

THE KILLING FIELDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

In the late 1950s individual members of the ANC started a long trek into exile. A central executive committee of the organization was established and a military wing launched at the end of 1961. The movement—in-exile took on a life of its own, with only tenuous connections with South Africa. There were connections with persons in South Africa who had been members of the ANC before it was banned, but it was on an individual basis and the underground groups inside the country were poorly organized.

New political activity in South Africa seemed at first to have little or no connection with the external ANC. The trade unions that were organized in 1973 owed their formal structures to white student research groups or some veteran white unionists. They were not affiliated to the old Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu), or to any other black movement. Instead they founded their own independent federations and called initially for a working class movement. The other movement that grew internally was the Black Conscious Movement. Formed in the 1970s it was independent of the ANC, had links with the Christian Institute, and was closer to the PAC in ideology than to the ANC.

There was a distinct political revival in the 1970s. This was connected with several factors that moved black communities, and also black student bodies, to revolt. There was a downturn in the economy and a further impoverishment of the urban working class; an importation of black liberation theology from the US; celebratory enthusiasm as the Portuguese colonies won their freedom from colonial rule; and rebelliousness in the schools and colleges rooted in the collapse of the old school system.

Quite how much contact the ANC—in-exile had with the events of 1976–77 (the Soweto Revolt) is debatable. However, some internal cells were in contact with grass-roots committees and as the revolt spread it seems that individual members of the ANC made contact with groups of students. But whatever the connection, the external leadership exerted little direct influence on the pattern of struggle.

Running parallel to the strikes of the emergent black trade unions, the revolt extended over a year and affected black communities across the country. Finally, crushed by the state, large numbers of young people found escape routes across the borders. They sought other means of struggle, above all through military action, and pinned their faith on exile movements.

It was the ANC abroad that gained from the mass exodus of youth. Only they could promise, and provide, schooling and/or military action. Largely through its association with the South African Communist Party, the ANC had access to substantial military, financial and other support from a bloc of states tied to the Soviet Union and from an international network of political parties in touch with the media, parliaments, the trade unions, the churches, student bodies and the left across the world. The only serious rival to the ANC, the exiled Pan Africanist Congress, despite being closer in tone to the black consciousness current, had nothing to compare with this solid base of international support. Young supporters of black consciousness organizations

deserted in droves when they crossed into exile and found that only the ANC could provide the material means they were seeking.

The ranks of the external ANC grew, as did the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe (or MK). However, this did not necessarily create closer links between the ANC-in-exile and the political groupings that were being established in South Africa. The differences in location, in experience, and in daily activity could only keep the two components of the movement apart. Yet the nature of this politics (led by a petty bourgeoisie with national aspirations) led to the construction of similar institutions. The rise to hegemony of the security department inside Umkhonto we Sizwe, had as its complement, the formation of the 'comrades' in the townships. They were two sides to the same coin, even though the one side carried the king's head while the obverse carried a 'necklace'.

During the 1980s, the carrying of the AK-47 by the armed forces of MK was imitated in the townships where youth carried wooden replicas. Armed action was mythologized if it could not be adopted. But more than replica AKs were in evidence. Local leaders emerged who believed that they could dispense justice as MK could, through the possession of real arms. The two sectors of the ANC, grown apart, nonetheless found common methods of asserting themselves.

It is not certain whether direct links were built up between the armed officers abroad and would-be officers in the townships. Nonetheless there was a marrying of minds in the use of terror: in MK abroad and in the townships of South Africa. This dimension is explored in the article by Paul Trewhela. That is only one aspect of the spread of terror in the country. Another aspect, discussed by Baruch Hirson, concerns the emergence of territorial armies grouped around tribally oriented movements: namely, the armies built up to enforce control in the Bantustans.

Each and every territory had its own history of armed terror. The police and army were turned loose on demonstrators, boycotters, or critics. In this issue it is Inkatha control in Natal (and more recently in the Transvaal) that is of concern. Nonetheless in the coming years the armies established under government aegis in all the Bantustans will play increasingly important roles in the way a final settlement is reached and in this they will be joined by the commanders of MK. The latter will try to impose a hegemonic control on all black armed personnel in order to give the army a distinct political role in the country. This process is already well under way in the Transkei, Nelson Mandela's place of birth, where the Bantustan military regime of Major-General Bantu Holomisa has provided not only sanctuary to the Umkhonto chief of staff, Chris Hani (a politburo member of the SACP), but also a certain fusion of political ambitions. The murder in the Transkei of a former ANC prisoner from its dreaded camp, Quatro, in Angola is a feature of the Holomisa/Hani accord which Trewhela investigates.

This conjunction of MK with the Bantustan armies will not exhaust the groups that will, at local or at national level, place their stamp on the emerging society. It might be premature to give them an independent role, unless South Africa breaks up in Lebanese fashion. There is no firm indication as yet as to the

future role of vigilantes in the urban squatter camps and the rural hinterland, nor of the roving bands of youth who bear no responsibility to any but their own local leaders. Those who have dispensed the 'necklace' of yesterday will always find a supply of old tyres, of petrol and matches, if not AK-47s. It is perhaps remarkable that in all the terror and mayhem that has been witnessed in South Africa over the past two decades, there has not been more major bloodshed. That is, no killings that could equal the extermination of Kampuchians by Pol Pot, of Kurds in Iraq, Ugandans by Amin or Malawians by Hastings Banda's cohorts. These massacres and many more, in Chile, Argentine, Tibet and other countries, have not as yet been repeated on quite that scale in South Africa. Instead there has been a steady and continuous flow of corpses and of maimed.

Many were killed by local gangsters, others fell victim to white brutality. Month after month there has been news of men and women tortured, mutilated and killed. Those accused (but not often found guilty in the courts) were farmers, or other white citizens. Others were policemen, in uniform or plain clothes, killing routinely in the course of official duties. Those done to death include demonstrators or just bystanders, and those locked up at the mercy of their captors in prison cells.

Some of the more notorious of these killings have been reported in the British press. Others have gone unremarked because the press does not find the event 'newsworthy'. One such event, described below by Brian Oswin, demonstrates that alongside black infighting there is a more pernicious terror in South Africa: that wielded by the police and the army and, inevitably, by the right wing reaction which has emerged from the ranks of those bodies. Let there be no doubt, these swastika swinging bodies might not be able to mount an insurrection but they are capable of destabilizing communities, indiscriminate (and also calculated) killings as well as inciting others to murder. No equation of forces in the coming events can afford to ignore the threat they represent.

A DEATH IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE KILLING OF SIPHO PHUNGULWA

Paul Trehela

The Principle of Monarchy

The Mandela myth was mainly the creation of the South African Communist Party. As the most important organizer of ANC politics within the country and internationally for thirty years, especially through the media, the SACP in the late 1950s and early 1960s set about the creation of a very specific cult of personality.

The 'M Plan' of 1953, in which 'M' stood for Mandela, did more to surround the leader's name with a mystique than reorganize the ANC on a cell-system, as it was supposed to do. Ten years later, after the arrest of members of the