

I. Pedi paramount chief born in about 1810 Sekhukhune I built the  
 Pedi chiefdom into the most powerful African state in the Eastern  
 Transvaal under his dynamic leadership. He succeeded his father Sekwati  
 after a bitter struggle with Mampuru his half brother who remained  
 his life-long enemy. Sekhukhune built his chiefdom up by rallying  
 the survivors of the northern Sotho chiefdoms that had been disrupted by  
 Mzilikazi and Shoshangane. His desire to maintain his independence  
 and to extend his authority over the Northern Sotho brought him into  
 conflict with the missionaries. When the missionaries began to make  
 many converts he felt that they were threatening his authority. He  
 told missionary Alexander Merensky: "I am no longer king in the  
 country: you have taken my people away from me." He expelled the  
 missionaries and Merensky's mission at Maandagshoek was burnt.

cartoon - Expulsion of the missionaries - burning of Maandagshoek mission.

2. Sekhukhune's relations with the Boers were good at first but by 1876  
 the Afrikaners in the Lydenburg district were alarmed at Sekhukhune's  
 strength and disturbed by Pedi raids on their cattle. President Burgers  
 invaded Pedi country with a force of Afrikaner commandos and Swazi allies  
 (led by Mampuru); but after some initial successes, the force failed  
 ignominiously before Sekhukhune's stronghold in the Lulu mountains.  
 Sekhukhune's seemed invincible.

cartoon - Sekhukhune successfully defending his strong in the Lulu mountains.

3. The tide turned in 1877 when Burgers organized a mercenary force  
 to build forts at strong points and make it difficult for the Pedi  
 to come down from their mountains to plant and reap crops. Sekhukhune  
 made a show of submission but acted independently soon afterwards.  
 In November 1879 Sekhukhune was finally defeated by a mixed force led by  
 British regulars (the British had annexed the Transvaal). Sekhukhune  
 retreated to a cave (Mamatamageng) where he was taken by R A Clarke  
 British special commissioner dispatched to deal with the Pedi situation.  
 He was kept prisoner in Pretoria until the Transvaal's independence  
 was restored in 1881. However he was stabbed to death by his arch-enemy  
 Mampuru in front of his hut on the slopes of the Lulu mountains on  
 3rd August 1882. Mampuru did not get off lightly as he was hanged for  
 this murder in November 1883.

cartoon Sekhukhune being captured in the cave by Clarke or Sekhukhune  
 being stabbed by his half brother.