

## A MISCARRIAGE OF DEMOCRACY:

### THE ANC SECURITY DEPARTMENT IN THE 1984 MUTINY IN UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

**Bandile Ketelo, Amos Maxongo, Zamxolo Tshona, Ronnie  
Massango and Luvu Mbengo**

#### **Prelude to Mutiny**

On 12 January 1984, a strong delegation of ANC National Executive Committee members arrived at Caculama, the main training centre of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in the town of Malanje, Angola. In the past, such a visit by the ANC leadership—including its top man, the organization's president, Oliver Tambo—would have been prepared for several days, or even weeks, before their actual arrival. Not so this time. This one was both an emergency and a surprise visit.

It was not difficult to guess the reason for such a visit. For several days, sounds of gunfire had been filling the air almost every hour of the day at Kangandala, near Malanje, and just about 80 kilometres from Caculama, where President Tambo and his entourage were staying. The combatants of MK had refused to go into counter-insurgency operations against the forces of the Union for Total Independence of Angola (Unita) in the civil war in Angola and defied the security personnel of the ANC. They had decided to make their voice of protest more strongly by shooting randomly into the air. It was pointed out to all the commanding personnel in the area that the shooting was not meant to endanger anybody's life, but was just meant to be a louder call to the ANC leadership to address themselves afresh to the desperate problems facing our organization.

Clearly put forward also was that only Tambo, the president of the ANC, Joe Slovo the chief-of-staff of the army and Chris Hani, then the army commissar, would be welcome to attend to these issues. An illusory idea still lingered in the minds of the MK combatants that most of the wrong things in our organization happened without the knowledge of Tambo, and that given a clear picture of the situation, he would act to see to their solution.

Joe Slovo, now secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), had himself risen to prominence among the new generation as a result of the daring combat operations which MK units had carried out against the racist regime. In 1983 the SACP quarterly, the *African Communist*, had carried an article by Slovo about J.B.Marks, another of the ANC/SACP leaders, who had died in Moscow in 1972. That article, emphasizing democracy in the liberation struggle, was a fleeting glance into some of the rarely talked-of episodes in the proceedings of the Morogoro Consultative Conference of the ANC, held in Tanzania in 1969. It might have been written for a completely

different purpose, but for the guerrillas of MK it was a call for active involvement into the solution of our problems.

Chris Hani was one of the veterans of the earliest guerrilla campaigns of the ANC in the Wankie area of Rhodesia, against the regime of Ian Smith, in 1967. He had had his name built by his 'heroic' exploits by claims that he escaped 'assassination attempts' against him carried out by the South African regime in Lesotho, where he had been head of the ANC mission. Despite these claims it is doubtful whether he could have survived over a decade in Lesotho (1972-82) if he had posed a threat as serious as those sometimes portrayed. Hani, it must be stressed, never carried out any major operations in South Africa, and there are no operations carried out in his name in the whole of MK combat history, unlike Joe Slovo for instance.

The guerrillas in Angola levelled their bitterest criticisms against three men in the NEC of the ANC, men who had had a much more direct involvement in the running of our army. The first was Joe Modise, army commander of the ANC since 1969. He was looked down upon by the majority of combatants as a man responsible for the failures of our army to put up a strong fight against the racist regime, a man who had stifled its growth and expansion. He was above all seen as someone who engaged himself in corrupt money-making ventures, abusing his position in the army.

The second was Mzwandile Piliso, the chief of security. He was then the most notorious, the most feared, soulless ideologue of the suppression of dissent and democracy in the ANC. The last one was Andrew Masondo, freed from Roben Island after twelve years of imprisonment, who had joined the ANC leadership in exile after the 1976 Soweto uprisings. In 1984 he was the national commissar of the ANC, and was therefore responsible for supervision of the implementation of NEC decisions and political guidance of the ANC personnel. Masondo was to use this responsibility to defend corruption, and was himself involved in abuse of his position to exploit young and ignorant women and girls. He was also a key figure in the running of the notorious ANC prison camp known to the cadres as 'Quadro' (or four, in Portuguese). It was nicknamed Quadro after the Fort, the rough and notorious prison for blacks in Johannesburg, known to everybody as 'No.4'.

Such was the situation when Chris Hani, together with Joe Nhlanhla, then the administrative secretary of the NEC and now chief of security, and Lehlonono Moloï, now chief of operations, arrived in Kangandala under instructions from the NEC to silence the ever-sounding guns of the guerrillas. Chris Hani was suddenly thrown into confusion by the effusive behaviour of the combatants as they expressed their grievances, wielding AKs which they vowed never to surrender until their demands were met. What were these demands?

First, the soldiers demanded an immediate end to the war by the MK forces against Unita and the transfer of all the manpower used in that war to our main theatre of war in South Africa. Secondly, they demanded the immediate suspension of the ANC security apparatus, as well as an investigation of its

activities and of the prison camp Quadro, then called 'Buchenwald' after one of the most notorious Nazi concentration camps. Lastly, they demanded that Tambo himself come and address the soldiers on the solution to these problems. All that Chris Hani could do in this situation was to appeal for an end to random shootings in the air, and to appeal to the soldiers to await the decision of the NEC after he had sent it the feedback about his mission.

### **The Beginnings of Quadro**

The demands mentioned above had far-reaching political implications for the ANC, which had managed to win high political prestige as the future government of South Africa. But for anyone to appreciate their seriousness, one must go back to the history of the ANC following the arrival of the youth of the Soweto uprisings to join the ANC. This historical approach to the mutiny of 1984 is more often than not deliberately neglected by the ANC leadership whenever they find themselves having to talk about this event. More than anything else, they fear the historical realities which justify this mutiny and show it to have been inevitable, given the genuine causes behind it.

The mainspring of the 1984 mutiny, known within the ANC as *Mkatashingo*, is the suppression of democracy by the ANC leadership. This suppression of democracy had taken different forms at different times in the development of the ANC, and it had given birth to resistance from the ANC membership at different times, taking forms corresponding to the nature of the suppression mechanisms. We shall confine ourselves to those periods that had become landmarks and turning points in this history.

The first such remarkable events of resistance to the machinations of the ANC leadership were in 1979 at a camp known among South Africans as Fazenda, but whose actual name was Villa Rosa, to the north of Quibaxe, in northern Angola. The majority of the trained personnel of MK had been shifted from Quibaxe in November 1978 to occupy this camp, where they were expected to undergo a survival course to prepare for harsh conditions of rural guerrilla warfare. With the promise that the course would take three months, after which the combatants would be infiltrated back into South Africa to carry out combat missions, everybody took the course in their stride and with high morale. After the first three months and the introduction of a second course, it became crystal clear that we were being fooled, to keep us busy. Voices of discontent began to surface in certain circles of the armed forces. The main cause of discontent was the suppression of our uncontrollable desire to leave Angola and enter into South Africa to supplement the mass political upsurges of the people. Alongside this were also complaints about inefficiency of the front commanders and suspicions that they were treacherously involved in the failure of many missions, leading to the mysterious death of our combatants in South Africa.

Mzwandile Piliso was accused of over-emphasizing the security of our movement against the internal enemy, at the expense of promoting comradely relations among the armed forces. He was promoting unpopular lackeys within the army while suppressing those who fell to his disfavour, branding them as enemy agents who would 'rot in the camps of Angola'. Most of those lackeys defected to the racist South African regime whenever they found it opportune. Such was the case with the most notorious traitors in MK like Thabo Selepe, Jackson, Miki and others, all of whom wormed their way up in the military structures assisted by Piliso.

The late Joe Gqabi [assassinated in Harare in 1981, while ANC representative in Zimbabwe] attended one such explosive meeting and commended the soldiers for their spirit of openness and criticism. Fazenda was getting out of hand, and the feeling of discontent began to spill into certain nearby ANC bases.

Something had to be done to stamp down this resistance. The security organ of the ANC, which till then had just been composed of a few old cadres of the 1960s, began to be reorganized in all the camps. Young men from our own generation who had recently undergone courses in the Soviet Union and East Germany were spread into all the camps. It was during this time that construction of a prison camp near Quibaxe was speeded up, which later took the form of the dreaded Quadro. ANC general meetings, which were held weekly, and had been platforms for criticism and self-criticism, were now terminated.

The very first occupants of Quadro prison were three men from Fazenda: Ernest Khumalo, Solly Ngungunyana and Drake, who had defiantly left Fazenda to go to Luanda, where they hoped to meet the ANC chief representative, Max Moabi, to demand their own resignation from the ANC. The ANC did not accept resignation of its membership [still the same ten years later, in January this year, after the authors of this document had presented their resignations]. Worse still, this was in Angola, a country where lawlessness reigned. After being beaten in a street in Luanda by ANC and Angolan security, they were bundled into a truck and taken straight to Quadro. Solly was released after two years, Ernest in 1984 and Drake's end is still unknown. The camp remained highly secret within the ANC. Everyone sent to work there as a security guard undoubtedly had to have proved his loyalty to Mzwandile Piliso, and was expected not to disclose anything to anybody. Even among the NEC, the only ones who had access to Quadro were Mzwandile Piliso, Joe Modise and Andrew Masondo.

### **An 'Internal-Enemy-Danger-Psychosis'**

To completely efface the spirit of resistance in Fazenda, the majority of the MK forces there were taken to Zimbabwe, where they fought alongside guerrillas of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua

Nkomo against the Smith forces as well as the guerrillas of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led by Robert Mugabe. Many worthy fighters perished there. Fazenda camp was closed in 1980, and fighters there were distributed among the two main camps of the ANC, Pango and Quibaxe, both to the north of Luanda. The chapter on Fazenda was closed.

But a burning urge to liberate South Africa, with the only language the boers understood, the gun, could not be trampled on as contemptuously as that. Yet it had become very dangerous to raise even a voice against the leadership. The ANC had become divided into a force of the rank and file and that of the leadership clubbed together with the security apparatus, which had grown to such enormous levels that practically every administration of whatever ANC institution was run by the security personnel, and practically every problem was viewed as a security risk and an 'enemy machination'.

In a bid to strengthen their repressive apparatus, Andrew Masondo created a security crack force in a camp known as Viana, near Luanda. This unit, known as ODP (Peoples' Defence Organization), was composed mainly of very young men or boys. Its tasks were to guard the ANC leadership when they paid visits to different camps, to enforce discipline and bash up any forms of dissent and 'disloyalty'. By this time, after the Fazenda events, the ANC leaders had begun to whip up an 'internal-enemy-danger-psychosis,' and whenever they visited the camps they had to be heavily guarded. Worse still if it was Tambo who visited: the whole camp would be disarmed, and only the security personnel and those attached to it would be allowed to carry weapons.

The next hot spot for the ANC was in Zambia, where the headquarters of the ANC was based and where most of the leadership was living. This was in 1980. MK cadres, who had been drilled for months in 'communist ideology' of the Soviet-East European type to denounce all luxuries and accept the hazards of the struggle, here came into direct confrontation with the opposite way of life lived by the ANC leaders. It became clear that the financial support extended to the ANC was used to finance the lavish way of life of the ANC leadership. Corruption, involving rackets of car, diamond and drug smuggling, was on a high rise. The security department itself was rocked by internal dissent between those who supported a heavy-handed approach and the predominantly young cadres who opposed it.

There was also the burning problem of the insignificant progress made by our forces in South Africa, at a time when our people were alone locked into bitter mass struggles against the racists. This aspect was further complicated by the decision of the NEC to send back to Angola a batch of MK forces who had survived the war in Zimbabwe and were discovered by the provisional government authorities in the assembly points, disguised as ZAPU guerrillas. These guerrillas, still itching to go to South Africa and aware of the conditions in the camps in Angola, refused point blank the instructions to return to Angola.

Faced with these and many other related problems, a meeting was arranged between the leadership and the representatives of the three detachments, the Luthuli, June 16 and Moncada detachments. Among their representatives, the June 16 Detachment was represented by Sidwell Moroka and Moncada by Timmy Zakhele, both of whom later ended up in Quadro. The June 16 Detachment advanced the proposal to hold a conference of the whole ANC membership where these issues could be settled democratically. This proposal, which had popular backing from the overwhelming majority of the young cadres, was rejected by the ANC leadership, which never accepts any idea that puts in question its competence and credibility to lead.

It was in the process of these discussions that a discovery of a spy network was disclosed and a clampdown on the 'ambitious young men who wanted to overthrow the leadership of Tambo' was put into operation. The ANC security went into full swing, detaining the so-called enemy spies and those who were proponents of the conference. It was said that this spy-ring was not only concentrated in Zambia, but was everywhere that the ANC had its personnel. Many of these young men — Pharoah, Vusi Mayekiso, Kenneth Mahamba, Oshkosh and others — were later known to have died under torture and beatings in Quadro prison camp. Others such as Godfrey Pulu, Sticks and Botiki were released years later, after torture and the failure of the security department to prove their treachery. Men who were bodyguards of President Tambo and were unwilling to continue serving in the notorious security organs were almost all sent to serve punishments in other camps in Angola. Sidwell Moroka, James Nkabinde (executed at Pango in 1984), David Ngwezana, Earl and others were among those men. The guerrillas from Zimbabwe who refused to return to Angola were flogged and beaten and were later smuggled into Angola.

After this clampdown, and with the majority of the membership panic-stricken, a strong entourage of ANC National Executive Committee members, including President Tambo, took the rounds in all ANC camps in Angola in February 1981. Appearing triumphant but with agonizing apprehension, the ANC leadership addressed the cadres about a spy network that had besieged the ANC, and emphasized the need for vigilance. Some awful threats were also thrown at 'enemy agents and provocateurs' by Piliso, who rudely declared in Xhosa '...I'll hang them by their testicles'.

Soon thereafter, a tape-recorded address by Moses Mabhida, the late general secretary of the SACP, was circulated, criticizing dagga-smoking and illicit drinking in ANC camps, and calling for strong disciplinary measures to be taken against the culprits. Commissions to investigate these breaches of discipline were set up in April 1981 in every ANC establishment. They were supervised by camp commanders and security officers in all the camps, and all those implicated were detained, beaten and tortured to extract information. The issue was treated as a security risk, an enemy manoeuvre to corrupt the culprits' loyalty to the ANC leadership. Most of those arrested were known critics of the ANC leadership and were labelled as anti-authority.

During the whole period of investigation they were tied to trees outside and slept there. In Camalundi camp in Malanje province, Oupa Moloji, who was head of the political department, lost his life during the first day of interrogation. Thami Zulu, (the travelling name of Muzi Ngwenya) who was the camp commander, and who himself died in ANC security custody in 1989, addressed the camp detachments about the death of Oupa, threatening to kill even more of these culprits who, at that time, swollen and in excruciating pain, were lined up in front of the detachment. Zulu/Ngwenya died in the ANC security department's hands in 1989 for alleged poisoning.

In Quibaxe, Elik Parasi and Reggie Mthengele were 'finished off' at the instruction of the camp commander, Livingstone Gaza, at a time when they were in severe pain with little hope of survival. Others like Mahlathini (the stage name of Joel Gxekwa), one of the talented artists who was responsible for the composition of many of the first songs of the Amandla Cultural Ensemble, were taken from Pango to Quadro, where they met their death.

It is important to realize that most of these atrocities were carried out in the camps themselves, and not in the secrecy of Quadro, where only a few would know. The operation succeeded in its objectives. Fear was instilled and hatred for the ANC security crystallized. Every cadre of MK took full cover, and the security department was striding, threatening to pounce on any forms of dissent. Camps were literally run by the security personnel. Many underground interrogation houses were set up in all places where the ANC had its personnel, and underground prisons were established in the places known as 'R.C.' and Green House in Lusaka and at a place in Tanzania disguised as a farm near the Solomon Mahlango Freedom College (SOMAFCO) at Mazimbu, the main educational centre of the ANC in exile. In Mozambique a detention camp was set up in Nampula where 'suspects' and those who kept pestering the leadership about armed struggle in South Africa were kept.

MK began to crack into two armies, the latent army of rebels which kept seething beneath the apparent calm and obedience, and the army of the leadership, their loyal forces. The former was struggling for its life, kicking into the future, but all its efforts were confined within the suffocating womb of the latter. Security personnel were first-class members of the ANC. They had the first preference in everything, ranging from military uniforms and boots right up to opportunities for receiving the best military, political and educational training in well-off institutions in Europe.

Face to face with this state of affairs, disappointment and disillusion set in and the cadres began to lose hope in the ANC leadership. The rate of desertion grew in 1982-83. There occurred more suicides and attempted suicides. The political commissars, whose task was to educate the armed forces about the ideological and moral aspects of our army, became despised as the protectors of corruption and autocracy. It became embarrassing to be in such structures. Cases of mental disturbance increased. This was mostly the case with the security guards of Quadro, rumoured by the cadres to be caused by the brutalities they unleashed against the prisoners. It was this

worsening state of the cadres that made Tambo issue instructions in September 1982 to all the army units to discuss and bring forward proposals to the leadership about the problems in which the ANC was enmeshed.

### **A Change of Forms**

Series of meetings followed and the MK cadres, thirsty to exploit this oasis of democracy which the ANC president had decided to have them taste, levelled bitter criticisms about the state of our organization. Once again the issue of the need for a conference was put forward. Among the questions raised by the paper issued by Tambo was what our response would be if the South African military decided to attack Mozambique. Were we ready to lay down our lives for a common cause with the Mozambican people? This question was treated by the combatants in a simplistic way, for it bore no significance to the nature of the problems we were faced with in the ANC. But the answer to it was right, in that the cadres emphasized the importance of intensifying armed action in South Africa, rather than fighting in foreign territories.

The reasoning behind such an approach by the MK cadres stemmed from their realization of the weakness of our army, both numerically and in relation to the quality of training. This was a time when the heroic P.L.O. guerrillas were locked into bloody battles against the invading Israeli army in Lebanon. One could not but call this to mind eight months later, when the overwhelming majority of our armed forces were mobilized for counter-insurgency operation against Unita in the Malanje and Kwanza provinces. One could not but note the similarities when Tambo appealed to the MK forces to 'bleed a little in defence of the beleaguered Angolan people,' as he addressed the MK forces in preparation for launching a raid against the Unita bases across the Kwanza River.

With the discussions over and papers from different camps submitted to the leadership, Masondo took rounds in all the camps expressing the disappointment of President Tambo about papers submitted from Pango camp and Viana. Claiming to be echoing the views of President Tambo, he said the papers were 'unreadable' and that Tambo had not expected that this opportunity would be used for launching attacks against the leadership and military authorities.

In April 1983, some structural changes were announced. The Revolutionary Council, adopted at the 1969 Morogoro Conference, was abolished by the NEC and a new body was set up, the Political Military Council (PMC). Announcements of personnel to man the Political Council and the Military Council were also made. The mere mention that Joe Modise would remain the army commander demoralized many cadres, who had speculated that he would be sacked as commander after rumours that he had been arrested in Botswana for diamond dealing (some cadres were severely punished for



circulating that account) and because of his dismal failure to lead our army into meaningful battles against the South African racist regime.

All the changes announced by the NEC became meaningless and a farce for the armed forces. Meaninglessness stemmed from the fact that the cadres had come to realize that the change of structures was not the main issue: the personnel that manned these positions had to be changed. Their farcical nature derived from realization by the membership that these changes had been advanced to forestall any demands for a democratic conference where the NEC could be subjected to scrutiny. This contempt for the demands and ideas of the grassroots, at a time when the balance of forces was turning in disfavour of the leadership, could only have the result that the ANC would pay dearly for it. To understand this scornful behaviour, one needs to understand the deep-seated Stalinist ideological leanings of the ANC leadership. We will consider this later. For now, having briefly set out the general outline of the background to the 1984 mutiny, let us examine the course of events.

### **The Mutiny at Viana**

Having received a dressing down from the rebellious armed forces at Kanguandala on 12 January 1984, and having been presented with a package of demands, Chris Hani sped back to Caculama where he delivered the news to Tambo and his NEC. During his address that afternoon in the camp at Caculama, which was composed overwhelmingly of new trainees, President Tambo felt the need to introduce his NEC to the recruits and to lay stress on certain political issues. Pointing at the NEC members on the rostrum, he said: 'This is the political leadership of the ANC....,' and suddenly turning his eyes to a man next to him,, he declared: 'This man founded this army...,' patting him on his shoulder. That man was Joe Modise, the man whom the armed forces, in their majority, were saying should be deposed.

Acclaimed as a man of wisdom, a man no-one could match in the way he had led the ANC, President Tambo saw the need even at that hour to firmly entrench Joe Modise in the MK commanding position. Tambo did not see a need to respond to the calls of the cadres to come and address them, in spite of the fact that he was only an hour's drive away. But, perhaps, nobody knows about armed soldiers, and the life of the most important man must be secured. Tambo and his entourage left Caculama for Luanda that same evening, without having addressed even a message to the mutineers.

No sooner had the NEC left for Luanda than mutiny began to grow to higher levels. The whole of the Eastern Front was engulfed in sounds of gunshots, and there were stronger demands for the closure of the front and the deviation of the whole manpower to a war against Pretoria. A few days later word came from the NEC that the front would be closed and that all the soldiers must prepare themselves to leave Malanje for Luanda, where they

would meet with the ANC leadership. The first convoy of a truckload of guerrillas left, followed by a second the following day, all eager for the meeting which they expected to put the ANC on a new footing.

Located at the outskirts of the capital city, Luanda, the ANC transit camp of Viana had been evacuated of all personnel, who had been sent to an ANC area in Luanda to prevent contact with the mutineers. Strict orders were circulated by the ANC security personnel that nobody in the district of Luanda should visit Viana or have any form of contact with the mutineers. Guerrillas from the Malanje Front entered Viana in a gun salute, shooting in the air with all the weapons in hand. Later the security personnel in Viana, under the command of a man known as Pro—a former security guard at Quadro and then also a camp commander at Viana, also very notorious among the mutinying guerrillas—demanded that every soldier surrender his weapons, explaining the danger they posed to the capital. The demand was dismissed summarily with the reason that arms provided security for the mutineers against the reprisals the security department would launch, given that situation. Instead, all the security personnel within the premises of the camp were searched and disarmed, but never even once were they pointed at with weapons. The administration of the camp deserted to other ANC establishments in Luanda.

In one of the metal containers, used for detention, a corpse was found with a bullet hole in the head. It was the corpse of Solly [not to be confused with the earlier named Solly], one of the strong critics of the ANC military leadership. At some stage he had tasted the bitter treatment of the security department and had in the process got his mind slightly disturbed. At the news of the mutiny in Malanje he had become vociferous and fearless, and that was the mistake of a lifetime.

That same day, some crews of guerrillas volunteered to round-up ANC establishments in Luanda to explain their cause and to understand the political positions of others. Even though this was a dangerous mission, given the mobility of the ANC security personnel in Luanda and the likely collaboration with them of FAPLA [armed forces of the Angolan state, controlled by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA], the task was fulfilled. That very same day again, people from all ANC establishments came streaming to Viana to join and support the mutineers. The efforts of the leadership to isolate the mutineers were shattered and they resorted to force by laying ambushes to attack those who were travelling to Viana with guns. In one such an encounter, Chris Hani, with an AK submachine gun, made his appearance on the side of the loyalists by chasing and firing at those who wanted to join the mutineers. For the first time since the mutiny began, a series of mass meetings were held in an open ground in Viana. Everybody was allowed to attend, even members of the security department.

## **The Demand for Democracy**

It was in these mass meetings that the political essence of this rebellion began to solidify. A committee was elected by the guerrillas themselves, to take control of the situation and serve as their representative in meetings with the leadership. This body, which became known as the Committee of Ten, was chaired by Zaba Maledza (his travelling name). Zaba was a former black consciousness activist in the South African Students' Organization (SASO) during the days of Steve Biko who had joined the ANC in exile during the early seventies and served as one of the foremost propagandists in the ANC Radio programmes alongside Duma Nokhwe. A brother to Curtis Nkondo, one of the leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in South Africa, Zaba had landed in Quadro in 1980 after some disagreements with the ANC military leadership while working for the movement in Swaziland, and was released in 1982. He then rejoined the Radio Broadcasting staff of the ANC in Luanda, where his unwavering opposition to men like Piliso and Modise, and his clarity of mind, had earned him the respect of both friends and foes within the ANC, something which even the ANC security begrudgingly appreciated.

Other members of the Committee of Ten, their real names given in brackets, included: 1. Sidwell Moroka (Omry Makgale), who was formerly Tambo's personal bodyguard and was one of the group of security personnel who were punished by being sent to Angola following a mop-up operation in Lusaka in 1981. At the outbreak of the mutiny he was the district chief of staff in Luanda; 2. Jabu Mofolo, who was at that time the political commissar of the Amandla Cultural Ensemble, 3. Bongani Matwa, formerly a camp commissar in Camalundi, 4. Kate Mhlongo (Nomfanelo Ntlokwana), at that time part of the Radio Propaganda Staff in Luanda, 5. Grace Mofokeng, also attached to the Radio Staff; 6. Moses Thema (Mbulelo Musi), a former student at the Moscow Party School and at that time serving as the head of the political department at Caxito camp, 7. Siphon Mathebula (E. Mndebela), formerly a battalion commander at the Eastern Front; 8. Mwezi Twala (Khotso Morena) and 9. Simon Botha (Sindile Velem).

Also adopted at those meetings was a set of demands addressed to the ANC National Executive Committee. They were:

1. An immediate suspension of the Security Department and establishment of a commission to investigate its all-round activities. Included here was also the investigation of one of the most feared secret camps of the ANC, Quadro.
2. A review of the cadre policy of the ANC to establish the missing links that were a cause for a stagnation that had caught up with our drive to expand the armed struggle.
3. To convene a fully representative democratic conference to review the development of the struggle, draw new strategies and have elections for a new NEC.

The demands were a backhand blow in the face of the ANC leadership. They threatened to explode the whole myth of a 'tried and tested' leadership. No wonder Chris Hani, in one of those tense and emotionally charged meetings, in bewilderment retorted: 'You are pushing us down the cliff! You are stabbing us at the back!' And like a cornered beast they used everything within their reach to destroy their opponents. Election of people to leadership positions was long preached and accepted as unworkable within the ANC. The last conference had been held in 1969 in Morogoro, and it had also come about as a result of a critical situation which threatened to break the ANC, and as a result of pressure from below. The very elevation of Oliver Tambo from the deputy presidency in 1977, something that never received support at Morogoro, was done behind the backs of the entire membership, without even prior discussion or announcement. Not that it did not have the support of the membership, but such decisions in a politically prestigious body such as the ANC needed at least a semblance of democracy, even if a sugar-coating.

The demand for a conference had been deviated in 1981 through the discovery of a 'spy-ring', and all those who talked about it then, feared even the word thereafter. When the same demand had been voiced out in 1982, the ANC leadership came out with its own fully worked-out changes and structures without the participation of the membership, even changing structures adopted at the past conference. And this time, as Joe Modise said later, a group of soldiers thought they could send the ANC leadership to a conference room 'at gunpoint'. Those demands were clearly unacceptable to the leadership.

### **Commission of Inquiry, And After**

In anticipation of a heavy-handed reaction from the ANC leadership, the committee members felt it was necessary to secure protection by the people of South Africa and the world. Placards calling for a political solution and reading 'No to Bloodshed, We Need Only a Conference' were plastered on the walls of Viana camp. Journalists were called, but they were never given the slightest chance to get nearer the mutineers. Two men, Diliza Dumakude and Zanempi Sihlangu, both of them members of the Radio Propaganda Staff, were intercepted by the security personnel and murdered while on their way to the studios of Radio Freedom.

While all this was happening, the presidential brigade of FAPLA (the Angolan army) was being mobilized and prepared to launch of an armed raid on Viana. The decision was that the whole mutiny must be drowned in blood. The ANC could not be forced by soldiers to a conference hall 'at gunpoint'. Early the following day, the mutineers were woken up by the noise of military trucks and armoured personnel carriers (APCs) as the forces of FAPLA encircled the camp. An exchange of fire ensued as the guerrillas retaliated to the attack with their arms. Shortly thereafter, shouts of 'Ceasefire' emerged

from one of the firing positions and Callaghan Chama (Vusi Shange), one of the commanders of the guerrillas, rose out of a trench beseeching for peace. One MK combatant, Babsey Mlangeni (travelling name), and one FAPLA soldier were already dead and an Angolan APC was on the retreat engulfed in flame.

What followed were negotiations between the national chief of staff of FAPLA, Colonel Ndalo, and the Committee of Ten. An agreement was reached after lengthy discussions with the guerrillas, with the Angolans trying to convince them that there would be no victimizations. Weapons were surrendered to the FAPLA commanders and they promised to provide security for everybody who was in Viana, and that even the ANC security would be disarmed. Two members of the OAU Liberation Committee arrived together with Chris Hani, who delivered a boastful address denouncing the whole mutiny and its demands as an adventure instigated by disgruntled elements. Then the usual political rhetoric followed, that the ANC was an organization of the people of South Africa, and that those mutineers were not even a drop in an ocean and that the ANC could do without them. To demonstrate this, Hani called on all those who were still committed to serve as ANC members to move out of the hall. The hall was left empty. All the mutineers were still committed to the ideals of the ANC, they were committed to ANC policies. Nevertheless, they could discern deviations from the democratic norms proclaimed in those policy documents and declared on public platforms. It was a concern for this that had forced them to use arms in conditions where criticism of the leadership and democratic election of NEC members by the rank and file was branded as counter-revolutionary.

During the period of these events, another rebellion was breaking out in Caculama, the very camp in which President Tambo had delivered his address about the illegitimacy of the mutiny which had then been in progress in Kangandala. Some groups of trained guerrillas and officers, including the staff unit commissar, Bandile Ketelo (Jacky Molefe), moved out of the camp, boarding trucks and trains to join and support the mutineers at Viana. The training programme for the new recruits came to an abrupt stop, and this was another slap in the face of the ANC leadership because Caculama camp was their last hope to counterbalance the popularity of the mutiny. With the support from Caculama, the mutiny acquired a 90 per cent majority among the whole trained forces of MK in Angola, which was then the only country where the ANC had guerrilla camps.

The Angolan government authorities played a very dishonest role thereafter. They began to throttle this popular unrest in collaboration with the ANC security, dishonouring all the agreements they had made with the guerrillas. The security personnel of the ANC were allowed to enter the camp armed, which was defended by the Angolan armed forces with their weapons. Later Joe Modise and Andrew Masondo arrived, together with five men from headquarters in Lusaka. The five men, James Stuart, Sizakhele Sigxashe, Tony Mongalo, Aziz Pahad and Mbuyiselo Dywili, were introduced as a

commission of inquiry set up on the instructions of Oliver Tambo to examine the whole episode. The following day, 16 February 1984, a group of about thirty guerrillas, including all the members of the Committee of Ten, were shoved with gun barrels of the ANC security into a waiting military vehicle of FAPLA. The tension that had captured the moment was eased when a group of guerrillas inside the closed truck broke out into a song, *Akekh' uMandela, usentilongweni, Saze saswel' ikomand' ingenatyala* (Mandela is not here, he is in prison, we have lost a commander). The trucks and some ANC security officers left for the Maximum State Security Prison in Luanda, where the guerrillas were locked up. The rest of the mutineers in Viana were transported to the two camps of the ANC north of Luanda, Quibaxe and Pango. Once again the Angolan authorities dishonoured the forces of change within the ANC, and added another point in their collaboration to abort a drive to veer the ANC towards democracy.

The mutineers in prison in Luanda were thrown into dark, damp cells with very minimal ventilation. The cells had cement slab beds without mattresses and blankets, and the toilets in the cells were blocked with shit spilling out. The gallery in which the mutineers were held was the one which housed Unita prisoners, and it had last preference in all prison supplies, including food. Starvation and lack of water was so acute that prisoners were collapsing and dying of hunger and thirst, the only ones surviving being those who were allowed visits from their families and relatives, who even brought them water from their homes.

Several days later, the commission of inquiry arrived at the prison led by James Stuart [a former trade unionist and ANC stalwart from the 1940s]. Interviews and recording of statements followed. Five questions were asked:

1. What are the causes of the unrest?
2. What role have you played in the mutiny?
3. Why do you want a national conference?
4. What can you say about the role of the enemy in this?
5. What do you think can be done to improve the state of affairs in the army?

In the process of these interviews, those in prison were joined by Vuyisile Maseko (Xolile Siphunzi), who had some head injuries he had received while resisting arrest in one of the ANC centres in Luanda. He had then decided to explode a grenade inside the military vehicle in which he was being transported, which contained also Chris Hani and Joe Modise, who had accompanied a group of security personnel to round up those who had escaped arrest in Viana. Hani and Modise managed to escape unharmed, and in the confusion that ensued Hani issued instructions to the security personnel to shoot Maseko on the spot, but Modise had intervened, saying 'he (Maseko) must go and suffer first'. He had since 'suffered', and was left in prison in Luanda when most of the mutineers were released in December 1988, where he probably still is, if not dead now.

## **Interrogation and Torture in Luanda**

The James Stuart Commission concluded its work after more than a week. What followed were interrogations conducted by the security department under two of the most notorious security officers, Itumeleng and Morris Seabelo. These interrogations were conducted not in the way the ANC security was used to. This was because, firstly, the armed revolts that had surprisingly engulfed the whole army had been characterized by open denunciation of the ANC leadership and a call to investigate the crimes of the security department and Quadro. It was a great shock to the entire leadership of the ANC to learn about their unpopularity within the army. They therefore had to exercise caution in dealing with those arrested so as not to confirm the allegations of atrocities that they were accused of, and they therefore had to restrain their interrogation teams. Secondly, the Angolan State Security Prison contained a lot of foreigners from different parts of the world, and the Angolan authorities had to make sure that those prisoners did not leave prison confirming the brutalities of the ANC security.

But if you are trained and used to extracting information through beatings and torture, it becomes difficult to sustain a laborious and tedious process of interrogation without falling back to your usual habit. So, here too, they started becoming impatient with this sluggish method, and they resorted to torture and beatings. The prison became more often than not filled with screams from the interrogation rooms as the security personnel began beating up mutineers, hitting them with fists and whipping them with electric cables underneath their feet to avoid traces. Kate Mhlongo, a woman who was a member of the Committee of Ten, had to be hospitalized in the prison wards for injuries sustained under interrogation, followed by Grace Mofokeng, who was also subjected to beatings.

The mutineers decided to take the matter up with the Angolan prison authorities and, in particular, with a Cuban major who was at the top of the prison administration. Promises were made by the prison authorities to stop the torture, but the beatings continued and no action was taken. When Angolan and foreign prisoners began to express their indignation to the authorities about these tortures, beatings and screams, the ANC prisoners decided to take action themselves. In mid-March they embarked on a hunger strike, demanding an immediate end to physical abuses, that they be charged and tried or released immediately, and that President Tambo himself should intervene and understand the political position of the mutineers. The hunger strike was broken up in its second week when the ANC security took away to Quadro about eleven prisoners, including Zaba Maledza (chairman of the Committee of Ten) and Sidwell Moroka.

The ANC security complained that Luanda prison was a 'Five Star Hotel' and felt that we were taking advantage of that. They told us that they would take us to 'ANC prisons' where we would never even think of taking any action to secure our release. The ANC interrogation team was saying that the mutiny

was an enemy-orchestrated move to oust the leadership of President Tambo, and they wanted to know who was behind this. They could not accept it as spontaneous, and to confirm that they cited the sudden response of support the mutiny got from all the centres of the ANC in Luanda. Coming out of one of those interrogation sessions in Luanda prison, Zaba Maledza pointed out that the ANC security had decided to frame him up as the one responsible for the whole unrest. They had questioned him about his relationship with [first name?] Mkhize, the chairman of the ANC Youth Section Secretariat, who had paid a visit from Lusaka to Angola shortly before the outbreak. Mkhize had since been deposed from the Youth Secretariat by the NEC.

Later in March while still in Luanda prison, we were joined by Khotso Morena (Mwezi Twala), who had been in military hospital following an incident in which he had been shot from behind in the presence of Joe Modise and Chris Hani during their round-up of other mutineers. A bullet had pierced through his lung and got out through his front, and he was still in a critical condition. Later still, in April, another three men were imprisoned for their role in the mutiny. The conditions in the prison were worsening and almost everyone was sick, their bodies skeletal and emaciated by lack of food and water. Some began to suffer from anaemia. Their bodies were swollen because of the dampness of the cells, which they were not allowed to leave for exercise or to bask in the sun like the other prisoners. To make things worse, the prison itself had no medicines or qualified medical doctors and all our efforts to appeal to the ANC security personnel to grant us medical treatment, which we knew they could afford better than the Angolan government, were ridiculed. They said the mutineers 'chose to leave the camps, and what was there was only for committed ANC members.'

In that 'Five Star Hotel', Selby Mbele and Ben Thibane lost their lives in a very pathetic way. Selby was speeded to an outside military hospital through the pressure of the mutineers themselves when he was already losing his breath, and he died the same day in the intensive care wards. Ben Thibane was also speedily admitted into an internal prison hospital on a Saturday evening, again through the pressure of his colleagues, at a time when he could hardly walk. In spite of his critical condition, he did not receive any treatment and he lost his life early the following Monday. Both these deaths happened within a space of ten days of each other. With a clear probability of more deaths to follow, the Angolan prison authorities and the ANC leadership were in a state of panic. It was only then that we were allowed, for the very first time, after nine months in that prison, to go out of the dark cells and do some exercises in the sun. Lawrence, a Cuban-trained ANC security official, who coordinated between ANC security and the Angolan prison authorities, for the first time brought us some medicines and even two ANC doctors, Peter Mfelana and Hagggar, to examine us. He also brought some food from ANC centres outside.

In February 1985, we received the first visit in Luanda prison from the leadership of the ANC: from Chris Hani, John Motsabi (who died in 1986



after he was taken out of the NEC at the Kabwe Conference in 1985) and John Redi, the director of ANC security. The meeting, which was held in one of the lounges of the Maximum Security Prison, was never fruitful as the guerrillas for the first time levelled bitter criticisms directly at Chris Hani for the treacherous role he had played in suppressing the mutiny. They further called directly on him to stage a public trial of the mutineers. Hani tried his best to defend his position and announced that the NEC had decided to hold a conference. 'The ANC is committed to justice,' he said, and the mutineers would be given a 'fair trial'. He left the prison ashamed of himself. From that time on, Chris Hani, who had managed to win the support of the armed forces before the outbreak of mutiny through false promises, would never even wish to meet with the mutineers on an open platform, except with them as prisoners.

### **From the Pango Revolt to Public Executions**

It will do at this stage to go back a bit, and have a look at one of the bloodiest episodes in the history of MK. This was in Pango camp in May 1984, two months after the suppression of the mutiny and the arrest of the first group at Viana. After the group considered to be the main instigators and ringleaders of the mutiny had been arrested on 16 February, the remaining soldiers at Viana were transported in military vehicles to two camps of the ANC to the north of Luanda, Pango and Quibaxe. These two were the oldest camps of the ANC in Angola and had been evacuated following a mobilization of the whole army in preparation for the war against Unita, leaving them with only a few guerrillas to man their defences. On their arrival, the guerrillas from Viana had to go through interviews with the Stuart Commission. With this over and the commission gone, life began to be tough for the mutineers as the authorities of the camp—composed squarely of those who were loyal to the military leadership—started enforcing castigative rules on people whose emotional indignation at the ANC leadership had barely settled.

A course was introduced arrogantly called 'reorientation'. The political motives behind that were not difficult to know. Mutiny had to be understood as the work of enemy provocateurs, who had been detained, while others had just been blind followers who had fallen prey to their manipulation. The immediate response of the whole group of guerrillas was negative, arguing that their demand for a conference was not disorientation and that they saw no need for the course. Through intimidation, some of the mutineers conformed to pressure to undertake the course but another group refused to comply. It is worth noting that the only people who had weapons in the camp were those loyal to the leadership, and fear and panic had gripped some of the guerrillas about the possible retaliation of the ANC security. Already by that time the security department was conducting interrogations on soldiers, and had been detaining others secretly and sending them to Quadro. The fate of those still in Luanda prison was becoming a concern of everyone, and

a serious state of insecurity had set in. This state of insecurity and harassment reached a peak in Pango after some guerrillas had been beaten, tied to trees and imprisoned by the camp security and administration, following an incident in which the camp authorities pointed weapons at a 'culprit' who was between them and the assembled guerrillas.

That Sunday, 13 May 1984, the guerrillas stormed the ANC armoury in Pango camp, disarmed the guards and shot one who refused to surrender his weapon, injuring him. Having laid their hands on the weapons, gun battles ensued throughout the night between the rebel guerrillas and those loyal to the administration of the camp. Zenzile Phungulwa, who was the camp commissar and a staunch defender of the status quo, Wilson Sithole, a staff commissar, Duke Maseko (another loyalist) and a security guard who was guarding prisoners in the camp prison were killed during the fighting that night. Cromwell Qwabe was found dead in the bush with bullet holes; Mvula and Norman were missing in combat. The camp commander and other forces loyal to the administration managed to escape and the camp was occupied and run by the mutineers.

The mutineers tried to reach the local authorities of the nearest town to report the matter, but the squad was intercepted by the security forces and after a short battle managed to retreat safely. It became clear then that the ANC commanders had mobilized a crack force of all its loyal cadres in all its camps and establishments in Angola, and they were encircling the guerrilla base. Running battles ensued from five o'clock in the morning the following Friday and continued the whole day as forces under Timothy Mokoena, then a regional commander in Angola and now the army commissar of MK, and Raymond Monageng (then regional chief of staff of MK, arrested in 1988 by the ANC as an enemy plant) struggled to overcome the camp occupied by the mutineers. At dusk that same day the battle ended. About fourteen guerrillas were down, and a lot more captured from the side of the mutineers.

Some managed to break out of the encirclement and marched through the bushes further up north. Those captured were subjected to beatings and tortures under interrogation, with melting plastic dripped on their naked bodies and private parts, whipped while tied to trees and forced under torture to exhume the bodies of the ANC loyalists who had died several days before and wash them for a heroic burial. A military tribunal was set up shortly thereafter, headed by Sizakhele Sigxashe, now head of ANC Intelligence, and composed predominantly of security personnel such as Morris Seabelo, a former commander and commissar at Quadro, and at that time chief of security in the whole of the Angola region of MK. Seven men were summarily sentenced to death by public execution by firing squad. They were James Nkabinde (one of Tambo's former bodyguards), Ronald Msomi, Bullet (Mbumbulu), Thembile Hobo, Mahero, Wandile Ondala and Stopper.

Motivated by a genuine desire to democratize the ANC and push it forward to higher levels of armed confrontation for people's freedom, they demonstrated a bravery and a spirit of sacrifice as they walked tall to the firing

squad which shocked even their executioners, not budging an inch from the demand for a national conference and the release of their imprisoned colleagues. Chris Hani, a man who endorsed their execution, was himself forced to comment that 'had this bravery and self-sacrifice been done for the cause of democracy and freedom in South Africa, it would be praiseworthy.' But history teaches us that the jackboot of autocracy knows no limits, and should therefore be opposed limitlessly, starting from wherever you are.

The executed MK soldiers were buried in a mass grave in Pango. Later in the week a group of about 15 who had managed to break through the encirclement of the loyal forces were caught in the province of Uige. After many days marching through the bush, they had decided to stop at one of the Soviet establishments in the region. After explaining their cause, they requested temporary sanctuary and requested the Soviet officials to inform the Angolan government and the ANC president about the matter. To show that they posed no harm to them and to the local population, they surrendered their weapons to the Soviet-FAPLA authorities. The Soviet officials sent the message to the security department of the ANC, whose personnel arrived in a convoy of military vehicles. The men were surprised in their sleep, tied hand and foot, and under whips, lashings and military boots they were thrown into the trucks, and all the way from there to Pango they were tortured and beaten. In Pango, torture and untold brutalities were unleashed against them, and in the process one of the captured mutineers, Jonga Masupa, died. Others like Mgedeza were found dead in the bushes nearby with bullet holes in them.

The mutineers were kept naked with ropes tied on them for three weeks in the prison at Pango, and any security officer or guards (who had been temporarily withdrawn from Quadro) could satisfy their sadistic lusts on the helpless prisoners. The head of the ANC Women's Section, Gertrude Shope, appeared on the scene from Lusaka at that time and was taken aback by what she saw. She ordered an end to executions and tortures, and that the prisoners should be allowed to get clothes, which was done. Eight of those arrested were taken to Quadro and the rest were given punishments which they served in the camp.

The end of the episode at Pango closed the chapter of armed resistance to enemies of democracy within the ANC. Zaba Maledza, the elected chairman of the Committee of Ten, died in Quadro shortly after these events in an isolation cell in which he had been kept since 16 February. The spectre of these young fighters will never stop haunting those who, for fear of democracy and in defence of their selfish interests at the expense of people's strivings for freedom, had nipped their lives at a budding stage.

### **The Kabwe Conference...and Quadro**

Overwhelmed by shock as a result of the great momentum of the forces for change, the ANC National Executive Committee succumbed. Shortly after

the events at Pango, it announced that it had decided to hold a National Consultative Conference the following year, in June 1985. Defensively, ANC leaders rushed to deny that they had been forced to comply to the demands of the mutineers, and that it was the political situation in South Africa that had made them take this decision. Equivocally, they declared that the conference would not be the type of conference that the mutineers had demanded. And what did they mean?

In April 1985, two months after Chris Hani's visit to the mutineers in the State Security Prison in Luanda and two months before the National Consultative Conference at Kabwe, in Zambia, thirteen mutineers were released from the Luanda prison and one from a group imprisoned in Quadro. Propaganda was whipped up within the ANC membership that those who had been released were innocent cadres who had been misled, and that those remaining in jail were still to be thoroughly investigated. On 12 April, all the remaining mutineers in prison in Luanda were transported to Quadro in handcuffs under a heavy escort of ANC security personnel. What followed, even as the conference proceeded at Kabwe, was their humiliation and dehumanization in a place talked about in whispered tones within the ANC.

Quadro was best described in a terse statement by Zaba Maledza, when he said: 'When you get in there, forget about human rights.' This was a statement from a man who had lived in Quadro during one of the worst periods in its history, 1980-82. Established in 1979, it was supposed to be a rehabilitation centre of the ANC where enemy agents who had infiltrated the ANC would be 're-educated' and would be made to love the ANC through the opportunity to experience the humane character of its ideals. Regrettably, through a process that still cries for explanation, Quadro became worse than any prison than even the apartheid regime - itself considered a crime against humanity - had ever had. However bitter the above statement, however disagreeable to the fighters against the monstrous apartheid system, it is a truth that needs bold examination by our people, and the whole of the ANC membership. To examine the history of Quadro is to uncover the concealed forces that operate in a political organization such as the ANC.

Quadro, officially known as Camp 32, was renamed after Morris Seabelo (real name Lulamile Dantile), one of its first and trusted commanders. He was a Soviet-trained intelligence officer, a student at the Moscow Party Institution and a publicized young hero of the South African Communist Party. In late 1985 he mysteriously lost his life in an underground ANC residence in Lesotho, where none of those he was with, including Nomkhosi Mini, was spared to relate the story. Located about 15km from the town of Quibaxe north of Luanda, Quadro was one of the most feared of the secret camps of the ANC to which only a selected few in the ANC leadership (viz., Mzwandile Piliso, Joe Modise, Andrew Masondo and also the then general secretary of the SACP, Moses Mabhida) had access. The administration of the camp was limited to members of the security forces, mostly young members of the underground SACP. Such were most of its administrative

staff: for example, Sizwe Mkhonto, also a GDR–Soviet trained intelligence officer and former political student at the Moscow Party Institution, who was camp commander for a long time; Afrika Nkwe, also Soviet intelligence and a politically trained officer, who was a senior commander and commissar at Quadro, with occasional relapses of mental illness; Griffiths Seboni; Cyril Burton, Itumeleng, all falling within the same categories, to name but a few.

The security guards and warders were drawn from the young and politically naive fanatic supporters of the military leadership of Modise and Tambo, who kept to strict warnings about secrecy. They are not allowed to talk to anyone about anything that takes place in an ‘ANC Rehabilitation Centre.’ The prisoners themselves are transported blindfolded and lying flat on the floor of the security vehicle taking them there. Upon arrival in the camp they are given new pseudonyms and are strictly limited to know only their cellmates, and cannot peep through the windows. From whatever corner they emerge, or any turn they take within the premises of the prison, they must seek ‘permission to pass’. Any breaches of these rules of secrecy, whether intentional or a mistake, are seriously punishable by beatings and floggings. To crown it all, when prisoners are being released they must sign a document committing them never to release any form of information relating to their conditions of stay in the prison camp, and never to disclose their activities there or the forms of punishment meted out to them.

The place has seven communal cells, some of which used to be storerooms for the Portuguese colonisers, and five isolation cells, crowded so much that a mere turn of a sleeping position by a single prisoner would awaken the whole cell. With minimal ventilation, conditions were suffocating, dark and damp even in the dry and hot Angolan climate. Even Tambo was forced to comment, when he visited the place for the first time in August 1987, that the cells were too dark and suffocating. In every cell there is a corner reserved for 5-litre bottle-like plastic containers covered with cardboard, which serves as a toilet where to the eyes of all cellmates you are expected to relieve yourself. With a strong stench coming from the toilet area and lice-infected blanket rags that stay unwashed for months or even years on end, the prison authorities would keep the doors wide open and perhaps light perfumed lucky sticks before visiting ANC leaders could enter the cells. Outside, the premises of the camp are so clean from the beaten and forced prison labour that again Tambo found himself commenting: ‘The camp is very clean and beautiful, but the mood and atmosphere inside the cells is very gloomy.’

### **In the Hands of the SACP**

The life activity of the inmates at Quadro is characterized by aggressive physical and psychological humiliation that can only be well documented by the efforts of all the former prisoners and perhaps honest security guards combined. Confronted by questions from the MK combatants before the outbreak of the mutiny, Botiki, one of the former detainees who had lived

through camp life in Quadro during its worst period, simply answered: 'What I've seen there is frightening and incredible.' For a long time, Quadro had been a place of interest to many cadres, and it was so difficult to get knowledge of the place from ex-detainees. The ANC security had instilled so much fear in them that they hardly had any hopes that the situation could be changed. The meek behaviour and fear of authority shown by ex-detainees, the intimidating and domineering posture of the security personnel, attempted and successful suicides committed by ex-prisoners such as Leon Madakeni, Mark, and Nonhlanhla Makhuba when faced with the possibility of re-arrest, and the common mental disturbance of the guards and personnel at Quadro, and what they talked about in their deranged state, threw light on what one was likely to expect in this 'rehabilitation centre.'

In Quadro the prisoners were given invective names that were meant to destroy them psychologically, names 'closely reflecting the crimes committed by the prisoners.' Among the mutineers, we had Zaba Maledza named Muzorewa, after a world-known traitor in Zimbabwe; Sidwell Moroka was named Dolincheck, a Yugoslav mercenary involved in a coup attempt in the Seychelles; Maxwell Moroaledi was named *Mgoqozi*, a Zulu name for an instigator; and there were many other extremely rude names that cannot be written here. Otherwise, generally every prisoner was called *umdlwembe*, a political bandit.

The daily routine started at six with the emptying of toilet chambers, during which prisoners would run down to a big pit under whipping from 'commanders' (security guards) who lined the way to the pits. After this, prisoners would be allowed to wash from a single quarter-drum container at incredible speed. The whole prisoner population was washing from a single container, with water unchanged, taking turns as they went out to dispose of the 'chambers.' The last cells out would suffer most, because they would find water very little and very dirty. The very activity of prisoners washing was a very big concession, because before 1985 it was not even considered necessary for the prisoners to wash and they were infested with lice. Each group of prisoners was required to use literally one minute to wash and any delay would lead to serious beatings.

Back to the cell after washing in the open ground, the prisoners of Quadro would be given breakfast which would either be tea or a piece of bread, or sometimes a soup of beans or even tea. They were normally given spoiled food that was rejected by the cadres of the ANC in the camps, and it was normally half-cooked by the beaten, insulted and frightened prisoners. The two other meals, lunch and supper, were usually mealie meal and beans, or rice and beans, sometimes in extremely large quantities, which you were forced to eat. To make certain that you had eaten all, there was an irregular check of toilet chambers to detect a breach of this regulation. Alongside the emaciated prisoners there were security guards who lived extravagantly, drinking beer every week: privileges unknown in other ANC establishments. During periods of extreme shortages of food for the prisoners, those who

were working would bank their hopes on the left—overs from the tables of the security officers and guards.

Simultaneously with the taking of breakfast, those who wished to visit the medical point would be allowed out. A clinic at Quadro was one of the most horrible places to visit. Usually manned by half-baked and very brutal personnel, a visit to the clinic usually resulted in beatings of sick people and a very inhuman treatment for the prisoners. Errol, one of the mutineers, who had problems with his swelling leg, was subjected to such inconsiderate treatment and beatings whenever he visited the clinic that he finally lost his life. Some prisoners would be forced to go to work while sick, for fear of revealing their state of health that would land them in the clinic. Even reporting your sickness needed a very careful choice of words. For instance, if you had been injured during beatings by the 'commanders', you were not supposed to say that you had been beaten. In Quadro, the 'commanders' don't beat prisoners, they 'correct' them: this was the way the propaganda went. 'A prisoner receives a corrective measure.'

After the prisoners had shined the boots of the commanders and ironed their uniforms, at eight o'clock the time for labour would begin. In Quadro there are certain cells that are earmarked for hard and hazardous labour. During this period, the cells predominantly containing mutineers were subjected to the hardest tasks. Lighter duties such as cooking and cleaning the surroundings were given to other groups of prisoners, while the mutineers carried out other work such as chopping wood and cutting logs, digging trenches and constructing dug-outs, and—most feared of all—pushing the water tank up a steep and rough road.

### A South African Labour Process

Every kind of work at Quadro is done with incredible speed. Prisoners are not allowed to walk: they are always expected to be on the double from point to point in the camp. The group that is chopping wood would leave the camp at eight to search for a suitable tree to fell. Everybody had to have an implement, an axe. With work starting after eight, chopping would continue without a break until twelve, and you were not even expected to appear tired. 'A bandit doesn't get tired,' so goes the saying. Whipping with coffee tree sticks, trampling by military boots, blows with fists and claps on your inflated cheeks (known as *ukumpompa*) became part of the labour process. A work quota you are expected to accomplish is so unreasonable and you are liable to a serious punishment for any failure to fulfil it. Many prisoners at Quadro had their ears damaged internally because of *ukumpompa*, which was sometimes done by using canvas shoes or soles of sandals for beating the prisoners. The same situation prevailed in other duties. Unreasonably heavy logs for dug-outs had to be carried up the slopes. Every prisoner was cautious to get a piece of cloth for himself to cushion the heavy logs so as to protect his

shoulders, but you would still find prisoners doing these duties with patches of bruises incurred through this labour form.

The most feared duty in Quadro was the pushing of the huge water tank, normally drawn by heavy military trucks, by the prisoners themselves for a distance of about three or four kilometres from the water reservoir to the camp. Like cattle, they would struggle with the tank and the 'commanders' wielding sticks would be around whipping prisoners like slaves whenever they felt like it or when the pace was too slow.

Prisoners in Quadro behaved like frightened zombies who would nervously jump in panic just at the sight of commanders, let alone at a rebuke or a beating. In the process of these beatings during labour time, prisoners who could not cope with the work were sometimes beaten to death. Such was the death of one prisoner who died from blows on the back of his head from Leonard Maweni, one of the security guards. Two others were unable to carry some heavy planks from a place far away from the camp, after the truck that had been carrying them broke down. Upon arrival in the camp they were summoned from their cell, under instructions from Dan Mashigo, who was the camp's chief of staff, and were taken for flogging at a spot near the camp. One never came back to the cell, and the other one died a short while after returning to his cell.

This was in complete conflict with what Dexter Mbona—the security chief in Quadro and later ANC regional chief of security in Angola—told the mutineers when addressing them on their very first day of arrival. On that occasion, he said: 'This camp is not a prison but a rehabilitation centre, and it has changed from what you portrayed it to be during the time of Mkatashingo [the mutiny].' Quadro was still a place of daily screams and pleas for mercy from physically abused prisoners. Saturday was the worst. It was a day of strip and cell searches, the 'commanders' would enter each cell with sticks and the search would commence. At the slightest mistake made by a single prisoner as a result of panic, the whole cell would be in for it, and to drown the noise of their screams, other cells would be instructed to sing.

As already hinted, the whole matter about this camp needs to be investigated to establish who were the masterminds behind these gross violations of human rights. Both psychologically and physically, the camp has done a lot of damage to those who unfortunately found themselves imprisoned there. Some have become psychological wrecks, while others have contracted sicknesses such as epileptic fits: for instance, Mazolani Skhwebu, Hamba Zondi and Mzwandile, three colleagues of the mutineers who were left in Quadro when other members of the group were released in 1988. What is certain is that Andrew Masondo, Mzwandile Piliso and Joe Modise were highly involved in these sinister political machinations. But was the topmost leadership of the ANC unaware? Let justice take its course, and with fairness and honesty let nothing be concealed from the people of South Africa.



## From Quadro to Dakawa

Such were the conditions of imprisonment in which the mutineers were held without trial for almost five years, with the sole purpose of breaking their commitment to the democratization of the organization they loved. Occasional visits by the leadership of the ANC only served further to frustrate the rebel inmates, to drive them to admit their guilt and to reduce them to tools manipulated by enemy provocateurs. But, if anything, the conditions in Quadro confirmed the justness of their cause and strengthened their commitment to cleanse the ANC of such filth.

The conference on which the detained mutineers had banked their hopes materialized at Kabwe on 16 June 1985, but to their disappointment it never carried out the expected reforms. The delegation from Angola, the main centre of internal strife, was predominantly composed of selected favourites of the ANC military leadership, who drowned the few who were sent with them as a compromise to give the conference a semblance of representativeness and democracy. The presidential report of O.R. Tambo never even touched the events that had rocked the ANC and led to so much bloodshed, and which had forced the convening of the conference. When the issues behind the mutiny were put on the table by some of the cadres from Angola, the matter was hushed up by Tambo under the pretext that it could divide the ANC. Mr Nelson Mandela had sent a statement to the conference appealing for unity and rallying support for the leadership of Tambo, and it was tactically read at the opening of the conference. It was a further weight against the rebels. Unity, once again, as always, was pushed forward at the expense of a fair and democratic solution of the problems that had beset the ANC. The culprits were saved and further strengthened their positions within the ANC. It was a miscarriage of justice.

Members of the National Executive Committee were to be elected from a list of candidates drafted by Tambo. At the end of the conference we were confronted by our jailers in Quadro and some members of the leadership boasting about unity in the ANC. Our demands for free and fair elections and for an inquiry into the activities and crimes committed by the security apparatus were ridiculed, and they bragged about how isolated the rebels had found themselves in the conference. Pro, one of the camp commanders of Quadro, commented to the mutineers in the cells: 'The people in Lusaka did not even want us to send your lieutenants to the conference, but we insisted here in Angola that they should go, and they experienced bitter isolation when they wanted to raise the disruptive issues of Mkatashingo.' Andrew Masondo was the only one who was sacrificed on the NEC, and that was simply because he was so discredited in Angola that he could not be saved. But the masterminds remained intact.

On 16 November 1988, exactly four years and nine months after the beginning of their imprisonment, the mutineers were summoned to the biggest cell in Quadro. There were about 25 of them in all, and they were

required to sign documents committing them to keep the crimes of Quadro a secret. A security officer signed the same documents, as a witness. After an emotional and angry address by Griffiths Seboni, threatening to shoot anyone who repeated anything concerning such problems within the ANC, the rebels were transported to Luanda and kept secretly in a storeroom to avoid contact with MK cadres. [By this time the international negotiations concerning the removal of Cuban troops from Angola were well under way. The removal of the prisoners from Quadro preceded the departure of the bulk of ANC personnel from Angola—*Eds.*] After two weeks they were secretly taken to the airport and flown to Lusaka, where they were kept in the airport until late at night. The following morning they were transported in an ANC bus to the border between Zambia and Tanzania where, without documents, they were crossed into Tanzania to an ANC Development Centre at Dakawa, near Morogoro. The whole journey took place under the escort of the security personnel and upon arrival in Dakawa they were interviewed by the security officers in one of their bases called the Ruth First Reception Centre. The main purpose of the interview was for the security officers in Tanzania to check on the mutineers' commitment to what had landed them in prison in 1984. To the disappointment of the security officers, the rebels still justified their cause. Again to the disappointment of the security officers, the welcome they received when they came into contact with the community was unbelievably warm and unique.

The political mood within the ANC in exile had remained shaky since the mutiny of 1984. The divisions between the security personnel and the general membership had continued to widen in spite of cosmetic changes of personnel in the apparatus. Piliso had been shifted from heading security to chief of the Development of Manpower Department (DMD), replaced by Sizakhele Sigxashe, who had been part of the commission set up to probe into the details about the mutiny in 1984. Workshops had also been convened to look into the problems of the Security Department, with the aim of reorganizing it in order to change its monstrous face. But these were half-hearted efforts, and could not improve the situation because they evaded the sensitive issues and left out the views of those who had been victims. The old security personnel were, above all, left intact. There was also the pressing issue of the running battles against Unita that had resumed in 1987, in which MK cadres were losing their lives in growing numbers. Armed struggle inside South Africa, one of the central issues in 1984, was caught up in a disturbing state of stagnation. The leadership of the ANC had become more and more discredited among the exiles, and it was hard to find anyone bold enough to defend it with confidence, as was the case earlier. Even within the security personnel you could detect a sense of shame and unease in some of its members. But it was still difficult for the membership to raise their heads, and the ANC security was in control of strategic positions in all structures.

As a result of this political atmosphere within the ANC, frustration and disillusion had set in at most of the ANC centres. Dakawa, where the

ex-Quadro detainees were taken after their release in December 1988, was also trapped in political apathy, with political structures in disarray. The Zonal Political Committees (ZPCs), Zonal Youth Committees (ZYCs), Women's Committees, Regional Political Committees and all the other structures whose membership was elected, were either functioning in semi-capacity or were completely dormant. Only the administrative bodies were in good shape, and this was mainly because their membership was appointed by the headquarters in Lusaka, and was composed of either security or some people loyal and attached to it. These are the structures that, contrary to the ANC policy of superiority of political leadership over administrative and military bodies, wielded great powers in running the establishments and which suffocated political bodies elected by the membership. This state of affairs reveals clearly that after more than 15 years without democracy and elected structures, the ANC was finding it difficult to readjust itself to the democratic procedures it was forced to recognize by the 1985 Kabwe Conference. The leadership found itself much more at home when dealing with administrators than with bodies that drew support from the grassroots. This strangled political structures, and drove many people away from political concern to frustration and indifference.

### **Between Democracy and Dictatorship**

When the mutineers arrived in Dakawa, the political mood began to change as they managed to show the people, and those who had taken part alongside them in Mkatashingo, the need to participate and to demand to participate in all issues of the struggle. They themselves took part in all the labour processes of the Dakawa Development Project and showed a sense of keen interest in political matters. When the ANC secretary-general Alfred Nzo visited Dakawa shortly after their arrival, he commended their example and called on the community to emulate them. He also announced in the same meeting that the ex-detainees should be integrated into the community and were allowed to participate in all structures. This never excited the ex-detainees, who took it for granted that they were full members of the ANC whose rights were unquestionable, even taking account of the leadership's half-hearted and concealed admissions of past errors, and even if the leadership still did capitalize on the methods used by the mutineers.

With the decision to revive the political structures, a general youth meeting was convened on 18 March 1989 and in the elections a Zonal Youth Committee (ZYC) was elected into office, dominated by former detainees and other participants in the mutiny. Out of its nine members, five were ex-prisoners who had mutinied in 1984, including three members of the Committee of Ten. This initiated the revival of other structures such as the Cultural Committee and the Works Committee (a trade union-like body for labourers in the project) at whose head we had former mutineers. The ANC leadership was clearly eyeing this situation with a sense of discontent, but it was difficult

for it to interfere directly with the democratic process under way, without provoking indignation from the community. To them this was a move that absolved the people they had tried to destroy and have ostracised.

The first political encounter between the Dakawa ZYC and ANC headquarters was at the Third Dakawa Seminar, held on 24/25 April 1989. The first and second seminars had been held in 1983 and 1985 respectively and had provided guidelines for the development of the Centre. The objectives of the Third Seminar were to review progress achieved, to establish an autonomous administration for the Centre, to consider new project proposals and to establish proper coordination between the Centre and regional and national structures. The Dakawa ZYC was not invited to be one of participants. It challenged that decision, and was ultimately allowed to send one delegate, Sidwell Moroka, its chairperson, who was able to deliver its paper. This paper was prepared after taking stock of the views expressed by the youth meeting of 7 April. Among the participants at the Third Seminar were heads of departments from headquarters including Piliso and Thomas Nkobi, the national treasurer. The paper of the youth of Dakawa was criticized by the leadership. The main theme of the seminar was the need for the setting up of bodies of local self-administration, with the youth pressing for elective bodies and the other side, led by Piliso, dismissing the idea as unrealistic. After lengthy discussions with the chairman of the ZYC uncompromising on the issue, Piliso noted that the chairperson of the ZYC was 'stubbornly opposed to appointed personnel.' However, the result was that a recommendation in favour of the position of the ZYC was adopted.

After this seminar, the ANC leadership was to reconsider its attitude towards the former detainees. In June 1989, when the ANC youth section was to attend a World Youth Festival in Korea, a telex was sent to Tanzania from headquarters in Lusaka cancelling the names of four delegates democratically elected by the youth in Dakawa to represent the zone. The four names were all of former mutineers. When an explanation was sought, nobody in the HQ claimed responsibility, but it became clear from discussions between the Dakawa ZYC and Jackie Selebi, chairman of the National Youth Secretariat (NYS), that this had the hand of security. The Dakawa ZYC and other upper structures in Tanzania expressed their discontent with this practice that undermined democracy and infringed on the rights of the membership.

The Dakawa Youth Committee had by this time already established its *Youth Bulletin* and was also making its ideas clear in the paper of the whole community, called *Dakawa News and Views*. The local security department and its administrative tools became very uneasy about the articles that began to appear sparing nobody from criticism and with a clear stand for openness and democracy. On several occasions the ZYC found itself a target of attack as instigators, and its office-bearers were intimidated to the point where some of its full-time functionaries, such as Amos Maxongo, were forced to abandon their post. Following a paper prepared by the ZYC in September on 'housing

problems in Dakawa,' the committee was called to account to the Zonal Political Committee and Administration meeting, and its members were threatened that they should either terminate their contributions in the local newspaper or change their language. The ZYC refused to back away from its position and called for freedom of expression.

This state of political wrangling and the rise in popularity of the Dakawa ZYC approached its climax in September 1989. At this time, the Regional Political Committee (RPC)—a supreme body responsible for political guidance and organization in different ANC regions—was elected into office in a meeting attended by delegates from all ANC Centres in Tanzania. Sidwell Moroka was elected its chairperson and Mwezi Twala its organizing secretary. Both of them were former members of the Committee of Ten elected by the mutineers at Viana in 1984. The closing session, on 16 September, was filled with tension as some of the ANC leading personnel who attended, including Andrew Masondo, Graham Morodi and Willie Williams, and the members of the ANC security, showed clear expressions of disapproval of the results. Morodi, then ANC chief representative in Tanzania, forced himself to occupy the platform and made a comment insinuating that the results should be sent to the NEC for approval. On 18 September he sent a letter to the incoming chairman, Sidwell Moroka, suspending accession of the new Regional Political Committee into office with the excuse that he was still awaiting approval from Lusaka. On 5 October the body was dissolved by order of the chief representative, Morodi, who stated that the decision had the backing of the office of the secretary general of the ANC, Nzo. The reasons advanced were that there had been violation of procedures in the meeting and that nominees had not been screened prior to the election: meaning that the ANC security has powers to determine who is eligible for election to the political structures of the ANC. It has a right to dissolve a democratically elected structure if it dislikes those elected by the ANC membership.

Later a body was appointed from ANC headquarters called the Interim RPC, to replace the democratically elected RPC and to fill the 'political vacuum'. The ZYC circulated a letter in which it disapproved of the imposition of 'dummy structures' and suppression of the democratically elected ones. It further raised the matter at the annual general meeting of the youth on 14 December. Rusty Bernstein, head of the ANC department of political education, and his staff, and the regional chairman of the youth, Gert Sibande (that is, Thami Mali who was responsible for the 1985 stayaway that rocked Johannesburg), had been invited to attend, and were present. At the annual general meeting, the youth in Dakawa called for the refusal of the personnel appointed to this structure to participate in it. Members of the department of political education and the regional chairman of the youth, Sibande, also expressed their disapproval of this undemocratic action and promised to consider their positions in relation to it. This meeting, which Bernstein admitted had shown 'unheard of openness in the ANC,' signalled the doom

of the Interim RPC, which had until then failed to take office due to its unpopularity and the hesitation of the appointed personnel to play the shameful political role allotted to them. At this point the ANC leadership collected its strength and could not restrain itself any longer.

### **The Destruction of Democracy**

Under instruction from the NEC, Chris Hani and Stanley Mabizela arrived in Tanzania from the HQ shortly thereafter and called for ANC community meetings in Mazimbu, and on 24 December 1989, in Dakawa. At these meetings, Stanley Mabizela announced the decision of the NEC concerning groups of people who had been imprisoned by the ANC. There were three categories that they mentioned: 1. A group of self-confessed enemy agents who had been imprisoned and released unconditionally. These had a right to take part and even occupy office in ANC structures; 2. A group of enemy agents who had been imprisoned and released conditionally. These had no right to take office in the structures of the movement; and 3. A group of 1984 mutineers who had been imprisoned by the ANC. These were also not allowed to take office in ANC structures. And hence, he concluded, the NEC had decided to dissolve the RPC. He then instructed the communities to support and strengthen the Interim RPC.

This announcement was immediately challenged by the people in the meeting and the former mutineers themselves, with the following arguments: i. That the National Executive of the ANC was acting autocratically, as it had no moral or political justification for taking a decision so important that it infringed on the right of the membership without even prior consultations with the general membership; ii. That the very issue of the mutiny and the causes behind it had never been opened for discussion by the entire membership of the ANC, and that the mutineers themselves had been denied platforms on which to explain their actions, and that they had never been tried by any court or competent body in the movement; and iii. That the very people who took the decision to dissolve the RPC were still continuing with tortures and murder of detainees and their political opponents.

The last point related to two young men who had escaped from the prison in SOMAFSCO at Mazimbu, and who had reported themselves at the Morogoro Police Station. One of them was Dipulelo, who had headed the *Dakawa News and Views*, and who had been accused of subversion, and detained and tortured by a security department man called Doctor. They arrived at the Tanzanian police station in handcuffs and naked, the way they had been kept in prison at SOMAFSCO [where the secondary school principal by this time was Masondo]. They had been detained in July 1989, and they related horrifying stories about the torture to which they had been subjected until they escaped in November.

At the meeting at Dakawa on 24 December, Chris Hani felt he could not tolerate the confrontation and howled from the rostrum at those who challenged the decision. 'The decision is unchallenged, it is an order from the NEC,' he shouted, beating the table with his fist. A commotion ensued as Hani's security tried to arrest those who talked, and a reinforcement of the armed Tanzanian Field Force was called to the hall by Samson Donga. The meeting ended in confusion and the whole community was astonished by the autocratic behaviour of that ANC leadership delegation. On 28 December a paper was circulated, officially banning nine members of different committees in Dakawa. This time again, those who sought the democratization of the ANC were arrogantly silenced by a decree from the strong opponents of apartheid undemocracy. What an irony!

### **Resignation from the ANC**

Widespread discontent filled the air in Dakawa and it spread to nearby Mazimbu, as the leadership reversed the process of political and cultural renewal that had marked the period in which the ex-mutineers had been free to develop their ideas among the ANC membership. This process of renewal was suppressed, not because there was anything wrong with it but because it threatened the ANC leaders with democracy, which they were not prepared to tolerate. Some members of the department of political education, such as Mpho Mmutle and Doctor Nxumalo, were summoned by the security department and questioned about their association with ex-mutineers, and instructed never again to visit Dakawa. A sense that anything might happen at any time set in, as the community awaited the reprisals that might follow. The whole of the ANC in Tanzania was filled with tension. From sources close to the security department, word came to the ex-mutineers about meetings held to decide on action to be taken against those who embarrassed the ANC leader and 'the man who wanted to take Mandela's mantle,' Chris Hani.

It was at this time, on 31 December 1989, that the ex-mutineers considered the issue of resigning from the ANC. The reasons are glaring to any realistic-minded person. There was a need to pre-empt the actions of the security department, which would have definitely followed. There was a need also to look for better avenues for continuing the struggle against apartheid, given that the ANC had banned the ex-mutineers from freedom of political expression. And there was also a need to relate this state of affairs to the leadership of the ANC inside South Africa, to the leadership of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and to all the people of South Africa.

We appeal to the people of South Africa and the members of the ANC to support our call for an independent commission to investigate these atrocities.