

White S. African Reporter Pleads Guilty to Treason

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JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — A white woman reporter-turned-guerrilla pleaded guilty to capital charges of treason today for bombing two police stations.

Marion Sparg, 28, a former reporter from the Indian Ocean port city of East London, also admitted belonging to the outlawed African National Congress. She said she did not regret her part in what she called a bitter war for freedom.

Sparg's guilty plea was accepted by Johannesburg's provincial Supreme Court. She could receive the death sentence when the court announces its decision, expected this week

"I do not regret the commitment I've made. The struggle to get this country free is my life now," Sparg said in an emotional letter appealing for her parents' understanding. It was written just before her March arrest and read to the court.

Few whites have been convicted of fighting in the ANC military wing.

Sparg sat, surrounded by friends and her parents, Wreford and Esther Sparg, as a prosecutor read the letter and a statement she gave to a magistrate.

This is the account he read:

Sparg left South Africa in 1981, contacted the ANC in neighboring Botswana and received military training in Angola in 1982

At her request, she infiltrated into South Africa, through Lesotho, in 1985.

Planted Limpet Mines

She planted limpet mines in police headquarters at Johannesburg and a police station in Cambridge, eastern Cape. Several people were hurt in the explosions.

Referring to a clash in which police killed black youths, she said, "I can understand their fear . . . as they failed to understand why children with stones were prepared to take on armored cars and submachine guns."

She said she hoped that one day, her parents “will be able to understand and be proud.”