

# The funeral the police left alone

IT WAS such a typical Eastern Cape township funeral scene that only seasoned observers would have been able to spot the crucial differences.

Inside the Kwanobuhle township community hall were three wreath-laden coffins. Hundreds of mourners sang songs and occasionally gave vent to pent-up emotions with mass political slogans.

But although the six-hour service was closely watched by police and army contingents, the security forces never once intervened as is common at the mass funerals for which the Eastern Cape is renowned.

Nor were any restrictions placed on singing, speakers, political messages and slogans, and the cortege route.

For this time the dead were not - as was also common during the recent uprising - supporters or members of the widely popular anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF) who were shot in their hundreds by security forces of the white minority nationalist government of President Pieter W. Botha.

Instead, Khentyu Matshaka, Kwekwe Ntantiso and Ndomelele Jack were members of the little-known Ama-Afrika political group bringing to six their number allegedly killed by the angry young township "comrades" who align themselves with the UDF.

In reality, however, the young comrades are governable by none.

The Ama-Afrika dead were part of a movement, which, according to Operation Real South Africa (ORSA), the extra-parliamentary civil rights branch of the Progressive Federal Party in the Eastern Cape, was brutally sponsored into power by the security forces on January 4.

Orsa director, Rory Riordan, says his information, obtained from 43 sworn statements he gathered from residents, is that the movement was willingly assisted by the security forces when it launched a systematic rampage against selected anti-apartheid figures in Kwanobuhle on January 4.

If the security forces are deeply involved - as he and the UDF allege - then it is not unreasonable to expect that the hand of the Joint Management Councils - secret "war" committees formed out of white civil authorities and the security forces in all South African cities and towns last year - is also present in fostering the conflict.

By their own admission, publicised soon after "bloody Sunday" - as the January 4 rampage has been dubbed - the Ama-Afrika group set out to destroy all black opposition groups from the black consciousness Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) to the mass democratic, non-racial groups organised in the United Democratic Front.

Since then, the movement which surfaced as the African People's Concerned Committee, has pursued these goals, conducting repeated bloody rampages against the groups, killing nine UDF supporters and injuring many. Homes have been burnt, possessions smashed and UDF activists have been driven out to seek refuge in other areas.

Kwanobuhle township, which could once boast an attendance of 60 000 people and upwards at a commemoration service for 21 residents killed by police fire on March 21 in nearby Langa township, is now caught, according to residents, in the grip of a terrifying enemy which has been diffused down into the township streets and to whom basic criminal law is an alien.

However, at the funeral - the movement's first public appearance - the image presented to journalists was one of political respectability as the slogans of the anti-white Pan-Africanist Congress were raised.

Perhaps the effect of the six recent and rapid deaths on the Ama-Afrika has had a sobering influence on its supporters who seem to have almost no coherent political profile beyond that of their two leaders, Rev. Ebenezer Maqina, a self-appointed lay-preacher and ousted black consciousness leader from New Brighton Township near Port Elizabeth, and a local Uitenhage furniture clerk, Joseph Maliwe.

Meanwhile, the movement which could get only 500 people to its funeral, seems set to face criticism from millions of Freedom Charter/UDF supporting Eastern Cape townshippers, liberal groups and the press, that it is really only a band of political thugs or "vigilantes".

As such the movement will have to answer to the allegation that it forms a brutal, illegal and expedient intra-township extension of the apartheid state's campaign of suppression.

## Death inquest of alleged guerilla

AN INQUEST into the death of an alleged guerilla, whose death was concealed by the Transkei government, started last week in the remote Transkei town of Sterkspruit.

Ngwenduna Vanda was shot by Transkei police near Telle Bridge border post between Lesotho and the nominally independent bantustan of Transkei, in December last year, after he allegedly crossed the border illegally.

His family were never informed of his death, only hearing of it through an anonymous telephone call five months later. Lawyers for the family then battled to establish Vanda's fate.

His body was subsequently exhumed and reburied near his family home.

At the inquest, a policeman involved in the shoot-out alleged that Vanda had opened fire with a Makarov pistol, when police attempted to arrest him. In the return fire, Vanda was wounded first in the right hand, and then fatally.

## Shack demolished, two dead

THERE WAS a pool of blood on the ground at number 18 Nconyana Street where a suspected African National Congress guerilla known only as Thandaxolo and his sister Nombini died in an apparent shootout with security forces in Port Elizabeth last week.

In a police communique released from Pretoria on Tuesday, police said security forces had used a casspir (a military vehicle) to demolish the shack in the black township of Motherwell when an order for the people to surrender was met with a hail of fire.

The communique said police went to the shack and were fired on after they attempted to enter.

Reinforcements were summonsed and an order to come out was met with renewed fire. The casspir was then used to push the shack over.