

A MASSACRE OF INNOCENCE: THE MARCH AT BISHO, 7 SEPTEMBER 1992

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Real Fictions

THIS WAS South Africa: it needed massacre, a really good, upfront massacre, with lots of dead, to get negotiations on the road again. Blood to grease the words.

In the fragments of parched misery that make up the so-called former 'homelands' in South Africa, all official military forces in the 1980s were the creatures of South African Military Intelligence (MI). That includes the current regime in the Transkei. There the military dictator, Major-General Bantu Holomisa, sprang the changes on his patrons in MI following a coup in 1987. He reversed the alliances and aligned himself with the rising political fortunes of the African National Congress.

It is no doubt from connections made during his tenure in structures controlled by MI that Holomisa acquired documents that led to the present head of MI, Major General Christoffel ('Joffel') van der Westhuizen, being named as author of the murder of four leading activists from the town of Cradock in 1985. Van der Westhuizen's role was first revealed in a copy of a military signal released to the press by Holomisa in 1992. He was named again as author of these murders in an inquest hearing in March 1993 by the communications officer who had transmitted the signal.¹

Bordering the Transkei lie the scattered bits and pieces of the Ciskei. Here MI remained firmly in control. This was the setting for the massacre on 7 September 1992 that permitted ANC leaders to resume their interrupted discussion with the government of President FW de Klerk.

The massacre took place outside the football stadium at Bisho, the Ciskei 'capital.' In truly South African fashion, this was an unreal place for a real killing. In the spirit of coups real and fictional that have characterised the region, it was the outcome of an attempt (in the imagination of the ANC) at a radical seizure of power, in a fictitious capital of a fictitious state created in the imagination of the apartheid rulers. A fictitious state, guarded however by real killers. In South Africa, fictions come policed with weapons, able and eager to kill.

Only weeks before the massacre, the former head of MI in the Ciskei, Colonel Gert Hugo, revealed his own role in the creation of the Ciskei dictator, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo. (Hugo, like Holomisa before him, had defected to the opposition). It was Gqozo's troops who slaughtered the ANC demonstrators as they ran towards 'his' capital, in an effort to liberate this little zone of dust from his tyrannical custody.

Hugo stated that the political government of President FW de Klerk was powerless against the real and still untouched military government of mass

murderers in MI, which had detailed plans for a coup against the government of politicians should it consider this necessary. Every local MI commander had detailed coup instructions locked in his safe, awaiting the order to activate them. The politicians in the government, including the president, were all too compromised in sanctioning and commissioning past brutalities to withstand the coercive suasion of the military, Hugo argued. (*Independent*, 24 August 1992)²

About a year earlier, information came to light about the role of MI in planning and executing the murder of two embarrassing former despots of the Ciskei, Charles Sebe and Onward Guzana. They were lured into participating in a fictitious 'coup' attempt (staged by MI) against the real coup-regime of Gqozo that had succeeded them. According to the former chief of operations of the Ciskei Defence Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Nelson Naka, in a statement to Ciskei's Acting Chief Justice, the coup attempt was faked in January 1991 so that Sebe and Guzana would be 'killed according to Brig Gqozo's instructions.' The whole affair had been stage-managed from the beginning with the aim of murdering these two embarrassing opponents of Gqozo. (*Southern Africa Report*, 6 September 1991)

This act of blood, worthy of the serial murderers who really rule in South Africa, was carried out by MI operating in the Ciskei under the characteristically suave cover name of International Research (IR). As in Namibia at the time of the independence elections in 1989 (where it styled itself African Communication Projects) and as with its former corps of assassins, the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), MI has a taste for the academic and the clinical in choosing the cover names for its crimes of blood. (A thesis is writing to be written on the semantics of murder in South Africa).

Headed by three white former SADF officers, IR was set up in August 1990, was equipped with substantial resources, and operated outside the control of the regular Ciskei army and police. It was based initially on Gqozo's personal farm. This was the kind of regime that the ANC attempted to overturn by a kind of populist street theatre, through its 'mass action' campaign. Colonel Hugo stated a month before the massacre that the fake 'coup' staged for Gqozo by IR had been 'a cover to justify a crackdown on groups allied to the ANC'. (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1992)

Six months after the massacre, in the course of the inquest into the murder of the 'Cradock Four' – Matthew Goniwe, Mbulelo Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto and Fort Calata – the role of General van der Westhuizen was confirmed by Colonel Lourens du Plessis, who said he had drafted van der Westhuizen's signal calling for the 'permanent removal' of Goniwe and two others. The men were murdered three weeks later.

At the same time Colonel du Plessis revealed how Sebe had been freed from prison in the Transkei in 1986 by white commandos of MI, who stormed the prison in which he was being held. The aim of MI at that time had been to install Sebe as head of a unified 'Xhosaland', comprising the Transkei, the Ciskei and the white-owned border region between them. According to the

colonel, the plan involved the proposed 'permanent removal' of Sebe's brother, Lennox, then Ciskei president. Secret documents released by Holomisa at the same time revealed that the plan for 'Xhosaland', including the proposed killing of Lennox Sebe, grew out of a meeting of the State Security Council. President de Klerk, like his predecessor PW Botha, was then a member of the SSC. 'Joffel' van der Westhuizen was head of its secretariat.

An Appetite for Human Blood

When the march on Bisho was being planned in the higher reaches of the ANC, everyone knew that the military forces of the Ciskei are creatures nourishing an appetite for human blood. The real issue was not whether the end of such a monstrous dictatorship should be contended for, but how. The breakdown in negotiations between the government and the ANC over a new constitution — in which the ANC had made concession after concession — provided the occasion for a conflict on strategy and tactics within the ANC leadership. This reflected conflicts within the ANC's social base of support.

The core ANC leadership grouped around Nelson Mandela rests ultimately on the small but growing black middle class being attached to capital through places on company boards, through franchises and gifts of all kinds and through access to higher education. A much larger constituency is the swelling mass of human misery thrown up by the combined working effect of South Africa's traditional social structure, the world depression and the results of sanctions and economic autarky in the 1980s.

To these hundreds of thousands for whom existence is a daily struggle for survival, the failed rhetoric of the 1980s — of armed struggle and revolt — continues to offer the appearance of a solution. Following a slump in savings, declining investment and a seize-up of world markets, this major section of South African society has experienced a worsening of life. The immediate future, like the present, offers nothing but further hardship and privation, added to the hardship and privation against which they rebelled in the 1980s.

The rhetoric forgets, however, that the insurrectionary perspective of the ANC army, Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), was cut short by MI through the brutal crushing of the township revolt of 1984-86. This was the time of the murder of the Cradock four, and very many others besides.

A grouping in the ANC National Executive Committee headed by three leaders of the South African Communist Party — Ronnie Kasrils (head of military intelligence of MK in exile), Chris Hani (secretary general of the SACP and former deputy commander of MK) and Raymond Suttner — seized their opportunity as men of action when the men of words failed to deliver. A strategy was agreed upon by the NEC which amounted to an attempted seizure of power in the 'homelands' by defenceless, unarmed demonstrators, ranged against lethal troops inured to killings.

The trap was set. All that remained was delivery of the bodies. There is no doubt that ANC leaders did in fact aim to occupy the 'business' centre of Bisho with their supporters, so as — in their imagination — to force out the dictator Gqozo.

The marchers set off from King Williams Town (in South Africa 'proper'). According to the notional plan, they are to proceed to the agreed assembly point of the march, the football stadium, paying real attention to Gqozo's troops ranged alongside them and between them and the centre of Bisho.

In their real plan, however, ANC commanders aim to lead the loyal and militant (but unarmed) masses in an infantry charge past the fictional destination, the football stadium, towards the centre of Bisho. They reckon as if, in a re-run of old Eisenstein and Pudovkin movies, Gqozo's troops will side with the demonstrators, and turn their weapons on the dictator. Or at least, refuse to fire.

It is a fatal miscalculation. Real live bullets rain down on the marchers from two directions for several minutes of uninterrupted free fire. There are scores of wounded, and 28 dead (or more). Sprinting at the head of the charge like an infantry lieutenant at the Somme, Kasrils is pulled to the ground by his bodyguards and survives.

A film in the head is transformed into flesh and blood. Flesh and blood is transformed into film, to fill a slot on TV news schedules. Routine horror in millions of living rooms across the world. Interviews with leaders of the march. Discussions on serious-minded chat-shows. Grave and judicious editorials. What is to be done? President de Klerk makes an offer. The deal is accepted, the talkers get into gear again, briefcases are loaded, relatives bury their dead, the wounded get on with the business of living wounded, soldiers clean their weapons. South Africa moves on. Another month, another massacre.

The Poetry of Death

If I approach this tragedy in the manner of farce, it is because it was created in the manner of farce by its authors.

In a country bristling with violence, it is impermissible for political life to be conducted as if thousands of people assembled for a political demonstration are so many extras in a movie. It is unforgivable for political romantics to re-enact the myths of Eisenstein and Pudovkin in a world in which the extras really do get killed: perhaps especially, when these romantics really are courageous, and ready to risk their own lives as well as those of others.

For these producers of the massacre at Bisho, the dividing line between theatre and life has been a blur for decades. For Kasrils, in particular, a central figure in the tragedy, it is a serious question at what point the heroic posture takes over from the calculation necessary in a military leader, responsible for the lives of people. The clenched fist and exultant expression

at Bisho were the same as when, a younger man, he appeared on stage in exile singing with the Mayibuye Cultural Ensemble in London in the 1970s.

With Kasrils, the Byronic stance as people's leader coincides with the imagination of an enthusiast of the Red Army under Stalin, the storming of the Winter Palace (stalinist version) and the entry into Havana of Fidel and Che.

This is epic theatre of a certain kind. Its tone may be studied in Kasrils' poetry published under the literary pseudonym 'ANC Khumalo' (also his MK name as former deputy commissar and chief of military intelligence), found in back numbers of the SACP journal, *The African Communist*, and in the collection edited by Barry Feinberg, *Poets to the People* (Heinemann, 1980).

A dithyramb in hectic monotone dedicated to the 'washing of the spears' in the blood of the apartheid regime, this poetry is interesting mainly for the psychology of the writer, and thus of the grouping that led the march at Bisho. The pseudonym itself is interesting: the more than intimate identification of the poet with a political party, and the identification also of the (white, Jewish) member of the Communist Party with the clan name of one of the most illustrious of Zulu chiefly families. This is Boys Own stuff, re-written for the side of insurrection and set in shanty-towns, locations and the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. With real corpses on the ground.

With Kasrils, and the other ANC leaders on the march at Bisho, it is not their courage but their judgement that is at issue. As with the language of MI, the semantics of this leader of the ANC and SACP leader deserves study. Just before the shooting begins, Kasrils states:

'It's a cinch. We are just going to march into the CBD [central business district]'. (*Times*, 8 September)

After the shooting stops:

'We had made it clear we were not going to the stadium to have a rally. Our intention was to go to Bisho'. (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 September) Hani, his colleague on the march, speaking before the shooting: 'We are going to Bisho to remove de Klerk's kitchen boy'. (*Daily Telegraph*, 9 September)

Later, the rhetorical question from Kasrils: 'Throughout history, how has tyranny been toppled?' The rhetorical reply: 'Never without casualties. This is the nature of the struggle. People are prepared to accept sacrifice, provided the leadership is prepared to be with them'. (*Times*, 9 September)

Kasrils again, the day after the shootings: 'One cannot regret what one does in good faith and in the best judgement of the collective leadership . . . Casualties take place all the time . . . We can't regret trying to go forward'. Followed by evocation of boyhood adventures: 'The trouble is I always was the best runner at school. There were others [leaders] with me, but they just could not keep up'. (*Guardian*, 9 September)

Then the suggestion that the 'armed struggle' should be resumed: 'This talk of peace is not going down with our people while war is being waged on them all over South Africa'. (*Times*, 8 September) To a rousing cheer at the site of the shootings the day afterwards, Kasrils states that suspension of the

armed struggle would 'have to be re-evaluated' in the light of the massacre. (*Independent*, 9 September)

There is something missing here. From these statements, there emerges the sense of a person whose moral register is somehow not in keeping with the horror in which he has been intimately present: of a strange kind of abstraction from the responsibility not to put human life needlessly at risk. To suggest an analogy: The owner of a huge articulated truck fails to ensure proper maintenance of his vehicle; the brakes fail; the truck ploughs into a queue of people at the roadside, killing several and maiming others. Comments from the owner of the truck even remotely in the spirit of Kasrils' remarks above could only be regarded as showing a deficiency in the person's moral sense. Such a person should not be permitted to be in control of a potentially lethal vehicle, for the safety of the public and even for his own good. At the very minimum, if such a person made comments in the spirit of Kasrils after an accident, a court would be justified in taking away that person's authority to own and operate the kind of vehicle that he had failed to maintain. A technical question — the maintenance or non-maintenance of a dangerous vehicle, or the judgement of a political leader in encouraging unarmed people to storm a position guarded by nervous armed troops — reveals itself as a moral question.

The idea that it was individual people whose lives were put at risk — that Kasrils' mind-set and actions got people needlessly killed — that as a well-known and highly regarded figure, he used his political authority to behave in a manner that would show lack of judgement even in the captain of a football team — this speaks volumes for the character of South African life over the past thirty years. One is compelled to ask, how does a nation acquire such leaders? If it does have such leaders, how does it acquire more worthy ones? This society needs better criteria of selection. If it has acquired the leaders it deserves, then it must raise its standards.

In a dangerous place like South Africa, political leaders require to be scrutinised with even greater care than in a comparatively mild and peaceful country like Britain. In fact there is a perfectly adequate standard for gauging the fitness of someone like Kasrils to be entrusted with people's lives. It is his writings. Not the poetry, which gives a clue to his obsessions (but not more than that). It is his writing on history. Here the reader can examine the relation of this person to a relatively tested and verifiable truth.

The History of an Illusion

Under his 'travelling name' of ANC Khumalo, Kasrils contributed an article to issue No 101 of the SACP journal, *The African Communist* (second quarter, 1985), published just as the SACP was preparing to launch its near-coup that secured for it almost total control over the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC in exile. This was at the Kabwe Conference in June 1985, the first full conference of the ANC since the congress at

Morogoro in Tanzania in 1969, sixteen years previously. The pro-democracy mutiny of almost 90 per cent of the ANC's trained troops in Angola in January–May 1984 had been crushed the previous year, by means of torture, the prison camp and the firing squad.

Kasrils, as chief of military intelligence, like Umkhonto's then chief of staff, Joe Slovo, had personal knowledge of the dissatisfaction of ANC troops with the conduct of the Security Department, before the most serious phase of the mutiny in February 1984. (personal communication) He, Slovo and other military leaders had done nothing about it. While not personally responsible for the crushing of the mutiny – this was left principally to Kasrils' colleague at Bisho, Chris Hani – their authority in the ANC rose at Kabwe to the same degree as the critics of brutality within the ANC were themselves brutalised in the prison camp Quatro.

At Kabwe, the racial barrier prohibiting entry of non-Africans to the NEC was removed. Slovo, Mac Maharaj and other non-African leaders of Umkhonto (and of the SACP) were now elected for the first time to the NEC, by a conference heavily rigged by the Security Department. (See Mkatashingo, 'The ANC Conference: From Kabwe to Johannesburg,' *Searchlight South Africa* No 6, January 1991) Kasrils was co-opted at a meeting of the NEC in July 1988.

Published almost simultaneously with the Kabwe conference, Kasrils' article in the *African Communist* is entitled 'Forty Years On. How the Red Army Buried Hitler'. His poem in the same issue, 'Zoya on Guard', like his poems in the volume *Poets to the People*, is also on a military theme. The picture on the front cover of the magazine is of a Soviet soldier hoisting the red flag, with hammer and sickle and star, above the ruins of Berlin in 1945. The cover bears the same headline as Kasrils' article: 'How the Red Army Buried Hitler'. This issue gives an indication of the mental outlook of the military leaders of the SACP at the moment they gained even further authority within the political directorate of the ANC.

The *African Communist* was one of the sole means of information and political culture permitted to members of MK in the camps. Whatever Kasrils wrote in this magazine would tend to acquire great force within the ANC, both because of his position as deputy commissar and also because of the very restricted access of the soldiers to information. Through censorship enforced by the Security Department, which was run by members of the SACP, no interpretation hostile to that of the SACP was permitted to the troops. Here one may observe how Kasrils respected the mental integrity of his readers in the camps, who were also in the main his military subordinates.

'Now, as then', he concludes, celebrating the time of Stalin from the time of Brezhnev, 'the Soviet Union is the sheet anchor of world peace and humanity'. (p 45) This ideological assertion is complemented by a more damaging distortion. He describes the beginning of World War Two as follows:

The Second World War commenced on September 1, 1939 with Nazi Germany's unprovoked attack on Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany. At this stage the Soviet Union was a non-participant, as was the other war-time ally, the USA. (p 36)

This is a falsification, but many of Kasrils's readers in MK were not to know it. The great majority of them had left South Africa illegally after the crushing of the 1976 school students' revolt. Because of their participation as teenagers in the students' revolt, they had not completed even the miserable secondary schooling offered to blacks under Bantu Education. In joining MK in exile, they exchanged Bantu Education for a basically stalinist education, conducted (in east Germany and elsewhere) by Kasrils and others. This was an abuse of the minds of these young people, who constituted the bulk of Umkhonto's fighting forces when – to their great credit – they demanded democracy during the mutiny of 1984. These young people were not permitted to know that far from having been a 'non-participant' in the invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Soviet Union had in fact been joint participant with Hitler.

Kasrils deceived his readers in MK by hiding the fact that the Red Army, under the direction of Stalin and Molotov, had been purged of its most eminent generals in the show trials of 1937 and invaded Poland from the east just as Germany invaded from the west, and by joint agreement with Hitler. He endorses this brutal abrogation of the national sovereignty of the Poles, which prepared the way for the almost total extinction of the Jews of Poland (one third of the population). The end result of this dictators' pact was. . . Auschwitz.³

Kasrils' comment on the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact is disingenuous. He writes:

In August 1939 it [the USSR] signed a non-aggression pact with Germany, winning a breathing space of nearly two years during which it was able to build up its defences and strengthen the socialist foundations of the Soviet state, threatened as it was on two fronts – Nazi Germany to the west and militarist Japan to the east. This non-aggression treaty has been much criticised by the enemies of the Soviet Union, but subsequent events were to prove its validity. (p 38)

There is no reason to think that Kasrils' political dream of a future ANC military victory over the apartheid state differed in any substantial respect from this interpretation of the final victory of Stalin's army over Hitler's. Stalin controlled the Soviet army with commissars from the KGB. Kasrils, Slovo and Hani policed MK in similar fashion through the ANC Security Department. With its death camps at Kolyma and its prison executions in the Lubyanka, the Soviet Union is the 'socialist foundation' to Kasrils' politics.

He makes no mention that the forward defences of the Soviet Union were almost totally wiped out on the ground in the German invasion of June 1941, despite Stalin's annexation of eastern Poland: so much for 'building up its defences'. No mention of Stalin's breakdown under the impact of the in-

vasion, and his withdrawal from policy direction for many crucial days. No mention of Stalin's inability to acknowledge the numerous advance reports he received of the coming invasion, including detailed high-level briefing from the Comintern agent Richard Sorge in Japan. No reference (an interesting omission, coming from someone of Jewish background) to the fact that tens of thousands of Jews in the immediate path of the German invasion were deprived of all means of knowing about their coming fate during the period of the pact, and that nothing was done to evacuate at least the Jewish children to the rear.⁴ One could go on, but there is no need to. Unlike ANC troops in the camps in 1985, anyone who wishes to study the period may do so.

From Poland to East Germany

Someone who can write history like this, for the consumption of poorly educated young people with no alternative means for studying the period in question, cannot be trusted with responsibility for human lives. Responsibility of any real kind disappears into a fathomless pit, in which any number of deaths can be justified.

Given this insight into the mind of Kasrils (and his military colleagues in the SACP), the ideological path leading to the massacre at Bisho becomes open to a more informed understanding. When Kasrils wrote these words, the Soviet military was a real presence in the sub-continent, mainly through tens of thousands of Cuban troops in Angola, but also through Soviet and East German military advisers in Angola and other countries. Penetration by Soviet armour and air forces into South Africa, in association with the township revolt that had begun in late 1983, seemed feasible. Cuban forces did in fact inflict a major military defeat on South African forces at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola, just north of the border with Namibia, in 1988. It is most probable that military leaders of the SACP envisaged a tightly disciplined Umkhonto we Sizwe arriving in South Africa behind Cuban armour, to impose a stalinist order as in eastern Europe.

In this light, it is more than faintly ironic that the strategy governing the march on Bisho was known among ANC and SACP leaders as the 'Leipzig option'. This was 'the belief that, as happened in East Germany, it is possible to bring down a state by mobilising mass demonstrations aimed at the state's weakest points'. (John Carlin, *Independent*, 9 September 1992) The phrase appeared in an SACP document entitled 'The boat, the tap and the Leipzig way: a critique of some strategic assumptions within our ranks', written by the ANC national executive member (and SACP leader), Jeremy Cronin. Cronin discussed and criticised the 'Leipzig' approach in his document, which was circulated at an extended central committee meeting of the SACP in June 1992, arguing that 'we are further (and we were arguably never that close) from insurrection now than we were three or four years ago'. (*Weekly Mail*, 10 July 1992) This was sober enough. But it appears that other counsels prevailed.

These people knew Leipzig well. The German Democratic Republic was for decades the most important base of military and propaganda support for the ANC and SACP. They defended the legitimacy, the conduct, the alleged 'socialist' character and the durability of this state until the very day it collapsed in 1989. And then . . . after singing its praises for decades as a model state, they name their strategy of mass action, culminating at Bisho, after the political events that brought about its downfall!

It is difficult to know whether the analogy with Leipzig was the result more of cynicism or stupidity. For leaders of the SACP to compare their own strategy with the events of 1989 in the GDR shows how little they understand the reasons for the collapse of this state. They had no idea how unarmed people could bring down such a despised armed power. The real causes for the inner rot of the GDR could not be understood by people who continued to praise its 'socialist foundations'. And if they could not understand the GDR, or the nature of the Soviet Union, or the Stalin-Hitler pact, and thus the Second World War which gave birth to the GDR . . . then they could not understand South Africa either. In particular, they did not grasp that the Soviet Union and its appendages had already over a long time previously collapsed morally, economically, socially and politically, while in South Africa the old state machine continued to remain a formidable power of coercion. Thus their blithe indifference to their own responsibility for the deaths at Bisho.

While correctly placing full responsibility on the Ciskei forces for the killings, the judicial commission on violence headed by Judge Richard Goldstone was not wrong in its report to blame also the ANC leaders for irresponsibility — Kasrils in particular. Goldstone demanded of the ANC that it 'publicly censure' Kasrils as its campaign organiser, accusing him of 'knowingly or negligently' exposing the demonstrators 'to the danger of death and injury'. (*Guardian*, 1 October 1992) Goldstone was justified in this judgement, just as he was in later finding the top command of MI responsible for criminal subversion of the ANC, and thus of the entire political process in South Africa.

A Choice of Evils

It is not often that a socialist concurs with an officer of the South African judiciary. This is one such occasion. On the issue of the massacre at Bisho, this writer does not have difficulty in believing that the future conscience of South Africa rests more humanely with Richard Goldstone of the South African bench than Ronald Kasrils, of the ANC army in exile. South Africa's misfortune is that the decades of opposition to the brutalities of its capitalist practice took place in a world divided between capitalism and the system of stalinist states. Against such a grotesque and entrenched regime, there was nowhere for this opposition realistically to turn, except to the iron-clad grip of the Soviet Union.

The problem with individuals such as Kasrils is that they enthusiastically reproduce this cruel choice as a positive virtue, and extol what is shameful and destructive. Respected by many in MK in exile as the only white person in the camps over very long periods, Kasrils serves merely as a more extrovert representative of the central dilemma of the opposition to the apartheid regime. For years he was a prime target for the regime's killer squads.⁵ His virtues are the obverse to his vices, like the Robben Island prison graduate Andrew Masondo, who inflicted his own experience of brutality on others (as ANC commissar and founder of the Security Department) as soon as he received the opportunity.

Unfortunate the land that requires heroes, wrote the dramatist Sean O'Casey about his native Ireland. In South Africa one concurs, adding: unfortunate also the land that creates its heroes in the mould of Hani, of Slovo, of Masondo and of Kasrils. It is not the least of South Africa's tragedies that courageous, committed, non-racial opposition to the regime was led and carried out over decades by a party so blunted to human suffering, and to truth.

Further decades will be needed to nourish a different, and more democratic, political culture. The merit of Judge Goldstone in his inquiry, set beside the lesson provided by the ANC at Bisho, is that the guidelines for a different moral sensibility may already be discerned.

Notes

1. In *Searchlight South Africa* No 8 ('Within the Secret State: The Directorate of Military Intelligence,' p 22, n 1), I mistakenly confused General 'Joffel' van der Westhuizen with his predecessor as chief of staff of MI, General Pieter van der Westhuizen. 'Joffel' was head of the secretariat of the State Security Council in the late 1980s (after the murder of the Cradock four). Pieter led a high-level MI delegation to Washington in March 1981 within two months of Reagan's inauguration as president, directed the operations of Renamo in Mozambique and — as reported in a book published last year in the United States — was a 'close friend' of the son of the former British prime minister, Baroness Thatcher. (*Weekly Mail*, 16 October 1992) The careers of the two van der Westhuizens will be explored in a future issue.
2. After disclosures about secret operations by MI to subvert the negotiations with the ANC, de Klerk removed 23 SADF officers from their jobs — many from MI — but not the kingmakers General 'Joffel' van der Westhuizen (head of MI) and General AG 'Kat' Liebenberg (head of MI in 1985, to whom the 'Cradock signal' was directed, and at the time of writing head of the SADF). Nor does de Klerk's removal of the 23 officers appear to have restricted MI support for the resumption of civil war in Angola by Dr Jonas Savimbi, head of Unita — the immediate cause of thousands of deaths.
3. Such cruel indifference to the national existence of the Poles on the part of Kasrils, as a military leader of a so-called 'national liberation movement,' has a more recent counterpart. (He conceals, of course, the deliberate planned massacre of 25,421 Polish officers ordered by Stalin, Beria, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Kalinin and Kaganovitch in Katyn woods, near Smolensk, in the Spring of 1940).
The national existence of the people of Tibet has been suppressed by the stalinist regime in China for more than thirty years. Over a million Tibetan people are estimated to have died at the hands of their Chinese rulers, and almost all their monasteries destroyed. Yet when Nelson Mandela visited China in October 1992 and was welcomed by the men who had sent tanks rolling over the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, his reply to a question on the

Beijing killings of June 1989 was: 'We are not fully briefed about this situation.' ('Nelson Mandela turns a blind eye'. (*Observer*, 11 October 1992)

'When we turned to the West for assistance,' he told the Beijing press corps, 'they supported the oppressor of our country, but when we came to China our leaders were accepted with open arms . . . Which human being of principle, who has a high standard of morality, would now turn against the very country that has aided them to make the advance we have made?'

Some massacres, one must suppose, are more lethal than others. It is a chilling omen for how the ANC would treat a Tienanmen Square protest by its own citizens.

4. Yevtushenko's poem, 'Babi Yar' (1961), is clearly an indictment of the Nazi invaders for their massacre of Jews at a ravine near Kiev and of the Soviet authorities for their silence on the atrocity. Kasrils knew this as well as anyone on the South African 'left'. Yet he and the editors of the *African Communist* continued to preserve silence about this complicity of the Soviet regime in these anti-semitic abuses while those who drew attention to these facts were denounced as Zionists.. In his 1985 article Kasrils and the AC aggravate the offence: he as deputy commissar in charge of political instruction of ANC troops, the AC as the authoritative voice of the 'theoreticians' within the ANC alliance.
5. Despite my criticism of Kasrils I must make it quite clear that, if as has been reported, Inkatha or any other organisation has taken a decision to murder Kasrils then this – or still worse, any attempt to carry it out – would be an act of barbarism worthy of the foulness of the 'old' South Africa. While Bantustans leaders drew their state apartheid salaries, individuals such as Kasrils lived for years in real danger: as witness the murder by SADF forces of the NEC member Cassius Make.