

# **The Swaziland Connection**

With the intensification of conflict in Southern Africa, Swaziland, already heavily dependent on Southern Africa for economic survival, is becoming more politically integrated with South Africa's objectives and strategies. This is not necessarily surprising, for Swaziland's position as a periphery of South Africa is not only economically determined, but has political, legal, cultural and ideological manifestations as well. Indeed, one might generalise that statement, and suggest that imperialism is never solely an economic relationship. Rather, it incorporates other relations of subordination, control and penetration as well. Thus, while an economic foundation is the basis for the imperial relationship, these economic relationships only circumscribe the parameters within which non-economic relations (also imperialist) emerge and operate. (More generally, the structure of economic relations are primarily, but not totally, responsible for the maintenance of a country's position in the international imperial chain, which itself maintains the dominance of global capitalism).

At the same time, it would be incorrect to see Swaziland as some 'unwilling captive' of South Africa, held in bondage through a structural relationship independent of developments and struggles in Swaziland. The maintenance of the imperial relationship is crucially linked to the nature of the class alliance which holds power in Swaziland. Whatever that alliance is, (and this is itself a problematic question, deserving of research and analysis in its own right), it is profoundly conservative, and has interests closer to the maintenance of current power relations in Southern Africa, rather than the radical restructuring of the whole sub-continent. The chance of far-reaching and basic change is a possibility today, but this was not foreseen with any clarity before 1975. The taking of State power in Angola and Mocambique by alliances committed formally to a socialist alternative, together with developments in Namibia and Rhodesia, put this possibility on the agenda for the whole of Southern Africa. But as this trend emerges, so the alliances linked to the propping up of a capitalist status quo strengthen their links with each other in the furtherance of a common interest. (The granting of a huge sugar concession to Tate and Lyle by the Swazi State shortly after the exposures of Tate and Lyle's labour practices on the Natal Sugar Estates is an interesting indication of what interests are expressed by the Swazi State).

It is in this context that one can view a series of recent events in Swaziland. They may not all be related, but on the other hand do have a similarity of orientation. Taken collectively they suggest that there is an increasing complicity between repressive mechanisms of the South African

State, and the Swazi State.

Sometime in January 1978, it appears that two men were kidnapped from just outside the village of Big Bend, near the South African border. The men were Mr. Victor Mayisela, a South African who has taught in Swaziland for many years, and Mr. Caiphus Mamba, a Swazi national.

With them at the time of the kidnapping was a Mr. Shabangu, who claimed in a statement to Swazi police that while he and the other two men were driving home, they stopped to help a man on the side of the road whose car appeared to have broken down. This was on the road between Big Bend and Golela, the Northern Natal border post.

Immediately they stopped, a group of men, including some whites, attacked them, and Mayisela and Mamba were forced into a parked car. According to Shabangu, he escaped after an attempt by the group of men to force him into the boot of the car, and was subsequently admitted to hospital with a number of cuts and bruises.

Swaziland sources have suggested that Victor Mayisela could have been kidnapped in error, the real target being Victor Mayekiso, who is alleged to be a PAC activist in exile.

It may be recalled that, some 13 years ago, Rosemary Wentzel, a South African exile granted political asylum in Swaziland, was kidnapped from the same area, and driven across the border into South Africa. There she was tricked into driving off in a car alone, where she was immediately apprehended in a Security Police roadblock. She was then detained by the S.B. under the 90 day detention law.

Two accused in the recent Maritzburg ANC trial (S vs Gwala and others), claim that they were kidnapped from Swaziland by the South African Police, detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act, and finally brought to trial to face charges of Terrorism. While on trial, they brought an application to the Natal Supreme Court, applying for their return to Swaziland. While the application was being heard, the Attorney-General for Natal issued an order in terms of the Internal Security Act, instructing that neither of the applicants could be released from custody until their Terrorism trial was over. This meant that even if the court had ruled that they had been unlawfully abducted, they would still face charges of Terrorism in South Africa. However, the application was refused, and eventually the two accused, Joseph Nduli and Cleophas Ndlovu were found guilty, and sentenced to effective terms of eighteen and fifteen years imprisonment. In rejecting their application to be released, the Judge found that even if the two had been kidnapped, the Natal Supreme Court had jurisdiction to try them.



Nduli and Ndlovu then appealed to the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein, but the appeal was refused. The Chief Justice, with four other judges of appeal concurring, found that the application would only have merit if it had been shown that the kidnapping had been authorised by the South African Government. Even if they had been kidnapped from Swaziland territory, and the kidnappers had included South African police, the arrest was not authorised by the South African State. Accordingly, the South African Courts had a right to try them.

Thus, on this decision, if members of the Security Police enter a foreign territory and abduct a person, bringing them back to South Africa to face charges, the Courts have the jurisdiction to try that person, illegal abduction notwithstanding, unless the accused can show that the abduction was authorised by the State. This appears to be precisely what happened in the case of Ndlovu and Nduli.

Shortly after the kidnapping of Mayisela and Mamba, a top ANC exile resident in Swaziland, Ablon Duma, was seriously injured by a parcel bomb sent to his private post-office box in Manzini. Duma is cited by the State as a co-conspirator in the current ANC trial in Pretoria (S vs Sexwale and others). This was the second attempt on his life: last year, he became suspicious of a parcel sent to him, and when police opened it, it was found to contain high explosives.

Shortly after the bomb blast, an anonymous caller telephoned a newspaper and claimed that the PAC was responsible for the parcel bomb. However, the PAC in Swaziland immediately denied this. There is a suspicious pattern in the anonymous caller syndrome. After the assassination of Rick Turner in Durban, a caller phoned a Durban Daily Paper, claiming that 'the ANC and the Black Power Movement' were responsible for Turner's murder. The ANC also denied responsibility for Turner's death, but did acknowledge involvement in other shootings in Natal. (This was not widely covered in the South African Press, although the 'anonymous caller' incriminating the ANC received front-page spreads).

Shortly after the Duma blast, Dr. Zonke Khumalo, Deputy Swazi Prime Minister said in a statement that he regretted the fact that some refugees from South Africa 'tend to pursue their subversive objectives' while in Swaziland.

A month after the Duma attack, a bullet-ridden, blood-stained vehicle belonging to him was found six km. inside Swaziland on the road to Mocambique. Swaziland sources say that the occupants of the truck were John Majola and Willie Nyoni, both South African exiles connected to the ANC. It is believed that they were returning from Mocambique at the time

of the attack, and at the time of writing, it is not known what has happened to them.

The next in a series of events occurred when Dr. Ambrose Zwane, former leader of the banned Swaziland opposition party, was arrested twice on the same day in Swaziland. Initially, he was picked up by the Swazi police for refusing to surrender his passport to the State, which had issued an order withdrawing it. After his sister had handed over the passport to the Swazi authorities, Zwane was released, only to be redetained 2 hours later.

(Note: Zwane's sister is a Mrs. Mamba. It is not known whether she is related to Caiphus Mamba, kidnapped with Victor Mayisela).

Not only is Dr. Zwane a well-known opponent of King Sobhuza's government who has spent three periods under the Swazi detention laws. He is an ex-South African, believed to be sympathetic to the ANC, and once active in ANC circles himself. A Dr. Zwane is cited as a co-conspirator in the Pretoria ANC trial. Zwane is believed to have just returned from Mocambique when he was arrested, and his passport confiscated, and is also believed to have close connections with Frelimo activists in Mocambique.

A recently released Swaziland detainee, John Walker, reports that an ANC recruit, Dumisana Manzi, 22, is being held in detention in Swaziland, after admitting to police that he had undergone military training in Moscow.

Walker also claimed that a Manzini businessman, Ambrose Simelane, who has PAC connections, is being detained in the maximum security section of Swaziland's Matsapa Prison.

There is also the case of three young ANC members, recently arrested in Swaziland. Zacharia Winfred Madela, 24, a former clerk at Baragwanath Hospital, Thamaaanqa Humphrey Makhuba, 23, and Thuthuka Dennis Hlube, 22, both ex-students of Naledi High School, Soweto, were arrested by Swazi police 5 km from the Oshoek border post leading to South Africa.

The three were charged with carrying 'weapons of war', and illegal possession of firearms, and on March 14th, were found guilty as charged. One of the accused claimed that they had been leaving South Africa, and that the weapons were for their safety if spotted by the South African Police. The Chief Magistrate of Swaziland accepted a defence contention that the three men were involved in a war in their own country (South Africa).

All three were sentenced to a years imprisonment for illegal possession of arms of war, and a further 400 days (or R400) for illegal possession of firearms.



The events detailed above are sufficient to create a strong suspicion that the Security Police and related State wings in South Africa are making a concerted attempt to smash ANC and PAC activity in Swaziland. This is not new. Neither is the suspicion that Swazi authorities are lending some sort of assistance to the S.A.P. in their efforts, which is sometimes masked behind a posture of being opposed to the present set up in South Africa. (Swazi authorities did protest very strongly to South Africa about the kidnapping of Nduli and Ndlovu). What is new is the scale and obviousness of both South African agents' activities, and the increasing assistance offered by the Swazi State in controlling the activities of South Africa's banned organisations.

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