

## THE CITIZEN COMMENT

JAN. 21, 1986

### Out he goes

IT WILL be a few days before the dust settles in Lesotho and we can establish with certainty the significance, for South Africa, of the ousting of Chief Leabua Jonathan.

But at least we can be satisfied that the Lesotho autocrat is no longer running the affairs of our landlocked neighbour.

Considering how economically dependent Lesotho is on South Africa, one would have expected him to show more concern about maintaining good-neighbourly relations with the Republic.

But Chief Jonathan was always too big for his boots, and relations between the two countries, particularly in the last few years, have ranged from fair to poor.

The reason is twofold:

First, after having seized power in 1970 when it appeared that his ruling Basutoland National Party was losing to the Opposition Basutoland Congress Party, he found that the Lesotho Liberation Army, the military wing of the BCP in exile, had become a thorn in his side, carrying out bombings and sabotage attacks.

Although Chief Jonathan claimed these attacks came from South Africa and that Pretoria supported the LLA, there was never any convincing proof of South Africa's involvement.

But his accusations against South Africa soured relations between the two countries.

Secondly, Chief Jonathan ignored South Africa's insistence that Lesotho rid itself of the African National Congress cadres which operated from Lesotho.

Relations hit rockbottom when South African troops in 1982 swept into Maseru, killing 42 civilians in an attack on dwellings used as bases by the ANC.

Chief Jonathan did not learn a lesson from that raid. He has been allowing the ANC to remuster in Lesotho for attacks on South Africa.

In December South Africa advised the Lesotho Government that the ANC planned attacks over the Christmas period, but Maseru claimed to have no knowledge of this.

Then came the Amanzimtoti bomb blast, followed by the raid on ANC houses in Maseru in which nine people, including six ANC members, were killed.

Chief Jonathan alleged the raid was by South African commandos, but the Lesotho National Liberation Army claimed responsibility.

South Africa, to protect itself from ANC infiltration, then placed a clamp on traffic to and from Lesotho, causing a shortage of essential foodstuffs and fuel and plunging Lesotho into an economic crisis.

Unfortunately, Chief Jonathan seemed to have adopted the foolish attitude that the ANC cadres in Lesotho were merely "refugees" and in no circumstances would he hand them over to the South Africans.

Foolish because by toughing it out with South Africa on this issue, he was not only making matters untenable for his country but was bringing about his own downfall.

For clearly the military were far from pleased with his handling of the situation.

Still, the collapse of the Jonathan regime is not due to any direct action by South Africa against the Maseru Government, certainly not in the sense of any plot to topple the Government.

It may be argued that the border clamp, which Chief Jonathan regarded as a blockade, triggered off the coup.

But if that is so, then it was just the last straw for those who wanted him out.

Major-General Justinus Lekhanye, who led the coup, is to head a military council that will administer the country, with King Moshoeshoe as head of state.

General Lekhanye is said to be a pragmatic man who is likely to favour close economic and other ties with South Africa.

We hope that the new regime in Lesotho will be one with which South Africa can coexist peacefully and with which it can reach agreement on security and other issues of mutual concern.

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COMMENT AND BACKGROUND

LONDON



Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

How Chief Jonathan maintained his slippery rule

# Lesotho: SA's uneasy neighbour

*DAILY NEWS*  
JAN 21, 1986

**MASERU:** Formerly the British protectorate of Basutoland, Lesotho attained independence on October 4 1966.

The Prime Minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, aborted the only post-independence general election in 1970 when it appeared his ruling Basutoland National Party (BNP) would lose the vote.

Two years later, Chief Jonathan set up a nominated National Assembly (Parliament).

The opposition Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) split after Chief Jonathan's coup, with one wing working with the prime minister and the other organising

**Population:** 1 500 000 (1985). About 70 per cent of population is Christian, 40 percent being Roman Catholic. Official languages are English and Sesotho.

**Area:** 30 340 Sq km. Lesotho is a landlocked kingdom totally surrounded by South Africa.

**Capital:** Maseru.

**Armed forces:** No standing army, but Lesotho has para-military unit estimated to have 1 460 men in 1983.

**Economy:** Gross National Product \$425 million (about R1 000 million). Per capita income \$290 (about R690) (official 1983/4 figures). Diamond finishing is the main industry. About 40 per cent of the male population work as contract labourers in South Africa, many



of them in the gold mines, and their remittances account for nearly half of the kingdom's GNP.

**Main exports:** Wool, mohair and diamonds. Most trade is with South Africa.

armed opposition against him.

BCP leader Mr Ntsu Mokhehle and some supporters fled into exile and later founded the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), the military wing of the BCP, which aims to overthrow the government.

Mr Mokhehle has refused to take part in any election unless conducted under United Nations supervision.

Since 1979 the LLA has carried out a series of bombings and sabotage, mostly against government buildings and people it says are

followers of Chief Jonathan.

The campaign escalated with the assassination of a cabinet minister in August 1982 and a rocket attack on Chief Jonathan's house in July 1983.

The prime minister was not there at the time.

Lesotho has frequently accused South Africa of aiding the LLA, but Pretoria has always denied doing so.

In December 1982, 42 people were killed in a surprise raid by South African troops on houses in Maseru, which lies close to the South African border.

South Africa said the raid was aimed at gue-

rillas of the African National Congress.

Lesotho blamed South Africa for an attack by about 20 armed men on a paramilitary border post barracks in March 1983, but South Africa denied the charge.

In mid-1985, Chief Jonathan dissolved his hand-picked national assembly in preparations for a general election in September.

But the poll did not take place after opposition parties boycotted it and Chief Jonathan again declared himself duly elected for another five-year term.



Seven people were killed in Lesotho's south-eastern Qacha's Nek district in December 1985 and Chief Jonathan again accused South Africa of being involved in the attack.

Pretoria again denied responsibility.—  
Sapa-Reuter



## Nanny and child join the celebrations as Jonathan is ousted

WOMEN of the mountain kingdom of Lesotho break into a "toi toi", a traditional festive dance to celebrate the military overthrow of authoritarian and Moscow-leaning Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan yesterday.

The woman in the middle, with a baby on her back, is probably a nanny working in Lesotho's tiny white community.



# New Lesotho boss takes firm control

DAILY NEWS  
JAN 21, 1986

Daily News  
Foreign Service

MASERU: Lesotho's new military regime has acted quickly in key political areas.

In its first hours in power the new government, apparently headed by Major-General Justin Lekhanye, began disarming the



# Lekhanye disarms the youth wing

pulling down the Lesotho national flag, which incorporates the colours of Jonathan's party, and is said to be regarded by many Basotho as a BNP rather than a Lesotho flag.

The Daily News Political Correspondent reports that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha, was due to meet a top-level delegation representing the new Lesotho government in Cape Town today.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has declined to give any more details of the meeting, and would not confirm or deny that a South African delegation visited Maseru yesterday soon after the coup.

Last night the streets of Maseru were deserted after a dusk-to-dawn

curfew was imposed.

Many people in Maseru are reported to have expressed the hope that the new regime will act swiftly to bring about an end to the South African border "blockade" that is increasingly disrupting Lesotho's daily life and economy.

No evidence has emerged to support speculation that South Africa had a hand in the toppling of Chief Jonathan, whose alleged reluctance to impose strict curbs on ANC operations in Lesotho prompted the border crackdown.

The new regime's crackdown on the BNP youth wing began with an appeal over Radio Lesotho today for them to hand in the weapons given them by the Jonathan regime.

• Botswana has cracked down on illegal aliens. The police have asked the public to report any strangers in their towns or villages and in the past few weeks 30 illegal immigrants have been detained.



# Jonathan — autocrat who seized power in 1970

THE CITIZEN  
JAN 21, 1986

MASERU. — Lesotho's autocratic Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan, toppled in a coup yesterday, had ruled the mountainous African kingdom since independence from Britain in 1966 and without the backing of the ballot box since 1970.

A practising member of the Roman Catholic Church, Chief Jonathan is married to a member of the Royal family, Paleho Molapa, and they have seven children.

He was sworn in on July 5, 15 months before independence was formally declared on October 4, 1966.

Despite his party's victory in the April 1965 elections, he himself was defeated and only secured a seat after one of his supporters resigned to allow the future Prime Minister to win a by-election.

Besides being Prime Minister, he retained the portfolios of Defence, Internal Security and Electoral Affairs.

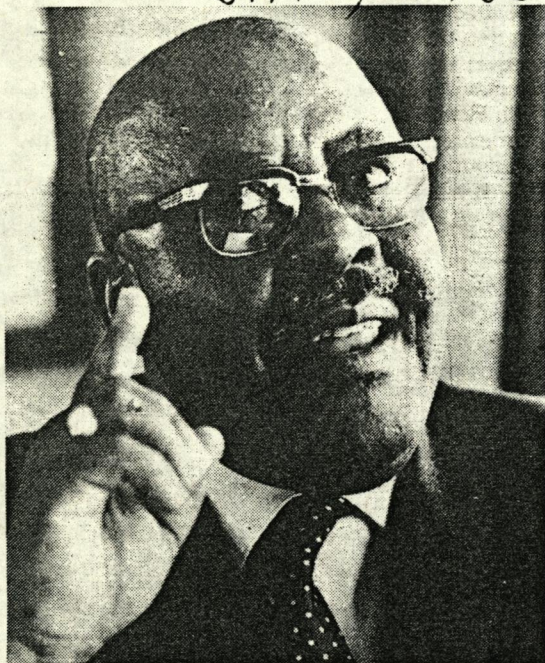
Ironically, it was with the aid of South African funds that Chief Jonathan won pre-independence elections in 1965.

In September that year, four months after self-government and a year before independence, he was the first Black leader to visit Pretoria and meet South Africa's then Prime Minister, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd.

## SA support

It was also with South African support for the Government's paramilitary force that he seized power during the 1970 poll, suspended the constitution, arrested Opposition leaders, banned political parties and established rule by decree.

"I have seized power, I admit it. I am not ashamed of it," he said at the time.



CHIEF LEABUA JONATHAN... seized power in 1970, now ousted.

Opposition leader, Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, claimed his BCP had won 33 of the 60 contested seats.

But Chief Jonathan accused him of using violence, intimidation and ballot rigging.

Political prisoners were released during 1971, but Mr Mokhehle was kept under house arrest.

In 1974, political unrest erupted in armed attacks on police stations.

Mr Mokhehle fled to South Africa with other key BCP members as the Government blamed it for the raids and launched a countrywide hunt for its supporters.

## LLA attacks

Since 1979, the Lesotho Liberation Army, the military wing of the BCP, has carried out a series of bombings and sabotage attacks, mainly aimed at Government buildings and supporters of Chief Jonathan.

The campaign escalated with the assassination of a Cabinet Minister in August 1982 and a rocket attack on Chief Jonathan's house in July 1983. The Prime Minister was not there at the time.

Chief Jonathan claimed the attacks were conducted from South Africa and charged Pretoria with aiding the rebels.

South Africa denied doing so.

Lesotho's first general election in 15 years, scheduled for September last year, was cancelled when the Opposition boycotted nomination courts.

Chief Jonathan was returned unopposed.

The five small Opposition parties charged that they had not been allowed to inspect voters' rolls and said election procedures had been rigged in the Government's favour.

## Central issue

Relations with South Africa have been the central issue in Lesotho politics since King Moshoeshoe I requested British protection in 1868.

Chief Jonathan began to distance himself from Pretoria in the late 1970s after South Africa started to establish a series of independent Black homelands.

Lesotho refused to recognise Transkei, the first independent homeland, in 1976 and South Africa

## Lesotho in a nutshell

THESE are the key facts about Lesotho:

**POPULATION:** 1 500 000 (1985). About 70 per cent of the population is Christian, 40 per cent being Roman Catholic. Official languages are English and Sesotho.

**AREA:** 30 340 sq km.

Lesotho is a landlocked kingdom totally surrounded by South Africa.

**CAPITAL:** Maseru.

**ARMED FORCES:** No standing army, but Lesotho has para-military unit estimated to have 1 460 men in 1983.

**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product R1 000-million.

**PER CAPITA INCOME:** R690 (official 1983/4 figures).

Diamond finishing is the main industry.

About 40 per cent of the male population work as contract labourers in South Africa, many of them in the gold mines, and their remittances account for nearly half of the kingdom's GNP.

Main exports are wool, mohair and diamonds.

Most trade is with South Africa.

Modern history: Formerly the British protectorate of Basutoland, Lesotho attained independence on October 4, 1966. — Sapa-Reuter.

retaliated with the first of a series of intermittent restrictions and harassments at border posts.

Chief Jonathan increased his criticism of apartheid and expressed open support for African liberation movements following the Soweto uprisings in South Africa that year.

His outspoken criticism of South Africa, despite Lesotho's almost total economic reliance on its neighbour, brought Chief Jonathan publicity at the

United Nations and increased Western aid and political support.

As relations with South Africa soured, border clashes increased.

In December 1982, relations sank to their lowest level when South African troops swept into Maseru, killing 42 civilians as they attacked dwellings they claimed were bases of the outlawed African National Congress.

In response to a South African demand, Lesotho later ordered all known

Black nationalist activists to leave.

But periodic clampdowns on the border have continued, restricting the flow of goods and tourists.

## Visited Reds

In 1983, emphasising his distance from Pretoria and repudiating a fiercely anti-communist line he espoused in the 1960s, Chief Jonathan visited North Korea, China, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia.

This was followed by the establishment of

Soviet, North Korean and Chinese Embassies in Maseru and an immediate doubling of the country's previously all-Western diplomatic community.

Cross-border trouble continued.

Lesotho blamed South Africa for an attack by about 20 armed men on a paramilitary border post



# Buthelezi's warning

**'We have no guarantee that war may not take place in South Africa within the decade . . .'**

THE NATAL MERCURY MONDAY 21 JANUARY 1988  
THE NATAL MERCURY  
Mercury Reporter

CHIEF Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and chairman of the South African Black Alliance, said in Durban yesterday that 'we have no guarantee that war may not take place in South Africa within the decade we have just begun.'

He was speaking at a gathering at Currie's Fountain organised by the alliance which is made up of Inkatha, the Labour Party — represented by the Rev A H Hendrickse — the Reform Party — represented by Mr Y S Chinsamy — and the Inyandza National Movement — represented by Mr D Lukhele of Barberton.

The meeting was attended by about 5 000.

Only a smattering of coloureds turned up and hardly any Indians which Mr Chinsamy described as disappointing.

Chief Buthelezi warned that whites needed to be reminded that some blacks had reached the conclusion that 'it is more noble to die than continue to live in an apartheid society'.

## Violence

While repeatedly emphasising that he was against violence and was committed to peaceful change, Chief Buthelezi said if the Prime Minister's new initiatives did not soon bring results 'it is going to be more difficult for us to convince those of our people who have already decided that to die is more noble than to remain alive'.

Chief Buthelezi was loudly cheered by the disciplined crowd when he said: 'We mean business and will not be distracted. Either we negotiate our future or take up arms and destroy each other and our country.'

He said although he could understand why some blacks felt violence was the only answer 'we stand for non-violence not only because this is a noble cause but we have also seriously weighed up the implications of going to war at this point.'

'We no longer appeal to white conscience as this seems non-existent as far as the majority of them are concerned.'

## Realise

'It is a matter of self-interest for whites to realise that they are making hell-fire for themselves when they hoard the wealth of South Africa for whites only.'

'Increasing poverty in the black community was the spark that would create fire to consume all.'

According to Chief Buthelezi 'unspeakable destruction not yet seen in Africa' may well be in the offing if white self-interest did not tell whites to do what was right and just to blacks.

'It must be remembered that I am far from one of the false prophets of quick solutions who promised our people quick victory.'

He slammed Western governments for merely shedding 'crocodile tears on us' and failing to come up with meaningful aid.

He appealed to the Prime Minister to reopen talks with the Coloured People's Representative Council.

Chief Buthelezi launched a scathing attack on the Natal Indian Congress which he said had waged a 'vilification campaign' against him.

He described the congress as 'political opportunists'.

According to Chief Buthelezi the congress had done things 'that in political terms are very naughty, extremely provocative, and grossly irresponsible'.



Citizen, 21 Jan. 1986

barracks in March 1983, but South Africa denied the charge.

Although Lesotho is economically and militarily at the mercy of Pretoria, Chief Jonathan resisted pressure to follow the example of Swaziland and Mozambique and sign a non-aggression pact with South Africa.

He said in May 1984 that despite irreconcilable political differences between the two countries, "we have from the onset emphasised the need for peaceful coexistence with South Africa".

But he warned South Africa that peace in the region as a whole would not be possible until it dismantled apartheid.

Seven people were killed in Lesotho's southeastern Qacha's Nek district in December 1985 and Chief Jonathan again accused South Africa of being involved in the attack.

Pretoria again denied responsibility.

Relations deteriorated, with South Africa recently clamping restrictions on traffic at the border with Lesotho.

Despite claims at the weekend that Chief Jonathan was still in power and that there had been no attempted coup, Lesotho Radio announced yesterday that he had been toppled by the military.