

## Blue-Blooded Afrikaner As Anti-Apartheid Revolutionary

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- By John Battersby Special to the Christian Science Monitor

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HEINRICH GROSSKOPF, a lanky young Afrikaner with a boyish face and sensitive manner, is known to white South Africans as the country's most wanted guerrilla. At the height of a spate of urban bombings in late 1987, Mr. Grosskopf, who comes from a leading Dutch-descended Afrikaner family, was blamed by police for two of the bombings in which at least three people were killed.

“By branding an Afrikaner boy as a terrorist they were sending a message to all whites - and Afrikaners in particular - that the boy next door could also be a terrorist,” Grosskopf said in an interview here.

Since he left the country secretly in 1986 to join the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) - and subsequently its military wing, Umkhonte We Sizwe - Grosskopf's whereabouts have been a mystery.

Great was the surprise, therefore, of 115 liberal whites who arrived at Lusaka airport June 30 to be greeted by a smiling, nervous Grosskopf in a suit and tie.

As chief of protocol for the three-day conference organized by the ANC to discuss the role of whites in a post-apartheid society, Grosskopf interacted with many delegates, to the visible discomfort of some.

Some delegates argued that his presence was a provocative act by the ANC that would play into the Pretoria government's hands to portray the ANC as hard-line terrorists. Others said it reflected the ANC's honesty in not trying to conceal the side of its operations that is less palatable to whites.

Grosskopf, as in most things, was frank:

“I am here. If they don't like it, that's tough.”

Grosskopf spoke openly about his past and his upbringing in a relatively liberal Afrikaner home. His father, Professor H.J. Grosskopf, is a former newspaper editor and head of the department of journalism at Stellenbosh University near Cape Town. His grandfather was an eminent Afrikaner writer.

But it is his mother, Santie Grosskopf, for whom Grosskopf reserves special words of praise and respect.

Following widely publicized police accusations that Grosskopf was responsible for urban bombings that killed civilians, Mrs. Grosskopf exchanged angry letters with Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok. She challenged Mr. Vlok to provide evidence to support his claims.

"I admire her for what she did and I appreciate it," he told the Afrikaans anti-apartheid newspaper Vrye Weekblad recently. "What she did was also politically correct because she was fighting for a principle."

There was endless curiosity among the delegates as to how the perfect Afrikaner boy became a violent revolutionary.

He traced his politicization to his school days at the Linden High School in Johannesburg. There he was branded a "communist" because he turned down a nomination to be a prefect - it involved opposing the enrollment of black pupils at the school.

By the time he left school he was acutely aware of the racial injustice around him and decided he would refuse to be conscripted in the South African defense force. As it happened he was exempted on medical grounds.

He was deeply affected by the widespread repression under the 1985 emergency during which hundreds were shot by security forces or detained without trial.

But the final catalyst that sent him on the hazardous and lonely path to exile was a statement in 1985 by then Law and Order Minister Louis Le Grange.

**Mr. Le Grange, in attempting to reassure the public, said the state had everything under control and that only six people a day were dying.**

Taught by his parents to reason things out for himself, Grosskopf concluded "that either parliament agreed that the government was in control and that it was acceptable for six people a day to die, or it was a case of nobody caring," he said.

From his new home at the exiled ANC headquarters, Grosskopf is not prepared to discuss the details of the bombings or whether he was involved in them.

But the soft-spoken Afrikaner revolutionary is proud of his position as a "political soldier" in the ANC's military wing and he defends violence and killing as necessary to hasten just order in South Africa.

"If I choose out of distress to kill you because of who and what you are, that is murder," he said.

"But if, out of distress, I decide to kill you because you are an obstacle to peace, a danger to the community, that is not murder," he said. He said he had been influenced by the writings of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela and by reading the Freedom Charter, the ANC's socialist treatise for a non-racial South Africa.

But in an exiled liberation army consisting overwhelmingly of young black exiles, with a handful of English-speaking whites, Grosskopf is a novelty.

"I don't feel I am any less of an Afrikaner because I am in the African National Congress," he told Vrye Weekblad. "I feel closer to my forefathers than do many of my fellow Afrikaners," he said.

But if he returned to his fatherland he would be arrested and almost certainly charged with treason and murder.

“I am in exile because I want to go home,” he said.