

# The Chemical Warfare Case

## The Truth Commission Files

### ***QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID REGIME AND ITS SECRET SERVICES IN EXTERNAL OPERATIONS LIKE HIT SQUADS, CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE***

Submission to the Research Department of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa

**November 1997**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA) was asked by the Research Department of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to assist in meeting TRC's mandate of developing as complete as possible a picture of gross human rights violations inside and outside South Africa in the period 1960-1994.

2. We were asked to focus on the external dimension, especially on hit squad operations in Western Europe (excluding England), e.g. Dulcie September, Godfrey Motsepe and Olaf Palme; and on South Africa's chemical and biological warfare programme, the plane crash in which Samora Machel died, and the attempted South African backed coup d'etat in the Seychelles.

3. The funding of this research has been provided by the Dutch Government via its Embassy in Pretoria in the form of grants to the TRC. One researcher of NIZA, Mr. Klaas de Jonge, has been working on all these topics during two periods of six months. The Submission draws on material held in archives available in different European countries: The Netherlands especially in the Library, Documentation and Information Centre of NIZA itself, Belgium, France, England and Sweden, and on Internet. The Submission also draws on knowledgeable people interviewed by the researcher.

### **BACKGROUND**

4. During the period 1960-1994 South African political exiles and anti-apartheid activists in the frontline states and in Europe were often subject to physical and symbolic violence from the South African Government through a series of ideological, administrative and military or paramilitary measures [see Israel, 1997]. This victimisation by the Government took several forms, from the withdrawal of citizenship, smear campaigns and spying on exiles and activists until kidnapping, attempted murder and murder.

5. Because the South African Government portrayed the African National Congress (ANC) as a communist and a terrorist organisation and its members as communist, violent and criminal, the authorities of several European countries like the United Kingdom, France and Belgium often seem to have given South African operations in their countries a 'blind eye' treatment. Sometimes certain individuals or groups within these Governments were defending the apartheid in South Africa and the apartheid regime; they were even actively cooperating.

6. Senior security police and/or military intelligence officers had been stationed at several South African Embassy's in Europe where they were allowed to do their work without much interference from the local authorities. In London some agents were even allowed to remain after their activities were exposed in the British press [Israel, 1997:14] and in Paris a high French government official did everything to harass on an official level the ANC representative Dulcie September [DSreport].

7. Whenever ANC and other political exiles were attacked or assassinated by the apartheid regime the South African Government declared that it had nothing to do with it and that the attack or killing was the consequence of an 'internal struggle' within the ANC. Here, I would like to refer to the murder of Ruth First, the murder of Dulcie September and the attack on the ANC office in Stockholm. This point of view was often rapidly taken over by the local authorities and police forces, the press and representatives of certain political parties.

8. Because of the secrecy surrounding this kind of operations the tracks of these operations are by definition covered up and the unwillingness in the past of the local authorities in other countries to invest much time and money on investigations concerning South African actions against organisations as the ANC, few of these cases were resolved. Ten years later, this becomes even more difficult.

9. In this Submission to the Research Department of the TRC I would like to concentrate on the issue of chemical and biological warfare, what we discovered and what questions still are open.

10. We consider chemical and biological weapons as weapons against humanity. South Africa signed the UN Convention against chemical weapons and the UN Convention against biological weapons. Consequently, South Africa is member of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague in The Netherlands.

11. Until a week ago, nobody in South Africa applied for amnesty for the actions we discuss here and there seems not much chance that in the near future anybody will confess. This does not count for chemical and biological warfare alone, but also for all the other issues in which NIZA did research for the TRC.

12. At the end of this Submission we will briefly summarize the reports we wrote on the other research we did, as we enumerated before.

13. We tentatively concluded that the apartheid regime's internal and external operations were part and parcel of the same global strategy, in which military and covert operations abroad served the same objectives as the internal ones: the elimination of the black opposition and its political allies.

14. Actions in neighbouring countries and overseas as outlined in this Submission were not only gross human rights violations, but also gross violations of International Law.

15. South Africa's destabilisation policies killed considerably more people outside South Africa especially in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique than inside the country.

16. This Submission provides although not always very hard prima facie evidence to follow up and to subpoena a number of individuals named in this Submission or in the more extensive research reports we submit to the TRC.

## CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

## A. BRIAN JOHN DAVEY

### THE PROBLEM

17. The South African Government has always maintained that its Chemical and Biological Weapons programme was defensive, although South Africa is a country known to possess until today 'schedule 1 chemicals': chemical products with few applications for peaceful objectives and usable as chemical weapons (Colijn: 20).

18. However, Lieutenant General Niel Knobel, the Surgeon-General of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) told a press conference in 1995 that it was a 'blatant lie' the charge that South Africa still possesses chemical and biological weapons(...): 'we destroyed all lethal, incapacitating and irritating chemical and biological agents in 1993.' (CWCB,28/6/95)

19. South Africa produced chemical weapons agents long before any other non-European country: it commenced production of chemical weapons munitions during World War II, like the NCP Chloorkop chemical plant nowadays one of the larger industrial chemical plants in Gauteng which produced mustard gas for the Allies. (Davey,ASA 1994:6)

20. South Africa claimed that the undelivered stocks were destroyed after the war. However, the production sites continued to be used for military purposes. South Africa can and does manufacture its own chemical weapons'. (ASA 1990:3; Burck:462464)

21. According to Dieter Felix Gerhardt (Letter 1111997), once a senior SADF officer 'commodore' who was sentenced for high treason in 1983 espionage for the USSR and ANC, the use of chemical agents can be divided into two basic classification. Firstly as area weapons used in conjunction with bombing or artillery as possibly used in Angola and in the Mozambique 1992 incident, and secondly as applied selectively and indirectly by special forces and the police against target persons and small groups.

22. We have to ask two questions. Firstly were the objectives of the South African Chemical and Biological Weapons programme always purely defensive? The possession of a small amount of offensive chemicals needed to test protective systems is considered to be part of defensive measures and legal under the actual UN biological and chemical weapons conventions. Secondly, if the objectives of the Chemical and Biological Weapons programme was a defensive one, have these objectives been violated in the sense that certain individuals and groups inside the South African (National) Defence Force (SADF) and within the South African Police (Services) (SAP) have used chemical and biological weapons offensively against humans? Further research to answer these questions seems meaningful, as we will show in this Submission.

23. One of Dieter Felix Gerhardt's responsibilities was to look at South Africa's chemical and biological warfare capacity. According to him the the chemical and biological weapons programme was apart from small scale operations of a very selective nature defensive up to the time of his arrest in 1983.

24. The use of chemical weapons against South Africa's enemies in the frontline states, however, was seriously considered, for instance by the Director of Strategic planning, the then Brigadier later Major General Jan Huyser. He was keen to go and spread this gas in Angola, to wipe out.

25. Through contacts of WASAG Chemie in Germany offers were made for undertaking 'turn key' projects to erect insecticide plants able to be converted to nerve gas production on a large scale. The top secret programme proposals were very contentious and it was possible by selective (mis)direction of the files by Gerhardt to prevent implementation until at least 1983.

26. On the other hand the nuclear weapon build programme was at that time in full swing. A person who fought tooth and nail against implementation of the use of chemical weapons and 'turn key' projects was Dr. Jean de Villiers, Head of the Chemical Defence Unit, an expert who controlled the defensive chemical warfare aspects and who was quite capable of setting up nerve gas production on a large scale, even without assistance from abroad.
27. The political implications of these weapons were so serious that Gerhardt and De Villiers did not want to embark on it. Brigadier Huyser has said according to Gerhardt 'well we can do it covertly.'
28. On the biological side there were two places where the biological weapon capability was established and where they (the South African Defence Force) had very special facilities to produce biological weapons, one was the Institute of Virology in Johannesburg and the other was the Veterinary Station at Onderstepoort near Pretoria.
29. According to Gerhardt they were as far as he is aware: plenty of talk but no action never deployed, at least until 1983. There was a fear that matters would run out of control damaging the National Party's own resource base.
30. In Gerhardt's opinion P.W. Botha, Minister of Defence, later Prime Minister and President, implemented very brutal policies: 'they had this concept of total war' and 'he went for the situation as hard as he could.'
31. 'Botha used every technique that was available to him, including things like Lothar Neethling's poisoning activities. That was chicken feed to them compared to the real killings that went on in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the middle of the late seventies, under the umbrella project 'Alcora', the joint Portuguese, Rhodesian and South African operations project.
32. Various 'dirty trick' poisoning operations were carried out using very sophisticated chemical agents, developed in amongst other places the forensic Laboratories in Visagie Street, Pretoria, under the control of Major General Dr. Lothar Neethling (nicknamed Mengele).
33. Uniforms and other material like sweat shirts were soaked in poisons and with false flag distributions taken up by Frelimo, Zapu and Zanu cadres leading to the latter's deaths. This made thousands of victims. It was done by a special unit. (reference the memoirs of the former Rhodesian Head of Secret Intelligence Services, Ken Flower).
34. Neethling's laboratory was part of the police, but there was informal contact between all (SADF and SAP) the laboratories (Letter, Braam).

## FACTS AND INDICATIONS

35. The South African chemical and biological weapons programme also called Project B; Project Coast was initiated because it was believed or convenient to believe that the MPLA Government of Angola had used chemical weapons during its war against the South African backed troops of UNITA.
36. Lieutenant General Niel Knobel, the Surgeon General of the South African Medical Services (established in July 1979) said in an interview with Argus that the research project on chemical warfare started in the late 1970s (TRCVilla:point 1).
37. It was the Belgian toxicologist Aubain Heyndrickx, who was the first one to carry out frequent

private investigations of chemical and toxin use in Angola and who reported the use of nerve gas and later also of mustard gas against UNITA.

38. There was cast doubts on the value of Heyndrickx' research findings in Angola, because his research was done in collaboration with a clinic staffed by SADF personnel and also because of the nonscientific manner he was working.

39. In 1995 Heyndrickx was convicted of fraud: he had falsified laboratory analysis data and swindled the Belgian National Health Service out of millions of francs. Heyndrickx' probably also falsified Angolareports were used by South African to develop rapidly her own chemical and biological warfare project.

40. Recently it has been established that Heyndrickx had contacts with Dr. Brigadier Wouter Basson head of the Medical Battalion Group, called 7Med or Sevmed of the South African Medical Services (SAMS). It has also been alleged that Heyndrickx in the past had sold 'Chemical Agent Monitors' (CAM's) to the South African Defence Force (SADF), which he had bought from Graseby Ionocs in he United Kingdom (UK) and which couldnot be exported out of NATOcountries. (Knack:28/2/90; MSR Nieuws:8/6/95; Van de Sompel (Army Talk 13 & 14/10/97)

41. During the wars in Southern Africa especially in Angola and Mozambique several allegations were made of the use of chemical weapons. In Angola, not only UNITA, but also the MPLA Government made these allegations. In Mozambique the FRELIMO Government alleged that RENAMO forces had used chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons has always been categorically denied by all parties.

42. Because neither Angola nor Mozambique were states which had achieved chemical warfare capabilities, the supplies of chemical weapons agents could only come from the Soviet Union and/or South Africa. One believed that South Africa also 'may have possessed' an offensive chemical warfare capability. CBurck:450468; CWCB)

43. Besides in Heyndrickx' studies, no serious independent scientific mission has found until now conclusive evidence of the use of chemical weapons in Southern Africa as shows for example the interesting case of a alleged attack in Mozambique by Renamo (read South Africa).

44. The South African military supplied Renamo and kept a firm grip over it, although perhaps less in 1992 than before (see Vines:1731). But Renamo forces could, in our opinion, never obtain and use chemical weapons in a clash with Frelimo troops as the Mozambican Government claimed (CWCB,22/1/92) without a direct involvement of South African chemical and biological weapons specialists and special forces.

## THE MOZAMBICAN 1992 INCIDENT

45. This incident took place on 16 January 1992 when Mozambican Government forces three commando companies and one company of provincial troops, approximately 300 to 400 soldiers were attacking one of the largest Renamo strongholds in southern Mozambique (Ngungwe), very close to the South African border.

46. As they approached the camp on foot in box formation one company forming each side of the box a white jeep type vehicle was seen in the vicinity of the camp. At about this time, also an unidentified light aircraft was seen flying above the area. The troops passed into the recently deserted Renamo base. They left the base again and a few kilometres away they came under

limited smallarms fire, not more than 15 shots. They took cover and then an explosion occurred overhead within the outline of the box between 150 and 250 feet above their heads, releasing a dense cloud of black smoke which then dissipated. The wind was blowing towards the rear of the formation.

47. After 15 minutes the first complaints occurred: 'It became very hot. Some of us were going crazy', told Second Lieutenant Joaquim Jonassa. He said they felt severe chest pains, were tired and thirsty, and when they drank water the next morning some of them vomited. Others said they had difficulty seeing. (Guardian 28/1/92). As a consequence a considerable disorganization of the troops occurred.

48. The UN Report on this incident concluded:

- \* that the effect (of the reported attack) on the troops was consistent with the use of a chemical warfare agent and also with severe heat stress;

- \* that in the absence of analytical data, they could not conclude that a chemical warfare agent was used in the attack;

- \* that because a considerable delay occurred between the attack (16 January 1992) and the investigation (23-27 March 1992) it might not be possible to detect traces of agent if a chemical warfare agent has been used in the attack.

(UN Report, points 3537)

49. The offsite laboratory analysis of samples taken, indeed did not show traces of chemical weapons (UN Report: Appendix III, IV & V).

## TESTING OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS ON MOZAMBICAN SOLDIERS?

50. We think that there remains a fair possibility that the above incident was, however, an example of the testing of chemical weapons in a combat situation against foreign soldiers as part of South Africa's chemical and biological weapons programme.

51. If so, it would have been a clear example of violation of international law and of human rights because of the fact that a chemical weapon was offensively used against humans during an attack in which at least four soldiers were reported dead and transported to Maputo, two were wounded during uncontrolled shooting, allegedly as a consequence of the disorientation experienced; 28 had to be admitted to Maputo Military hospital and 38 were reported missing.

52. We do think that there is a fair possibility that the Mozambican incident in 1992 is an example of the testing of chemical weapons in a combat situation against foreign soldiers because:

53. Only one single explosion was heard, so probably only one artillery or mortar shell or self destructing rocket was fired, which would be normal for a test situation. In a nontest situation, during a conventional or chemical attack normally a salvo of several rounds would be fired over a short period, which did not happen. (UN Report, point 27)

54. The UN report (point 27) reported that no followup attack occurred after this single explosion, despite the considerable disorganization of the Frelimo troops which resulted. It is seen as somewhat 'unusual', but the report does not speculate on the causes. The observers and the

Renamo troops must have been aware of what happened, but they did not make use of this situation by counterattacking. Why did they hold back? Could it be that it was because of the zone would be contaminated by the use of a chemical weapon?

55. The presence of a light aeroplane above the area and that of a white jeep-type vehicle near the campsite points in the same direction: preparation, organization and observation of the incident.

56. According to an informant of the South African Defence Force (SADF), an officer who claimed to have been involved in setting up a 'Chemical and Biological Unit' told him (beginning 1980s), that the 'SADF was developing a 155mm artillery shell which has two compartments containing clear liquid chemicals..... The two chemicals mix when the shell is in flight and when it explodes the effect is deadly'. According to the officer a lot of the research for the weapon was carried out at the Institute for Aviation Medicine, previously known as the Military Medical Institute, in Pretoria.' This description of the artillery shell fits only one type of weapon: that of a 'binary nerve gas projectile', the most advanced chemical weapon available at that time. (Feature:12)

57. This means that South Africa could do such a test with nerve gases like VX or another chemical agent if the Government thought it necessary...

58. The troops had never seen a similar explosion before and it did not produce alarm (UN Report, point 9), to be expected in the case of a chemical attack, which had never occurred before.

59. 'Severe heat stress' as a consequence of the weather conditions seems unlikely. The weather was sunny and described as normal for the time of the year. (UN Report:point 9) The commando's were experienced troops and the attack, which begun at daybreak had only just started when the explosion occurred. That means in our opinion that the effect of this attack on the troops was in all probability more consistent with the use of a chemical warfare agent...

60. The chemical agents most likely to be used in a South African projectile would be a lethal agent like VX or one of the other highly toxic nerve gases (as Sarin) which causes the nervous system to lose control. They all effect the body in the same manner. (Jane's NBC:15)

61. According to specialists, 'the number and severity of symptoms which appear are dependent on the quantity and rate of entry of the nerve agent which is introduced into the body. These symptoms, in normal order of appearance are: running nose, tightness of chest, dimness of vision and pinpointing of the eye pupils, difficulty in breathing, drooling and excessive sweating, nausea, vomiting, cramps, involuntary defecation and urination, twitching, jerking and staggering, headache, confusion, drowsiness, coma and convulsion. These symptoms are followed by cessation of breathing and death.'" (Jane's NBC:14)

62. If one wonders about the low reported number of casualties, it should be noted that out of approximately 5.000 people affected by the 'Aun Shinryko' Sarin attack on the Tokyo metro station in March 1995, only 12 people ultimately died. The reasons for the rather low number of fatalities in Japan are probably the incomplete mixing of agent, a low level of agent purity and a quick medical attention for the victims. (personal communication chemical and biological weapons expert)

63. This last factor was certainly different in our case, but in Mozambique the alleged attack took place in the open air during a sunny day, while the wind was blowing, conditions which also could limit the number of fatalities.

64. A conventional bomb, shell or rocket would probably have made more victims, but a chemical weapon is also a psychological weapon, as Brian John Davey mentioned (Problems:3,4): 'chemical warfare has emerged as an effective means of waging large scale psychological warfare. People

experience an inherent horror associated with gassing and poisoning.'

65. But would a nerve agent still be the most probably chemical agent to be used in 1992? Dieter Felix Gerhardt doubts it: '(although) it was possible that chemical warfare could have been deployed then (...) I doubt if the South African authorities would have felt the need or taken the risk to deploy in an area such as Mozambique weapons with a chemical nerve gas base as late as 1992.' (Letter)

66. The South African expert Brian John Davey (ASA 926:11) mentioned in his article 'The experience of chemical weapons in Southern Africa' that in the case of Mozambique some investigators considered 'the possibility of the use of an incapacitating agent such as BZ or a related compound.

67. According to Jane's (NBC:18) the incapacitating agents suggest employment where military necessity requires control of a situation, but where there is good reason for not harming the surrounding population or even troops. They also suggest covert uses either to confuse defence or retaliatory forces, or to affect the rationality of an important leadership group at some particularly crucial point'

68. Unlike the nerve agents they can produce purely temporary effects without permanent damage and to be lethal the dose must be very high (Piller:247,table 2A). General symptoms from agent BZ are: interference with ordinary activity, dry, flushed skin, abnormally rapid beating of the heart, urinary retention, constipation, slowing of mental and physical activity, headache, giddiness, sometimes maniacal behaviour and an increase in body temperature. These symptoms may also vary widely from individual to individual.

69. At the start of the 1990s the use of some kind of incapacitating agent seems to be more likely, but in case South Africans would be quite sure to get away with it, they could also decide to deploy a nerve agent. Anyway, both of the above agents are 'weapon standard' agents falling under the Chemical Weapons Convention, especially if offensively used and leading to fatalities.

70. Because destabilisation of the frontline states was still undertaken, a test with a nerve gas, BZ or a related compound would serve a double purpose: firstly, it would help Renamo to keep military control over the area, important in a period just before the military and ceasefire discussions between Frelimo Government and Renamo would take place (Vines:137). Secondly, this very limited attack could serve as a test for future deployment of this gas during the turbulent times of the run up to the South African elections, if the internal situation would get out of hand.

71. The affected Frelimosoldiers described several of the above mentioned symptoms: just after the attack a feeling of tremendous heat, a severe thirst, dry mouth and sore throat. Chest pains were reported. Some experienced profound muscular weakness within one hour, in other soldiers it was delayed for several hours. It prevented casualties from walking. In some casualties lethargy occurred after several days. Visual disturbances were common and lasted for several days. Confusion, disorientation, emotional lability and irrational behaviour occurred early in some casualties. Confused behaviour continued for several days. After the explosion, some casualties had difficulty hearing and some complained of a ringing sensation in their ears. Early deaths, within one or two hours, were reported, as were casualties suddenly falling to the ground and dying, while trying to walk out of the area. Constipation was relatively common. Skin lesions were not reported, neither convulsions. (UN Report:points 1120)

72. There is one statement (Umtata) which couldnot be confirmed independently by an exRenamo member, named Vitorino Fernandes, who had surrendered after Government soldiers attacked a rebel base at Maxixi, southern Maputo Province on 22 January 1992 who told that 50 especially trained Renamo soldiers had arrived there the day before, carrying poison filled bullets and oxygen

masks. The men came from Ngungwe base near the South African border, and said they were trained at Phalaborwa camp in the South African Transvaal province... Could it be that protection equipment had been present in the Ngungwe base the same Renamo stronghold where the alleged chemical attack took place to protect Renamo soldiers during this 'fieldtest'?

73. According to a TRC document (TRCVilla:point 15) Protechnik had been called in to investigate the allegation of chemical warfare. Other sources mentioned that the SADF sent a medical team to Mozambique (perhaps 7Med or/and the same ones from Protechnik?) on 22 January to investigate claims that several soldiers had been killed and others injured in this chemical weapons attack. They interviewed patients, did postmortem examinations and took away biological samples from patients and corpses for later analysis in South Africa. They concluded that they could not confirm the allegation from the evidence found. (Mozambique; SADF; Brian Davey, ASA 926:11/12 & Allegations:8)

74. Why would Mozambique invite, of all people, South African military and civilian medical doctors to do this investigation? Did they perhaps offer their services themselves? Only later (28/1/92) the Mozambican Government issued an appeal to all countries and NGO's for assistance to determine the nature the weapon allegedly used. (CWCB:28/1/92)

75. Today we know that Protechnik, officially specialised in protection technologies and the detection of hazardous substances (Pr.Labs SA, ASA 944), was at the time a SADF front company of South Africa's chemical and biological weapons programme. At that time Mr. Jan Lourens (Coleman:4; Industria) was still the director of Protechnik. Lourens was (former?) member of South African Medical Services (SAMS) and Special Forces, a man with a notorious record. (TRCList: 6)

76. In our opinion South Africa would never confirm the use of chemical weapons nor by its 'client' Renamo, neither by itself. Even in the case that their data proved otherwise (see also the Heyndrickx case).

77. A more plausible explanation for their investigation seems to us that these chemical and biological weapons expert linked to the SADF and the first to arrive officially in Mozambique would try everything to erase any possible traces of such an attack.

78. The South African expert Dr. Brian John Davey mentioned in his article 'The experience of chemical warfare in Southern Africa' (ASA 926:11) that 'the only concrete evidence available at the end of the (Mozambique) investigation was the reported experiences of the patients'. If so, it would not be too difficult for these first South African specialists present to make sure that the remembered experiences would be reported in such a confused and varied way, that they would not support the allegation that chemical weapons were used.

79. The prologue of the article 'Interviews during investigations into alleged use of chemical weapons' (ASA 944:1) written by the same Dr. Brian John Davey mentions that he conducted an investigation into this matter in Mozambique. Therefore, Davey probably took part in this official South African mission (and not in subsequent Swedish, British and UN investigations) or/and perhaps in another not yet known field study.

80. One South African doctor (name unknown) with knowledge about this case, would brief the UN team on the last day of their visit (27/3/92) (UN Report:12). His report was later made available to the UN team during its stay in Geneva (UN Report:5). Where are the results of these investigations? Who was this unknown doctor (perhaps Dr. Davey?) and what was said during this briefing?

81. The incident happened in a combat area close to the South African border (Kruger Park, an

area frequently used by the SADF during undercover operations in Mozambique). The duration of effectiveness of an attack with chemical agents depends upon munitions used and the weather. Even a nerve agent does not persist longer than one to two days under average weather conditions. (Jane's NBC:14)

82. So, it must have been possible for a team of researchers of South Africa's Chemical and Biological Weapons programme coming from the Kruger Park to carry out thorough investigations on the site, just after the incident, without any knowledge of it either by the Mozambican Government, nor by nonauthorised South Africans. If necessary there would be ample time to clean and decontaminate the area before others would arrive: destroy the traces of the shell, remove any bodies left behind and collect samples for chemical analysis in a SADF laboratory. This could be done as a part of Protechnik's normal operational testing and decontamination activities as this company presented itself as having expertise in 'decontamination' and 'waste disposal' in the difficult climate and terrain of Southern Africa. (Industry & Coleman: 4). Because of the season the rains could have taken care of the rest.

83. The UN team which visited the site much later, spent only a limited time there, owing to reports of enemy activity in the area. According to a TRC document (TRCVilla:point 8) Dr. Wouter Basson visited the Kruger Park in 1992 with some Americans and the Special Forces also involved. What were they discussing with Basson? Why was Special Forces involved? And, why were the Americans visiting the Kruger Park? Could it have something to do with the Mozambique incident?

84. From the beginning there were also uncertainties about the location of the site: Dr. Brian John Davey in his article 'The experience of chemical warfare in Southern Africa' (ASA 926:12) wrote: 'Joint attempts between Mozambique and South African officials to locate the exact area (January 1992) of the incident were unsuccessful, and no early environmental samples could be taken' during the mission led by South African experts to assist the Mozambican Government in their investigations (...). No wonder, in our opinion...

85. Two months later the UN team (27/3/92) would make a short study visit to the presumed site of the attack, identified by two soldiers who said they had been present. The site visited was further south than anticipated by this team. (UN Report: point 2831)

86. A further study of specifically this case could help us to answer the question if the objectives of the South African Chemical Biological Weapons programme were always purely defensive or not. We ask the TRC to invite former personnel of Protechnik, Mr. Jan Lourens and Dr. Brian John Davey, who is actually Head of 'Health and Safety' at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (PTS/OPCW) in The Hague (The Netherlands) to present a Submission about their involvement in this Mozambican 1992 incident. Why was Protechnik and/or SADF medical doctors called to investigate the incident? Who was there, what did they do, and where are the documents related to the investigation?

87. Until now there is not real hard evidence that nerve gas, BZ or other chemical agents were used by the South African forces during the wars in Southern Africa. In the case of the Mozambique incident we are missing reliable physical tests of the victims and of the site. In the majority of cases of alleged use of chemical weapons one does not have conclusive proof.

88. But based on more knowledge about the South African Chemical and Biological programme than was available in 1992, we think, that there exists enough circumstantial evidence to state, that the 1992 Mozambique incident was probably an example of the testing of chemical weapons on foreign soldiers.

89. We request the TRC to investigate this incident further, especially concerning the role of the

above mentioned persons: Mr. Jan Lourens, Dr. Brian John Davey and Dr. Wouter Basson.

## THE USE OF POISONS BY SPECIAL FORCES AND THE POLICY AGAINST TARGET PERSONS AND SMALL GROUPS

90. Lately evidence mounted that chemical and biological weapons had indeed an offensive side, as part of an official policy or not. This indicates a gross human rights' violation as defined by international agreements and law, as can be shown from the following points:

- \* evidence of research on poisons and other chemicals used against antiapartheid activists as the nerve gas poisoning of Rev. Frank Chikane and others; see also the case of Conny Braam);
- \* the designing of knockout drops' for political attacks (see later);
- \* the distribution of Mandrax tablets to rioting students in black townships;
- \* claims of research on infertility drugs that targeted the Black population;
- \* the huge sums spend to buy 'sensitive chemicals'.

91. Further study of these chemical and biological weapons related facts will show that human rights' violations were committed under this programme as we will illustrate in the case of 'Conny Braam', victim of a murder attempt by poison. Also we show that further investigation of all the person and companies involved in the research, development and application of the Chemical Biological Weapons programme is necessary.

## GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES

### THE BASSON GROUP

(TRCdocuments; several newspaper articles)

92. The Chemical and Biological Weapons programma was founded and directed in the beginning of the 1980s by Dr. Brigadier Wouter Basson, Head of the Medical Battalion Group (called 7Med or Sevmed) of the South African Medical Services (SAMS). This unit was in constant interaction with the Special Forces, of which Basson was a member himself. At least until 1995 Basson has been active in the chemical and biological weapons field, because in March of that same year he was still one of South African Government officials who held international talks on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Basson).

93. Other former officers of these same units SAMS and/or 7Med were at least since 1992 active on the international level, like Dr. Brian John Davey, Mr. Jan Lourens (see several ASA Newsletters since 1992) and Davey still is.

94. Even though the 'Health and Human Rights Project' alleged that health personnel of SAMS had been involved in the torture and 'turning' of captured Swapo guerillas, the 'fame' of SAMS' 7Med was even worse, allegedly being involved in manufacturing and handling of drugs and poisons for operational use against antiapartheid activists.

95. It was the 1992 report by General Pierre Steyn (TRCSteyn) which identified Basson not only as the Head of this Chemical and Biological Weapons programme, but implicated him also in many third force operations. He seemed to have been involved in assassination and elimination actions together with Dr. Philip Mijburg and Jan Lourens for many years, sometimes in cooperation with East Rand Murder & Robbery Squad and with former SAP forensic chief Lieutenant General Lothar Neethling. The SA Defense Force's elite special forces were often supporting the police, especially in internal operations. (TruthGen.) Basson has been involved in several front companies. (TRCList)

96. Because these alleged atrocities were done not only by Dr. Basson but by a whole team of scientists, it seems to be important to know who belonged to this team. Several names of persons and companies reappear over and over again (TRCList/NIZA/Villa/Steyn), like:

\* Dr. Philip A. Mijburg doctor/general practitioner; SAMS/ 7Med allegedly involved in assassination; close to Basson; Director of Medchem Consolidated Investments, Delta G. Scientific, Protechnik and Lifestyle Management;

\* Dr. Wynand Swanepoel nonpractising dentist, Commander Special Forces allegedly carried out elimination actions with Basson and Lourens; Director Roodepoort Research Laboratories/ RSL;

\* Dr. Deon Erasmus, Special Forces operator; SAMS; second in command of 'die Organisasie';

\* Johannes Jacobus Koortzen, clinical psychologist; Special Forces; research with Mijburg and Basson; and

\* Jan Lourens, SAMS; Special Forces; Director of Protechnik; allegedly carried out elimination actions for the SADF together with Mijburg and Basson).

97. All the above mentioned companies were SADF front companies which formed part of Project Coast, as DeltaG Scientific, RSL and others also believed to have been connected to covert operations, like Medchem Consolidated Investments, Protechnik Laboratories and Lifestyle Management.

98. A small group around Dr. Wouter Basson, seems to have been active, whose members occupied key functions in the different companies and who had in general a Special Forces and/or SAMS background. It has been alleged that this group (also called 'die Organisasie') which carried out elimination actions for the SADF, consisted of a conglomerate of doctors, vets and chemists which operated covertly through the above mentioned companies. Also involved were the above mentioned Lieutenant General Lothar Neethling, Johan Theron (ex Special Forces) and John Truter (financial consultant in close contact to Basson).

## LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT AND DR. BRIAN JOHN DAVE

99. For our research Lifestyle Management (Pty) Ltd. at Lyttleton is of importance. This company was founded in 1990 and allegedly specialised in biogenetics and doing secret research for Armscor/Denel. Its directors were the above mentioned Johannes Jacobus Koortzen and Philip A. Mijburg. A third Director was Dr. Brian John Davey. A former Director was Catherina du Plessis and some other persons involved in Lifestyle Management were Dr. H.G.van Zyl, Deon van Zyl and Dr. Cilliers. (TRCList:10)

100. Although biotechnology including so called genetic engineering has been revolutionising medicine and agriculture in recent years, the possibility exists of its misuse for political ends, for

clandestine production and refinement of biological weapons, and for future development of weapons of mass extermination which could be used for genocide. (Bartfai:293)

101. Since 1978 there have been rumours and several allegations that South Africa was doing research on bioweapons that could target the Black population (Feature:1517; Osborne). According to Gerhardt (Letter) the biological weapon capability was established at the Institute of Virology in Johannesburg and the Veterinary Station at Onderstepoort near Pretoria. They had very special facilities with which they could produce biological weapons but until 1983 these were never deployed.

102. Basson during cross-examination cited the benefits of chemical and biological warfare, saying that any weapon that reduces the fighting capabilities of an enemy would be worthwhile to develop (Leklem:373). Therefore, there is a serious possibility that research and development of biological weapons also continued.

103. We know of South Africa's genetic engineering expertise through a project at Roodeplaat which developed an vicious wolf dog (the 'boerbul') to track down insurgents and guard the country's segregated farms and suburbs.

104. But it is not impossible that other research was done and if Lifestyle Management allegedly a front company of the SADF was implicated in this kind of research, further investigations of this company and of all the persons involved seems us to be imperative. Especially because of the past of at least two of its Directors Koortzen and Mijburg.

105. However, also the third Director, Dr. Brian John Davey has a profile that seems to be identical to that of many persons of the Basson group, namely that of a medical doctor and an Officer of 7Med linked to chemical and biological warfare and/or a member of the Special Forces himself or in constant interaction with them. (TRCList:115)

106. Brian John Davey (CV) is a Medical Doctor by training with PostGraduate qualifications in experimental Physiology and Occupational Health, who during his Military Service had been the medical project officer for chemical defence.

107. In his (short) CV from 1994 Davey did not mention that he had been a founding Director of Lifestyle Management and of the 'Institute of Environmental Physiology' as is mentioned in a newsletter (ASA 926:13). Why not? Because the first of these companies has allegedly been linked to the chemical and biological weapons project and to Basson? (TRCList:1,0)

108. Although Brian John Davey does not mention that he was once a member of 7Med himself, we can presume that he must have been, because according to an article of his own hand 'The South African Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense School' (ASA 926:5) the defensive Chemical and Biological Weapons project was linked to the the Medical Battalion Group (7Med) which provided special medical support for unconventional operations (Special Forces operations).

109. As an officer of this 7Med he must have taken part in their operations in the field, in addition to doing research. His frequent visits to war zones in Angola at least two times (DaveyAllegations:1,3) and once to Mozambique (DaveyASA 944:1) point in the same direction. In these two countries and also in Iraq, Brian John Davey did 'numerous investigations' of alleged chemical weapons use.

110. Brian John Davey probably was also linked to the Chemical and Biological Weapons school established at the 7Med. This school's primary task was the basic defensive chemical and biological weapons training of the troops being deployed in operational areas (as Angola). One of its other tasks was to remain in close contact with the operational units for operational research, and to act

as an expert advice centre. The school implemented also a project aimed at producing an urban chemical incident response ability, capable of effective response to hazardous materials incidents (as industrial chemical accidents).

111. Brian John Davey has been Founding and Research Director of Lifestyle Management Ltd. (ASA 923:15 & 926:13) where his two codirectors were former Special Forces members Koortzen (psychologist) and Mijburg (medical doctor) both belonging to the Bassongroup and the last one implicated in elimination actions for the SADF (TRCList:2,3,5).

112. Brian John Davey also knew Jan Lourens, when the latter was still the Management Director of Protechnik Laboratories in Randberg, another SAMS & Special Forces member implicated in elimination actions. (TRCList: 6; ASA 923:15)

113. Like Basson, Brian John Davey represented his Government on an international level. At least since 1992 he has been a member of the South African Delegation at the Geneva Chemical Weapons Convention talks, at Chemical Weapons Convention related conferences and congresses, and during an extensive visit to professional counterparts in the USA. He also participated in the expert work group on Health and Safety in The Hague and he has been a Special Advisor to LieutenantGeneral Niel Knobel, the Surgeon General of the South African Medical Service (SAMS). (DaveyCV)

114. Brian John Davey is according to the ASA Newsletter seen as one of the world's most experienced chemical weapons investigators. He participated in several symposiums on chemical and biological weapons defence at which he seems to be one of the most respected writers and speakers.

115. Since 1 April 1995 Brian John Davey has a very important function at the PTS/OPCW in The Hague (The Netherlands) as Head of 'Health and Safety' (Focal). He is married (with Ann) and has twin boys. The family lives in The Hague. (Eagles). Davey's phonenumber at the OPCW is: +31.71.376 1775.

## CONCLUSIONS

116. There is strong, although circumstantial evidence that chemical weapons were used by the apartheid regime in the case of the 1992 Mozambique incident.

117. Because of his actual responsible function at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, we request the TRC to invite Dr. Brian John Davey to present a Submission about his activities as a medical project officer for chemical defence, especially concerning the 1992 Mozambique incident; as a Research Director of Lifestyle Management Ltd., and about his knowledge of the activities of his former colleagues as Mijburg, Lourens and Basson who were allegedly involved in criminal activities, violating in the past the very same conventions Davey has now to implement.

118. We do request the TRC to investigate the role of Protechnik and of its Director Mr. Jan Lourens in the 1992 Mozambique incident.

119. We also ask the TRC to invite LieutenantGeneral Niel Knobel, the Surgeon General of the South African Medical Services (SAMS) and until today South Africa's representative at the OPCW to disclose the particulars of the above mentioned affairs: especially of the 1992Mozambique incident, the role of Protechnik in it and of all the personnel involved. Niel Knobel, under which

Basson's Chemical and Biological Weapons programme fell, must certainly have had full knowledge of the several Chemical and Biological Weapons projects and activities carried out.

120. Most -if not all- of South African CBW legal and technical specialists are whites who were once working for the apartheid-regime. This is understandable, the ANC had no knowledge in this field. But on account of this background, it would be advisable that if these specialists are still working in this field and especially if they possess executive functions in international organisations as the OPCW (note\*1) and others, that the history of these persons is brought into the open! We ask the TRC to look into this.

121. Finally, we request the TRC to refuse to grant any amnesty to the South Africans named in this Submission, or to any others uncovered during further investigation, unless they have cooperated fully with the investigation.

## B. THE CASE OF 'CONNY BRAAM'

### THE CONTEXT

122. As we mentioned before, evidence has mounted that the chemical and biological weapons had indeed an offensive side, a clear gross violation of human rights. Research was done on poisons and other chemicals, which were used against anti-apartheid activists. Some evidence concerning this type of crime activities is based on the following reported incidents.

123. One of the first reported attempts to use poisons against anti-apartheid activists happened in 1978, when an acid-impregnated T-shirt was sent through the post to Mary, daughter of Donald Woods, the then editor of the Daily Dispatch who was actively crusading to bring the men responsible for the death in detention of Steve Biko to justice. Mr. Woods who asked a former security police officer to investigate the matter, blamed the security police for this attack. (Laurence)

124. In 1981 the ANC-aligned teacher Joe Pillay was abducted from Swaziland. He had been taken according to Coetzee to an observatory in Klapperkop Fort near Pretoria, where there was an underground bunker, four VIP houses and an ultraluxurious conference room. Major Kallie Steyn (MI) and Colonel Andy Taylor of Natal Security Branch had interrogated Pillay. Steyn brought an army doctor who administered 'truth serum' to Pillay. Pillay was kept in a state of semiconsciousness, where he just could not gain control over his thoughts. When it emerged Pillay was not as thought a senior member of the ANC Natal machinery, he was smuggled back to Swaziland. (TRCPillay)

125. Sipiwe Mtimkulu and Topsy Madaka were stopped by Security policeman near the Holiday Inn, Port Elizabeth, and taken to the disused police station at Post Chalmers in the Cradock district. There they were apparently interrogated, given drinks spiked with sedatives (VW 1/12/89 mentions that 'thallium' had been given), carried outside and each was shot in the head by a different applicant. Their bodies were placed on a wood pyre and burnt for about six hours. The remaining fragments of bone were thrown into the Fish River (...) (TRC Presentation)

126. The PEBCO Three. In broad outline, the information supplied on the abduction of the PEBCO Three is similar to what has already been published previously: that they were abducted from the Port Elizabeth Airport and taken to Post Chalmers police station outside 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 (...). (TRCPresentation)

127. Captain Dirk Coetzee former Vlakplaas commander told the TRC's amnesty committee that it had been decided to kill the student activist Gonisiswe Kondile after he sustained brain damage while in detention at Jeffreys Bay police station in the Eastern Cape in 1989.

MajorGeneral Nic van Rensburg of the Port Elizabeth security branch wanted to avoid a second Steve Biko case. Kondile was taken to a spot ten kilometres outside Komatipoort by Van Rensburg and several other policemen, where they met up with Coetzee and Kamatipoort Security Branch commander Major Archie Flemmington. There, Kondile was given a drink containing knockout drops before being shot in the head by one of Flemmington's men armed with a silenced Makarov pistol. Coetzee claimed that he obtained these knockout drops from police forensic laboratory head General Lothar Neethling. The policemen disposed of Kondile's body by burning it on a pyre of wood and tyres for more than seven hours. 'While that happened we were drinking and having a braai next to the fire. (...)' Coetzee said (TRCCoetzee).

128. Mid1983 Renamo's first SecretaryGeneral, Orlando Cristina was murdered. Evo Fernandes, with South African backing, was able to take over the position of SecretaryGeneral of Renamo. This murder is believed by some commentators, including Renamo spokespeople, to have been orchestrated by MID, who were concerned that Cristina was becoming too independentminded over the running and objectives of Renamo (Vines: 21).

129. The East Rand Murder and Robbery Unit investigated this murder. According to a TRC Document (TRCList:1,2,3) Dr. Wouter Basson, Dr. Philip Mijburg and Dr. Wynand Swanepoel, who worked together with this Murder and Robbery Unit, were involved in the assassination of Cristina. The South African authorities attempted to hush up the murder by claiming Cristina was in a Pretoria flat, not at a training camp and simultaneously issuing to the Press Editors a "D" notice, banning any mention of the circumstances of his death. [Vines: 166 note 42].

130. Captain Dirk Coetzee accounted also of his visits to Neethling's office and house to obtain poison to assassinate the unreliable Askari turned ANC member Peter Dhlamini and uncooperative ANC member Vusi Mavuso. Neethling supplied the poison, which was administered, but did not work. When the poison failed to take effect Captain Koos Vermeulen shot the two. (Evans)

131. Leslie Lesia [Garson; Lesia] testified January 1991 that he was recruited by South African military intelligence (MI) in October 1986 and provided with poisons and poisoned liquor to eliminate ANC officials in the neighbouring states (Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe). He also received detonators and explosive television sets. He had been instructed by his handlers which he knew under the names of Mr. Brown and Mr. Becker to spill poison, by means of a ring, into the drinks of ANC officials when he got the opportunity, or if possible to inject his victim.

132. There were two types of poison, one was clear and the other was yellowish in colour. The vodka contained the clear poison. The small glass bottles with an aluminium and rubber top, fit to take a syringe, contained the yellowish liquid. He was told that the poison was untraceable by a doctor and fatal, but that it would take approximately one to two weeks to kill a person. He was also told to concentrate on senior ANC officials. Lesia received a training in the poisons and the explosive devices. He had supplied a case of poisoned Castle beer to the Russian Embassy in Gaborone (Botswana) in November 1986. In Mozambique, he had used a poisoned can of Castle for the murder of ANC member Gibson Ncube (Maputo).

133. His contactman, Mr. Becker had once (January 1987) pointed out somebody to him at the Jan Smuts Holiday Inn, saying that is was the boss of the police, General Neethling who is helping us with the stuff (the poison).

134. At one time Lesia collected some of this poison liquor one case of brandy, one case of vodka

and three cases of Castle beer, containing 24 cans each at a Laboratory in Silverton, which Mr. Becker had told him was the Police laboratory and where they may see the boss (referring to General Neethling). Mr. Justice Kriegler found that it had not been proved that the beer came from the Police Forensic Laboratory. (Evans)

135. Lesia was imprisoned in Zimbabwe from May 1987 until July 1990 for the murder of Tsitsi Chiliza, the wife of an ANC member who died in Zimbabwe, when her boobytrapped television allegedly supplied by Lesia exploded in May 1987. A bottle of poison, two syringes, a poison ring a ring with a swivel lid to contain poison in a hidden cavity, pistol, silencer and a biscuit tin containing detonators were found in a secret compartment of his car by the Zimbabwean authorities.

136. In prison Lesia met a number of other South African agents like Guy Bawden and Barry Bawden and others he had not known before. They told him how they took their apparatus into Zimbabwe by plane. This apparatus included poison, bombs etc. They did not know where the poison came from in South Africa, it was given to them by their respective commander. They did not say who they were. It was to be put into liquid to kill people. According to Lesia Kit Bawden could have more information. Guy Bawden would pursue this and Kit Bawden might join forces with us.

137. After his release in 1990 Lesia was taken to a military hospital and debriefed. (Lesia) Guy Bawden who was released January 1990 has been interviewed (Luirink) in 1996, during which he named Lesia as the person working with poisons and Neethling as the one responsible for the production of chemicals, but this was after Lesia had died and Neethling had been already pinpointed in the media. He told the interviewer that Lesia had meanwhile died allegedly from cancer but according to Bawden it was the result of poisoning. According to Bawden poisoning fell under Colonel Joe Verster who had been Kit(s) Bawden's boss. General Kat Liebenberg was Verster's superior.

138. According to a TRC report (Villa: point 4) Joe Verster, managing director of the CCB worked closely together with Dr. Basson. Dr. Basson made extensive use of him. According to the same report Dr. Basson and General Neethling have also worked together. (TRCVilla: point 18)

139. Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, survived a sophisticated attempt to poison him in 1989. On three occasions during that year, once while he was in Namibia, and twice during a visit to the United States, the Rev. Chikane fell suddenly and inexplicably ill.

Thorough tests eventually established the cause: 'exposure to an organophosphate anticholinesterase or pharmacologically similar compound', a highly potent poison associated with pesticides. This nerve gas had probably been injected into his clothing and baggage. His body had been absorbing the poison through the skin from his clothes. (Laurence; Churchman; Chikane; Smith)

140. According to a TRC doc (poison:42) Eugene de Kock claimed in his evidence in mitigation to have had a discussion with Colonel Otto not lang after the Chikane incident. Otto allegedly confided to him that it was a joint SAP/SADF operation and that the Security Branch secured his luggage, while the SADF applied the poison. Otto also said that the only reason Chikane survived was because he was diagnosed in the USA.

141. A similar incident took place in Malawi in 1992. The Reverend Emmanuel Chinkwita Phiri Acting General Secretary of the Christian Council of Malawi was a member of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), which represented churches, professional bodies and other groups lobbying for political reform in Malawi. He believes that on three occasions there have been attempts to kill him. Two times, in November and December 1992, it appeared that he had been victim of an attempt to

poison him.

142. In November 1992 Rev. Phiri was wearing a suit which he had just collected from the dry cleaners. At a meeting with an UN technical team he became aware of a burning sensation around his neck and shoulders. He left the meeting and went home to bed, where he developed a fever, rapid heartbeat and a burning sensation. He was taken to hospital, given medication and gradually recovered. He suspected that his clothes were impregnated with poisons.

143. In December 1992, when he was part of a Christian Council of Malawi delegation visiting Kenya he suffered a similar sensation and again had to receive medical treatment. As on the first occasion he believed that his clothes had been poisoned, like Rev. Frank Chikane's victim of a similar attack.

144. Amnesty International could not provide independent confirmation of these incidents, but because the Malawian Government had resorted to political assassinations before and also because of a long history of security cooperation between Malawi and South Africa, Amnesty International (AI) expressed its concern for the physical safety of opposition figures.

145. There have been many other alleged poison cases (see TRC documents), but new are here the above mentioned case Reverend Emmanuel Chinkwita Phiri, in Malawi in 1992, and the case of Conny Braam

## INTRODUCTION

146. Conny Braam nowadays a well known novelist in The Netherlands is a Dutch woman who had been active in the Dutch AntiApartheid Movement (AABN) since 1970 and for many years she was also its chairperson, which made her the most visible person of the movement. For her work she travelled frequently in Southern Africa. The AABN had always been the strongest supporter of the ANC in the Netherlands and Conny Braam in particular, had very good relations with many high level ANC leaders.

147. In the late 1980s she participated in the very secret Operation Vula. (see BraamVula) Her cover was that of an innocent chairperson of the antiapartheid movement. Vula was aimed at bringing military operations of the ANC and underground political work closer together in order to ensure that military and political operations could be planned in conjunction with, and hence strengthen, each other. The ANC sent leaders, like Mac Maharaj, Sphiwe Nyanda and Ronnie Kasrils, into the country so that decisions could be made on a daily basis. This integrated approach appeared successful. State security services only became aware of the existence of Operation Vula after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990.

148. Although nobody knew about her involvement in Vula until 1990, already long before that time Conny Braam was very well known by the South African security police. Craig Williamson knew her from the time he had been working for the IUEF in Geneva and the security services must have seen her as an interesting person as is shown by a remark (June 1985) made by Craig Williamson to Klaas de Jonge, when arrested: 'Are you one of the boys of Conny Braam?'

149. The interest in her person was certainly stimulated further by possible reports of the South African agent Joy Harnden (from Rhodes), who was part of the Olivia Forsythe group when she saw in Maputo Conny Braam together with Jeremy Brickhill and Albie Sachs (later, both got blown up) in a sort of conspiracy in 1986.

## FACTS AND INDICATIONS

150. Around September 1987 Conny Braam had been two times the victim of an alleged attempt to kill her. September 1987 Conny Braam participated in the Children's Conference in Harare as a representative of the AABN, but her stay in Southern Africa was also used for consultations concerning Operation Vula.

## THE LUSAKA INCIDENT

151. Before going to Harare she staid in Lusaka (Ridgeway Hotel) to meet Sipiwe Nyanda, Joe Slovo, Rashid and Chris Hani. One morning (Saturday 19/9/97) Rashid picked her up at the hotel for a meeting: 'I went for a little drive and we talked in his car. I came back to the hotel room. The door was locked. I had kept my key with me. I didnt give it to the reception. I opened the door and the bed wasnot made, nothing was. It was really too early, because the girls who were cleaning the room were sort of a floor below, they were busy (...).'

152. 'But next to my bed, there was a bottle. It was a brown glass bottle. You know, typical sort of vitamins, vitamin C sort of thing, you know, where you take a lot, not a small, but a big bottle, with a label and the label said, 'All vitamin pills' (...) It had a screw top, it was lightcoloured and it had a price label on top (...) not rand or something (...). Now I was alert, I was cool and calm I was in those days. Actually nothing could really upset me, but, seeing the bottle, I knew immediately here was something wrong or strange, because, I mean if you bring in a thing like that yourself, you know or not. The door is locked. You have the key yourself. So I didnt touch it and I looked for that lady who cleaned the room (...).' The cleaning lady hadn't been in the room and she had appeared honest.'

153. 'So then I went back and I looked at the bottle and there was liquid in it. There were no pills in it. (...) It was a thick, thick liquid sort of oily (...) I just shook it and I put it back. My plane was going to leave that same day, I mean, as I say a few hours later I was going from Lusaka to Harare.

154. Sipiwe Gebuza came, just for a last thing, and I said 'look at that' and he said, 'Jesus, do not touch it, get it out here', and he got very nervous about it. Conny Braam expected the bottle to explode when it would be opened. Because Vula was still a very small group then, there was not an expert to investigate the bottle and eventually put it out of order.

155. For this reason Conny Braam did something she regretted:

she took the bottle and put it in the waste bin in the bathroom together with dirty tissues and shit on it to make it stink and ugly, to prevent that the woman who would come to clean, would see the bottle, think "All Vitamins" and would take it, but instead would throw it away. However, Conny Braam felt bad and guilty about it. Especially, when she heard afterwards during the Children's conference, two, three days later that there had been an explosion close to the railway station in Lusaka. (Braamstat: 29)

## THE HARARE INCIDENT

156. The Children's conference was an important and fantastic conference, but according to Conny

Braam at the same time there also was a lot of other work and scheming going on in all the hotel rooms. It was just before Sipiwe Nyanda and Mac Maharaj were about to go in and they were having sort of last preparation talks. Conny Braam stayed first in the Sheraton hotel where the Conference was and moved Sunday evening (27/9/87) when the Conference was over to the Bronte Hotel where the other members of the Dutch delegation stayed. Her reservation was made two weeks before. Conny Braam was known at Hotel Bronte but this time there was somebody behind the desk that she didn't know.

157. 'I came into the room and I wanted to unpack my things and to put my things away and then I opened the closet and there were two jackets hanging in the closet (...). The jackets were not in a plastic folder, but hanging open on a hanger as if somebody had left them behind.' Normally she always was very careful and on her alert, but this time she was not thinking about this too much. There had been the conference and Conny Braam had a few days of hard work behind her, and there also had been some drinking with people from inside. She was very tired.(...).'

158. 'What worried me later on is that they the South African security services must have figured out that they could not somebody to befriend me, not even a woman. They tried that (...) half a year before in the Lusaka hotel the Ridgeway Hotel.' In general Conny Braam was almost unapproachable and always very much on the alert.

159. 'But they must have noticed or they must have worked out a plan because one thing that I've done over the years is change myself, my appearance from the activists with jeans into a lady. Because I thought that's very safe and as long as they think I've got a relationship with Slovo, it's better than that they think I work with him you (...). So I always have these nice suits and high heels and in public I would be sort of girlish, having a girlish behaviour and nice clothes and I think that is what they exploited.

160. So these jackets were very, very beautiful and very much beyond me. I mean moneywise. I've not a good feel for nice material. One was a real woollen jacket, black woollen jacket, beautiful, and the other one was cotton, but with a print and a design oh God, I mean it must have been a fortune they must have cost, and what was most amazing, absolutely my size. I put them on and they fitted like, you know, they were made for my body. So beautiful and they had no labels (...).'

161. And there was a certain smell, but I thought it was sort of old perfume, quite strong. That sort of thing, that's ...not pleasant (...). It's actually the reason why I took them off, because then, you know, it made you realise it had been from somebody else.'

162. 'Later I was quite cold. It was very hot during the day and I had on one of my conference dresses. It was just a little thing, so with lots of skin. I was cold, I was really cold and terribly tired, but I had to do my report, my final report for the movement, because the Dutch delegation was going to leave the next morning and they had to take this report (...). I was cold, I put on the jacket, that dark, black jacket and I sat at a little table and I wrote my report. I don't know how long I worked on it. Maybe an hour, I doubt it was more.'

163. Conny Braam did not think about it all. She saw it as a stroke of luck, the jacket looked good on her, it made her feel good and the woollen one was warm. She finished her report and went to bed. She took the jacket off, but she did not take a shower or anything, she just went to bed at about eleven. In a room next to Conny Braam's room was a Dutch television crew, the reporter Jan de Graaff and the cameraman.

164. 'I woke up maybe three or four hours later (in the night of 27 to 28 of September, 1987), I never checked what time it was. I woke up of my own screaming and knocks on the door. So I must have been sleeping very deeply, but the pain must have started already, so I first had screamed in

my sleep and the knocks on the door were from the television people next door, who heard me scream.

165. Now, what happened in my body was I had had a child already by then so I knew what was giving birth so I can compare the pain and it wasn't an easy birth. So it was like, you know, contractions. Gee, incredible pain, the whole inside, the pain would come and it would build up (...). It was unbearable. (...). I crawled on the floor and opened the door and they helped me on the bed (...). And this is where I sort of fainted and I would grab in the air for that's why I rolled off the bed a few times, you know, and then they'd hold me there because I would try to get (away) that's what I remember from how heavy the pain was. (...). I also felt a terrible fear. What was good is that I saw these faces of Jan de Graaff and the cameraman, whom, I knew.

166. They thought that I'd been eating something wrong that my stomach was upset. So they said 'you must get rid of what's in you, in your stomach'. So now, they hang me over the toilet, put fingers in my throat to make me vomit. Nothing happened (...). Jan de Graaff had gone to the reception to raise the alarm that somebody was very, very ill. He gave me something for diarrhoea, to stimulate the (bowel movement)... He was really panicking... I thought nothing... I knew that I was dying...'

167. According to Conny Braam, later was found out, that this receptionist was a double agent, who worked for the CIO and for the South Africans. He was the one who called the doctor, who was there very quickly. 'Anyway, then the doctor came. I mean, this is now very vague for me, but all of a sudden there's a man hanging over me. I was most upset about it, because he was a stranger and it was a man with a heavy South African accent (...). The guy had my because I slept in this long Tshirt, you see Tshirt up, so I was laying naked there and he was pressing me here (pointing to her stomach), with his fingers and he said: 'she's got an ulcer'

168. He immediately produced a bottle, a brown bottle and put it next to the bed. These were the pills that had to be given to me and it would go, no problem. He explained to the other guys 'well, she's got the age for it, isn't it?'. And I remember this also, because I felt so insulted. I was so ... always a woman. I thought later on, you know, God, the guy lifted my shirt and then he made the remark about my age. He played it down like it was just an ulcer...

169. Now he had the wrong guys, because the cameraman had an ulcer himself. He looked at the pills and he said, 'this is rubbish. I've never seen this sort of shit for an ulcer', and he threw all the pills away down the toilet and then made me vomit. And he said also ulcers don't come like that. So they didn't believe it. So the pills were gone and Jan de Graaff stayed with me. He and the cameraman took it by turns and they didn't leave me and I just slept.'

170. 'The pain would come back, but it would get less and less and after three or four days I found myself recovered enough and I wanted to go as soon as possible. I am in very good physical condition normally, so I recovered. Back in Holland I went to my own doctor and I had research done on my stomach. He couldn't find an ulcer or anything else.'

171. 'I'm quite ashamed to tell you this, but I took the coats with me. I packed them in plastic and I took them with me and I brought them to the drycleaners twice. I was very suspicious of the coats and I wanted to give them a signal that they couldn't get me with these sort of cheap tricks and that's why in Arusha at the next Conference (December 1987) I wore the coat again. I still got them.'

172. Conny Braam thinks that the coats were ment to poison her and that the pills of the doctor were supposed to kill her off. She regrets that she didn't check her blood, but it was only when she got the report of Frank Chikane's poisoning in the United States that she recognized that her symptoms had been almost the same, although to a lesser degree: she felt nauseous; her body shoke; she could hardly walk; she felt felt were weak and almost fainted. However, she had

difficulties to vomit, her vision was not blurred and she also did not experience respiratory problems as Chikane had.

173. March 1988 Conny Braam had to go to the hospital, because something strange happened. 'One morning I woke up and between my legs, the little bridge between my vagina and anus, there was a ball as big as this (the size of a pingpong ball). So I went to my doctor and he had one look and he said. 'Jeez, to the hospital straight away'. There they did not know what it was nor where it came from. I was operated quite quickly for it and they removed it. But, the wound did not close. For a year the wound did not close. I lived with a plastic bowl and surgery soap and three times a day I had to sit in it to keep that wound clean. There was no pus and there was no blood, nothing, but it was open. In the hospital they were totally puzzled.

174. What I should have done of course is say 'Look in my blood if there's poison', but I did not. I was fully working for Vula then: we were training people, sending people over, arranging the money. I had a child and I was chairperson (...). I lived with this open wound like it was a part of me, (although) I was very scared for infection, especially when travelling in Africa.'

175. 'After a year they decided in the hospital that this could not go on and went for a second operation (...). They thought it was something inside, what was causing this. But, they found nothing, nothing, nothing. I had a mysterious thing between my legs. But, I think what must have been five, six months later it closed, started closing. I think by then the poison had worked out. The strange thing is, it's not a good solid scar and I have to be very careful with it. It is a very vulnerable scar which affects my sex life as well. Besides, the psychological thing, for a bit more than a year of suffering from a posttraumatic stress disorder (...) well, it's not fun.' (Braamstat:932)

## ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

176. Concerning the group who could have been directly responsible for poisoning her, Conny Braam (stat:29) heard from Nico Basson, who tried to get information about this case, that the ones responsible for the poisoning were Kit and Guy Bawden. In the first place Kit Bawden and that it sounded completely like the way that CCB group operating in Harare would do it. Guy Bawden mentioned that the job on Conny Braam was probably done by Leslie Lesia. (Luirink) Understandable, because Lesia had admitted these kind of crimes (see above) and was not alive anymore. But neither Guy Bawden nor Leslie Lesia could have been responsible for this attack on Conny Braam, because both were in prison in Zimbabwe when it occurred.

177. From Lesia's statement (Lesia:52), we know that he was not the only one working with poisons: 'The other agents told me how they took their apparatus into Zimbabwe by plane. This apparatus included poison, bombs etc. They didn't know where their poison came from in South Africa. I believe Kit Bawden knows some information (...). They told me that the poison was given to them by their respective commander. They didn't say who they were.(...).'

178. As well Leslie Lesia, Guy Bawden as Nico Basson mentioned Kit Bawden as the one who should know more about poison cases. According to Guy Bawden poisoning fell under his brother's boss, Colonel Joe Verster. Verster's superior was General Kat Liebenberg.

According to a TRC document (Villa:point 4) Joe Verster, managing director of the CCB worked closely together with Dr. Basson. Dr. Basson made extensive use of him. According to the same report Dr. Basson and General Neethling have also worked together. (Villa:point 18)

## CONCLUSION

179. There is very strong evidence that special forces and the police systematically killed or tried to murder activists using poison.

180. Conny Braam alleges that she has been the victim of two attacks, one by poison, which did not kill her but affected deeply her further life.

181. Conny Braam request the TRC a further investigation of this poison case, especially concerning the role of the above mentioned persons: Kit Bawden, Joe Verster, Dr. Basson, Dr. Neethling and General Karl Liebenberg.

182. Conny Braam also request the TRC to investigate the role of LieutenantGeneral Niel Knobel, the SurgeonGeneral of the South African Medical Services (SAMS) under which Basson's Chemical and Biological Warfare programma fell. Knobel must certainly have had full knowledge of the several chemical ad biological weapons projects and activities carried out.

183. Conny Braam would like to have an answer on the following questions:

- \* Why was poison used against her?
- \* What was the poison used?
- \* What can be its effects in the future?
- \* Where came the poison from?
- \* Who actually carried out the attempt to poison her?
- \* Who ordered the poisoning of her?

184. Conny Braam request the TRC to refuse to grant any amnesty to the South Africans named in this Submission, or to any others uncovered during further investigation, unless they have cooperated fully with the investigation.

### Note (1)

For example, linked to the OPCW in the Hague (Holland) on a temporary or permanent base, we find besides the persons already mentioned: Lorain Lotter (security issues); Johan Rautenbach (legal specialist) and Albert Warnich (diplomat at the SA Embassy).

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