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Militarisation, Patrimonialism and the Collapse of the
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EVANS, Laura <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2471-7439>>

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THE BANTUSTAN STATE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSITION: MILITARISATION, PATRIMONIALISM AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE CISKEI REGIME, 1986-1994

Laura Evans

Sheffield Hallam University; University of the Free State

laura.evans@shu.ac.uk

ORCID 0000-0003-2471-7439

ABSTRACT

This article examines the Ciskei bantustan and processes of state formation during the transition to democracy. In the Ciskei, the rule of Brigadier Gqozo rested on the continued support of the South African state: identified as the weakest link in the National Party's conservative alliance, the Ciskei became the first target for the African National Congress' mass action campaign of 1992. The struggle in the Ciskei thus had some significance for the shape of the transition. While at a constitutional level the National Party eventually conceded to the re-incorporation of the bantustans in late 1992, it continued to stall change and to bolster the bantustans through covert military operations and land transfers to bantustan elites. These dynamics of state formation are critical aspects of the history of the transition and were at the heart of the emerging political conflict in the Ciskei, which by mid-1992 was escalating into civil war. This article examines mass mobilisation, political repression and the consequences of the patrimonial militarisation of the Ciskei state in the Ciskei/ Border region. By focusing on processes of state formation and struggles over the fabric of the state, this article provides a corrective to the prevailing academic focus on the elite negotiations and argues for the value of social histories of the bantustan states for understanding the enduring legacies of these regimes.

Keywords: Homelands; political violence; Bisho; apartheid; negotiations; 'third force'

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the years of South Africa's transition to democracy witnessed more intense political violence than at any other time during the apartheid era: between February 1990 and April 1994 some 15,000 people were killed.¹ Notwithstanding this, South Africa's transition to democracy was regularly represented as a "miracle"; a "peaceful revolution" with only episodic violence, as at Boipatong or Bisho in 1992.² Few who had any interest in

¹ South African Institute of Race Relations, cited in A. Guelke, "Dissecting the South African Miracle: African Parallels," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 2, no. 1 (1996): 150.

² N. Barnard, *Peaceful Revolution: Inside the War Room at the Negotiations* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2017); P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

reading the South African news during the early 1990s would agree with this representation of the transition: a miracle “misunderstood.”³

The National Party (NP) declared the formal end of military repression in 1990, yet critics such as Chris Hanu accused the regime of adopting a “twin-track strategy” of violence and negotiation, and blamed the state’s shadowy ‘third force’ for precipitating violence.⁴ There is no doubt that violence and negotiation were intertwined during the transition years, and that F. W. De Klerk’s government was funding and supporting vigilante ‘surrogates’ to undermine the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies.⁵ As Ellis argues, by the mid-1980s, the South African Defence Force’s (SADF) network of covert operations, initially developed to undermine political resistance in the Frontline States, had been deployed within South Africa to damage political mobilisation and erode support for the ANC.⁶ De Klerk’s attempts to exert control over the security state’s fragmented operations were largely (often deliberately) ineffective. The weight of evidence supports the view that covert repression was sanctioned by the State Security Council (SSC) until late into the transition.⁷ The ANC had also declared an end to armed resistance in August 1990. In reality, the organisation also struggled to maintain control over the activities of its own cadres: some Self Defence Units (SDUs) and other ostensibly Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) groupings refused to demobilise and became semi-autonomous militias.⁸

Much of the political violence of the transition was concentrated in what were then Natal province and the PWV (Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging) region, and the emphasis of the existing literature reflects this geographic focus.⁹ In contrast, scholars have tended to

³ A. Guelke, *South Africa in Transition: The Misunderstood Miracle* (London: IB Tauris, 1999).

⁴ C. Hanu (September 1992), cited in J. Kane-Berman, *Political Violence in South Africa* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1993), 16.

⁵ I. Liebenberg, “Unconventional Intervention During Transition,” in C. Shutte, I. Liebenberg and A. Minnaar (eds), *The Hidden Hand: Covert Operations in South Africa*, Second Edition (Pretoria: HSRC, 1998), 137-151.

⁶ S. Ellis, “The Historical Significance of South Africa’s Third Force,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, no. 2 (1998): 261-299.

⁷ R. Taylor and M. Shaw, “The Dying Days of Apartheid,” in D. Howarth and A. Norval (eds), *South Africa in Transition: New Theoretical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 13- 30; K. O’Brien, *The South African Intelligence Services: From Apartheid to Democracy, 1948-2005* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 172- 203.

⁸ G. Kynoch, “Crime, Conflict and Politics in Transition-Era South Africa,” *African Affairs*, 104, no. 416 (2005): 493-514.

⁹ See, for example, A. Guelke, “Interpretations of Political Violence during South Africa’s Transition,” *Politikon*, 27, no. 2 (2000): 239- 254; G. Kynoch, “Reassessing Transition Violence: Voices from South Africa’s Township Wars, 1990–4,” *African Affairs* 112, no. 447, (2013): 283–303; Mathis, “From Warlords to Freedom Fighters.”

represent the transition years in the Eastern Cape as a time of relative peace.¹⁰ It has been argued that the region experienced comparatively little political violence, owing to the overwhelming support of the local population for the ANC and the well-established networks of civic and labour organisation in the region.¹¹ More recently, historical work has begun to address this gap in the literature, by examining the military operations of the SADF and MK in the Transkei and Ciskei during the 1980s and 1990s.¹²

There is substantial evidence to support the view that in the Border and Ciskei region of the Eastern Cape during the early 1990s a virtual civil war was unfolding, precipitated by an aggressive and repressive bantustan regime in hand with the covert military operations of the South African security apparatus: the SADF and its Military Intelligence wing (SADF-MI). While the significance of the state's covert operations and the extent of violence in the Ciskei were revealed in a series of contemporary media exposes, not least in the wake of the shooting at the Bisho stadium on the 7th September 1992, they have remained largely absent from subsequent academic accounts of the transition.¹³ Throughout the late-apartheid period (c.1986-1994), the security state funded covert operations and private front companies to escalate existing political competition between Africanists and Charterists, supporting and arming opposition groups to terrorise United Democratic Front (UDF) and ANC supporters, while seeking to establish an alternative 'Xhosa Resistance Movement' in the Eastern Cape.¹⁴ During the 1990s these operations were unleashed on the rural areas of the Ciskei to bolster the bantustan state and its networks of patronage under Brigadier 'Oupa' Gqozo.

¹⁰ M. Shaw, "The Bloody Backdrop: Negotiating Violence," in S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds), *The Small Miracle: South Africa's Negotiated Settlement*, *South African Review* 7 (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1994), 183; Guelke, *South Africa in Transition*; Guelke, "Interpretations of Political Violence".

¹¹ P. Gibbs, "Political Identity and Democracy Formation in the Eastern Cape, 1990-1994," in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 6, Part 1* (1990-1996) (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2013), 317-321.

¹² D. Douek, "'They Became Afraid When They Saw Us': MK Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Bantustan of Transkei, 1988-1994," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, no. 1, (2013): 207-225; P. Mangashe, "Operation Zikomo: The Armed Struggle, the Underground and Mass Mobilisation in South Africa's Border Region, 1986-1990, through the Experiences of MK Cadres," *South African Historical Journal*, 70, no. 1 (2018): 42-55.

¹³ The few accounts that do mention this history include J. Peires, "The Implosion of Transkei and Ciskei," *African Affairs* 91, no. 364 (1992): 365- 387; R. Taylor and M. Shaw, "The Dying Days of Apartheid." See also L. Flanagan, "Covert Operations in the Eastern Cape," in Shutte et al., *The Hidden Hand*, 191-282; C. White, "The Rule Of Brigadier Oupa Gqozo in Ciskei: 4 March 1990 To 22 March 1994" (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 2008).

¹⁴ Flanagan, "Covert Operations," 192.

The future of the bantustans, or ‘homelands’,¹⁵ was a pivotal issue throughout the negotiations.¹⁶ Reshaping and limiting the role of ‘traditional authorities’ in the new South Africa was critical for the possibilities of democracy in South Africa’s rural areas.¹⁷ While some of the more recent historiography on the bantustans in the transition focuses on the actions of homeland leaders as they sought to secure their own futures, work by Mathis and Gibbs examines the critical local dynamics of mobilisation, repression, political violence and state formation.¹⁸ Accounts that address these local dynamics and thereby augment the prevailing focus on the elite-level negotiations are critical for the development of a more nuanced historical understanding of processes of state formation in the bantustans during the transition and, indeed, their afterlives. This paper examines the relations through which the Ciskei state was sustained during the late apartheid period: it explores political violence, patrimonialism and their connections.¹⁹

The bantustans were patrimonial regimes, with a fragile legitimacy dependent on their relationship with Pretoria. Their leaders were “state managers”: reliant on funding from the central state, their power rested on their ability to garner support through the patronage of state resources and the decentralisation of control over local governance.²⁰ Political power was built around the gate-keeping of access to limited state resources, including land, pensions, labour contracts, state funds and employment in the bureaucracy. Amid the scarcity

¹⁵ The term ‘bantustan’ has historically been preferred by critics of the apartheid regime, while the government employed the term ‘homelands’, laden with the discourse of ethnic self-determination. I thus follow this usage: when referring to these entities in descriptive or general terms I use ‘bantustan’. I employ the term ‘homeland’ with reference to government policy and the nominally independent political regimes. For ease of reading I have omitted quotation marks hereafter.

¹⁶ Peires, “The Implosion”; J. Peires, “Transkei on the Verge of Emancipation,” in P. Rich, *Reaction and Renewal in South Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 192-221; P. S. Jones, “From ‘Nationhood’ To Regionalism To The North West Province: ‘Bophuthatswananess’ And The Birth Of The ‘New’ South Africa,” *African Affairs* 98, no. 393 (1999): 509–534; M. Lawrence and A. Manson, “The ‘Dog of the Boers’: The Rise and Fall of Mangope in Bophuthatswana,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 3 (1994): 447-461; A. Manson, “‘Punching Above its Weight’: The Mafikeng Anti-Repression Forum (Maref) and the Fall of Bophuthatswana,” *African Historical Review* 43, no. 2 (2011): 55-83. Various authors, Special Issue on Transkei, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 11, no. 2 (1992); J. Cherry and L. Bank, “A Tale of Two Homelands: Transkei, Ciskei,” *Southern Africa Report* 9, no. 1 (1994), 25- 30.

¹⁷ L. Ntsebeza, *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of Land in South Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

¹⁸ J. Robinson, “Fragments of the Past: Homeland Politics and the South African Transition, 1990–2014,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 5 (2015): 953-967; S. M. Mathis, “From Warlords to Freedom Fighters: Political Violence and State Formation in Umbumbulu, South Africa,” *African Affairs* 112, no. 448 (2013): 421-439; T. Gibbs, *Mandela’s Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid’s First Bantustan* (James Currey: Woodbridge, 2014), 131- 175.

¹⁹ It thus complements new work by Wotshela that examines local mobilisation in the Ciskei and Border during the late apartheid period and the transition to democracy. L. Wotshela, “The Fate of Ciskei and Adjacent Border Towns’ Political Transition in a Democratising South Africa, 1985 -1995” in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 8* (forthcoming).

²⁰ J. Graaff, “Towards an Understanding of Bantustan Politics,” in N. Nattrass and E. Ardington (eds), *The Political Economy of South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 67.

of land and employment, competition over resources fuelled rivalries between and within patronage networks.²¹ State funding for bantustan bureaucracies grew only very slowly and did not keep pace with inflation, leading these regimes into the accumulation of private debt and hindering their already very limited capacity to provide basic services.²²

Amid economic recession from the mid-1970s, the fragile legitimacy of bantustan regimes was further eroded by local civic mobilisation.²³ While the bantustans failed as political projects, they resorted to more trenchant forms of repression. One of the significant consequences of homeland independence was that the leaders of the nominally independent bantustans (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei, or TBVC) exercised control over a military-security apparatus.²⁴ If the bantustans were created as a political bulwark to demands for liberation, by the 1990s they had become a key focus of the security state's activities. After the Soweto Uprising, the TBVC states took on a new role in Botha's Total Strategy as "security buffers", owing to their proximity to the Frontline States where the ANC in exile operated.²⁵ Bantustan elites trod the "politics of the tightrope", vying for popular support amid the widespread rejection of apartheid authority while continuing to depend on funding from Pretoria for their life source and on the growing influence of SADF-MI military operations for their monopoly on violence.²⁶ While Buthelezi perfected the act, the rise and the inconstant politics of Brigadier Gqozo in the Ciskei - brought to power through a military coup in 1990; first ally then enemy of the UDF, Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and ANC - also reveals some of these tensions.

Drawing on published and historical sources - including South African newspapers, archives of the Independent Board of Inquiry into Violence (IBI), and materials emanating from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) - this article traces the collapse of the Ciskei regime during the early 1990s amid the proliferation of political violence in the region. While at a constitutional level the National Party eventually conceded to the re-incorporation of the

²¹ J. Peires, "Ethnicity and Pseudo-Ethnicity in the Ciskei," in W. Beinart and S. Dubow (eds), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995), 256- 284; Peires, "The Implosion"; L. Wotshela, "Territorial Manipulation in Apartheid South Africa: Resettlement, Tribal Politics and the Making of the Northern Ciskei, 1975-1990," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30:2 (2004): 317-337; L. Evans, "Resettlement and the Making of the Ciskei Bantustan," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 1 (2014): 21-40.

²² Graaff, 62.

²³ Wotshela, "Territorial Manipulation",

²⁴ Graaff, 61; C. Cooper, "The Militarisation of the Bantustans: control and contradictions," in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds), *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 174- 187.

²⁵ Jones, "From 'Nationhood' to Regionalism," 513.

²⁶ S. Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Race and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).

bantustans, it continued to stall change and to bolster these regimes through its (con)federal agenda.²⁷ The paper examines the continued significance of repressive covert operations by SADF-MI during the years of the transition and develops an account of the patrimonial militarisation of the state in the Ciskei during the late apartheid period. These dynamics of state formation are critical aspects of the history of the transition and were at the heart of the emerging political conflict in the Ciskei. By focusing on processes of state formation and struggles over the state at local level, this article provides a corrective to the prevailing academic focus on the elite negotiations and points to the importance of social histories of the bantustans for understanding their enduring legacies.

COVERT OPERATIONS IN THE EASTERN CAPE, 1986-1990

During the popular insurrection of 1985, the state had lost control in the townships of Port Elizabeth and it struggled to suppress the deeply-rooted democratic organisations in other small towns in the region. In response, the heads of the South African military set out to ‘normalise’ the situation in the Eastern Cape through a multi-pronged strategy of ‘counter-revolutionary warfare’ under the SADF’s Eastern Province Command.²⁸ This strategy employed a plethora of front companies, covert military units and hit squads to attack and kill UDF activists while attempting to foster an alternative ‘resistance movement’ to counter the ANC’s influence in the region.²⁹

In 1986, the SADF launched ‘Operation Katzen’ to remove Lennox Sebe and consolidate the Ciskei and Transkei under the Transkei leadership.³⁰ Through a series of covert activities under Katzen (so named after General AG ‘Kat’ Liebenburg and General CP ‘Joffel’ van der Westhuizen), the SADF planned to foster a pan-‘Xhosa Resistance Movement’ (XRM) in the Eastern Cape, emulating Inkatha to bolster the bantustan regime and as a bulwark to the ANC in the region.³¹ The scale of covert operations by SADF-MI in the Eastern Cape during

²⁷ Where most members of the Freedom Alliance were in favour of confederalism; Buthelezi continued to support a federal arrangement.

²⁸ Janet Cherry, pers. comm.

²⁹ Flanagan, “Covert Operations”.

³⁰ “Goniwe Witness Reveals Secrets,” *Sowetan* (12/3/1993); “The Plan that Went Wrong: Naïve Joffel, the Shadowy Supremo,” *Sunday Times* (14/3/1993); “Holomisa Hands Over More Secret Documents,” *Sunday Times* (21/3/1993); Douek, “They Became Afraid,” 215.

³¹ South African History Archive (SAHA, Johannesburg), AL2878- The Freedom of Information Programme Collection, A2.4.1.7.8- Operation Katzen.

the second half of the 1980s was extensive, involving an elaborate set of front companies and ostensibly independent ‘educational’ organisations, including Adult Education Consultants and its subsidiary Dynamic Teaching.³² Much of this activity was coordinated under the Eastern Province Command under Van der Westhuizen and was sanctioned at the highest level by the State Security Council.³³ Van der Westhuizen controlled 30,000 members of the SADF, including the covert operations responsible for the murder of the Cradock Four in 1985;³⁴ the murders of the PEBCO Three in 1985; the Motherwell bombing in 1989; and various attempted coups in the Ciskei and Transkei.³⁵ During the States of Emergency in 1985 and 1986, the Eastern Cape had perhaps the highest level of repression and detention in the country. As Flanagan argues, the region was understood by the security regime as the ANC’s ‘powerbase’; as a central battleground in the war for South Africa.³⁶

SADF-MI continued to cultivate political conflict through arming Africanist organisations. The Eastern Province Command had funded and supported Reverend Ebenezer Maqina, (one-time Black Consciousness activist, first in Port Elizabeth during the mid-1980s and then from the late 1980s in Uitenhage-KwaNobuhle); in the development of the vigilante organisation amaAfrika.³⁷ From the early 1980s, SADF-MI found a partner in Maqina to aggravate existing conflicts between the UDF and the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO), by funding and arming Maqina and his clients and, from 1986, through the establishment of amaAfrika via front organisations including Adult Education.³⁸ A number of former members of amaAfrika in Uitenhage later became members of the PAC and there was a considerable overlap between the local organisational structures of these two groups.³⁹

The SADF’s attempts to remove Sebe revealed the limits of the power of the central state to control governance in the bantustans. Sebe had become an embarrassment to the government’s scheme of independent homelands: his personal aggrandisement and brutal repression had alienated local people and in so doing strengthened support for the liberation

³² Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand, AG2543- Independent Board of Inquiry (IBI) 1989-, 2.2.28- Special Report on Bisho/Ciskei Shootings: 7 September 1992; A. Shepherd, “Sinister Ciskei,” *Africa Report*, 38, no. 1 (1993): 54-56.

³³ Flanagan, “Covert Operations.”

³⁴ “The Plan that Went Wrong,” *Sunday Times*, (14/03/1993).

³⁵ A. Minnaar, “The PEBCO Three, Cradock Four (Goniwe) and Motherwell Killings,” in Shutte et al., *The Hidden Hand*, 283- 296.

³⁶ Flanagan, “Covert Operations,” 192.

³⁷ R. Riordan, “Ama-Afrika: Kwanobuhle, 4 January 1987,” in Shutte et al., *The Hidden Hand*, 242.

³⁸ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, Volume Two* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 302- 306, (hereafter *TRC Report*). Re. amaAfrika in Uitenhage, see *TRC Report, Volume Three* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 100-102.

³⁹ *TRC Report, Volume Three*, 102-103.

movements in the region. Botha and his ‘securocracy’ pursued an alternative hegemonic project and looked to Buthelezi’s model of Inkatha for a more durable solution. The Africanist rhetoric of Maqina and AZAPO fitted with the SADF’s desire to foster an alternative ‘Xhosa Resistance Movement’ to counter the ANC, while Maqina presented as a possible Buthelezi of the Eastern Cape.⁴⁰ As Bantu Holomisa argued in 1993, the revelations about Katzen provided clues as to the ongoing strategies of repression during the transition.⁴¹ While Katzen failed, its substance was carried forward in the creation of the euphemistically-named African Democratic Movement (ADM) under Brigadier Gqozo during the early 1990s. SADF-MI’s covert operations spanned the Eastern and Western Cape linking amaAfrica and the ADM in the Eastern Cape with the activities of the Witdoeke and the Western Cape United Squatters Association (WECUSA) in the Western Cape.⁴² Prince Gobingca, leader of the Witdoeke, was ‘a key player’ in various sites of violence in the Eastern and Western Cape through his involvement with WECUSA, the ADM and SADF-MI.⁴³ Gobinca had also become associated with an ANC SDU in Khayelitsha, over which the ANC had lost control, and which had struck up connections with Gobingca and the ADM in the Ciskei in order to obtain weapons.⁴⁴ The militarisation of the bantustan state through the funding of covert operations thus developed a patrimonial character. This had the effect of blurring the lines of political opposition, as decentralised militias sought to access arms through whatever means possible.

THE ADM AND THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE CISKEI (1990-1993)

By the late 1980s, the fragile, repressive and hated system of Tribal Authorities created by the apartheid regime in the Ciskei had all but collapsed under the weight of popular insurrection and civic mobilisation. In many localities, Residents’ Associations had assumed control over the local allocation of land and housing, effectively casting out headmen.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ben Conradie, former official of Eduguide, cited in *TRC Report, Volume Two*, 304.

⁴¹ “The Dirty Tricks Trail Leads to the Top,” *Weekly Mail* (12/03/1993).

⁴² “MI Links to Gunrunning,” *Weekly Mail* (04/02/1994- 10/02/1994).

⁴³ *TRC Report, Volume Two*, 704-5. SAHA, AL2878, A.2.4.1.7.10.5.2; A.2.4.1.7.10.6.2; A.2.4.1.7.11; A.2.4.1.12.1.

⁴⁴ *TRC Report, Volume Three*, 124-134, 513-515; G. Houston, S. Mati, D. Seabe, J. Peires, D. Webb, S. Dumisa, K. Sausi, B. Mbenga, A. Manson and N. Popiwa, “The Liberation Struggle and Liberation Heritage Sites in South Africa” (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2013), 454-456.

⁴⁵ C. Manona, “The Collapse of the ‘Tribal Authority’ System and the Rise of Civic Associations,” in M. Whisson and C. de Wet (eds), *From Reserve To Region: Apartheid and Social Change in the Keiskammahoek*

When Gqozo came to power in March 1990, having ousted Lennox Sebe in a military coup supported by SADF-MI, his promise of a conciliatory politics was widely embraced. There were high hopes among the popular movement that Gqozo would emulate Bantu Holomisa's military rule in the Transkei, which provided some shelter to the ANC. After the coup, Gqozo appeared at political rallies alongside ANC leaders and professed a commitment to democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and free association. He dismissed the illegitimate headmen who had been appointed under Sebe's regime, tacitly acknowledging the widespread failure of Tribal Authorities and the de facto authority of Residents' Associations and other civics who had assumed roles in local governance.⁴⁶

Despite his initial overtures, by February 1991 Gqozo's stance had shifted. This was due in part to the growing influence of SADF-MI. Amid growing calls for his resignation, and being fed information by the personnel of SADF-MI, Gqozo became increasingly paranoid about the possibility of a coup by the ANC to oust him. Following a series of reported coups against his government, a 'silent coup' was staged by SADF-MI, which came to assume control over the Ciskei government.⁴⁷ In late 1990 SADF-MI established a new covert operation known euphemistically as International Research (IR, later Ciskei Intelligence Services, or CIS). IR-CIS was engaged in the destabilisation of the Ciskei's rural areas, meting out violent attacks on known political adversaries and recruiting askaris through private covert organisations concealed as Adult Education initiatives.⁴⁸

While military intelligence personnel fed Gqozo misinformation and fuelled his fear of being unseated by the ANC,⁴⁹ the changing political alliances of the Ciskei General must also be understood in relation to the challenge posed to the patrimonial bantustan regime by strikes and civic mobilisation. Land invasions and the influence of Residents' Associations undermined the local relations on which the territorial power of his regime rested, while strikes by civil servants undermined its viability. The thin veneer of Gqozo's democratic commitments and his failure to placate opposition had been revealed in July 1990, when residents of Thornhill, an impoverished and densely populated resettlement area in the northern Ciskei, moved onto land in the vicinity held by the South African Native Trust

District of (Former) Ciskei, 1950 to 1990 (Grahamstown: Institute of Social and Economic Research- ISER, 1997), 49- 68. L. Wotshela, "Territorial Manipulation," 337.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch (HRW), "Ciskei: Ten Years" on Human Rights and the Fiction of 'Independence', *Human Rights Watch Reports* 3, no. 16 (1991).

⁴⁷ "Ciskei Succumbs Gratefully to the Silent SA Coup," *Weekly Mail* (15/02/1991- 21/02/1991)

⁴⁸ "A Secret Network to Preserve White Power," *Christian Science Monitor* (24/08/1992).

⁴⁹ "Gqozo was Turned by MI, Claims Hugo," *City Press* (31/01/1993).

(SANT). They were forced back to Thornhill at gunpoint by the Ciskei Defence Force (CDF). The Mdantsane Residents' Association (MDARA) was denied the right to protest the Ciskei government's inaction over the housing shortage in this large urban township outside East London.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, a strike wave had begun in the Ciskei's civil service. Initiated in April 1990 by nurses at Cecilia Makiwane hospital, the strike had spread to include other hospital staff and civil service employees, demanding wages equal to South African employees. The strikes were met with heavy repression by Gqozo's regime and workers were forced to return to their posts. From February 1991, the strikes multiplied across the civil service, provoked further by Gqozo's declaration that Ciskei's residents must not participate in the proposed national stay away. Striking workers staged a series of marches on the capital of Bisho and ground the Ciskei's administration to a halt. The Ciskei state again responded with violent repression, arresting activists and engaging in widespread intimidation. Some workers were forcibly removed from their government-owned homes.⁵¹ Under the duress of a failing administration, Gqozo was forced to negotiate, and called in the Tripartite Alliance (ANC; Congress of South African Trade Unions- COSATU; South African Communist Party- SACP) to negotiate on behalf of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) who had organised the strike. On 1 March 1991, the strikers marched again on Bisho, demanding Gqozo's resignation, the reincorporation of the Ciskei into South Africa, and the recognition of trade unions and popular structures of local government.⁵² When an agreement was reached and not heeded by Gqozo's regime, the strike again resumed. Amid mounting tensions, strikes, protests and repression in Hewu in the northern Ciskei, a partial state of emergency was declared in Whittlesea on 27 April 1991.⁵³

The other key dimension of the Ciskei's emerging political crisis stemmed from Gqozo's attempts to restore the historic authorities of the bantustan regime: Tribal Authorities and headmen. Proposals to reinstate headmen in the Ciskei had been made early in 1991, following the repression at Thornhill and Mdantsane, but these only came into force in June 1991. In July, a new directive instructed all magistrates in Ciskei to reappoint headmen and to disregard the local authority of popularly-elected Residents' Associations. Simultaneously, Gqozo launched his new political party, the ADM, which was explicitly modelled on Inkatha. On 2 September 1991, Gqozo appeared with Buthelezi on state television calling "moderate"

⁵⁰ HRW, "Ciskei"

⁵¹ White, "The Rule," 99.

⁵² HRW, "Ciskei."

⁵³ The SoE remained in place until August. *TRC Report, Volume Three*, 128. For further discussion see Wotshela, "The Fate of Ciskei."

leaders to join together, airing the alliance between the two bantustan leaders.⁵⁴ At the launch of the ADM, Gqozo publically stated his intention to “clean up Ciskei.”⁵⁵ A series of political purges ensued, involving the removal of Ciskei government ministers critical of Gqozo, expulsions from the police force, and the removal of Radio Ciskei employees who had allowed government opponents to air their views.⁵⁶ The ADM was heavily supported by the covert military operations of IR-CIS and was established to buttress the local power of headmen, who were in turn charged with promoting the organisation.⁵⁷ Through the ADM, Gqozo hoped to shore up his alliance with Inkatha and the NP, hedging his bets by supporting a federal agenda while preparing the ground to wage a battle in multiparty elections.⁵⁸ Having failed to placate civic mobilisation, repression through the ADM and SADF-MI covert operations was designed to reassert political control over local governance and the structures of state patronage. As Human Rights Watch argued, “One of the aims of the ADM... is to recruit traditional community leaders with the aim of moving local government under the direct control of the military regime.”⁵⁹

The re-imposition of headmen and the attack on local democratic authority that this constituted provoked popular anger and unleashed a wave of violence across the Ciskei. By October 1991, the conflict between the ADM and headmen on the one hand, and local populations sympathetic to the ANC-aligned civics on the other, had reached “crisis proportions.”⁶⁰ “Anger in the Ciskei is growing and both resistance to the military rule and reaction to this resistance is becoming increasingly violent”, the IBI reported.⁶¹ Gqozo rallied for popular support of the ADM in its war against the ANC, which centred on Hewu, King Williamstown and Alice. At the latter, Chief Maqoma, supported by the murderous IR-CIS, had thrown his weight behind headmen, arming them heavily. There was also some speculation within Ciskei government circles that South Africa preferred Maqoma to Gqozo as a more predictable and conservative leader of the homeland.⁶²

More than six hundred people were arrested or detained from July to September 1991 in connection with conflicts over the re-imposition of headmen in the Ciskei. Seventy-two faced

⁵⁴ Historical Papers, AG2543, 2.2.18, IBI Monthly Report (September 1991), 38.

⁵⁵ HRW, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992: Events of 1991* (New York: HRW, 1991), 115.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Douek, ““They Became Afraid,””224

⁵⁸ IBI (September 1991), 37.

⁵⁹ HRW, *HRW World Report 1992*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ Historical Papers, AG2543, 2.2.19, IBI Monthly Report (October 1991), 35.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² IBI (October 1991), 46; ““The Lawyer’ chosen to rule,” *Weekly Mail* (19/3/1993- 25/3/1993).

court charges, some for intimidation and murder. A number of violent clashes had taken place, resulting in at least two deaths: the property of headmen and ADM supporters had been burned; there was a hijacking, and an ADM supporter's home was attacked with grenades. More than twenty headmen had resigned by October 1991.⁶³ On 28 October 1991, Gqozo declared on Radio Ciskei: "I say to the police they should hit silly people on the head because the courts take a long time while they continue to burn people."⁶⁴ Having signed the National Peace Accord the previous month, in contravention of legal process and surprising his advisers and the South African government, on 29 October Gqozo announced a State of Emergency across the Ciskei.⁶⁵ The South African government declared that it would not intervene to revoke the State of Emergency: Gqozo's repression of the ANC was bolstered by the SADF's covert operations (IR-CIS) and his intransigence was highly convenient if not clearly strategic. The State of Emergency was only formally lifted on 17 November under the weight of widespread criticism from the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and internationally.⁶⁶

The escalation of violence in the Ciskei throughout 1991 provides an essential context for understanding the mass action campaign of the following year, as the ANC leadership responded to the ensuing crisis. The return to the Ciskei's rural areas of highly trained MK fighters also fuelled this conflict.⁶⁷ A spiral of violence - involving attacks by Ciskei police and SADF-MI covert operations on ANC supporters, coupled by reprisals and attacks on headmen, Ciskei officials and ADM supporters - was escalating into an unacknowledged civil war.⁶⁸

Amid this turmoil, and frustrated with the slow pace of negotiations, in mid-1992 an SACP grouping called for mass action to bring down the homeland regimes and homed in on the Ciskei as the first and most vulnerable target for the so-called 'Leipzig option'. They proposed to overthrow the regime through popular action and drew inspiration from the 'peaceful revolution' in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe. In doing so, they responded to the strikes already in motion in the Ciskei. Gqozo insisted that his regime would meet the proposed protest with the full use of military force. On 7 September, led by senior leaders including Chris Hani, Ronnie

⁶³ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁴ HRW, HRW World Report 1992, 115.

⁶⁵ IBI (October 1991), 36.

⁶⁶ HRW, HRW World Report 1992, 114- 116.

⁶⁷ White, "The Rule," 122.

⁶⁸ TRC Report, Volume Three, 128-136.

Kasrils, Steve Tshwete and Cyril Ramaphosa, a large demonstration of peaceful protesters marched to the stadium at Bisho, the capital of the Ciskei homeland. One group of protesters, led by Kasrils, attempted to break out of the stadium into which the crowd had been corralled, to proceed to the government buildings in Bisho. As they did so, the CDF opened fire on protesters, killing 29 people.⁶⁹ The supposed ‘Leipzig option’ miscalculated the continuity of political alliances in South Africa and underplayed the likelihood of violent state repression, which had been widely anticipated in Leipzig. The NP government had not disowned its bantustan project: instead the government refrained from disciplining Gqozo, whose intransigence was expedient for the NP’s political strategy.

COMPROMISE, NEGOTIATIONS AND THE FUDGING OF FEDERALISM

The brutality and obstinacy of Gqozo’s regime, supported as it was by SADF-MI, was convenient, if embarrassing, for the NP. The Bisho Massacre did not bring an end to the violence nor did it force the NP to step back from its agenda of bolstering the homeland regimes and their politics of patronage. Following the massacre and widespread global condemnation of the NP government’s complicity in the killing of peaceful demonstrators, Pretoria signalled that reincorporation of the independent homelands was on the cards.⁷⁰ The government had been proposing the replacement of the bantustans by nine regions since the previous year, yet while pedalling such rhetoric, no such legislation had emerged.⁷¹ Less than an admission that the homelands should be disbanded, this was another step in the ‘fudging’ of federalism, as the government continued to press for the protection of white interests by supporting its traditional allies in the homelands and by recasting federalism in the debate about regional policy.⁷²

The NP and the security establishment continued to protect its minority interests by promoting the authority of bantustan elites long after the formal admission that the bantustans would be incorporated into a single state as the ANC demanded. Like military strategy, state governance during the transition continued on a similar path, as the government held out for

⁶⁹ White, “The Rule,” 132- 164. I examine local mobilisation against the regime and the mass action campaign in more detail in a forthcoming article.

⁷⁰ “South Africa May Seek Shift in Black Homelands,” *Washington Post* (18/09/1992).

⁷¹ HRW, *HRW World Report 1992*, 114- 116; R. Suttner, “The Bisho March and Massacre: An Assessment,” *The African Communist* 130 (1992).

⁷² R. Humphries, T. Rapoo and S. Friedman, “The Shape of the Country: Negotiating Regional Government”, in Friedman and Atkinson (eds), *The Small Miracle*, 148- 181.

federal or regional concessions. Despite having repealed the Land Acts (1913, 1936) and Group Areas Act (1950) in 1991, the NP government continued to provide land to homeland regimes to shore up their authority. In the latter part of 1992, there was an outcry by land activists and civics at revelations that the government had continued to transfer land to the bantustans in the months following the breakdown of CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa), in order to bolster the local power and patronage of chiefs, headmen and homeland regimes.⁷³ Responding to revelations of secret land transfers to the administrations of ‘independent’ homelands including Bophutswana and Ciskei, as well as proposed further transfers to the ‘self-governing’ territories of QwaQwa, Lebowa and KwaZulu, the South African Council of Churches called for a moratorium on land transfers until the establishment of a representative government. The ANC and AFRA (Association for Rural Advancement) also condemned the transfers.⁷⁴ The government claimed that the transfers were aimed at addressing land hunger; that they were merely delivering land already promised by the SANT. The more likely truth is that in transferring land to the bantustans, the government sought to bolster the patronage networks of bantustan elites, while removing the possibilities for a new, ANC-dominated regime to distribute land under a land reform programme.⁷⁵ These land transfers reveal the continued efforts by the regime to underpin the authority of bantustan elites and to bolster conservative alliances in forthcoming elections. The “transfer deals, made to honour past promises to homeland governments are”, the *Weekly Mail* argued (representing the perspective of critical activists and Land Committees), “aimed at winning allies in a future election, and not addressing land hunger.”⁷⁶

Indeed, O’Malley argues that it was not until the NP was informed categorically that the state’s coffers were empty that it conceded to the ANC’s demands for the reincorporation of the homelands.⁷⁷ Even at the end of 1992, the NP would not simply “pull the plug” on the homelands (as international critics argued it should), continuing to back a solution that would give the homelands the most status and influence in the new political order.⁷⁸ These strategies

⁷³ “Call to Stop Govt Land Sales,” *Cape Times*, (28/10/1992); “Govt land transfers ‘must stop’”, *Business Day* (29/10/1992).

⁷⁴ 400,000 ha of land held by the SANT was due to be transferred to the ‘self-governing’ entities. Ibid.

⁷⁵ M. Ottaway, *South Africa: The Struggle for a New Order* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1993), 170; P. B. Rich, “Apartheid, the State and the Reconstruction of the Political System” in P. B. Rich (ed), *Reaction and Renewal in South Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 53-54.

⁷⁶ “No to Apartheid Land Deals,” *Weekly Mail* (30/10/1992-05/11/1992).

⁷⁷ P. O’Malley, “Overview of 1992.” Accessed at <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv00017/04lv00344/05lv00607/06lv00608.htm> commentary for 1992 on 09/08/2018.

⁷⁸ Dugard, cited in A. Shepherd, “Problem Child,” *Africa Report*, 38, no. 3 (1993), 31.

were informed by the experience of the transition in Namibia, where the security state had experienced some success in curbing the South West Africa People's Organisation's (SWAPO) electoral gains by bolstering the conservative Turnhalle Alliance through covert operations.⁷⁹ Underestimating the strength of support for the ANC in rural areas, the government hoped that the patrimonial networks of the bantustans might foster support for conservative allies in a future election.

While it did not quell protests or violence, the Bisho massacre acted as a centrifugal force to bring the emphasis back to the negotiators. As the reputation of "tricky Frickie" De Klerk became tarnished by the alliance with Inkatha (on which he had been forced to renege by signing the Record of Understanding on 26 September 1992), the NP's "Young Turks," Roelf Mayer and Leon Wessels, moved to closer to the ANC negotiators, notably Cyril Ramaphosa. The media dubbed it the "Roelf and Cyril Show".⁸⁰ In late 1992 a trip to Germany by ANC strategists had allayed their fears that federalism would "emasculate" the power of the organisation.⁸¹ The critical sticking point in the negotiations thus far - the future of the homelands - was to be worked out through the details of a regional policy. Sidelined by the Record of Understanding, Buthelezi formed the Concerned South Africans Group (COSAG), an uneasy alliance of conservatives and 'traditionalists' invested in the regime of ethnic separation and determined to hold on to their power at all costs. The alliance - including (alongside Buthelezi) Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana; Gqozo; and the 'white right' Conservative Party - dug in their heels against the growing consensus for a unitary state as the Multiparty Negotiating Forum (MPNF) got underway in April 1993.

Entering into renewed negotiations at the MPNF, the NP and ANC had agreed on the principle of power sharing, but the details concerning the future of the homelands were to be worked out further at the Commission on the Delimitation/ Demarcation of Regions (1993). Where constitutionalism reigned, the fault lines remained: the NP wished to settle the boundaries and functions of regional government prior to democratic elections, while the ANC defended the right of a democratically-elected assembly to decide on such matters; the NP called for major powers in the regions - decentralised control over justice, law and order,

⁷⁹ Battersby, cited in O'Brien, 160; M. Swilling and M. Philips, "State Power in the 1980s: From 'Total Strategy' to 'Counter-Revolutionary Warfare'" in J. Cock and L. Nathan (eds), *War and Society: The Militarisation of South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989), 134- 148.

⁸⁰ A. Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Road to Change* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 181.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

mining, commerce, land and agriculture - which the ANC rejected.⁸² The NP's proposals to the 1993 Delimitation Commission conceded little and pressed to maintain the territoriality of the bantustans.⁸³ Like Mangope, Gqozo sought to rebrand his project as a developmental regional exercise while expanding the territories of his proposed region beyond the Ciskei's historical borders.⁸⁴ Encouraged by the NP's tacit and continued financial support for the homelands, members of the COSAG alliance continued to throw their weight around, making threats of secession and civil war if their demands for federalism were not met.⁸⁵

AFTER BISHO: NEGOTIATIONS AMID VIOLENCE

While the NP and ANC were committed once again to political negotiations, the situation on the ground was as fraught as ever as repression, reprisals and counter-reprisals spiralled into civil war.⁸⁶ Following the massacre at Bisho on 7 September 1992, violence in the Ciskei escalated. After the funeral on 18 September for the 28 ANC supporters killed at Bisho, angry mourners ransacked and burned a casino at Mdantsane, while Ciskei riot police opened fire.⁸⁷ The preceding night, at a vigil held outside the South African 'embassy' in the Ciskei, ANC Youth League President Peter Mokaba called for confrontation, proclaiming that "[t]he time has come for us to return fire with fire. . . . We must fight, comrades."⁸⁸ At the end of October 1992 the IBI reported that "[t]here is an undeclared war between the Ciskei government, the government-linked African Democratic Movement (ADM) and the South African force on the one hand, and the African National Congress and its supporters on the other."⁸⁹ The violent conflict that had characterised the eighteen-month period since early 1991 appeared to "be escalating to a Natal-style conflict."⁹⁰ More sophisticated weaponry was being used by both sides. The IBI was sympathetic to the ANC and its allies, reporting a series of savage attacks that were being carried out by the Ciskei regime against almost

⁸² ANC Regional Policy, March 1993. Accessed at <http://www.anc.org.za/content/anc-regional-policy> on 17/07/2018.

⁸³ Y. Muthien and M. Khosa, "'The Kingdom, the Volkstaat and the New South Africa': Drawing South Africa's New Regional Boundaries," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, no. 2 (1995), 303-322.

⁸⁴ Jones, "From 'Nationhood' to Regionalism," 509.

⁸⁵ Sparks, *Tomorrow*, 187.

⁸⁶ A. Trench, "Ciskei: A Cauldron of Continuing Conflict," *Democracy in Action* 6, no. 6 (1992): 20-21.

⁸⁷ "South Africa May Seek Shift in Black Homelands," *Washington Post* (18/09/1992).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Historical Papers, AG2543, 2.2.29, IBI Report (October 1992), 33.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

anyone who had had contact with ANC officials and independent monitors.⁹¹ Later, the TRC reported that after the Bisho massacre, ongoing clashes between the ADM and ANC had evolved into “overt warfare”, with the majority of attacks carried out by ANC-aligned groups in reprisals against people associated with the regime, not least headmen.⁹²

The Ciskei state garnered local influence through its ability to allocate land and resources and to mobilise support among the landless.⁹³ The continued mobilisation of ‘squatters’ in Residents Associations aligned with SANCO (South African National Civic Organisation) posed an ongoing challenge to the local authority of the Ciskei regime.⁹⁴ In 1990, shortly after coming to power, Gqozo encouraged landless people to build on any available open space within the Ciskei.⁹⁵ He arguably did so in an attempt to placate and undermine the Residents’ Associations, not least in Hewu. But in January 1993, following the re-imposition of headmen; amid ongoing political violence between the ANC and ADM and following reprisals after the Bisho massacre, Gqozo cracked down on shack-dwellers in Mdantsane and across the Ciskei, giving them just a week to move.⁹⁶ Gqozo’s erratic approach towards the question of ‘squattening’ in the Ciskei reveals struggles over the fabric of the state. On Monday 18 January, he announced on Radio Ciskei that the state would target all those who had erected shacks without permission: “I want people to obey my headmen, my councillors, my chiefs and my tribal authorities”, he said. “We are going to take action against squatters. We will throw their stuff away. Squattening is causing bad administration.”⁹⁷ Henceforth, in an attempt to bolster the authority of the bantustan, the ADM and their patronage networks, permission to erect housing was to be sought from headmen and councillors. Political and civic leaders in the region argued that this move was directed as an attack on SANCO, the ANC and its supporters: Gqozo knew that “the squatter settlements have been at the forefront of resistance against his government” said ANC spokesperson, Mcibisi Bata; “people will have no alternative but to fight back.”⁹⁸ A similar dynamic was unfolding in Bophuthatswana,

⁹¹ Ibid., 33-35.

⁹² Following the massacre, for example, a group of ANCYL members murdered a headman at Alice. *TRC Report, Volume Two*, 671-672.

⁹³ This dynamic had shaped Sebe's appeal to Rharhabe ethnicity earlier in his time in office. Peires, “Ethnicity,” 257.

⁹⁴ L. Wotshela, “Quitrent Tenure and the Village System in the Former Ciskei Region of the Eastern Cape: Implications for Contemporary Land Reform of a Century of Social Change,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, no. 4 (2014): 741-743.

⁹⁵ “Oupa to Squatters: Get Out or Else,” *Weekly Mail* (22/01/1993- 28/01/1993).

⁹⁶ “Raze Your Shacks- Gqozo,” *Star* (19/01/1993).

⁹⁷ “Oupa to Squatters: Get Out or Else,” *Weekly Mail* (22/01/1993- 28/01/1993).

⁹⁸ Ibid.; “Raze Your Shacks- Gqozo,” *Star* (19/01/1993).

where Mangope's repressive regime cracked down on shack-dwellers, not least at Hammanskraal, in what many understood as a political purge of opponents to his regime.⁹⁹

Against the tide of support for the ANC in the region, Gqozo's regime was meanwhile also desperately handing out bribes to chiefs. By January 1993, twenty four vehicles had been given to chiefs and headmen, including Lent Maqoma and J. Mkrola, a newly appointed and widely-despised headman in Hewu.¹⁰⁰ These "bakkies" were a bid to buy off chiefs while advertising the value of loyalty to them. More than this, in the context of the simmering conflict in the Ciskei this may also have comprised a threat to opponents of the regime: while building the ADM, Gqozo appeared to be arming his allies with the means to transport vigilantes, in a sinister echo of Inkatha's brutal Seven Day War on pro-ANC settlements in the Edendale Valley.¹⁰¹

Conflicts between the ANC and ADM continued throughout 1993, while the fraught relations between the ANC and PAC continued to be fanned by the ADM's patronage of arms and resources. Some ADM associates looked to the PAC for political cover, while ANC members justified violence in the name of self-defence. Following the attacks by ANC supporters on headmen, ADM members and other associates of the Ciskei government, a number of headmen, former headmen and other ADM supporters joined the PAC.¹⁰² In the wake of the attack on the King William's Town Golf Club (28 November 1992), which was claimed by APLA (Azanian People's Liberation Army), it emerged that some of the alleged perpetrators of this attack were also ADM members. The ANC's Smuts Ngonyama argued that the same weapons used in the attack were later confiscated from ADM members near Dimbaza in January 1993.¹⁰³ ADM General Secretary Thamsanqa Linda claimed that he had encouraged ADM members to join the PAC in order "to get protection from ANC radicalism". The PAC's recruitment drive in late-1992 saw the organisation appealing to ADM members to join. While offering some political protection to ADM members and former members, the association between the ADM and the PAC also offered APLA a conduit for access to weapons.¹⁰⁴ In the violence between ANC and PAC supporters at Fort Beaufort in February and March 1993, it was reported that ANC supporters in the township blamed the PAC as the

⁹⁹ A. Shepherd, "Bophuthatswana's Squatter Problem," *Africa Report*, 38, no. 3 (1993), 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ "Oupa Hands Out Free Cars to Chiefs Spurning ANC," *Sunday Times* (31/01/1993).

¹⁰¹ Sparks, *Tomorrow*, 168-170.

¹⁰² *TRC Report, Volume Two*, 672.

¹⁰³ "ANC Links Ciskei Govt to Club Killings," *City Press*, 17/01/1993).

¹⁰⁴ "PAC Linked to Gqozo's 'Inkatha,'" *Weekly Mail* (15/01/1993- 21/01/1993).

instigators of the violence and believed that the police favoured the PAC.¹⁰⁵ The burgeoning conflict no doubt also offered a variety of opportunities for gangsters and ‘hardmen’ as Kynoch suggests.¹⁰⁶

Covert military operations and paramilitary forces continued to operate against the regime’s opponents in the Ciskei. In January 1993, in spite of the fact that the SADF was supposed to be in the process of disbanding the unit, 32 Batallion was still being used to ‘patrol’ the border of Ciskei.¹⁰⁷ De Klerk’s attempts to reign in the military had been conspicuously feeble, but by the end of 1993 senior SADF officers reached a reassessment themselves: they were losing interest in a coherent destabilisation strategy on the basis that covert operations were failing to halt the momentum of the constitutional negotiations.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the patrimonial militarisation of the region through covert operations - hit-squads and the economies that surrounded them - had found a momentum of their own.¹⁰⁹

The murder of Chris Hani in April 1993 by white right wingers was yet another tragedy that threatened to wreck the negotiations but which further underpinned the negotiating power of the ANC and the cohering of an agreement between the ANC and NP. The level of violence in the Ciskei rose again in the wake of Hani’s murder. Headmen appealed for military protection from the Ciskei state against attacks, as angry ANC supporters continued to target the regime’s local representatives. Gqozo’s decision in May not to prosecute those soldiers implicated by the Bisho massacre further incensed ANC supporters. Gqozo’s indemnity for the soldiers was shaped by his fears of a mutiny among CDF troops.¹¹⁰ During late 1993 and early 1994 a series of hit-squat attacks were waged against ANC supporters by ADM members and associates of the Ciskei regime, while ANC supporters continued to target ADM supporters and figures of authority in the bantustan.¹¹¹

GQOZO’S LAST STAND

¹⁰⁵ *TRC Volume Two*, 678-681.

¹⁰⁶ G. Kynoch, “Crime.”

¹⁰⁷ “32 Batallion Must Go,” *City Press* (7/02/1993)

¹⁰⁸ P.B. Rich, “Apartheid,” 57- 58.

¹⁰⁹ Sparks, *Tomorrow*, 163.

¹¹⁰ “Jittery Brigadier Backs Off on Bisho,” *Weekly Mail* (21/5/1993- 27/5/1993); “Indemnity boils,” *Financial Mail* (25/5/1993).

¹¹¹ *TRC Report, Volume Two*, 623; “Ciskei Attacks: ANC Blamed,” *Cape Times* (26/2/94).

In October 1993, as the major negotiating parties (ANC and NP) drew close to finalising their transitional compromise, the COSAG alliance - now with the AVF (Afrikaner Volksfront) too - reconstituted itself as a political party, renamed the Freedom Alliance (FA).¹¹² Frustrated with the dominance of the ANC and NP in the negotiations, the FA hoped to square up to the main players to push for their (con)federal demands. While negotiating over the form of a unitary state with the ANC, the NP continued to meet with the FA and to press for greater regional autonomy. Under pressure from Buthelezi, who had already left, Gqozo and Mangope pulled out of the negotiations. The compromises reached on the policy concerning provinces did indeed provide some considerable concessions to the NP (which was advocating for the FA): some regional power over taxation and law-making, and the strengthening of local government. But for the FA this did not go far enough to protect their political power.¹¹³ The citizenship of all South Africans was to be restored in law from 1 January 1994, thereby dissolving the political keystone of ethnic homelands and the power of the bantustan executives; the Interim Constitution was ratified by the MPNF plenary in November; a Transitional Executive Committee (TEC) was appointed and the date set for multi-party elections on 27 April 1994.¹¹⁴

The regime in the Ciskei was looking ever more fragile as the negotiations proceeded through the course of 1993. In return for more funds, a new and high profile finance minister was sent by Pretoria to curb the regime's elaborate spending. Faced with the impossible job of working with Gqozo, he promptly resigned.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, the Ciskei Supreme Court responded to the changing political scene and passed a string of legislation that upheld liberal freedoms including a Bill of Rights.¹¹⁶ The axing of senior civil servants in June seemed to signal the imminent collapse of the Ciskei, and another strike of civil servants was on the cards.¹¹⁷ Further revelations of coup plots against Gqozo emerged.¹¹⁸ Senior state officials, including Gqozo, participated in the brazen plunder of state resources while they had the chance.¹¹⁹ The inquest into the deaths of Charles Sebe and Onward Guzana, in which Gqozo

¹¹² P. Laurence, "The Diehards and the Dealmakers," *Africa Report* 38, no. 6 (1993), 15.

¹¹³ H. Ebrahim, *The Soul of a Nation: Constitution-Making in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), chapter 9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ "Finance Man Quit Ciskei in Disgust," *Sunday Times* (16/5/1993).

¹¹⁶ "Ciskei Bill of Rights Sets Pace," *Star* (1/2/1993).

¹¹⁷ "Ciskei govt 'on the verge of collapse,'" *Cape Times* (6/7/1993); "The brigadier's in a Corner," *Weekly Mail* (9/7/1993-15/7/1993).

¹¹⁸ "Ciskei Army Officers Held for 'Coup Plot,'" *Business Day* (22/6/1993).

¹¹⁹ "Top Ciskei Govt Man on Theft Charge," *Sowetan* (26/06/1993); "Gqozo's Second Farm," *Sowetan* (25/6/1993).

was implicated, threatened the future of his regime: he was to be charged with the murder of Sebe, and calls for his resignation were renewed.¹²⁰ Yet still the Ciskei's leader closed ranks. Gqozo moved closer to the Volksfront generals, who provided arms through the front company Multi Media Services (MMS),¹²¹ while the launch of his new - and to be short-lived - political party, the so-called Christian People's Movement, in June 1993 was an admission if ever there was of his resounding failure to garner local support for the ADM.¹²² While formally shunning the Negotiating Council's decisions, the Ciskei's ruler was nevertheless anticipating an election, attempting variously to restyle himself as a democratic leader, while employing violent covert operations to support his electoral strategy and disrupt the ANC's.¹²³ He was training an ADM militia to support his regime, recruited by rural chiefs and headmen and trained by the CDF at his farm near Peddie, which conveniently adjoined a military base.¹²⁴ In October 1993, a new decree in the Ciskei reintroduced detention without trial and allowed authorities to ban meetings: this was a clear indication that Gqozo intended to repress electioneering by the ANC opposition while contesting the election with the ADM.¹²⁵

Ciskei was the weakest of the bantustans in the Freedom Alliance, being reliant on Pretoria for eighty percent of its revenue.¹²⁶ Gqozo's power rested on maintaining control over the gate to state resources and a monopoly on violence supported by the CDF and private militias, funded and trained by SADF-MI front companies. This weakness became even more apparent late in 1993, as fears of a CDF mutiny pushed Gqozo to break ranks with the FA. SADF generals had finally reconsidered the efficacy of covert repression. While he stood trial for murder (for which he was controversially acquitted), Gqozo formally signalled that he would go along with the transitional process and elections, even if his Alliance partners still refused.¹²⁷ In fear of losing the support of the CDF, whose jobs were threatened, he agreed to

¹²⁰ "Gqozo to Face Murder Charge," *Sowetan* (1/10/1993).

¹²¹ "Were generals Paid for Guns or Spying?" *City Press* (11/7/1993); "Kei Gave Cops AKs," *City Press* (1/8/1993); "Gqozo Loyalists Trained as Militia," *City Press* (1/8/1993).

¹²² "Outcry Over Gqozo's CPM," *Weekly Mail* (4/6/1993-10/6/1993); "The Brigadier's in a Corner," *Weekly Mail* (9/7/1993-15/7/1993).

¹²³ "R102,000 for Gqozo's Photo?" *Cape Times* (10/7/1993); "Were Generals Paid for Guns or Spying?," *City Press* (11/7/1993).

¹²⁴ "Gqozo Loyalists Trained as Militia," *City Press* (1/8/1993); "Is Gqozo Changing the Guard?" *City Press* (10/10/1993).

¹²⁵ "Gqozo's Last Stand?" *South* (1/10/1993-5/10/1993).

¹²⁶ Shepherd, "Problem Child," 29.

¹²⁷ "Ciskei's Gqozo Agrees to Fight Elections," *Star* (11/12/1993); "Gqozo Acquitted of Murder," *Star* (13/12/1993).

join the TEC in early 1994 and left the FA.¹²⁸ The Christian Democratic Alliance was consolidated as the NP's electoral alliance with Gqozo, Mangope, and Buthelezi.¹²⁹ The Ciskei government continued its efforts to buy support for the ADM by introducing a scheme to transfer state housing to tenants.¹³⁰

The Freedom Alliance finally disintegrated following the Bophuthatswana crisis - the so-called 'Battle of Bop' - in March 1994. Mangope's intransigence and intervention by the AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging- Afrikaner Resistance Movement) could have had major ramifications for the (con)federal designs of the Freedom Alliance members, who continued to boycott the elections and who had been scheming for a militarised secession supported by private militias.¹³¹ Buthelezi's rejection of the forthcoming election threatened to undermine it. As it was, Mangope's determination to repress striking civil servants (who demanded a fifty percent pay rise, immediate pension payouts and reincorporation); the brutalisation of civilians by the AWB; the mutiny by Bophuthatswana Defence Force soldiers and the resumption of control in Mmabatho by the SADF humiliated Mangope and the white right and wholly undermined bantustan leaders threatening secession.¹³²

With similar dynamics present in the Ciskei, Gqozo promptly resigned less than a week later.¹³³ Major strikes among civil servants had already stalled the Ciskei regime in 1990-1991 and now threatened to take root again, forcing Gqozo to concede to demands for a pension payout.¹³⁴ Emboldened by this, civil servants remained steadfast, calling for Gqozo's resignation and immediate reincorporation; they threatened to take "Bophuthatswana-style" action if their demands were not met.¹³⁵ The CDF had already forced Gqozo to join the TEC; prison warders had recently come out on strike;¹³⁶ and, following the collapse of Bophuthatswana, a mutiny developed in the Ciskei's police force. Much like in Bop, police

¹²⁸ "Ciskei Defies Alliance and Joins TEC," *Business Day* (11/1/1994); "Ciskei to Join TEC, Gqozo tells headmen," *Cape Times* (11/1/1994); "Gqozo's Days are Numbered," *Weekly Mail* (14/1/1994-20/1/1994); "Gqozo May Let FA Dominoes Topple," *City Press* (16/01/1994).

¹²⁹ "NP Finds Unlikely Ally in Gqozo," *The Weekly Mail & Guardian* (4/3/1994-10/3/1994); R. Southall, 'Beyond the Bodycount,' *Reality* 24, no. 5 (1993): 5-7.

¹³⁰ "Free Transfers for C'kei Homes," *Cape Times* (3/1/1994).

¹³¹ "Ciskei and Bop Deny AWB Claim," *Sowetan* (13/7/1993); "Mastermind of the Afrikaner Volksfront," *Weekly Mail* (16/7/1993-22/7/1993); "Ciskei Arms Cache Confirmed," *Cape Times* (16/7/1993); "Gqozo on Firm Deal with White Right," *Sowetan* (26/11/1993).

¹³² Sparks, *Tomorrow*, 197- 224; P. Laurence, "Acceding to the Inevitable," *Africa Report*, 39, no.3 (1994), 67-70.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ "C'kei Threat to do a 'Bop,'" *Cape Times* (16/3/1994); "Ciskei Agrees to Pay Out Pensions," *Business Day* (17/3/1994).

¹³⁵ "Gqozo Threat Grows," *Sowetan* (18/3/1994).

¹³⁶ "Hostage Drama at Ciskei Prison," *Cape Times* (12/2/1994).

staged a sit-in at the police college in Bisho, demanding immediate pension payments; the mutiny developed as fifteen officers were taken hostage. CDF troops joined the mutiny and placed Gqozo under house arrest.¹³⁷ Hundreds of members of NEHAWU stormed government buildings in Bisho and ordered workers out. Fearing for more than his political career, with a crisis looming and with SADF troops gathering on the border of the Ciskei, Gqozo telephoned Pik Botha, the Foreign Minister, and capitulated, inviting Pretoria to step in. The TEC appointed two interim officials - including local civic leader Rev. Bongani Finca - supported by the NEHAWU general secretary and other administrative specialists, to govern the Ciskei until the election.¹³⁸ The following day, wildcat strikes ensued by government workers. Civil servants hailed riddance to Gqozo as they waited vainly for him to address them at the Bisho stadium, while the SADF (under the control of the TEC) closed in on the Ciskei to stall a further rebellion against the TEC by the CDF.¹³⁹

If Mangope's regime was dependent on support from Pretoria for its survival, in lacking the independent mineral revenues of Bop, Gqozo's was shackled to the government, now controlled by the TEC. The fall of his more powerful ally sealed Gqozo's demise. The balance of power had shifted decisively in favour of the ANC: as Joe Slovo famously declared in triumph following the capitulation of Mangope and Gqozo, "two down and one to go."¹⁴⁰ Only Buthelezi and his ally, the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini, and the ongoing threat of political violence now stood in the way of the success of the forthcoming elections in which the ANC looked likely to secure the majority they needed to govern. The strikes by civil servants and the rebellion by bantustan security forces - which stemmed from escalating demands for pay increases and the uncertainty over jobs and pensions amid the growing chaos and state plunder of dysfunctional bantustan regimes - had indeed proved to be the critical dynamic in the eventual demise of Ciskei and Bophuthatswana.¹⁴¹ These actions, coupled with the failed military intervention by the white right, precipitated the eventual collapse of these regimes into the unitary state prior to the election in April 1994.¹⁴² As Peires argues, "the biggest threat to the homeland state came... from within the state itself... [civil

¹³⁷ "Gqozo Goes: TEC Takes Over as Ciskei Police Revolt," *Cape Times* (23/3/1994).

¹³⁸ Laurence, "Acceding;" "TEC Takes Over Ciskei as Gqozo Quits," *Business Day* (23/3/1994); "Gqozo Resigns," *Sowetan* (23/3/1994).

¹³⁹ "Chaos in Homelands," *Star* (24/3/1994); "SA Troops Subdue Ciskei," *Star* (25/3/1994).

¹⁴⁰ P. Laurence, "Acceding," 68.

¹⁴¹ "Anarchy in Homelands," *Sowetan* (25/3/1994).

¹⁴² J. Cherry, "Development, Conflict and the Politics of Ethnicity in South Africa's Transition to Democracy," *Third World Quarterly*, 15, no.4 (1994), 619.

servants] possessed the capacity to bring the [bantustan] state almost to its knees.”¹⁴³ As in a variety of late-colonial contexts, the African civil servants proved a critical dynamic in accelerating political change.¹⁴⁴

If political reincorporation was now set, and the interim government would not make binding federal protections beyond April, what did this mean for the future of the bantustans and their bureaucracies? Much was unknown. The bantustan police and militaries would be reincorporated into the unitary state, along with their bureaucracies. The new government was saddled with the mammoth task of reforming the legacy of a bifurcated state. In the immediate aftermath of Gqozo’s resignation, Finca and his team of transitional administrators had some major matters to contend with. Civil servants had been assured by the TEC that their jobs and pensions would be protected with reincorporation, yet their capacity to strike effectively was evident. Not least among the challenges for Finca’s team were the hit squads still believed to be living in the Ciskei’s rural areas, many of whom had been trained as part of Gqozo’s ADM militia. Furthermore, large-scale state land deals had been underway in a bid to shore up the power and patronage of the bantustan’s elite.¹⁴⁵ In the months prior to the April election, wealthy and powerful individuals in the Ciskei and Transkei were using their access to the bantustan administrations to buy up state land at slashed prices, the Border Rural Committee revealed. This marked the demise of the bantustan regime as a conduit for access to state resources.¹⁴⁶

CONCLUSIONS: THE BANTUSTAN STATE AND THE TRANSITION

To underpin their strategy of slowing up political change, while variously buttressing their conservative allies in future elections, the NP regime and the security state continued to engage in established practices of state formation in the bantustans throughout the transition

¹⁴³ Peires, “Transkei on the Verge of Emancipation,” 209.

¹⁴⁴ As Cooper argues, “the ambiguity of civil servants’ status as workers inevitably opened up the relationship of workers of metropolitan and African origin and the hence the question of race.” F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 443, 443- 450. Less than a ‘collaborationist bourgeoisie’, Bantustan employees were a waged middle class, mobilised in ‘white-collar’ unions. As Peires has suggested, amid the fracturing of apartheid and the bantustan project, it is less than surprising that they looked to the ANC and the TEC, who promised a deracialised, and a more secure, dispensation. D. Innes and D. O’Meara, “Class Formation and Ideology: The Transkei Region,” *Review of African Political Economy* No. 7 (1976): 1-18; R. Southall, “The Beneficiaries of Transkeian ‘Independence,’” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 15, no.1 (1977): 1-23; Peires; “Implosion”, 383-387; Peires, “Transkei on the Verge of Emancipation,” 196-200.

¹⁴⁵ “Ciskei Probes Hit Squads”/ “Land Deals,” *Sowetan* (8/4/1994).

¹⁴⁶ “Probe into Huge Sales of State-Owned Land,” *Sunday Times* (10/4/1994).

period. Long after accepting that the bantustans would be incorporated into a single state, the NP supported these patrimonial regimes as decentralised agents of repression and political allies in forthcoming democratic elections.¹⁴⁷ They did so through the provision of additional land to distribute, while the covert operations of the security state fomented political violence and competition through the promotion of alternative political organisations. Through these practices, the apartheid regime pursued established strategies of state formation at a moment when the future form of the state was being negotiated. Buttressing the bantustans through violence and patrimony bolstered the possibility that a federal state of some sort - and thus the protection of white privilege - remained on the cards.

The history of political violence in the Ciskei illuminates important dimensions of the bantustan state in the transition. In the Ciskei, the struggle for power centred on the control of various levels of the 'gatekeeper' state.¹⁴⁸ Gqozo and his ADM sought to reassert control over the distribution of resources, not least land, to wrest control away from the civics. Through the patronage of weapons to vigilante organisations, covert operations bolstered the local power of the Ciskei state. The militarisation of the bantustan state in the Ciskei was thus patrimonial: in turn this shaped the dynamics of the violence. Training and arming young men for the ADM both underpinned the power of local chiefs and headmen, and developed new networks of patronage connected to the trade of guns between and among armed factions. Gunrunning muddied the political waters, as participants in the conflict struck up alliances to procure weapons: both the PAC and ANC at different moments became linked to the acquisition of arms through the ADM.¹⁴⁹

Written more than two years before the collapse of the Ciskei regime, Peires' analysis of the "implosion" of Ciskei and Transkei foretold key dynamics in the eventual collapse of the bantustan states: strikes by civil servants and homeland police and mutinies by homeland militaries.¹⁵⁰ Organised through NEHAWU, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), this strike wave was of unprecedented scale in the history of South Africa's public service.¹⁵¹ As in Bophuthatswana (and with similar dynamics in Transkei and Lebowa) the strikes and direct action protests of

¹⁴⁷ Graaff, "Towards an Understanding," 64.

¹⁴⁸ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 465.

¹⁴⁹ For comparative conclusions regarding Inkatha see Mathis, "From Warlords to Freedom Fighters"; C. Charney, "Vigilantes, Clientelism and the South African State," *Transformation* 16 (1991): 1-28.

¹⁵⁰ Peires, "Implosion," 383; 386-387.

¹⁵¹ G. Adler, "The Neglected Role of Labour Relations in The South African Public Service," African Studies Seminar Series, University of the Witwatersrand (10 April 2000).

civil servants, coupled with the rebellion by the homeland police and defence forces, compelled Gqozo to resign. Gqozo had alienated civil servants in his repression of the strikes of 1990-1991. In the crisis of March 1994, amid state plunder and the increasing dysfunctionality of the Ciskei regime, the TEC reassured the Ciskei's employees that their jobs and pensions would be secured through reincorporation. This sealed their rejection of the bantustan regime which now stood in the way of change. Further, South Africa's security generals had come to realise that their aims might be better served by running with the forthcoming election. Gqozo had lost his patrons and opted to join the election too.

The apartheid regime's efforts to foster an alternative 'Xhosa Resistance Movement' were a resounding failure as an electoral strategy in the Ciskei and Border region. In an area with more ANC members than anywhere outside the Transvaal; where the memory of Sebe's tyranny was recent and with mounting evidence of state repression through the ADM, Gqozo's ostensive political party was doomed to fail.¹⁵² In April 1994, the ADM did not win a single seat in the National Assembly or in the Eastern Cape Legislature, winning a measly 0.4 percent of the votes in the Eastern Cape, compared with the ANC's 84 percent.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, throughout the transition, the future of the homeland regimes, their bureaucracies and 'traditional' authorities in the 'new' South Africa were questions that repeatedly stalled the negotiations and threatened to disrupt them entirely. Chiefs and headmen were given some assurance by the concessions to Goodwill Zwelethini and CONTRALESA.¹⁵⁴ But where reincorporation dissolved the power of the Ciskei's executive, the social and economic relations that comprised the bantustan state, and which had been fostered throughout the transition, remained. With the eventual fall of Mangope and Gqozo, these bantustans were not dismantled but their executives deposed and their structures incorporated; the major questions concerning the reform of the state were - perhaps fatefully - postponed.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Peires, "Implosion," 377.

¹⁵³ White, "The Rule," 186.

¹⁵⁴ T. Maloka and R. Gordon, "Chieftainship, Civil Society and the Political Transition in South Africa," *Critical Sociology* 22, no.3 (1996): 37-55.

¹⁵⁵ L. Ntsebeza, "Rural Governance and Citizenship in Post-1994 South Africa: Democracy Compromised?" in J. Daniel, R. Southall and J. Lutchman (eds), *The State of the Nation, South Africa, 2004- 2005* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), 68; 58- 85.

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