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# ADAC NEWS

DETENTION ACTION COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER NO. 9 JULY 1984  
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JEANETTE SCHOON

ADAC STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF JEANETTE SCHOON.

"The Detention Action Committee (ADAC) has learnt with sadness and anger of the murder of Jenny Schoon and her six-year-old daughter, Katryn, by a parcel-bomb in Angola. We note with great interest the statement by 'South African Security Branch sources' in the Sunday Times that a 'South African Communist Party assassination squad' was responsible for this outrage.

Are we then to believe that this alleged 'assassination squad' is also to blame for the murders, inside South Africa, of South Africans opposed to apartheid, like Griffiths Mxenge and Rick Turner? Or for

assassinated

28 june 1984



KATRYN SCHOON

the death threats received by so many others? Or for the similar deaths in exile of Joe Gqabi and Ruth First, both members of the ANC? We also recall how the White Rhodesian public was fooled for so many years by Ian Smith's denials of atrocities committed by the infamous Selous Scouts.

When we bear in mind the South African government's previous denials of support for the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR) and of Koevoet atrocities in Namibia, both of which are now established, the latest disclaimer is all the more difficult to believe."

This statement was submitted to the Cape Times, Argus and Herald. None published it.

# RIVONIA

- 20 YEARS

1963 was a year of great repression of the organisations fighting for freedom in South Africa. The worst blow of all was struck on 11 July when a number of the leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the sabotage group that had many ANC activists as members, were arrested at Lilliesleaf farm in Rivonia, a suburb outside Johannesburg. Those detained included Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein, Raymond Mhlala and Bob Hepple.

Hepple was able to escape, but the others were accused in what has become known as the Rivonia Trial. It is the best-known of the numerous political trials in South Africa in the early 1960s, because it involved members of the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Those arrested on the Farm did not stand trial alone. Elias Motsoaledi, James Kantor and Andre Mlangeni joined them in dock, while Nelson Mandela was brought from jail to stand as accused number one. Mandela had been sent to jail in 1962 for five years for leaving South Africa illegally and for incitement.

The defence lawyers were led by Bram Fischer, who was himself jailed for life in 1966 for organising acts of sabotage and heading the underground South African Communist Party.

All the accused pleaded not guilty to charges under the Sabotage Act when they appeared in court on 3 December 1963. They said that the government and not them, should be put on trial. These were the first signs of the immense courage they showed throughout the trial even though they thought they were going to be sentenced to death.

The state had collected a lot of evidence at the farm itself and most of those admitted that they had been involved in sabotage. The state called 173 state witnesses in the case, the most important of whom was Bruno Mtshali, a member of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe who gave evidence against his comrades, giving away as much information as he could.

The defence gave the leaders, and in particular Nelson Mandela, a chance to explain why Umkhonto we Sizwe had been formed and to answer some of the state's charges. The accused said, for instance, that 'Operation Mayibuye' (a document,

planning guerilla war and armed intervention by countries supporting the liberation movement, which was at the farm had not been accepted as Umkhonto policy. They also made it quite clear that Umkhonto was started as a last resort, after peaceful methods had been suppressed by the government and that fighters were told not to do anything that might cause the death of innocent people.

Mandela's statement from the dock has since become famous and has been quoted around the world.

Other countries showed a lot of interest in the trial. The United Nations passed a motion by 100 votes to 1 (South Africa) that attacked political trials, and called for an end to the Rivonia Trial. Two days before the judgement, the Security Council - the highest body of the UN - called for an end to the trial and for the accused and all other prisoners of apartheid to be released.

On 11 June 1964 some eleven months after the raid on Lilliesleaf farm, the judge found Bernstein not guilty (Kantor had been released at the end of the case for the state) but Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada, Goldberg, Mhlala, Mlangeni and Motsoaledi were convicted on one or more counts. The next day they were all sentenced to life imprisonment. In South Africa this means that they will stay in prison until they die, unless the government decides to pardon them.

On the day of the sentence, some 2000 people went to the court. Many of them joined the accused in shouting 'Amandla' as they were driven away to prison. Among those in the crowd were Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu.

After the trial Chief Albert Luthuli made a statement about those who had stood trial: 'They represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African struggle; this morality and ethics has been sentenced to an imprisonment it may never survive.'

Their policies are in accordance with the deepest international principles of brotherhood and humanity; without their leadership, brotherhood and humanity may be blasted out of existence in South Africa for many decades to come. They believe profoundly in justice and reason when they are locked away, justice and reason will have departed from the South African scene.'

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# JEANETTE SCHOON

## 1949 - 1984



Jeanette Eva Schoon was only thirty-five years old when a parcel bomb ended her life in Angola, on Thursday 28 June, 1984. Hers was a short life, but one dedicated to the struggle of the majority of South Africans for a better life.

In 1972 Jeanette Curtis, as she was then, served as Vice-President of NUSAS and President of NUSWEL, the welfare arm of NUSAS. In that capacity, she played a leading role in the establishment of Wages Commissions on campuses throughout the country. She was one of that generation of White students who, cut off from their Black counterparts in the era of

Black Consciousness, found a role for themselves in the emerging organisational work that began in and around the Black working class. The following year she helped to set up the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau, which began by assisting individual workers with labour problems but served as a basis for organisation and eventually evolved into the General Workers' Union.

Jeanette then moved to Johannesburg, where she was one of the founders of the Industrial Aid Society and served on its executive. She also worked for the Institute of Race Relations as an activist, collecting valuable material on trade unions and prominent individuals in the labour movement.

In September 1975, Jeanette was detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act after the detention of Breyten Breytenbach, but was released some two months later without being charged. On being released she issued a strong statement and was praised by many for her courage in the circumstances.

A year later, in November 1976, Jenny Curtis was banned for five years, along with others in the labour movement. Shortly afterwards, she met Marius Schoon, also under a banning order, and married him in June 1977. As banned people they were not, by law, allowed to communicate at all and so they fled South Africa for Botswana, where they lived until moving to Angola recently.

The apartheid system, which Jeanette Schoon opposed so determinedly, has now killed her. Unlike the faceless creature who posted the bomb, and those who sustain him, she will be remembered as a fine human being, one who gave her life for the liberation struggle in her country. We salute her.

# UNKNOWN KILLERS ?

"Mister Commissioner, I want to tell you truly, I am able to achieve the impossible with my Department. I am not boasting... I can tell you here today, not for your records, but I can tell you, I have enough men to commit murder if I say to them, kill...I don't care who the target is. This is the type of men that I have..." Gen. H.J. van den Bergh, former head of BOSS, to the Erasmus Commission, Supplementary Report, p.61. (Translated from the Afrikaans).

General van den Bergh should know what he is talking about. As chief first of the Security Police and then BOSS, van den Bergh held a top position in the South African security establishment for more than fifteen years.

Almost immediately after the murder in Angola, by letter bomb, of Jeanette and Katryn School on Thursday 28 June, this establishment, well aware that it stood accused of the outrage by informed opinion put out a story through its more reliable allies in the media that an "assassination squad of the S.A. Communist Party" was responsible.

But how does this version stand up when seen in the context of events in the last ten years - a decade of intensifying violence against opponents of apartheid? In 1974, Mr Abraham Tiro, a former SASO leader, was assassinated by a letter bomb in Botswana. Mr John Dube, an ANC member in Zambia, was similarly killed in Lesotho in 1974. Mr Ablom Duma, an ANC representative in Swaziland, received letter bombs in 1977 and 1978 - the 1978 attack caused him to lose one arm. In 1979 Mrs Phyllis Naidoo, an exiled South African attorney, and four others, were injured by a letter bomb in Maseru.

The 1980s have seen these sorts of attacks increase in ferocity - in 1981 the ANC representative in Zimbabwe, the former New Age journalist and Robben Island prisoner Mr Joe Gqabi, was gunned down in a professional, gangland style assassination in Harare. For months before his murder Mr Gqabi had slept in a different house

each night in an unsuccessful attempt to shake off his killers. It was not the S.A. Communist Party which Mr Gqabi feared.

In August 1982, Ruth First, a stalwart of the liberation movement and well-known academic, was murdered by a letter bomb in her office in Maputo. Two members of the ANC in Swaziland died around the same time when their car was blown up by a bomb. And now, the latest killing, after the lives of the Schoons had been threatened and they had been obliged to leave Botswana for Angola.

but it is not only in exile that progressive South Africans face violence. In January 1979, Dick Turner, Natal University lecturer and a banned person, was shot dead at his house in Durban. In November 1981 Griffiths Mxenge, the Durban attorney and leading member of the democratic movement, was brutally murdered one evening after work. Needless to say, neither murder has been solved.

More recently, two members of organisations affiliated to UDF, Norman Manyepote and Brian Mazibuko, have been assassinated. Their murders, too, remain unsolved.

Between 1964 and 1978, there were some 1600 reported incidents of right-wing violence in S.A. - and two prosecutions. Some of these attacks, and subsequent ones, have also been blamed on the ANC or SACP. These groups would seem to have a very wide network and a most peculiar sense of their own interests, to spend so much time attacking opponents of their own enemy, the S.A. Government.

And if private right-wing fanatics are responsible, are they, too, able to operate country-wide, evading the police in the process? How do they obtain private addresses, work-places and unlisted telephone numbers, and tap telephones (without which many "dirty tricks" could not have happened?)

Until one of this mysterious group appears to tell us, we have only the voice of General van den Bergh to rely on.



## THE MPETHA TRIAL PRISONERS: ONE YEAR ON THE ISLAND

June 28, 1983 was an important day for all freedom-loving South Africans. It was the day of sentence in the marathon trial of Oscar Mpetha and 18 young comrades arising out of the 1980 boycotts.

The 10 comrades who were sentenced to between 7 and 20 years' imprisonment on Robben Island were (with the length of their sentences in brackets) : Christopher Sidlayiya (7), Morgan Makubalo (15), Alton Sabuwa (12), Vusumzi Kube (18), Johannes Hlapo (20), Jeff Baardman (10), Vuyisile Dibe (15), Bongani Mpondo (20), Philip Nyongwana (10), Aaron Tshangama (15).

And so it was that exactly one year later, on the eve of June 28, the families and friends of the comrades came together at a Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC) meeting. They came together both to commemorate this important day and to celebrate the unity of those on the Island and their families.

As one mother said, "Through sharing our problems and giving each other support, we have been able to stay strong and keep our spirits high."

The parents talked about some of the problems they have been experiencing with visits to the Island. Although their sons are meant to get at least one visit a month as "D Grade" prisoners, many have had their applications for visits turned down (sometimes for a number of consecutive months) because "visits were fully booked" for a month.

As another DPSC member said: "We find this very strange because when I went for my visit on Sunday two weeks ago, there were only three or four of us on the ferry. And yet some of the other parents had been refused visits for that same day."

The parents also spoke of visits being cut short by the prison authorities because visitors are supposed to talk about "family matters":

"It is very hard no to talk about other things and the time is so short anyway. We only get half-an-hour and we have to talk on a telephone and look through a glass panel. And the wardens

watch you and listen to you the whole time."

The DPSC resolved to take up the issue of visits being withheld. The get-together ended with a minute's silence to salute those on the Island.



# JUST WHO IS DOING THE INTIMIDATING?



High-ranking police officers and Cabinet Ministers have warned that "interference in the democratic right of people to vote in elections" would not be tolerated in the "Coloured" and "Indian" elections in August. They have said that the Intimidation Act will be used against people disrupting meetings and disturbing "the public order".

What exactly does the Intimidation Act say and how has it been used since it was introduced in 1982?

Like the Internal Security Act of 1982, the Intimidation Act was based closely on the recommendations of the Rabie Commission which tightened up all the security laws.

A new offence of "intimidation" was created and it has a very wide definition. The Act makes "any assault or injury, or threat of assault, injury or damage aimed at influencing a particular standpoint of an individual" a criminal offence. If you are found guilty of intimidation, you can get a maximum penalty of R20 000 or two years' imprisonment, or both the fine and the imprisonment.

It is interesting to note that, so far, workers and community activists have been charged with intimidation for things like :

- distributing pamphlets in the townships of Bloemfontein in 1982, calling on all people, especially bus-drivers, to stay away from work on June 16;
- encouraging fellow-workers to join strikes and others not to take up "scab" employment;
- mobilising people during the Alexandra bus boycotts.

On the other hand, there have been many reports of harassment and intimidation directed at political activists - but these people have, for some reason, not enjoyed similar protection (sic) under the Intimidation Act (or, for that matter, any form of legal redress).

Examples of allegations of harassment and intimidation include :

- threatening phonecalls in the early hours of the morning;
- frequent house-raids and questioning by the security police;
- arson attacks on houses and cars;
- car tyres and engines being tampered with;
- pensioners and state employees being forced to register for the August elections;
- people being left a "call-in card" at home or work asking them to report to a police station in connection with a "police matter";
- shots being fired at homes and cars;
- bricks being hurled through windows;
- priests and school principals being warned not to make halls available for political meetings.

It is also very interesting to note that the Attorney-General decided not to prosecute those responsible for breaking down a tent occupied by UDF supporters, who were collecting signatures at Seetwater holiday camp near Kommetjie on April 23 this year. And this after four of the group of pole-wielding assailants, which included SADF members, were positively identified at a parade as having taken part in the attack.

There are signs that the Intimidation Act is going to be used more and more to camp down on opponents of apartheid. In the light of the above examples, the two questions that we should ask are :

- Who is really doing the intimidating?
- And, is it just a funny coincidence that only workers and other political activists have been prosecuted for intimidation so far?

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**DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989**

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