

# DESCOM *BULLETIN.*

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DESCOM BULLETIN IS A PUBLICATION OF THE DURBAN DETAINEES SUPPORT COMMITTEE



## PROFILE OF THE CISKEI

The turmoil in the Ciskei over the last two years has resulted in hundreds of detentions, several strikes, bus and school boycotts, factional intrigue among its ruling clique and severe political repression. In order to better understand these events, this issue of the Bulletin places the Ciskei in the context of South Africa's bantustan policy. It then goes on to discuss the peculiarities of the Ciskei crisis, including an account of the particular form of repression in the Ciskei and a chronology of recent and current events there.

## **BANTUSTAN DEVELOPMENT : A HISTORY**

The creation of the so-called "independent homelands", of which the Ciskei is the latest, is by no means a separate sphere of South African history.

From the earliest colonisation of the Cape, the task and battle of those that have ruled has been the same: to bring the vast African majority under CONTROL in such a way as to reap the benefits of its land and labour.

At first, the battle was waged primarily by military means. Conquered people, deprived of their independence and their land, were slowly but surely driven through economic necessity to sell their labour.

With South Africa's enormous economic growth following the development of the mining industry, there occurred a labour, and to a lesser extent, a land, shortage. The labour of those African peoples still working the land therefore had to be harnessed under the new system of production. The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts wrested many of these people from their livelihoods, when approximately 87% of South Africa was designated "white" and 13% declared to be "native reserves".

The relative barrenness (caused by overpopulation and overgrazing) of the reserves condemned the majority of their populations to work as migrant labourers in the cities of white South Africa. This was, of course, precisely how mine-owner and government intended things to work.

The political implications of this system were the age-old ones of divide-and-rule. Those under control themselves found splits opening between 'rulers' and 'ruled': headmen and chiefs, directly or indirectly functionaries of the South African state, were given certain powers over land allocation and administration within the reserves.

The bantustan policy was formalised in the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act and the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act. The first created a hierarchy of "Bantu" authorities for the bantustans, whose function was to administer and implement South African government policy, and to control the African population of the reserves - and to some extent, in urban areas within white South Africa as well.

The policy had the effect of dividing South Africa's people according to 'ethnic' criteria, rather than simply 'racial' or territorial ones. According to the 1959 Act, which introduced the fraud of self-government, eight "ethnically separate national units" were set up. Within each, quasi-independent legislatures and state apparatuses were established.

These moves were clearly a counter to the growing forces of African nationalism and worker resistance. At the same time, they fitted the political imperative of restricting the influx of Africans into urban centres and dovetailed with the system of labour exploitation. In addition, they were the essence of the formalisation of apartheid under National Party rule.

The 1960s and early 1970s saw the next stage of the development of the bantustan policy. Spurred on by domestic upheaval and international protest following Sharpeville, the status of "self-governing" was conferred upon the bantustans, beginning with the Transkei in 1963. Others followed suit. Pretoria retained control of security and police, foreign affairs, posts, telegraphs and related services, immigration, currency, banking, customs and excise. Within the bantustans, political structures were embellished the power of the territorial authorities was extended and a small but powerful and conservative bureaucratic class emerged.

The 1970 Bantu Homelands Citizens Act proclaimed ALL Africans in South Africa to be "citizens" of one or another bantustan, through a series of arbitrary cultural, racial and linguistic criteria. The 1971 Bantu Homelands Act provided for the various bantustans to pass through several phases before becoming "national states".

This period saw a certain amount of economic development inside the bantustans (eg. the investment attracted by the Xhosa Development Corporation in the Transkei, and the creation of the agency system in 1968) which, although meagre, served to provide a veneer of independent development.

From the mid-1970s, the bantustans began to gain their "official independence". While Soweto was still in flames, the Transkei hoisted its new flag. It was followed by Bophuthatswana in 1977, Venda in 1979 and the Ciskei in 1981. Various acts and amendments, both in white South Africa and in the bantustans themselves, tidied up the loose ends of the independence policy.

The struggle for power in the Ciskei among members of the ruling elite surfaced in April 1983, when President Lennox Sebe was warned about a threat from the Ciskei armed forces. The warning was issued at a meeting in Mdantsane. The man who spoke at the meeting about the danger to Lennox Sebe from "those closest to him" was immediately arrested by none other than the then Major General Charles Sebe, Ciskei Defence Chief and Brother of Lennox.

Soon after this incident, Lennox Sebe was elected "President for Life". It was not until July 16 that the conflict was to become public. This was sparked off by a mysterious shooting incident at the home of a cabinet minister, Mr B. Pityi, a staunch supporter of the president.

Lennox Sebe cut short a visit to Israel and convened a cabinet meeting. The next day, it was announced that Charles Sebe had been removed from his post and replaced by Col. Z. Makuzeni.

The first detention of a Sebe family member was the son of General Charles Sebe, Khambashe Sebe. He was detained together with the son of Vice-President W.M. Xaba. Both detainees were members of "Ikrele Lesizwe", an "anti-terrorist" squad created by Charles Sebe. A further eight aides to General Sebe were in detention by mid-July, among them Brig. H. Tamsanqa, once Gen. Sebe's right-hand man.

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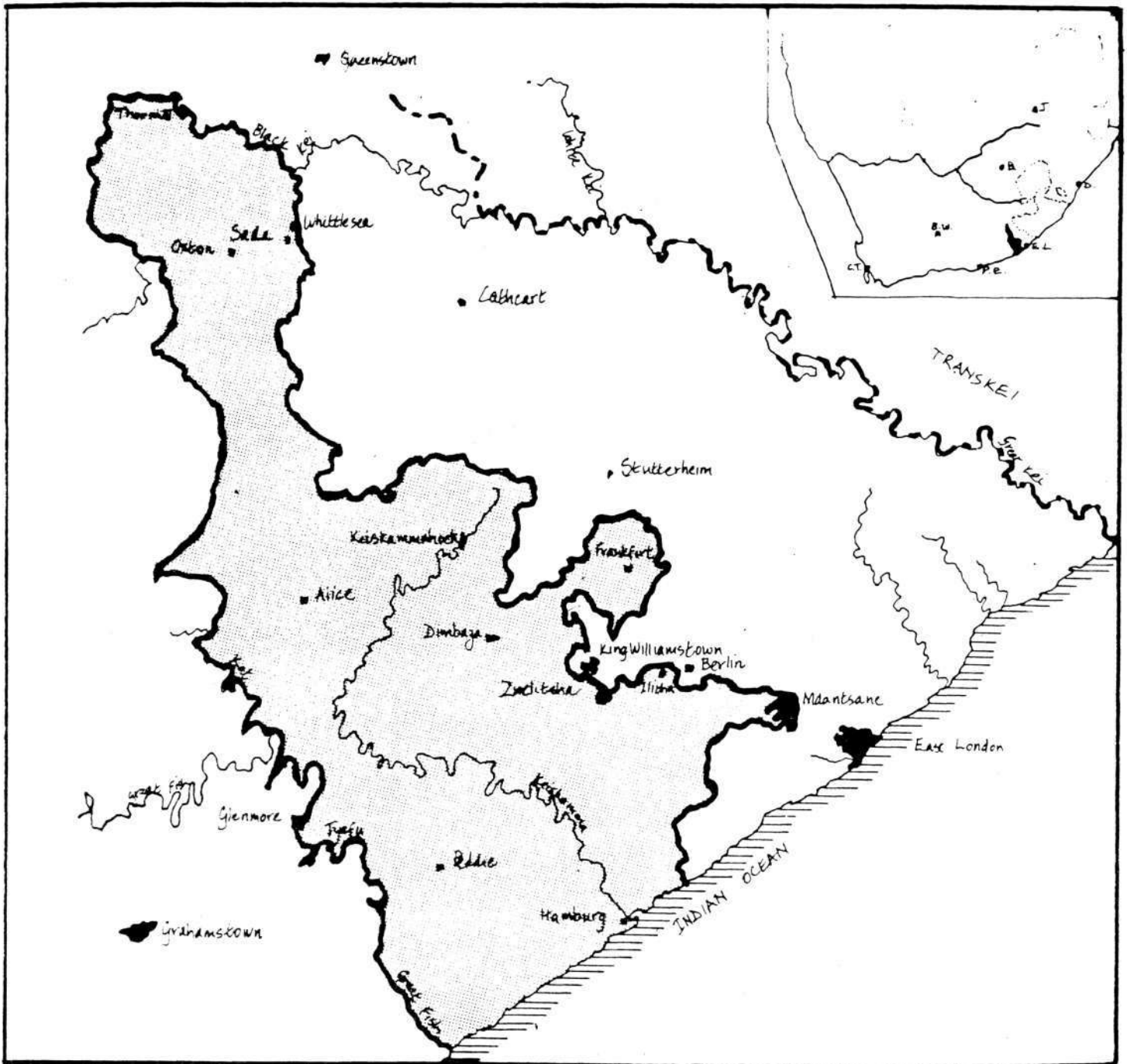
On July 20, Gen. Sebe and his South African aide, Major General T. Minnaar were arrested by the Ciskei authorities and held under the National Security Act.

At this point, rumours about the political future of Vice-President Rev. Xaba started. Mrs Xaba publicly stated that her husband was "not wanted" in the Ciskei government.

July 21 saw the arrest of Koli Sebe, son of the Ciskei minister of Transport, together with another family member, Toni Sebe. Both of them were lieutenants in the Ciskei Defence Force. Gen. Sebe's son was released and then redetained in King Williamstown (outside the borders of the Ciskei). South African police repeatedly denied any involvement in the Ciskei shake-up. However, two white plain-clothes men, who were recognised as South African security policemen by a former detainee, participated in the arrest of Gen. Sebe.

South African involvement was further emphasised by the unannounced visit by the South African Commissioner of Police, Gen. Johan Coetzee, and the South African security police chief, Maj. Gen. F. Steenkamp, to Lennox Sebe and members of his cabinet.

The allegiances of another Sebe family member were rumoured to be under scrutiny. This time it was Namba Sebe, minister of Transport. However, he was not arrested until October.



Proposed boundaries of the Ciskei according to 1975 consolidation proposals

Source: Human Awareness Programme  
Special Report No 2, 1981.

# REPRESSION IN THE CISKEI

We know that ALL of the bantustans are repressive. To some extent, all bantustan leaders, politicians and officials have to rely on force to keep them in power. They cannot rely on popular support because people in the bantustans have rejected them.

This is true of all the bantustans. Yet we need to ask: why is the Ciskei the most repressive of them all? Why are human rights so massively abused in this particular bantustan? There are many reasons.

Perhaps the most important is this: that the challenges to the Ciskeian authorities are too radical to be contained or absorbed in any "democratic" way. They are challenges to the very existence of the Ciskei as an independent bantustan. The only path left open for Sebe is to crush opposition brutally.

What has led up to this situation?

- Migrant labour: for most Ciskeians this is the only kind of work available
- Resettlement: over half of the Ciskei's population has been forcibly relocated in the Ciskei over the last 20 years
- The unemployment rate is very high
- Only 25% of Ciskeians have access to land on which to try to support themselves
- The Ciskei has the largest urban population of any bantustan. Mdantsane, with a population of 250 000, houses about 1/3 of Ciskeians
- The Eastern Cape economy has been characterised by poor economic growth all through the 1970s and the current recession has affected it badly, with employers moving away from the region - this in turn has had a disastrous effect on the Ciskei
- The people of the Eastern Cape, especially in the urban areas, have a long history of political consciousness. This is due to the high level of education in that area (the beginnings of 'enlightened' missionary activity were in the E. Cape - Lovedale, Healdtown, etc.). There is also a low level of subsistence: these two factors combine to produce a heightened political awareness.



# detention: who to contact ? what to do?

## THE POLICE MUST.....

- 0 Identify themselves. Do not go with them until they have done this.
- 0 Tell you under which law they are acting.
- 0 Inform your family.
- 0 When you are in detention, make sure that you are visited regularly by a district surgeon and an Inspector of Detainees. THIS IS THE LAW.

## YOU SHOULD.....

- 0 Remember you are not alone or forgotten. A campaign will be held for your release.
- 0 Take a Bible or Koran with you - even if you are not religious.
- 0 Try to stick to a set routine of reading, exercise and sleep.
- 0 Constantly demand to see a lawyer.
- 0 Constantly demand to see a minister and doctor of your choice.
- 0 Trust your friends. Don't believe any stories you hear about them.
- 0 Not worry about your family. They will be taken care of.
- 0 Not feel guilty - you have done nothing morally or politically wrong. DON'T BE FRIGHTENED BY THREATS OF LONG-TERM PRISON SENTENCES.
- 0 Remember - if you make a statement it can be used against you or your friends.
- 0 If you are ill-treated, TRY to tell any doctor/magistrate/minister you see.

- 0 Ensure that all information given to the District Surgeon is written down and inform him that it will be taken up by your own doctor.

## IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS DETAINED YOU MUST.....

- 0 Inform their doctor, when possible, to report any illness the detained person may have had to the District Surgeon in the area where the person is being held.
- 0 Contact a lawyer.
- 0 Inform the organisation to which that person belongs and his/her family.
- 0 Contact DESCOM.
- 0 Speak to community leaders and ministers and ask them to do something about the detention.
- 0 Find out from the security police where he/she is being held, and under what law.
- 0 Demand to send food and reading material.
- 0 As much as possible, carry on with your normal routine.
- 0 Stand together - remember you are not alone in your worry and concern.
- 0 Not feel guilty or ashamed. Often shame and guilt is felt by family members who are not politically aware. These feelings can weaken them and even weaken the detainee.
- 0 Visit the detainees' family. Give them strength.

WHETHER YOU ARE DETAINED, ARE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE OF A DETAINEE REMEMBER THAT ULTIMATELY THE ORDEAL WILL BE OVER AND YOU WILL BE RE-UNITED.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT DESCOM AT:

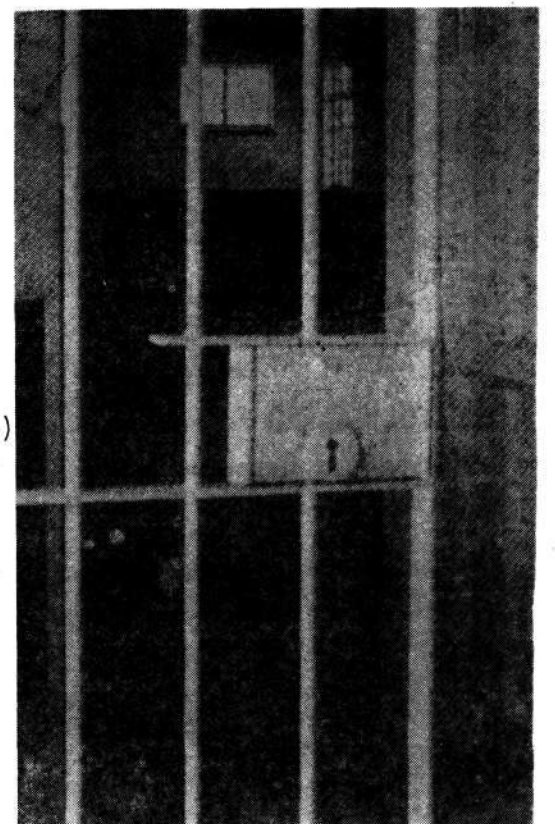
P.O. BOX 18441  
DALBRIDGE

OR TELEPHONE THE FOLLOWING DURBAN NUMBERS:

312609 (through Dependant's Conference)  
815378  
784508  
339046

OR PIETERMARITZBURG

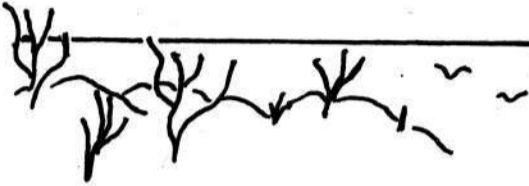
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# THE CISKEI AT A GLANCE

## LAND & CLIMATE

- 85% too dry, mountainous or neglected for viable cultivation
- Only 1/4 of land is free of erosion
- Nearly 1/2 of pasturage is overgrazed
- Rainfall is uncertain: droughts are common and severe
- A chronic shortage of uncontaminated water



## POPULATION

- Population in 1980: 650 000
- Density: 126 per km<sup>2</sup>
- Population growth: 5,85% (due to relocation as well as natural increase)
- 350 000 people "resettled" in Ciskei since 1960
- 2/3 of population live in rural areas
- Mdantsane and Zwelitsha the only significant urban centres
- Young (0-14) and old (+65) are over 50% of population at any time (due to migrant labour)



## SERVICES

- There is a chronic shortage of housing
- Welfare services are almost non-existent
- Education is grossly inadequate
- There is a very high crime rate
- Infant mortality is high: the rate in some areas is 50%



## MIGRANT LABOUR

- The majority of migrant workers are employed in the East London area
- Ciskeian workers are also employed on the Reef, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town
- Over 50% of the population is dependant on migrant earnings
- 65% of Ciskei's per capita income is derived from migrant labour
- Wages for contract work are between R100 and R200 for men per month (1980); few can remit more than R50 per month



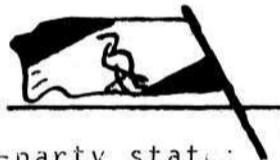
## THE ECONOMY

- Part of E.Cape 'border' region
- G.N.P. R180 per capita per annum, R117 of which is earned outside the Ciskei
- More than 50% of population estimated to be living below the poverty datum line
- The economy is underdeveloped in all sectors
- Expansion rate is very slow - due to severe lack of financial resources
- Nearly all development schemes favour the elite
- Small-scale subsistence agriculture yields miserable R8 million per year: plots are usually under 1 hectare and the yield per farmer is R24 per month
- Less than 0,9% of Ciskeians are employed internally in industry
- The only industrial centres are Dimbaza and Mdantsane
- Wages in 1981: an average of R20 per 50-hour week for men and R9 per 50-hour week for women (who constitute 75% of the labour force)
- There are few large commercial concerns
- There are very few licenced traders
- There is a large "informal sector"
- The state is the largest employer of labour - mostly teachers and civil servants (11 000) and semi- and unskilled labour (2 000), the latter category earning under R80 per month
- Unemployment is very high: about 30% and growing



## POLITICS

- The Ciskei is a one-party state: Sebe's ruling Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP) is the only one allowed to function openly. All other parties have been repressed or pressured out of existence
- Most (2/3) of the members of the Ciskei legislature are appointed chiefs. The remaining 1/3 consists of 'elected' representatives
- Only the South African government and the other independent bantustans recognise the state-hood of the Ciskei
- Tribal chiefs are the key to the entire political system in the Ciskei



## SECURITY

- The 1982 National Security Act replaced previous security legislation obtaining in the Ciskei. It allows for detention without trial, bannings, prohibitions, etc. and almost unlimited power of the security police
- The security/repressive apparatus is tightly knit - and until recently, under the total overall control of Charles Sebe, the President's brother. Under the umbrella of the Ciskeian Combined Forces are: the Ciskei Central Intelligence Service, the police, the airborne division, and the traffic police. The structure is complemented by CNIP vigilantes, called up whenever it is deemed necessary by Sebe.





• The role of the chiefs is of prime importance for political control.

- Chiefs and headmen have the power to distribute land, and political power can be accrued from this
- Chiefs allocate labour contracts: workers are therefore dependent on them if they need to get work as migrants
- Chiefs themselves can be allocated contracts according to their loyalty to CNIP (Ciskei National Independence Party). Loyal chiefs are favoured more than troublesome ones
- In times of crisis, chiefs call up vigilantes to 'protect the state'. The CNIP vigilantes are known as "brown shirts" or "green berets".
- CNIP can control chiefs by blocking funds to areas in charge of "troublesome" chiefs
- Sebe himself BECAME a chief through acquiring land (and therefore people) from the South African government
- There are a number of such artificially created chiefs in the Ciskei
- Most cabinet ministers, and 2/3 of the Legislative Assembly, are chiefs. Sebe's whole system depends on them

• Sebe, unlike other bantustan leaders, cannot use "ethnic" identity to build a support base. The Transkei has already claimed to be the "true homeland" of the Xhosa-speaking people. For Sebe, this has created a climate of insecurity, and has meant that he has had to find other methods of claiming legitimacy.

• Even before independence, Sebe had made this task difficult for himself by sowing deep division between Fingo and Xhosa people in the Ciskei. He himself was a Xhosa, and at that stage, Fingo people - mostly chiefs - controlled the Ciskei government. He caused ethnic division in his effort to win power. Once he had won power, he then had to try to heal the division - something he has managed to paper over, but NOT to heal.

All of these factors combine to make for a potentially very explosive situation. With severe economic and political difficulties faced by the Ciskei state, PLUS a high level of awareness and long tradition of resistance on the part of Africans in the Eastern Cape, the state has had to resort to a high level of direct repression:

- vicious security legislation
- election rigging
- close co-operation between S.A. and Ciskei security police



# CURRENT CISKEI CRISIS : A CHRONOLOGY

Two major threats to the authority of Ciskei chief Lennox Sebe are the cause of the present Ciskei crises. The first is from his own corrupt bureaucracy and family, and the second comes from independent organisations and campaigns developing in the Ciskei. This latter threat consists of the independent trade union movement, in particular the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), and community-based resistance such as bus and school boycotts. It is useful, for the sake of clarity, to deal with these two threats separately.

## division in the house of sebe



How the RAND DAILY MAIL's cartoonist Andy sees the Ciskei's second anniversary.

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The reasons for the detentions were revealed in an affidavit submitted to court when Gen. Sebe's wife sought a court order for her husband's and son's release. Ciskei's Commissioner of Police Brig. L.B. Madolo stated that Gen. Sebe et al were being held because of an "intent to overthrow or endanger the state authorities in the Ciskei". In answer to the accusation of maltreatment, Madolo said that "they are being very well treated and get much better food than any other detainees". Gen. Sebe's wife alleged that the detentions were a result of family feuds.

Gen. Sebe's fall from power has seen the arrest of many of his former associates and once staunch supporters of Lennox Sebe's Ciskei National Independence Party (CNIP). The crises within the Ciskei ruling elite were intensified by resistance from below, which was spearheaded by the organisers of a bus boycott in Mdantsane in answer to increased fares.

## peoples resistance

- July 19: In the midst of the internal political crises, a boycott against the Ciskei Transport Corporation (CTC) is started. The CTC is owned by Ciskeian state as well as private interests. The increase in bus fares is an explosive issue in an area with 30% unemployment. In Mdantsane, a "Committee of Ten" is elected to coordinate the bus boycott.
- July 20: Press reports indicate an 80% drop in the use of CTC buses. CTC refuses to reduce the fares, claiming that they are cheaper than those in South Africa.
- July 21: A petrol bomb explodes in a CTC bus, killing two children and injuring 25 passengers. People in Mdantsane begin stoning the buses. Road blocks are set up around Mdantsane. Some eight members of the Committee of Ten are detained.
- July 25: Ciskei police start to harrass commuters attempting to use the trains rather than catch the CTC buses. Vigilantes are used to assist the crisis-ridden security forces. Most of vigilantes are CNIP supporters bussed in from the rural areas. Commuters who use taxis are beaten up and and dragged out of cars at the road blocks, with full sanction of the Ciskei police.
- August 4: Minister of Justice Takane declares a state of emergency and imposes a curfew on Mdantsane from 10pm to 4.30am. An incident occurs at Fort Johnson station between Ciskei police and commuters. Commuters reported that 15 people were shot dead when the police opened fire in the early hours of the morning. Buses were parked at the stations, where commuters were forced to board them.

August 9: 350 people are said to be in detention. A number of people are being treated in Mdantsane's Cecilia Makiwane Hospital. The East London Chamber of Commerce announces that workers can face wage cuts.

August 10: About 1 000 people are reported to be in detention in the Ciskei. Some 700 people are in detention for breaking the curfew. All attempts by the boycotters to hold meetings are thwarted by the Ciskei and South African authorities

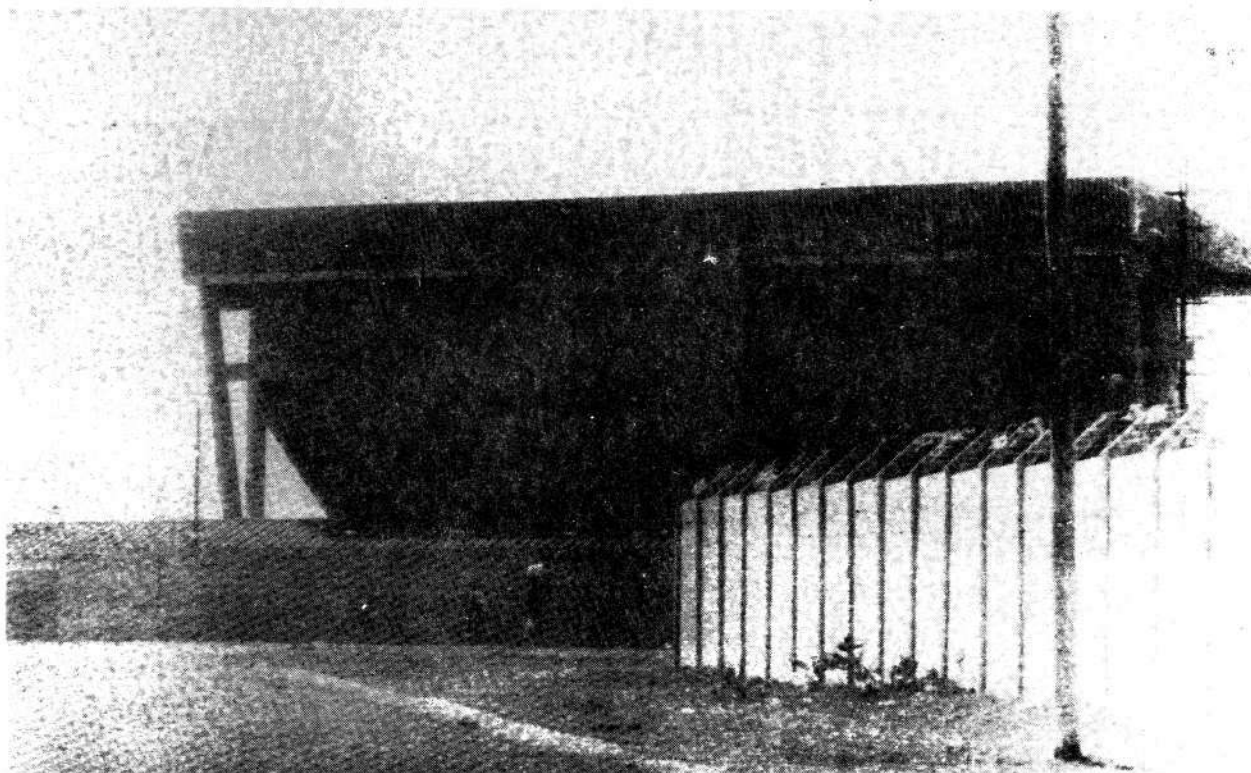
September 3: SAAWU is banned.

September 10: East London Detainees Support Committee hosts the second national Descom conference. A call goes out for solidarity with the detained and oppressed in the Ciskei.

September 30: The toll in the shooting incidents since the start of the boycotts stands at 90 dead and several hundred injured.

To date, the repression continues with harrassment and detentions, the most widely publicised being that of the Catholic priest Simangaliso Mkatshwa. Ntombazane Botha, the East London Descom coordinator, is also in detention.

While many of the trade unionists have been released, their union, SAAWU, is still banned and the Ciskei state of emergency is still in force. The Ciskei celebrated its second year of sham independence on December 4th under these conditions.



The stadium of horror - behind these walls, people are beaten and tortured.

# DETENTION



# NEWS

## PUBLICATIONS AND THE POLICE

In the past year or so, quite a few people have been charged with being in possession of books or magazines or papers that have been banned. But it is not always against the law to read a banned book.

There are only certain banned publications that you can't even possess. When something is first banned under the Publications Act (the law that gives the Government the right to ban and censor publications and films) it is banned for distribution. This means that you may not sell or lend or give it to someone else, or bring it in from another country, but you may still keep it for yourself.

But if the censors really don't like something, for instance, a pamphlet that criticises the army, they can make it illegal even for you to do this. This means that they ban the publication for possession. They usually only do so a few weeks after they've banned it from being sold or lent or brought into the country.

If you distribute or possess a publication when the Publications Act forbids either of these things, you can be fined up to R500 or sent to jail for 6 months for a first offence.

According to the Internal Security Act, (the biggest security law) there are other publications that you can't possess. These are ones that are written or brought out by a banned organisation and ones that are banned by the Minister of Law and Order himself. If you are caught with one of these publications, you can be sent to jail for 3 years.

Of course, that doesn't mean you will get 3 years. The first time you are caught, you'll probably get a suspended sentence. That means the court gives a jail sentence, but doesn't send you to jail. If you are caught again, then the first sentence can be carried out, and you will also be sentenced for the second offence.

So many thousands of publications have been banned that it's often difficult to know if something was banned or not. If you are caught with a book that you didn't know was banned, you can tell the court that you didn't mean to break the law because you didn't know the book was banned.

## SECURITY POLICEMAN TO FACE CHARGES

A security policeman is to be charged with murder after the death of Mr Paris Malatji on 5th July, 1983 in the Protea Police Station in Soweto. Mr Malatji died within 24 hours of his detention of a bullet wound in the forehead.

After his death, a policeman was suspended "pending a police investigation". At the detention conference in East London last month, a resolution was passed calling on the police to bring to justice the person responsible for his death.

Natal Witness 1/2/83

### Witness Reporter

A WOMAN doctor at Edendale Hospital has been detained by security police.

Colonel B.J. Beukes, chief of the security branch, confirmed yesterday that Dr Nomasonto (Sonto) Nkosi (30) was detained on Tuesday evening under Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Act.

Security police have detained 11 people during the past 10 days.

Three have been released.

On Wednesday last week Mr Dikobe Martins and Mr Dumu Gqubule (18), son of Dr Simon Gqubule, vice president of the South African Council of Churches, were detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

The following day, Dr Gqubule's teenage daughters, Thandi (17) and Phumle (15) were detained along with two Edendale doctors, Dr Tom Mvuyo and Dr Faith Motloapane.

Also detained were Mr George Martins, Mr Siphiso Shezi, Mr Aubrey Ngcobo and Mr Ondile Reve, vice president of the DCO Matiwane League.

All except Dr Motloapane were detained under Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Act. Dr Motloapane was detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

On Friday security police detained Mr Gordon Sibusiso (Tso) Ngcobo, and on Monday this week Mr Mlungisi Maphumulo. Both are being held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

On Monday, the Pietermaritzburg Detainees Support Committee (Descom) issued a statement condemning the detention of people from Edendale and Imbali.

The committee called for "the immediate release of all those who are being detained".

Colonel Beukes said the Descom statement had no bearing on the detention of any of the detainees held in the recent swoop.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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LEARN AND TEACH