

THE LOVEDALE PRESS: LITERATURE FOR THE BANTU REVISITED

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The fact is that the mass of the vernacular literature published in the past emanated, and still to-day emanates, from missionary presses, and naturally such literature has sought to fulfil the aims of missionary societies.¹

I.

The special features of written vernacular history as a specific category of African historical documentation still await a general theoretical analysis. This article makes no attempt to remedy the deficiency, but considers two possible hypotheses from the relationship between Xhosa traditional historians and the Lovedale Press during the 1930s. First *cf* Vansina, that it is not only oral traditions which are affected by their mode of transmission. Second, *cf* Goody and Watt, that it is one thing to be literate, but quite another to find a publisher.²

Perhaps the first printed work in Xhosa was that of a stoic-looking cow bestriding the legend "All cattle come from God," which appeared in 1823.³ The writer was Rev. John Bennie of the Glasgow Missionary Society, and the printing was done at the Chumie mission station, shortly to be renamed Lovedale.⁴ From that time, Lovedale remained the focal point of the literate Christian culture which emerged among the Xhosa of South Africa's Eastern Cape. This primacy was reinforced in 1915 when the South African Native College (now Fort Hare) was established nearby under the chairmanship of the Principal of Lovedale. The Lovedale Press flourished along with its host institution. The only available estimates indicate that up to January 1939, 238 books were produced in Xhosa, more than in any African language except Swahili.⁵ The overwhelming majority of these were published at Lovedale.

The Lovedale Press initially concentrated on providing books and pamphlets for the evangelical and educational tasks of the mission. But, although this type of publication continued to

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predominate, it began increasingly to concern itself with more general literature. This trend was accentuated in 1929, when R.H.W. Shepherd arrived at Lovedale.⁶ Shepherd soon made his presence felt in the affairs of the Press and in 1932 he was appointed Director of Publications. His motives and objectives are reasonably frankly set out in his *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu*, written as a supplement to his main thesis for the degree of Doctor of Literature. He started from the "danger . . . that the missionary agencies, having in their schools taught vast numbers to read, should leave non-Christian and even anti-religious elements to supply the reading matter."⁷ The devastating impact of the industrial age had, he argued, led to a breakdown of the old moralities, and the Church needed to equip the African "for the demands of the new day" by providing "a substitute of a satisfactory kind."⁸ Africans were too inclined to remain inarticulate, or to speak "in wildness of passion and protest."⁹ The answer was to develop a love of good literature among the Africans. Shepherd was heartened by the example of American blacks, who had the "spiritual, mental and physical characteristics of Africans," and had managed -- so he believed -- to turn away from "the poetry of protest, rebellion and despair, often an inartistic and unlovely thing."¹⁰ He hoped to inspire a similar movement in South Africa. "Bantu writers who have escaped from a purely utilitarian or propagandist view of literature and whose souls are dominated by ideas of art for art's sake will arise and make known the soul of Africa."¹¹

Shepherd envisaged a battery of large-scale all-embracing programs to hasten this happy day. His schemes ranged from organizing mobile libraries to training African authors. Particularly arresting was his advocacy of press monopoly. He deplored the number of small presses, and urged that these be combined so that there should be only one mission press in each language area. This would mean more capital, more cooperation, and less duplication of scarce resources. The activities of these mission presses were to be coordinated by a national Academy of Bantu Languages and Literature which would have dictatorial powers in all linguistic and literary matters. "The matter of the translation of suitable works into and from the vernacular is not one that should be left to the individual," Shepherd declared, "but should be tackled by a body that can take a comprehensive and objective view. The consideration of the merits of MSS should be undertaken by bodies of approved personnel."¹² It is not clear how many Africans were to be members of this academy; fortunately, the monster was stillborn.

Although Shepherd was more than willing to encroach on the territory of other mission presses, he jealously guarded the monopoly of the Lovedale Press in its area, and within that press, he exercised the monopoly of his individual judgment. When he first arrived at Lovedale the press was directed by the Principal, who convened meetings of the Press Committee on an

ad hoc basis. In 1930 Shepherd became convenor, and in 1936 he staged a mini-coup whereby the Press Committee was relegated to a ceremonial annual meeting and all decisions, including the approval of manuscripts, passed into the hands of the Press Subcommittee, which consisted of Shepherd and the two European employees who supervised the bookshop and the mechanical side of the press.¹³ It cannot be said that Shepherd was ideally equipped for the position he had secured. To begin with, his command of Xhosa was insufficient to cope with manuscripts submitted in that language.¹⁴ These were usually referred to Professor D.D.T. Jabavu of Fort Hare or to I. Oldjohn, a Xhosa-speaker employed by the press for proofreading and orthographic tasks. Shepherd's deficiency was probably a blessing to Xhosa literature since there is every reason to believe that he would have been a harsher censor than the readers he used. Although Shepherd had a genuine liking for some aspects of the African "racial heritage," he accepted the usual racial stereotypes of his time.¹⁵ Thus there was a specifically Bantu soul and specifically Bantu genetic traits, such as emotionalism. South African Bantu and American Negroes shared inherited spiritual, mental, and physical characteristics. Conversely, a European was qualified to instruct a Bantu in his own literature because "his race may have behind it centuries of experience in the production and development of literature."¹⁶ These deeply-rooted racial attitudes enabled Shepherd to scale unsuspected heights of self-righteousness when dealing with criticism from blacks. The following passage from *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu* speaks for itself:

They are at the adolescent period, a period which, as in the life of individuals, is difficult for any people. It is difficult and trying not only for themselves but for those who are in any sense their guardians or their guides. A people at this stage is strong enough to feel its own strength, but sometimes not wise enough to be completely independent. Emotion is often more powerful than reason, and such emotion may find expression at times in strange and startling forms. . . . The recognition that the Bantu have reached such a stage should not pass from the minds of those who seek to aid the development of Bantu language and literature.¹⁷

And this was the man who aspired to be sole arbiter of Xhosa literature!

Shepherd was able to realize his ambitions to a very considerable extent. A Xhosa manuscript rejected by the Lovedale Press had little hope of finding an alternative outlet. Longmans Green published a few textbooks, the S.P.C.K. brought out some religious works, while a few competition prizewinners found a place in Witwatersrand University Press' *Bantu Treasury* series

(printed at Lovedale). The small mission at Emfundisweni in eastern Transkei also produced a few ephemeral publications.¹⁸ Only on four known occasions did Xhosa authors escape the net and have their works privately published.¹⁹ It was not easy for Xhosa authors to print at their own expense and distribute their manuscripts privately. The cost of doing so -- Lovedale printed a minimum of 1000 copies -- was well beyond the means of most individuals, and those few books published in this way, such as V.P. Ndamase's *Ama-Mpondo*, *Ibali ne-Ntlalo* (The History and Ways of the Mpondo) and R.T. Kawa's *I-Bali Lama-Mfengu* (The History of the Mfengu), were made possible only by communal subscription.²⁰ In any case, Shepherd's fiat ran beyond publication into censoring even the printing done by Lovedale Press. "No MS. is accepted even though the author is prepared to meet the cost of publication, unless it is found after close scrutiny to have reached a certain standard of excellence," he assured his readers.²¹ Lovedale's dominant position with respect to printing in the Xhosa language was facilitated by the system of segregation in which it participated, however unwillingly. No person who was not a member of the Federation of Master Printers, in effect no African, was permitted by the Department of Labour to work as a printer or bookbinder. The Lovedale Press was granted exemptions enabling it to apprentice Africans in these trades on condition that it concerned itself exclusively with work of a "Native" or missionary character. This allowed Lovedale to pay its workmen wages below the rates stipulated by the trade union for their white counterparts. Shepherd provided the rationale: "The production of books by Native workmen, although their wages are relatively high, helps to avoid costs that would make the prices beyond the means of Bantu readers."²² Segregation thus meant a division of labor between Lovedale (and similar presses in other areas) which published for "Natives" and the European press which published for everyone else. Segregation also meant that Lovedale Press could produce a Xhosa book more cheaply than a white press that was compelled to pay higher wages and forbidden to employ native Xhosa-speakers to set up the type.

In the face of Lovedale's monopoly, African authors had little alternative but to submit. Some, like L.K. Siwisa, author of a collection of Xhosa idioms protested: "While other people, Dr. Shepherd, are busy trying to get other channels of producing their books, we, who have no other means of getting our books printed, but solely depend on Lovedale Press for the production of our books, would not like to be tossed about."²³ But most, like L.T. Manyase, whose novel stood condemned of admitting the existence of witchcraft, responded with desperate humility: "I think you will cancel out my paragraphs or sentences you think are not good to support . . . Thank you, Sir, for taking such a great care for such an insignificant person like myself."²⁴ Nor was it only the lowly and unrecognized who bent the knee.

When S.M. Molema submitted a history of the Rolong, Shepherd demanded alterations in the orthography and the content. "I would not like the Lovedale Press to give publicity to the judgment . . . This is Hitlerism with a vengeance! and there are other similar passages -- particularly with reference to the British -- the writing of which may give emotional satisfaction but which seems not dispassionate enough for serious history." Molema replied meekly: "I assure you that I very highly value them [Shepherd's criticisms] as helpful advice . . . I am setting about to correct the shortcomings of the Manuscript on the lines of your suggestions." But he did not resubmit the manuscript.²⁵ As we shall see, the most considerable of the Xhosa historians, S.E.K. Mqhayi and J.H. Soga, were forced to react similarly.

Despite his immense authority, the policy of the Lovedale Press could not be entirely dictated by Shepherd's discretion. Although it was not a commercial enterprise seeking monetary profits, the financial side of the press had to be run efficiently. The press subsidized the Lovedale Missionary Institution by as much as £800 a year. On top of that it had to make up the losses of Lovedale's monthly journal, the *South African Outlook* (about £100 a year).²⁶ It was only after these commitments had been met that capital could be allocated to the risky business of publishing manuscripts by unknown African authors. Every praise is due to the Lovedale Press for seeking to "ensure that every meritorious MS. by an African author shall find a channel of publication," and indeed every Xhosa writer of note in the first half of the twentieth century owed the start of his career to sponsorship by the Lovedale Press.²⁷ But it must be noted that it was not only struggling black writers who were subsidized. Precise figures are not available, but the press' biggest disasters in the period 1930-50 included *African Dawn*, a novel by the son of a Lovedale missionary; C.J. Uys's eccentric history, *In the Era of Shepstone*; and *Under the Oaks*, a volume of sermons by no less distinguished an author than Shepherd himself.²⁸ Financial considerations forced the Lovedale Press into measures it would doubtless have preferred to avoid. A hostile missionary voiced suspicions that may have been widespread: "Suppose I were to say that it was a scandal that the Xhosa hymn book should sell at 4/6 when it probably takes little more than a third of that to produce . . . or that it was a scandal that the 'considerable resources' which the Lovedale Press now has, have come from the pockets of the Bantu people?"²⁹ Be that as it may, the press was certainly tenacious about its commercial rights. Ten years after Sol T. Plaatje's death, it was still hanging on to his royalties to pay off the debt on his account.³⁰ Relations with A.C. Jordan were completely severed after Lovedale Press refused to concede the author the right to publish a translation of his great novel, *Ingqumbo yemiNjanya* (The Wrath of the Ancestors) elsewhere.³¹

Financial considerations directly affected Lovedale Press' publishing policy in several ways. Most of the profits came from the printing as opposed to the publishing side of the business. The press depended largely then on being given outside jobs such as the printing of the journal *Bantu Studies* for the University of the Witwatersrand, or the production of vernacular literature for missions operating in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. When faced with wartime shortages of paper, Lovedale Press was forced to sacrifice its own publishing program in order to undertake more lucrative work for Northern Rhodesia. The next priority was given to school textbooks, which had an assured market.³² A second consequence of financial stringency was a reluctance to print unusually long works unless they were assured of a good sale. T.B. Soga's ethnology, *Intlalo kaXhosa* (The Way of the Xhosa) was divided into two parts for publication. Sales of the first did not meet expectations, so the second was never published and the manuscript has since been lost.³³ Third, Lovedale's profits depended very largely on the primary school market. This did not involve ideological conflict since there was very little divergence at the time between Lovedale's objectives and those of the Cape Department of Native Education. Several of the important figures in native education such as W.G. Bennie and G.H. Welsh, successively the Chief Inspectors of Native Education in the Cape Province, were closely associated with Lovedale. In the 1930s Lovedale struck gold with the *Stewart Xhosa Readers*, a graded series for primary schools edited and prepared by W.G. Bennie, grandson of John Bennie, the founder of Lovedale. According to the two half-yearly accounts available (1942 and 1944), the series sold about 56,000 copies every six months. Attempts to introduce the series in other languages were unsuccessful. The *Stewart Zulu Readers* were used to some extent in Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland but were successfully repulsed in the Zulu heartland by the combined forces of the Natal Education Department and Shuter and Shooter, publishers, while the *Stewart Tswana Readers* were destroyed in the planning stages by the counter-machinations of the London Missionary Society.³⁴

The exigencies of providing school literature rendered the Lovedale Press particularly vulnerable to the great orthographic upheaval which struck Africa in the 1930s as the result of the work of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures founded in 1926 by D. Westermann and his colleagues. Westermann's proposals for a new and consistent "Africa" orthography sparked off a new quest for language standardization throughout the continent. By comparison with other languages, which were severely mauled by ill-considered attempts at dialectal unification, Xhosa was fortunate. The labors of the early missionaries had enshrined the Ngqika dialect of Xhosa -- that spoken around Lovedale -- as the undisputed ideal of linguistic rectitude. Nevertheless, problems with regard to matters such as

tone and aspiration had led to inconsistencies in spelling. The "Old Orthography" was not always capable of distinguishing between words of totally different meanings. For instance, the particle 'nga' could be negative, copulative, auxiliary, prepositional, or a noun meaning "mimosa tree." In 1929 a South African Orthography Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Professor Clement Doke. The Xhosa sub-committee included not only Shepherd and W.G. Bennie, but eminent Xhosa writers such as D.D.T. Jabavu, S.E.K. Mqhayi and J.H. Soga. At first, the Xhosa sub-committee agreed to only one change, the introduction of a new symbol to denote the implosive 'b', but gradually they succumbed to the blandishments of linguistic perfectionism. Far-reaching changes were adopted: the introduction of three new letters, the creation of a number of new didacts (two-letter consonants), the use of diacritic marks to indicate tone and stress, the practice of doubling vowels to indicate length, and new rules for the division of words.³⁵

However satisfactory these new arrangements may have been from a purely linguistic standpoint, their social implications were disastrous. The manner in which the regulations were imposed awakened deep resentment among educated Africans. Sol. T. Plaatje spoke for many when he said: "It is to be regretted that at this end of the continent the scheme was attacked along real South African lines; i.e. -- the Natives know not what they need. So let University Professors lay down a scheme in the light of science; and Native schools will have to adopt it or do without Government grants!"³⁶ The awesome effect of the "New Orthography" was to turn every literate African into a functional illiterate. Even Mqhayi and Soga, who had sat on the Xhosa sub-committee, could not (or would not) write their manuscripts correctly in the New Orthography.³⁷ Plaatje, whose Tswana language was hardest hit, concluded that "the muddle brooks of only one solution; i.e. not to write Sechuana at all."³⁸ One can only wonder how many vernacular manuscripts were aborted in this way. The Lovedale Press at least was in no doubt about how to proceed. W.G. Bennie became an enthusiastic convert and propagandist of the New Orthography, and Shepherd naturally supported him. "Their ignorance of the latest and most up-to-date orthography, even of their own language, is often surprising," he wrote.³⁹ And although he was too ignorant of Xhosa to read or write it himself, he enforced the provisions of the New Orthography on his authors. As we shall see, the extra costs and delays incurred in revising the orthography of accepted manuscripts were to prove fatal in several cases.

In both its Christian and its liberal capacities, Lovedale mission was plagued by the ugly Xhosa-Mfengu ethnic split, which was especially virulent in the Ciskei where Lovedale was situated. At the time of the European irruption into southern Africa, the Xhosa had occupied the territory between the Fish and the Mbashe rivers. In nine bloody frontier wars spread over no

less than a century, they battled to hold the line against the relentless white advance. 'Mfengu' is a generic term for the fragmented peoples who settled among the Xhosa in the wake of the Mfecane. They rallied around the sympathetic Wesleyan missionary John Ayliff, and during the Sixth Frontier War (1834/35) he was instrumental in provoking them to desert across the Kei to the British. On their arrival at Peddie, the Mfengu 'capital,' they swore a great and solemn oath to obey the Government, to accept Christianity and to educate their children. In each of the following frontier wars they fought loyally for the whites, and in each they were rewarded with more land taken from the Xhosa. Their enthusiasm for Christianity and education led them to acquire western techniques and skills, so that even after the end of the frontier era they maintained a socio-economic superiority over the defeated Xhosa. Ethnic animosity found political expression in the rivalry between the Mfengu J.T. Jabavu, and the Xhosa W.B. Rubusana. The Xhosa had their own Christian tradition. The prophecies of a certain Ntsikana who lived near the future site of Lovedale inspired several prominent Xhosa to seek instruction from the Presbyterian missionaries who established themselves there. One of these was Soga, councillor to Ngqika and forefather of many eminent churchmen and writers. Thus when the Mfengu introduced a Mfengu Remembrance Day in 1907 to commemorate their oath, the Xhosa responded with a Ntsikana Day. Although couched in religious terms, these ceremonies were in fact ethnic rallies.⁴⁰

Such a situation was obviously distasteful to the Lovedale missionaries. Although they had traditionally been the Xhosa denomination, many talented Mfengu like E. Makiwane and J.J.R. Jolobe had joined their ranks. The missionaries were painfully aware that this division could crack the Church wide open. As one of them put it: "The large majority of the church members and office-bearers were Fingoes [Mfengu]. But the finest office-bearers were Xhosa, though the Xhosa converts were very few."⁴¹ Ethnic resentments had played a part in the Mzimba secession of 1898, and the Church faced another Ethiopianist crisis when the Bantu Presbyterian Church split in 1935. Moreover, Lovedale's closest African friend and adviser was D.D.T. Jabavu, son of the old Mfengu leader, J.T. Jabavu. The younger Jabavu, President of the All-Africa Convention and one of the leaders of early black South African nationalism, resented and fought the ethnicity which threatened his local base. For all these reasons then, the Lovedale Press was exceptionally sensitive to historical references to Mfengu-Xhosa differences.

II.

Having examined the general factors which shaped the policy of the Lovedale Press in the Shepherd era (1930-50), we can turn to specific cases of editorial interference. The records are

fairly detailed, but some documents mentioned in the surviving correspondence are missing, and there are no files for some historians published by the Lovedale Press, for instance A.Z. Ngani. These studies do not therefore comprehend the whole output of the Lovedale Press in this period, but they may be taken as representative inasmuch as like principles would presumably produce like effects in most instances.

Case I: A Manuscript Forgotten

John Henderson Soga (1859-1941) was grandson of old Soga and son of Tiyo Soga, the famous Xhosa missionary and essayist.⁴² Born of a Scottish mother, he was educated in Scotland and married a Scottish wife. In 1893 he returned to the Transkei as a missionary, and began to write hymns and translate devotional works. The Lovedale Press published some of these, but apparently because they did not pay him sufficiently well ("I am not a philanthropic bureau"), he completed his father's translation of *Pilgrims Progress* for the S.P.C.K. instead. Soga was soon to find that his secular work was less in demand than his religious writings. First he failed to place a translation of Aesop's Fables. Then he tried to market his monumental historical manuscript, *Abe-Nguni, Aba-Mbo, Nama-Lala* (The Nguni, and Lala peoples), completed in 1926. This compilation of oral traditions and available published materials was the result of research carried out during thirty years of missionary activity throughout the Transkei. Historiographically, Soga is to the Xhosa what Samuel Johnson is to the Yoruba and Apolo Kagwa is to the Ganda -- the foundation on which all subsequent Xhosa history has been and will continue to be written. It is not that Soga is unprejudiced or free from error, it is simply that his work will always be indispensable. Yet, incredible as it may seem, his original manuscript has never been published.

Soga began by sending his manuscript to the Lovedale Press, but was told that he would need to contribute £140 toward publication, well beyond his means. Fortunately, the Editorial Committee of *Bantu Studies* heard of the manuscript and paid Soga £100 to translate it for them. The translation entitled *The South-Eastern Bantu* appeared in 1930. In 1928, Soga approached the Lovedale Press about his English language *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (which they eventually published) and tried at the same time to sell them his Xhosa history for £50. The press replied that it had no funds on hand for the moment. By August 1930, we find Soga withdrawing his offer for a second time, stating hopefully that he was "opening negotiations with others who may possibly, though I do not say probably, come to terms." But no one could be found to publish the greatest historical work ever written in the Xhosa language. In 1936 Soga sailed for England and retirement. In February 1937 he offered the Lovedale Press the manuscript free of charge, "in the character of an inheritance to my father's people." Shepherd generously sent

him £50 with the fatal request that the manuscript be transcribed into the New Orthography. Soga reluctantly agreed ("It would be foolish for me to kick against the inevitable"), but asked that long and short vowels remain undifferentiated. Shepherd replied that the book had to be orthographically perfect for the schools. "You win again," Soga conceded in September, "better an offspring with a deformity than no offspring at all." Alas, the deformity was to kill the offspring. Soga had typed the manuscript in the Old Orthography and in single spacing. This meant that it could not simply be converted into the New Orthography, but that it had to be retyped as well. The job was given to Oldjohn who performed such tasks at an hourly rate. After 82 hours' work, Oldjohn was only a third of the way through, and the Press Sub-committee decided that, in view of wartime conditions, work on the manuscript should cease.⁴³ Soga was killed in the German bombing of Southampton and although his manuscript has survived him, it remains unpublished.

Case II: A Manuscript Emended

After the success of his primary schoolbooks, W.G. Bennie edited an anthology to serve as a Xhosa reader for high school. Many of the items in *Imibengo* (Titbits) were taken from old newspapers and are not otherwise available. The initial typescript has survived and shows emendations in Bennie's hand.⁴⁴ Most of these changes are orthographical or delete journalistic comments of the "to be continued in our next" variety. But it seems worthwhile to note the remainder of the omissions, which are related mainly to indecency. Thus the passage "He objected, saying that this was his older brother's wife, and just when he was about to win over the councillors, he was constrained to it by Chief Rharhabe, who said, your older brother had not yet known this [woman], go you and sleep with her" becomes "He objected but was constrained to it by Chief Rharhabe." The published book states that Ndlambe's Great Wife left him, but not that this was "because she was not well pleased with the manhood of Ndlambe." "Concubines" twice become "women," and we no longer find that "the girls were stung with excitement" but only that "a dance was held." A passage on King Gcaleka's initiation as a diviner is removed with the marginal note in English "We can't leave this as it is here." The only politically oriented change is the replacement of the derogatory *amagwangqa* (pale brown ones) for the more polite "white people." On the other hand, politically emotive incidents and phrases like "That fellow has already gone and sold himself [to the whites]" were allowed to remain in the text.

Similar bowdlerization took place in T.B. Soga's *Intlalo kaXosa*. This was due to the vigilance of Mr Bangeni, the typist, who objected to the presence of "extremely obscene" words such as *ukuzindaba* (to wipe one's backside on the grass) and other semi-scatological expressions. Bangeni and D.D.T. Jabavu went through the manuscript, "cut out all the matter

likely to make a bad impression . . . and felt satisfied we had thereby improved its tone without sacrificing anything worth preserving."⁴⁵

Case III: An Edition Abridged

Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi (1875-1945) is generally recognized as the greatest writer the Xhosa language has yet produced, and *Ityala lamaWele* (The Case of the Twins), a historical novel set during the reign of Hintsa (1808-1835) is his masterpiece. It is fairly short, and was originally published by the Lovedale Press in 1914, together with some of his shorter articles, several of which were historical in nature. Unlike Soga, Mqhayi was less a collector of oral traditions than a historical commentator. His refutations of European historical stereotypes -- for instance, his contention that the Xhosa could not have been cattle thieves because the Europeans initially acquired their cattle from the Xhosa -- have passed into oral tradition. As a Xhosa, Mqhayi could not but allude to the historical quarrels with the Mfengu, pointing out for instance that Mfengu Remembrance Day was held on the anniversary of the murder of Hintsa during the War of 1834/35.⁴⁶

It is to the credit of whoever was running the Lovedale Press in 1914 that they permitted these and similar remarks to appear in the first edition. But by the 1930s the situation at Lovedale had changed. W.G. Bennie abridged the book for use in schools, and cut out chapters dealing with the following subjects: the arrival and desertion of the Mfengu; the death of Hintsa and the dismissal of Governor Benjamin D'Urban, who was held responsible; praise poems and comments on the Zulu rebellion of 1906; and the life of the Xhosa chief Maqoma. Other chapters lost paragraphs on the following: Mfengu-Xhosa rivalry; witchcraft in the Old Testament; causes of frontier wars; J.T. Jabavu's political association with the Afrikaner Bond; and W.B. Rubusana's difficulties with the Congregational Church.⁴⁷ It seems that Mqhayi was induced to agree to this abridgement for financial reasons. At the time he was living entirely by his pen and was chronically short of money. He contrived to alert his readers in his ironic preface to the abridged edition, which deserves to be quoted in full:

The day of the 8th printing, this little book completes 31,000 copies. Pupils, we are thankful for such support. For doing this, we thank our Father, the Government for the great honour which they have given this little book -- to the Department of Education for causing it to be read in the schools; to the Department of Justice for using it in Xhosa-language examinations for magistrates.⁴⁸

This should be read in conjunction with the preface to the full edition, which is addressed to chiefs, councillors, ladies and

gentlemen and boasts that it contains the "essence" (*isimo*) of Xhosa history.

What Mqhayi failed to realize at first was that the Lovedale Press intended to drop the full edition in favor of the abridged version. On 28 September 1939 he wrote Shepherd an alarmed letter saying that he had heard that the last impression of the full edition (in the Old Orthography) was out of print, and adding that "I do not want this edition to die away."⁴⁹ The Press Sub-committee met and recalled that Mqhayi had "agreed to the publication of an abridged edition but only so long as we sold the old one."⁵⁰ The complete edition was issued in the New Orthography around 1940, but that was its last impression. In 1957 Xhosa orthography suffered another revision, and the complete edition has not yet been transcribed into the "Revised Standard Orthography." As might have been anticipated, the schools edition has driven the full one off the market. No Xhosa whom I have questioned on the subject has been aware of any substantive difference between the various editions.

Case IV: Two Manuscripts Returned for Correction

R.H.W. Shepherd did not like Mqhayi.⁵¹ When the author demanded increased royalties for his novel *Don Jadu* and backed up the claim with a lawyer's letter, Shepherd threatened never to reprint the book or to publish anything else by Mqhayi.⁵² W.G. Bennie usually acted as Mqhayi's protector, settling the differences over *Don Jadu* and insisting on the publication of Mqhayi's autobiography.

But even Bennie's influence was not always sufficient. In February 1932 he wrote to Shepherd, urging him to publish Mqhayi's *Life of Elijah Makiwane*, written a few years previously. Shepherd resisted. "I cannot foretell how the Committee will regard the matter. The books that don't seem to sell are vernacular lives of Native ministers." Opposition also came from D.D.T. Jabavu, who felt that the book overstressed Xhosa-Mfengu rivalry. It appears from the correspondence that the book praised Makiwane, a Mfengu, for remaining above the Xhosa-Mfengu division, marrying a Xhosa wife, and taking no part in the Mfengu-inspired secession from the United Free Church of Scotland. But even such moral lessons were unacceptable to Shepherd and Jabavu, who wanted all references cut out. When Bennie stood firm behind Mqhayi, they were forced to adopt the expedient of sending the manuscript to all members of the Makiwane family for comment and suggestion. It did the rounds for more than three years and, when Mqhayi returned a corrected version to Shepherd (10 March 1937), the latter passed it back to Jabavu who kept it nearly a year, and then made further objections (21 February 1938). The manuscript renewed its peregrinations and was last heard of on 19 June 1945, when Jabavu noted that "The Life of Makiwane by S.E. Mqhayi must be held back till we are satisfied from an authentic opinion from his family and others who knew him (of whom there are quite a number) that all essential aspects of the biography have been included."

On 6 February 1940, Mqhayi asked the Lovedale Press for an estimate on his biography of the Xhosa leader Rubusana "as my wish is to try if our people could meet the printing expenses." The technical staff produced a quote of £81 and Mqhayi offered £25 immediately, £25 just before publication, and the rest to be made up from sales.⁵³ It is quite extraordinary that Mqhayi, who was so short of money that he sold the valuable copyrights to *Don Jadu* and to his autobiography for trifling sums, should offer to pay for the printing. The Rubusana family was likewise badly off. Mqhayi must have known that Shepherd and the Lovedale Press would never publish the biography the way he wanted it. In this he was correct, but he was wrong in thinking that they might be prepared at least to print it. This time it was Oldjohn who blew the whistle. Mqhayi had introduced too much "irrelevant matter" such as the causes of Kaffir Wars, and he was "too partisan" in his discussion of political matters such as the differences between Rubusana and J.T. Jabavu.⁵⁴ In April 1940 Shepherd wrote to Mqhayi informing him of the decision and pointing out that "as a missionary press, we cannot allow ourselves to become involved in political controversy making for division among the Bantu people." Mqhayi replied contritely that he would "pick out those parts that are bad," but he never re-submitted the manuscript and its present whereabouts is unknown.

Mqhayi's manuscript *Ukwaluko* (Circumcision), in which he argued that the Xhosa practice of circumcision was compatible with Christianity, was also rejected ("the right method of approaching [the subject] at this stage seems to be through the churches and Christian bodies rather than through a publication of the Lovedale Press") and has also disappeared. In 1938, Rev. W. Mazwi of Matatiele district offered to pay for the printing of his history of the Moravian missions. The Lovedale Press objected that there was too much emphasis on Kaffir Wars and too little on the positive side of the mission work. The manuscript was sent on to the superintendant of Moravian missions, who replied that his society could not support publication of the manuscript as it stood as they were "not quite satisfied with its contents." There the matter ended.⁵⁵

Shepherd asked Mrs. F. Ross for permission to delete references to Xhosa-Mfengu rivalry in the forthcoming reprint of Reverend Brownlee J. Ross's *A Missionary Family*. Apparently, she refused, for references to it appear in the published volume.⁵⁶ It is more surprising that the Lovedale Press allowed attacks on John Ayliff and Europeans in general to appear in Kawa's *I-Bali Lamas-Mfengu*.⁵⁷ This might have happened because the book was privately printed, or because it was accepted before Shepherd's rise to power, or because the Xhosa readers shared Kawa's Mfengu viewpoint. We have already noted that Shepherd instructed Molema to cut "violent" and insufficiently dispassionate anti-British passages out of his Rolong history. A similar fate befell

T.S. Preller, doyen of Afrikaner historians, when he submitted his *Lobengula*. Shepherd denied that he was turning down the book because it was anti-British, but added that "we would not, however, publish matter which we consider harmful to the missionary cause."⁵⁸

Case V: A Manuscript Rejected

The manuscript with the most chequered career was not in Xhosa but in Tswana. This was a biography of Kgama the Great by L.D. Raditladi, whose grandfather was half-brother to the great man. Raditladi was a graduate of Lovedale, which he represented with distinction in the Hurdles and the High Jump.⁵⁹ Raditladi had won a prize with his manuscript, and in November 1935 he was invited to submit it for publication. This he did, but publication had to be delayed until the various bodies wrangling about correct Tswana orthography reached agreement. The revised manuscript was sent to Lovedale in February 1938, and Shepherd sent it on as a courtesy to Rev. A. Sandilands, the London Missionary Society's expert on the Tswana language. Sandilands' full report was delayed by a remarkable contretemps. It will be remembered that Shepherd was keen to emulate the success of the *Stewart Xhosa Readers* by extending its benefits to other language groups. It so happened that Sandilands was preparing his own Tswana readers and the Lovedale campaign, begun after Sandilands had received Raditladi's manuscript, involved isolating that missionary from the rest of the L.M.S. and the Bechuanaland Protectorate Director of Education. At one point in the acrimonious campaign, Shepherd quite typically exclaimed, "If Sandilands is editor, it will be better for South Africa that another set of readers be put on the market."⁶⁰ In this atmosphere, Sandilands finally passed his judgement on Raditladi. It was favorable to the language ("not merely correct vernacular, but vernacular touched into fire") but was critical of both the history and the orthography. The manuscript was sent to a Tswana expert in Mafeking for orthographic revision (August 1939), but Raditladi refused to accept the suggested changes (January 1940). It was then sent to Professor Lestrade of the University of Cape Town for arbitration; he decided that neither version was quite correct and made suggestions of his own. In July 1940 the manuscript was finally declared orthographically fit for school consumption.

During the five-year delay however, Raditladi himself had not been idle. He was associated with the 'tribal-democrat' opposition in Ngwato politics, had committed adultery with a wife of Ngwato regent Tshakedi Kgama, and in 1937 had been expelled with some of his relatives from the Ngwato reserve.⁶¹ These incidents had not exactly endeared him to the most powerful chief in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. As a result, it began to be felt that passages in the Kgama biography were rather too pointed. For instance: "His [Kgama's] servants got rich and his domestic servants were not dressed in rags, they looked happy and contented.

He realized that if headmen were left to become poor they would be looked down upon." Informed of these objections, Shepherd wrote to Raditladi, who gave him *carte blanche*. "I have the pleasure to inform you that you have my permission to do what you think fit with my MS on the life of Chief Kgama," he replied on 18 March 1939. But even after four alterations were made, Protectorate officials continued to find objections. In a notable understatement, the Director of Education wrote to Shepherd that "There is not a particularly good feeling existing between the Raditladi and Tshekedi Khama," and passed on to the nub of the issue: "Should it be that Tshekedi took exception to this book it would mean that very few copies would be sold in his territory and there might be a similar result elsewhere owing to his influence." Bechuanaland Protectorate officials felt that any manuscript submitted by Raditladi "would fail simply because it was written by Raditladi. If Tshekedi were approached Germond thinks he will bring out millions of objections." The final coup de grace was delivered by the distinguished anthropologist Isaac Schapera, who worked in close cooperation with Protectorate officials. After conceding that there was nothing really offensive in the biography, Schapera continued that "it omits many important facts about Kgama's life, and . . . contains nothing new. A far better biography of Kgama can and should be written, and I fear that if this one were published it would deter others from venturing into the same field . . . Would not a better solution be for you to commission a biography from some more competent person?" Lovedale Press dropped the book, and in June 1949 it was returned to Raditladi at his own request. Its present whereabouts are unknown.

The available evidence leaves several interesting questions unanswered. Were the Protectorate officials really concerned about Lovedale Press' publishing a dud, or did they simply want to prevent the publication of any manuscript by Raditladi? Was the Lovedale Press more alarmed about losing sales than they were about the possibility of losing official goodwill in an area where they still hoped to publish textbooks? Whatever the answers, the implications of the Raditladi case are disturbing, demonstrating that a vernacular historian could be blotted out entirely by colonial officials who are afraid of rocking the boat even very slightly. It demonstrates the extent to which the Lovedale Press was absorbed in the production of suitable textbooks. And Schapera's letter shows that even the most perceptive of Europeans believed that there was no room in a vernacular language for more than a single history.

It has not been the purpose of this paper to give a balanced view of the work of the Lovedale Press. Such a view might well stress the numbers of books published by the press which might otherwise never have seen the light of day. It might well point to the work done by the Lovedale Press and its host institution

in promoting literacy and the love of reading. Certainly it is well to note here that there is no way of ascertaining the number of historical manuscripts which Lovedale published exactly as its author wished. The fact that only one history (H.M. Ndawo's *Iziduko samaHlubi*) definitely is known to fall into this category is not statistically significant, given the fragmentary nature of the records. My object has simply been to examine the various ways in which the Lovedale Press processed and thereby altered the historical manuscripts which were sent to it.

The case studies presented here demonstrate clearly that the effective monopoly of the Lovedale Press in the era of Shepherd stifled the development of a meaningful vernacular historiography. Objections by the Lovedale Press left an author no choice but to submit or withdraw his manuscript altogether. Controversial references to British and missionary roles, ethnic differences, or contemporary politics were eliminated. Vivid references to natural human functions were taboo. Authors were not allowed to present their views on religiously touchy issues such as circumcision or witchcraft. The exigencies of finance haunted both publisher and authors, and in some cases resulted in the non-publication of manuscripts. The need to provide acceptable school textbooks would have driven the Lovedale Press to censorship, bowdlerization, and the New Orthography regardless of its own inclinations. Delays in publication were to prove fatal in several cases. No matter how much one makes allowances, it is hard to forgive the Lovedale Press for its part in the loss of three manuscripts by the greatest figure in Xhosa literature or for its role in mutilating its greatest classic. The same might be said of the loss of manuscripts by Molema, Raditladi, and T.B. Soga.

The Lovedale Press was not of course responsible for the problems caused by the orthographic experimentation of the 1930s. This was a continental phenomenon and it would be interesting to know to what extent it affected vernacular historiography elsewhere in Africa. Why, for example, did the 1930s see a "hiatus" in Ganda historical writing, but a "flood of local histories" in Yorubaland?⁶² More generally, the example of the Lovedale Press should be an object lesson to historians who have proffered subjective explanations for the shortcomings of vernacular histories. Certainly, it would be wrong to ascribe the bland nature of so many vernacular histories entirely to the restraints and attitudes of the vernacular historians themselves. Two years ago, I wrote that the "constant friendship [of Xhosa historians] with sympathetic Europeans and their attachment to Christianity led them to suppress or mute historical opinions or attitudes which they felt reflected discreditably on the Xhosa people."⁶³ In light of the testimony of the Lovedale archival materials I would not write such a thing now. Similarly, I do not altogether credit M. Twaddle when he explains the fact

that so many Ganda wrote but did not publish their autobiographies by referring to "a high evaluation of privacy and individualism."⁶⁴ One can imagine reasons of a more concrete nature.

NOTES

1. R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature for the Bantu* (Lovedale, 1945). The book included the following note: "This book was submitted as supplementary to the main Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Literature and accepted by the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa." (unpaginated). The present paper is based primarily on the records of the Lovedale Press which have been deposited in the Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown. They do not cover the entire life of the press, but run from approximately 1928 to 1953. They consist of files arranged in alphabetical order by name of correspondent; published and unpublished manuscripts; and MS 16,297, Cory Library, Minutes of the Press Committee and the Press Sub-committee. I would like to thank Sandy Fold, Jackson Vena, and John Claughton for their assistance.
2. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (London, 1965); J. Goody and I. Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy" in J. Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 27-68.
3. It is not known with certainty which of Lovedale's pamphlets was the very first. The one referred to was reproduced as the frontispiece to W.G. Bennie, *Imibengo* (Lovedale, 1935).
4. The authorized version of Lovedale's history is R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa: The Story of a Century* (Lovedale, 1941). Lovedale has recently attracted a good deal of more critical scrutiny, most of which remains unpublished. See S.M. Brock, "James Stewart and Lovedale," (Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1974); R.H. Davis, "Nineteenth Century African Education in the Cape Colony," (Ph.D., Wisconsin, 1969). This paper will not touch on the role of the mission institution, but will confine itself resolutely to the Lovedale Press.
5. *Books for Africa*, (January, 1939) cited in Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, pp. 25-26.
6. G.C. Oosthuizen, *Shepherd of Lovedale: A Life for Southern Africa* (Johannesburg, 1970), the only biography, is a curious affair. Oosthuizen was part of the South African government's takeover of Fort Hare, Lovedale's neighbor, in 1959. His political orientation led him to admire most those aspects of Shepherd's career which liberals find most embarrassing. The most valuable part of the book is its exhaustive bibliography of Shepherd's voluminous writings.

7. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, p. 26.
8. Ibid, p. 26.
9. Ibid, p. 89.
10. Ibid, pp. 27, 85.
11. Ibid, p. 89.
12. Ibid, p. 52.
13. MS 16,297. Minutes of the Press Committee, 24 August 1936.
14. Oosthuizen, *Shepherd*, p. 36. File, S.E.K. Mqhayi, Shepherd -- I. Oldjohn, 22 February 1940. File, T.B. Soga, D.D.T. Jabavu -- Shepherd, 6 September 1935.
15. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, p. 96.
16. Ibid, p. 70.
17. Ibid, p. 75.
18. The lack of any full bibliography makes precision impossible. Emfundisweni did bring out two vernacular histories by W.D. Cingo, the local school principal: *I-bali lama-Mpondo* (History of the Mpondo) and *I-bali laba-Tembu* (History of the Thembu), both around 1930. Neither is of great historical value. I have been able to trace only three other books published by this press, and these all appear to be of a devotional nature and were also published in the early 1930s.
19. The first of these was W.B. Rubusana's valuable collection of oral traditions and praise poems, *Zemk'iinkomo Magwal-andini* (The Cattle are going you cowards!) (printed by Butler and Tanner, Frome, 1906). At the time, Rubusana was still on the payroll of Cecil Rhodes' successors in the Cape Progressive Party. The success of this collection prompted Rubusana to collect material for a second edition, but it never appeared. The others were all by S.E.K. Mqhayi. See P.E. Scott, *Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi, 1875-1945: A Bibliographic Survey* (Communication no. 5, Department of African Languages, Rhodes University, 1976).
20. File, J.H. Soga. J. Henderson -- Soga, 17 June 1929. File, D.D.T. Jabavu, Jabavu -- Shepherd, 12 February 1937. D.D.T. Jabavu, Foreword to Kawa (July 1929). It is significant that it took the comparatively well-educated and prosperous Mfengu seven years to raise £10 for publication of Kawa's manuscript.
21. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, p. 19.
22. Ibid, p. 68. MS 16,297. Minutes of the Press Committee, 11 August 1933 with annexures describing a visit from the Secretary of the Federation of Master Printers.
23. File, L.K. Siwisa. Siwisa -- Shepherd, 15 August 1949.
24. File, L.T. Manyase. Manyase -- Shepherd, 16 March 1941.
25. File, M. Molema. Shepherd -- Molema, 10 January 1940; Molema -- Shepherd, 17 January 1940.
26. Fairly full financial statements appear in MS 16,297, Minutes of Press Committee on the following dates: 19 March 1930; 26 March 1931; 3 March 1932; 5 June 1933; 9 February 1934. Passing references in the Minutes of the Press Sub-

- committee, 22 February 1938 and 14 February 1940 indicate that the position remained unchanged for the remainder of the decade. The greatest profits came from the printing unit, followed by the bookroom. Publishing always made the smallest contribution but it consistently maintained a comfortable credit balance.
27. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, p. 54.
 28. File, P.L. Hunter, Hunter -- Shepherd, 7 January 1950 refers to *African Dawn* as "selling so badly" and only 175 copies sold. File, C.J. Uys, Principal -- Randles and Davis, 10 January 1936. *In the Era of Shepstone* sold only 371 copies in two years, and the net loss was £93.12.4. File, Father Callaway, Shepherd -- Callaway, 31 July 1941. *Under the Oaks* sold fewer than 450 copies in seven years. The only African-authored publication which seems to have made a comparable loss was H.I.E. Dhloho's English drama, *The Girl Who Killed to Save*.
 29. File, Tswana Readers. A Sandilands -- Shepherd, 29 November 1939.
 30. File, S.T. Plaatje, Account to Estate Sol T. Plaatje, 22 September 1942.
 31. File, A.C. Jordan, Shepherd -- J. Urdang, 17 March 1950.
 32. File, Committees, Minutes of Press Sub-committee, 19 April 1945. MS 16,297, Minutes of Press Committee, 27 September 1939.
 33. File, T.B. Soga, passim.
 34. Files, Stewart Xhosa Readers, Stewart Zulu Readers, Stewart Tswana Readers.
 35. For general background see A.N. Tucker, "Orthographic Systems and Conventions in sub-Saharan Africa" *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 7(1971), pp. 618-53. More specifically, see W.G. Bennie, "Xosa Orthography," *South African Outlook*, April 1931; idem, *Notes on the New Xhosa Orthography* (Lovedale, 1937).
 36. S.T. Plaatje, "Suggested New Bantu Orthography," *South African Outlook*, May 1931
 37. File, J.H. Soga, Soga-Shepherd, 10 August 1937. File, S.E.K. Mqhayi, Mqhayi -- Shepherd, 22 November 1939; undated, unsigned report on Third Part of *Don Jadu*.
 38. Plaatje to Editor, *South African Outlook*, August 1931.
 39. Shepherd, *Lovedale and Literature*, p. 53.
 40. The most convenient exposition of these matters is R.A. Moyer, "Some Current Manifestations of Early Mfengu History," *Institute of Commonwealth Studies Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa*, III, (1971/72).
 41. B.J. Ross, *His Ancestry and Some Writings* (Lovedale, 1948).
 42. The section is based on correspondence in the J.H. Soga file. The Xhosa manuscript referred to is in the Cory Library collection.

43. MS 16,297, Minutes of Press Sub-committee, 22 November 1939.
44. The typescript is in the Cory Library collection. The emendations mentioned refer to the following pages in the 1971 reprint of *Imibengo* (note that all reprints of this work have substantially the same pagination). In the order cited in the text: pp. 146, 149, 155 and 156, 151, 131, 130, 192.
45. File T.B. Soga, Memo by B. Bangeni enclosed in Shepherd -- W.G. Bennie, 13 February 1936; D.D.T. Jabavu -- Shepherd, 11 March 1936.
46. I regret that I have been unable to see Wandile Kuse's recent University of Wisconsin dissertation on Mqhayi. For more information on Mqhayi see A.C. Jordan, *Towards an African Literature* (Berkeley, 1973); *South African Outlook*, (December, 1975); P.E. Scott (see note 20 above). References in this paragraph are to pp. 134-35 and 123 of the seventh printing (1931?) of *Ityala lamaWele*.
47. This section is based on a comparison between the seventh printing and the abridged edition.
48. Abridged edition (1976 impression), p. iv; seventh printing, p. vi.
49. File, S.E.K. Mqhayi.
50. MS 16,297. Minutes of Press Sub-committee, 18 October 1939.
51. This is apparent from the tone of the S.E.K. Mqhayi file, and from the letter Shepherd wrote to W.G. Bennie on reading Mqhayi's autobiography (9 May 1938). "I must say when I read the MS in English, I laid it down with a greater liking for the author." Shepherd was, however, very careful to praise Mqhayi in his public pronouncements. See, for example, Chapter 31 of his *Bantu Literature and Life* (Lovedale, 1955).
52. MS 16,297, Minutes of Press Committee, 19 March 1930. The rest of this section is based on the S.E.K. Mqhayi file, unless otherwise indicated.
53. MS 16,297, Minutes of Press Sub-committee, 20 March 1940.
54. Ibid, sub 17 April 1940.
55. File, W. Mazwi.
56. File, B.J. Ross. Shepherd -- F. Ross, 14 October 1947. B.J. Ross, *His Ancestry*, pp. 42-43.
57. Kawa, *I-Bali*, Chapter 10.
58. File C.J. Uys. Shepherd -- Uys, 1 December 1933. *Lobengula* was finally published in 1963.
59. *South African Outlook* (January 1932). This section is based on the L.D. Raditladi file, except where otherwise indicated. There is a short biography of Raditladi in Richard Stevens, *Historical Dictionary of Botswana* (Metuchen, N.J., 1975), pp. 120-21.
60. File, Stewart Tswana Readers, note by Shepherd of conversations with Bennie, 17 November 1938.
61. I would like to thank Neil Parsons for his help with the Botswana background. For further details, see Q.N. Parsons,

- "Shots for a Black Republic? Simon Ratshosa and Botswana Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 73(1974), pp. 449-58, and Mary Benson, *Tshekedi Khama* (London, 1960).
62. J.A. Rowe, "Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda Historical Writing, 1893-1969," *Uganda Journal*, 33(1969), p. 26; R. Law, "Early Yoruba Historiography," *History in Africa*, 3(1976), p. 74.
63. J.B. Peires, "A History of the Xhosa c. 1700-1835" (M.A. Rhodes University, 1976), p. 27.
64. M. Twaddle, "On Ganda Historiography," *History in Africa*, 1(1974), p. 98.