

- 198 In the case of aid to UNITA, files from the military archives reveal frequent joint planning meetings between SADF and UNITA military officials. On 2 December 1981, a plan was agreed for a joint operation in Cunene province in order to “help UNITA regain control of its traditional area of strength in north-east Cunene”. Silwer’s goals for 1982 are detailed as “protection of Cunene province, extension of UNITA influence in Cunene and Moxico provinces ... elimination of SWAPO as a realistic threat to South West Africa”.
- 199 The file for 1982 (the only one made available) contains numerous references to supply drops such as those in Mozambique, as well as to several limited military operations to enable UNITA to move into new areas. It is clear that the level of SADF military involvement with UNITA on the ground was far greater than in Mozambique. The presence of MK camps in the country was certainly not an insignificant determining factor in that regard. The list of ANC members killed in exile reveals that considerably more MK combatants were killed in what are termed “UNITA ambushes” than by the SADF in combat. This was, indeed, the single largest cause of unnatural deaths amongst ANC members in exile.

■ POLICE AND MILITARY COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN LESOTHO: *OPERATION LATSA*

- 200 The Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) – the object of the SADF’s support in terms of *Operation Latsa* – had its origins in events in Lesotho in the 1970s. In 1970, the then pro-South African Basotho National Party (BNP) refused to accept the results of the country’s first post-independence general election, which it lost. With covert South African government support, it held on to power and declared a state of emergency. In 1974, the Basutholand Congress Party (BCP) – the 1970 election winner – attempted an armed seizure of power, which failed. Hundreds of BCP supporters, including its leader Mr Ntsu Mokhehle, fled the country. Initially they found refuge in Botswana and Zambia.
- 201 In the course of the 1970s, the BNP’s stance towards the South African government and the ANC changed radically and large numbers of ANC members and MK combatants found sanctuary in the country. The BNP’s foreign policy shifted as well, to the point that the Soviet Union opened an embassy in Maseru in the 1970s, a move that antagonised the South African government. By the mid-1970s, as far as the South African government was concerned, Lesotho had moved into the camp of the ANC.

- 202 In this context, the South African government and the BCP found common ground in their hostility to the BNP government. By this time, the BCP had developed an armed wing, the LLA, whose major logistical problem was getting its guerrillas through South Africa into Lesotho. Its initial attempts to infiltrate guerrillas into Lesotho in 1978 were disastrous. The first two sets of infiltrators were all captured by the SAP, as was the entire LLA High Command, with the exception of its leader Ntsu Mokhehle, *en route* to a meeting in Welkom. By 1979, however, the LLA had managed to establish a clandestine presence in the Transkei from where it launched operations inside Lesotho in August 1979.
- 203 The Basotho government responded with a major crackdown on the BCP, and by January 1980 over 700 BCP supporters had fled to the Orange Free State. By this time, Mokhehle was in touch with the South African government. By mid-1980, the LLA was receiving weapons and training from the SADF. The LLA was now able to move the bulk of its fighters from the Transkei to Dithotaheng camp in QwaQwa and another camp on a farm called Ferndale, near Bergville in Natal, where the Special Tasks personnel assigned to the LLA project were also based. These were at various times Special Forces members Colonel Hennie Blaauw, Major GC (Dan) Griesel (who was base commander at Ferndale for a period), Captain C 'Pine' Pienaar, Lieutenant Erasmus Steyl (aka Trevor), Colonel MA van den Bergh and Major Johan Opperman.
- 204 Although officially heading the BCP in exile in Botswana, Mokhehle seems to have spent a good deal of time in South Africa in the early 1980s. He is known to have stayed at Port St Johns in the Transkei in about 1983, where he developed close ties with the former Rhodesian military officers then running the Transkei Defence Force. At other times, he is known to have been given accommodation at the secret SAP farms Vlakplaas and Kochfontein. This latter was near Zeerust and was frequently used by the SADF's Special Forces as a base for attacks into Botswana.
- 205 Operations inside Lesotho focused primarily on the sabotaging of infrastructural facilities and the killing of BNP supporters and officials. There is little evidence of LLA operations against ANC/MK targets, with the exception of an attack in February 1981 on the home of a South African refugee, Mr Khelaki Sello, a prominent lawyer who often defended ANC members. He survived the attack.
- 206 The LLA was used by the South African government primarily as an instrument for applying pressure to the BNP government – pressure which was relaxed when the BNP was negotiating or talking with South Africa and intensified when it was