

KING SABATA THE NATION SALUTES YOU!



A potentially historic crack appeared in the edifice of apartheid last weekend when a young major-general, dapper in a dark suit, made his way to the microphone at a king's funeral on a South African mountainside.

General Bantu Holomisa was making his peace with the anti-apartheid movement in whose eyes the ersatz country he rules is a symbol of the system they are fighting to destroy. And he drew an excited ovation from thousands of mourners as he offered to abandon the Transkei to the cause of SA unity.

It was a fitting occasion for the gesture. At the general's feet as he spoke lay the golden coffin of King Sabata Jonguhlanga Dalindyebo, the tribal monarch whose life was spent repudiating the kingdom which could have been his and whose death has come to represent the cause of wider unity.

The reburial of King Dalindyebo, Paramount Chief of the Thembu tribe — the largest sub-group of the Xhosa people — turned into a startling demonstration of what is beginning to look like the political renaissance within SA of the outlawed ANC. From the black, green and gold colours lying with a king's cheetah's pelt on the coffin itself, to the huge ANC banners brandished over the crowd, it was as much a political celebration as the burying of a king.

Marshals in the uniforms of the ANC moved around the crowd; thousands of small ANC pennants were brandished with a gaiety which paradoxically suited the solemnity of the occasion and, up on the platform of VIPs, Winnie Mandela in an ANC beret reminded the crowd of the missing chief mourner, Nelson Mandela — a member of the Thembu royal family who had played a key role in the weekend's events from behind his distant prison walls.

'Roar, young lions, roar', cried Peter Mokaba, a former Robben Island prisoner invoking the battle cry of the SA Youth Congress, of which he is founder president.

'We have come here from Cape Town in 18 buses to declare the ANC unbanned. It is now unbanned,' he said.

'The South African Youth Congress met the ANC recently. We've met the political military command. We have met military intelligence. We have met all the structures involved in the struggle in South Africa, because we are a component of the ANC.'

But if fiery speakers like Mokaba served notice that the revolutionary fervour of the ANC was in the ascendant again, it was the comparatively quiet intervention of General Holomisa that suggested King Dalindyebo's funeral could find a notable place in the history books.

The young general, trained at Staff College in Pretoria, took over the 'independent' homeland of the Transkei in 1987. Seeming at the time to be just another military dictator, he has adopted an intriguing role, treading a tightrope between his mentors in Pretoria and the ANC — a

tightrope which last month took him to a little-publicised visit to Lusaka.

The general was introduced almost diffidently by the master of ceremonies — the rebel Zulu priest, the Rev Mcebisi Xundu — who pointed out that at least the general had allowed the funeral to take place.

The apologetic note proved unnecessary, the general drawing roars of approval as he told the crowd that in any war there were some who had to go away to fight and others who had to stay at home and look after the people. Speaking in Xhosa, he said that if the people wanted to change the independent status of the Transkei, he was prepared to hold a referendum and carry out their wishes.

The offer was breathtaking, amounting to a declaration of his willingness to abandon the 'independence' of the Transkei. Oldest and largest of SA's four homelands, the Transkei is a cornerstone of 'grand apartheid'. If the general goes ahead with his offer, the effect will be considerable, in effect throwing the Transkei behind the African National Congress.

Whether the offer will be realised remains an open question. But added force was given to it when the general's brother, Sango Holomisa — sporting ANC colours — brought the funeral to a climax with a farewell message from the ANC's leader, Oliver Tambo.

Appealing to the blacks of South Africa to close ranks, he said this would be the final tribute to King Dalindyebo: 'May our soldier king rest in peace'.

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side by side without fighting. Maphumulo said: 'Until today there has been peace in my area. That is why Ulundi is making such a big noise.'

Asked whether he did not fear for his safety given the high-profile conflict between himself and KwaZulu leadership figures, Maphumulo replied, 'I have said for years that I have only one enemy — that is Inkatha and Ulundi. If I disappear tomorrow then the whole world will know who is responsible.' He was a close friend of Londa Shembe, the charismatic leader of the Shembe church, shot and killed in his sleep earlier this year. Both Shembe and Maphumulo tried to tread a careful line between Inkatha and the UDF; does Maphumulo not fear he will share the same fate as Shembe? 'If it does come, let it come,' he replied.

Maphumulo has been rapped over the knuckles for insulting the king. He had an appointment to see the king to introduce Contralesa to him, but then never arrived. Instead he sent a fax requesting that the meeting take place in the king's traditional seat of Nongoma instead of Ulundi, because of Ulundi's 'political' connotations and because he did not believe he would be safe there.

Buthlezi took exception to the tone of Maphumulo's letters to the king as well as to the fact that he refused to meet the king in Ulundi. Buthlezi also said it was rude of Maphumulo to imply that he would not be safe in Ulundi. 'Who in Ulundi would dare intercept a visitor who by arrangement was coming to see the king?' Buthlezi demanded.

Maphumulo said this week that no such assurances were forthcoming when in October 1983 members of the Inkatha Youth Brigade attacked him in Ulundi and knocked him unconscious. *Weekly Mail 6.10.89*

KwaZulu

...Chief Buthlezi, in declining an invitation from the state president of Transkei, Paramount Chief Tutor Ndamase, to a top-level meeting of national and independent state leaders, suggested Transkei should first give up its independent status. Chief Buthlezi said in his letter that if Transkei first abandoned or declared its intention to abandon its so-called 'independence' in order to return to the South African fold, this would be a different matter. He could not hold separate discussions with Transkei leaders or whoever else while Inkatha was involved in a peace initiative with the UDF and Cosatu, which must also involve the ANC if it were to proceed further... *Star 2.10.89*

The Zulu leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, held talks with Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street yesterday as the Prime Minister prepared to withstand attacks over her southern African policy at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference in Kuala Lumpur later this month...

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Transkei

Transkei will not seek incorporation into South Africa for as long as F W de Klerk is president, even if its people voted against independence in a referendum. Transkei's military ruler Bantu Holomisa said... 'We are

not going into South Africa under De Klerk. We are not going to commit suicide.'

...Holomisa said that the question of independence will be put to a referendum. He also pointed out that the referendum would simply be used to gauge opinion among Transkeians with a view to presenting a democratic position during negotiations on a future SA. He said the ... referendum was to find out what Transkeians wanted from negotiations. 'Do they want us, for instance, to negotiate as Transkei, negotiate for our stake only, or do they want a sort of federal set-up? Do they say, no let those who negotiate do it on our behalf? The intention is that we know what they feel. Whatever we do we must know what they feel about the whole set-up.'

Holomisa was clearly concerned that Transkei would be ignored in any negotiations which South Africa may start and pointed to the fact that De Klerk did not consult the homeland when proposing negotiations. 'You look at what De Klerk is saying. It means we must do our homework as well because he did not consult us.'... He added that he would hold a referendum now if asked to...

New Nation 6.10.89

Ciskei

The Ciskei Transport Corporation (CTC) this week launched another attempt to break the five-month-long bus boycott — this time in the form of a R6 000 competition. To enter the competition, workers have to buy weekly bus tickets and answer questions on the new fare structure that was introduced to lure commuters back to CTC transport. The decision to boycott buses was taken during a May Day celebration and was in protest against a 25% fare increase.

The contest, which started this week, will continue for 10 to 12 weeks, according to CTC managing director John Armstrong. People are expected to choose the correct fare for a trip from Mdantsane township to East London. The CTC reduced fares by 50%, but said the lower fares would only apply between 8am and 3pm. Commuters have rejected the new fare structure, pointing out that most workers use the buses before 8am and after 4pm. CTC has also embarked on a huge publicity campaign around the new fares and has advertised prominently at bus ranks all around Mdantsane. Newspapers have also carried advertisements announcing the new fare structure.

Commuters said they viewed the competition as another attempt to break the boycott. Attempts to resolve the boycott failed earlier this year when the CTC broke an agreement which prevented the commuters' committee and bus owners from speaking to the press.

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Both the Ciskei government and police maintained their silence yesterday amid renewed allegations that police fired rubber bullets and used teargas in Nkqonkqweni village. The alleged incidents come less than a fortnight after the Nkqonkqweni residents withdrew an application against the Minister of Police, Mr D M Takane, for contempt of an earlier Supreme Court order restraining police from harassing villagers. The application was withdrawn after Mr Takane undertook in

papers not to take any unlawful action against residents. He pledged that no member of the police would unlawfully arrest, detain or assault residents, issue unlawful threats, or exert any unlawful pressure against them.

The attorney acting on behalf of the residents, Mr Mike Smith, ...said the residents reported that ... on Wednesday morning, a vehicle mounted with a teargas-spraying apparatus was seen being driven through the village, discharging clouds of teargas. A residents' committee spokesman said the police had moved into the village shortly after clerics had left the scene of an earlier incident involving the alleged firing of rubber bullets through church windows. Teargas canisters had been fired indiscriminately throughout the village... A child had to be treated after he had been choked by teargas, he said.

Mr Smith said his clients reported another incident on Wednesday night, in which rubber bullets had been fired at the homes of three residents' committee members... The president of the Border Civics Congress (Bocco), Mr Chief Ndingwa, expressed concern at Ciskei's alleged actions against the people of Nkqonkqweni, as well as the communities of Balasi near Bisho and Bodyani near Peddie. He said he was curious to know whether Mdantsane residents would receive the same kind of treatment if they decided to reject Ciskei rule. *Daily Dispatch 29.9.89*

Venda

The Venda president, headman Frank Ravele, and four others have been promoted to chiefs, making them automatic members of the homeland's legislative assembly for life. Chiefs Ravele, H Musekwa, Calvin Mphephu and deputy Health and Welfare Minister T T Ramabulana were crowned on 15 September.

Sowetan 27.9.89

KwaNdebele

A former senior police officer in KwaNdebele allegedly promised special constables medals if they shot stone-throwing 'comrades', the Parsons Commission of Inquiry into the 1986 unrest and mismanagement in the self-governing state has been told... Colonel Stefanus van Loggerenberg, former commander of 115 Battalion and currently secretary of the KwaNdebele Areas Security Council, yesterday told the inquiry in Pretoria that (Brig Hertzog) Lerm, former commissioner of police, made this statement in his presence. 'Brigadier Lerm told the special constables that they should shoot any comrade who throws stones and added that he will see to it that they are not prosecuted.' He also allegedly promised them medals.

Van Loggerenberg ... denied allegations that members of the defence force gave firearms and uniforms to Imbhokodo members during their reign of terror... Earlier, another witness, Miss Colleen McCaul, ... told the inquiry that according to information she had gathered, the defence force members gave firearms and uniforms to the Imbhokodo members... (and that) one-third of the deaths were caused by security force members, a third by Imbhokodo members and the rest by 'comrades' trying to defend themselves... *Sowetan 27.9.89*