

The Case Of The “Seychelles”

The Truth Commission Files

[Seych-Report]

Date (coup attempt): 25 November 1981

Place: Mahé International Airport on Mahé Island (Seychelles)

Name Victim:

Objective of the coup was to bring down the Seychelles government of President France-Albert René and to re-install the former President James Mancham.

Information Victim:

President France-Albert René: he ousted the former President Mancham in the 1977 coup [SE:167]. Mancham had been 'enthusiastically wooed by former information Secretary Eschel Rhoodie as a politically ally' and SA was unhappy with the rule of René. After the overthrow of Mancham, SA aircraft landing rights were withdrawn and SA'n economic overtures collapsed. [S.Tribune 29/11/81]

Perpetrators:

Hoare and his 43 mercenaries (Notes*1) were disguised as tourists: rugbyplayers and members of a beer-drinking group called the "Ancient Order of Frothblowers." They arrived in a Royal Swazi jet on Mahé, carrying their own weapons. Nine mercs (members of Hoare's advance guard) were already on the island on the evening of Wednesday, 25 November 1981.

Perpetrators information:

-In 1978 Seychelles exiles in SA, acting on behalf of ex-president James Mancham, began discussions with officials concerning a coup attempt to be launched in Seychelles.[SE:172] Gérard Hoareau, Seychelle dissident, was one of the authors of the 1981 coup attempt. Later expelled from SA.

-As coup plans developed, the operation became an object of struggle between the Military Intelligence service (MI) and the civilian one (NIS). The SA Government allocated the coup operation to MI, but appointed Martin Dolinchek as a liaison officer on behalf of the NIS. [SE:173]

- Operation entrusted to Mike Hoare ('Mad Mike' Hoare), an Irish mercenary soldier (ex-Congo) living in SA as a civilian. Among the 53 people selected to carry out the coup: some members of the SA special forces (Recces), several former Rhodesian soldiers and ex-Congo mercs [SE:173; Mockler:284-294]

Crime activity:

Coup attempt. The coup attempt was unexpectedly triggered off when an alert customs official spotted an AK-47 assault rifle in the luggage of one of the mercs [RDMail 13/4/82].

The invaders fought a brief gun-battle at the airport and 45 live mercenaries escaped aboard an Air India jet (Air India Boeing aircraft Flight 224) which happened to be on the tarmac and which they hijacked. One merc had died during the skirmish. Five soldiers, a female accomplice and also Martin Dolincheck (alias Anton Lubic) were left behind.[Mockler:311]

The mecs took some hostages, who were later freed unharmed.

A police sergeant was wounded and an army 2nd lieutenant David Antat was killed.

Crime Results:

-The Seychelles Govt arrested the seven (6 men and 1 woman) who remained on the Seychelles and tried the men (June-July 1982). The charges against the woman were dropped. Four of the six were sentenced to death (Brooks, Carey, England and Puren), Dolincheck was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and Sims to 10. After negotiations, all were eventually returned to SA in mid-1983.

-In January 1982 an International Commission, appointed by the UN Security Council, made an inquiry of this mercenary aggression.

-Hoare and his mercenaries (45 in total??) were tried on their return to South Africa, but not for having attempted to organize a coup in a foreign country. The accused were charged before court with specific offenses under the Civil Aviation Offenses Act of 1972.[Argus 27/7/82]. The judge concluded that the SA Govt. was not involved in the Seychelles affair [Argus 27/6/82]. Hoare got 10 years, Peter Duffy (??), Mike Webb, Tullio Moneta and Pieter Doorewaard (probably the most senior of the Recce Commando reservists) were sentenced to 5 years, Ken Dalgliesh to 1 year, and Charles Goatley to 2 1/2 years. [Mockler:330]; The other mercs (39?) were freed [F&R:1981-Z22].

-Pretoria Govt, embarrassed, opened negotiations for the return of the 6 arrested men. SA gov. paid President René a ransom of \$ 3 million (of which his cabinet was not informed) and came to a broader understanding wit Pres. René personally [SE:173]

-Beset by attention of foreign secret services and by plots of within, Pres. René asked his friend, the Italian businessman Mario Ricci (Notes:*2) to help improve his security service [SE:174]. He realized that he needed to adjust his foreign policy to accommodate SA interests, at least in some measure.

-In the aftermath of the 1981 coup attempt SA secret services came fully to appreciate Ricci's significance as a potential intermediary with President René. SA "super-spy' Craig Williamson (notes*3) developed in the mid-1980's a close relationship with Ricci. [SE:175]

Crime Motives:

1. Seychelles was of considerable strategic interest to the USA, USSR, France, South Africa and others, all of which sought to exercise influence in this islands.

After 1979 (when SA's main supply of oil was threatened) Seychelles had a minor but distinct role to play in the new strategy of the 'total onslaught'. The islands offered a) potential military facilities and b) could possible be used as a base for clandestine trading purposes in the face of economic sanctions (after the Iranian revolution of 1979 especially oil). SA was unhappy with the rule of President René, far to the left of his predecessor. So, a coup was planned [SE:172-3] with the objective, to bring down the government of President René and install Mr. Mancham (the former President) [F&R81:Z22].

2. [RDMail:13/4/82]: the long term aim in overthrowing the Seychelles Government was to have a base from which the Tanzanian Government could be destabilized, Mr. Dolinчек said. Other reasons included landing rights for SAA aircraft and a strategic base on the important Cape sea route.

It was said [Argus 27/7/82] that the American CIA were sympathetic and that the American and Kenyan Governments would give instant recognition to the reinstated Seychelles government.

Chain of Command:

-Prime Minister PW Botha emphasized that the attempted coup was carried out without the knowledge of the Government, the Cabinet or the State Security Council and that no authorization was given. Also the judge in the hijack-trial concluded that the SA Govt was not involved in Seychelles affair [Argus 27/6/82]

-[RDMail:4/5/82]:Hoare said that the Cabinet and top ranking officers of the NIS and the SADF knew about and condoned the abortive Seychelles coup. His initial contact with the NIS had been through Mr. Martin Dolinчек. Through him Hoare arranged meetings with Mr. Van Wyk (BOSS, forerunner of the NIS) who said he would submit a minute to the Cabinet of the proposals to take the Seychelles by force. The initial approach failed. Later he had met with Mr. N.J. (?James Younger) Claasen of NIS (Deputy Director and Dolinчек's handler) who informed Hoare that the Cabinet had given their approval in principle. Mr. Claasen introduced Hoare to Brigadiers Hamman and Knoetze. Hoare gave them the details of the plans which were studied at length. The men acceded to the request for arms and ammunition and radios. Hoare submitted as evidence an invoice, purportedly from the SADF certifying the delivery to the home of weapons and ammunition to be used in the coup (75 AK-47 assault rifles, nearly 24,000 rounds of ammunition, 40 hand grenades and 100 rockets [The Guardian(Br), 4/5/82]. Military Intelligence was prepared to back the coup. But, it was a question of keeping South African involvement to a minimum.

-Merks like Beck claimed that Hoare had told them that the coup was officially backed.

-Mr. Martin Dolinчек (alias Anton Lubic) declared that his department (NIS) and the SADF had full and prior knowledge of the coup plans. The coup plans were put to the SA Govt. in 1979 and rejected, only to be accepted in 1980 with the logistical support given by the SADF in the form of weapons (AK-47 assault rifles; other weapons would be available on the island). [RDMail 13-14/4/82]. Dolinчек named Major General Charles Lloyd, an officer commanding South West African security forces, as a man with intimate prior knowledge of the bungled Seychelles coup. Lloyd was an SADF recipient of a report written by Dolinчек on the Seychelles invasion plan as presented by Colonel 'Mad Mike'Hoare in 1980.It was before Lloyd was appointed OC in SWA. The report had also been given to his own department (NIS).

He had travelled to the Seychelles on a SA passport (no. D631473) as 'Anton Lubic'. It was issued on 12/10/81 by his contact (Mrs. Van Heerden) in the Department of the Interior in Durban.

Witnesses:

1. Key witnesses of the Maritzburg hijack trial included the Air India pilot: Captain Umesh Saxena and Seychellois officials who negotiated with the mercenaries during the short-lived invasion [BD 15/1/82]; Third Defence Force reconnaissance unit doctor Dr. Christiaan Lodewicus De Jager was giving evidence for the State; two Recce colleagues Dr. Steyn De Wet and Dr. Theodorus Van Huyssteen (never called) have turned State witness in the trial and gained indemnity against prosecution [NP 19/3/82].

2. Mr. Martin Dolincheck (see above).

3. Mr. Mike Hoare (see above)

Notes:

*1 Names of mercenaries involved in the attempted 1981 coup in the Seychelles. There were 54 mercenaries involved(1 deserted, 1 died):

Name, Military Background, Arrived in Durban/ remained in the Seychelles, Remarks

BARNES, Kevin Nicholas, ??, Durban

BECK, Kevin Trever, SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner, his AK-47 was found

BIDDLECOMBE, Stephen John ??, Durban

BOTES, Desmond (Des) Jurgens probably exCongo merc; once in the Rhod. Police (Sp. Branch) Durban, Advance guard ;once SA's karate champ; karate-school Jo'burg

BOUCHER, Louis Anthony, SADF (Malan) Durban

BROOKS, Aubrey formerly Selous Scouts, Rhod. Seychelles Zimbabwean Advance guard; wounded; Treason charge;Age:38 y

CAREY, Bernard (Barney), probably ex-Congo and Yemen merc, Seychelles, British;lived, in SA (since 1980:repairs business P.Maritzburg). Advance guard; Treason charge; age: 39 y.

DALGLEISH, Kenneth Hugh once in the Rhod. Police (Sp. Branch) Durban Advance guard; Took charge with Mr.DUFFY of the negotiations in Durb ;Maritzburg trial: 2 1/2y

DAVIES, Robert (Bob) Jones OR ??: JONES-DAVIES, Robert (Bob), ??, Durban

DEACON, Alex SADF (Malan); Recce, Durban

DE BEER, Johannes (Vic) SADF (Malan); lieutenant in One Recce Commando Durban ?? issued the call-up papers NOT IN LIST, TRC 25/6/96

DEETLIEFS, Ernst Lodewyk ??, Durban Afrikaner

DE JAGER, Chris, Two Recce Commando, Afrikaner, Recce-unit med. doctor defected before the coup when he heard that they would be carrying their own weapons.

DEKKER, Jochemus Louis SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner

DE VOS, Bernhard, SADF (Malan); Recce, Durban Afrikaner

DE WET, Steyn SADF (Malan); Recce-unit Durban Afrikaner; Recce-unit med. doctor; State witness (gained indemnity)

DOLINCHEK, Martin,(alias Anton Lubic) NIS Seychelles Liaison officer on behalf of the NIS; Advance guard; Treason charge: 20 y. He lived under the name Martin Donaldson in Durban.

DOOREWAARD, Pieter, SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner Recce officer; trial Maritzburg: 5 y

DUFFY, Peter ex-Congo merc Durban, Durban news photographer; karate expert; 'tourleader' of the beerdrinking club; took charge of negotiations in Durban together with DALGLIESH; Maritzburg trial: 5 y.

NOT ON LIST TRC 25/6/96 (OR? Peter Anthony DUFF Hean; see HEAN)

DUKES, Charles William, SADF (Malan); ex-SAS/ Rhod; ex (?) 1 Recce Commando, Durban American merc Advance guard Wounded during attack on army barracks

DU TOIT, Jacob Adraan, SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner

ENGLAND, Roger ex 3rd Paras (Angola merc era); ex Rhod. SAS, Seychelles Zimbabwean Advance guard; Treason trial

EURELLE, Johgn Patrick, ??, Durban

FORSELL, Sven Helge, (this a Swedish name!) civilian, Durban Austrian ?? living in SA; ex-opera singer; film director (documentary on mercs); friend MONETA

FRITZ, Johan (ex?) parabat SADF, Only casualty ;Corps was taken back

GOATLEY, Charles Glen, once helicopter pilot in the Rhod. airforce, Durban Zimbabwean; Maritzburg trial 2 1/2 y

GOUWS, Frederick Lourens SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner

GREENHALGH, David Charles once lieutenant in the RLI / Rhod. Durban

GRIBBIN, Barry Francis, SADF (Malan) Durban

HEAN, Peter (Anthony Duf), (DUFFY ??) ex-Rhodesian, major in the RLI /Rhod Durban, manager Pretoria textile firm

HENRICK, Patrick Glynn Barry, SADF (Malan) (ex?) parabat; Recce, Durban Afrikaner

HILLEBRAND, Christo, SADF (Malan) Durban Afrikaner

HOARE, Thomas Michael (alias Mr. Thomas Boarel) ex-Congo merc Durban

Col. "Mad Mike" Hoare; Irish merc living in SA; Head of the operation; Maritzburg trial: 10 y; Age: 63

INGLE, Susan (alias Mrs. SIMS), civilian Seychelles British-born Advance guard; "Wife" of Bob SIMS, Charges dropped

KELLY, Kenneth John ('Blue'Kelly) SADF (Malan) Durban Australian; suspected NIS agent

KENNY, Doanald Peter, probably ex-Congo merc; ex Rhod. SAS and Grey's Scouts; SADF (Malan); Recce Durban Englishman; Hoare's bodyguard; Age: 45

MACKAY, John Vincent, SADF (Malan), Durban

MACLEOD, Keith, SADF (Malan); Recce Durban, ??

MANN, Alex Ashton, SADF (Malan); Recce Durban, ??

MONETA, Tullio probably ex-Congo merc Durban, Italian born, lived in SA; Hoare's 2nd in command

PAUL, William Dunlop, SADF (Malan); Recce Durban, ??

PRETORIUS, Johannes Lodewicus = DE BEER!, ??, Durban Afrikaner

PRIEFERT, Kurt Georg Horst ex-Congo merc;SADF (Malan); Recce Durban, German; crossbow champ. SA

PRINSLOO, Vernon Anthony once captain in Rhod. airforce, Durban Afrikaner?? Maritzburg trial: 1 y

PUREN, Jeremiah (Jerry) ex-Congo merc Seychelles Afrikaner; 2nd hand car business in Durban; shot e Seych. sergeant; Treason trial; Age: 57

ROHWEIN, Peter ex-Congo merc Durban, German, coffee farm in Zimbabwe

SIMS, Robert (Bob), civilian Seychelles Advance guard (together with Mrs. INGLE); brother of Mike Hoares wife Phillis; Profession: jockey and trainer; charged: illegally importing arms; Age:49

STANNARD, Richard John British special press and propaganda operation in Ulster; Captain in the Selous Scouts /Rhod; Officer with SA forces in Angola; SADF (Malan) Durban ex-Rhodesian (much-decorated war-hero) ;Age: 28; manager of retail store in Durban

SYDOW, Jan Olav, military intelligence?? Durban Swede;

VAN HUYSSSTEEN, Theodoros Daniel, SADF (Malan) recce-unit Durban, medical doctor recce; turned state witness (never called); gained indemnity

WALKER, Desmond, SADF (Malan); Recce Durban

WEBB, Michael (Mike) Francis former British cavalry officer Durban Ex-Rhodesian He recruited almost all the Rhodesians; Ordered DUFFY & DALGLIESH to negotiate

WHITE, Andrew Thomas Standish, ??, Durban from Zimbabwe

WILLAR, Simon Torquil ex-captain Selous Scouts / Rhod., Durban, Scots born

WILSON, Nicholas, SADF (Malan) Durban from Zimbabwe

54 mercs

-Unknown: 7

-(ex?)SADF:27 (included: also Congo:1; Congo/Rhod: 1; Rhod :2)

-ex-Congo merc:7 (included: also Yemen:1)

-ex-Rhod. unit: 9 (included: also Congo:1)

-NIS:1

-Civilian: 3

Defected: 1 Died: 1 Seychelles:7 Durban:45

16 had been or a member of a Rhod. unit or lived in Zimbabwe; all the others are South Africans or lived in SA

Remarks:

-1: Persons (25) mentioned in the Gen.Malan affidavit (Malan) were almost certainly members or former members of the SADF (see Cape Times 17/June?/1982).

-2:DE BEER, Johannes (Vic) Lodewikus Pretorius (or PRETORIUS) could be an important operator: he managed to keep 'clean', although he was a lieutenant in One Recce Commando and responsible for issuing the call-up papers of the recces involved.

-3: I didn't find Ronald Desmond BEZUIDENHOUT (alias Duncan Smith-in the ANC-, alias Tokaref) who participated also in the coup (probably under another name, which?)[VW].

-4: See RDMail 12/3/82;TRC Seychelles Hit 25/6/96; Mockler, 1985 "Paradise Lost- Coup in the Seychelles & Trials and Tribulations" pp.284-350; Cape Times 17/June(?)/1982; Hoare;

*2 Giovanni Mario Ricci (born in Italy 1929) lived since 1974 in the Seychelles where he became an important intermediary for foreigners [SE:169]. He became René's friend and unofficial financial advisor. He was associated with some very unusual companies as: the 'Seychelles Trust Company'/ SETCO (since 1978) through which he masterminded the establishment of the Seychelles as a tax haven; the 'International Monetary Funding', or IMF (1982, not to be confused with the International Monetary Fund/IMF) and the commercial company 'Order of the Coptic Catholic Knights of Nalta'(1984, not to be confused with the well-known Vatican order) through which Ricci, got a diplomatic status. He used his company GMR (named after his own initials), as a flagship for various interests. By early 1980s Ricci acquired a reputation as someone who could be approached by anyone who wished to transact some form of business in Seychelles [SE:169-171] Ricci is considered as the Mafia's key figure in the Seychelles [ION-209, 7/12/95]. Ricci greeted Francesco Pazienza in the Seychelles, in 1983, when the latter had to flee Italian justice. It was Pazienza who introduced SASEA/ 'Société Anonyme Suisse d'Exportations Agricoles' (headed by Florio Fiorini) into the Seychelles. Pazienza's name has been associated with several major scandals.[SE:183-184] and the same counts for SASEA and its sub-companies. The Seychelles tax haven is one of the most attractive in the world (ION:486 6/7/91). It is a 'private' one, entirely controlled by Mario Ricci's SETCO. He was also in charge of Seychellois external intelligence operations: surveillance of the opposition, installing telephone bugs in France and Great Britain [Intelligence Newsletter 1/3/89]. Ricci faces trial in France (1987) charged with 'criminal association and infringement of privacy' for ordering the tapping of the telephone of Seychelle's opposition leader Gérard Hoareau, who was murdered in London several months later (Nov.1985)[ION-209, 7/12/85]. Ricci, having become an embarrassment to the Seychelles, left the island in August 1986 to settle in South Africa where he joined forces with Craig Williamson.

*3 Craig Williamson first, number 2 person in section A, the foreign desk of the South African

Security Police and since 1985 a colonel in SA Military Intelligence came to appreciate the possibilities of the extraordinary empire built by Ricci. In 1986 Williamson became managing director of the South African subsidiary of Ricci's GMR empire (GMR-South Africa). Williamson helped to set up a risk consultancy company called 'Longreach', an affiliate of GMR but in fact secretly owned by SA Military Intelligence for which it operated. Williamson admitted that this company had engaged a French mercenary to carry out the attempted murder of President Lennox Sebe of Ciskei. He has also arranged the import of a cargo of oil into SA via the Seychelles [Africa Confidential, vol.28 no.8; SE:175-178].

Sources:

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