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Black and white, sons of the 'Kei

While the Transkei town of Cofimvaba is well known for being the residential base of the homeland's first Paramount Chief, the pro-Bantustan Kaiser Matanzima, it can also boast strong connections with more liberal-minded men.

Cofimvaba has been linked to the slain SA Communist Party leader, Chris Hani, who was born in the village of Sabalele about 40 kilometres outside the town.

This small town on the road between Umtata and Queenstown also gave birth to a lesser-known progressive thinker, Alistair Weakley, who together with his brother Glen, was murdered by bandits in the Port St Johns area last week.

At Alistair Weakley's funeral in Grahamstown this week, Professor Ian MacDonald of Rhodes University delivered the eulogy. He said Mr Weakley, an attorney, had been killed in a part of the country he had loved best.

A Xhosa linguist, he was raised in Transkei among people whose culture he understood and respected, and for whom he alternately grieved and raged at the violence done to them, Prof MacDonald said.

He was a talented rugby player who played for Border and he was instrumental in making the Rhodes Rugby Club one of the first "liberal" rugby clubs. He became a campfighter for racial equality in sport.

When the University of Port Elizabeth denied permission to students to participate in the annual Intervarsity Ball, Alistair Weakley led his club in the campaign to have the ball cancelled.

Another incident saw him leave the playing field in the middle of a game in protest at the rough handling of a black man by a white supporter of the rival team.

Prof MacDonald said Mr Weakley was a fierce competitor, but he detested brutality and viciousness.

He was an executive member of the Grahamstown branch of the Democratic Party, and campaigned in four elections and two referendums.

Shortly before Transkei gained independence in 1976, whites moved out of Cofimvaba.

This week, the *Sunday Tribune*, after great difficulty, found someone who remembered when the Weakleys lived in the town.

Henry Cassels, 76, worked for Glen and Alistair's father, Laurie, who travelled all over Transkei on behalf of an East London firm of wholesale merchants.

"I remember Glen who must have been about 10. I cannot remember Alistair. He must have been five or six when the family left the town."

The old house which the Weakleys occupied in Cofimvaba has hardly been changed, but the town has become more run-down, crowded, and there isn't a white face to be seen.