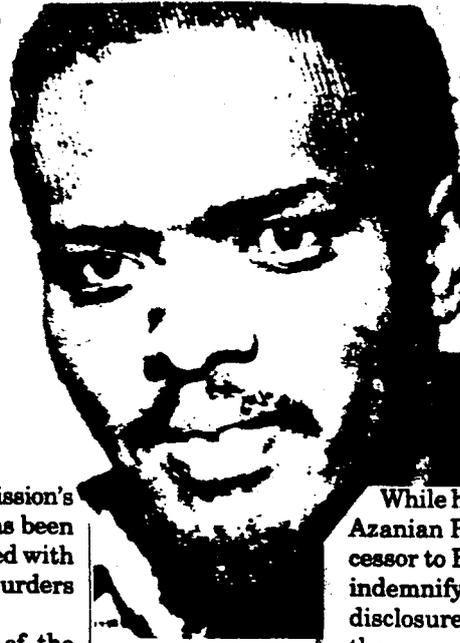




15 February 1997



TRC breakthrough as Biko, Goniwe killers seek amnesty

The success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's in flushing out killers from the apartheid days, has been underlined by the decision of the policemen involved with several of South Africa's most notorious political murders to apply for amnesty.

While the TRC has not yet persuaded most of the military killers to give evidence, the decision by the policemen responsible for the previously unsolved murders of the 'Cradock Four' and the 'Pebco Three' in the mid-1980s to come forward, following the application by five former security policemen involved in killing Steve Biko in 1977, seems to have broken the back of remaining police resistance to the process.

Backed by a Minister (Sydney Mufamadi) and a police commissioner (George Fivaz) who are giving strong support to the TRC, thousands of former security policemen have applied for amnesty. Mufamadi, a former United Democratic Front and Cosatu (Congress of SA Trade Unions) and SA Communist Party underground leader, has himself applied for amnesty.

In contrast, Defence Force chief Georg Meiring - who was recently linked to apartheid era 'third force' activity by the Steyn report (*SouthScan* v12/3, p 19) - has treated the TRC with barely concealed contempt, while Defence Minister Joe Modise has made little effort to encourage soldiers to give evidence.

The five policemen applying for amnesty over Biko's killing include the convicted bomber, Lieut. Col. Gideon Niewoudt, who is currently serving a 25-year sentence for murder, and was a detective sergeant in the Port Elizabeth security branch at the time.

The others are Col. Harald Snyman, now 75, the then-commander of the security police in the Eastern Cape who led the team which interrogated and assaulted Biko, Col. Harold Snyman, Capt. Daantjie Siebert and Warrant Officers Ruben Marx and Johan Beneke.

"They are virtual outcasts," said their attorney, Francois van der Merwe. "They acted in the belief that they were acting to protect a system. They were acting within the culture of the government of the day."

Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement which thrived among young urban blacks in the 1970s, died in Pretoria on September 12, 1977 after being driven while shackled and naked in the back of a police Land Rover from Port Elizabeth, where he had been held at security police headquarters. He was punched, kicked and tortured by the five men, until he fell into a coma. He was 30-years-old at the time.

While his widow Nontsikelelo - backed up by Azapo (the Azanian People's Organisation), the small and shrill successor to Biko's BCM - have challenged the TRC's right to indemnify Biko's killers in exchange for full confession and disclosure, his former friend and posthumous biographer, the newspaper editor Donald Woods, said their confession "feels good".

The confession of the Biko killers has been the most high profile triumph for the TRC, but the revelations about the murders of the Eastern Cape UDF leaders in the mid-1980s has greater current significance.

Francois van der Merwe has also lodged applications on behalf of the murderers of several other prominent Eastern Cape UDF activists, including Matthew Goniwe, a leader who was killed with three colleagues in 1985 after being apprehended at a police and army roadblock outside Port Elizabeth.

"One of the four was allegedly shot for trying to escape", TRC deputy chairman Alex Boraine said. "Two were beaten unconscious with a heavy iron implement and then stabbed to make it appear as if their deaths were vigilante killings".

The badly burned bodies of the four men - who became known as the 'Cradock Four' were found by a roadside.

Van der Merwe is also representing the murderers of the 'Pebco Three' - a trio of leaders of the Port Elizabeth civic association - who disappeared in 1985. Boraine said they were abducted from a local airport and taken to a police station outside the town of Cradock.

"There, after interrogation, the three were apparently given coffee with sleeping tablets in it. Each one was allegedly shot by a different applicant, then the bodies were placed on a pyre and burnt. The remains were placed in plastic bags and disposed of in the Fish river."

Three years earlier, a Port Elizabeth high school student leader, Sphiwe Mtimkulu and his friend Topsy Madaka, disappeared. Mtimkulu had been crippled as a result of being poisoned by thallium while held in security police detention.

After his release he sued the government but the case was never heard. Instead he was abducted while on his way to hospital with Madaka, taken to Cradock, interrogated, sedated, shot and burnt.

"The remaining fragments of bone were thrown into the Fish river ... and their vehicle was left at Tete Bridge on the Lesotho border to create the impression they had left the country," Boraine said. Mtimkulu's mother, Joyce Mtimkulu, said "I will never forgive them."



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TEARS, FEARS, AND HOPES:

Healing the Memories in South Africa

Pastor Philip Knutson of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, reports on a workshop he and other church leaders attended.

"The farmer tied my grandfather up to a pole and told him he must get rid of all his cattle...I was just a boy then but I will never forget that...I could have been a wealthy farmer today if our family had not been dispossessed in that way." The tears streamed down his face as this "coloured" pastor related his most painful experience of the past to a group at a workshop entitled "Exploring Church Unity Within the Context of Healing and Reconciliation" held in Port Elizabeth recently.

A black Methodist pastor related his feelings of anger and loss at being deprived of a proper education. Once while holding a service to commemorate the young martyrs of the June 1976 Uprising, his congregation was attacked and assaulted in the church. What hurt most, he said, was that the attacking security forces were black.

The workshop, sponsored by the Provincial Council of Churches, was led by Fr. Michael Lapsley, the Anglican priest who lost both hands and an eye in a parcel bomb attack in Harare in 1990. In his new book *Partisan and Priest* and in his presentation he said that every South African has three stories to tell.

"What was done to me; What I did; and What I didn't do."

The workshop, which brought together more than one hundred church leaders from diverse racial and theological backgrounds, was hosted by a large white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) congregation. In the plenary discussion, several black speakers expressed their frustration with white people who are not attending the open hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as it meets in towns and cities around the country. "Are you serious about reconciliation?" they asked.

One white DRC dominee stood up and pleaded for understanding and patience. "It is not easy for us to get our congregations to make this paradigm shift," he said. A black pastor replied in exasperation. "We have been patient for long enough. We could have demanded Nuremberg type trials and severe penalties, but we opted for a process of reconciliation and even amnesty. What more do you want?"

"Many white people have the perception that the TRC is only opening old wounds and will increase division," another white minister added. Fr. Lapsley waved one of his metal "hands" in the air and asked, "Where is the verse in the Bible that says we must forgive and forget? We are people who remember. What we remember shapes our actions and who we are. The Old and New Testament speak of redemptive memory. 'Remember when you were slaves in Egypt' and 'Do this in remembrance of me.' Forgiveness is not easy or quick. It is big, painful, and difficult.

continued on page 4

Tears, Fears and Hopes (continued from page 1)

It is not just saying sorry but also making restitution. It is a package deal."

One participant mentioned the recent statement of the DRC in the Eastern Cape on the TRC. The document is very candid when it says:

"...While we still try to deny the fact of serious transgressions, it becomes more and more clear that more people were involved than had been thought to be the case....Most of the people are Afrikaans speaking and a great number are members of the Dutch Reformed Church...They were heroes who received medals for some of their deeds. Now they are branded as thugs and villains. How do we (as the DRC) guide them through this period?"

The statement ends by calling on its members. "to become involved in the work of the TRC, to listen to and attend sessions of the TRC, and as Afrikaners to look anew at our own history. True liberation will come if and when we confess our guilt. The past should not impair us forever."

Jacques Pauw, a young Afrikaner journalist, recently produced a two-hour TV documentary on Eugene de Kock, known as "Prime Evil" by his apartheid government death squad cohorts. While everyone is shocked to hear the details of the atrocities, Pauw states, "It is very important that every white person takes responsibility for the actions of Eugene de Kock because he did it in our name."

As more and more military and police members come forward with their stories of death and destruction all eyes are on the former leaders of the apartheid government who are now being subpoenaed to appear before the Amnesty Committee to testify on their role in sanctioning these gross abuses of human rights.

Towards the end of the workshop people talked about the way forward. The black participants again extended an invitation to their white brothers and sisters: "You are asking for time and understanding to deal with the truth....but remember you do not have to do this alone. Here are your brothers and sisters."

The world is watching South Africa to see if we will be able to break the cycle of oppressed becoming the oppressor. The government set up the TRC but the Holy Spirit blows where it will. It is a tremendous challenge to all the churches to participate in the healing of the memories and the reconstruction of a new society. We all need to remember and be reminded, so we don't do it again!





Angella Johnson in Johannesburg finds prejudice flourishing in private in the 'new, unified' South Africa

TWO WEEKS ago I arrived at my home in one of Johannesburg's predominantly white suburbs to find a note slipped under my cottage door. It read 'You poor sick little kaffir girl' and was unsigned.

Panic engulfed me at the thought that I had ignited so much rage in someone during my 10 months in South Africa that they had scrawled my first hate mail.

It was not, however, the first time I had been called a kaffir — an Afrikaans word with the same emotional charge as 'nigger'. In 1990, during my first trip to this former bastion of segregation, I was thrown out of a pub by a burly Afrikaner who furiously informed me that 'kaffirs are not welcomed'. That was two months after Nelson Mandela's release from his 27-year incarceration but the framework of apartheid still stood strong. I said then that it would take at least a generation for attitudes to de-racialise.

The resignation last week of South African national rugby coach Andre Markgraaff, after the revelation of a taped conversation in which he called black people 'f-ing kaffirs', says so much about how this troubled country has changed in six years. Not that people no longer use the K-word (as it is now politely called), but it is no longer socially acceptable to do so openly. Words like bantu, native, boy and girl (for adult blacks) have quietly gone underground too, but Markgraaff is not alone in believing racial bigotry is OK in private: a wealthy woman, assuming I was also white because of my English accent, recently vented her feelings on the phone about how 'the bloody blacks were contented living in their squalid townships before do-good liberals interfered'.

Despite President Mandela's attempts to unify

his people under a non-racial banner, it is clear that fundamentally attitudes remain the same among some whites. The only difference is that they can now be prosecuted for expressing them openly.

Had Markgraaff not resigned, the rugby authority said he would have been sacked for bringing the game into disrepute. He still insists he is no racist, but then neither is any white person I have met.

Even the police, once the tools of oppression used by racist politicians, have put on the public coat of non-racism.

It is as if the nation's whites have been afflicted with shared amnesia. All are at pains to assure me they did not know of the catalogue of murders and human rights violations carried out in their name by successive apartheid governments.

The average white citizen is struggling to deal with racism at a gut level. Most have had little experience of dealing with black people, except as servants and labourers. They stare in open antagonism when I visit previously exclusive restaurants — especially if accompanied by a white friend, because it is still rare for black and white people to mix socially. Even at dinner parties in the home of white liberals who fought against apartheid, I am invariably the only person of colour — something I am used to from Britain.

Many racists use the issue of rising crime levels (something blacks have lived with in townships for decades) as a way of expressing their prejudices. To them crime is a euphemism for black encroachment into their once sheltered suburbs.

I came to live in South Africa to escape the sophisticated racism in Britain and was reminded of 1960s London

as experienced by my Jamaican parents. I went to view a flat which had been advertised in a newspaper; on opening the door the landlord literally rocked back on his heels in surprise. The English voice he had heard on the phone did not fit the skin colour. At once the flat became unavailable.

Another white male landlord confided to me by phone: 'I rented it to blacks in the past, but they just messed it up.' I responded: 'I'm afraid this is where I tell you that I am black.'

There was a pause, then he replied: 'Yes, but you're a different type of black.'

It is not just whites who are thrown by the new multiracial society. A friend's mother told me that her black maid would go into a spin each time I was invited for a meal. 'She just does not know how to deal with you,' explained my middle-aged hostess one evening. 'It's hard for her to deal with seeing you at the table. It's not the norm in her eyes and she doesn't like the change.'

I am reliably informed that

a black maid with a black 'madam' loses status within her community in the new emerging social hierarchy.

There is also new racism, as expressed by the Coloured communities, who under apartheid enjoyed a degree of privilege but now say they are being discriminated against by the black majority government's affirmative-action policy. 'Once we were too black, now we are too white,' they complain. Their protest vote for the formerly oppressive National Party has kept the Western Cape a strong Afrikaner stronghold.

Affirmative action — the government's policy to redress historical disadvantages by setting quotas for black recruitment in companies — has become a symbol of both white and Coloured rage because of the premium it puts on black professionals who can demand high salaries.

While it is true that many receive inflated salaries beyond their worth, often 10 times more than the average, it is also a way of doing down

talented blacks by saying they only got the job because of skin colour. At least here blacks do not have to contend with the 'glass ceiling' syndrome prevalent in the West.

Crude racism still abounds in rural communities where diehard Afrikaners continue such practices as beating black workers into a coma, or even to death, without charges being laid by the local police.

Occasionally there are flashpoints in the cities. A friend told me that he recently witnessed an Eastern European restaurant owner, in one of the wealthiest suburbs of Johannesburg, pin a well-dressed black customer to the ground and throttle him — all because he had dared to touch a white waitress while arguing that he had waited 40 minutes to be served.

Markgraaff is a symbol of the racial undercurrent that still plagues this society. The most damaging aspect of the affair is the embarrassment that it must have caused Mandela, who so proudly donned a rugby jersey as a symbol of

racial unity after the national Springbok team's world cup victory. But rugby has always been a symbol of white oppression or supremacy, depending on which side of the fence you stand.

As for the mystery writer behind the 'poor sick little kaffir girl' missive, after a process of elimination that Sherlock Holmes would have been proud of, I deduced that the culprit was a 52-year-old dog psychologist whom I had profiled that week for a newspaper.

A friendly, motherly type, she had visited me to take me out on one of her house calls. We had chatted easily, eaten breakfast and even talked casually about me visiting her farm in the country.

Not liking the tone of my article, she hit back with words intended to wound. She might have succeeded with more familiar gems such as 'black bitch', 'nigger' and 'coon' — all of which were flung at me some time or other back home in Britain.

Namibia

BISHOP ROBERT MIZE, who three decades ago was thrown out of his diocese, Namibia, by the illegal occupying power, South Africa, is in hospital with a broken hip.

Bishop Robert H. Mize, Jr
Diocese of San Joaquin
4159 East Dakota Avenue
Fresno, California 93726

Namibia suffered a tragic loss on 2 November last. MS BRIGITTE LAU, head of the National Archives of Namibia, was killed in an auto crash.

Brigitte, - a Namibian, was fulfilling the enormous task of bringing together worldwide documentation on the long and agonizing history of the struggle of the Namibian people for their freedom.

Swazis revolt against royal cabal

A crippling strike in an African oasis of calm has drawn blood as workers push for political reforms. Ruaridh Nicoll reports from Mbabane

MOSES BHEMBE marches through the workers, moving in the super-heated air suffused with the sounds of tribal singing and the crash of war-ready feet. The workers are rising against the aristocracy in Swaziland, and Bhembe knows where they are heading. 'When you embark on political reform, you inevitably come face to face with the king,' he said.

Earlier, in the nearby town of Big Bend, police had retreated before a charge by sugar-cane workers, firing into the crowd. Six men were wounded.

It was not enough to make international headlines, but Swazis fell into shock. 'One shot in the air and everyone starts fleeing,' said a reporter from the *Swaziland Times*. 'It is true, we are peaceful people.'

This should not be happening in Swaziland. In the past, the country was always the dot of calm amid a sea of discontent: a small, ethnically singular nation of less than a million who survived the ravages of the Zulu nation, English colonialism and the apartheid regime without descending into widespread bloodshed.

But now all is changed. With (relative) peace in the region, Swaziland's political system, an absolute monarchy, 'sticks out like a sore thumb', as one diplomat put it.

For neighbouring South Africa, the two mountain kingdoms that live off it — Swaziland and Lesotho — have become an embarrassment. The last few weeks have seen a mutiny by the police in Lesotho and a crippling strike in Swaziland.

Calm has returned for the moment to Lesotho, but Swaziland has found itself lumped with places such as Angola and Zaire as states destabilising the region. The situation was 'potentially explosive', said President Nelson Mandela.

The problems in Swaziland centre around one of Mandela's relatives by marriage — the 29-year-old King Mswati III, who retains absolute control. He is closeted in one of his palaces and refuses to speak about the crisis.

The scene is straight from Africa's history books. The tribal king and his court of sycophants — the 'dark princes' — feel put upon by pushy outsiders who force ideas such as democracy into

their insular world. The members of the court, the Swazi National Council (SNC), are a conservative cabal who will attempt anything to avoid losing their privileged positions.

They claim the Swazi system, the *tinkhundla*, is a true African democracy and 'hide behind what they see as its ethnic appeal. A system that is supposed to merge Western and age-old African forms of rule, it allows for an elected government of people nominated by the country's 300-odd chiefdoms.

In reality, the elected Parliament is a sham and the appointed Cabinet is meaningless. The king makes the decisions and is shielded from their results by the worthies

surrounding him. 'It is like the role of the eunuchs in imperial China,' a former Minister said.

According to those in power, it is the educated 20 per cent who want democracy, not the illiterate man on the street, and the privileged will turn on anyone who tries to interfere. 'Look at the problems [in South Africa] — people retrenched, Coloured shot dead — and yet Mandela still makes comments about the situation in our country,' a Minister said.

'They want to destabilise the country so they can take our jobs.' He laughs and adds: 'We don't expect any help from them.'

Ranged against them is the Swaziland Federation of



The besieged absolute monarch Mswati is under pressure from relative Nelson Mandela to end the 'explosive' crisis.

Trade Unions (SFTU) which, over the past three years, has staged a series of increasingly violent strikes in an attempt to get the king to allow multi-party democracy to take hold. Backed by the tough South African unions, the SFTU

halted sugar and timber production at the beginning of the month, sending the GNP down by 70 per cent.

Three weeks ago the dark forces around the king, without the knowledge of the ineffectual Cabinet, made the cru-

cial error of locking up the SFTU leadership.

Whatever the cabal says, there is little doubt that Swazis, who genuinely like the monarchy, want transparency in government. They supported Derek Von Wissell, a white Swazi businessman who took on the aristocracy after learning from the newspapers that he had been appointed Minister of Finance.

Von Wissell, who immediately began recovering unpaid debts the elite had run up at the national bank, soon found himself switched to the Ministry of Tourism and resigned.

The average Swazi never fell for the aristocracy's attempts to smear him as a racist.

Equal murkiness surrounds the arrest of the union leaders on non-bailable charges of intimidation. Asked about the arrests, a Minister wondered

whether I wanted the official or unofficial line. 'It was members of the SNC,' he said — unofficially. 'We never knew anything about it and I, for one, am very angry about it.'

When Mandela summoned Mswati to Pretoria, he told him to release the union leaders, offering to keep his unions from crippling the Swazi government in return.

Mswati returned to his capital and offered the jailed men a deal. But this was rejected.

Now Mandela is getting tough with his tiny neighbour. The friendly advice is over and the ANC will do all it can to support the union stand. The court case against the union leaders is now under way and will end in an acquittal or royal pardon. Then, for this year, the strike will be over. But the problems with the government will remain.

23 February 1997
The Observer

West gives Mobutu green light to unleash dogs of war in Zaire

Off the record, the Western diplomat is blunt. His country is not generally in favour of refugees suffering or dying but in this case one must consider who they are.

More than 200,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees were this week trapped in the heart of the Zairean jungle when Zaire finally launched its mercenary-led counter-offensive against the Rwandan-backed rebels who have captured a huge swathe of eastern Zaire.

Congregated around the towns of Amisi, Tingi Tingi and Shabunda, weak after trekking hundreds of kilometres west through the bush, they are surviving on supplies which have been flown in by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

While the UNHCR lobbies the international community, the rebels and Zaire to rescue them, there is little sign that anyone is prepared to help. It is quite different from November last year, a month into the rebellion, when the world clamoured for action to save more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees trapped in eastern Zaire and a multi-national UN force was poised to intervene.

The crisis "ended" with the awesome spectacle of 700,000 refugees spontaneously making their own way back across the border. The world breathed a sigh of relief and switched its television sets off. Those now trapped in the Zairean jungle are the rump that walked against the tide.

Regime's bloody counter-offensive enjoys world's discreet backing, writes Mary Braid in Kinshasa

Although the plight of the Hutu refugees attracted worldwide sympathy, they were regarded with ambivalence by many observers in the Great Lakes. Their flight to Zaire followed the 1994 Hutu genocide of 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis. The UN refugee camps became the base from which those who were guilty of genocide plotted to recapture Rwanda from the new Tutsi-led government. The Rwandan government backed the rebellion in eastern Zaire to eradicate the threat on its doorstep.

In his plush Kinshasa office, the Western diplomat admits that among the refugees now languishing in the jungle there are innocent children and adults. "But there are many, many Interhamwe" [the organisers of the genocide], he says, "people who have trekked into Zaire because they can never go home." Why, he implies, should he care?

Now that the world is not watching, the question appears academic. It is convenient to shelve the vexed issue as the stakes rise in the Great Lakes. With the launch of the government counter-offensive, led by

200 to 300 foreign mercenaries and two battalions of Angolan Unita rebels, more than 700,000 people in eastern Zaire were reported to be on the move. The likelihood of a regional catastrophe, which threatens to engulf the whole of central Africa, has increased.

In Kinshasa, some diplomats say a Great Lakes war, pitting Rwanda and Uganda against Zaire, is already clandestinely under way, and that the uprising in eastern Zaire was only a smokescreen for a Rwandan attack.

This theory is being advanced now with greater vigour than before. The rebels, under Laurent Kabila, an opponent of Zaire's corrupt dictator, General Mobutu Sese Seko, are rubbish; the capabilities of the thuggish Zairean army, which is under new leadership, are being played up. The conflict is reported to be escalating, with



Mobutu: Put mercenaries in charge of revamped army

Uganda and Rwanda sending in reinforcements to meet the counter-offensive.

This new, stronger line from some Western governments contrasts with the feelings of most ordinary Zaireans. At first they demonstrated against Mr Kabila, who was denounced as a Rwandan puppet by the

Mobutu regime. But now they mostly believe the rebel movement is homegrown and that Mr Kabila is a national hero.

But then the West has made an art form of being out of step with popular feeling in Zaire. For years it propped up the Mobutu regime, sending in troops to crush popular revolts, although it was obvious that the dictator was bleeding the former Belgian colony dry.

Today Zaire has no infrastructure. Entire regions are virtually autonomous; tributes or payments to Kinshasa are made simply to keep Mr Mobutu's mafia at bay. The people are among the poorest in the world. Yet the West still chooses to put its faith in the Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, an unpopular figure since the ailing President engineered his election during a brief visit home from France, where he is being treated for cancer.

"When the state is collapsing you hang on to institutions that still exist," another diplomat explained. But Mukendi Malumba, chief adviser to the main opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, says the West is naive to think Kengo wa Dondo will ever hold fair elections.

Tense times have resulted in diplomatic feuds. Dan Simpson, the US ambassador to Zaire, recently accused France of neo-colonialism in Africa. The French, who to their shame supported the Rwandan Hutu regime which committed the 1994 genocide, claim the US supported the Tutsi-led Rwandan government in its surrogate aggression against Zaire.

The row was smoothed over during diplomatic discussions in Paris two weeks ago. The overriding common interest, it was agreed, was to maintain the existing borders. These were drawn up at the 1878 Berlin con-

ference, when Europe carved up Africa, ignoring the existing tribal and language groups.

Richard Cornwall, of the Africa Institute of South Africa, compares the Zairean state to blancmange. "You try to grab but there is really nothing there," he says. "But the fiction of the state has to be maintained, or else a whole can of worms is opened and no one wants to deal with that."

One theory portrays the giant, tottering state of Zaire as a territorial buffet table at which the nine countries on its borders are feasting. Now that Rwanda's original aim, the neutralisation of the Hutu threat, has largely been achieved, it might be expected to withdraw.

In order to prevent regional chaos, the international community will be willing to sacrifice the refugees, human rights and the democratic aspirations of Zaire's people.

Zambian-based Katangans prepare for Zaire invasion

The Revolutionary National Council - the new political arm of the ex-Katangan gendarmes - says it has a force of "non-armed" men operating from Zambia under the "supervision" of an ex-Zairean military officer, Col. Maurice Bendersa.

RNC sources told *SouthScan* the men are fighters waiting on stand-by for an order from their chairman, Emile Ilunga, to join other ex-Katangan gendarmes and their sons, currently serving in the 24th commando regiment of the Angolan government forces. This regiment has about 6,000 fighters on the Angolan side of the border facing Katanga and Kasai in Zaire. Despite the recent top-level agreement between Zairean and Angolan officials to prevent any attack from Angola (*SouthScan* v12/1 p6), the RNC believes the 24th regiment will soon cross the border.

One of its senior officials told *SouthScan* that contrary to an agreement between Kinshasa and Lusaka for the RNC group to be sent back to Zaire, a deal has been struck between the Angolan government and the RNC for the 24th regiment - backed by the Zambian-based Katangans - to invade Katanga and Kasai. Ilunga, who is based in Belgium, met with AFDL leader Laurent Kabila in the "liberated territories of Kivu" in late December, to coordinate plans for an attack on the southern front. Ilunga was once a member of the central committee of Kabila's People's Revolutionary Party and claims to have close ties with the ANC and the Tanzanian authorities, and strong support in Belgium. The ex-Katangan gendarmes, however, face several potential obstacles in their invasion plans. The Zairean army chief of staff, Gen. Mahele Bokungu Lieko, travelled to Lubumbashi late last month to organise the defence of Zaire's borders with Angola and Zambia, and to prepare for attacks in the southern Kivu region.

Meanwhile, Kabila's forces face the potential obstacle of Afrikaner farmer settlers from SA in the Marungu highlands, if their southern offensive continues.

His forces also appear to be fracturing in some areas. The Mai Mai militias of the Hunde and Nyanaga tribes were particularly enraged after he offered US \$2,000 for the capture of one of their leaders, Doctor Kaganda.

As a result, according to diplomatic sources, they have shifted allegiances and on January 12 cleared an airstrip between Goma and Bunia to allow Zairean troops and a group of 30 mercenaries led by the former Katangan army officer Christian Tavernier, to land. They are believed to be assisting President Mobutu Sese Seko's forces by preparing for a counter-offensive.

An excellent report on the operation of Executive Outcomes by Elizabeth Rubin appears in the February 1997 issue of HARPER'S Magazine.

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SA mercenaries on UN agenda

The issue of South African-linked mercenaries in Southern and Central Africa is set to top the agenda at the new general assembly of the UN in September. This follows allegations about the involvement of the Pretoria-based Executive Outcomes in the ongoing war in Zaire, as well as in Sierra Leone, Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

The UN exposure could put renewed pressure on EO, as well as on Britain, where EO has an office, and on the SA government, to curtail their activities, which are at the same time linked with commercial expansion.

According to the French newspaper *Le Figaro* and the German weekly *Die Zeit*, a confidential report circulating in South African government circles lists 34 governments which have approached EO over the past three years. Security services are used as an opening for making more legitimate connections.

Strategic Resources Corporation, the holding company with a controlling share in EO, is rapidly expanding its African network.

An SRC subsidiary, Ibis Air, is in partnership with a Kenyan company, Simba airlines, in which Raymond Moi, the son of President Daniel Arap Moi, has an interest.

Other companies in the group include Heritage Oil and Gas, the security company Saracen, Branch Energy Limited and Branch Mining, operating in Uganda.

Countries believed to have contacted EO include Sri Lanka (which sought military advice to fight the 'Tigers'), Turkey (which recruited divers), Algeria (military training), Nigeria (protection of gold fields), Madagascar and Botswana (both showing an interest in military advice and training).

EO has also been stepping up recruitment in South Africa. Executive Research Association - a company considered by South African intelligence organisations to be an EO proxy - is reported to have recruited a further 500 men for new operations.

The role played by EO is expected to feature prominently during the general assembly debate. The special rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Peruvian diplomat Enrique Bernales Ballesteros, is expected to make specific recommendations about the "use of mercenaries to undermine the rights of peoples to self-determination."

In Ballesteros' first report, presented to the general assembly in September 1996, he said that the then SA ambassador to the UN, Jackie Selebi, presented him with a letter on June 24, 1996, requesting him to investigate allegations concerning EO's activities in Sierra Leone and Angola - the first unambiguous indication of the government's concern about the role being played by EO.

He has expressed his concern about the commercial extension of security activities.

"Should certain trends persist, as seen in the conduct of some mercenary rings operating in Africa which are attempting to establish legally registered companies that will provide security services and invest in various sectors, a situation could arise in which mercenary armies, legally protected by contracts signed between the company employing them and the hiring state, would be carrying out police, law enforcement and punishment functions.

"If this trend is confirmed, the concept of security and the nature of international relations based on the principle of state sovereignty which have characterised the twentieth century would be greatly altered."

However, his report suggests that some of the major powers are not particularly concerned about this development. He mentions a dismissive letter from the British ambassador to the UN, Nigel Williams, asking him about EO's activities in Sierra Leone.

Scourges or saviours of a troubled continent? Khareen Pech and David Beresford

uncover British intelligence documents which point to an expanding role for South Africa's highly paid mercenaries

THERE is, some say, a new imperialism at work in Africa. But it knows no ideology beyond the laws of profit and feeds on the conflicts of a troubled continent. According to others, it brings order. It provides a pan-African peace-keeping force of a kind the international community has promised but failed to deliver. Executive Outcomes has fought many battles in Africa with guns, bombs, gunships and jet fighters. Today the controversial company that has brought a new dimension to the concept of the 'corporate state' — mustering what is arguably the world's first fully equipped corporate army — is again fighting for survival, this time in the arena of public opinion.

It is six years since the name of Executive Outcomes began to be heard in Africa. Nowadays it tends to feature whenever and wherever there is a new outbreak of the warfare to which this weary continent has become so accustomed. As Zaire threatens to implode, there is intense speculation (denied by the company) that its mercenaries are moving in to shore up the crumbling rule of President Mobutu.

The origins of Executive Outcomes are shrouded in some mystery, which is hardly surprising when one considers the circumstances of its creation and the characters involved.

A 'UK Eyes Alpha' ('top secret') British intelligence report records that 'Executive Outcomes was registered in the UK on September 1993 by Anthony (Tony) Buckingham, a British businessman, and Simon Mann, a former British officer'.

Buckingham and Mann are central figures in the Executive Outcomes saga, although Buckingham denies any 'corporate link'. A veteran of the SAS and a close friend and business associate of former Liberal Party leader Sir David Steel, Buckingham is chief executive of Heritage Oil and Gas, which has drilling interests in Angola and other parts of the world.

Heritage — originally British, now incorporated in the Bahamas — was also linked

with a Canadian oil corporation, Ranger Oil.

Mann, a former troop commander in 22 SAS specialising in intelligence, has seen service in Cyprus, Germany, Norway, Canada, Central America and Northern Ireland. As an expert in intelligence systems, he has worked in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Nigeria among other countries.

It was in 1993 that Buckingham and Mann first met Eeben Barlow, a former officer in the South African Defence Force. Barlow had served in some of the most notorious units in the South African military, including the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) — an apartheid-era state-run assassination network organised on corporate lines.

According to former colleagues, he handled operations in Europe where he was able to develop contacts within both Western and Eastern European secret services and helped to facilitate South Africa's sanctions-busting operations.

One of the centres of the oil industry in Angola is the town of Soyo, which was under the control of rebel Unita forces in the early 1990s. In January 1993, Buckingham and Mann commissioned Barlow to recruit a force of South Africans with combat experience in the former Portuguese colony to seize the town. A force of fewer than 100 men succeeded. But Unita quickly recaptured it after the South Africans had left. Luanda then asked Ranger and Heritage to hire a larger force in exchange for oil concessions.

According to the British intelligence document, Ranger allocated \$30 million (£19m) for the operation and placed the contract with Buckingham and Mann. They in turn appointed Barlow and Lafras Luitingh — a former colleague of Barlow's in the CCB, who had led the first attack on Soyo — to recruit and command about 500 men, most of them former members of the South African Defence Force.

Recruitment in South Africa appears to have been, if not facilitated, at least winked at by senior leaders of the ANC who — as the British report puts it — believed 'it

would remove from South Africa a number of personnel who might have had a destabilising effect on the forthcoming multiracial elections'.

The story of the success of Executive Outcomes in Angola is now well known. With sophisticated weaponry — such as devastating fuel-air bombs obtained from a Russian supplier — the mercenary force effectively turned the course of the civil war. From there they moved on to Sierra Leone, shoring up the regime of Valentine Strasser against the Revolutionary United Front of Foday Sankoh, which was on the point of seizing Freetown when Executive Outcomes intervened.

Since those days Executive Outcomes's tentacles have spread over the continent with astonishing speed. The *Observer* has established that the company has a substantial presence in Kenya, where it has had business dealings with Raymond Moi, son of President Daniel arap Moi.

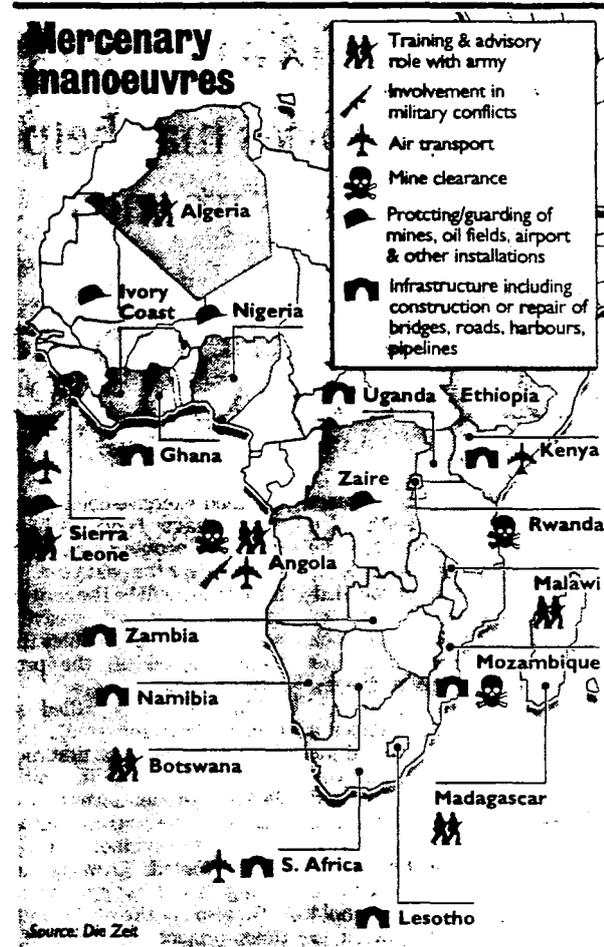
It has been reported that Executive Outcomes has had links with more than 30 countries, mostly in Africa. (It is also believed to have ties with Malaysia and South Korea.)

The Executive Outcomes mercenaries are not simply 'guys for hire'. They are the advance guard for major business interests engaged in a

latter-day scramble for the mineral wealth of Africa. A hint of the breadth of their operations is provided by an office block in Chelsea. On the second floor of a modern, glass-fronted building at 535 King's Road, known as 'Plaza 107', a single receptionist handles incoming calls to more

than 18 different companies. Buckingham, Mann and others run businesses which include international oil, gold and diamond-mining ventures, a chartered accountancy practice, an airline, foreign security services and offshore financial management services.

The *Observer* has a list of



company and staff names dated to September 1994. Included are Executive Outcomes Ltd, Heritage Oil and Gas and a management services company called Plaza 107 Ltd which heads the list in bold type. Other company names include Ibis Air International, Branch Interna-

tional Ltd, Branch Mining Ltd and Capricorn Systems Ltd. Among the list of directors and staff are Buckingham, Mann and Sir David Steel and the South African director of Ibis Air, Crause Steyl.

It is suspected that the name Capricorn originates with the 'Capricorn Africa Society', established by the eccentric military hero who founded the SAS, Sir David Stirling — who was himself involved in mercenary operations before his death in 1990, aged 74.

Another company which took the name Capricorn Air. When the mercenaries first flew into Angola in 1993, on two Beechcraft light aircraft that operated out of Lanseria, a small airport outside Johannesburg, it was by courtesy of Capricorn.

Later registered as Ibis Air in both Angola and South Africa, this has effectively developed into a substantial air force. It reportedly includes a fleet of Boeing 727s, at least two Mi-17 helicopters, two



'Hind' MI-24 gunships, several small fixed-wings — one of which has surveillance capabilities — at least two jet fighters and several private jets.

After an accident at Lanseria involving one of the Boeings, Ibis moved operations to facilities provided by Simera, an aviation division of the South African state arms development and procurement firm, Denel, which as the Atlas Aircraft Corporation used to build the country's combat aircraft. For two years, Denel has stored and maintained the aircraft used to transport Executive Outcomes' hired forces into African war zones.

Company documents show that the airline flies between African capitals including Luanda, Freetown and Nairobi, and the island of Malta where it is believed that Ibis is based. Both Buckingham and Mann are directors of Ibis. Luitingh and several other Executive Outcomes associates are involved in running the airline.

Branch International is believed to be the holding corporation for a string of subsidiaries and associated companies engaged in the hunt for oil, gold and diamonds among other gems and minerals.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, Plaza 107 is mirrored by Strategic Resources Corporation, based in a suburban house in the affluent suburb of Lynnwood, Pretoria.

Bank documents dated March 1995 showed this to be the holding corporation for another string of companies including Saracen, a security company specialising in 'VIP protection, strategic point protection and business security protection', Falconer Systems, set up as a front for Executive Outcomes in providing logistical supplies to 'United Nations-related organisations', and Bridge International, which specialises in construction and civil engineering.

The British intelligence document says Executive Outcomes is acquiring a wide reputation in sub-Saharan Africa for reliability and efficiency, with a particular appeal to 'smaller countries desperate for rapid assis-

tance'. By contrast, the document says that UN operations are cumbersome and slow and that the Organisation for African Unity is seen as a talking shop. There 'is every likelihood' that the company's services, already extending into imports and exports and administration, 'will continue increasingly to be sought'.

But the document warns that such widespread activities are a cause for concern because the company is able to barter its services for large shares of an employing nation's natural resources and commodities.

It continues: 'On present showing, Executive Outcomes will become ever richer and more potent, capable of exercising real power, even to the extent of keeping military regimes in being. If it continues to expand at the present rate, its influence in sub-Saharan Africa could become crucial.'

South Africa's ANC government is belatedly moving to try to throttle it. Last month the national conventional arms control committee announced it would ask the Cape Town parliament to rush through legislation designed to curtail the involvement of South Africans in mercenary activities by subjecting the sale of military or intelligence services to the same licensing process as military hardware.

Barlow makes light of the proposed legislation: 'We are quite happy about it.' He said the legislation is 'not aimed at us and we have no fears for that'. He added: 'We are not going to help anyone that is not a legitimate government or which poses a threat to South Africa, or that is involved in activities which are really frowned upon by the outside world. We have had a major impact on Africa. We have brought peace to two countries which were almost totally destroyed by civil wars.'

The major powers could still squash Executive Outcomes. But for them Africa is a plague on the conscience and a trap for the unwary. They are content to leave its murkier transactions to those enjoying the limited liability of the corporate world.

SA 'dove' implicated in apartheid-era dirty tricks

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

From hawk to dove, declared a jubilant press two years ago when General Georg Meiring, leader of the apartheid government's war against the African National Congress, became part of the miracle of South Africa's peaceful transition.

Yesterday, in a previously suppressed report General Meiring — the man who in spite of his past was chosen by President Nelson Mandela to oversee the creation of a national defence force for the new South Africa — was implicated with more than 60 officers and soldiers in apartheid-era dirty tricks, including state-sponsored murder.

The revelation was made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which also sug-

gested that former president FW de Klerk orchestrated a cover up while still in power in 1992 by refusing to investigate charges against General Meiring and two other generals, Kat Liebenberg and Joffel van der Westhuizen, despite the conclusions of an investigation by General Pierre Steyn.

General Steyn, then a lieutenant-general, was appointed by Mr de Klerk to investigate allegations that a shadowy Third Force was destabilising the country through covert violent operations designed to discredit and divide the liberation forces. He probed train violence, assassinations, gun running, drug smuggling and cross-border raids.

Instead of investigating the three generals, as General Steyn specifically recommended, Mr de Klerk asked them to take a look at Steyn's list and

come up with one of their own. Twenty-three men were eventually sent packing. But yesterday's TRC announcement confirmed widespread suspicion that the purging of the old guard has been limited.

Charles Villa-Vicencio, the TRC's head of research, said during his investigations far more effort was expended by the armed forces and the police on covering up and identifying leaks than on gathering evidence. Despite explicit instructions, police and armed forces documents were destroyed.

Yesterday, Alex Boraine, the TRC's deputy chairman, said Mr de Klerk's actions at the time were extraordinary. "It seems a strange way to get at the truth," he added. He also said that the TRC now held the report Mr de Klerk had previously

denied existed in written form.

Mr Boraine plans to hold talks with Defence Minister Joe Modise and General Meiring. "It will be interesting to hear what Mr de Klerk has to say when he appears before the commission later this year," he said.

A defence force spokesman said he could not comment on the charges against General Meiring until the force had had time to study the report.

A spokesman for Mr de Klerk said that the commission was making a deliberate attempt to damage de Klerk, who now leads the national party in opposition. He said the TRC's claims were seriously misleading and that Mr de Klerk did not have strong enough evidence to take drastic measures against the highest ranking officers at what was then a delicate stage in the transition process.

A.R.A.G. NATIONAL

Abortion Rights Action Group

P.O. Box 15486, Vlaeberg 8018

A New Deal for South African Women

Constitutional Certification

On 8 May 1996, the final Constitution was adopted by both houses of Parliament, but before it could be made operational it was referred by Parliament to the Constitutional Court for "certification". Certification by the Court was a procedure prescribed by the interim Constitution, in terms of which the Court was given the task of scrutinising every provision of the final Constitution to satisfy itself that it complied with the "Constitutional Principles" which had been agreed by the parties at the time that the interim Constitution was drafted.

The Court spent approximately three months examining the final Constitution, during which time the public was permitted to make written and, in some cases, oral submissions to the Court which set out their views on the Constitution's compliance with the Principles. A number of Christian religious organisations filed submissions, arguing that the Constitutional guarantee of reproductive health and the right to make decisions concerning reproduction violated the Constitutional Principles of "a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women and people of all races", in which "everyone shall enjoy all universally accepted fundamental rights", and a Constitution which would "prohibit racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination and ... promote racial and gender equality and national unity".

Those organisations based their submission on the notion that a fetus is a bearer of rights and that the protection of reproductive decision-making violates those rights and is undemocratic.

In July, in response to the Christian anti-choice submissions, the Reproductive Rights Alliance, representing and supported by several other pro-choice organisations like ARAG, made a written and oral submission, presented by Michelle O'Sullivan and Cathi Albertyn; they argued that the inclusion of a right to access to reproductive health services and a right to make decisions concerning reproduction were fully compliant with the Constitutional Principles, and in fact were an important component of substantive equality for women and men, and contributed to a democratic culture. In ten days of submissions to the Court, only 45 minutes were used by women, with Michelle and Cathi being two of the three women involved!

The Constitutional Court presented its findings during September 1996. It decided that the final Constitution did not comply in every sense with the Constitutional Principles, and referred it back to Parliament for amendments. It is important to note, however, that the Court identified specific portions of the Constitution which did not comply with the Principles, and that none of these are relevant to reproductive rights and abortion. Parliament proceeded to amend the Constitution as proposed by the Court, and we await the Court's verdict on the amended final Constitution. In the meantime, we wish to record our satisfaction that the protection of reproductive health and bodily integrity were found to comply with the Principles, and will be entrenched in the final Constitution.

PIPPA REYBURN

The Bill was introduced by Dr N. Zuma, the Minister of Health, who, significantly, concluded her strongly supportive speech by quoting from a letter by Reverend Renate Cochrane, a Lutheran, expressing shame that a Christian women's pro-choice lobby group had not been organised, asking how many women in our country are being crucified in backstreet abortions in spite of the Christian ethic of compassion and love, and expressing support for the legalisation of abortion "because of our faith".

The Bill was then firmly supported by Dr S.A. Nkomo, Chairman of the Portfolio Committee on Health. In further strongly and well-argued opening speeches Mr M. Ellis of the DP and Mr R.K. Sizani of the PAC expressed their parties' intention to vote for the Bill. The FF and the ACDP expressed complete opposition while the NP and the IFP informed the Assembly that their members would have a free vote. The NP in fact proposed certain amendments, apparently mainly a re-wording of amendments already rejected by the Portfolio Committee on Health, and so prevented a vote being taken. After the debate, the amendments were not therefore discussed further but were simply rejected in a vote by the re-convened Committee, so they served only as delaying and time-wasting tactics.

30 October saw the second reading of the Bill, at which the NP tried for further discussion which the Acting Speaker refused to allow, saying that ample opportunity had already been given for debating the Bill.

In an atmosphere of tension and rising excitement, both on the floor of the House and in the gallery, the vote was taken - the result being 209 yes votes, 87 no votes and 5 abstentions. The 69% of the votes (more than 2/3 of the members present) in favour of the Bill preclude the opposition from applying to the Constitutional Court within 30 days of the date on which the President assents to and signs the Act, for an order declaring the Act as unconstitutional and thus possibly delaying its implementation. The fact that not only the ANC but also the DP and the PAC and some IFP members voted yes was most important and gives great legitimacy to the new legislation.

The announcement of the result of the voting was greeted with great excitement and applause from the Members who had supported the Bill and from those of us in the gallery, including a strong contingent from ARAG, who were privileged to witness the passage of a law which will change the health and lives of all our women for the better.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

Circumstances in which & conditions under which pregnancy may be terminated:

1. Upon request during the first 12 weeks of the gestation period.
2. From the 13th to the 20th week, if a medical practitioner, after consultation, is of the opinion that the pregnancy would pose a risk of injury to the woman's physical or mental health; or of severe mental or physical fetal abnormality; or would significantly affect the social or economic circumstances of the woman.
3. After the 20th week, if a medical practitioner in consultation with another doctor or a trained midwife is of the opinion that the continued pregnancy would endanger the woman's life, result in a severely malformed fetus, or pose a risk of injury to the fetus.

Terminations may only be performed by **medical practitioners** except in the first 12 weeks of the gestational period when they may also be performed by **registered midwives** who have completed the prescribed training course.

Surgical terminations may be performed only at **facilities** designated by the Minister.

Counselling provision will be promoted by the State and will be non-mandatory and non-directive.

Consent will be provided by the woman only - no spousal or partner consent will be required. Minors will be advised by doctors and midwives to consult with parents, guardians, family members or friends, but terminations will not be denied to them. A special clause has been introduced to cover the provision of consent for women who are severely mentally disabled or unconscious.

The conscientious objection clause for medical personnel, plus the requirement of referral in such cases, has been deleted and replaced by a requirement that women requesting terminations be **informed of their rights** under the Act by the doctors or midwives consulted.

Records of terminations must be kept by medical personnel and by people in charge of facilities designated for terminations. These must be forwarded to the Director-General of Health, whilst preserving confidentiality on the identity of the women concerned.

Offences apply to anyone other than doctors and trained midwives performing terminations in accordance with the act, anyone preventing terminations or access to facilities and anyone failing to notify terminations and to keep records of terminations.

Angola's riches block road to peace

Diamonds and oil, Ruaridh Nicoll reports from Luzamba, are keeping a war-torn nation divided.

THE United Nations Land Cruiser moved swiftly south, passing through a lush green world of banana trees and manioc in Angola's Lunda Norte. Pereira Pillar, a slight Brazilian colonel with only two fingers on his right hand, cursed softly as a roadblock appeared ahead.

Two men moved from a reed hut by the road and slid back the bamboo barrier. But Pillar was having none of it. He motioned the Uruguayan driver to stop and argued with the men in fast Portuguese. The men were members of Jonas

Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita).

The guards talked about bandits on the road and Pillar winced. Roadblocks are illegal, he told them, but eventually gave up. As the car pulled away, Pillar put his head in his hands and the Unita men slid the bamboo back.

In the Angolan capital, Luanda, the UN will tell anybody who listens that peace is on its way, but hope has been shattered again. A shindig which was to have seen African leaders fly in to witness the cre-

ation of the government of national unity and reconciliation was postponed, Unita deciding it was not yet reconciled and unified with its enemy, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

What was a Cold War battlefield has turned into a quest for riches. The MPLA government shed its Marxist clothes in the mid-1980s, only to be corrupted by the receipts from Angola's vast oil reserves. Meanwhile, Savimbi becomes ever more belligerent in his desperate quest for power, fi-

nancing his ambition from diamond reserves found in the Cuango river basin.

It is here where the problems facing the peace process are most exposed. Unita is now supposed to be an unarmed political party, but it still controls 40 per cent of the country, some of it in the Lunda — the beautiful wild east, where law is thin on the ground. Mining executives describe it as Africa's Klondike.

The plane carrying Colonel Pillar touched down at Unita's stronghold of Luzamba, where a Unita man in an ex-

pensive leather jacket, cowboy boots and a stetson checked off the passengers. Nearby the Cuango, thought to contain half of Angola's diamonds, snaked by. Overhead the air was battered by the sound of cargo planes piloted by Russians who fly the precious stones to Zaire, returning with luxury goods which are then sold at exorbitant prices.

Pillar was visiting the town in his role as the UN's regional commander. His main purpose was to drop by the UN camp at Muchinda, 90 minutes

away by car along a broken tarmac road where Unita, as part of the peace deal, has quartered troops under UN supervision.

The Lusaka Protocol, which attempts to create peace after a disputed election in 1992 ended in widespread slaughter, requires the demobilisation of Unita's army and a unified government to be put in place. But, given the riches, Unita is unwilling to give up control of Luzamba. The diamond field earns an annual \$300-£350 million (£180-£210m).

Alberto Kanhango, the

young and flamboyantly dressed Unita chief for the Lunda, sat at a table in the UN compound in Luzamba. He refused to discuss diamonds, but complained at having to demobilise his army. 'The Protocol says that the military has to demobilise before the political situation is solved,' he said. 'But I would have preferred it to have been the other way round.'

Unita took control of Luzamba following the election. Odebrecht, a company which manages mines for the state diamond company, Endiama, had taken advantage of the calm before the poll to try to exploit the area. It built roads, a landing strip, a hospital and a school before Unita's soldiers dropped by and demanded the keys.

Kanhango, who declined to live in the Muchinda camp, preferring the luxury afforded to the rich in Luzamba, greeted his Brazilian counterpart warmly. Pillar said he liked the guitar-playing rebel. But when questioned, Kanhango quickly took exception to the fact that nobody really believes Unita has demobilised its army or turned in all its weapons. 'The roadblocks have nothing to do with Unita,' he said. 'There are no economic controls here and there are a lot of criminals.'

If peace is finally to come to Angola, men like Kanhango have to be prepared to release their grip on the country's riches. To do that he would have to pass the administration of this area over to the government. 'It's not easy for Unita to believe in the MPLA or for the MPLA to believe in Unita,' he said. 'We have been fighting for a long time.' But he claimed to be fighting for peace. 'We are working to get there.'

Last week saw the UN involved in frantic negotiations to broker a new government, but without success. It said the crucial issue that had caused the delay was the ques-

tion of Savimbi's status. He wants an executive role and there is little doubt one role he wants is control over the diamond concessions.

There is no shortage of tragedies in Angola — it is possibly the richest country in Africa but has suffered the continent's longest civil war; it has the most mutilated population on the globe. Maybe the often talked about 'potential' of the country is yet another tragedy. From the Mercedes cars that roam the rubbish-strewn streets of Luanda to the expensive 4 X 4s in Luzamba it is clear Unita and the MPLA are making too much money. 'I have on and off days,' said a Western diplomat. 'But when I am pessimistic I think the only chance of a decent future lies in the leaders leaving the country.'

As Pillar's Land Cruiser moved away from the roadblocks which surround Luzamba and into the countryside, old Africa crushed back in. The remaining bits of tarmac which covered the road were white with ground manioc waiting to dry in the sun. Women washed clothes in the streams, laying the colourful fabrics on the rocks. Only the hulks of trucks blown up by landmines told of the fury of the war.

At the end of the road is Muchinda, where the UN quartered 4,536 Unita soldiers. Only 1,984 remain; some went to join the new unified army but most have just disappeared. The camp is a damp, unpleasant place where malaria is rife.

Guillime Isaac sat in a straw hut, looking worried despite being in the heart of Unita territory. 'I handed in my gun because I'm tired of fighting,' he said. 'Now I wait to see if the government will kill me.' Perhaps it is the truth, but the UN soldiers say most Unita men in the camp spend their time worrying about other things, mainly searching the river bed for precious stones.