

Appendix 1: Burial at Steytlerville

Steytlerville is a small dusty farming town on the road from Uitenhage to Graaff Reinet. On 13 July two of its young men were buried, the latest victims in the tensions sweeping the Eastern Cape. We were invited with Molly Blackburn M.P.C. by the community to attend the funeral as they feared that "police violence" would be used against the mourners.

We were accompanied by three American lawyers, an international television team, and 3 members of the P.F.P. Youth. Mrs Blackburn had telephoned the local SAP commander to request that the police keep a low profile and to remind him of Mr Justice Kannemeyer's remarks about the police and funerals.

The two young men to be buried were Mzwandile Muggels, aged 20, a leader of STEYCO, the Steytlerville Youth Congress, a U.D.F. affiliate, and Johannes Spogter, aged 13, a schoolboy whose principal paid homage to his qualities.

On 4 July the black and "coloured" communities of Steytlerville held a procession between their two "townships" to honour the four Cradock leaders murdered in Port Elizabeth. At the request of the SAP commander the route was altered to avoid passing two white-owned shops. As they walked a police van drove up and, allegedly without warning, teargas was fired.

That evening 24 policemen and local farmers raided the black township of Kabah. We spoke to many witnesses and tape-recorded some reports. Because of the occasion we did not take sworn statements. In terms of the Police Act the allegations may not be published but an independent pathologist has submitted his reports to family lawyers.

Mzwandile Muggels was removed from a bed and taken outside where he died as a result of gunfire, allegedly while escaping. The community claims that every black person in the open, even in the townships, was taken to the police station for questioning, and Johannes Spogter was one of these. He was unhurt and was heard calling "Mama" from the police van.

When Johannes had not been released by the next day, a community representative was sent to the police station to enquire, and he did not return. The next day the Spogter family was told that Johannes was dead.

Mzwandile was at another house when the raid took place. The police entered the house and said, "Dis hy". They led him outside. The lady of the house says that she looked through her window and heard one policeman say, "Skiet die kaffir." A shot rang out. Another resident reported that one policeman held him down with his boot while another shot him. We were told that the pathologist found plastic casing in his body, proving that he was shot with the gun virtually touching his body. The community has no idea of what happened to Johannes in detention except that police, "as a matter of course," beat people.

The funeral commenced at 10 am when over 1 000 people went in procession to the two homes to fetch the bodies. We expressed our sympathy to the parents but did not discuss the circumstances with them.

The funeral lasted 4½ hours and consisted of prayers, hymns, freedom songs, tributes, and messages from many organisations. How one wished that those who form white opinion

could hear the messages of anger and frustration from obviously gentle people. We cannot quote any particular statement because of reports of what happened to those who spoke at previous funerals, but there was naught for the comfort of those who console themselves with talk of reform.

As youths filled the graves, they chanted in praise of the heroes. "Mandela, VIVA. Tambo, VIVA. Goniwe, VIVA." Long lists of those who have died or suffered. Denis Goldberg and Neil Agget were the only two white names I heard. From time to time they switched to those opposed, "Botha, VOETSEK. Le Grange, VOETSEK. Sebe, VOETSEK" Short lists of Community Councillors and "Homeland Leaders."

We had taken seats near the back of the crowd and were unknown to our neighbours. We were treated with the respect accorded to funeral guests but with no warmth until we were seen to join in NKOSI SIKELELI. After that we were flooded with warmth, especially from the youth, who said they had never previously met white people who opposed apartheid.

I told them that my wife had stood as a Provincial Council candidate against a Steytlerville farmer (who they knew) and had spoken for integrated schools and complete non-racialism, and had unseated the Nationalist, collecting 6 568 votes in just one white suburb.

Anyone who saw the reaction would realize how easy it would be to be as close to a great peace as we now are to civil war, if only our people could meet one another.

One piece of news had reached the youth and we were flooded with questions. "Is it true that two white mothers in Cape Town chained themselves to the railings of Parliament?" "Did we know them?" "Was one woman pregnant?" "Was it really for Johannes Spogter (aged 13) from Steytlerville?" "Were the women still in detention?" "Were they safe?" We promised to carry greetings to the two accused Capetonians.

After the funeral we were invited to a meal with the parents and churchmen and community leaders. As we drove away people waved from all the houses.

As we left Kabah a police van fell in behind us and followed us until we left Steytlerville. We were back in reality. We were very conscious that the police had done it again. Another community had been driven to active anger. The SADF would have to increase conscription yet again.

Soon after we reached Port Elizabeth three hours later, we received a phone call from the Muggels family to satisfy themselves that we had returned safely.

On the journey I had told the American visitors that I had been invited to a cocktail party at the American Consulate on July 4 to celebrate their Independence, and had asked the new Consul-General to cancel the party as it was inappropriate when our nation was in mourning, and when many blamed "constructive engagement" for the hardening of violence. Press photographs showed Piet Koornhof and Denis de la Cruz at the party at the very time when Mzwandile Muggels died.

Brian Bishop