

HOMELANDS — VENDA GENERAL

1993 — 1994

By Mathatha Tsedu

THE African communal life style of extended families has always meant that no one could go hungry.

In fact, there is an African saying that hunger has no grave, which, as we all know now, is untrue as Somalia can bear testimony.

As this lifestyle crumbled in urban townships, leading to many elderly people turning into vagrants and hobos who sleep on park benches, the rural areas always stood out as a saving grace.

Even work seekers who left their rural homes would eventually turn back home if things were not working out, knowing that no matter how low things have sunk, there would always be someone out there to lend a helping hand.

But as the economic situation of black people, in particular, goes deeper and deeper into depression, even the rural areas are losing that quality that made them special.

Deep in the rural areas of Venda, away from the madding crowd, children are being dumped in hospitals under false names by mothers who have no intention of ever returning.

Child abuse, which was unheard of in many rural settlements, has also reared its head. Social workers say this is also due to frustrations caused by unemployment and poverty.

Moved by this situation, a group of men, mainly church elders, started the Takalani Children's Home at Siloam in the Nzhelele district.

Situated in thorn tree bushveld, Takalani, which literally means "be happy", provides a home for children who would otherwise be roaming the streets or wandering around in hospital wards without any hope of ever becoming anything in life.

Opened in 1988 with four children, including a three-month-old orphan whose mother had died after giving birth, the centre serves as a referral for the nearby Siloam Hospital and Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser hospitals.

The centre consists of six rondavels and a kitchen. It is run by a staff of 10, which includes two night watchmen, the director Mrs Mukondelele Phaswana (32) and her assistants.

"Social workers who find cases of extreme need also refer them to us and this, with our present register of 35 children, is way above our capacity of only 20 toddlers.

"The overstrained cash situation means the spectre of retrenchment hangs over staff members in this area where unemployment is higher than 50 percent," Phaswana said.

Today its register includes children who are attending school at primary



Director Mrs Mukondelele Phaswana and Awelani Mukwevho, a seven-month-old boy whose mother died while giving birth to him and whose father is too old to look after him.



"It is really tough to keep this place open," Mr Paul Tshindane says.

and secondary level. The cost of caring for these children is borne by the centre. This includes clothes, food and transport for those who need it.

"Dutch church donors have kept the Takalani home fires burning since its inception. But the rising cost of living, the change in the mood internationally as reform goes ahead in this country, and a dispute in the area which saw the mass departure of Dutch doctors, has seen a cut in aid to the centre," board secretary Mr Paul Tshindane said.

But the needs of the centre are increasing by the day and directors have had to rely on local fund raising to keep the place going.

"In 1992 the centre ran an overdraft of R20 000 which we are still trying to deal with," Tshindane said.

For this year the centre's budget for running costs alone amounts to R325 000. Of that amount, R125 000 still has to be raised.

"On top of that the centre needs an

Child abuse, which was unheard of in rural settlements, has also reared its head

additional R300 000 for expansion to handle the present enrolment as well as the many others who have had to be turned away because of overcrowding," Tshindane said.

The children themselves look a happy lot, learning house chores in a non-sexist environment where all share in all duties.

The centre can never replace the parents who either dumped them or have died, but for many of the children it is a home from no home that cannot be matched by anything else.

It would be a pity if this institution, the only one of its kind in the region, was to close down because those who have the means will not save it.

Its closure will mean closing the book on the future of these children, for whom Takalani not only means joy, but is the only home they can call their own.

Contact info

Those wishing to assist can contact Mrs Phaswana at telephone (01595) 30273 or Takalani Children's Home, PO Box 226, Nzhelele, Venda.

Venda's glitzy 'lawyer' under arrest

By MOSES MAMAILA

PROPELLED by the desire to be a well educated lawyer, an ambitious taxi-driver resorted to becoming a "legal practitioner" even though he did not have a scrap of tertiary education.

The man, in his twenties, comes from a remote village outside Sibasa and has been claiming to be doctor of law, with an LLD degree.

But recently his luck ran out when the Venda cops tracked him down

after his scam was exposed.

According to a social worker based at Tshilidzini Hospital, the man came to the hospital and offered legal assistance to workers who sought help through the social work division.

"He showed us his business card and it stated that he holds an LLD degree.

"But we were suspicious because he had difficulty talking in English," said the social worker.

(113)
"We actually referred a case to him as he said he was attached to the state office," she added.

The social worker said it was discovered that the man was not a qualified lawyer after she called the state attorney's office, and was told there was no such man in the office and no black lawyer in Transvaal who held an LLD.

The man is believed to have defrauded a number of people.

But the man, who

claimed that he had just bought a new Merc which had a carphone, was just an ordinary man who used to drive taxis, it was established.

Sources who know the man said he was ambitious and would do anything to be seen to be sophisticated.

Venda police spokesman Lt Benno de Klerk confirmed that the man had been arrested. He called on people with complaints about the man to come forward.

Venda: guarantees/sureties by State (113) 197. Mr K M ANDREW asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

- (1) Whether any guarantees or sureties were given directly or indirectly by the Government or any Department or agency of the Government to any person or organization for (a) loans granted, (b) lines of credit granted and (c) other specified financial services rendered to (i) the Government of, (ii) any Government Department of, (iii) a development corporation in and (iv) any other specified person or organization in Venda in the 1991-92 financial year; if so,
- (2) (a) what amounts were involved in each case and (b) what was the total amount outstanding in terms of such guarantees or sureties as at the latest specified date for which information is available;

(3) whether foreign currencies are involved in any of these guarantees or sureties; if so, (a) what currencies, (b) how much is involved and (c) who is responsible for bearing the potential cost of exchange rate fluctuations? B445E

The MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

- (1) (a) No.
 (b) Yes, a guarantee in respect of overdraft facilities to the Government of Venda.
 (c) No.
- (2) (a) R326 500 000
 (b) R225 860 000
- (3) No.
 (a), (b) and (c) fall away.

INTERPELLATIONS UNDER NAME OF MEMBER

Abrahams, Mr T—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 629

Beyers, Mr J M—

General Affairs:
 Constitutional Development, 573

Bruwer, Mr A A B—

Own Affairs:
 Agricultural Development, 783

Burrows, Mr R M—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 99

Carlisle, Mr R V—

Own Affairs:
 Housing and Works, 605

Chiolé, Mr J—

General Affairs:
 Transport, 49

Gerber, Mr A—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 19

Gibson, Mr D H M—

General Affairs:
 Trade and Industry, 309

Goodall, Mr B B—

General Affairs:
 Finance, 580

Gounden, Mr T L—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 648

Haswell, Mr R F—

General Affairs:
 Law and Order, 420

Isaacs, Mr N M—

General Affairs:
 Public Works, 619
Own Affairs:
 Local Government, Housing and Agriculture, 125

Langley, Adv T—

General Affairs:
 Justice, 413

Leon, Mr A J—

General Affairs:
 Justice, 56

Moorcroft, Mr E K—

General Affairs:
 Agriculture, 734

Naidoo, Mr P—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 855

Nasson, Mr C I—

General Affairs:
 Administration and Tourism, 823
 National Health, 351
Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 359

Nel, Mr W U—

General Affairs:
 Justice, 7

Pauw, Dr F H—

Own Affairs:
 Education and Culture, 459

Pienaar, Mr D S—

General Affairs:
 Law and Order, 1, 727

Egg broken on education boss

^{CT 10/3/93}
PHUTHADITJABA — A protest yesterday by 2 000 QwaQwa teachers ended violently with the public humiliation of an education official.

The teachers, alleging harassment by inspectors, stormed the circuit offices near here, smashing chairs, emptying desk drawers and destroying documents.

Circuit secretary Mr T R Leballo was stoned, an egg was broken on him and he was forced to apologise for alleged harassment of teachers.

● In Venda about 8000 teachers went on strike yesterday for better pay.

— Sapa

113

(111)

Marx solves houses row

AGREEMENT has been reached between the Johannesburg City Council and residents of Ennerdale, south of Johannesburg, about outstanding payments for allegedly defective houses built and sold to the residents by the council.

Johannesburg councillor Ms Marietta Marx, chairman of the Health, Housing and Urbanisation Committee, said misunderstandings about a moratorium placed on payment arrears had been resolved.

Sowetan 30/3/93

Stay-away continues

THE boycott of classes at the University of Venda continued yesterday.

Students pressed demands that include the disbanding of the institution's council.

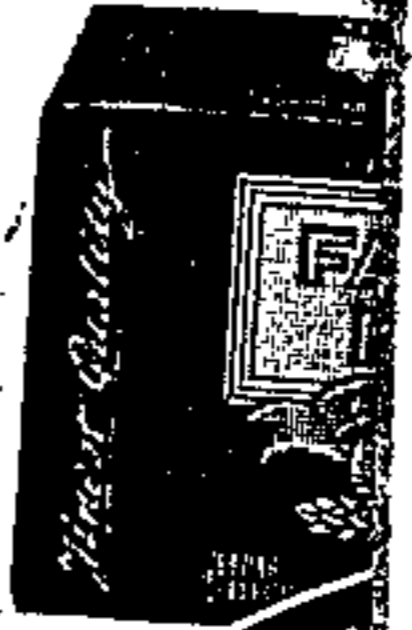
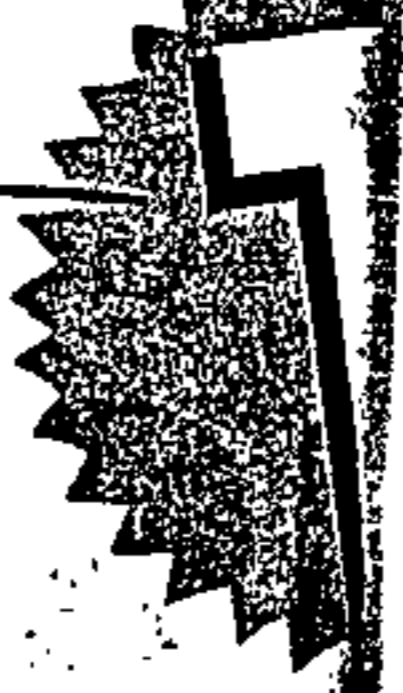
A meeting held at the weekend at the university failed to live up to expectations as several invited organisations were unable to attend.

Students began boycotting classes last Tuesday.

They were demanding the return of suspended staffers, including Mr RN Kharidza, former director of public relation, and former registrar Mr JN Ndwambe.

Sowetan 30/3/93 (113)

Pot O' Go Margarine





Female singers from the Sophiatown era showed they still had the spark (and some lovely legs) when they thrilled a capacity crowd at the Dorkay House Charity Concert at the New Civic Theatre on Sunday. Shaking it up in a group swing are Stella Starr (centre), Lorraine Staple (left), Thandie Klaasen (3rd from right), Dorothy Masuku (2nd from right) and Dolly Rathebe (right).

TV, radio licence boycott warning

A BOYCOTT of television and radio licences, spearheaded by organised labour, could follow if the Government does not move fast to democratise the SABC and remove it from party political control.

This emerged from the Congress of South African Trade Unions conference at the weekend in which it was resolved to put pressure on advertisers to withdraw advertising if the SABC restructuring deadlock was not broken soon.

Cosatu said it was committed to a total boycott of SABC licences if no other solution was found.

■ Cosatu tells government to move fast in democratising the SABC and establishing central bargaining:

Cosatu's three-day campaign conference was attended by over 300 senior worker leaders and a decision was also taken to throw the union federation's full weight behind the African National Congress.

The conference condemned alleged attacks on central bargaining by Government and employers, saying it would fight fiercely to defend and advance this negotiations strategy.

It said centralised bargaining was a

critical element for success in constructing a growth path for the economy.

"We are not prepared to have prescribed to us a type of economic growth which continues to pay starvation wages and undermines labour standards," Cosatu said.

Government and employers would be targeted for a specific action programme if economic restructuring was not negotiated with the trade union movement, the conference resolved.

Health of 1 200 pupils in danger

113

Sowetan 30/3/93

■ HEALTH HAZARD Sewerage pipes not

repaired since they burst early this month:

By Russel Molefe

THE HEALTH of about 1 200 pupils at Munzhedzi Primary School in Vleifontein, near Louis Trichardt, is in danger since sewerage pipes burst early this month.

Human excrement has spilled into the school yard and teachers and pupils work under conditions described as "inhuman and totally unacceptable".

Sowetan reporters visited the school this week. They were greeted by a terrible smell.

Teachers claimed that Venda's ministry of public works was not interested in repairing the pipes.

"Efforts during the past four weeks to persuade the authorities to repair the pipes have been fruitless," they said.

The toilets were in such a condition that teachers and pupils were unable to use them.

In a bid to draw attention to the situation teachers occupied the local administration offices. They were promised that the sewerage system would be repaired soon but this has not been done.

Teachers said several pupils had re-

'This place is a health hazard. Teachers and pupils are under tremendous strain. We can't teach under such conditions.'

ceived treatment after complaining about stomach pains. They expressed fears that there could be an outbreak of cholera.

"This place is a health hazard. Teachers and pupils are under tremendous strain. We can't teach under such conditions. And the kids can't learn either," a teacher said.

Venda's director-general for public works and his assistant were not available for comment yesterday.

Venda's education director-general, Mr Khwara Madzaga, said:

"There is no comment. We know what to do when we are in this situation. There are channels that have to be followed."

Peace body for Venda (13)

JOHANNESBURG. — A committee has been nominated to establish a peace structure in Venda, the National Peace Committee said yesterday.

CT 8/4/93



Locals try to drive out Indians after 'muti killings'

Race war erupts in Venda

C/Press 25/4/93

By **MOSES MAMAILA**

A HORROR race war has broken out in Venda where Indians are being hounded out of their homes and businesses by irate locals.

This week more than 50 businesses were attacked by looters, leading to 30 arrests.

However, the Indian community in the homeland has vowed to stay despite a mounting mass campaign geared at forcing them out.

The Uganda-type campaign started on Wednesday this week when thousands of people protesting against ritual killings looted almost all Indian-owned businesses in Thohoyandou and Sibasa. More than 50 shops were damaged.

But despite reports that the protesters are preparing themselves for another bout of "mass action", the Indians - most of whom lost goods worth hundreds of thousands of rands - maintain they won't leave as they are innocent.

The violence, in which a number

of Indian businessmen were assaulted, erupted following rumours that an alleged freelance ritual killer linked to the deaths of four teenagers in recent weeks said he was "hired by Indians to kill for muti".

Venda police spokesman Capt Benno de Klerk confirmed that a 50-year-old man had been arrested in connection with the murder of Patrick Mudau, 13, Talakani Tshikhudo, 14, Khaukanani Tshisikoli, 14, and Tshililo Netshitongwe, 14.

Indian businessmen in the area have denied that they kill children for muti, saying that was against their religion. "The whole thing is part of a conspiracy by some business people who are complaining that we sell our goods very cheaply and they can't make a profit," said Abdullah Patel, who lost more than R120 000 when his two shops were looted.

"Muti killings have been committed in Venda long before Indi-

ans arrived. All those blacks convicted of these crimes did not receive the same treatment as us," Patel said.

"I am a South African. If I leave, where do I go?" asked Muhammed Akroo, who lost tens of thousands of rands when his shop was looted. He said although Indians were a minority, they would not allow jealous people to exploit them.

Many Indians lost valuable property, but said they did not hold a grudge as many people in Venda still supported them.

When City Press visited the area yesterday several shops were still empty or closed.

There were rumours that the "mass campaign" would be intensified.

Military supremo Brig Gabriel Ramushwana has lashed out against the "campaign", saying as the people were advancing to a nonracial SA ethnic violence could not be allowed.

113

Seeking peace in Venda

113

By Dirk Nel
Northern Transvaal
Bureau



The National Peace Committee (NPC) has been asked to help resolve conflict in Venda, even though the territory's military government has not signed the National Peace Accord.

During a meeting with national and regional peace committee officials, Indian traders on Tuesday described their shock last week when mobs attacked and looted Indian-owned shops in Thohoyandou and Shayandima. The damage was estimated at R500 000.

The traders claimed the raid was carefully planned in response to unfounded rumours that members of the

Indian community were guilty of ritual child murders.

A spokesman for the traders told NPC member Dr Johan Steenkamp and regional peace committee chairman Dr Koos van den Heever: "We were forced to vacate our shops and flee.

"We also feared for the lives of our families when there were threats of attacks on our homes."

The spokesman claimed police looked on while the looting was in progress.

After the meeting, Steenkamp said urgent steps would have to be taken to prevent an escalation of such ill-conceived violence.

He promised to look into the possible establishment of a Venda peace committee, in consultation with the military government.

He said he would also consider asking the Goldstone Commission to investigate the allegations made against the Indian community.

The peace officials later travelled to a rural venue to meet several Venda chiefs, including acting paramount chieftain Sofia Mphephu.

The chiefs told the peace officials that, since military leader Gabriel Ramushwana scrapped the Venda Council of Chiefs, there had been no direct communication between the government and the Venda people.

The chiefs claimed they were being prevented from exercising their traditional authority, and they claimed that the people at grassroots level were uninformed on

constitutional developments. The situation constituted a threat to peace in Venda, they said.

Consultations with other sectors in Venda would be held in future to promote peace, Steenkamp said.

● Clyde Johnson of the Lowveld Bureau reports that a group of about 2 000 marching youths yesterday stoned and set vehicles alight, damaged property and looted shops in an Indian township near Witbank.

The extent of the damage is not yet known but it could run into millions of rands.

Police said the group marched from KwaGuqa to the Department of Education and Training office in Witbank to hand over a petition.

On the way back, a vehicle belonging to Trador, a wholesale company, was set alight. Teargas was used to disperse the unruly crowd.

81 arrested after Venda race riot

EIGHTY-ONE people including women and children have been arrested in Venda's capital, Thohoyandou following the stoning of shops owned by Indian traders and looting goods are facing public violence charges.

Prosecutor MR Legarabe said that charges were not put to them when they appeared in the Thohoyandou magistrate's court this week.

Legarabe said accused below 21 were remanded under the guardianship of their parents while others were granted bail ranging from R50 to R100 depending on their financial position.

Their arrest and appearance in court is a sequel to last week's strife in the city when people stoned shops owned by Indian traders.

■ Reports by CP reporters and Sapa

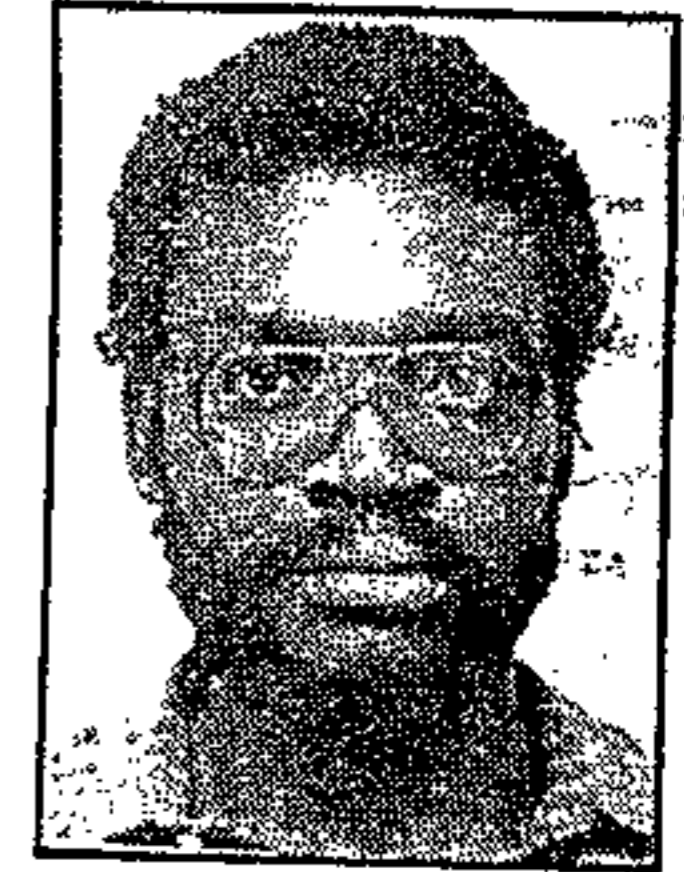
Cifress 2/5/93

113

opinion on murder

Sawetani 24/5/93

Three years ago the Venda Supreme Court heard revolting details of how an infant was killed and sliced to pieces in a macabre ritual. Investigations Editor **Mathatha Tsedu** argues that the perpetrators should not be condoned:



LAWYERS for Human Rights is a reputable grouping that has fought many battles on behalf of the country's underdogs. To mind comes their intervention in the Nofomela case that led to the uncovering of the role police played in the murders of political activists.

Last night they were involved in an urgent interdict against Venda's military ruler, Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, urging him to stop the execution of two ritual murderers sentenced to death in June 1990.

The case, in which an 18-month-old boy was murdered and dismembered by Frans Tshirengo Netshirombeni, had appalled humanity.

The Venda Supreme Court had been filled to capacity each day of the sitting. Tears had flowed on many cheeks as witnesses testified about the killing.

But that was almost three years ago and people seem to have forgotten who Netshirombeni is and what he did. And time, the healer of all wounds, has now shifted justice seemingly on to the side of Netshirombeni and chief plotter Wilson Thidzhielwi Nelukalo.

But is it fair? What had they actually done? Gundo Nemakhavhani, the only son of Miss Tshinakaho Lesiba, had been taken from the care of his minder by Tshinakaho Netshifhefhe (45), a concubine of Gundo's grandfather, Mr Nelson Nekhavhani.

Gundo, who slept on the back of Netshifhefhe, was taken up the Tshaulu mountain, where seven other people waited in a macabre setting that resembled the Tarzan of the movies.

(13)

Goat-slaughterer

Netshirombeni, who was Tshaulu's expert goat-slaughterer, was also there, to do what he does best. Soon after the arrival of Gundo, and following some formalities, Netshirombeni grabbed the still asleep Gundo by the hips, swung him in the air and smashed his tiny head against a rock, shattering the skull.

Netshirombeni then started cutting off parts of the body — the tongue, genitals, lungs, heart, liver and fats in the intestines. The head was severed with an axe.

The severed parts were laid out on a rock before they were covered in a shawl which was put in a mealie meal bag as the group tramped down with its gory loot.

One of the men in the group took a left hand for himself.

Further evidence was that the parts were given to Nelukalo, who used them as muti that was buried at the entrance of a motel he owned jointly with the then Director-General of Venda Intelligence, Mr Theophilus Mutshaeni.

It was a ghastly deed that outraged everyone, especially Gundo's mother Tshinakaho.



INNOCENT ... The child who was brutally murdered, Gundo Nemakhavhani, and his mother, Miss Tshinakaho Lesiba.

Speaking after sentence was passed, she said she was happy that those who carried out such a cruel deed would themselves be hanged to save other people from their kind.

Must Ramushwana pardon Netshirombeni and Nelukalo, as the LHR is now arguing?

I do not think so.

There may well exist cases where I would say do not hang killers, such as the Messina trialists, Mthetheleli Mncube and Mzondeleli Nondula, who had planted landmines that killed farmers in the Northern Transvaal.

But I cannot find it within me, having sat through that trial and heard the chilling details, to say Netshirombeni and Nelukalo deserve less than an immediate meeting with their Maker.

Ramushwana too is caught on the horns of a dilemma. He came to power as a result of a coup that was precipitated by an unprecedented campaign against ritual killings.

‘While people understand that political activists can be released or pardoned, once we start releasing ritual killers we will be opening ourselves for accusations that faced the other government. I do not think that ritual killers should be pardoned.’

The regime he overthrew was seen as soft on ritual killers. In an interview marking one year in office, Ramushwana fingered the release of ritual killers and the suspension of death sentences for this group of prisoners as a major challenge to his rule.

“While people understand that political activists can be released or pardoned, once we start releasing ritual killers we will be opening ourselves to accusations that faced the other government. I do not think that ritual killers should be pardoned,” he declared.

It is a decision that would surely carry the day in Venda.

Which leads to another question: How just would the decision be to pardon Netshirombeni and Nelukalo? If the people in Venda, who are affected by such a decision, view such a pardon as an aberration of justice, should it still be undertaken regardless?

I think that justice must not only be done, but should be seen to be just.

Opinions of people in that area should be tested before putting pressure on Ramushwana to release the likes of Netshirombeni.

odge urgent court application ● PAC leader lauds Apla operations

Bid to stop executions

Sowetan 24/5/93

LAWYERS for Human Rights were last night scheduled to bring an urgent application to prevent the planned executions today of two prisoners in Venda, LHR spokesman Mr Andries Nel said at the weekend.

Appeals to Venda

In a statement in Pretoria, Nel announced that Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Pik Botha and African National Congress president Mr Nelson Mandela had issued appeals to Venda Military Council chairman Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana to halt the executions of Mr Frans Netshirombeni and Mr Wilson Nelukalo today.

The two prisoners were convicted and sen-

■ FRANTIC PLEA Mandela and Pik

ask Ramushwana to stop hangings:

tenced to death for a ritual murder in June 1990. (113)

He further said the LHR found Ramushwana's decision "completely unacceptable" in the light of the fact that his government was party to a near-unanimous decision taken at Codesa in April 1992 to suspend executions, pending the negotiations of a new constitution.

"If it weren't for Brigadier

Ramushwana's history of breaking promises regarding the death penalty, we would have found this sudden about-turn outlandishly incredible."

Last minute appeal

Nel said that in February 1991, two prisoners were executed less than a week after four death row prisoners had been reprieved following an urgent application brought by the LHR

and a last minute appeal by Mr Mandela.

The executions came days after Brigadier Ramushwana gave an undertaking that Venda's death penalty laws would be reviewed, Nel said.

He said it should be clear to Ramushwana that the future of Venda was "inextricably linked" to that of South Africa.

"We find it unacceptable that he chooses to act unilaterally on a sensitive and emotional issue as the death penalty when executions have been suspended in South Africa, Bophuthatswana and Transkei, and abolished altogether in Ciskei." — Sapa.

See page 8

Star 24/5/93

Farmers 'are legitimate targets'

Crime Reporter

(113)

A senior PAC official said in Venda on Saturday that farmers were legitimate targets for the organisation's military wing, prompting angry responses from Transvaal farmers and the Government.

According to Sapa, PAC national organiser Maxwell Nemasivhanani made the statement during an address to mourners in Vuwani at the funeral for slain Azanian People's Liberation Army member Mbengeni Fanual Mudau.

Mudau was shot dead by security forces near Tzaneen on April 28, after allegations that an Apla unit was linked to the recent death of a farmer's wife.

"We will always be after the farmers who have so illegally occupied our land and it will serve them right until they pressurise De Klerk for the total liberation of Azania," Nemasivhanani said.

Law and Order Ministry spokesman Captain Craig Kotze yesterday denounced the statements as "utterly provocative".

"It is comments like these which emphasise the findings of the Goldstone Commission on Apla activities and justify steps the Government has taken against terrorism such as that emanating from Apla elements based in Transkei," said Kotze.

Such statements also justified the security forces taking the "strictest possible steps against organisations like Apla".

Transvaal Agricultural Union deputy manager Jan Human said farmers did not want to take the law into their own hands but would have no choice if the Government did not protect farmers.

Farmers had not taken anyone's land. "We bought it and there is no question of us taking it from anyone," he said.

Lawyers aim to halt Star 245193 executions

Staff Reporter and Sapa

Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) was expected last night to bring an urgent application to stop the execution of two prisoners in Venda today.

LHR spokesman Andries Nel said yesterday that Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha and ANC president Nelson Mandela had urged Venda Military Council chairman Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana to stop the executions.

Frans Netshirombeni and Wilson Nelukalo were due to be executed today for a ritual murder committed in June 1990.

Nel said the Venda government had indicated it would grant a stay of execution. But one of Ramushwana's personal assistants told him yesterday the executions would go ahead.

In a statement earlier, Nel said LHR found Ramushwana's decision "completely unacceptable" since his government was party to a decision taken at Codedesa to suspend executions pending the negotiation of a new constitution.

Venda govt stays hanging

THE Venda Supreme Court yesterday heard evidence in the application for the stay of execution of two ritual killers. *Sowetan 28/5/93*

Counsel for the applicants, Mr MH de Villiers, argued that Venda had been party to an agreement on a moratorium on hangings at Codesa last year.

Consequently it was unlawful for the military junta to carry out the hanging of Frans Netshirombeni and Wilson Nelukalo.

Later De Villiers asked the court to stop the hearing as he said he had been informed by the commissioner of the Venda police that the stay of execution had been granted.

Chief Justice J van der Walt, however, rejected the request.

The hearing continues today. *(113)*

● See page 13

Taxi operators fear attacks

TAXI operators in Venda's Dzanani district have been living in fear of revenge attacks since the fatal shooting of a rival taxi boss early in May. *Sowetan*

Their reluctance to take to the road, particularly after dark, has seriously affected local transport services. ~~332~~ (113) 216/93

The situation has prompted members of the Dzanani Taxi Association — an affiliate of the National Federated Transport Organisation — to request Venda Police to apprehend the gunmen who shot and killed Mr Cedric Dongola "to secure the lives of innocent people who may be caught in the crossfire".

NEWS FEATURE *In the bush a dream is beginning to become a physical reality*

Dream civic plan gets off the ground

Sowetan 25/6/93

By Mathatha Tsedu
Investigations Editor

A CIVIC centre with a library, resource centre, a community hall, a community garden, accommodation, a small industries complex, sports ground and a market.

Pretty ambitious by any standards you might say. But many would agree that these are facilities needed in any urban area where there is a congestion of people.

But even then, many would say a township that hopes to raise the funds needed to put such a complex together was out of its mind.

If you also felt that way, consider that this is what a rural-based civic organisation, the Nzhelele Zone of the South African National Civic Organisation, aims to do.

Nzhelele is a rural area in Venda, about 40km west of Thohoyandou. The zone caters for 70-odd villages with a population of over 120 000.

The men and women who run the

■ **SELF HELP** *R2 million complex takes shape in the Venda bushland:* (113)

zone aim to raise at least R2 million to construct the centre, which will also have a recreation centre, six classrooms, brick making project and a tennis court.

The project will be built in phases and the small business complex which will be rented out to entrepreneurs is already off the ground.

Funded to the tune of R132 000 by the Independent Development Trust, the complex will also serve as offices for the zone. It consists of eight cubicles.

The project has its own management, with chairman Mr Frank Tereka Lalumbe. A retired school principal. Lalumbe said his nine man committee that heads the Nzhelele Development Project was canvassing for funds from well-wishers to help with building the centre.

Committee member and secretary-general of the zone, Mr Eddy Mafune, said the facilities were badly needed by the community.

"We are faced here with a situation where children have absolutely no recreation facilities. As a result, abuse of liquor at a very early stage is growing alarmingly as almost every restaurant now has a liquor licence as well.

"We see this development as a trend-setter for other rural areas that have been neglected by the state and private sector in the provision of facilities.

"We reject the notion that because people are in a rural area they are less desirous of facilities. We are looking at the centre as a hive of activity that will be available for all our people to develop their talents and also encourage business," Mafune said.



Workers at the Nzhelele Civic Centre.

focus on hanging

Sowetan 17/6/93

MATHATHA TSEDU ARGUED that Frans Netshirombeni and Wilson Nelukalo should not be pardoned or released.

He has no need to persuade us of this fact — we have never argued for their pardon or release and have no intention of doing so in the future. He asks the question: "Must Ramushwana pardon Netshirombeni and Nelukalo, as the LHR is now arguing?" and we can only hope that he asks this in ignorance rather than with mischievous intent. He does however fall into the very common trap of believing that those who oppose the death penalty are "soft on crime" and seek the release of violent criminals. As an Investigation Editor, Mr Tsedu should know better.

LHR has in fact spearheaded many of the public outcries against the releases of criminals such as Jack le Grange, Robert van der Merwe, Kethani Shange and Samuel Jamile.

What we are calling for is for Netshirombeni and Nelukalo to be given (and to serve) lengthy terms of imprisonment in place of the death penalty. It is unfortunate that public confidence in the "staying power" of criminals has taken somewhat of a bashing recently because of government ineptitude and opportunism. Nevertheless, we do not believe that one of our follies should lead us on to even greater ones.

The crime committed by Netshirombeni and Nelukalo was horrific and macabre (as Tsedu correctly points out) and we believe that such crimes must be dealt with severely. The perpetrators of such horrendous crimes must be removed from society to protect the innocent lives of children like Gundo. We believe that they must also be given the opportunity to become rehabilitated and to repay their horrible debt to society. Once dead they cannot do this.

The history of ritual murders in Venda is well documented and this issue has become one through which political power has been won and lost. A number of ritual murderers have been hanged in the past, both at Pretoria Maximum and in Thohoyandou yet these hangings have done nothing to deter those whose belief in the efficacy of such muti is strong. The ritual murders continue to this day and will continue well into the future until such time as reason replaces superstition. This will not be achieved through hanging.

The death penalty is a penological dinosaur which belongs on the scrap heap of history along with the archaic forms of punishment which enjoyed their heyday during the Middle Ages.

Revenge is the only cogent "argument" in favour of the death penalty and we think that South Africa has had enough revenge to last it for generations to come. A society which is trying desperately to free itself from its bloody, violent and reactionary past can surely do with-

Andries Nel and **Paula McBride** of the Lawyers for Human Rights' Penal Reform Project respond to an article by *Sowetan* Investigations Editor Mathatha Tsedu about an interdict to stop the execution of two men sentenced to death in Venda:



Gundo Nemakhavhani ... killed by ritual murderers

out the sentiments to which Mr Tsedu is pandering.

The fact is no one has ever proved capital punishment to be a deterrent. It is therefore short sighted and dangerous to rely on the death penalty as a solution to the serious ritual murder crisis which Venda forces.

The danger behind using the death penalty is that it obscures the real complexities of the many social problems for which it is hailed as a panacea. To place Netshirombeni and Nelukalo on the gallows as sacrificial animals, on the pretence that this will somehow prevent further ritual murders, is both dishonest and misleading. However, this doesn't seem to bother Mr Tsedu as long as people had their appetite for revenge whetted.

In addition to the principled argument against the use of the death penalty, there is a very specific (and political) argument against its use in South Africa at this stage of our history. We hope that within a few months we will have an interim government in place, and it is our belief that this government may well abolish the use of the death penalty. To execute persons at this stage is therefore entirely unacceptable, and this applies as strongly to the illegitimate homeland structures as well as it does to the illegitimate South African Government.

113
2002

Mr Tsedu ends his article by outlining the "dilemma" facing Brigadier Ramushwana — a political dilemma. He implies that we should not interfere in Brigadier Ramushwana's bid to cling onto political power by tampering with his political popularity — whose popularity will be reinforced through the execution of Netshirombeni and Nelukalo.

A classic "ends justify the means" argument which we find deeply disturbing. If the question of the death penalty can be used as an acceptable vote getter, then what else falls into this category?

At the end of the day we see very little difference between a military dictator who believes that he will stay in power by killing prisoners and a businessman who believes that he will prosper by killing children.

Mathatha Tsedu comments:

The article referred to was an opinion piece in which I argued that the two men sentenced to death did not deserve any mercy, considering the gruesome killing of Gundo Nemakhavhani.

Both Nel and McBride are entitled to differ with me; I still believe that the two should die. I have spent time in Venda and understand the complexities of the situation of ritual killings.

I am not arguing from a libertarian point which does not take cognisance of realities. I said in my piece that military ruler Ramushwana, having come into power in a coup because of ritual killings in the area, has to take public opinion into consideration in his decision about the stay of execution.

This is a fact. How lawyers can construe this as a defence for a military dictator is beyond the understanding of a simple journalist like me.

They argue about Netshirombeni and Nelukalo as if the court application was a part of a struggle to unseat Ramushwana.

If they have chosen to make that their preoccupation, they are entitled to act as they wish. I had never seen the issue in those political terms and do not wish to do so now.

Sowetan 2/9/93

Magisterial sit-in

ALL 43 magistrates at the Venda Magistrate's Court yesterday continued a sit-in to demand pay parity with their South African counterparts. (13)

Venda Magistrates' Association chairman Mr Harry Magoro said the sit-in, which began on Tuesday,

Sowetan 2/9/93

would continue until the Justice Department addressed the problem. Magoro said the government had been promising pay parity since 1988. (13)

focus on the big payout

THE TALK AROUND VENDA'S capital, Thohoyandou, these days is of the need for more traffic lights to control the ever-growing traffic.

Those who claim to know say that over 300 cars have been put on the roads in the past two months, as the pension payouts have turned the sleepy area on its head, with men walking around with bulging pockets full of thousands.

Jokes too abound around pensions. Like the one about a man who picked up a "16-valve" and took her to the local hotel where she then proceeded to the bathroom to freshen up, prior to doing duty. It is said the man had shown the girl his loot wrapped in brown paper, amounting to over R10 000. When the girl came out of the bathroom, she suggested that the man do the same, to which he gladly agreed, and went in whistling as he soaked himself in bath foam prepared by the girl. When he came out, she was gone, and so was the brown paper and its treasured contents!

There is also a story of girls such as the 16V, who now target the older men and have a liking for fried chicken. Their favourite slogan is said to be "Sdumo toe papa".

But for many, the pension payout in which over R800 million is being paid out to civil servants in a historic one-off move, has meant the luxury of mobility that many have yearned for but could not afford. Some see it as a natural fallout of poverty-stricken civil servants, many of whom are getting over R100 000.

The euphoria born of sums that people are getting has spawned its own "pension speak", with cars that are being bought called figure cars. The government had insisted that all money should be transferred to insurance policies that would not be available for other uses until after 10 years.

Trade unions representing workers argued that the money should be paid out directly to individuals, so each person could decide what to do with his/her pension savings. And so it was done, as it never has been done anywhere else before.

Many are investing the money in insurance policies, but others, like our man mentioned earlier, are romping in the hay while the sun shines, as if it never will set again. It is this group, as well as the new motorists, that have become a headache for many, who see in them a problem for the government of tomorrow, as they will have squandered their all and would depend on old-age state pensions.

These are concerns that the men and women who have survived pedestrianism for so long hear but do not understand. "There is only one life," they argue, "and if I can afford a car today why should I continue to put my life in the hands of taxi drivers?" Why indeed?

Venda is awash in money since civil servants were paid out their pensions ahead of time. **Mathatha Tsedu**, Investigations Editor, visited the suddenly rich town of Thohoyandou: Sowetan 2/9/93



113



“The euphoria born of sums that people are getting has spawned its own “pension speak”, with cars that are being bought called figure cars”

Venda salary threat

THOHOYANDOU — Venda public servants would not receive their September salaries if the sit-in by finance department employees continued, Venda's acting finance director-general M M Senomadi said as the sit-in entered its seventh day. — Sapa

(113) ARG 10/9/91

Private luxury car (13)

THOHOYANDOU. — A luxury car, imported from Germany by the Venda government in 1984, was not registered or recorded as a state vehicle, although purchasing records indicated it was bought by the government. Instead, the car was registered for the private use of a former minister, the Taylor Commission of Inquiry into corruption by Venda ministers has found.

Where poverty rules supreme

Sowetan 7/10/93

113

By Musa Zondi
Environmental Reporter

■ NO SUPPORT *Story of a bantustan where independence is nothing more than a dusty landscape :*

On a hot summer's day, the haze covers the mountains of Venda like a thin sail to shield the inhabitants from the scorching sun.

From the "South African side" the haze blends well with the lush green valleys in the Levubu area. But as you enter the homeland, the green suddenly disappears and you are confronted by a dusty landscape.

At the roadside, women and their children sell fruit. Most of these children go about naked and the clothes worn by a few are tattered and filthy.

This is the story of the homelands — the story of phony independence. Poverty in this area is widespread and this is the background to the Rural Development Collective.

The RDC is an attempt by residents of this tiny homeland to address issues like the poverty. The three founder members are Mr Rashaka Ratshitanga, Ms Manalo Mudau and Mr Masikela Nematondoni.

Rural communities

It is a non-governmental organisation which aims to address the needs of the rural communities through development.

It faces challenges in a land where 89 percent of the population of 750 000 is unemployed, where the level of illiteracy is 75 percent and where there are inadequate schools, clinics or crèches for children. It is a challenge in the land where absolute poverty is the order of the day and water is scarce and farming methods primitive.

As we sit in the offices of the organisation at the University of Venda, Ratshitanga and Mudau say they do not have the answers to problems "but RDC aims at empowering these people to take decisions that affect their lives".

The RDC believes that through in-

tensive literacy projects, development will have a better meaning to the people concerned.

The biggest emphasis is placed on education because "official surveys have shown that Venda is the least literate of all regions in this country," says Ratshitanga.

"What we are saying is that these income generating projects should go hand in hand with literacy projects," they say.

This was the background to the Temescial Education Week which was held at the university between July 4 and 10. This education week

'Venda is the least literate of all South Africa's regions'

had a specific emphasis on career guidance to help the youth identify what they would like to do.

The organisation has committed itself to "engaging human resource development through establishing adult and school drop-out literacy centres in rural villages, farms and peri-urban areas of the far Northern Transvaal

sub-region".

Last year the RDC arranged a meeting between the University of Venda's council and the student body which resolved the impasse between the two.

But back to development. These projects are mainly directed at women "who have to fend for themselves in poverty while their men are in the cities — at times not even working. These women have to look after the children as well and see to their well-being, they say.

They are trying to get a group of women who do sewing to form a collective. In May 1991, the RDC held talks with the Tshiffi community with a view to establishing a collective farming project. This was to be followed by the establishment of a loan scheme for collective agricultural projects.

Most of these projects, however, did not really get off the ground because of the lack of funds. After appeals to various funding groups in the country and overseas, the RDC has been given promises but no real help.

The RDC is based at the university which, according to the organisers, attests to the fact that it has the support and backing of the people and that it is also helping to transform the homeland's highest institution of learning to be more accessible to ordinary people.

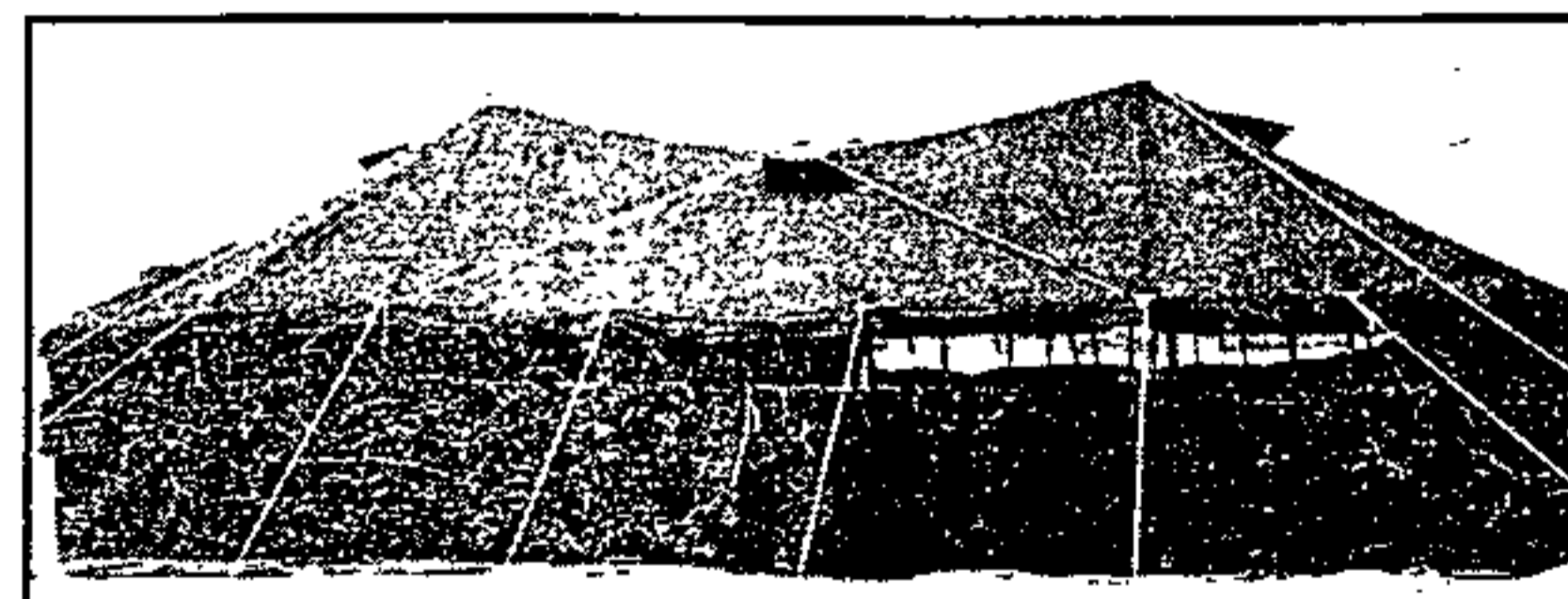
Says Ratshitanga: "We are operating here because it is time that universities served the communities around them." The organisation can be contacted at PO Box 269, Sibasa, Venda, or call them at (0159) 21071/21080 Ext 2462.



Mr Rashaka Ratshitanga and Ms Manalo Mudau — founder members of the RDC. PIC: MUSA ZONDI

TENTS

Brand new 5 m x 10 m tents (2 pole tent)



PRICE: R5 200 INCL. VAT

MILITS STORES

6 BUITEKANT STREET, PRETORIA WEST
TEL. (012) 327-1185 Fax (012) 327-1194

ALSO TABLE AND CHAIRS AT EXTRA COST

Find out about

Venda taxi permits mostly 'invalid'

THOHOYANDOU — Most taxi permits in Venda could be regarded as invalid because they had not been issued according to procedure by the Venda Transportation Board, the Taylor commission heard yesterday.

B/Say 7/10/93
The commission, which is investigating irregularities in Venda's transport department, was told that the board had not legally considered and approved applications for renewing motor transport permits.

Board head Robert Mabirimisa and secretary Samuel Mafune testified that clerical staff were responsible for the renewal of permits. This was contrary to the Transportation Act. They said board members endorsed the applications after the staff had issued the permits. (113)

The commission was also told that Venda government vehicles damaged in accidents were returned without accident reports to the homeland's state garage in Sibasa. — Sapa.

Venda officials told to repay millions

STEPHANE BOTHMA

FIVE Venda public servants, who became instant millionaires last year when the homeland privatised its pension fund, have been ordered to repay more than R5,5m.

Letters of demand had been issued by Venda's Pension Implementation Committee, calling on the five public servants to respond within 21 days or face legal action, Venda Public Servants' Coalition Committee chairman Alidsulwi Muyhango said.

A Venda Commission for Administration spokesman would not give details yesterday, and would not identify the five, but indicated that the move followed recommendations to government by a commission of inquiry into the privatisation.

The five received the money after an incorrect formula was used by the Venda government when it privatised the fund.

At least seven public servants, including Venda military ruler Brig Gabriel Ramushwana, became millionaires after the homeland government allowed its 24 000 public servants to remove their pensions from the homeland's estimated R1bn pension fund in February last year.

A proclamation gave public servants the choice of remaining within the Venda state pension fund, transferring contributions to an approved retirement annuity or transferring contributions into an approved investment plan for retirement. However, the formula used to calculate each contributor's share was incorrect, resulting in a R2m, year-long investigation.

Homelands crisis deepens

Gazankulu, Venda also in financial difficulties

Star 15/10/93

113

BY NORMAN CHANDLER
PRETORIA BUREAU

The financial crisis in the homelands is deepening.

After revelations of Lebowa's financial chaos, The Star learnt yesterday that Gazankulu is also experiencing financial difficulties. And in Venda the government is trying to recover R5,5 million in pensions paid in error to five civil servants.

Gazankulu sources said "desperate cost-cutting measures" were being introduced to save the homeland from bankruptcy in the months before the 1994/95 budget allocation is made.

The Education Department alone is down R72 million, and has instructed school principals to "privatise their schools" and, if necessary, retrench staff to reduce the salary bill. Similar exercises are being followed by other departments.

At least 2 500 unqualified teachers stand to lose their jobs at the end of the year, but will be able to apply for posts in April.

In Lebowa, meanwhile, claims of about R60 million have been received from suppliers to the homeland's government. These are being processed.

Plans are also being made for Regional Affairs Minister Andre Fourie to meet the Lebowa Interdepartmental Action Co-ordinating Forum next week to

DESPERATE cost-cutting measures are needed to rescue homelands — with shortfalls of millions — from bankruptcy

discuss grievances.

Yesterday about 60 000 striking civil servants warned of a boycott of white businesses in and around Lebowa if the crisis with South African officials was not speedily resolved.

They also demanded that 14 dismissed Works Department employees be reinstated and that no white-owned company which was owed money by the Lebowa government be paid until casual workers received their overdue wages.

A spokesman for the Regional Affairs Department told The Star that hundreds of casual workers would probably be paid soon.

The Venda civil servants have been ordered to repay the R5,5 million within 21 days or face legal action. They got the money last year as a result of incorrect calculations made when the Venda government pension fund was privatised.

Letters of demand from the country's Pension Implementation Committee had been sent to them, Venda Public Servants' Coalition Committee chairman Alidzulwi Muvhango said.

Dis
vil
C
2
a
SO
The
was
was
hos
the
mar
T
clai
was
his
cha
who
han
T
iden
ed
lice
whi
Sept
S

Venda set to return to SA

Star 7/12/93
Thohoyandou — Venda yesterday paved the way for the homeland's reincorporation into South Africa when it adopted the Acts initiated by the multiparty negotiators.

The Venda Council of National Unity said in a statement the Independent Media Commission Act, the Independent Electoral Commission Act, the Transitional Executive Council Act, the Independent Broadcasting Act and the Electoral

Act would now be applied, implemented and interpreted in accordance with Venda law.

"This proclamation will enable Venda citizens to take part legitimately in the election of 1994 and to engage in the reconstruction of the new South Africa without being called foreigners."

The final reincorporation will be implemented after the April election.
— Sapa.

(113)

CT 18/12/93

Venda ID valid for April ballot

SIBASA. — Venda citizens would not have to change their identity documents for registration to vote in the April 27 elections, homeland director-general for the Department of Internal Affairs and Manpower, Mr W Sigwazhulimu said yesterday (13).

Mr Sigwazhulimu said the 16-page Venda identity document would be valid until the election.

"We are awaiting instructions from the Transitional Executive Council," he said.

From January, Venda will be an administrative region of South Africa and no longer have the status of a republic. — Sapa

NP 'stokes fires'

Sowetan 31/12/93

CLAIMS by the National Party that Umkhonto we Sizwe members were joining its ranks should be treated with "contempt and disgust", African National Congress national spokesman Mr Ronnie Mamoepa said yesterday.

Mamoepa was reacting to earlier claims by the NP's federal council that an unspecified number of MK members were joining the NP because of "deep dissatisfaction with the ANC leadership".

Mamoepa said the NP's claims were "malicious propaganda against the ANC".

"The ANC and the public in general are aware that people joining the NP do so not out of convictions, but for pecuniary gain.

"For the NP to make allegations of

corruption against the ANC is an absurdity considering its own track records of maladministration and mismanagement over the past decades and its direct responsibility for fraud and corruption in the homelands," Mamoepa said.

He said the NP statement was yet another attempt by it to "stoke fires within the ranks of MK".

"Instead of making unfounded allegations, the NP should clean the ranks of the South African Defence Force, which are riddled with CCB (Civil Co-operation Bureau) and hit squad elements, and lend its weight behind efforts to create a new and non-racial defence force."

"The ANC rejects with contempt the allegations contained in the statement," Mamoepa said. -- Sapa.

Venda crippled

GOVERNMENT services in Venda have ground to a halt because of a work-stoppage by about 22 000 civil servants, commission for administration deputy director-general Mr Willy Nemaokonde said yesterday. Sowetan

The work stoppage, which took the form of sit-ins by civil servants who are members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, started on Wednesday. 31/12/93

They demand the implementation of agreements entered into during the general strike which ended four weeks ago.

All the departments are almost at a standstill with the Internal Affairs Department being the hardest hit. 113

The government garage and computer centre have also been affected as official vehicles cannot be refuelled and cheques to companies contracted by the government cannot be issued.

What the new Act means

Sowetan 31/12/93

By Ike Motsapi

THE Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1983 on domestic workers come into operation tomorrow, the Department of Manpower announced yesterday.

Mr Francois de Villiers, head of public relations for the department, said as from January 1 the basic conditions of employment for domestic workers will be regulated by prescribed legislation.

He said this meant that domestic workers would be paid minimum wages,

allowed to take lunch periods and also be entitled to be off on certain days.

De Villiers said: "The definition of wage in the case of domestic workers includes payment in kind and includes the provision of food, quarters and any other payment in kind.

"Payment in kind in the case of a domestic worker means any payment other than cash. 113

"The value of the payment is determined as R100 a month or an amount agreed to in writing by the employers and employee, whichever is the larger

amount."

He said an employee who had worked on a Sunday for four hours or less must be paid not less than a day's wage.

If a domestic worker has worked for longer than four hours he or she is entitled the following benefits:

- Be paid wages for two days or at double his/her wage rate for the whole time worked or whichever is greater; or
- Be paid at one-third time his/her wage rate for the time worked and also be granted one day's leave on full pay with seven days of such Sunday.

(13)
CT 27/1/94
**Brigadier must
clean up mess**

THOYOYANDOU: —
More than 15 000 Venda
civil servants staged a
sit-in at government
buildings here yesterday
in reaction to the ap-
pointment of Brigadier
Gabriel Ramushwana as
head of the National
Peacekeeping Force.

They said he could not
resign as head of the
Venda government with-
out "cleaning up his
mess" and paying their
pensions. — Sapa

'Refunds for Venda govt pension fund'

Brigadier denies irregularities

Star 28/1/94

■ BY DIRK NEL
NORTHERN TRANSVAAL BUREAU

Thohoyandou — Venda military ruler Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana said yesterday he would be moving to Bloemfontein as soon as possible to take up his new appointment as commander of the National Peacekeeping Force.

His successor would be appointed shortly by the territory's Council of National Unity.

Ramushwana denied allegations that he had been involved in irregularities in the Venda government pension fund. He claimed the allegations had come about because of confusion created by two different formulas in the privatisation of the pension fund.

"The insurance company concerned has been requested to investigate the matter and to refund amounts required by

NKPF commander leaves for Bloemfontein shortly to take up his appointment

the pension fund," he said.

Turning to his new task, he pointed out that the main function of the peacekeeping force would be to promote peace wherever possible during the run-up to the April election.

He pointed out that he had not been charged with the maintenance of law and order — this was the task of the police throughout the country.

When asked by The Star whether he was optimistic about the success of the peacekeeping force, he replied that anything was possible if people were prepared to co-operate.

Questioned on his priorities



Gabriel Ramushwana ... to head NPFK soon.

during the coming months, he said he would first need to acclimatise himself before working out his strategy as commander of the force.

Ramushwana said his fluency in many languages would be an asset.

A delicate task for Venda strongman

Star 29/11/94

TWO military experts have conflicting views on the NPKF chief, GUY JEPSON reports.

SECURITY policeman, homeland dictator and now commander of the National Peacekeeping Force — key moments in the extraordinary career of Venda strongman Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana.

Bright, an outstanding linguist and a strong military ruler, the man who steps into the NPKF hot seat after a long stand-off between the ANC and SADF was accused — as late as April 1992 — of being “terribly undemocratic and arrogant” for refusing to allow civic structures to operate in Venda.

HIS security police links — he joined the Security Branch in 1966, rising to the rank of warrant-officer — and alleged infiltration of ANC bases in what was then Rhodesia have, in the past, been used against him by political opponents.

However, the independent military think-tank, the Institute for Defence Policy (IDP), this week described Ramushwana as “a good compromise candidate” for the job of chief peacekeeper.

His CV, released by the Transitional Executive Council, details his movement through the ranks in the police and military, but fails to record the fact that he seized power in Venda in a (bloodless) coup in 1990.

Nor does it reflect two recent achievements — his appointment to the TEC defence



EXTRAORDINARY CAREER: Key appointment for Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana.

subcouncil and his nomination as an ANC election candidate.

His new job demands that he relinquishes these (along with his homeland fiefdom) but the political tag could prove a major headache — even for a man who neatly straddled the ANC-NP divide before multiparty talks.

In Venda, where Ramushwana (52) is at the centre of a multimillion-rand pension fund scandal, the news of his

appointment sparked mass action by thousands of disaffected civil servants this week.

However, IDP senior researcher Brigadier Bill Sass says allegations of corruption in Venda — as long as they remain untested — are unlikely to trouble the men and women under Ramushwana's command in the NPKF.

It is probably also true that they won't mean much to the

warring factions on the East Rand and in Natal, where the NPKF is likely to be deployed inside six weeks.

Sass says Ramushwana — a longstanding advocate of re-incorporation of the homelands who hosted the first MK gathering in the country in 1991 — is acceptable to both the ANC and the Government. He adds that “because he is not a Xhosa”, Ramushwana's appointment leaves the door

open for possible Inkatha Freedom Party participation in the NPKF.

Military analyst Helmed Heitman strongly disagrees. Pointing out that the conflict in the areas where the NPKF is likely to be deployed is primarily between the ANC and IFP, Heitman argues that a Ramushwana's “ANC connection” will undermine the neutrality of the force.

Heitman has another concern: the fact that Ramushwana has already used his army to run a military push makes him a potentially dangerous man.

“In my view, people like Ramushwana, Holomisa and Gqozo should not be allowed uniform appointments. If three are politicians — no longer soldiers.”

SASS points out that the Venda coup was far less violent than those in Ciskei and even Transkei — adding that, once in power, Ramushwana put the lid on political violence in the homeland.

“I think he has the ability to handle a situation calmly. He's also a good administrator. He built up the Venda defence Force and kept it going, working closely with the SADF which still has elements attached to it.”

“He understands the system. He has worked in various government departments and the SADF. Especially in the next six weeks, he's going to need the SADF and the Government.”

Sass says Ramushwana's police experience will stand him in good stead in the NPKF, which is being schooled in the use of minimum force in riot situations.

Ramushwana to pay back 'excess' to fund

DAVID BREIER

Weekend Argus Political Staff

A CLOUD hangs over the new National Peacekeeping Force as pressure grows on its commander Gabriel Ramushwana to pay back R580 000 he allegedly owes a Venda pension fund.

Late this week progress was made when Brigadier Ramushwana undertook to pay back the money to the Venda civil servants' pension fund after mounting pressure including a threatened sit-in next week.

Brigadier Ramushwana has resigned as military ruler of Venda where he seized power four years ago. He is to head the new NPKF which is to be deployed late in March to keep the peace in the April elections.

He was paid R1,28 million when the Venda public service pension fund was privatised, but local civil servants said he had been paid R580 000 too much and demanded he pay it back.

Brigadier Ramushwana met the pension fund implementation committee late this week. Committee spokesman Joseph Silinda said the Brigadier had explained he had difficulty in obtaining certificates from Sanlam where he had invested the money.

Mr Silinda said Brigadier Ramush-

wana had authorised the Venda Department of Finance and the implementation committee to approach Sanlam for the certificates.

"The cloud has been partially removed, but until the actual payment is made it will still be there. That will be only after the money has been recovered," he said.

Chairman of the Coalition of Trade Unions in the Venda public sector Sam Muvhango said he was optimistic that Brigadier Ramushwana would pay over the money.

He said the situation would be assessed on Monday.

"If we are not satisfied then we will hold a mass meeting and decide what to do," he said.

Brigadier Ramushwana was a surprise choice to head the NPKF. It is understood he emerged as a compromise candidate after Transkei military ruler Bantu Holomisa vetoed a commander from the SA Defence Force while the SA government vetoed a commander from Transkei.

Mr Bill Sass of the independent Institute for Defence Policy said Brigadier Ramushwana was a compromise candidate as he was from the minority Venda and was neither Zulu or Xhosa.

Venda officials owe fund R40-m

Sowetan 31/1/94

By Russel Molefe

■ **WRONG FORMULA** 500 state

officials to repay pension fund: (113)

VENDA MILITARY supremo Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, who was recently appointed commanding officer of the National Peacekeeping Force, and a senior official, Mr SE Moeti, have agreed to repay the local pension fund an amount totalling almost R2 million.

Ramushwana and Moeti, who owe R580 239 and R1,1 million respectively, are among the 500 senior government officials who collectively received more than R40 million in pension fund money not due to them.

The officials have been given until Wednesday to repay all the money they owe.

Sowetan yesterday established that some officials are planning to defend in court their right to the money.

The 500 officials received incorrect payouts when the wrong formula was used during the privatisation of the pension fund a year ago.

Ramushwana has authorised members of the Venda Pension Implementation Committee together with officials of the Finance Department to recover the money he owes from Sanlam insurance company where it is invested.

This followed an emergency meeting he held with the VPIC after announcing his resignation as head of the homeland administration at a Press conference in Thohoyandou on Thursday. Ramushwana, is required as a condition of his appointment to sever ties with political bodies and structures. He denied he was involved in irregularities concerning the government pension fund. He also denied the allegation of corruption arising from the mistaken payments.

Moeti, who is the secretary-general of the ruling Council of National

Unity, confirmed on Friday that he would repay the R1 178 480 he owes the pension fund.

VPIC secretary Mr Joseph Silinda said the councillor for law and order, Major-General TG Ramabulana had indicated that he would repay the R376 758 owed by him to the fund. This, however, could not be confirmed with Ramabulana.

Government sources told *Sowetan* that other officials, mostly directors-general, were contemplating legal action to challenge the order to repay the money.

Silinda said the VPIC would first try to convince the officials to repay the money owed by them before resorting to legal action.

He said letters of demand were issued on Friday to all the officials who owe money to the pension fund.

'Must answer graft claims'

Protest over new post for Ramushwana

Star 27 July
■ BY DIRK NEL
NORTHERN TRANSVAAL
BUREAU

Thousands of Venda civil servants embarked on mass action yesterday to protest against the appointment of the homeland's military ruler Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana to the post of commanding officer of the National Peacekeeping Force.

The workers, threatening to block the appointment, said they would not let Ramushwana resign his Venda premiership until he had resolved corruption allegations against him.

The controversial military ruler and more than 500 other Venda government officials are alleged to owe the local pension fund a total of more than R40 million.

About 15 000 civil servants staged a sit-in at the government buildings in Thohoyandou to protest against alleged irregularities and corruption.

Informed sources said Ramushwana owed the pension fund R580 000, and it seemed likely this week that he and other alleged offenders would be put on trial. (113)

A successor would be announced today, Venda government officials said yesterday.

A spokesman for the civil servants said they would not return to work until an investigation had been launched.

Ramushwana, born and educated in Messina, started working as a clerk in a mining office in the town but later joined the South African Defence Force.

When Venda obtained apartheid-style "independence" in 1979, he became a member of the Venda National Force and subsequently worked himself up through the ranks of the army to become a colonel.

He staged a bloodless coup in 1990 to become Venda's military ruler.

Lebowa patients told to go home

LEBOWA. — Six Lebowa hospitals are standing empty while 3 000 nurses strike. (113)

Patients at the Mankweng, Mokopane, Jane Furse, Grootboek, Maphutha Malatji and Seshego hospitals had to be discharged prematurely as a result of the strike. CT 2/2/94

Nurses are demanding the signing of a recognition agreement between Lebowa Health Services management and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union. — Sapa

Sowetan 9/2/94

focus on Venda

VENDA'S CIVIL SERVANTS are caught in a dilemma.

When the pension fund was privatised two years ago, a formula was used that turned 12 senior officials into overnight millionaires.

Following an uproar and a new formula, all the millionaires disappeared, and the difference had to be refunded. And that is where the problem started, for none of these officials was prepared to pay back.

In any normal situation, those so aggrieved could resort to the law to get their money refunded. But not in this case, for as a worker representative, Mr Simon Ramovha, said this week, "workers have no legal standing to bring such an action in court.

"The money was paid out to these people by the government. So only the chairman of the military council, General Ramabulana, or his predecessor, Ramushwana, or the director general for finance, Mr Senoamadi, can bring this action.

"All these people are affected and cannot be relied upon to bring the action against themselves. The workers also have no confidence in the courts, they have vivid memories of how the courts were manipulated by previous regimes here to issue suitable judgments", Ramovha said.

And so, the government came to a standstill on February 2, as the workers used the only power they have to try to effect a resolution of the problem.

R38 million is still being owed by over 700 people, but many of these are small fries, according to Ramovha, who said these are coming forward to pay.

Already, over R1 million had been collected, and the *Sowetan* team witnessed a steady stream of people who were bringing documents in to effect repayments.

Big and little fishes

But the big fishes (53 of them owe R20,7 million) have not done so, and while some, including former head of state Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana and present chairman Major General Gerson Ramabulana, have indicated a willingness to repay, there are some who have vowed not to pay up.

The latter grouping is now preparing to go to court, according to their chairman, Mr W Sigwavhulimu.

Ramabulana's council met with the coalition of worker representatives on Monday, in an effort to defuse the situation, which has paralysed all but very essential services.

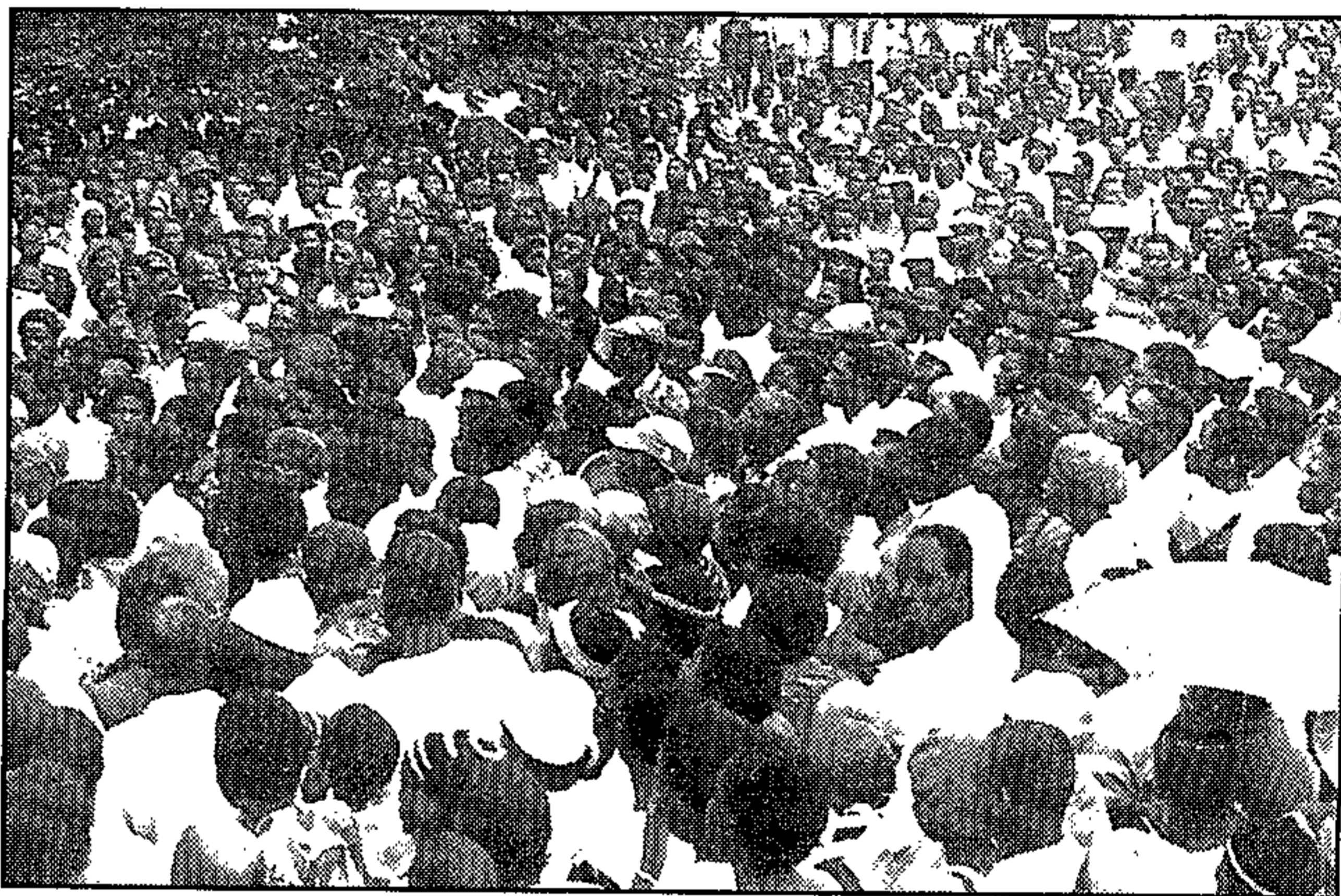
It was agreed at this meeting that when the deadline for the refunds expires in two weeks from now, those who would by then have not yet paid should be suspended.

Many will be hoping that this threat will bring the "recalcitrant" grouping running to pay and thereby bring the strike to an end.

The concern of many is that schools in the area

(113)
Venda civil servants are fighting for a refund of grossly inflated pension payouts and at the same time are blocking salary parity moves for their seniors, say

Mathatha Tsedu and Khathu Mamaila:



Strikers in Venda want 12 officials to pay back the millions paid out to them by the homeland's pension fund.

PIC:VELI NHLAPO

have been disrupted, no mail is moving, and areas served by manual telephone systems are cut off.

Sigwavhulimu's group argue that the formula used to pay them was legal at the time and that they should not be bound by a new formula that came into being while they were no longer members of the fund.

They are determined to try their argument in court, should that be necessary. For now they are holding out, and in the process reaping interest from the investment, interest that they are not being asked to refund.

But the pension is just one of the issues that has precipitated a strike; parity is another. Venda government workers have been crying for parity with their counterparts employed by the central Government.

It has been effected in various segments but there are others, including typists and civil engineering technicians, who have been on strike for over a month insisting that their cases have not been addressed.

And it is this parity that has also brought a somewhat ironic twist to the fight by the workers.

For while they argue for their own parity, a move to streamline the salaries of Directors General and get them cars in terms of applicable scales in the central Government has been blocked by the workers, who argue that this

category of workers are already paid too much.

This struggle is being coordinated by the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, whose secretary in the area, Mr Phillip Kutama, said while they were blocking the salaries of the DGs, they actually had no proof that this was not parity.

"We have said they should produce proof that it is parity. We have also said their case is not a priority, as there are workers who earn R140 a month who should be attended to first.

"As far as their car scheme is concerned, we have said that the scheme should be extended to other junior officials up to the rank of senior clerk. Only then can we sanction the scheme", Kutama said.

He said Nehawu and the government had agreed to refer an earlier agreement to arbitration, and that this meant the strikes relating to parity were now off, although the same workers are out now for pensions.

Ramabulana told *Sowetan* that he would repay the money this week and said he hoped the arbitration would resolve the matter once and for all.

It is a hope that is surely shared by many of the workers who spend money daily travelling to Thohoyandou for meetings. It is also shared by parents who want to see their children back in class if the dismal results of last year are to be avoided.

Sowetan 9/2/94

Where to park Venda's future?

(113)

By Mathatha Tsedu
Political Editor

■ **THREE MONTHS** *Venda's new*

ruler has little time to savour power:

VENDA'S NEW ruler, has only three months or less to stay in office. And no one is more aware of this fact than the man himself, Major General Tshamano Gerson Ramabulana.

This interim chairman of the military council of national unity, sees his role as that of a driver who has reached his destination.

"All I am doing is looking for parking, but we have arrived," Ramabulana told *Sowetan* in an exclusive interview at his house at Thohoyandou.

But if this suggests a pushover of a man, forget it.

For Ramabulana is a policeman. And when he set out to be a policeman, he had one thing in mind, to be the best.

He derived this from the writing of Dale Carnegie, who once wrote:

"If you are a shrub, try to be the greenest shrub."

"No one in my family, most of whom were educated, wanted me to be a policeman.

"They felt I could be something else. But by that time I had joined the force after leaving school due to financial problems. I told myself that I was now a policeman and I should be the best policeman around," he explained.

Ramabulana took over from Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana last week, after the latter was appointed head of the National Peace Keeping Force.

He inherited a bantustan torn asunder by a crippling strike by the civil service.

The strike was precipitated by pensions that have to be repaid by senior officials, including Ramabulana himself, and demands for the permanent employment of a legion of labourers.

Venda's administration has come to a standstill. Only hospital workers, computer operators who issue salary cheques and water affairs workers have been exempted.

The rest of government employees, including teachers, have been pulled out by the coalition that is calling for the refund of about R38 million from peo-

'Someone has to do it. I took it because it is for a short period and it is not really political'

ple such as Ramabulana, Ramushwana and other senior bureaucrats.

The capital Thohoyandou, and nearby Sibasa, have rubbish piling up in heaps all over, as workers gather daily at the main government buildings gates for updates on the strike.

Why did he walk into such a position at this time, and how does he hope to deal with this problem, we asked.

"Someone has to do it. I took it because it is for a short period and it is not really political.

"I agreed because my colleagues asked me and I cannot shy away from responsibility.

"This is my home and someone has to do the job and see that the situation goes back to normal," he said.

Pension Issue

Turning to the pension issue, Ramabulana said negotiations were the only solution to the crisis. "I met the people of the coalition of unions dealing with the pension issue and I am going to repay what I owe the fund.

"I have no problem with that as I am convinced that the formula used to calculate the first payouts was wrong.

"Regarding the Nehawu issues, the position is a bit difficult because a team of government workers who met the union agreed to do things that the government is in no position to implement.

"We met the president of Nehawu last

week and agreed to appoint an arbitrator to look into this agreement. As this process goes on, our understanding is that workers should go back to work," Ramabulana said.

Born at Migavhini, Dzanani, on February 17 in 1941, Ramabulana is the first-born of a family of seven.

The son of a schoolteacher, Mr Nanga Phillip Ramabulana, and his wife Magadlena, he passed his Standard 6 at Dzanani in 1956 and completed his junior certificate in 1960.

He enrolled at Lemana training college but left in midstream due to financial problems.

The dull uniform of the SAP beckoned and he joined the force in 1962.

"Prisoners were at that time not allowed out, so student policemen, the black ones, had to scrub the floors of the charge office," he recalled.

He was trained at the Benoni training centre in 1963 and was stationed at Orlando, Jeppe, Moroka, Kliptown and John Vorster over a period of time.

Highest rank

During this time he had also been studying and attained the highest rank possible for a black policeman at the time, senior sergeant.

"In 1970, due to a change in ranks, the rank of senior sergeant was abolished and I became just an ordinary sergeant again.

"Three years later, the ranks were re-introduced, and I had to sit for another examination to regain the rank that had been abolished.

"It was tough at the time. A senior sergeant earned R21 a month. I remember that. I still have my pay slip. After big pay (bonus) and R1 for a uniform, I got R66.

"There was also a lot of conflict with young white boys who wanted blacks to make tea for them. I never agreed to that," he said.

Ramabulana was transferred to Louis



Major General Gerson Tshamano Ramabulana ... at the helm of Venda.
PIC: VELI NHLAPO

Trichardt in 1975 and later to Dzanani, as station commander with the rank of warrant-officer.

Three years later, he became a lieutenant and was involved in preparation for Venda's independence, which was led by his cousin, Chief Patrick Mphophu. Mphophu appointed him head of security.

It was during his tenure as chief of the dreaded security police that many detainees, including Tshifhiwa Muofhe, died at the hands of his men.

How does he feel about that, and would he allow a reopening of the cases?

Ramabulana said he had striven to clean up his force.

Policemen discharged

"Investigations were made and the cases went to court and the policemen were discharged.

"However, if anyone wants to reopen the case of Tshifhiwa, for example, they are welcome. We will co-operate, we

have nothing to fear," he said.

From independence in 1979, Ramabulana's rise in the ranks of the police force was phenomenal, becoming a major, colonel and brigadier within 10 years.

He was promoted to major general in 1989, and became councillor for law and order in 1990 after the coup, which was led by his one-time junior, Ramushwana.

Ramabulana says he has no regrets about being a policeman.

He believes that he has set an example for younger people — that perseverance does pay. Married with six children, Ramabulana's life today is a far cry from the misery of the ordinary policeman. His job now is to steer Venda through the election process and usher in a new dispensation.

He will only then decide on his own future plans — to retire or go back to active police service. But, he emphasised that politics is out.

Pay it back, 'fatcats' told

Star 17/2/94

Thohoyandou — Tens of thousands of Venda civil servants and members of the public took to the streets of Thohoyandou yesterday to demand that 500 government officials, who were allegedly overpaid R60 million by the homeland's pension fund repay the money within 24 hours.

The road from Thohoyandou to Sibasa was blocked for several hours as public servants forced businesses owned by the officials to close "or else".

Many employees had to flee when what began as a peaceful march turned into pandemonium. — Sapa.

113

42 seek

court

Sowetan 22/2/94

order

By Khathu Mamaila

FORTY-TWO Venda government officials have applied for a court order blocking any attempt to force them to repay the money owed to the homeland's pension fund. *Sowetan* learnt yesterday.

Venda Pension Fund Committee spokesman Mr Takalani Netshituka said yesterday that the court interdict was served on his committee and the Venda government on Friday.

The order prohibits the committee from conducting a public campaign against the bureaucrats to the effect that they were dishonest in not returning the over-payments. The committee was also ordered to refrain from organising or taking part in visits by groups of people to the premises of the applicants to cause repayments to the amount being demanded.

The homeland government was ordered to maintain law and order and protect the applicants against "undue demands by the pension fund committee". The homeland government is also urged to take measures against the civil servants taking part in an illegal strike.

Commenting on the interdict, Netshituka said that his committee was not intimidated by the order. "We will challenge this order in court on Friday," he said. The interdict follows a mass campaign by Venda civil servants to retrieve R38 million from government officials overpaid during the pension payout last year.

Violence in QwaQwa

BLOEMFONTEIN. — Police apparently fired on a crowd as looting broke out in QwaQwa's capital Phuthaditjhaba yesterday during a march on the self-governing territory's government offices.

United Nations observers were advised by police to withdraw from the town, a UN source said, and troops were reported to be guarding government facilities.

Mass Democratic Movement local

secretary Mr Molozi Leluma said 60 people had been injured — some with gunshot wounds.

The events follow demands that QwaQwa chief minister Mr Kenneth Mopeli be removed from office and replaced by an administrator, Mr Leluma said. *CT 29/3/94*

He claimed Mr Mopeli had been using state funds to support the election campaign of his Dikwankwetla Party. — Sapa *(113)*

THE REGIONS *Mphephu government was riddled with*

Venda Republic set to disappear

By Khathu Mamaila

THE so-called independent Republic of Venda will disappear from the map of South Africa in five weeks' time, marking the beginning of the end of the popular struggle for reincorporation.

The self-governing territory became an independent state on September 13 1979 and paramount chief Patrick Ramaano Mphephu became its first president.

The main opposition at the time was the Venda Independence Party led by Mr Baldwin Mudau. The VIP never won any of the elections but observers believed that elections were rigged to enable Mphephu to stay in power.

Save for a few armed attacks, like the bombing of the Sibasa police station in 1981, Venda was peaceful under Mphephu's iron rule.

Mphephu, known for his pidgin English and his love of women, lived like Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

He built himself a mansion and was driven around in posh cars, while the majority of his subjects lived in abject poverty.

In the mid-eighties, Mphephu, whose government was riddled with corruption, declared himself life president of the Republic of Venda.

Some of his relatives were employed by the government without their being given

Sowetan 12/4/94
■ **FIVE WEEKS** *Quasi-independent*

state will cease to exist:

(113)



Major-General TG Ramabulana.

specific posts. Their job description were determined while they were already drawing "fat cheques".

Mphephu died in April 1988 after a short illness. He had successfully neutralised the opposition.

Headman Frank Ndwakhulu Ravele succeeded him and became the second president of Venda.

A few months after taking power, Ravele was faced with recurrent strikes

and school boycotts engineered by the pro-Black Consciousness Sibasa Coordinating Committee.

While the aim was to fight against the balkanisation of the country, the SICCO and other ANC-aligned organisations campaigned for the removal of cabinet ministers and other bureaucrats who were implicated in ritual killings.

When free political activity was allowed in Venda in February 1990, the people who had been "suffering in silence" took to the streets and demanded reincorporation into South Africa.

As the campaign intensified, law and order collapsed in the bantustan.

On April 5 1990 Colonel Gabriel Ramushwana ousted Ravele in a bloodless coup. He assured the Venda people that he would lead them to the new South Africa.

In February this year, Ramushwana was appointed commander of the newly formed National Peace Keeping Force and he had to relinquish his position as military ruler of Venda.

Major-General TG Ramabulana was the last ruler of the homeland.

Venda officials lose court bid

JOHANNESBURG. — Applications for interdicts by Venda government officials overpaid pension monies were dismissed with costs in the Venda Supreme Court yesterday (113)

The officials sought orders to prohibit the Venda Public Servants Coalition Committee, Crisis Pension Committee and Venda government from demanding the money back. — Sapa

Friday January 21 1994 SOWETAN

NEWS Homeland police

Venda cops up in arms

By Russel Molefe

POLICEMEN in Venda are up in arms over what they term "unfair promotion policies" and the alleged reluctance by authorities to address their long-standing demands.

They say commissioned officers are promoted without any academic qualifications required whereas non-commissioned officers have to produce a diploma or a degree certificate for promotion.

Disgruntled policemen also allege that non-commissioned officers, especially constables, are also denied promotion for "talking too much" or being members of the Police, Prison and Civil Rights Union.

Other demands, which the policemen say date back several months but have not yet been attended to by authorities, include:

- The formation of community-based policing;
- Equal salaries and allowances to their South African counterparts;
- An immediate stop to unnecessary transfers; and
- The right to purchase firearms.

Venda police acting spokesman Captain Mashudu Sethuga yesterday said they were not aware of the complaints and they had not been submitted to the Commissioner of Police. Popcru said in a statement it expected the authorities to rectify the promotion policies and address the demands before the April 27 elections.

S/Tuao 20/2/79

Strike halts Venda mail

THE Post Office has asked people not to send mail to Venda until further notice.

Spokesman Gawie van Eeden said a strike by Venda post office employees had disrupted the service and no post was entering or leaving the homeland.

More than 700 postbags destined for Venda are being stored at the transfer office in Louis Trichardt.

Bantustan now isolated

Sowetan 21/2/94

■ PENSION FUND Angry civil service strikers press demands for repayments:

By Khathu Mamaila and
Russel Molefe

SERVICES IN VENDA have virtually collapsed with Thohoyandou resembling a rubbish dump.

This is the result of the four-week-old strike by more than 20,000 civil servants who are demanding that 500 senior officials repay R38 million which was paid out during the privatisation of the homeland's pension fund a year ago.

All government services, except health and police, have collapsed. Venda has been cut off from the rest of the world since telephone and other communication services collapsed.

There are heaps of undelivered letters at various post offices.

Electricity and water supply at Thohoyandou was allegedly disconnected by civil servants angered by the failure of the officials to repay the money.

It is feared that electricity could be switched off as workers at the electricity corporation have been dragged into the

furor.

Workers at the three parastatals — Venda Electricity Corporation, Venda Development Corporation and the Venda Agricultural Corporation — have joined the strike demanding their pension funds.

The strikers went to the houses of several high-ranking officials who each owe the fund more than R250 000.

The workers, chanting political slogans, besieged the targeted houses. Some stormed into the yards and held discussions with the officials' family members.

Family members of the officials were warned to urge their relatives to repay the debt or "drastic steps would be taken against the entire family".

It was also revealed that some officials who were found at their homes were called to explain their refusal to repay the money.

"A certain official in Makwarela, who was trembling like a leaf, told the crowd that he was willing to repay but he had used the money to buy a farm," said a striker.

He said the new strategy was calculated to induce fear and embarrassment to the "stubborn" officials who had ignored letters of demand ordering the repayments.

Pensions dispute officials sent off

Sowetan 3/3/94

By Khathu Mamaila

THE Venda military council yesterday suspended about 56 bureaucrats in a bid to recover the R38 million owed to the pension fund.

The 56 government officials, who include directors-general and their deputies, were given leave without pay with effect from yesterday, according to a statement released by the homeland government.

The suspensions would only be lifted after the officials have repaid the overpayments, according to government sources.

A spokesman for the Venda Pension Fund Implementation Committee, Mr Takalani Netshituka, yesterday congratulated the government on taking firm action against the officials.

"If there are visible steps taken against them, they will be forced to repay the money," said Netshituka.

A well-placed source revealed that several officials were jolted by the suspensions and some had started arranging for repayments shortly after the news of the suspension spread throughout the homeland.

"By Friday, most of these people would have paid up. They obviously do not want to be out of their well-paying jobs," a source said.

Among those suspended are: Secretary-general of the military council Mr SE Moeti; director-general for internal affairs Mr RW Sigwavhulimu; director-general for education Mr AK Madzaga, and auditor-general Mr ND Maphiri.

Sewetan
Pensions trickle in

ABOUT R30 million has been recovered from Venda government officials who were owing the pension fund, a spokesman for the Coalition Committee, Mr Takalani Netshituka, revealed yesterday. 1813194

The repayments followed suspensions of bureaucrats of the ruling military council in a bid to force them to repay the owed amounts. (114)

Netshituka said of the 76 suspended officials, 47 have repaid, adding that there were some who were still defiant.

Those who have vowed to retain the overpayments, dubbed "Pension Weerstandsbeweging (PWB)" by the Coalition Committee, were pressing on with court action in a bid to get their jobs back, Netshituka said.

He said arrangements had been made to postpone the court hearing scheduled for March 21 to March 28.

The postponement was to give legal advisors enough time to "face the new initiative of the PWB".

NEWS Public asked to limit Venda

Sowetan 7/4/94

Nurses in Venda stage a sit-in

114

By Khathu Mamaila

NEARLY all members of the Venda Nursing Association, which has a tradition of opposing strikes as a method of resolving issues, yesterday embarked on a sit-in in defiance of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, which is known for rolling mass action at hospitals.

Venda health and welfare director general Dr J P McCutcheon yesterday confirmed the sit-in. He called on the members of the public to limit the visits to hospitals to urgent cases only.

Vena president Mrs Khomotjo Serakoana said about 300 nurses who are Vena members embarked on a sit-in to press their demands.

She said the demands included the payment of a night duty allowance, back-dating of promotions from April 1990, cash bonus, provision of well-equipped ambulances and creation of posts.

Nehawu chairman in the area Mr Kennedy Phalanndwa accused Vena of using the strike to "save face".

Asked if the demands put forward by Vena were not legitimate, Phalanndwa said: "These demands are fictitious.

"Our shop stewards at the hospitals where the striking nurses come from, have never brought these demands to the attention of the union. We distance ourselves from these demands," said Phalanndwa.

20 patients die during Venda hospital strike

ARG 13/4/94

114

□ IEC says demands without substance

The Argus Correspondents and Sapa THOHOYANDOU (Venda). — At least 20 patients are reported to have died in Venda since a pay strike by about 3 000 nurses began seven days ago.

The strike has closed about 100 clinics and has hit three hospitals near the capital.

Stranded patients are being referred to the neighbouring Gazankulu hospitals of Malamulele and Elim.

The strikers have occupied the Department of Health building in Thohoyandou to press their demands.

They initially put forward 16 demands, but Independent Electoral Commission officials intervened and 11 of the grievances have been dropped.

The IEC officials apparently argued that the other demands were without substance.

The strikers said they would return to work only when their demands had been met.

● The Natal Provincial Administration has told striking ambulance personnel to return to work by 4pm today or face disciplinary action.

But the Natal Public Sector Workers' Union said the strike, in its second day, would continue until workers received "a meaningful salary package".

Strikers claimed the lowest-paid employee was paid R600. The union said they were paid 50 percent less than counterparts in other provinces.

The NPA ultimatum came after a series of urgent talks yesterday with

the union in a bid to end the strike by more than 1 000 employees, about 70 percent of the province's ambulance staff.

The union called for intervention by the Transitional Executive Council to expedite wage negotiations.

The TEC yesterday appealed to civil servants not to strike in the run-up to the elections.

● About 200 student nurses at Bisho Hospital in Ciskei went on strike yesterday, complaining that they and patients were being fed only mealie meal and bread.

A delegation went to the Bisho parliamentary complex to hand over a memorandum and spoke briefly to joint administrator Bongani Finca, who is reported to have promised that their complaints would be looked into.

A spokesman for the student nurses, Mandisa Koboka, said they had complained about the quality of food since March 2, but the administration had taken no notice.

Patients had been fed only samp since that date, she said. Sometimes their milk was diluted with water.

On Monday the nurses found there was only samp, mealie meal and about 60kg of rice in the hospital stores.

Ms Koboka said the student nurses would return to work as soon as they and patients were assured a proper diet.

Ms Koboka said registered nurses were still at work at the hospital, where there were more than 200 patients.

For two weeks a 15-year-old mentally retarded boy, right, was left without the care he needed while the nursing staff at the Hayani hospital were on strike.

JOCELYN MAKER reports from Venda

Filth and urine cloak hospitals in wake of strike

SITUATION 17/1/94

PATIENTS of the Hayani hospital in Venda will never be able to express what they have suffered over the past two weeks.

Only a small group of people like therapists, cleaners and military medics who did not join the striking nurses and clerks know what the 312 mentally retarded and physically handicapped inmates have endured.

But they will not speak, as they fear for their lives, even though the two-week strike which paralysed five Venda hospitals ended on Friday morning.

They do not want to be labelled as scabs — or alienate themselves from the work they are dedicated to.

Outside the hospital grounds, some were prepared to say that nursing staff were "heartless and cruel" for turning their backs on their helpless charges.

Supporters of the strike said they had no choice, as it was the only way to pressure the Venda government into paying them decent salaries.

But no matter what, those caught in the middle are the hapless ones. Patients who do not even know where they are — little children, the elderly, young men and women, some in wheel-

chairs, others who crawl the passageways on their hands and knees or who sit rocking or lying for hours in the sun.

On Thursday, while 3 000 nurses gathered at a sit-in outside the Department of Health in Thohoyandou, the problems at Hayani, just a few kilometres away, had reached crisis point.

Like a number of the psychiatric wards at other hospitals, more than 120 Hayani patients had already been sent home.

Ambulances carting the deformed and bedridden were out in the hills delivering patients to homes in the communities.

Many residences were locked because parents were at work, so patients were left with young children or neighbours.

Almost all had not been home for many years, as Hayani had become their home.

Hayani's occupational therapist, Mr Edward Luruli, 28, has been the backbone of the home.

Since the start of the strike, he has had to manage the patients. Unable to cope, three wards had to be closed and more than 44 cerebral palsy children had to be sent home.

He said: "Volunteers came in to help us feed the patients, as many just lie in their cots unable to care for themselves. Patients in

Hayani are totally dependent on the staff for everything.

"It has been a nightmare, and I am deeply worried about those we have sent back into the community."

For the past two weeks, most patients at Hayani have not been bathed. They wandered around corridors in urine-soaked clothing, their faces caked with dried food.

In one courtyard, three people lay near pools of urine that had been left there for days. In the children's wards, some lay face down, vomit which had been left on the ground for hours.

Some patients crawled around under filthy, thin blankets, while others lay in their beds on dirty linen.

A heavy stench of urine, dirty bodies and overcooked food hung in the corridors.

"We tried everything we could to make our patients as comfortable as possible, but it has not been easy," said Mr Luruli.

On Friday, one nurse who stood feeding a child said she did feel sorry for her patients, but she had to fight for her rights.

"I have my matric and two years training. I have worked at Hayani for four years and I earn R800. It is not enough to keep my family alive," she said.



Picture: CHRISTINE VANDERKAM

S/Times

17/4/94

Anguish over deserting the ill

By JOCELYN MAKER

IN A deserted psychiatric ward a mentally retarded woman lay on her bed speaking to a pile of snuff in the cup of her hand.

Caught up in a world of her own, she was unaware that the people who had cared for her for over 10 years were no longer there.

She was one of the lucky ones in the two-week nursing strike which paralysed almost every hospital in Venda for two weeks.

At least she had the security of a familiar environment, food and shelter.

Other patients, from 12-year-old children to ageing adults, had been taken home or left with friends and neighbours in their communities.

Most were dropped off without medication, left with families who had not seen them for years and many were highly dangerous.

The only reason the mentally retarded woman had remained in the psychiatric section of the Tshilidzini hospital, only 8km outside the capital city of Thohoyandou, was because no one could find her home address or even a family member to take care of her during the turmoil.

The strike, which ended suddenly on Friday, has left supervisor James Tshishonga with a heavy heart.

Dedicated to his 54 chronically ill psychotic and retarded patients, he was left with only a few helpers.

Most patients were unable to feed or clean themselves and all needed constant supervision.

Unable to cope, Mr Tshishonga realised there was only one solution — to send his patients home.

Driving for hours through Venda, he searched desperately

for his helpless charges' former homes.

"It was a nightmare. Most of our patients lived in the bush before they came to us. Our society discards them and when they finally arrive at our hospital they very rarely see their families again.

"As I drove I realised I would have to drop off my patients at homes where they were not wanted.

"Now I was taking them back, much against my own will and I knew I was going to leave them alone and confused without the care and attention they so desperately need on a daily basis.

"Some of my patients are psychotic. They are an extreme dan-

ger to society: anything can trigger them off and not much can hold them back when they go into a rage ...

"In our communities we now have mentally ill people who are going to run riot. Others are going to be neglected and abused.

"I know the nursing staff have a major problem and that they are paid a pittance for the work they do."

Mr Tshishonga said he was also deeply concerned that many of his charges would go missing and never return to the hospital.

"To take patients home because of a strike goes against everything that I am as a psychiatric nurse. It worries me terribly and has left me deeply upset."

Last Sunday Mr Tshishonga took one of his patients, James Ravhura, to an address about 25km outside the city. James's brother was away and the patient was left with a neighbour.

"As I drove off I felt shattered ... James is harmless and lives in a world of his own. All I could do was hope that he would be well cared for until I returned to fetch him," he said.

But four days later James reappeared at the hospital.

"He had somehow made his way back to us. I was so relieved. I just pray that as I now go back to collect my patients I will be able to find them and that they have not harmed themselves or anyone else," Mr Tshishonga said.

Ex-Venda workers strike

THOHOYANDOU. — Hundreds of Department of Health and Welfare workers in the former Venda homeland continued their protest yesterday after going on strike the previous day for better working conditions. The strikers also want "outstanding money".

27/5/94/114



Millions spent in ⁽¹¹³⁾ unauthorised spree ^{CT 4/11/94}

ADMINISTRATIVE chaos in the former homeland of Venda, including unauthorised spending of more than R7,4 million in a single financial year, has been reported to Parliament by the territory's auditor-general.

The unauthorised spending in 1990/91 included R2,9 million in the Finance department and R2,7m in Social Welfare,

Because of serious weaknesses in internal control, misappropriated funds, lack of supporting documents and improper bookkeeping he was unable to give an audit opinion on the Department of Public Works' books for the 1991/92 year. — Sapa

December pension payouts may be late

By Khathu Mamaila

MORE than 50 000 pensioners in the former Lebowa homeland will not get their pensions before Christmas unless the strike by hundreds of civil servants is resolved soon.

Hundreds of workers in the justice department, which handles the payment of pensions, are on strike in support of their demand to be regraded.

Regional head of the justice department Mr Elijah Rasefate said pensioners had not received their monthly grants as

a result of the strike since November 18 by the administration staff.

He said all civil servants in 14 districts, each responsible for more than 4 000 pensioners, were on strike. Pension payouts had been disrupted as a result of the strike.

The workers went on strike about two weeks ago after a long-standing row over job grades. They demand that they be graded higher than their current notches.

"Pensioners face a bleak Christmas if the strikers do not suspend their action," said Rasefate. He appealed to the strik-

ers to go back to work, adding that their grievances were receiving the attention of the justice ministry.

Rasefate said local courts had also been affected by the stoppage. Asked if the principle of no work, no pay would be applied, Rasefate said his department had still to decide on the matter (13)

The strikers have vowed they will only return to work after their grades have been reviewed. "We can only be taken seriously if we engage the government in some kind of action," one striker, who refused to give his name, said.

