 1986 – The North Eastern Bird Club as a branch of the South African Ornithological Society founded in Haenertsburg.
- 1987 – September – October: Haenertsburg celebrated its centenary.

APPENDIX 2: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

PRE-HISTORICAL TIMES

Will we ever be able to say, without doubt, who the first humans were who inhabited this area, today known as Haenertsburg and surrounds? Proof of prehistoric occupation has been found by archaeologists at a number of sites, inter alia in the form of rock paintings and engravings in the Mohlaitse valley in the Wolkberg, probably the artistic efforts of the San (Bushmen) of the Later Stone Age.

It seems, however, that there is a general consensus among the authoritative sources about the origins of the black tribes and that some of them arrived in this area some time between 1500 and 1700. The Mamabolo tribe settled, not far from where, much later, the village of Haenertsburg was founded and the Molepo (Malepo) tribe on their western side (where they, the Molepos, still are to this day). Further to the east, below the escarpment, stayed the BaTlou under kgoshi Makgoba. The Mamabolos, it is believed, were the first tribe to have settled in this area – some say even before 1500.¹ They were all part of the Northern Sotho nation.

The sources agree that the Makgobas were subordinate to their neighbours, the Balobedu. PJ Mampeule in his dissertation states: “All other chiefs [of the area] such as Makgoba, Maupa and Pelo-ya-Kgomo [?] who settled within the territory of Bolobedu owed their allegiance to the kings and queens of Bolobedu and paid tribute to them”.² A man who knew Makgoba well as a neighbour, who fought against him in the war between the Boers and Makgoba and who had to identify his head when it was brought to the Boer lager, BH Dicke, in his memoirs wrote that Makgoba probably never had more than 250 warriors during the war against the Boers. Also a descendant of Makgoba, Prof. William Makgoba, mentions in his book that the

¹ Bergh, JS (ed.): *Geskiedenis Atlas van Suid-Afrika; Die Vier Noordelike Provinsies*, p. 107.

² PJ Mampeule: *A Short History of the Lobedu; their Contact with Missionaries and the Origin and Development of the Christian faith in Bolobedu, 1600 – 1981*, p. 5.

Makgobas were small in numbers.³ (Many years after the Makgoba War, the 1935 census revealed that the Makgobas still only numbered 1 150 heads of families).

NJ van Warmelo, the State ethnologist of the early 20th century, described the Makgoba people as Tlou (elephant totem) whereas JD Krige referred to them as Kolobe (duiker totem) and in the State publication, *Short History of the Native tribes of the Transvaal* they are called Mothlalerwa (leopard totem). Van Warmelo admit that they were sometimes referred to as Kolobe and Mothlalerwa because they had people of those origins in their midst. Makgoba himself stated in 1892, when he appeared before the Location Commission, that, although they were previously subordinate to the Letswalo/Narene tribe (Nare, that is buffalo totem), they are closely related to the Molepos (Tlou – elephant totem).

Well-meaning local white businessmen in 1999 decided to erect a monument for Kgoshi Makgoba at the hotel that bears his name. The writer of this report was in a way responsible for creating the belief that such a monument was necessary. In books that I wrote and in television programs I elaborated on the merits of such an endeavour. I was the one to coin the phrase “Lion of the Houtbosberg” that was later used by other authors and even his grandson Prof. William Makgoba.⁴ It all culminated in creating a much bigger image of the man than what he really was. Eventually when the monument was erected, to my surprise, I saw that Kgoshi Makgoba was now elevated to a King. Not only on the monument but all the signage on the roads used the word “king” in stead of “kgoshi” or “chief” in English. Of course it was pure ignorance. But the point is that all the ethnic groups in the country have but one Kgoshighulu – in English “Paramount chief” which is the equivalent of “king”. Thus the Zulus have but one royal house, the Swazis one etc. The Northern Sothos also had one paramount royal family, the Sekhukunes (BaPedi) who at one time ruled over all the other Northern Sothos. TE Setumu in his MA dissertation wrote: “The Bapedi chiefdom is singled out from the other Northern Sotho chiefdoms because it enjoyed a lot of ascendancy over the others in all spheres. It once established a powerful empire which reached its zenith during the reign of Thulare

³ MW Makgoba: *Mokoko; The Makgoba Affair*, p. 8.

⁴ MW Makgoba: *Mokoko*, p. 8.

(about 1790 – 1824). Its influence was so extensive that other [Northern Sotho] chiefdoms came to recognise its paramountcy”.⁵ The ZAR and thereafter the British forces in the 1870s destroyed the power of the Sekhukunes and since then the Northern Sothos did not have a Paramount Chief (King) any more.

Although it might not have been understood exactly the same by the people before the white man came, at least today that is the structure. Traditional leadership is still divided by our present government into three categories, i.e. Kgoshighulus (Kings or paramount chiefs) at the top followed by Kgoshis (chiefs) and under the chiefs the Indunas (headmen). The pyramid has a very few kings on top but many chiefs under them and even more headmen under the chiefs. Thus in the former Lebowa there are no kings at present but 128 chiefs and over 900 headmen.⁶

There is more than one authoritative source indicating that the Makgoba people stayed below the escarpment in the valley today aptly known as Magoebaskloof (although misspelled), at the time when the white people came in the 1860’s.

Before the white people came, the Mamabolos stayed on top of the mountain, on the uplands around where in 1887 the village of Haenertsburg was founded as mentioned before. MER Mamabolo, a well respected headmaster of a school in Mankweng wrote a short history of his tribe – “The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe” – and clearly indicated where his people stayed and where the Makgobas stayed. He also agreed that the escarpment was the boundary between the two tribes.⁷ All these sources agree that the Makgobas stayed between the Mamabolos on their west, and the Balobedu (Modjadji) on their eastern side.

The Mamabolos moved away in a north-westerly direction somewhere between 1840 and 1860 and settled on the flats, north of the Molepos, and to the west to where today we have the University of Limpopo (previously known as the University of the

⁵ TE Setumu: Official Records pertaining to Blacks in the Transvaal, 1902 – 1907, p. 21.

⁶ Department of Provincial and Local Government: *Draft White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance*, pp. 38 - 39.

⁷ MER Mamabolo: *The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe*, pp. 12, 13 – 16.

North), where they are still residing.⁸ This is confirmed by another Black academic, HM Mailula in his “A Short History of the Lobedu”.⁹

According to MER Mamabolo, some families did not move away but stayed behind at Haenertsburg to work for the white farmers who moved into the area at about the time they (the Mamabolos) moved away.¹⁰ Those people who stayed behind became known as the Batladi – which originally was the name of the place where the Mamabolo stayed. The Molepos did not move away when the white farmers moved into the area in the 1860 but stayed on in their ancestral land.

THE WHITE PEOPLE ARRIVE

The first white people to arrive in this area came in 1837. They were Voortrekkers under the leadership of Louis Tregardt who crossed over the mountain not far from where many years later the village of Haenertsburg was founded.

The first independent Boer Republic was established in 1852 – to be known as the South African Republic or commonly referred to as the Transvaal. Soon it became known that the boundaries of the new republic were extended to the north to include all the black tribes in the north right up to the Limpopo River, in other words also the Mamabolos and Molepos and their neighbours. At first the black tribes probably, weren't even aware of this development and in any case wouldn't have recognised the laws of the white man. A serious bone of contention was when soon thereafter the new government introduced a tax system.

The new government soon realised the necessity of regulating land distribution between black and white. According to the *Volksraad Resolution of 28 November 1853* the Commandant-General and Commandants of each district were responsible for ‘granting’ land for ‘native occupation’ where necessary. The government recognised the indigenous peoples’ tradition of communal landownership instead of

⁸ Mamabolo: *The Mamabolo Tribe*, pp. 12, 13 – 16.

⁹ HM Mailula: *A Short History of the Lobedu*, p. 3.

¹⁰ MER Mamabolo: *The Origin and Development of the Mamabolo Tribe*, pp. 14 -

individual ownership. The first law that recognised black communal ownership was *Act No. 3 of 1876*.¹¹ However, before that law was promulgated the first major clashes between the Boers and the tribes of the North had occurred.

The first whites to stay in this area were farmers settling here in the 1860s. At first most of them came to exploit the indigenous forests of the area but when gold was discovered in the 1870s more whites were drawn to the area.

In 1881 the government had, according to *Article 22 of the Convention of 1881*, introduced a Location Commission whose responsibility it was to ascertain the boundaries and the size of reserves (“lokasies”) for the different black tribes. Before the end of 1882 the Location Commission made recommendations to the government about which tribes should receive reserves, and where. They *inter alia* recommended that reserves should only be allocated to tribes larger than 500 families. Smaller communities would not receive their own reserves but would be allotted to bigger tribes to whom they were related. The government approved these proposals. On the initial list of seventeen tribes in the Transvaal that they recommended for reserves neither the Molepos, the Mamabolos or the Makgobas were included.¹²

The discovery of gold (±1871) led to the proclamation by the ZAR (Transvaal) government of the Houtboschberg (Woodbush) Goldfields in 1887. Two years before, the Executive Council of the ZAR had decided to establish a town for the large number of miners that had arrived in the Houtboschberg following the discovery of the gold. The instruction to survey and plan a township was given the same year (1885) to the Surveyor-General (acting), Johann Rissik. The surveyor, Fred Rissik (brother to the S.G.), only completed his task in September 1887 and submitted his township plan to the government. President Paul Kruger signed the proclamation on the 13 September 1887. Before the end of that month the government’s representative,

¹¹ For a detailed history of early legislation regarding black land ownership read WA Stals: *Die Kwessie van Naturelle-eiendomsreg op Grond Transvaal, 1838 – 1884* (Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis, Jrg. 35, deel 2, Pretoria, 1977).

¹² See Bergh: *Geskiedenisatlas*, p. 215.

Mining Commissioner, Louis Biccard, assumed his duties in the new town. 13 September 1887 can therefore be regarded as the founding date of the new town. It was also decided by the government to name the town after CF Haenert, the man who actually discovered the gold, based on the knowledge left by the German geologist, Karl Mauch, of auriferous deposits in the area.

Carl Ferdinand Haenert was born on 3 June 1831 in Eisenach in the Thuringian Forest near Erfurt in Germany. He came to South Africa in 1857 to hunt big game and fell in love with the country and never returned to Germany. For a while he rode transport from Pietermaritzburg to the north. In 1863 he married Helen Hodgson, who had come from England with her parents in 1850. The newly married couple decided to move to the Soutpansberg, where the village of Schoemansdal was established. Shortly after their arrival there, in 1865, their first child was born.

Before long Haenert with his 'modern' ideas in farming, became one of the leaders in this field. He was the first person to plant coffee on his farm 'Laaste Hoop' (today between Mara and Vivo). When Schoemansdal was evacuated in 1867, because of the clashes between the white people and the Venda, Haenert remained behind for a while on his farm, but with increased hostilities of the Venda, and after they had destroyed his coffee plantations, he abandoned his farm. He moved southwards to where the whites had gathered near present-day Pietersburg.

For a while Haenert was the proprietor of a trading store at Fort Klipdam (Rita/Rhenosterpoort). He was also the postal agent there. When Pietersburg was surveyed in 1884, all the ex-inhabitants of Schoemansdal were compensated for their losses by being given stands in the new town, which was proclaimed in 1886. Haenert was given stands nos. 22, 23 and 24. Stand no. 24 is on the corner of Joubert and Marshall Streets.

After the discovery of gold in the northern Transvaal in ±1871, Haenert began prospecting. He criss-crossed the northern Transvaal and in 1880 made his discoveries in the Houtboschberg, which led to the proclamations and founding of the village.

When the village was surveyed, Haenert was one of the first people to acquire stands. He built a house on the corner of Kerk and Kantoor Streets. He was not only involved with the mining of gold; he also had a trading store in the village. The licence for this store was issued on the 7 February 1887 by Landdros Maré of Pietersburg – even before the village had official status. In the same year he was nominated by the Government to the Divisional Council for the ward Houtboschberg and he was appointed as Postal Agent for Haenertsburg. But Haenert did not stay long in the village that was named after him. In 1891, because of ill health, he moved to Pietersburg where he obtained a house in Bok Street close to the corner of Vorster Street. He died soon afterwards, on 28 December 1894 and was buried in the old Pietersburg cemetery where his grave can still be seen.

Haenert had five sons and four daughters: Johanna, Lucy, Marie-Ann, Helen, Tom, Morris, Edwin, Theodore and Louis. The last two were twins. Carl Ferdinand Haenert was known by his second name. Most sources of that time refer to Ferdinand Haenert only. The abbreviation of Ferdinand, Ferd was also used. This was sometimes confused with Fred which later, after his death, led to the wrong conclusion that his name was Frederick.

Of all Haenert's children it was only Tom and Morris who stayed behind in Haenertsburg. The others all settled elsewhere. Tom (married to Kate Zeederberg) had a water mill with a huge wooden water-wheel known as Haenert's Flour Mills just outside the village on the Broederstroom. The old mill could still be seen on the site when the new school was built up on the hill in the 1950s and they used the little waterfall at the old mill from where water was pumped up to the school with a hydram pump-system. The remains of the pump house, that originally was the water mill, can still be seen opposite the café across the Main road.

Because Tom stayed in Haenertsburg for so many years and became well known some people, after his death, believed that the gold was actually discovered here by him and that the village was therefore named after him. It could hardly have been one of Ferdinand's sons who discovered gold here in 1880, as his first child was born in 1864 and was at the time of the discovery of gold only 16 years old. The village was definitely named after CF Haenert, better known as Ferdinand.

THE OCCUPATION FARM ACT OF 1886 AND ITS RESULTS

In 1886 the ZAR government decided to promulgate a law to make it possible for white farmers to obtain land free of charge as long as they stayed on it: *The Occupation Farms Act* (“*Occupatiewet voor Gouvernementsgronden gelegen in het district Zoutpansberg*”) Act no. 8 of 1886. This was the first law that was promulgated to try to sort out the differences about land-ownership between black and white. The rationale behind this was to get more white farmers in the isolated Soutpansberg district. With more white farmers on the frontier they should be able to defend themselves without the help of the government and hopefully the black tribes would also be more lenient and would think twice before attacking the farmers. This law drew quite a substantial number of white farmers to the north.¹³ The area where the Molepos stayed was within the area demarcated for occupation farms. Between 1886 and 1895 the whole area was surveyed, beacons erected and registered as farms. The reason why the other farms were not declared occupation farms is that after the discovery of gold in the area in the 1870’s a number of farms were on 6 October 1887 declared as part of the ‘Woodbush Goldfields’ and therefore not made available for farming.¹⁴ Nobody could own land in the goldfields although people were allowed to stay there.

A law regulating ‘squatting’ on white farms was also introduced by the old ZAR government in 1887 – *Act no. 11 of 1887* amended by *Act no. 21 of 1895*. According to this law black people not living in their reserves but on farms outside it could stay there as long as they were not more than five families.¹⁵

Many white farmers in the area began to use labourers according to the stipulations of this law. Farmers would allow labourers to squat on their farms with the understanding that they had to work for them for at least three months of the year. Many black

¹³ For more detail about the Occupation law of 1886 read JWN Tempelhoff: *Die Okkupasiestelsel in die Distrik Soutpansberg, 1886 – 1899*. D. Litt et Phil thesis, UNISA, 1989.

¹⁴ Tempelhoff: *Die Okkupasiestelsel in die Distrik Soutpansberg*, pp. 425 – 426.

¹⁵ JS Bergh (ed.): *Geskiedenisatlas van die vier Noordelike Provinsies*, pp. 214 – 215.

people preferred this instead of staying in the reserves. They were allowed by the farmer to plant vegetables for personal consumption and graze a reasonable number of cattle on the farm.¹⁶ This form of labour-tenant also became the common in the Haenertsburg area.

Although the Molepos and the Mamabolos did not get reserves in 1881, in 1888 the government had reconsidered and decided to grant locations to them. In July of that year the Location Commission made the farm Cyferfontein 103 available to the Mamabolos. This farm belonged to the Berlin Mission Society. In 1890 they made the farm Zamenkomst (Samenloop) 345 belonging to Salmon Marais and the southern portion of Nooitgedacht 369 available to the Molepos. The Molepos complained that the reserve was too small and Marais was not happy to part with his farm either. Still in the end they all agreed. The final demarcation of these two reserves by the Native Location Commission was completed in 1892.¹⁷

It stands to reason that the main cause of friction between black and white was the land issue. Most of the tribes couldn't and wouldn't agree with the ZAR government's decision that they move to a location that was demarcated for them. The result was that a number of wars were waged towards the end of the 19th century between the Boers and those black tribes who wouldn't co-operate. The Molepos although under protest did finally recognise the boundaries as ascertained by the government in 1892.

The final cause of the wars was when the government started applying forced removals in the 1890s . The bigger tribes like the Balobedu of Modjadji, and the Mamabolo and the Molepos, as described above, were given their own locations. The smaller tribes with less than 500 families, now had to settle with a bigger tribe to whom they were related. The Makgobas had to move to a location south of the Letaba river where they would have been subordinate to Mmamathola whose territory it was. Makgoba did not want to be subordinate to Mmamathola and actually requested that if he *had* to be moved couldn't it be to the Molepo location since they were related to the Molepos. The request was not granted which subsequently led to war. Although

¹⁶ Tempelhoff: Okkupasiestelsel in die Soutpansberg, p. 487.

¹⁷ Bergh: Geskiedenisatlas, p. 222.

Molepo did not openly join in the war on the side of Makgoba it was known that they sympathised with the Makgobas and that some individuals from Molepo on their own fought with their kin.

The first scientific and most detailed account of the war against Makgoba was written in 1955 as an MA dissertation by LS Kruger under the title “Die Makgoba (Magoeba) Oorlog”. Although a very one-sided and biased study it still is the most authentic source on this war, also because Kruger could still interview people, both black and white, in the 1950’s who had first-hand knowledge about the war. It was never published. Since then quite a few popular, mostly unverified books, dealing with the history of this area, used Kruger as their main source in dealing with the Makgoba War. AP Cartwright and TV Bulpin’s books are the most noticeable in this regard. (See ‘Source List’ at the end of the Report).

Other more scientific studies on the war that have since appeared are my own publications: *Letaba Commandos, 1889 – 1989*, Pretoria, 1989 and a booklet *Makgoba (Magoeba) and the War of 1895* written by me under commission for the unveiling of the Makgoba monument in 1999. In 1997 the already mentioned descendant of Kgoshi Makgoba, Prof. William Makgoba, devoted a chapter in his book *Mokoko; the Makgoba Affair* to the war of 1895. However, except for the degrading remarks about the white people and slanderous inserts it is almost exclusively copied from my book *Letaba Commandos, 1889 – 1989*. One of the best abridged accounts of the war appears in *Geskiedenisatlas van Suid-Afrika; die Vier Noordelike Provinsies* (ed. JS Bergh), (See ‘Source List’ for these publications). For original, detailed information about the war the official reports and minutes of meetings should be consulted in the State Archives in Pretoria.

Most of the sources indicate that the Makgobas were removed to Pretoria at the conclusion of the war, but that some individuals or families stayed behind or later came back to this area. At the closing of the war, on 11 June 1895, the Boer war council took a decision that not only the Makgoba tribe, but also their associates, the Tsolobolo, Mmamathola and Mosote tribes, should be removed from the area and resettled near Pretoria. Thus, in total between 4000 and 5000 people of the four tribes were taken to Pretoria. As a tribe the Makgobas lost their land and according to some

sources ceased to exist as a tribe. Even Kgoshi Makgoba's claim-to-be-grandson, Prof. William Makgoba, in his aforementioned book states that the tribe was scattered and for a hundred years did not reclaim their land.¹⁸ After the war their land was deproclaimed and later surveyed into farms and sold to white farmers. There is also a belief that the government gave farms free of charge as compensation to "burgers" who fought in the Makgoba War. This was also the belief of one of the old Magoebaskloof residents, Ds. GPJ Grobler, when interviewed in 1991.¹⁹

Because there was 'n shortage of labourers on some of the farms in the area after the Makgoba war the government stipulated that those tribes who sided with the Makgobas in this war should now provide a certain number of their people to squat on white farms as labour tenants. Twenty families from Molepo was prepared to move from their reserve to white farms.²⁰

All the farms were surveyed before the end of the 19th century but not all of them were sold to white farmers. The reason for that was, as already explained, because most of these farms were proclaimed as part of the 'goldfields'. The surveying of all farms during the ZAR period had to be listed in the Government Gazette.

UNDER A NEW RULE

After the Anglo-Boer War (1899 – 1902) the new government (the Transvaal was now under British Crown Colony rule) soon realised the importance of attending to the land distribution problems of the country. They therefore appointed Native Affairs Commissioners for each district to investigate the situation regarding the black tribes of the country. In the first report, of the Native Affairs Department for 1903, it is mentioned that some of the tribes in the north 'emerged from the war [AB War] with the idea that the object of the war had been to return them to their old lands, and that white owners had been expelled forever from their farms and habitations'. In another

¹⁸ MW Makgoba: *Mokoko*, pp. 9 – 11.

¹⁹ E Stoltz: Magoebaskloof (Transcribed interview with Ds. GPJ Grobler, Magoebaskloof, 14 Aug. 1991).

²⁰ Tempelhoff: *Die Okkupasiestelsel in die Soutpansberg*, p. 515.

example it is mentioned that ‘the native generally thought that after the war it was the intention of our government [British government] that all their engagements to their landlords would be cancelled, and it was further the intention of government to practically divide the Boer farms among them, at least in so far that each native would receive the holding he then rented from his landlord from government in free simple’.

²¹ This of course did not happen. The new government actually basically continued the former policy regarding land and its distribution.

In 1903 the government appointed the Zoutpansberg Land Tenure (Occupation) Commission to investigate. During the same year (1903) the old *Occupation Law no.8 of 1886* was recalled and replaced by the *Crown Land Disposal Ordinance of 1903*. Section 2 of the Ordinance stipulated that ‘Crown Land means and includes all unalienated land and all land the property of the Government however acquired’. The government then appointed CA Wheelright to investigate the situation. (He published his report in 1907).

In 1904 the Commissioner for Native Affairs of the then new government brought out a report specifically on land acquisition by the black tribes. In 1906 a Native Location Commission was appointed to make recommendations as to which tribes, if any, should be granted tribal land after they were uprooted by the ZAR government in the years before the Anglo-Boer War.

The map accompanying *The Transvaal Mines Department’s Report of the Geological Survey for the year 1906* (published in 1907) indicates all the locations of the different tribes of this area. Some maps clearly indicate that the Makgobas were separated by the escarpment from the Mamabolos and the Molepos.

In 1906, as mentioned, a Native Location Commission was appointed to make recommendations as to which tribes, if any should be granted tribal land (reserves) after they were uprooted by the ZAR government in the years before the Anglo-Boer War. This commission under Sir Godfrey Lagden, the then Commissioner for Native Affairs, brought out a report, also known as the Lagden report, specifically on land

²¹ Peter Warwick: *Black People and the South African War, 1899 – 1902*, pp.164 – 165.

ownership by the black tribes. The new report recommended that the reserves should be drastically extended. An adjoining farm was thus added to the Molepo reserve.

The Lagden report also pointed out that apart from black communities owning land in the reserves and a few cases of blacks owning private farms, there were also black people permanently residing on white owned farms and blacks staying on state land. They produced a map indicating all the reserves in the Transvaal, as well as the areas where blacks were staying on privately owned farms, white owned farms and on state land. The government also appointed a Crown Land (Zoutpansberg) Commission under *Government Notice no. 1333 of 1907* to investigate the position regarding black people staying on crown land. The Native Affairs Commission also recommended that a policy of segregation should be followed and that the distribution of land and the boundaries of the reserves should be revised.²²

In 1910 the two British colonies in South Africa, the Cape and Natal, and the two ex-Boer republics, the ZAR and the Orange Free State (now Crown colonies) were united and became known as the Union of South Africa.

In 1912 the *Land Settlement Act no. 12 of 1912* was promulgated which stipulated that ‘Crown Land shall mean and include all un-alienated land within the Union, however acquired, which is the property of His Majesty in his Government of the Union; and un-alienated shall mean not leased or reserved for special purposes as well as un-alienated by grant, transfer, or other form of absolute disposal’.

THE 1913 LAND ACT

More and more pressure was exerted on the new government to legislate a policy regarding the land issue that would be applicable for the whole country. Thus in 1913 an act was passed with specifically this in mind.

The *Natives Land Act no.27 of 1913* was the initial legislative enactment embodying the principles of territorial segregation and separation of land rights between black

²² Bergh: Geskiedenisatlas, pp. 226 – 228.

and white people. The Act contained a schedule of 'native areas' (reserves) and its provisions prohibited the acquisition by whites of land in the reserves and conversely, it prohibited the acquisition by blacks of any land outside the reserves.

The 1913 Act was a preliminary measure and made provision for the appointment of a commission whose functions were to lay down permanent lines of territorial segregation i.e. permanent 'native areas'. It also recognised that the reserves were in most cases too small. In the same year (1913) the government appointed the Native Lands Commission (the Beaumont Commission) to investigate. The Commission's proposals led to lengthy debates in parliament and eventually the promulgation of the Native Administration Act, Act no. 38 of 1927.

The Land Act of 1913 was the first legislation regarding land expropriation that was passed by the Union of South Africa government that was applicable to the whole country since the two ex-Boer republics and the two ex-British colonies became united in 1910. Before that, the Black people had lost their land through warfare, conquest and treaties and under three different governments – British and the two Boer republics. .

The 1913 Land Act was the turning point in the history of legislation regarding the land issue and is still the most important date in the process of solving the land issue.

FURTHER LEGISLATION TO SEPARATE BLACK AND WHITE

In 1936 the next law to try to correct imbalances in land distribution was promulgated.

²³ The *Native Trust and Land Act, Act no.18 of 1936*, inter alia, prescribed a large number of areas that should be released from the restrictions imposed by the 1913 Act to be made available for the reserves. This act, therefore, made provision for more land to be bought by the government to be added to the reserves as they were defined in 1913. The Molepo reserve did not benefit from this development since the commission did not deem it necessary to add to their reserve. Because more land was

²³ UG 61/1955: Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa, p. 44.

now available in the reserves, from now on many black families were moved from where they were staying in 'white areas' to their 'homelands', often under heavy protest.

Since 1948, when the National Party came into power, the main focus regarding land issues was on developing the black homelands into self governing states. *The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 (Act no. 68 of 1951)* was the first to introduce measures of self-rule to the homelands. This law inter alia made provision for the traditional system of tribal rule through the chiefs.²⁴

The government also appointed a Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa (the Tomlinson Commission). The Commission also had to make proposals to the government on how the reserves could be consolidated for each ethnic group to make them more practical and viable as potential independent states. The Commission's report, presented in 1954, inter alia made provision for an independent state for all the Northern Sothos which included the Molepos, Mamabolos and Makgobas of the Haenertsburg area. In other words that all the different sections of the Northern Sotho should be united into one state. They recommended that these tribal authorities should be recognised and that they should be under the control of a territorial authority which in turn should be subordinate to the senior chief.²⁵ Thus on 20 November 1956 the Tribal Authority for the Molepos was established.

The Nationalist government envisaged that eventually South Africa might develop into a 'commonwealth of nations' similar to the British commonwealth. They therefore proceeded on their way to develop the homelands and passed another law to enforce this: *The Act on Promoting Bantu Self-government (Act no. 46 of 1959)*. The next step was the promulgation of the *Act for Bantu Homelands Constitutions (Act no. 21 of 1971)*. Hereafter one after the other homeland was granted self-rule. The

²⁴ Bergh: Geskiedenisatlas, pp. 226 – 228.

²⁵ For detail about the proposals of the Tomlinson Commission read UG 61/1955, Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa.

Northern Sotho under the name Lebowa, received self-rule in October 1972. After a few years the government decided that some of the self-ruling homelands were ready for independence. In 1976 a process was started by which the homelands, when it was deemed ready for it, would be issued with declarations of independence.

These new states were however never recognised by the rest of the world. Because of political pressure the South African government in the early 1990's began to reverse the process by reincorporating the 'independent' black states and self-ruling homelands. Eventually through the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (*Act no. 200 of 1993*) all the so-called independent black states and self-ruling homelands ceased to exist and were incorporated into the new provinces that were to constitute the new South Africa under the ANC government.

With the introduction of the new government in 1994 the restrictions on land for black people, as brought about by the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, also fell away. One of the first acts passed by the new government was the *Act on the Restitution of Land Rights, Act no.22 of 1994* which stipulated that tribes or communities who lost their land through forced removals since 1913 could submit claims to have that land restored to them or be compensated.

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