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Jg..... Nr..... P...6... Dat... 15 MAY 1998

Bomb attack was cowardly, TRC told

Perpetrators of Church Street attack compared unfavourably with 'Wit Wolf'

By ROSS MORTHEY
Special Writer

Former SA Air Force lieutenant Zirkie Jansen, who was seriously injured in the Church Street bombing, yesterday compared the bombers unfavourably with "Wit Wolf" Barend Strydom.

Jansen was less than 2m from the Church Street car bomb when it exploded. He still sets off walk-through security apparatus, which detects metal, because of the shrapnel still in his body.

"If you looked at Barend Strydom you could at least see he was holding a gun, and defend yourself, or hide.

"But concealing a bomb in a car and setting it off - I can't conceive how this could be fighting apartheid," Jansen said.

He spent seven months in hospital recovering from his injuries and was blind in one eye for three years due to glass fragments in the eye.

He told the TRC's amnesty committee in Pretoria he was opposed to amnesty being granted to the applicants responsible for the blast of May 20 1983.

Senior Umkhonto weSizwe member Aboobaker Ismail has applied for amnesty for masterminding the attack.

The two operatives who drove the car bomb to the site were both killed in the blast.

"I said from the beginning that I forgave the people who planted the bomb but not the one who planned the attack - that was a cowardly deed. It was never acceptable and is still not," Jansen testified.

He said that if amnesty were granted, the applicant would walk away a free man.

"He'll never understand how the victims and their families suffered," Jansen said.

TREFWOORDE

- 1 *Magoffen*
- 2 *g. Kuenis*
- 3 *Kommarsie in*
Waarheid
- 4 *Pretoria*
- 5 *Lemonhoff*
- 6 *strate*
- 7 *Sponeurs*
- 8 *amnestie*
- 9 *solde*
- 10 *Umkhonto we*
Sizwe

INSTITUUT VIR EIETYDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat

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"I don't have a problem with the applicant's fight against apartheid but I do with his methods.

"If it had been a war situation, with soldiers fighting each other, then they could have talked of a struggle."

He said he had never thought of the SAAF headquarters building as a military target but simply as a building like any other in Pretoria's city centre.

"The ANC and the government were not at war - the situation between Swapo and the SADF was a war. For me it was more of a political power struggle," he said.

"I have never been a violent person but I was forced to spend time in a military uniform or go to jail, which would have been an awful waste of my life.

"The closest I got to a pistol was 30 minutes during my basic training.

"I feel that, in the military, we were indoctrinated. The ANC were always portrayed as terrorists," Jansen added.

The Rev Charles Martin testified that, contrary to evidence presented earlier this week by applicant Colin de Sousa, he had never recruited anybody for military training in the ANC or to carry out attacks.

He said he was a parish priest in Bonteheuwel on the Cape Flats and was sympathetic to the struggle.

When he was approached to help political activists who were in trouble, he would arrange safe houses for them or help them to get out of the country, he said, but he denied he had been active in recruiting people into Umkhonto weSizwe.

Yesterday's testimony completed this hearing and the parties were asked to make written submissions by June 7.

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