

# The suppression of political opposition and the extent of violating civil liberties in the erstwhile Ciskei and Transkei bantustans, 1960-1989

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*This paper aims at interrogating the nature of political suppression and the extent to which civil liberties were violated in the erstwhile Ciskei and Transkei. Whatever the South African government's reasons, publicly stated or hidden, for encouraging bantustan independence, by the time of Ciskei's independence ceremonies in December 1981 it was clear that the bantustans were also to be used as a more brutal instrument for suppressing opposition. Both Transkei and Ciskei used additional emergency-style laws to silence opposition in the run-up to both self-government and later independence. By the mid-1980s a clear pattern of brutal suppression of opposition had emerged in both bantustans, with South Africa frequently washing its hands of the situation on the grounds that these were 'independent' countries. Both bantustans borrowed repressive South African legislation initially and, in addition, backed this up with emergency-style regulations passed with South African assistance before independence (Proclamation 400 and 413 in Transkei which operated from 1960 until 1977, and Proclamation R252 in Ciskei which operated from 1977 until 1982). The emergency Proclamations 400, 413 and R252 appear to have been retained in the Transkei case and introduced in the Ciskei in order to suppress legal opposition at the time of attainment of self-government status. Police in the bantustans (initially SAP and later the Transkei and Ciskei Police) targeted political opponents rather than criminals, as the SAP did in South Africa.*

**Keywords:** Transkei; Ciskei; suppression; civil liberties; bantustans; Operation Katzen

## Introduction

This paper intends to demonstrate how bantustan legislation appeared to be more repressive than parallel legislation used in South Africa. This law enabled among others detentions, bannings of individuals and organisations, and limits on the right to strike. Most of the powers were exercised on the discretion of the commander-general of national security, Charles Sebe (Adam and Moodley 1993: 56-68). This paper will also delve into questions of whether the bantustan police acted with extraordinary brutality. For example, the Pondoland Revolt of 1960 and events in subsequent years elicited a venomous backlash from the police (still the SAP in the early years), with police assaulting detainees so badly that it appears they cared little whether detainees lived or died (Bergh and Visagie 1985: 112-121). The Human Rights Commission (HRC) recorded thirty-two deaths in detention between 1976 and 1982. The Eastern Cape accounted for eight of these (25 per cent), with five of the eight in the two bantustans (four in Transkei, one in Ciskei and three in Port Elizabeth) (Dugard 1980: 22-28).

It will be established if the bantustan authorities did have open links with vigilante groups and to what extent. The Ciskei government went so far as to make facilities available to the vigilantes: the use of the Mdantsane stadium as a base for the Green Berets in 1983, the use of a training camp for the Zwelitsha vigilantes in 1985 along with an MP to work with them, and the use of a military base and a private security company as trainers in the 1990s (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1994: 38-44). These vigilantes were, in all cases, used to target unionists and commuters in 1983, members of progressive youth structures in 1985 and ANC members in 1990 (Johns and [?] 1991: 46). Under the military dictatorships, this trend was even more obvious as they ruled by decrees, some of which appear to have been issued on whims (Manganyi 1990: 64-73). While the police tended to operate in overt and brutal ways (detentions, torture, and assassinations), by the mid-1980s the South African military was learning how to manipulate the separate Ciskei and Transkei security forces and ultimately the politicians in the region. Such military activities became even more sophisticated in the 1990s when the need for a clandestine method of destabilising the now-legal ANC arose. The independent bantustans provided a perfect loophole for this.

## The Pondoland Revolt

What became known as the 'Pondoland Revolt' took place in Pondoland in eastern Transkei in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Manganyi 1990: 91). This was an extended uprising by Pondoland groups – particularly ANC supporters who referred to themselves as iKongo members – against the imposition of tribal authorities and impending self-government for Transkei (Karis and Carter 1972-1977: 52). Numerous incidents of violence took place during 1960, including clashes between security forces and iKongo members, attacks by iKongo members on chiefs and those regarded as collaborating

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with chiefs or police, and the destruction of iKongo members' homes by chiefs. Legal methods used by the security forces to crush this revolt included the declaration of a state of emergency on 30 November 1960, widespread detentions, criminal prosecutions and banishment of families. Illegal methods included torture in custody (primarily in detention), deaths in custody, apparently due to treatment received, and the use of unnecessary force in public order policing. The over 200 statements received by the Commission in connection with this matter indicated that torture, killings and disappearances were a key feature of security force responses to this revolt (Lodge 1983: 75).

On 6 June 1960, conflict developed between security forces and iKongo members at Ngquza Hill in the Lusikisiki region of Pondoland, when security forces broke up an iKongo meeting. Most accounts indicate that the meeting was teargassed from aircraft, after which police on the ground moved in, some of them opening fire, killing at least eleven iKongo members. An inquest subsequently found that at least some of the dead had been killed by fire from Sten guns (Gerhart 1978: 35). It also became known that security force members had parachuted from the aircraft. It seems clear that the SAP were involved in this incident, although the extent of their involvement is not. The SANDF told the Commission that: "In the sequence of events it is clear that the SADF was over the said period definitely not deployed in the Transkei" (Manganyi 1990: 64-73). However, the aircraft used in the operation must have been SADF aircraft used in support of police operations (the SAP had no aircraft at that time) and, if there were any parachutists, these were probably SADF members. The SAPS said they had no knowledge of the use by police of Sten guns in 1960. According to the SANDF, both police and military were armed with Sten guns (Biko 1972: 4).

Sten submachine guns were only issued to the platoon leaders (lieutenants) and platoon sergeants of which, according to the strength of the SADF elements, there were about eight in total. The troops were issued with .303 rifles. From memory, it seems that the SAP was issued with 9mm Sten submachine guns. It seems probable that the shooting was carried out by the police as, if the SADF were involved in this incident, they were probably involved as backup to an SAP operation as was standard procedure. The SAPS said it had no records from this period, but said both military and police were involved:

Information received is that the police and soldiers were operating jointly to arrest the Pondo people. Information further indicates that soldiers were not interested to go for negotiations; as a result people were shot dead (Manganyi 1990: 64-73).

The SADF had been used in the Transkei before the Ngquza Hill incident, during Operation Duiker from 21 March 1960 to 7 May 1960, when six platoons and four Saracen troop carriers were sent to Transkei. All troops had left the region by 7 May and did not return until late November, when Operation Otter started in Durban (which involved air support to the SAP), followed by Operation Swivel from 7 December 1960, which continued at least until early January 1961. A report from the colonel in charge of Swivel to the then chief of army staff indicated that, from 16 to 30 November 1960, the SADF were involved in six operations that resulted in the detention of 1 330 people in the Pondoland district. At the same time, two mobile watches of 300 troops were sent to Bizana in terms of Operation Swivel (Ottaway 1993: 119).

While the SADF was present in support of the police during at least part of this period, it is clear that it was the police who had primary responsibility for dealing with the revolt. The main tool appears to have been mass detentions. From 27 January 1961 about 4 769 people had been detained, with 2 067 eventually brought to trial (Price 1991:44). Statements made to the Commission indicate that torture was a key part of those detentions. This was supported both by the submissions handed to the Commission by Kairos and by literature on the Pondoland Revolt. Mkambati forest was frequently named as a site of torture. This appears to have been a camp with tents in the forest during the 1960s, possibly set up during the Pondoland Revolt as a police crisis measure, later becoming an established police station. While the SAPS was unable to provide any information on the setting up of the Mkambati police station, it is understood that during the 1960s this station was under the command of Colonel Theunis Jacobus 'Rooi Rus' Swanepoel. Kairos refers to Swanepoel as a notorious police officer who played a key role in the 1960s and later became the chief interrogator of the SAP's Security Branch (Price 1991:44).

Sparks states that, immediately after the Ngquza shootings, police rounded up suspects and family members were also assaulted by police in attempts to track suspects. Suspects were detained, assaulted, tortured and released still suffering the after-effects of either torture or illness (possibly tuberculosis) contracted in detention or jail. He further states that some subsequently died; the health of others appears to have been permanently damaged (Sparks 1990: 89). In most cases police assaulted detainees to the point of permanent injury and then released them to die at home. Others returned home mentally disturbed. These cases point towards a deliberate policy of assaulting detainees, who could have been used as experimental cases by the SAP. Needless to say, detainees who died or who suffered permanent injury may have been subjected to one or more severe assaults, untreated exposure to illnesses such as tuberculosis, electric shocks (including shocks to the head), and poisoning (Karis and Carter 1972-1977: 64).

## The use of vigilantes in Ciskei

The period 1983-1989 saw the rise of organised vigilantes supported by the bantustan authorities in Ciskei; the beginnings of SADF MI manipulation of the bantustans to foster inter-bantustan conflict through Operation Katzen in what may have been part of a national bantustans military strategy; the implementation of a South African security force policy of killing rather than capturing guerrillas; an increase in the use of torture in bantustans, and the first internally-initiated bantustan military coups, which led to ongoing and increasingly vicious battles between the bantustan and Pretoria security forces. During 1985, there was a national wave of vigilante groups starting to operate. These were generally groups which targeted UDF members and their allies.

Over the years, vigilantes were used on several occasions by the Ciskei authorities. Moleah (1993: 43) records the first use of vigilantes in Ciskei as being during 1974, when vigilantes known as the "Green Berets", who were members of the ruling Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP), assaulted Mdantsane commuters during a boycott of the local bus company. In 1977 vigilantes again emerged, this time to target Mdantsane schoolchildren who were boycotting classes in protests over Mr. Steve Biko's death in detention (Horrell 1978: 42). While there was suspicion that these vigilantes were linked to the bantustan authorities and they appeared to act in support of the bantustan government, there was no clear evidence of state support for them.

However, there was clear Ciskei government support for the vigilantes that operated during the July 1983 boycott of Ciskei Transport Corporation (CTC) buses in Mdantsane. The boycott started on 19 July; on 2 August, vigilantes operating under the supervision of police were brought in to run roadblocks; they were involved in assaulting commuters (Horrell 1978: 42). Police, army and vigilantes were used to break the boycott by assaulting commuters who used taxis, trains and private cars, and taxi drivers. The vigilantes were also given the use of the central Sisa Dukashe stadium in Mdantsane as a venue for holding detainees. Moleah (1993: 61) reports that there was "overwhelming evidence" that the vigilantes were involved in the assault and torture of detainees at the stadium. Ciskei Minister of Justice, David Takane, denied knowledge of this, but did acknowledge that the vigilantes were operating with official endorsement. On 26 August 1983, the Ciskei Supreme Court granted two urgent applications restraining the security forces and vigilantes from harassing Mdantsane residents. The Ciskei authorities did not oppose the order.

At least some of these vigilantes are believed to have been recruited from government supporters in the rural regions: here the involvement of chiefs was crucial. This was another element in the increasing conflict between chiefs and their communities. By 1983, Moleah (1993) records that the tension between chiefs, headmen and the communities in Ciskei was so great that Lennox Sebe had authorised them to carry guns (Lave 1994: 483-524).

Along with the national emergence of vigilantes in 1985, vigilantes with links to the Ciskei authorities re-emerged. This time the group operated in Zwelitsha and targeted those linked to progressive structures. In September, vigilantes in Zwelitsha hunted down South African Students' Organisation (SASO) activist Zandisile Matyolo with the assistance of Ciskei security forces. Days earlier Ciskei police had threatened Mr. Matyolo's mother that he would be killed. He was chased and killed in front of witnesses (Lave 1994: 483-524). This was an extreme case and the vigilantes were subsequently prosecuted. One of those convicted was Mr. Willie Kolisile Matsheketwa, who applied for amnesty for this killing. He had been sentenced to eight years imprisonment, reduced on appeal to eleven months. Matsheketwa, at the time a Ciskei MP, joined the Green Beret vigilante group in 1976.

While a member of the Green Berets, I used to accommodate other members who had no homes locally as some were pulled in from neighbouring localities. Some incidents of violence occurred and I was implicated as I was housing the Green Berets. This was mostly in 1976 (Lave 1994: 483-524).

He said that by 1985 he was a CNIP MP and was not involved in Green Beret activities; however, he re-joined after Ciskei president Lennox Sebe ordered men to join the group to oppose youths who wanted to burn down schools. "Those who defied this order were harassed," (Lave 1994: 483-524) said Matsheketwa. He said on one occasion he had been sent by another MP to tell a police colonel that a contingent of guards was on their way to come and assist the police to guard schools. Further incidents of violence recurred between the guards and youths who wanted to burn down schools. These guards were subsequently called Inkatha. In July 1987, vigilantes killed activist Zola Nozewu who had been involved in resistance to Ciskei rule by the Potsdam community. It is not clear how closely these vigilantes were linked to the state; however, like Matyolo, Mr Nozewu was killed after police warned his family he would die if he did not leave politics alone (Horrell 1978: 54)

When military ruler Brigadier Oupa Gqozo deposed Sebe's government, the use of state-sponsored vigilantes continued. When the clashes between Gqozo's government and ANC supporters became increasingly bloody during 1992-94, Gqozo hired a private security company – Peace Force – to guard government installations and to recruit and train members of the government's African Democratic Movement (ADM), which acted as a vigilante force. As with the 1983 vigilantes, rural chiefs and headmen were crucial in recruiting these trainees. (SAIRR 1994: 94). This group was given

training by Peace Force at the CDF military base on the coast, next door to Gqozo's private farm, and was armed with shotguns. Later Gqozo's security forces also armed headmen with G3 rifles. Needless to say, this demonstrated unprecedented levels of suppressing opposition and violating civil liberties.

### **Ciskei policy to subdue dissent**

On several occasions during the 1980s, Ciskei targeted entire communities opposed to bantustan rule – often communities that had been subjected to forced removals or incorporation into the bantustan (Worden 1995: 80). In the mid-1980s, the Kuni community was evicted from Ciskei *en masse* and dumped at the roadside in South Africa, where they later found a home at Needs Camp outside East London.

In 1987, a large group of residents fled at least twice from Potsdam outside Mdantsane following assaults by police and vigilantes. South African security forces forcibly loaded the group onto trucks and drove them back to Potsdam. In April 1989, they were granted permanent residence at Eluxolweni in South Africa. This group had some years earlier been forcibly removed across the border into Ciskei. In August 1988, the Ciskei borders were redrawn to incorporate the Nkqonqweni village at Peelton near King William's Town (Swartz, Leslie, and Levitt 1990: 265-86). In drawing the Ciskei boundaries in 1981, the village had inadvertently been split in two. The redrawing of the border was to enable the South African government to banish UDF activist Steve Tshwete to his home village of Nqonqweni in Ciskei rather than Nqonqweni in South Africa. In the following year, Nqonqweni residents complained of repeated assaults by Ciskei forces.

This eventually resulted in a mass exodus of residents to King William's Town. Ciskei declared a state of emergency in the Peelton area and violence and bulldozing of rebels' houses followed. In a court case arising out of the conflict, the Ciskei Supreme Court found against Mr. James Fikile Phindani, a resident of Peelton village, who had been evicted from his home and dumped across the South African border by the Ciskei security police in 1989, and approved the passing of a retrospective law which allowed the Ciskei authorities to do this. Eventually the incorporation issue was quietly dropped and residents returned home (Swartz, Leslie, and Levitt 1990: 265-86).

The Peelton conflict was the beginning of widespread rural rebellion against Ciskei president Chief Lennox Sebe's rule, which resulted in initial popular support for Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, who overthrew Sebe's government in March 1990. A press report from 1989 commenting on the battles by various communities to escape Ciskei rule said:

It's not hard to find the reasons why the communities are so desperate to leave. On the one hand, there is widespread objection to the whole notion of an 'independent' Ciskei. On the other, there are massive practical problems associated with the bantustans ... [T]he territory's social benefits and facilities are generally inferior to those of South Africa. For example, old age pensions are substantially lower than in South Africa (Price 1991:66).

Ciskei also demands several different types of taxes – ranging from 'development tax' to membership of the ruling Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP). Those without the notorious 'CNIP card' may often find themselves barred from benefits and even housing.

Far worse are the extremely common allegations of assaults and routine harassment – particularly of resisting communities – by Ciskei authorities. Often the Ciskei police and army are accused of acting together with vigilante groupings. CNIP membership also seems to be used by Ciskei as a measure of loyalty to the territory (Moodie 1975: 73). There are repeated stories of communities brutalised by Ciskei authorities for refusing to pay taxes and CNIP membership. Pensioners complained of their pensions being docked. Refugees from the Potsdam grouping, who three times fled Ciskei, claimed they were refused treatment at clinics, their children turned away from school. Community leaders were murdered (Price 1991:72). It could thus be concluded that the suppression of political opponents was brutal and merciless to the extreme.

### **Destabilisation through Operation Katzen**

In January 1983, Brigadier Christoffel Pierre 'Joffel' van der Westhuizen moved to Port Elizabeth to take over as officer responsible for the SADF's Eastern Province Command. In attendance at his taking-over ceremony were Ciskei security chief General Charles Sebe and Major General Ron Reid-Daly of the TDF (Moodie 1975: 77). Over the next few years, these three men were to work together on Van der Westhuizen's ambitious Operation Katzen plan, drafted in an attempt to retain SADF control over both the Transkei and Ciskei and to use the bantustans as a bulwark against the rising tide of popular resistance.

Charles Sebe had a meteoric rise to power in Ciskei. He joined the SAP in 1957 at the age of twenty-three and was transferred six years later to the security police. He was based in Port Elizabeth for some time. In 1974, he joined the Bureau for State Security (BOSS) and worked in King William's Town where he was involved in investigating the Black

Consciousness Movement. In October 1978, he was transferred to the new Ciskei administration where he founded the Ciskei Central Intelligence Service with only three men (Manganyi and du Toit 1990: 270-82). By 1979, he was a colonel and the Ciskei police were under his control. By the end of 1981, he was a major-general and in September 1982 (following Ciskei independence and the passing of the National Security Act of 1982) he was promoted to lieutenant general and then to a new position of commander general in control of all the armed forces in Ciskei, a total of about 4 500 men. As commander general, he was paid about R3 500 per month.

As an SAP member, Sebe said he "carried my promotions in my pocket" (as he told journalist Joseph Lelyveld). Two years after the ANC was banned, Sebe, then an SAP member, joined the ANC and later helped arrest both ANC leader Govan Mbeki and members of the fledgling Poqo (Manganyi and du Toit 1990: 270-82). Sebe also appears to have been close to South African commissioner of police General Johan Coetzee: according to Lelyveld, while Sebe was in charge in Ciskei, he apparently reported directly to Coetzee and was also subject to overrule by officers seconded from South Africa. Court papers in Sebe's 1983-84 trial indicated that he had telephoned Coetzee, apparently in search of advice, the night before his arrest.

In July 1983, Sebe made one of his last public appearances as Van der Westhuizen's guest (this time at the SADF's seventy-first birthday celebrations). By the middle of July, Sebe had lost his total control of the security forces due to a reshuffle in those forces on the president's orders, and his deputy was in detention (Worden 1995: 89). Within days, Sebe himself was detained and in June 1984 was convicted of incitement to violence, after an attempt to get his deputy released from custody. He was jailed for twelve years and leave to appeal was refused. Lennox Sebe subsequently turned down three separate appeals by South African foreign affairs minister Pik Botha to show clemency towards Charles Sebe.

In January 1985, the SADF was evicted from Ciskei following the deaths of recruits at a Ciskei base, and South Africa lost its foothold in that bantustan. By 1986, Van der Westhuizen had drafted the Katzen plans for an operation that involved a successful jailbreak, abductions and an abortive attempt to abduct or kill Lennox Sebe, in which at least two TDF members died (Worden 1995: 90). On 2 June 1986, Chief Lent Maqoma, a one-time ally of Lennox Sebe, launched his Ciskei People's Rights Protection Party; this was followed a few months later by the launch by the rebel group in Transkei of the 'armed wing' of this party, Iliso Lomzi. It seems that both were launched with MI assistance. MI subsequently printed and distributed pamphlets (including dropping them from aircraft) in support of these two groupings (Moodie 1975: 83).

In September 1986, Charles Sebe was sprung from the Ciskei's Middeldrift maximum security prison by SADF members and/or ex-Selous Scouts operating from Transkei; from then on he operated from Transkei together with the rest of the Katzen group. The day Charles was released, Lennox Sebe's son Kwane Sebe, the head of the Ciskei Police Elite Unit and the man groomed as the successor to the president, was abducted and taken to Transkei (Moleah 1993: 70). Three months later, Kwane was sent back to Ciskei in a bantustan prisoner swap.

Attempts to extradite Charles Sebe back to Ciskei collapsed. The then Ciskei Attorney-General Jurie Jurgens applied for their extradition, subsequently finding that both these matters had quietly fizzled out in some political settlement (Moleah 1993: 72). This presumably involved some pressure from the South African authorities, which had previously campaigned for Charles Sebe's pardon. In January 1987, Van der Westhuizen left the Eastern Cape and took over as officer commanding the Witwatersrand Command. On 21 January, Holomisa, then second-in-command of the TDF, was detained; partly, it seems, because he opposed the Katzen planners. Weeks later, on 19 February, TDF troops crossed the Kei River border between Transkei and South Africa, and drove on to launch an abortive attack on Ciskei president Lennox Sebe's private palace in Bisho (Manganyi 1990: 69-76). It was reported that one TDF soldier died and another was captured; later South African authorities captured French mercenary Jean-Michel Desble.

The captured soldier, Rifleman A Ndulu, was held under guard in the Ciskei's main Cecilia Makiwane Hospital in Mdantsane, then eventually sent home to Ciskei in terms of a deal apparently engineered by Holomisa. Likewise, the body of the soldier, Mr. Mbuyiselo Templeton Nondela, was allowed home for burial. The Commission found evidence of another previously unreported death and direct SADF complicity in the raid. (Karis and Carter 1977: 64). A TDF soldier who was badly injured in the failed attack, Mr. David Simphiwe Makazi, was rushed down to East London by his fellow attackers. He was airlifted by the SADF from the East London race track and flown back to Butterworth. Apart from Van der Westhuizen and the officer he reported to on Katzen, General Kat Liebenberg, other senior officers and officials named in the Katzen file as having been involved at some stage included General Jannie Geldenhuys (head of SADF Special Forces), General Griebenauw (Border regional head of the security police), General Zondwa Mtirara (head of the TDF), Vice-Admiral Dries Putter, Colonel Reg Deyzel (the officer commanding of Group Eight in East London), a former Transkei minister of defence and Dr. Tertius Delpport (then at the University of Port Elizabeth). Delpport later denied any knowledge of the Katzen plans (Johns and Davis 1991: 132). In 1983-84, Delpport had served as one of two assessors at the Ciskei trial after which Charles Sebe was jailed for twelve years.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) also appears to have been involved in Katzen. One of the NIS staff was involved in at least some of the planning. An undated document headed "Top Secret", which appears to be the abbreviated notes of a meeting, lists those present as including an SADF general, an SADF brigadier, an SAP brigadier, three colonels, two commandants and an NIS representative. Another document refers to NIS involvement: "All political front actions (Lent Maqoma) will now be handled by NIS. We will continue to co-operate politically/militarily" (Johns and Davis 1991: 132). A "Top Secret" NIS document on Katzen, which appears to have been drafted during rather than after the operation, lists those involved in or aware of Katzen as including President PW Botha, SADF chief General Jannie Geldenhuys, army chief General Kat Liebenberg, the commissioner of police (then General Johan Coetzee), the secretariat of the State Security Council and the director general of NIS (Moleah 1993: 75).

### **The collapse of the Katzen Plan**

On 1 April 1987 the Ciskei banned both the Ciskei People's Rights Protection Party and Iliso Lomzi (Manganyi 1990: 64-77). On 4 April, Transkei detained sixteen white military officers, mainly the ex-Selous Scouts. Soon after their departure, Holomisa took charge of the TDF, and Transkei support for Katzen was severely curtailed. Desble made a few token appearances in the East London courts before being officially deported back to France. In an interview in 1995, Attorney-General Jurgens said that his flight made an unscheduled stop before reaching France so that he could disembark and thus avoid prosecution as a mercenary in France.

A month or two later, former General Johan Coetzee, now retired as SAP commissioner, was appointed to run a tripartite committee out of East London to keep the peace between the warring bantustans (Johns and Davis 1991: 134). The TDF convened a board of enquiry into the abortive attack on Ciskei in August 1987. Its work was concluded and handed to the Transkei minister of defence. The SANDF was unable to trace this report.

In 1989, the Harms Commission of Inquiry into the Jalc group of companies heard that Putter, who was the chief of MI at the time and party to the Katzen plan, had been warned about the impending attack by one of his staff. MI officer Brigadier Marthinus Deyzel, seconded to Jalc in terms of a proposal for MI to use Jalc for intelligence-gathering purposes in the bantustans and frontline states, told Harms that Lennox Sebe had told him he was aware of an impending attack on him by elements of the SADF (Price 1991:73). Deyzel, who seems to have been unaware of the Katzen plan, told his superiors. He subsequently complained to the Harms inquiry that his warning had been ignored. Putter told Harms he had taken Deyzel's warning extremely seriously and that he had written a memo for circulation among his superiors. The memo, dated 9 February 1987, stated (Lave 1994: 483-524):

The Ciskei Government alleges that they have information that several RSA elements are involved in the destabilisation of the Ciskei. If this is correct, it would be advisable to put a stop to it ... An investigation of the facts must be urgently undertaken and certain punishment procedures will have to be considered. At the same time that Katzen was running in the Eastern Cape, the SADF's Operation Marion was running in KwaZulu. The attack on Ciskei was carried out on 19 February; the KwaMakhutha attack carried out in terms of Marion, which killed thirteen people, was carried out just weeks earlier in January.

There are several links between Marion and Katzen. Both operations were co-ordinated at Defence Headquarters in Pretoria by Colonel John More, at the time part of the DST. More was mentioned in the Katzen documents as supplying weapons for that operation. Liebenberg and Geldenhuys, two of the accused in the KwaMakhutha trial, were also named in Katzen documentation. Lieutenant Colonel Jan Anton Nieuwoudt, who was involved in the 1986 Caprivi strip training of the men who carried out the KwaMakhutha attack, was subsequently (in the run-up to the 1994 elections) involved in an Eastern Cape operation which seems to have been a successor to Katzen (Breytenbach 1991: 83-91). Liebenberg was involved in 'officially' shutting that operation down after it was blown and Nieuwoudt moved and apparently continued the operation in a different form elsewhere. General Tienie Groenewald was another of the KwaMakhutha accused; during the 1990s he was involved in an organisation that was implicated in running guns to prop up Gqozo's government in its battle against the ANC.

As More was part of DST, this indicates that both Marion and Katzen were run by DST, a section also responsible for running covert support to pro-Pretoria rebels in Angola (UNITA) and Mozambique (RENAMO) (Lave 1994: 483-524). This indicates that the bantustans were also part of MI's strategy of supporting (and sometimes setting up) rebel groups that were involved in violent attempts to overthrow governments which were either antagonistic to or could not be controlled by Pretoria, or were involved in violent clashes with UDF-aligned (and later ANC-aligned) groupings. In the bantustans, this thus involved covert support for Inkatha in the KwaZulu-Natal region and, in the Eastern Cape, the setting up and funding of first the Ciskei People's Rights Protection Party and Iliso Lomzi and later the setting up and arming of the ADM (Breytenbach 1991: 83-94). This policy does not appear to have ended with the failure of Marion and

Katzen in 1987 as several of the key officers involved in those two operations were again implicated in similar activities based in the Ciskei during Gqozo's rule and the run-up to the 1994 elections.

Although Katzen seems to have collapsed in early 1987, its legacy of violating civil liberties continued. Two years later, Lennox Sebe's Ciskei government still regarded Iliso Lomzi as a threat, as can be seen in a "Top Secret" CDF contingency plan for dealing with an attack expected by "elements of Iliso Lomzi supported by the TDF and ex-Rhodesians" around 24-25 July 1989 (SACS 1995: 39-47).

### **Security force and the guerrillas**

Former SADF Special Forces commander General Joep Joubert told the Commission that, in the mid-1980s, he drew up a plan for the elimination and destruction of ANC activists, their allies and supporting structures. The then SADF chief General Jannie Geldenhuys had instructed him to draw up a plan to enable Special Forces to assist the SAP in countering the revolutionary onslaught. The proposal called for the use of both clandestine and counter-revolutionary methods against the liberation movements. "I did discuss the plan with General Geldenhuys (Hill and Harris 1989: 68). I was under the impression that it was approved. Operations were then launched in line with the plan," Joubert told the Commission's armed forces hearing. The Eastern Cape, along with Northern Transvaal and the Witwatersrand, were identified as the problem areas. Joubert's plan called for co-operation between Special Forces, the regional SADF commands and the regional heads of the security police. Joubert could not say when these operations ended; he said no order had been given to cease operations.

Apart from SADF raids on the front-line states during the 1980s, this plan appears to have involved the setting up of the 1986-87 Operations Katzen and Marion (see above): documentation in the Katzen file indicates that both Joubert and Geldenhuys were involved in Katzen, while Geldenhuys was one of the accused in the KwaMakhutha trial arising from Marion (SACS 1995: 39-47). The Border region head of security police, General Griebenaauw, was also involved in the Katzen plan.

Joubert's plan also clearly involved assistance with the targeting of individual guerrillas who were then tracked down by police acting in conjunction with askaris, and assassinated. Police statistics for the time indicate that insurgency increased dramatically in 1985, from fifty-one incidents reported in 1981, thirty-nine in 1982, fifty-five in 1983 and forty-four in 1984 to a massive 136 incidents for 1985.

It is interesting to note that, according to information handed to the Commission by the ANC, 60 per cent of the 246 MK members who died in combat were killed during the four years from 1986 to 1989, the period when the Joubert plan was probably in operation. According to the ANC list, at least 17 per cent of the deaths during those four years were either in the Eastern Cape or were of guerrillas who had been operating in the Eastern Cape (Tutu 1994: 54). In the Eastern Cape the Joubert plan would have focused on guerrilla infiltration from Lesotho via Transkei and would thus have involved:

It is also likely that General Johan Coetzee, the recently retired commissioner of police, was involved. Coetzee was brought into the region and based in East London from about March 1987 until April 1989; his official brief was to run a tri-partite commission aimed at keeping the peace between Ciskei and Transkei, but this commission never operated and it seems his real reason for being there was to help run the clandestine security operations.

It is during this period that the security police set up an additional base in the Eastern Cape in support of Vlakplaas – based on a farm outside East London and apparently set up sometime during 1987 (Roux 1964: 120). It is highly likely that one of Coetzee's key tasks was to oversee the setting up of this base.

During the mid-1980s in Transkei, there was a marked increase in the number of incidents involving both sabotage by guerrillas and armed clashes between guerrillas and police. By 1988, a spate of security trials was underway or had recently been concluded. Most of these related to ANC activity and many were linked to each other, indicating the operation of a widespread guerrilla network across Transkei. The security force actions against this network indicate that Joubert's plan was indeed implemented in this region (Roux 1964: 120). The years 1987 and 1988 were particularly bad for guerrillas operating in Transkei, featuring several hit squad killings.

### **The fuel depot bombing suspects**

On 25 June 1985, the Umtata fuel depot was blown up, together with the city's water pipelines and electricity sub-station. In what must surely have been one of the most spectacularly successful MK operations, the fuel depot burned all day, leaving panicked Umtata residents queuing for petrol, the city without electricity for several days, and the possibility of running out of water before the pipelines and electrical pumps could be restored.

On 24 September, student activist Bathandwa Ndongdo, a University of Transkei student representative council member who had been expelled the year before, was picked up at his home in Cala near the South African border by a

unit involving SAP member Mbuso Enoch Shabalala, Transkei policeman Sergeant Gciniso Lamont Dandala and askaris Silulami Gladstone Mose and Xolelwa Virginia Shosha (SAIRR 1993: 93). He was shot dead. Within weeks, the then Transkei president Chief Kaiser Matanzima had announced publicly that Ndondo had been killed because he had been involved in the fuel depot bombings.

Guerrillas Masizizi Attwell "Pieces" Maqeqeza, Zola Dubeni, Welile Salman, Sisa Ngombeni and Mzwandile Vena were sought by police in connection with the fuel depot bombing. On 21-2 January 1987, Maqeqeza was one of two guerrillas who assisted guerrilla Mbulelo Ngono, aka "Khaya Kasibe" or "KK", to escape after a thirty-six-hour shoot-out between Ngono and the combined forces of the TPF, TDF and SAP. Maqeqeza and Ngono, together with Mr. Thandwefika Radebe, were attacked by unknown gunmen in Lesotho weeks later (SAIRR 1995: 53). Radebe was killed, Ngono fled and subsequently disappeared, while Maqeqeza was killed by unknown gunmen on 15 March 1987 while recovering under police guard in the Maseru hospital from the first attack.

During 1988, Maqeqeza was mentioned in at least five security trials in Transkei in cases in which others were charged with assisting him. Also in March 1987, Dubeni was shot dead by police in Cape Town, allegedly after trying to attack them after pointing out his arms cache (USIP 1993: 24). Ngono disappeared later in 1988 when he was abducted by South African security police from Lesotho to work as an askari; he has never returned home and his fate is unknown (the Commission received amnesty applications in connection with this abduction).

In October 1990, Salman died in Mafikeng in a shoot-out with security force members. Vena, one of the only guerrillas linked by police to the fuel depot bombing to survive, was arrested in Cape Town in 1988; he subsequently unsuccessfully fought against his extradition to Transkei where he was later released after the 1990 unbannings. Those who had offered assistance to guerrillas such as Maqeqeza, Dubeni and Vena were subsequently arrested and tortured. They included Mr. Zakade Alfred Buka and Mr. Dugard Maqeqeza (USIP 1993: 26).

About twenty eventually ended up in court in various cases. The main case was thrown out of court after months of postponements; police scrambled to re-capture some of their detainees as they leapt over the dock and ran for the courtroom doors as soon as the magistrate made the ruling. Few of the guerrillas made it as far as a courtroom; Vena seems to be a notable exception here. Generally those who got to court were those who were charged with assisting guerrillas (SACS 1994: 34-41). Key Eastern Cape people were also targeted by other regional police forces during this period. For example, on 25 April 1987 Mr Phindile Mfeti (40) disappeared in Durban. The Commission subsequently found that Mfeti, a unionist who had been banished to Transkei, had been abducted, murdered and secretly buried by the Natal SAP.

In August 1987, police tried to kill guerrilla Stembele Zokwe outside Umtata; he survived and managed to get to hospital. A second attack followed, but apparently the presence of witnesses frightened off the attackers (Jukes 1995: 110). On 12 January 1988, Zokwe's luck ran out and he was shot dead by police hours after being arrested in Butterworth. Rumours at the time were that he was an askari who had outlived his usefulness or changed his mind about assisting the police: ANC sources at the time questioned how Zokwe had managed to avoid being charged and was instead freed after he had been arrested in Bophuthatswana on his return to the country with another guerrilla, Mr. Gilbert Binda, who was jailed for seven years (Jukes 1995: 112). Two Transkei police officers, Sergeant Mtobeli Tyani and Sergeant Pumelele Gumengu, were charged with his murder, but both escaped from different jails on the same day and disappeared.

### **The failed abduction**

The suppression of political opposition and the violation of civil liberties also manifested itself through abductions. In December 1987 advocate Joseph Mzwakhe Miso was snatched from the streets of Umtata, having been mistaken for lawyer Dumisa Ntsebeza, and driven out of town towards the Kei Bridge border with South Africa by white men who claimed to be South African policemen. They beat him badly and threatened to kill him, releasing him only after he was able to prove his identity. Only days before this attack, Ntsebeza had been in Queenstown for a case and had been threatened by Major Venter of the Queenstown security police in the presence of Border region security chief Brigadier Griebenauw. Ntsebeza's brother (HRW/A 1994: 75), Ndondo, had been killed two years earlier by a hit squad and Ntsebeza's attempts to get a prosecution underway had repeatedly been thwarted by the authorities.

The Vlakplaas askaris were clearly operating in the Eastern Cape and in the then independent Transkei during the early 1980s. The Terrorism Research Centre incident lists record that on 7 August 1981 there was shoot-out between the police and the ANC cadres in Butterworth following a bomb blast in East London the day before; two Transkei policemen died. Later the same day two SAP members were seriously injured in a clash with the same guerrillas at a roadblock near Elliot on the main road to Lesotho; "Two ANC gunmen killed, one captured," noted the Terrorism Research Centre. Five days later the organisation recorded "Two ANC gunmen fatally wounded, one policeman seriously wounded, in shootout



with police on farm near Aliwal North; the two ANC men were the last two of the group involved in the bomb incident at East London on 6 August, and the Butterworth and Elliot shootings on 7 August" (TRC 1994: 74).

There is some confusion about the number of guerrillas involved in these incidents and their fate: the Commission dug up the remains of four guerrillas secretly buried by police on an Aliwal North farm after this incident, thus accounting for the two killed on 7 August and the two killed on 13 August. They were Mr. Anthony Sureboy Dali, Mr. Thabo Makhubo, Mr. Joseph Lesetja Sexwale and one 'Senzangakhona' (Goodwin and Schiff 1995: 43-56). However, it is not clear what happened to the guerrilla reported as having been arrested on 7 August: was he one of the two shot dead five days later? He may have been MK member Gwaza Twalo, whose family told the Commission he disappeared from the Pretoria prison following a clash with police in the Aliwal North/Herschel area some time after 1980; another witness told the Commission that the SAP had told the International Committee of the Red Cross that Twalo had been detained in Aliwal North and released in May 1980 without charges (surprising considering that he had fled the country together with the Azanian People's Liberation Army's (APLA) Sabelo Phama and had undergone ANC training in Angola). Depending on the date of disappearance, Twalo may have been the guerrilla arrested on 7 August; alternatively he may have been arrested in an earlier incident and killed in a similar way to the latter four (Goodwin and Schiff 1995: 43-56).

By late 1981, the Vlakplaas unit had been sent down to the Eastern Cape for a stint of several weeks, as reported by Dirk Coetzee. He reports that the CI unit moved down to the Eastern Cape following a clash between police and guerrillas at Elliot and Barkly Pass in August 1981 (presumably the clash which resulted in the guerrillas being buried on the Aliwal North farm) and worked there for seven to eight weeks. The early killings related to the fuel depot blasts described above may have involved the askaris who were permanently based at Vlakplaas; the Ndong killing in 1985 seems to have been orchestrated from there (Goodwin and Schiff 1995: 43-56). By the time Ngono was abducted the Ladybrand police were involved. By the time of the Sangoni, Mayaphi and Mgibe killings in February 1988, the askari unit was operating out of East London. 1987 and 1988 seem to have been the key years for the killing of guerrillas, primarily by locally based police.

There were various incidents of guerrillas dying in clashes during 1985-86; it is not clear how many of these were deliberately orchestrated by the security forces and how many were isolated incidents. They include: six PAC members killed in a clash with Lesotho security forces at Qacha's Nek near the Lesotho/Transkei border (one of the six was Mr. Thami Zani from King William's Town, a friend of Steve Biko); Mr. Zolani Mvula, who died during an explosion in a car while travelling between Engcobo and Umtata together with brothers Mlungisi and Bongani Booi; the death of an unknown guerrilla in Sterkspruit on 13 April 1986 following two clashes with police; in May 1986 an unnamed guerrilla was reported by the press to have been shot dead at a roadblock in Transkei; in July 1986 there was a clash between police and guerrillas at Mount Fletcher (Johns and Davis 1991: 133).

Transkei and [sentence?] an explosives cache were found; also in July 1986 former SAAWU member turned ANC guerrilla Mathemba Vuso was shot dead by Ciskei police in Mdantsane. In December 1986 alleged guerrilla Ngwenduna Vanda was shot dead by Transkei police constables Ishmael Commando Dzai and Nelson Nceba Solombela while crossing from Lesotho in Transkei near Telle Bridge border post; an inquest later found they did not have the right to shoot him, but no prosecution ensued. In July 1987, another former SAAWU unionist, Mr. Eric Mntonga, died in detention at the hands of the Ciskei police. In March or April 1987 General Johan Coetzee moved into the region. The official reason for bringing the general out of retirement was to co-ordinate a tri-partite commission involving South Africa (Manganyi 1990: 68-79), Transkei and Ciskei, to keep peace between the two warring bantustans. Ironically, the immediate need for the commission had been sparked by the failed TDF attack on Ciskei president Lennox Sebe's palace in January 1987; this was later revealed to have been planned by the SADF as part of Operation Katzen.

At the same time, national politicians publicly warned of the possibility of illegal security force actions against guerrillas. On 28 March 1987, then minister of defence Magnus Malan warned that the South African security forces would "sniff out" any ANC guerrillas in neighbouring states and wipe them out. Ten days later on 8 April, then minister of foreign affairs Pik Botha claimed ANC "terrorists" were planning to disrupt the upcoming elections and warned neighbouring states that South Africa would take "whatever action" necessary to stop them (Price 1991:74). It was during March and April that Maqekiza was killed in Lesotho, and Dubeni and Mfeti were killed in South Africa. Not much is known about Coetzee's tri-partite commission; its role was still unclear by the time it closed down two years later. It held very few meetings, Coetzee was unwilling to be interviewed by journalists and no public report was ever issued by it.

About four months after it was set up, the Commission announced its first meeting. This meeting established a security agreement signed by SA, Ciskei and Transkei in Cape Town on April 10 by PW Botha, Lennox Sebe and George Matanzima. After the meeting, Coetzee said the group was likely to meet again soon and regularly. A statement issued by the director of co-operation between the TBVC states and South Africa at the Bureau for Information, Mr. CM van Niekerk, said that the functions of the commission would be "to promote good neighbourliness, peace, security, justice

and economic progress in the Eastern Cape region by investigating, monitoring and making recommendations to the two governments about all matters which may adversely affect relations between the three states" (Price 1991:77). In October, Coetzee told the Eastern Province Herald that he could not discuss the commission's work unless the other two members, Ciskei director general of manpower MC Kashe and Transkei's chief of civil defence General JS Mantutle, were present.

During the period of the commission's existence, Coetzee was consistently unavailable for interviews, and at one point both bantustan governments said that they did not really know what the commission was doing. There was frequent tension between Transkei and Ciskei during this time, but the three-person commission rarely met. In January 1989, during yet another spat between the two bantustans, Ciskei spokesman Headman Somtunzi said he did not think the commission existed anymore, while South African Foreign Affairs spokesman Roland Darrell said that he thought it still existed but he "was not aware of anything that it's done recently". Darrell later said it was "overshadowed" by other initiatives, but confirmed that Coetzee was still involved (Greenstein 1994: 641-61). Other South African officials were reluctant to comment or gave confusing replies. By April 1989, the mysterious commission had closed down, although this was only reported in January the following year; a Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman said at the time that the closure had been reported to a local newspaper, but the newspaper could find no record of this. When asked to comment on the possibility that the commission had been an excuse for Coetzee to be in the region to run security operations, Mr. Mark Phillips of the Wits University Centre for Policy Studies said that Coetzee was a proponent of the view that targeting and removing key activists was a better way of dealing with opposition than the state of emergency.

A complication for these covert police operations was the coup in Transkei by Major General Bantu Holomisa, who took over briefly first in September 1987 and then permanently in December 1987. During 1988 the SAP and their askaris were still operating in Umtata, but apparently without the support of the military government, which seems to have been a little confused over how to stop them; by early 1988 there were rumours in Umtata of a clandestine SAP base operating from a house near the Umtata golf course (Greenstein 1994: 641-61). It seems that part of the need for the clandestine co-operation between SAP and TPF was not just in order to keep it out of the public eye, but more importantly to keep it out of Holomisa's eye.

Illegal handovers went hand in hand with the crackdown on guerrillas; during 1988-89 this appears to have been a source of some conflict between the then ruling TDF and the more conservative TPF. In 1987 ANC guerrilla Livingstone Matutu was arrested in Bophuthatswana, handed over to South African security police and then illegally handed over to Transkei authorities. During 1988, he appeared on trial in Transkei, in a case that his lawyers claimed the authorities tried to keep from their knowledge (Greenstein 1994: 641-62). In December 1988, Transkei commissioner of police General Leonard Kawe said that Transkei and South African forces needed to co-operate in order to carry out their work. Kawe was speaking in response to criticism from South African judge PB Hodes, who criticised the South African police for knowingly and illegally allowing the Transkei police to cross the border to deliver a suspect. By the end of 1988, the Transkei police seemed to be increasing their power in the bantustan, with the military rulers apparently unable to curb them (Lave 1994: 483-524). By early 1990 the military government felt confident enough to take on its own police force in public: Holomisa warned his police that any activities involving their co-operation with the SAP had to be cleared with their seniors first. Holomisa said that earlier in the week members of the SAP had searched vehicles "deep inside Transkei territory" and that the SA embassy in Umtata had said this was done with the co-operation of a Transkei police officer, but that this had still to be verified.

During this period, the police also tried to recruit askaris among guerrillas who had survived to be jailed. Mr Stembele Zokwe (see below) was probably one of these; he was later shot dead in 1988 (Lave 1994: 483-524). During 1989, East London security policeman Captain Charles van Wyk told a Transkei court he had tried to recruit accused Phumzile Mayaphi (later sentenced to death for the Wild Coast Sun bombing) as a police spy. One strategy used by the SAP to protect their members from prosecution relating to illegal killings was that of changing their names. When Transkei's Attorney-General tried to charge the police in connection with the Ndondo killing of September 1987, he was told by the SAP that SAP member Mbuso Enoch Shabalala was dead; it later emerged that he was very much alive and had officially changed his name (SAIRRs 1994: 97). Mr Bongani Wana, implicated first in the Sangoni *et al.* killings of February 1988 and later along with SADF MI in the abortive Duli coup attempt of November 1990, is now known as Charles Wanase; his new identity document was issued in July 1991 and he was serving as a member of the SANDF after the elections.

Mr. Pumelele Gumengu, a sergeant in the Transkei security police, was arrested on charges of killing MK guerrilla Stembele Zokwe in Butterworth shortly after his arrest on 12 January 1988. Gumengu, who escaped from custody on the same day as his co-accused, Sergeant Aaron Tyani, although they were held in different prisons, was later arrested by the Transkei government in connection with the abortive November 1990 coup attempt led by Colonel Craig Duli and

supported by SADF MI. Gumengu was arrested carrying a passport in the name of Zama Dube: his lawyer told the Umtata Supreme Court that this was in fact Gumengu's real name (HRW/A 1994: 78).

Sergeant Tyani, who escaped custody while facing charges in connection with the January 1988 Zokwe murder, is also understood to have changed his name. In a similar strategy, Vulindlela Mbotoli gained South African citizenship (as opposed to Transkei citizenship) in mid-1991 in an attempt to avoid extradition to Transkei on charges relating to the Duli coup attempt (Ottaway 1993: 121). He was ultimately abducted by the TDF MI from Johannesburg, put on trial and jailed. Similarly in KwaZulu, former KZP special constable Vela Mchunu was issued with a KZP appointment certificate in the name of Alfred Masango in March 1991 to help him evade prosecution (see KwaZulu section below).

There were some revenge attacks on the police, clearly carried out by MK members. In 1990 Madliwa, the co-ordinator of the askari unit in East London and the man in charge of the February 1988 attack on Sangoni *et al.*, was gunned down outside Mdantsane's Cecilia Makiwane Hospital. In February 1994, Ms. Xolelwa Vusani (31, aka Noxolo or Dudu or Fetsha), was shot dead in Mdantsane; her baby who she was holding at the time was injured in the shooting (Greenstein 1994: 641-61). Vusani had been involved in the September 1985 killing of Ndondo in Cala. Clashes between police and guerrillas, which guerrillas frequently did not survive, continued during 1988, especially in Transkei. Transkei police, sometimes working together with the SAP, were involved in these incidents.

Two guerrillas who were eventually charged in a court were Mr. Ndibulele Ndzamela and Mr. Phumzile Mayaphi, who were sentenced to death for bombing the Wild Coast Sun on 18 April 1986 (both were eventually freed after the 1990 unbannings and later implicated in the hit squad killing of an ANC dissident in Transkei). While they were on trial during February 1988, Mayaphi's brother Zonwabele stopped in at the Umtata Supreme Court to attend the trial. After he left the court buildings with his friends Zolile Sangoni, Thozamile Nkume and MK member Thembisile "Gift" Mgibe, they were followed by a police hit squad, pulled over and gunned down; only Nkume, who seemed to have coincidentally hitched a lift with the group, survived (Greenstein 1994: 641-61). The killers were SAP member Sergeant Mpumelelo Madliwa from East London, TPF member Constable Bongani Wana from Umtata and three askaris; they later told an inquest they had been armed with irregular weapons, used false vehicle registration numbers and had fired because they thought the guerrilla was going to attack them (HRW/A 1994: 75). They justified the killing to the inquest by explaining that Mgibe was a guerrilla; Mayaphi and Sangoni appear to have been targeted because of their connections to the terrorism trial and a prominent firm of human rights lawyers respectively.

In January 1988, clashes between police and guerrillas continued in Transkei with few guerrillas surviving. On 25 January, there was a shoot-out near Ugie; the following day two guerrillas (Mr. Sipiwo Hamlet Mazwai and one "Bobo") died in a clash with police while four others were detained (Horrell 1978: 55). Mazwai's family later claimed that police had not even informed them of Sipiwo's death. Both the SAP and SADF monitored his Grahamstown funeral and the area was declared an operational zone for the duration. On 8 March 1988, MK member Qondo Hoho and his uncle Acacia Hoho were killed and six policemen injured in a shootout after the SAP surrounded a house in Mlungisi near Queenstown. The house was afterwards bulldozed by police, a technique often used by police when dealing with guerrillas. On 2 July 88, a clash between police and guerrillas in Mzamba, Transkei, resulted in one guerrilla being captured and another two escaping (Horrell 1978: 57). About a week later, in an incident probably linked to this, another clash followed; guerrilla Leo Mkuseli Xatula was killed. Evidence had it that Xatula was detained, held for some days and then executed. On 28 September 1988, MK member Lungisa Christian Qokweni died after a shoot-out with Ciskei police at a house in NU5 in Mdantsane. Ciskei denied that the SAP had also been involved in the shoot-out.

In October 1988, Transkei and South African police working together arrested guerrilla Aga Khan Tiya in Umtata. An arms cache was reportedly found at the same time. Two weeks after the arrest, Tiya appeared in the intensive care ward of the Umtata hospital, his throat having been cut while in custody (Lave 1994: 483-524). He was released and subsequently died under unexplained circumstances, presumably having been assassinated. On 25 December 1988 in Mdantsane, Ciskei, an unknown gunman attacked civil rights lawyer Hintsisa Siwisa, unionists Jeff Wabena and Billy Shiyani and their friends Noluthando Ntongana, Norie Joli and Virginia Panziso, leaving Joli and Panziso dead (Greenstein 1994: 641-61). Later rumours were that this was part of an internal ANC clash between opposing youth movements and that embezzlement of union funds may have been involved; however there is a strong possibility that this may also have been the work of the covert police unit.

While the coup attempt by Charles Sebe in Ciskei was probably at least supported by the SADF and the 1987 attack on Lennox Sebe was part of the SADF's Operation Katzen, there were a few rumblings which appear to have been independent actions. In January 1987, Bantu Holomisa was in detention in a Transkei jail, apparently partly for opposing Transkei involvement in Operation Katzen and partly for refusing to send in the TDF against an MK guerrilla involved in a shootout at Willowvale. A few months later he was out of detention, the former Selous Scouts were on the road out of Transkei and Holomisa was head of the TDF (SACS 1995: 39-47). At this point, the SADF appeared to have lost control

over the TDF. In September, Holomisa took over the Transkei government; shortly afterwards he handed over to the civilian government of Stella Sigcau. On 31 December 1987 Holomisa deposed Sigcau's government, citing corruption, and took control to run Transkei until the 1994 elections.

During his first coup, Holomisa waited until Prime Minister George Matanzima was "out of the country" in Port Elizabeth; President Tutor Ndamase was allowed to continue undisturbed and later appeared on publicity posters alongside military council members (SACS 1995: 59-64). A legal challenge to Holomisa's government brought later by former president Kaiser Matanzima was subsequently overturned when the Transkei Supreme Court ruled that Holomisa's government was the *de facto* Transkei government. The Holomisa coups had a crucial effect on the security forces' policy on the Eastern Cape: when the South African security forces finally realised that Holomisa would tolerate opposition and, after the 1990 unbannings, allow the liberation movements to organise freely, they changed tactics from prioritising attacking those regarded as members of liberation movements to attacking the Transkei government instead. Thus by the 1990s a spate of coup attempts were launched by the South African security forces to try to unseat Holomisa; to no avail.

## Conclusion

It could thus be concluded that the suppression of political opposition in the erstwhile Ciskei and Transkei Bantustans during the era in question was unprecedented. The Pondoland Revolt was marked by numerous incidents of violence, a state of emergency, widespread detentions, criminal prosecutions and banishment of families. The use of vigilantes in Ciskei fostered inter-bantustan conflict through Operation Katzen in what was part of a national bantustans military strategy. Vigilantes operating under the supervision of police were brought in to man roadblocks, assault commuters, break boycotts by assaulting commuters in taxis, on trains and in private cars. The Ciskei policy to subdue dissent entailed brutalisation of communities. Operation Katzen, used as a bulwark against the rising tide of popular resistance, left untold stories of violating civil liberties in these bantustans. The security forces countered the revolutionary onslaught in the most brutal manner. The abductions of freedom fighters led to various incidents of deaths at the hands of the security forces. The violation of civil liberties in Ciskei and Transkei was such that by the end of the 1980s these bantustan armies embarked on insurrection.

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