

Fascist Sympathiser — Now Minister of Justice

At the beginning of this month three South African trade union leaders and African National Congress members, Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba, were hanged. The Prime Minister of Kenya, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta described the hangings as "racialist brutality" and branded the Verwoerd government as a fascist regime bent on the extermination of those who stand for freedom and justice. Journalist BRIAN BUNTING, author of "The Rise of the South African Reich", here paints a portrait of the man who plays a key role in Verwoerd's reign of terror.

MINISTER of Justice in the Nationalist Party Cabinet headed by Dr. Verwoerd, Balthazar Johannes Vorster, was one of fifteen children born to his parents on a farm in the Eastern Cape and brought up in the strict Calvinist traditions of the rural Afrikaaner.

The Vorsters father was a typical rural patriarch, rigid in his beliefs, strict in discipline, anxious that his children should get an education whilst adhering closely to the traditions of family and "volk".

The Vorster children attended a farm school where the medium of instruction was English. Those children who spoke Afrikaans at school (and it must be remembered that at this time Afrikaans was regarded as little better than "kitchen Dutch" and had no official recognition) had as punishment to write out hundreds of lines reading "I must speak English at school".

This anti-Afrikaaner chauvinism bred, not only in the Vorsters but in practically all Afrikaaners of this period, an intense resentment and hatred of the English which flourished easily in the post Boer-war decades when Afrikaaner nationalism was on the upsurge.

MILLION LASHES

Balthazar Vorster said in after years that he received many canings from his father which didn't do him any harm. He uses this experience to justify the million lashes which have been administered to 200,000 prisoners, black and white, in South African prisons and police cells during the last twenty years.

Whether inspired by his beatings of his ambition, Vorster did extremely well at school, coming first in class all the way from standard one to standard ten. Afterwards he went on to Stellenbosch university, one of the cultural centres of Afrikaaner nationalism, where he furthered his ambition to become an advocate and a politician.

The young advocate Vor-

ster had barely got himself started on his career when South Africa was engulfed by the second world war, and national rivalry and strife between Afrikaaner and English were raised to new heights.

Vorster joined an organisation called the Ossewa Brandwag (Oxwagon Sentinel), a fascist organisation built on military lines with a view to taking over power by force, negotiating with a victorious Hitler and establishing a totalitarian racist regime in South Africa.

The future Nationalist Minister of Justice scorned the Parliamentary tactics of the Nationalist Party at that time under Dr. Malan, and committed himself to an organisation which conducted a campaign of sabotage and terrorism.

While South African troops were fighting and dying to make the world safe from Hitlerism, Vorster was, as an Ossewa Brandwag "general", parading his gangs of hooligans in secret and preparing them physically and ideologically for Der Tag.

ARRESTED

Today he claims to be fighting to save democracy and Western civilisation from communist subversion; but in 1942 he said:

"We stand for Christian Nationalism which is an ally of National Socialism. You can call this anti-democratic principle dictatorship if you wish.

In Italy it is called fascism.

Germany nationalism, and in South Africa Christian Nationalism."

Vorster was arrested under the war-time Emergency Regulations in September 1942. He says he was kept in solitary confinement for forty-two days, went on hunger strike in protest and as a result was transferred to Koffiefontein interment camp where he was prisoner No. 2229/42 in Hut 48, Camp I.

He was released on parole in January 1944 and placed under house arrest until the end of the war, needing a special permit every time he had to leave the town for any purpose. His experience of solitary confinement and house arrest was sufficiently bitter to lead him to use both weapons against his political opponents after he became Minister of Justice.

After the war, Vorster again became involved in politics. The Ossewa Brandwag was absorbed in the Afrikaaner Party of Mr. Havenga, which had entered into an electoral alliance with the Nationalist Party for the 1948 elections.

Vorster was nominated by the Afrikaaner Party for Bra-kpan, but ironically enough was voted by the Nationalist Party which felt that his war record would make him unacceptable to the electorate.

But Vorster eventually got the nomination, to be defeated by the English-speaking United Party member, A. E. Trollop, who was later to cross the floor and join the Nationalist Party on being offered the position of Minister of Labour and Immigration which he at present holds.

PERSEVERED

Vorster persevered and was later elected Member of Parliament for Nigel, but for many years remained an obscure back-bencher who was thought to have little hope of promotion because of his war record.

This, however, proved a handicap only during the period in which the Nationalist Party was anxiously wooing the English vote. Two factors combine to bring about a change.

The first was the outright Nationalist victory in the 1960 Republican referendum and the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961—both events tending to establish the absolute hegemony of the Afrikaaner in the electoral sphere.

The second was the 1960 State of Emergency, during which 2,000 top political leaders of the extra-Parliamentary opposition of all races were jailed without trial for periods up to five months, the newspapers New Age and Torch were temporarily suppressed, and the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress were declared illegal.

"OUT OF HAND"

The Pondoland rebellion of December 1960 and the emergence in 1961 and 1962 of the organisations Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo, reflecting the abandonment of the policy of non-violence on the part of ever-growing sections of the oppressed peoples of South Africa, made Prime Minister Verwoerd realise that the tra-

ditional methods of police control, and the personality of the then Minister of Justice, F. C. Erasmus, were no longer adequate to cope with a situation which was fraught with the greatest danger for Afrikaaner Nationalism and White Supremacy as a whole.

Erasmus was sent packing to Rome as South African Ambassador, and Vorster was brought in, over the heads of party colleagues of far too longer standing, to serve as Minister of Justice in a Cabinet determined to stop at nothing in the fight for survival.

"MINISTER OF JUSTICE"

In his first speech as Minister, Vorster declared that "rights were getting out of hand in South Africa". In all his subsequent legislation he has acted to ensure that the rights of Government opponents were whittled down to nothing.

In this he has proved himself Verwoerd's most able and ruthless lieutenant. In 1962 he pushed through Parliament the notorious Sabotage Act.

This gave him sweeping powers to restrict the political leaders of the people (house arrest, prohibition on publication of statements by banned people etc.) and made various forms of political activity ranging from the distribution of leaflets to outright acts of violence punishable by a minimum of five years imprisonment to a maximum of death.

When this Draconic law failed to bring the sabotage campaigns to an end, Vorster during 1963 pushed the General Law Amendment Act through Parliament.

This increased the range of political offences punishable by death and contained the notorious ninety-day no-trial clause which put an end to the rule of law and turned South Africa into an out-and-out police state in which the life and liberty of any person is placed at the mercy of any police officer, with the jurisdiction of the courts expressly excluded.

"I appreciate that it is not a measure which is proper in peace time", Vorster declared during the debate on the ninety-day no-trial Act. He knew he was opening the way to torture of political prisoners.

"The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition said that he had seen human beings being broken (when he was a prisoner of war). It is not a very nice thing to see a human being being broken. I have seen it and he has seen it. The man taking these powers must take the responsibility for them."

In his own words Vorster must take the responsibility for the ghastly crimes against humanity which have been perpetrated by his police, force during the last seventeen months. Here is the tally:

* About 800 people of all races have been held in solitary confinement without legal right of access to lawyers, relatives or friends. At least sixty have been held for more than ninety days, and eight, including three women, for more than 180 days.

* About 400 have been charged in court, but more than 300 have been released without being charged. About fifty have given evidence for the state under promise of indemnity.

* At least forty-nine detainees have complained of assaults by policemen or warders—twenty-six alleged kicking and hitting, nineteen said they were kicked, hit and electrically shocked with sacks tied over their heads.

* Two detainees have committed suicide by hanging in their cells and in September 1964, a third, Suliman Salojee, threw himself to his death from the window of the seventh floor room at Security Police headquarters in Johannesburg where he was being "interrogated".

* At least five detainees have been examined by psychiatrists or been admitted to mental hospitals.

* Latest "interrogation" techniques are more refined. Electric shock torture has been apparently abandoned, following exposure and international protest. Today detainees are kept standing indefinitely until they drop or, their minds broken, agree to make statements.

"It is not a very nice thing to see a human being being broken," said Vorster. At this moment about 100 men and women are under ninety-day detention. The room on the seventh floor from which Salojee threw himself to his death has had bars placed over the windows. It will be more difficult for detainees to commit suicide in future. But the

mind-breaking which drives them to suicide goes on. And Vorster justifies it.

"History taught that nothing so destroyed a great nation as weak leadership", he told a symposium on "The challenge of leadership" at Stellenbosch University in March of this year.

And in May he told a Republic Day meeting in Rustenburg: "It is no secret that the threats against South Africa are drawing to their climax. Ask me what we should do when this climax comes? There is only one thing I can say to you: 'If you lie down you are finished'."

BOASTS

Vorster has consistently refused opposition demands for a judicial inquiry into the allegations of torture of political prisoners, saying he has full confidence in his police force. He had equally refused to withdraw the ninety-day no-trial law, saying he is not willing to "chop off the hands of my police".

He boasts of the results of his work: under various security laws, 3,355 people of all races, including 592 in the Transkei, were detained in

South Africa last year.

Since March 1963, there have been 111 political trials in which 1,315 persons were charged. Their fate was: forty-four sentenced to death; twelve sentenced to life imprisonment; 894 sentenced to a total of 5,713 years imprisonment; 340 acquitted; one sentenced to six lashes; four sentences unknown; eighteen remanded.

In the maximum security prison camp on Robben Island, seven miles off Cape Town, about 15,000 prisoners, including about 1,000 political prisoners, are incarcerated under abominable conditions.

The raids and arrests, the beatings and the tortures continue. Daily new political trials come before the courts.

The Dutch Reformed Church Minister Dr. Vorster says of his brother Balthazar: "He is one of the most humane persons I have met. Few people know it, but he is sincerely interested in people who have served jail sentences. Most of his servants are ex-convicts and at one time he had a former murderer as a cook."

No doubt he is also passionately fond of the music of Bach and Beethoven.

VENGEANCE

Mini, Big strong smiling Mini and Khayinga and Mkaba who loved life no less, have been robbed of their most precious possession, life.

Our comrades fell in Verwoerd's Pretoria bitten in the neck by the hangman's knot.

Have you seen life slipping away? I once saw my mother die on the sharp sand at Sharpeville.

I hear Babla my brother cry and his body hitting the concrete one hundred feet down from the interrogator's window.

Have you seen the face of a man being beaten up? In prison when you hear the noise your heart-beats race.

But worst of all is the sigh or shriek or cough or —or nothing

just escaping air as life slips away. How did Mini and my brothers die

in that secret hanging place? You may ask—please let me tell you—I know.

Singing? Yes—but how they sing! Big firm Mini not smiling on this day a smile at the lips perhaps but the eyes grim always grim when facing the enemy.

Heads high they walk strong united together singing Mini's own song "Naants' indod' emnyama Verwoerd" —Watch out Verwoerd the black man will get you— "Watch out Verwoerd" the people have taken up this song "Watch out Verwoerd" the world sings with Mini.

And meeting Death in their front-line trench the three heroes shout into the grey teeth of the enemy "We shall be avenged" and the people take up the shout "Our heroes shall be avenged."

It is vengeance we want as the last precious gasps escape into the Pretoria air. Kumalo of the ANC

OCTOBER ASHES

It is done — The revolution, The revolution, the revolution; There is none — For evolution, Cold evolution, slow evolution;

When a man, In full illusion, Slavish suppression, wicked oppression, Lives on the banks of a river, But has to wash his hands With spittle; Is a maker of waterpots, But has to fetch water With a basket In tsarist Petersburg; Lives under the sun, But must blunder on Like a moth Attracted by the candle light In a night, In whom are held and hidden, But never for ever The unheard cry of the child Lynched in Mississippi, The mountain and the smoke, And the gnashing of teeth of him who, massacred in his youth Lies spawling in the burning pool Of spilled Sharpeville blood.

And when man no more could wait, And no more would wait

For the desired earthquake of change, And October caught fire In the minds and hearts of men, Only October flames knew What October flames intended to do.

And everywhere ashes lie — The ashes of the song And the ashes of the ears, The ashes of the palace And the ashes of the chains, The ashes of the moon And the ashes of the tree, The ashes of the sky And the ashes of the rain: The rain that fell And flooded and crushed away Our ram-shackle homes; The song we were forced to sing In Lobito and along the tsarist Volga, While the dripping blood From our whip-crackled lips Mingled with the salty sweat Of the Sun-scorched faces. On us, us the people; The ears that refused to hear The silent and aged weeping Of the oppressed, the people; The palace we built But which we could not enter, We, the people;

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Spotlight on South Africa

We Mourn the Death of Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba

At the time of going to press the shocking news of the barbarous execution of three of our comrades—VUYISILE MINI, WILSON KHAYINGA and ZINAKILE MKABA—was made known.

It is with heavy hearts, deep sorrow and justified anger that we announce the execution of three brave South African patriots who were murdered in the cause of human freedom and dignity. We proclaim to the world that they have not died in vain—THEY SHALL BE AVENGED. —Editor.

PRESS STATEMENT:

The barbarous execution today of our heroes, MINI, MKABA and KHAYINGA, who were leading members of the African National Congress is a shocking act of murder which will never be forgotten nor forgiven by our people.

What is alarming is the fact that the executions have taken place so shortly after their appeal was dismissed, and in typical Nazi-style the date of execution was deliberately kept secret to forestall world-wide protest.

Those who have defied the legitimate demand by the peoples of the world for the release of these valiant sons of our country, and have instead carried out this dastardly crime must know that nothing can save them from retribution.

This brutal act reveals the very grave situation which now exists in South Africa. The fascists like vampires now demand the very blood of those who courageously oppose their wicked regime. The African people will no longer tolerate a situation in which the loss of life is on our side only. The systematic murder of our people will be replied to on the basis of a LIFE FOR A LIFE.

(Sgd.) D. NOKWE, Secretary-General,

African National Congress of South Africa,

P.O. Box 2239, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania 6th November, 1964