

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ARTICLE ON WHY THE ARM MEMBERS DID WHAT THEY DID

VIGNE

-- born 1928

-- at Oxford in 1948 -- part of generation which assume that they were going to run South Africa quotes with a few afrikaners to help.

-came back to South Africa but was "totally disillusioned" about the NATS -- had some linkage with the Torch Commando.

-- joins the Liberal party in 1953.

-- was equally turned off by what he called the Communist world -- what was happening in the eastern satellites -- the new knowledge about what happened at the Moscow trials and he was particularly influenced by the book *The God That Failed* -- "terrific stuff".

-- notes that he came back to South Africa in 1949 . But decisively went back to England again in 1956 at which point he had to decide whether he was going to stay in England or go home and "get involved".

-- until that time in 56 he said he just had a lot of fun and worked with the publisher Maskew Miller and had a good social life. He was married in 1953 on the day that the Liberal party was formed.

-- on the plane going back to South Africa or rather from Johannesburg to Capetown he saw Leslie Rubin sent him a note asking to chat . Basically he seems to have said to Rubin that he was ready to get stuck in and as he says on the basis of that discussion he got involved with the Liberal party..

-- his description of the Liberal party is of interest. In Capetown he says they were sleepy, dead, ridiculous excepting for their participation in the electoral process. In particular he doesn't seem to like the more conservative members of the Liberal party at that time.

-indeed 1958 election seems to have been a turning point for him . IT'S NOT CLEAR WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED IN 1958 -- CHECK THIS HE IMPLIES THAT SOMEHOW THE GROUP THAT HE WAS A PART OF IN CAPETOWN WAS DEEPLY DISILLUSIONED AFTER THE FIFTY-EIGHT ELECTION AND DECIDED THAT MORE HAD TO BE DONE BUT WHAT EXACTLY WAS IT?

-- by 60 however it was clear that those parliamentary and extraparliamentary activities were simply giving legitimacy to the system and were pointless A. MY GUESS IS THAT AFTER FIFTY-EIGHT HIS GROUP WANTED THE PUSH TO BE PUT ON EXTRAPARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY?

-- by 60 as he says he became convinced that the regime had to be taken ON or rather attacked rather "head on".

-- the next stage is apparently that John Lang visited Capetown and Vigne seems to imply that he then invited Vigne and Eddie Daniels to the first meeting. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS A BREAK IN THE TAPE WHERE VIGNE DISCUSSES THE PERSON IS WHO CONTACTED EDDIE. THERE IS ALSO A REFERENCE TO SOME EXTRAORDINARY EVENT WHICH TOOK PLACE IN SWAZILAND AT ABOUT THIS TIME. CHECK

-- note that earlier Vigne had mentioned that after fifty-eight the arrival of Patrick Duncan was something off a tonic and help.

-tape then discusses the number of people involved in Capetown -- Vigne thought about 20. Remarks that Watson stayed with the Prager's and mar in fact have been providing training to the JHB group or perhaps getting some training from them. Vigne then discusses the Prager case which was similar to that of Rusty Bernstein in the sense that all those involved made in agreement to exonerate the latter.

--I ask about his sense of danger in doing all of this Vigne said that they were all certainly very much aware the death penalty which he believed was actually being debated and perhaps enacted at the time that they had that first meeting at Alex Cox's house. CHECK THIS

- the story of Omar is very interesting. He was caught carrying a suitcase of dynamite. The police pulled him over simply on the suspicion that a black carrying a suitcase might be a possible criminal. His hand shook so much that they pulled him in and discovered the dynamite but he maintained throughout despite solitary confinement and much torture that he had simply been carrying this case for somebody else. He was given one year and ended up with both Mandela and Sobukwe before they ended up on the island. Omar missed the minimum five-year sentence by a hair -- this also gives an idea what legislation was in place at that time.

-- he emphasizes that the organization took pride in the security measures that it took -- after all nobody knew for years who they were. He also emphasizes that much of the sabotage they carried out was simply training to see how to do it.

-- at the Johannesburg meeting there was no program adopted -- there was a general agreement on some principles. WHAT THESE WERE NOT CLEAR -- CHECK. His thinking was that the two major organizations that is the ANC and interestingly he mentions M. K. as well (the dates would be wrong as regards M. K.) and then Poqo were "closed shops". They also didn't like the way these organizations were run where the leads called the shots and simply used the members as cannon fodder. -- also they were inefficient and disorganized and untrained. The feeling was that if one had a new organization which could prove itself in the field by its actions then it would have some kind of legitimacy to provide a link between the ANC and the PAC. A highly professional and skilled organization carrying out activities would both give it some authority within the anti-apartheid movement and provide a basis for linking (or linking up with?) the two organizations. After Sharpeville there was a great deal of talk about the need for unity. In other words it would provide a basis for "getting in" and help in the formation of a united movement.

-- Vigne believes that anywhere from 20 to 30 people attended the Johannesburg meeting. His memory of who was there is a bit shaky. But he does remember that Omar was there and also maintains that Higgs was there. There does not seem to be any distrust among the people who were there. The only people who may have raised the issue of having a political program were Baruch and Rhoda Prager. -- for the rest he remembers the meeting discussing targets -- how to keep in touch and communicate and so on. There wasn't even much of the discussion -- is my impression -- about harming people -- it seems just to have been assumed that one would take every care not to do so and that sabotage against property was the main focus. -- the group was "pragmatic". What really united us was "that we were all out in the cold" -- they were outside the ANC and PAC and there was no question of the Liberal party really "ever getting anywhere".

-- Vigne makes a point that the sums of money were awfully hard to find in those days is compared to now when as he notes it seems there is lots of money for everything around. IT'S

INTERESTING THAT VIGNE CAN'T REMEMBER WHETHER THE ACCRA MONEY CAME BEFORE OR AFTER THE JOHANNESBURG MEETING. ONE THEN WONDERS WHAT IT WAS THAT JOHN LANG TOLD HIM WHEN HE CAME TO CAPETOWN IN CONNECTION WITH THE FORTHCOMING MEETING.. CHECK

-money may have been raised from some Trotskyites groups in Italy.He approached Sweden in the form of Per Westerberg who simply didn't reply.

-- the tape then goes onto a discussion of Leftwich who was apparently recruited by Rubin. Vigne discounts the story of Leftwich's collapse during the simulated solitary confinement -- it is true that he asked for a cigarette but Vigne doesn't believe that he became a sniveling wretch. It is true that he was very addicted to cigarettes and Vigne gives another anecdote. Vigne says there was little awareness of the time of Leftwich's acknowledged odd relations with his parents. Much of what is said about Leftwich is Monday morning quarterbacking according to Vigne..

-- they were supposed to resign slowly from the Liberal party -- there was a sense that it would not be honorable to involve the party and of course Alan Paton was deeply antiviolence of any kind .

-- Vigne was banned at the beginning of 63 -- he could not meet with more than two people..

-- there was some ironies when people tried to meet. Randolph remembers meeting with Leftwich and perhaps Schneider at a very secure and secluded beach outside Capetown Llandudno which was very tiny that time and very secluded and at the end of the meeting when they went back to the cars they found the Patons and Hoffenbergs having a picnic on the beach.

SIDE Two

-Vigne remembered only four actions that had been carried out. The Simons town mast -- the Ronda Bosch train action and two others but he admits that while each action got bigger than the last one -- (the first one was pretty much carried out in the cold or rather just standing up) they never got to the "stage where they had confidence to carry out an action on a big scale" . They had "endless" discussions on targets. But the problem was an absence of wherewithal -- money and explosives. Things were easier in Johannesburg where there was more dynamite because of the existence of the mines. But he emphasizes that "they were absolute beginners" "we had nothing to go on a" quotes "we had a train ourselves". They obviously could not train with "mock dynamite"

-- Vigne discusses the time that he Leftwich went to Bantry Bay to talk and Leftwich said to him "do think we should pack it in" and Vigne was a bit suspicious thinking that perhaps Leftwich wanted him to say "yes" in order to push him out off the leadership position which Vigne was suspicious that Leftwich was coveting. Later he learned that Adrian was actually quite serious about it but can't recall the time when this was. HE ASK FOR CAUTION ON THE STORY. (I then told the story of Adrian trying to push Eddie Daniels out) and Vigne remembered this story which was told him by Baruch.

-V then tells the story about how someone told him that when they were being interrogated and it may have been Daniels they were shown a picture of Vigne and his informant coming out off the safe house. Baruch must've been at that meeting because Randolph remembers the issue of Eddie being discussed. It's interesting to that Randolph says that at that point he had not met Eddie so security must have been fairly good. WHERE WAS THE SAFE HOUSE? CHECK WITH RANDOLPH AGAIN ABOUT WHETHER BARUCH WAS IN THE PICTURE OR WHETHER ADRIAN WAS IN THE PICTURE.?

-- Vigne agrees at this point that the security police were as "hopeless" as "we were " -- he then modifies the word hopeless. IT'S INTERESTING AT THIS POINT THAT THEY HAVE A PHOTO OF OF SOMEONE WHO SHOULD NOT BE SEEN PEOPLE AT ALL.

-- The context of the Leftwich story -- above -- is that it was a bad time for the organization apparently because some members were leaving particular FLip Geen who was regarded as a quite significant member of the organization. He had come to Capetown to say that he was not going to participate anymore. This was down time in the movement -there was a fear that people who left the organization might talk.. Vigne goes on to say that later on Schneider told him that in fact Adrian was trying to get control of you organization and was very ambitious. But at the meeting with Baruch both Schneider and Adrian apparently were having a go at Daniels..

-- interesting points about Schneider. He started off with the Johannesburg group. Apparently was quite influenced by David Soggot. Had an interesting escape story. Eisenstein was also apparently influenced by Soggot.

-the N. C. L. Had decided that they should stay completely unknown until "we felt we were really ready to make the big hit" and therefore there were no press releases after the actions. In fact there was some debate aabout whether some kind of symbol should be left behind after actions and this was discussed at some length. But then there was a regional meeting where Randolph was outvoted and it was decided that a general statement would be issued and Leftwich went to Johannesburg to discuss this and came back with one. Note that Leftwich apparently thought that the first statement was not radical enough and then at some point either in Johannesburg or Capetown probably the latter they radicalized the statement.

-- Adrian characterized as very very active but Randolph notes that against all the rules "he kept notes" Randolph believes that he kept a list of code names.

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