

FOREWORD

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Anton Lubowski was my friend. Once we travelled to New York and back in one weekend to see if we could bring about a reconciliatory meeting between Sam Nujoma of SWAPO and Dirk Mudge of the DTA. That was quite some time before the implementation of Resolution 435 began, which culminated in the Constituent Assembly elections that led to Namibia's independence. According to the following account, his assassination was part of a campaign to disrupt SWAPO's participation in those elections. It is also called "a terrible mistake" - a gross misstatement. His death was a mindless, brutal, senseless act of terror. Many of those are recorded in the pages of this book.

On such a long weekend flight to New York and back, a friendship deepens and explores many confidential and intimate contours of the other's existence - marriage, children, fidelity, politics, Africa, music, existential angst - the whole "sense of it all". Anton was a bighearted, lovable, paradox of a man. His total absence of malice and calculation was not enough to protect those close to him from the hurt he caused them and he himself

experienced because of it. If anything, it was the consequence of a powerful zest for life and an inability to deny himself any opportunity to experience it with others. He was incapable of deliberately hurting any living thing and was filled with a deep rage by those who did. He died at the hands of such.

July 1987 - Dakar, Senegal : A group of predominantly Afrikaner South Africans (+- 60) sit around a table with ANC executive members (+- 18). Mac Maharaj talks about the ANC's armed struggle. He says : "Before I went to Robben Island I could kill in anger; when I left it, I could kill in cold blood." A chill went through the gathering and then passionate debate exploded which dominated the whole period of our interaction over the next 10 days : When, if ever, is violence as a political instrument justified? What about innocent lives? When has one explored every possible non-violent source? The meeting ended without resolution except to agree to differ. The day before my return to South Africa from the Dakar meeting a bomb went off outside the Witwatersrand High Command injuring scores of innocent civilians. The ANC accepted responsibility.

Much later, perhaps two years, in Lusaka, Oliver Tambo drew me aside and apologised for any embarrassment the bombing may have caused me, assuring me that it was not calculated to co-incide with my return. The Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, later blamed a young Afrikaner from an impeccable establishment family called Hein Grosskopf for leading the bombing mission on behalf of MK of the ANC. This led to an outcry because Hein Grosskopf had neither been arrested or formally charged. I

joined in the outpouring of indignation and wrote a letter of sympathy to his parents who are well known to me. After the Tambo meeting, another IDASA conference between members of MK and those involved with the SADF took place in Lusaka. At this meeting Hein Grosskopf acknowledged that he was a member of MK and without accepting responsibility for the High Command bombing, said he was quite willing and able to lead such a mission, even if innocent bystanders got killed.

I am not a pacifist - I can well imagine when, out of anger, fear or in a war-like situation I could kill. But then, and now, I cannot justify cold blooded, pre-meditated murder for political purposes. I lack the ideological dogmatism and moral certitudes to make this likely, and in fact, have no desire to be cursed with either. But if I cannot justify, I have come to understand how it is possible. This book deepens such understanding.

It explores how successive governments used the State apparatus to change the victims of its policies into enemies and to fashion any conceivable instrument to eliminate them. It records how some of the agents of State security can "kill in cold blood" and "innocent bystanders". South Africa is not unique in this respect. Many authoritarian regimes have been exposed in their use of death squads, political assassinations and destabilization. Almost without exception they adopted omniscient, ideological delusions of grandeur of our own "total strategy" vs "total onslaught" variety. When this happens, legal accountability becomes capricious; civil liberties are crushed; society polarizes; and brutality and barbarism replaces the rule

of law. This is true for Chile, Columbia, Rumania, Uganda and us.

In our case, funny grey little men wear Afro wigs, dark glasses and play 007 games with their fellow citizens. Drunk with limitless power they decide on a whim who to "take out", "neutralize" or "eliminate" in order to save the Fatherland" or protect themselves. They live in pockets of moral vacuity, insulated from the expository influence of the civil society they systematically set out to destroy. Some of them end up conserving endless bottles of cough mixture to stay awake from their own nightmares whilst society stumbles on in the heart of darkness.

Now, the political leaders of South Africa, from inside and outside the regime, have declared a common commitment to move away from such darkness. They tell us we hover on the threshold of a "new South Africa". This book, like a bucket of cold water in the face, serves to remind us how fragile such a commitment is, if the instruments of State security, do not understand, support or are possibly even hostile to it. The transition to "a non-racial democratic" South Africa is incapable of being negotiated if the instruments of State security are not clearly under control and accountable to civilian authority, and provide non-partisan and legitimate stability and law and order. This will have to be demonstrably evident before any serious negotiations can begin. If not, our transition will simply regress to a new kind of autocracy where once again, laws without justice will be enforced by secret groups of people accountable

only to themselves.

It is in the nature of a negotiated transition that society is denied a fresh, clear start which some believe a dramatic historical rupture provides. The legacies of the past have to be recognized, transformed and in the process the future created. One such legacy is the security system. We cannot afford to ignore it or pretend it does not have a history and a culture. Because if we do, we will not be able to transform it and make it serviceable to the non-racial and democratic future which our politicians have dedicated them, and us to. There is no point in "a new South Africa" if innocents like Anton Lubowski are to be killed in cold blood and youngsters like Hein Grosskopf are prepared to accept responsibility for similar incidents because of the actions of State Security. Such a transition is simply a gearshift into madness.

Jacques Paauw is to be commended for his resolution and courage in writing this book. Max du Preez, Editor of Vrye Weekblad for the same qualities and for supporting Jacques Paauw. Theirs has been a lonely and lonesome journalistic task but I have no doubt that should South Africa move into a non-racial, democratic mode of existence with a non-partisan security system constrained by, and committed to the finest principles of the rule of law, future generations will look back also to the likes of them with gratitude and pride.