

CLUE THAT PROVES SOUTH AFRICA IS BEHIND ATTACKS

Observer 20/2/83
by RICHARD HALL,

A WHITE commando killed while trying to sabotage a vital railway line in Mozambique was an Ulsterman serving in the South African army. Evidence of his identity provides proof of the 'secret war' South Africa is waging against neighbouring black States.

The Mozambique Government had been unable to identify the white saboteur, or the three Africans who died with him, because all four were blown to pieces. But one vital clue, a photographed page of a handwritten novel about Northern Ireland, has been obtained by THE OBSERVER.

This proves that the saboteur was Sandhurst-trained Lieutenant Alan Gingles, 27, from Larne in County Antrim. By the time of his death he had resigned from the British Army and had become a regular officer in the South African Defence Force.

Shortly after the fatal explosion on the railway line, between Zimbabwe and the Mozambique port of Beira, the Defence Force headquarters in Pretoria released a communiqué about Gingles. This said he had been killed 'in action against terrorists' in the 'operational area.'

The South African embassy in London has confirmed that the phrase 'operational area' always refers to 'the zone between Angola and Namibia.' Its use in this instance was intended to hide the awkward truth that Gingles had died on the other side of the African continent, while attacking a civil target in a sovereign State.

The revelation about Gingles is the first direct proof that South Africa is striking at non-military installations deep inside other countries. Allegations of such actions are often made, notably by Zimbabwe's Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe. But indisputable evidence has been lacking.

The Beira railway is a main artery for Zimbabwe's imports and exports. Alongside it runs the equally vulnerable oil pipeline. The main effect of sabotage attacks on either is to undermine the economy of Zimbabwe and make it dependent upon routes through South Africa.

Gingles died more than 300 miles beyond South African territory. His operation was quite distinct from the limited cross-border raids made by the Defence Force to 'take out' the bases of guerrillas planning to infiltrate South Africa.

After the attack on the railway—at Doerol, halfway between Beira and the Zimbabwe border—Mozambique protested that unidentified 'Boer soldiers' had been involved. A spokesman for the South African Government called this 'lying propaganda.' Only a few days

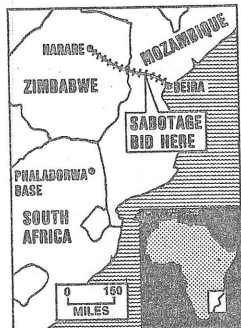
earlier it had put out the totally misleading statement about Gingles.

The background to the death of Gingles has remained hidden for more than a year. It acquires added significance because last week another Briton—Finlay Dion Hamilton, from Manchester—was jailed for 20 years for alleged involvement in the sabotage last December of Beira's fuel depot, which serves Zimbabwe.

Rebel 'cell'

Suspicion was directed at Beira's small expatriate community—in which Hamilton was a leading figure—because it was known that white men had operated alongside guerrillas belonging to the rebel Mozambique National Resistance organisation. Hamilton was accused of running an MNR 'cell.'

The trail that led to Gingles's home town, 20 miles



north of Belfast, had begun in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. THE OBSERVER's correspondent there, Joseph Hanlon, obtained pictures taken at the scene shortly after Gingles had blown himself up. The photographer was Carlos Rodrigues, from the staff of Beira's *Diário de Mocimboa*.

These pictures show the equipment of the sabotage team, including rifles, a map, and a camouflaged sleeping bag.

There was no name on any of the white man's possessions, which included basic mapping equipment, a Portuguese language primer and a neatly inscribed wordlist in Shona, the local language. The crucial evidence lay in the photographed fragment of the handwritten novel.

The fictional hero, a student named Willie, was portrayed as being heavily involved in Northern Ireland's politics. He had been recruited into a right-wing terrorist cell, and was instructed to infiltrate the Ulster Defence Regiment.

One sadly apt sentence in the novel reads: 'Death, as he now knew, was anything but pleasant or glorious.'

THE OBSERVER established that the dead saboteur was called Gingles. This unusual surname was tracked to Larne, which fitted with the novel. A girl in the story has the codename 'Antrim,' and Larne is in County Antrim.

Letters home

In Larne, there was no difficulty in tracing Gingles's relatives. He was well-known in the town and was so keen on military life that he had joined the Ulster Defence Regiment while still in the sixth form at Larne Grammar School. He went to Sandhurst and was commissioned in the Royal Irish Rangers in 1977.

After the news of his death, there was a memorial service in Larne Presbyterian Church.

At a farmhouse near the Ballyhampton Road, two miles from Larne, Hubert Gingles produced last week a bundle of the letters sent home by his son from Africa. The handwriting in them was identical with that of the manuscript found 5,000 miles away beside the Mozambique railway line.

All this gives the lie to South Africa's claim that Gingles had died 'in action against terrorists.' By some lights, he was a terrorist himself.

The identification of Gingles also weighs against South Africa's denial of collaboration with the Mozambique National Resistance, MNR guerrillas are reportedly trained at Phalaborwa, a military camp in the eastern Transvaal; the official communiqué said that Gingles had been based at Phalaborwa.

Hubert Gingles is proud of his son: 'Alan was adventurous and had a wish to combat terrorism.' He thought his son had died in some unorthodox mission 'perhaps trying to blow up a bridge.'

After an unexciting spell in Germany, Alan Gingles had

resigned his British commission and gone to Rhodesia during the closing stages of the Smith regime. There he fought in a commando unit of the Selous Scouts, but when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe he moved on to South Africa.

His letters display anti-Marxist views, and a bitterness—shared by many regular soldiers who fought in Rhodesia—that the victory finally went to their black opponents. A wish for revenge is said to motivate some of the former Rhodesians who volunteer for risky operations north of the Limpopo River.

Although Gingles failed, other raids into Mozambique have had spectacular results. The devastation of the Beira fuel depot caused weeks of damaging petrol shortages in Zimbabwe.

Dion Hamilton was, until the time of his arrest, the managing director in Beira of Manica Freight Services, owned by the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa. He had lived for 20 years in Mozambique, and acted as unofficial British Consul in Beira.

Hamilton was a champion Mozambique parachutist and trained a Government sky-diving team. At the time of his arrest, with eight others, his plane was said to have a full tank of fuel and ready for take-off.

Before his trial, part of which was in secret, he was paraded barefoot, shirtless and in manacles in front of a political rally.

It was Hamilton's misfortune perhaps, to be working in a country which other white men have been trying so hard to destabilise.