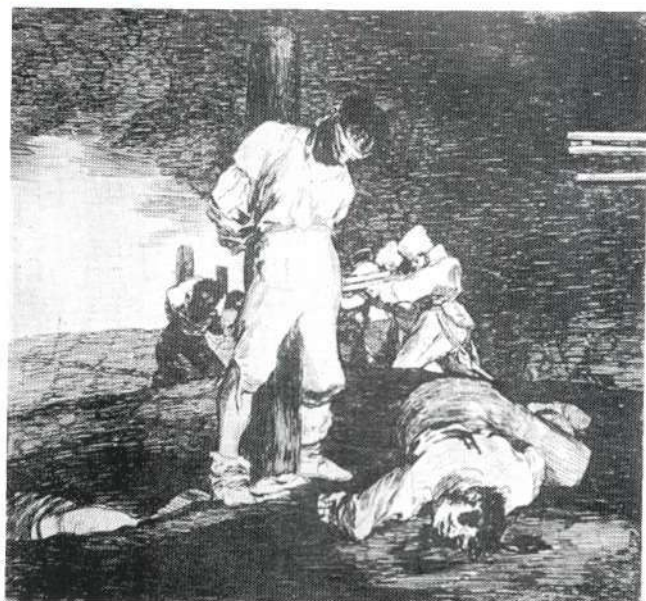


SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

NO.5

JULY 1990

£3.50

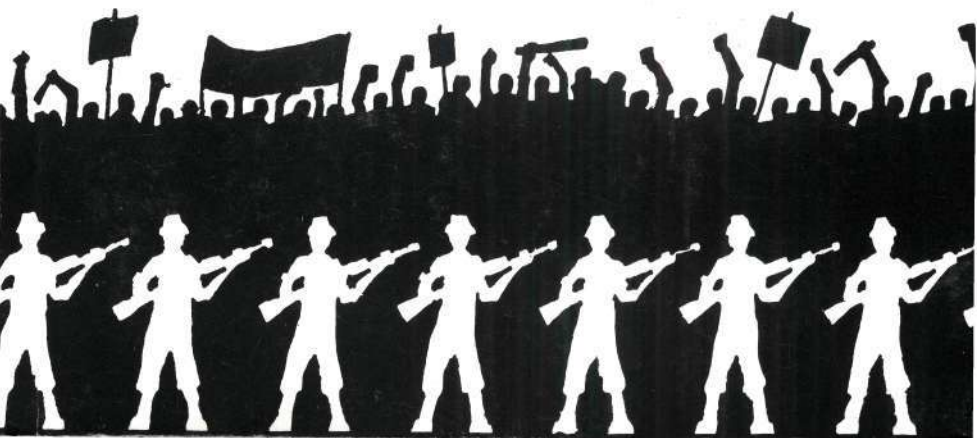


Mutiny in the ANC, 1984

'Born-Again' Socialism — or Slovo's Apologia for Gorbachev

The Path to Negotiations?

History of the SWAPO 'Spy Drama'



SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA Vol.2, No.1 (No.5)

A Marxist Journal of South African Studies

Editorial		1
Discussion Article	The Path to Negotiations?	3
Baruch Hirson	Socialism – Has It Failed? Joe Slovo's Apologia for Mr Gorbachev	14

MUTINIES IN THE LIBERATION ARMIES

	Inside Quadro	30
Bandile Ketelo et al	A miscarriage of Democracy: The ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny Open Letter to Mr Mandela	35 66
Paul Trewhela	The Kissinger/Vorster/Kaunda Detente A Question of Truthfulness	69 87
Letter: P. Bond	Financial Sanctions – A Rebuttal	91

Cover picture: Goya, Desastres c.1820

SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

Published Quarterly

Address: BCM 7646, London WC1N 3XX

ISSN: 0954-3384

Editors: Baruch Hirson, Paul Trehwela, Hillel Ticktin, Rose Phahle, Brian MacLellan.

Annual Subscriptions

Individual £12 Institutions £24 — Special student offer £9

Abroad: add £4 p&p

or \$US/Canadian equivalent.

Notes to Contributors:

Articles and reviews, accompanied by IBM ASCII files on disk — if possible — should be submitted to the editors, typed or printed out, in one-and-a-half, or double spacing. Articles should be between 4,000 and 7,000 words, but the editors will be flexible and will consider longer pieces. Short articles (other than letters) will only be accepted if they are of exceptional interest. Pseudonyms may be used but we need to know the author's identity.

If substantial alterations would improve an article or review, the editors will communicate with the author before proceeding with publication. The editors reserve the right to alter grammar, spelling, punctuation or obvious errors in the text. Where possible, references should be included in the text, with sources listed at the end of the article, giving author, title, publisher and date.

We regret the lateness of issue after issue. But we will try to meet our publication dates and early submissions will ensure early inclusion. Letters commenting on recent articles in *Searchlight South Africa*, or relating to current events in South Africa, will be printed as soon as possible. These contributions should not exceed 1,500 words and may be shortened to fit available space. Reviews of books will be by invitation and must be ready for the following issue of the journal.

A REQUEST TO READERS

If readers have documents of contemporary or historic interest that would bear republication, we would be pleased to receive them. They will be returned immediately.

Errata: The article in our last issue on the Beijing Autonomous Federation, written anonymously, was incorrectly ascribed to Ralph Schoenman.

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Searchlight South Africa* is different in structure from our four previous issues. For this we owe our readers an explanation. Firstly, there are issues that arise from the release of Nelson Mandela from prison after 27 years and the unbanning of all proscribed organizations. This has to be discussed alongside the opening of 'talks about talks' between an ANC team and the South African government. Secondly we offer an analysis of Joe Slovo's discussion of socialism's future. This document offers a critique of over half a century of crimes committed in the name of socialism. It is an attack on Stalinism, written by a once faithful servant of the iniquitous system that operated in the USSR and its satellite states. If this offered any hope that Stalinism was finally dead in South Africa and that the Communist Party had reformed—there would be no further need for us to continue publication. Some of us might have applied for membership of the SACP, or perhaps we would even have been invited by Slovo and his friends to join with them in the struggle for a socialist South Africa. We did not expect such an invitation—and none has come. Nor could we think of joining forces with a party that we still believe to be an anti-working class force. Consequently, we devote space to answering a document that we regard as spurious.

However, the major part of this issue is devoted to two topics, seemingly different, but intertwined. We refer to the revolts inside the ANC and SWAPO, the two 'liberation' movements of Southern Africa that have been in the forefront of the news in recent months. Firstly, we print an eyewitness account of the mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1984. We offer, from the pens of those who were victims of a Stalinist leadership, as we received the story, a graphic account of torture, executions and victimization. The truth of at least part of this story has been acknowledged by Nelson Mandela in a last-minute press conference in April before he flew in to the jamboree at Wembley Stadium to celebrate his release from prison, and also confirmed by Albie Sachs in May when he speech at the University of Cape Town.

There is no shortage of confirmation of injustice done—although the ANC has refused to countenance an independent commission of inquiry into the mutiny and its aftermath. We print a story that some of the British media has refused to touch, and which the left wing press everywhere has (with one or two notable exceptions) refused to discuss. We find this inexcusable. This is a story that must be considered by every socialist trying to assess the progress of events in South Africa. There is also a twist to this story that is taken up in the discussion of Slovo's pamphlet.

Slovo, who talks so readily about the crimes of Stalin was the Chief-of-Staff of the ANC armed forces when the mutiny took place. His task was to supervise events in those forces before and during that bloody encounter. If he was doing 'his duty' as officer in command, then there is blood on his hands. If, however, he did not know what was happening, he is guilty of negligence, and must take responsibility for what happened. Yet, at the time of going to

press, there is no statement from him, no acknowledgment of guilt. From Chris Hani who succeeded him there is an even more ominous silence. Are they too busy talking to their opposite numbers in the South African government to be concerned about the fate of former volunteers in their army?

In printing this document we must add that our contact with its writers, by post, fax and phone, convinces us that the story they tell is true, but some readers might wish for further confirmation. With this we concur – but it is up to the ANC to provide their documents for all to judge. There is no excuse for the ANC to withhold its own account and no excuses for secrecy. If there were informers involved, as the ANC claimed, the South African government would have had all the details in 1984. But if there were no informers, or if the government failed to pick up the story in 1984, it certainly knows now. It is the duty of the ANC to provide any information it might have, and such evidence must be submitted to an independent commission of inquiry. Failing this, the ANC must stand condemned for the murders committed in its name.

Rumours about the ANC camps had been around for some time, but were denied by its friends. Even when the revelations about Swapo became known (see *Searchlight South Africa*, No.4), they repeated their conviction that nothing had happened in ANC camps. Will they believe the stories now? Will they endorse the demand of the ex-ANC detainees for an independent commission of inquiry? If, as we believe, these militants are innocent of the charge of having been government agents, their names must be cleared.

In researching the events in Swapo and unravelling the history of its camps in Angola, Paul Trehwela has uncovered a trail of deceit and double-dealing extending back to the 1970s, that remains concealed in the archives. However, enough has been published to provide an understanding of those events. We publish an account of this history in two parts – part 1 appears inside. We hope that these researches will be expanded into a book telling the story of guerilla armies that operated in Southern Africa. Because of its relevance to the story of the Swapo ex-detainees we include a critique of Victoria Brittain's recent work on Southern Africa. Ms Brittain has done the cause of freedom an injustice which cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.

We have held over a number of articles prepared for this issue including the life stories of persons, some known, others unknown, who participated in the struggles in South Africa in the 1930s and 1940s, inside the ANC, the CPSA, and other organizations. We also held back an assessment of the armed struggle, a critical assessment of Trotsky's analyses of the Soviet Union by Hillel Ticktin, a number of historical studies and the continuation of our reprints of archival materials. We have asked a contributor to discuss the nature of the South African economy and hope to have at least one essay available for the next issue. There is space in this issue only for a letter from a reader challenging a previous contribution on sanctions. We publish it with minimal cuts (for purposes of space) and invite readers who have opinions on the subject to take up the debate in future issues. We will print our reply at a later date.

THE ANC ON THE ROAD TO NEGOTIATIONS

The Release of Nelson Mandela

During prime viewing time, on Sunday 11 February 1990, millions of people in South Africa, Great Britain, and throughout the world, sat glued to their TV sets. There they saw the emotional scenes as Nelson Mandela emerged from his last place of confinement: the Victor Verster prison in the Cape. Let there be no doubt about that moment. Mandela impressed his audience. Aged but unbent, calm even in that moment after 27 years of incarceration, he moved from the concealment of a prison to the blaze of world publicity. Perhaps the watchers were even more impressed when this man, for so long maligned by government agents as the enemy of the state, was given a police escort to take him to a public rally in Cape Town where tens of thousands gathered to cheer him on. It was the reception more usually accorded an international statesman - except that there was no local dignitary to greet him: no State President, no cabinet minister, not even a member of parliament as he entered the Grand Parade. This was a state function - but with no guard of honour, no band, no red carpet.

Let us dwell on this release for just a moment more. Veterans of the anti-apartheid lobby roared in acclaim at the greatness of F.W. de Klerk in taking this 'courageous decision' to free Mandela. Those that had shown no sympathy for the anti-apartheid struggle, like Mrs Thatcher, went quite ecstatic and immediately lifted the most important of all sanctions against South Africa: the sanctions against investments and against tourism. Other world leaders did not go so far, but they too cried hosanna for this act of magnanimity. As the praise rang out, it must be asked: what is there to praise?

During the trial of Mandela and his co-accused in 1964 there was always the possibility of the death sentence. In South Africa most of the people sighed with relief when the accused were given life sentences, even though, at that time, such a sentence meant imprisonment till death. After a brief flurry in the media, the prisoners were all but forgotten for the first fifteen years of his incarceration. When, thereafter, there was some agitation for Mandela's release, his co-accused, serving the same life sentence, were usually not even mentioned. There was no excuse then, and none since, for keeping Mandela and his comrades imprisoned for 24 years.

We have no praise for Mr de Klerk, his government and his party. Instead we demand an explanation for the barbarous way in which they keep their political prisoners, for the grave crimes inflicted on prisoners on Robben Island and elsewhere, for the rigour with which they used prison regulations

to deprive their political enemies of the most basic rights accorded to prison inmates.

The political prisoners in South African gaols were not broken by even the harshest regime. They fought injustice and won back some of their rights but their gaolers showed little compassion for their suffering. They were allowed no respite when those nearest to them were ill or died. They were given no concessions when they themselves were ill. Mandela, as is well known, contracted TB in prison and had to be moved to hospital. Must we thank the government for its magnanimity in this case, or should we demand to know who was to blame for the criminal neglect that allowed a man under their control to contract that dread disease? Then, despite President Botha's word that Mandela would not be returned to prison when he recovered, he was moved to a warder's house inside a prison compound, and kept a 'diplomatic' prisoner.

What happened while Mandela was ensconced in that compound house has still to be revealed. We will not probe further now, but the story must be revealed. What was happening to Nelson Mandela, prisoner and yet not prisoner? What manner of convict was he, receiving visitors, visiting President Botha (at Mandela's request apparently), communicating with the external and still banned ANC? Behind all the media hype, there is much that remains unknown. What discussions took place between government administrators and this prisoner? What was prepared and arranged—what deals were struck?

For vast numbers of people in South Africa a spell in prison has been part of their life-experience. Conditions have been notoriously bad and isolation from the outside world almost complete. But this time, it appears to us, the grim walls of South Africa's prisons had the function not so much of keeping Mandela out of contact with society, as of keeping the people of South Africa out of contact with the secret discussions between Mandela and the state.

The Honourable Men?

When Mandela addressed the ecstatic crowd in Cape Town on 11 February he reaffirmed the ANC programme as he understood it: its commitment to the Freedom Charter (including the nationalisation of the mines), to the 'armed struggle' and to the continuation of sanctions against South Africa. These are issues that call for fuller examination, but we will move on for the moment.

Mandela had previously stated his position in a written statement transmitted to President PW Botha in mid-1989 when he called for negotiations to stop 'the civil strife and ruin into which the country is now sliding.' Nelson Mandela had been in prison for 27 years but surely he knew that the 'civil strife and ruin' extended back for decades? Perhaps a man who steps into the public arena after 27 years cannot be called upon to formulate new

programmes. Yet, at least part of his statement was startling and unacceptable. He spoke of President de Klerk as a 'man of integrity.' This man, who was an integral part of the apartheid government, who had condemned those who had gone to Lusaka to meet the leaders of the ANC as traitors to South Africa, was praised as a man who could be trusted. A political operator who maintained the apartheid vision of Dr Verwoerd over decades; who had backed every oppressive step—in the townships and the homelands, in Namibia, Angola and Mozambique, and who reluctantly relaxed some of the apartheid laws because they were no longer sustainable; who insists on minority (that is, white) rights, is a man we must trust! It is no wonder that the youth in the townships of South Africa speak mockingly of 'Comrade de Klerk'.

Where is the evidence of this 'integrity'? To be sure, he had unbanned the ANC, the SACP and other organizations. And it was he, who finally, gave the order for the freeing of Nelson Mandela. He did not remove the laws outlawing communism or even the ANC and the PAC. A wide spectrum of books and oppositional journals, including this magazine, remains banned and their circulation blocked. He did not release all the other political prisoners. Political exiles were not even given the right to return—except at de Klerk's discretion. He even chose to release Mandela, after playing cat and mouse over the final date, to give himself maximum political advantage. Is this integrity?

In case there is any doubt about de Klerk's 'integrity' we add: he could only have taken these tentative steps with the support of his cabinet and with the tacit support of the chiefs of police and the army—the props of the oppressive system in place to this day in South Africa. The regime that has just fought a ruinous war in Angola and still support Renamo in Mozambique; that tried to 'destabilize' all the front line states—from Zimbabwe through to the Seychelles; that dominates the enclaves of Swaziland and Lesotho; that has filled the townships with armed troops and quelled the revolt in Bophutatswana; that still shoots down peaceful demonstrators and maintains its hit squads; that has men and women on death row (even if capital punishment is halted for the moment); this monstrous apparatus has collectively have backed, or appeared to have backed, the moves to end apartheid. What has induced this 'change of heart'?

Did We Get It Wrong?

In the momentous events that have taken place since the middle of 1989 in China and in Europe, in the Americas and Africa, *Searchlight South Africa* has tried to maintain a sense of perspective on what was happening. We greeted the rising wrath of the workers and students of China, of the eastern Europe and elsewhere. But in each case we warned, alongside our colleagues of the journal *Critique*, that these were not moves which would lead directly towards a socialist society. The crimes of Stalinism and Maoism would be

paid for by the retreat of world socialism, the rise of right-wing reaction and the spread of illusions about the market. That was the perspective we had for the immediate future and knew that we would have to wait for a new generation of workers to renew the drive to a democratic socialism.

We believe that we were correct in our estimation of the consequences of the world-wide revulsion in what had taken place in the name of Communism and Marxism. In the light of this retreat of the left we also saw that the crumbling of the Soviet Union as a 'threat' to the West would lead to moves to impose 'stability' in regions of global conflict. That is, to impose settlements which do not run counter to the interests of the USA. It was this that cleared the way for events in south west Africa, leaving a weakened Angola and a vassal state called Namibia.

However, such moves would only succeed where the contending parties were so exhausted or in such financial difficulties that they could be forced to entertain a peace settlement. Provided, that is, that it was in the interest of the US to secure such settlement. In the light of this, the editors of *Searchlight South Africa* erred in not reading all the indicators correctly. We saw correctly that there had been a massive defeat of the revolt in the townships by 1986. We dismissed the effectiveness of commercial sanctions and divestment as a means to end apartheid, but noted that its aim was not to change society but rather to open the way to 'negotiations'. We saw the looming crisis in the South African economy—not because of sanctions but as a result of basic fault-lines in the economic structure of the country. These things we dealt with implicitly or explicitly, but we failed to see the rapidity with which these events, taken together, would put pressure on the South African government and force it to open talks with its erstwhile opponents.

We erred, and it is necessary to say so. However, that has not invalidated our basic premise: that the only way in which the society can be basically transformed is through working class revolution and an appeal to workers in surrounding states to join in building a new commonwealth. Without such action on the part of the workers the society will remain unaltered: the old exploitation will continue, but under new managers.

On the other hand theories, held by proponents of the ANC and the SACP, have been demonstrably falsified by current events. Without examining these in any detail, we can assert that: the belief that capitalists were divided ethnically into English and Afrikaner speaking fractions has been shown by their joint approaches to be patently absurd; the further contention that there is a category 'racial capital' is equally absurd. Capital knows no ethnicity, no race, no skin colour. Capitalism battered on the black working class as long as it was possible, but not because it had a particular liking for the white workers. In the case of the major financial force, the gold mine producers, the privileged position of the white workers, accepted as a political necessity, was always seen as a barrier to increased profitability. The mineowners saw no economic benefit in paying inflated wages to white supervisors and welcome the possible end of apartheid. In this respect the ideologists of the

Chamber of Mines were more correct than their critics who adopted a Marxist guise. It was after all Gavin Relly, chairman of Anglo American, who started the process of negotiations. He was among the first to visit the external leaders of the ANC when such action was considered next to treason, and it was Relly who visited Mandela in prison and came out saying he could do business with that man.

Further: the current proposals to extend common citizenship to all South Africans, whatever the formula for such a move, spells the end of 'internal colonialism', the theory first propounded by the liberal thinker Leo Marquard and hijacked by the eclectic thinkers of the SACP. With the 'homelands' policy about to be scrapped by the South African government; the people of South Africa are recognized as belonging to one society — even if some are more equal than others. With talk of the black communities becoming part of one comprehensive 'free market' system, talk of 'national liberation', must now be seen for what it always was: the concealment of the class nature of the underlying struggle in South Africa

The Road to Negotiations?

Full formal negotiations have not yet begun but only that strange bird, the political ostrich, can bury its head in the sand and say they will not take place. Those that demand that talks take place include: big business and the mineowners; the government and the ANC, the homelands' leaders (whether allied to the ANC or not), the Progressive Party, the Indian Congress and the Coloured Labour Party. That is not all. The leaders of the most powerful capitalist countries and the members of the Commonwealth; the members of the Organisation of African Unity and the leaders of the USSR and of eastern Europe; all want to see the talks begin. Precisely why each one of these parties wants the talks needs discussion, but only those who abstain from all politics can afford to ignore the inevitable.

The convergence of these very different forces indicates that every interested party wants a stable base in southern Africa - each one seeing that stability through its own spectacles, but each desiring it none the less. Without spelling out the complex issues that have influenced the various parties, certain tendencies stand out clearly. The western states want an area that is pacified and open to safe investment. They want an area in which trade can develop and from which dividends can be safely extracted. The Soviet Union wants to withdraw from areas of conflict in which it cannot advance its interests - politically or economically - and which have only been a drain in the past. All want to see a free market economy which will ensure the continued supply of vital minerals to the world economy.

Finance houses, government and opposition, in South Africa have a different agenda that happens to intersect with the needs of the external world. Leaving aside for the moment pressures from abroad, the government

and big business are driven by the need to salvage an economy that is in need of urgent assistance. This, contrary to the propaganda of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, is not the result of sanctions, or of divestment, or even the cutting off of financial capital, serious as the latter might be. Any serious analyst can see that the major source of finance in the country, the production of gold, is slowly running down and must collapse within the next few decades unless there is a dramatic rise in its market price. Between 20–25 per cent of the mines operate at a loss and the average cost of production (when all mines are considered) does not leave a large margin of profit at current prices on the open market. A serious reduction in gold production will place a heavy strain on the government, which receives over half its revenue from the sale of gold. It will also lead to ever greater losses to farmers (already in a parlous state with accumulated debts that far exceed annual returns) who have always been heavily subsidised by taxes imposed on the gold mines.

Only a small proportion of South Africa's land is suitable for agricultural production, and this has been poorly developed by the present land owners. The malaise in agriculture is exacerbated by the inability of farmers to provide adequate food for a population which now stands at 37 million and is expanding rapidly. Attempts at agricultural expansion have been limited by the failure to invest the huge sums of money needed to increase the water supply. The country is notoriously short of water and threatened by a cycle of intense droughts and drowning downpours that leads to the advance of desert and scrub land. Yet constant prevarication has stopped investment in the water resources of Lesotho and few other viable plans have been investigated to prevent large scale tragedies over large regions of the country.

This is alarming enough, and any new arrangement in government will have to cope with problems that could bring the country to the edge of disaster unless there is a massive injection of finance into the country to rescue the farmlands and build new manufacturing plants. This might just become possible if there is a political settlement, if there is capital available from the western powers, and if a political settlement leads to a government that can divert (if not satisfy) mass discontent. Add to this the ceiling placed on local manufacture due to the restricted spending power of the bulk of the local population and the inability of neighbouring states to pay for imports. The state of the economy, which has been allowed to decline by an incompetent government, will reach disaster level unless there is a massive change in policy within the next few years.

Why then should the ANC (or any other movement) aid the government by entering into negotiations? Here too there are complex factors – not least of which are the divisions inside each camp on the advisability of proceeding with the talks. However, whatever the differences inside the ANC, between political and military wings and between the older and the younger generations, that movement has always been one of negotiations. In fact its leaders are proud of their record on that score, always quoting the many messages they sent to Prime Ministers Malan, Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha and so on,

calling for talks and consultations. They have always wanted incorporation into the state rather than radical change. Even the call for sanctions, and the move to armed resistance—half-hearted as it was—was predicated by the hope that this would persuade the government to talk¹.

There is perhaps, an even greater incentive that leads the ANC to a call for talks. Despite its talk of socialism in South Africa the constitutional guidelines drawn up by its leaders in exile, in mid-1988, spoke only of a mixed economy in which the state 'shall have the right to determine the general context in which economic life shall take place'².

Now, after thirty years in the wilderness, the leaders of the ANC want to 'come home' to enter into government, to get their men into the army and to enter the field of finance to which they aspire. However much they fear the insincerity of the government—despite Mandela's stated belief in the integrity of Mr de Klerk—and however much they might fear that they might lose the good-will of their constituents in the townships, they will press ahead with the demand that talks take place.

The Parties to the Talks

The 'talks about talks' of May 1990, in which government representatives confronted part of the opposition, indicate the line up that is being prepared for the next round.

On the government side there were some surprises. These were the men of political power—but without the security chiefs. General Malan, the representative of the army, was not present, although the police were presumably represented by their man in the cabinet. There were no businessmen and a one-time leading Progressive had seemingly turned down an invitation to join this side. There were also no representatives from the Coloured or Indian parties in the tricameral chambers. Even more surprisingly, there were no 'homelands' leaders. In other words, the government showed their contempt for their own satraps or failed to win their support for these initial talks.

On the opposite side of the table sat the ANC/SACP together with representatives of the Mass Democratic Movement. The delegation included Joe Slovo of the SACP, Joe Modise the commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, members of the Mass Democratic Movement, and Beyers Naude of the Christian Council. There were no consultations over the choice of delegates to this meeting, and no statement to explain how it was brought together. Some of these people were to be expected, others were there through the grace the ANC executive, and there were obvious absentees. There appears to have been no attempt to consult with the wider public and there is no information on whether attempts were made to widen the scope of the delegation. Because of this silence it is not possible to speculate on why some groups were excluded, or why some of the delegates were appointed.

However, one thing is clear. The ANC/SACP intends dominating the opposition side of the talks, making the main proposals, and determining what terms are acceptable. They will speak for 'the people', despite the fact that they have no mandate to do so. It also seems clear that the ANC and the SACP (together and separately) will seize the opportunity of mobilising sections of the population on their side. They have already launched membership-campaigns and will use every occasion to impose their control on the trade unions, homelands' councils and community, student and business committees.

The Opposition to Talks

There are of course groups that stand opposed to talks. They need discussion in their own right and also because in some respects they are correct – even if they fail to make their point cogently. However, it must be stressed that there is nothing inherently wrong in negotiations. It is only in the event of a violent overthrow of any regime that talks do not take place. In all other cases: at the end of a strike, or civil struggle, or war, talks are inevitable. Whether there has been defeat or victory all sides have to sit at the bargaining table and talk, although it is quite obvious that the victors will have the means to force through most of their demands. And because the peoples' revolt of 1984–86 did not bring victory, the forces ranged against the government are weaker than they might have been. This too is a reality that must be taken into account.

In the present case those who oppose the talks fall into two opposing camps, and obviously we reject the arguments of the forces on the right. That is: the opposition which includes the Conservative Party and para-military groups such as the Afrikaner Resistance Movement. These groups oppose any relaxation of the apartheid system and demand the reversal of those reforms already introduced. This is the voice of farmers and white workers, of the petty bureaucrats, a majority of white police and an unknown number in the armed forces. Let there be no doubt, that even though these forces fly in the face of world opinion, even right wing world opinion, and are therefore without a viable future, they are capable of inflicting heavy damage inside the country. Vigilante forces as seen in Welkom, hit-squads emerging from the present police force and/or army, and even crazed opponents of change can spread mayhem before they are overcome. If not curtailed and defeated, these provide the base for a police or army coup.

Most black opposition to the talks has a different base and perspectives. It stems from the fear that too little will be won from talks with the minority government and that those who enter such talks will compromise on basic issues. This opposition, which is fractured and atomized at present, include the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement and a host of smaller groups that includes part or all of Azapo, the Unity Movement, the Cape Action League (now transformed into the Workers' Organization of South

Africa) and so on. Their reasons might differ, but they have all spoken out against conducting talks with the government. Whether they will all maintain this stance over the coming months remains to be seen, but thus far they oppose the talks. We can see some reason in their claim that without victory won on the battlefields, or in the factories and the townships, they cannot possibly enter into talks. The problem is that they have not provided any cogent set of alternatives and no answer to the fact that talks are going ahead, despite their opposition.

Talks and the Democratic Process

We can close our eyes to reality and seal our lips against talks, but that would be merely opting out of a real situation in which decisions will be taken that will affect all our lives. If there is to be any radical or socialist input, new tactics must be framed to meet the situation. In making our proposals we do not wish to do more than open up discussion on what might be achievable.

First it seems to us that when talks are opened there are four conditions that should be resolutely demanded:

- a) Delegates to such talks must be drawn from all parties, all organizations and all trade unions. The ANC has no mandate to speak for the disenfranchised, and no one has nominated them to act on behalf of all.
- b) All talks that take place must be located in South Africa. Talks outside the country's borders will not be subject to scrutiny and are not acceptable.
- c) All sessions must be open. Secret talks must be opposed. There must be no secret bargains, no signing away of any democratic rights, and no fudging on basic issues.
- d) At the conclusion of all talks, their results must be submitted to the public for approval.

Quite obviously, any group that stands opposed to talks will have no opportunity of making such demands. This might satisfy their political egos but it will exclude them from any say in what happens.

We do not stop at this point. Even if the above four points were accepted there is no guarantee that our basic requirements would be satisfied. We could always be told that what was agreed was, under the circumstances, the best that could be obtained. The people's needs are so great that only continuous pressure can secure them. In saying this we turn back to a previous century, when democratic demands were being discussed in Europe, to demonstrate our meaning.

In March 1850, in their 'Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League,' Marx and Engels said that the 'revolutionary worker's party' co-operated with the petty-bourgeois democrats against the [ruling] party

which they aim to overthrow, but 'opposes them wherever they wish to secure their own position.' They continued:

The democratic petty bourgeoisie [in our case, the ANC] far from wanting to transform the whole of society in the interests of the revolutionary proletarians, only aspire to a change in social conditions which will make the existing society as tolerable and comfortable for themselves as possible.

Marx and Engels then set out the demands of the petty-bourgeoisie in Germany in 1848, pointing out that 'as far as the workers are concerned one thing, above all, is definite: they are to remain wage labourers as before.' The demands of the petty-bourgeoisie, however, could not satisfy the party of the proletariat:

While the democratic petty bourgeoisie want to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible, achieving at most the aims already mentioned, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat have conquered state power and until the association of the proletarians has progressed sufficiently far—not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world—that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers. Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to hush up class antagonisms but to abolish classes, not to improve the existing society but to found a new one.

The address must be read as a whole for its revolutionary content. The authors called for 'an independent organization of the workers' party' that would oppose all attempts at limiting the worker's demands. It was a call on the workers' to 'drive the proposals of democrats to their logical extreme,' to go beyond the claims of the petty-bourgeoisie and lay the foundation for themselves to assume power. The authors concluding message to the workers are as relevant now as they were in 1850:

*Their battle cry must be: The Permanent Revolution*³.

To find the means through which the workers' voice can be manifest in the coming period, one step seems obvious to us: an elected assembly is needed to monitor the progress of these talks. Ideally such a body should be called into being through an election, but that might prove impossible in the short time that is available. The alternative, second best as it would be, is for local organizations, in the townships and the factories, in the towns and the rural areas, to nominate delegates to a Constituent Body able to control those who engage in talks. The workers must set up their own section in such a body to

advance their claims and create the conditions in which their voice will become the predominant voice in the shaping of a new society. They might not be ready to transform the country now, but only through such endeavour will they secure some of their demands. Only in this way will they prepare for whatever further battles are required to secure a socialist South Africa.

References

1. In October 1987 the ANC national executive stated that it 'reaffirmed that the ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing to enter into genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy.'
2. A senior official of the ANC quoted by Tom Lodge (*South African Review*, No. 5, Hans Zell, 1990, p.50) stated in 1986, when the organization believed that the apartheid state was about to be overthrown, that 'for some while after apartheid falls there will undoubtedly be a mixed economy, implying a role for levels of non-monopoly private enterprise represented not only by the small racially oppressed black business sector but also by (white) managers and business people of good will.'
3. Karl Marx (1973), *The Revolutions of 1848*, Penguin, pp.319-30.

CRITIQUE

A biannual journal of socialist theory with analyses of contemporary society. *Critique* rejects the concept of socialism in one country, and the possibility of a country being both socialist and undemocratic and seeks to show that the problems of our time are governed by the necessity for democratic control over all aspects of society. The absence of such control leads to inefficient, wasteful and hierarchically structured economies. *Critique* provides analyses of the forms, laws, tendencies and relations in different countries, in the broader perspective of the epoch. The journal endeavours to develop Marxist method and political economy in principle and through application.

Issue No.22, 1990: The Demise of Stalinism

Subscriptions:

1 year, Indivs. (UK) £5 (USA) \$10	Institutions (UK) £12 (USA) \$27
2 yrs £9 \$18	£24 \$54

Cheques/Money Orders to Bob Arnot,
Dept of Economics, Glasgow College of Technology, Glasgow G4 0BA

SOCIALISM - HAS IT FAILED?
or
JOE SLOVO'S APOLOGIA FOR MR GORBACHEV

Baruch Hirson

Getting the Record Straight

The devil was ill, the devil a monk would be.
— Rabelais

There is disarray in the party that calls itself the South African Communist Party (SACP). After decades of uncritical support for Stalin and his successors in the USSR, part of the leadership has decided with President Gorbachev, that for things to remain the same, stories must change.

Faced with the crisis in the USSR and the popular uprisings in eastern Europe, leaders of the SACP now concede what is common knowledge throughout the world: that Stalin's regime murdered millions of peasants in the drive to forced collectivization; wiped out whole generations of dedicated socialists in a set of fake trials and secret executions; conducted vicious campaigns against minority populations; murdered thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn forest; used the Nazi extermination camps at the end of the Second World War for their own nefarious ends; exiled soldiers who were taken prisoners of war by the Germans through no fault of their own; and shot down workers who went on strike. That alone is a cause for embarrassment, but it is now also admitted in the USSR that Lenin wanted Stalin removed from his post in the government; that Khrushchev had laid bare many of these facts in a speech that was denied for over thirty years. It is also now admitted that claims of Stalin's military prowess in the Second World War were false; that claims to socialist achievements in the USSR are eyewash; and that political opponents were wrongfully detained in mental homes. The list is endless. Even if the past were put aside there is still the reality that the Soviet state has been unable to cope with natural or industrial disasters, and that people in the USSR are poorly housed, lack everyday requirements, are offered poorly produced commodities and spend hours in queues for food.

If conditions in the USSR are bad, the situation in its neighbouring east European states, controlled for over forty years by communist parties are possibly worse. In all the states that were once trumpeted as socialist, in Czechoslovakia, east Germany, Romania, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, there is a mad rush to embrace capitalist modes of production, the communist parties have been shown to command no popular support and many of its leaders stand accused of corruption, fraud or embezzlement. These states,

once held up by the communist parties in the west as being models of socialism that had solved the problems of poverty, of culture, and of racism, have been shown to be empty facades in which the workers exercised no control and the population faced tyranny.

These facts are not new. They have been known for decades to all who would look. Yet, just months before the riots and revolts in the heart of the Soviet Union and the uprisings in east Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, delegates to the conference of the SACP adopted a new programme in which the great achievements of the 'socialist world' were acclaimed¹. Although there must surely have been doubts following the defeat of the communists in the elections in Poland and the move to the 'free market' in Hungary, these factors were not discussed in the new party programme. There might even have been greater doubts about events in China, just about to erupt in revolt within weeks of the SACP's conference—but that too went unrecorded. Rather, they danced and pranced as they celebrated the great advances of socialism in eastern Europe, in Viet Nam (and perhaps China?), in Cuba and Nicaragua and Ethiopia, in Angola and Mozambique.

In one act of contrition they raised the ghosts of former members of the SACP who had been shot in the USSR. They rehabilitated S P Bunting, the man who was once slandered and driven to his grave because he fell out of step with the party he had helped create, but there was no word of remorse for those members of the communist parties who were expelled or forced to resign because they could not stomach the lies coming out of the Soviet Union. Many retired from active politics, destroyed by the revelations that their politics had been built on lies. Others stayed active, but outside the ranks of the party to which they had devoted large parts of their lives. While their leaders glorified in these waves of terror, and found justification for what was happening, these individuals condemned the false trials in the USSR and in the Warsaw pact countries; they protested at the false accusations that led to the isolation of Yugoslavia; they would not tolerate the crushing of the populist movement in east Germany and Poland, in Hungary in 1956, or the smashing of the Prague Spring in 1968. They also raised their voices against the anti-democratic movements in Ethiopia, the false promises of the leaders of Viet Nam; the mass genocide of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia and so on, and on, and on.

These one-time members of the Communist Party had the courage to stand up against the political harassment of their former 'comrades.' They were hounded — ostracised by former friends, accused of being traitors or of other heinous crimes. Some had their family lives destroyed. Events in South Africa cannot be compared to what happened in Europe where the communist movement had won thousands of converts: the ranks of the South African movement were small, and its doings did not attract attention outside the borders of the country. That does not make their harassment and isolation any the less painful. They had to live with the false accusations hurled at them:

of being government spies or even agents of the Nazis and enemies of socialism.

If these dissidents had been able to break through the years of Stalinist mis-education, the ranks of the revolutionary left would have been formidable today. But the truth must be faced: the years spent in the Stalinist movement acts as a barrier to fresh political thinking. For many, the task of starting anew, of formulating a new programme, and of engaging afresh in active political work proved to be too much. They could not carve out a new path, and despair and frustration sapped their initiatives.

Those that stayed on in the SACP always found reasons for avoiding critical appraisal of the USSR. They closed their eyes to the obvious, or, in the case of many honest (if misguided) members they argued that events in the capitalist world were so bad that any faults in the USSR paled by comparison. They pointed to the sympathy for fascism and Nazism in pre-war Europe; to the policy of appeasement by Chamberlain in Britain and Blum in France; to the cold war record of statesmen from Churchill, through Truman, Adenauer and de Gaulle; they attacked the imperialist wars conducted by the Dutch, the French, the British and the USA; and they expressed horror at the support accorded reactionary governments from Chile to South Africa and the financing of reactionary armies, from the Contras in Nicaragua to Renamo in Mozambique. Who could fault them when they condemned the poverty of large sections of society—from the minority groups in the USA to the vast majority in the former colonial countries; or the blatant discrimination against women, gays, of blacks; the gross inequalities in wealth; or the poverty of social services and education?

But, if they were correct in so many of these cases it is abysmal that they did not read the same faults into the 'socialist' regimes. The bourgeois press tells lies, they said correctly, but they closed their eyes to the even greater lies told by the so-called communist press. They believed what they were told and would not see that the countries they admired were false and corrupt to the core.

Then, after years of concealment, events could no longer be hidden. First, there were the catastrophic disasters: the explosion at the atom plant in Chernobyl, the consequences of which are still being revealed, and the earthquake in Armenia where mass destruction showed that the population was exposed to inexcusable risks. There were the ethnic riots in the Asian republics of the USSR, and bread riots and strikes that spread through this 'land of socialist construction.'

This went in tandem with the withdrawal from Soviet spheres of influence in Africa, Asia and Latin America in favour of the USA. Support for allied states or dependent movements was withdrawn, surrendering their followers to the imperialist powers. After all those years in which the USSR posed as protector of the liberation movements in the former colonial empires, the agitation against imperialism was abandoned and subject people told they could not aspire to socialism for a hundred years and that they should

surrender to their masters — or at least secure the best terms they could through bargaining.

If this was not enough, one after another of the 'socialist countries' rose in revolt. Oh! What a comedown for the apologists of Soviet rule. After four decades or more of 'socialism', millions clamoured for an end to Communist Party rule, for democracy, for multi-party politics, and for capitalist relations in production and distribution. They rejected the education system and the instruction that was mis-called Marxist. They despaired of the health system that was a death trap to many. They demanded the right to read, to see, and to hear what they wanted. And the communist parties outside the eastern bloc were suddenly reduced to silence. At first, denying that anything had gone wrong they condemned the critics inside the Soviet bloc who demanded change. Then, unable to maintain their position in the face of mass protests and revelations of corruption and even genocide, some hastened to change their names. Others denied that anything had ever gone wrong...but none of them grasped the nettle and explained what had gone amiss.

Into the breach has stepped Joe Slovo, member of the Central Committee of the CPSA in exile and also member of the ANC's Revolutionary Council since 1964, member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC since 1985, Chief-of-Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe (the military wing of the ANC) until 1986, and then general secretary of the SACP. His task was no mean one: he was going to explain to his comrades in the ANC and SACP, and also to the world at large, what had gone wrong. The result is modest, only a 'draft discussion paper' entitled *Has Socialism Failed?* published as a pamphlet and reprinted in the *South African Labour Bulletin* of February 1990. In less than twenty pages Slovo offers an answer to all those tens of thousands who are seeking to discover what happened in those regions that claimed for so long to be socialist and moving towards communism.

Indeed, in these twenty pages the reader is offered an answer to the problems that have beset socialists over the past sixty and more years. There are 'explanations' for the rise of Stalinism and for the failure of communists to detect faults in the USSR. There are discussions of Marx and Lenin and Luxemburg; of one-party rule and of democracy; of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the rise of 'unbridled authoritarianism'; of 'social and economic alienation'; of the party and trade unions. There is also an attack on the misery that accompanies capitalism and imperialism; and there are notes on *perestroika* and *glasnost*, on the ANC and on the SACP. Finally this encyclopedic study ends with an assurance that the SACP changed its bad old ways and moved to a new position as far back as 1970 and will ensure the future of 'socialist humanitarianism' in a liberated South Africa.

In covering so much in so short a space there are some obvious omissions. He extols the party's programme of 1989 and fails to explain why it extolled the achievements of the Soviet bloc. He claims that the party had already carried out basic reforms in 1970 but does not explain its subsequent harassment and persecution of members who did not toe the party line — and that

includes the alienation of his wife, Ruth First, from the party. He avoids any mention of the armed struggle and of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and does not provide an assessment of his own role in it as Chief-of-Staff during the mutiny of 1984. There is no explanation of the Quadro prison constructed in Angola in 1979 (as described by the ex-ANCers in this issue of *Searchlight South Africa*), nor of the tortures and the executions of members of the ANC (while he was in command) after the SACP had 'reformed' its practices. It was precisely in the Brezhnev era (after 1970) that the SACP most brazenly revealed its despotic nature through its security apparatus that operated these horror camps.

In discussing Slovo's contribution to an understanding of the failure of socialism in the USSR, and the crimes of Stalin, it will be necessary to keep in mind that Slovo and his 'comrades' have acted as replica Stalins through their entire political lives. They have lied by omission and they have lied by commission. They have persecuted and they have oppressed. They have vilified and they have condemned others who fought for the principles that they now claim to uphold. If there is a note of bitterness in these words it is because Slovo's track record is known to us and he has been guilty of the crimes he now claims to condemn. Before he can claim to provide the answers to Stalinism he must confront his own past, both in theory and in practice, and then indeed it might be possible to take his writings seriously.

'Born-Again' Socialism

*The hardest things to predict about the communists is what happened in the past*²

One factor, and one factor alone, led to this remarkable act of 'criticism' by Slovo: the crisis in the USSR and its satellite states. This is the issue that Slovo set out to explain. Addressing members of his own party, he says, 'we' must come to terms with the fact that the regimes of eastern Europe were brought down by 'massive upsurges' of workers and even members of the ruling parties. Consequently, socialism faces its greatest crisis since 1917 and there are four fallacies against which 'we' must guard.

Firstly, the 'finding [of] excuses for Stalinism'²— a term which he defines as:

the bureaucratic-authoritarian style of leadership (of parties both in and out of power) which denuded the party and the practice of socialism of most of its democratic content and concentrated power in the hands of a tiny, self perpetuating elite.

Slovo is apparently angry with those of his party comrades who won't concede that the 'socialism' they admired has,

on balance, been so distorted that an appeal to its positive achievements (and of course there have been many) sounds hollow and very much like special pleading. It is surely now obvious that if the 'socialist world' stands in tatters at this historic moment it is due to the Stalinist distortions.

Slating those members of the SACP who still uphold the Stalinist past, Slovo demolishes their 'plea in mitigation'. Stalin, they say, brought 'some positive economic achievements.' Nonsense, he replies: the process of primitive economic accumulation can achieve such results in the early stages of capitalist or socialist growth. He also condemns those who believe that the 'Stalin cult' (his words) helped save socialism from military defeat. In statements that he would have vilified a year or two back, Slovo states that Stalin's 'virtual destruction of the command personnel of the Red Army' and the 'lack of effective preparations against Hitler's onslaught' and 'Stalin's damaging interventions in the conduct of the war' nearly cost the USSR its victory.

I read the document with a certain wonderment. This was a radical departure for a member of the SACP. Was I to take this account seriously? Was it possible that a man who has accepted and justified the actions of every Soviet leader — from Stalin, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko to Gorbachev — capable of explaining the debacle of these countries? Is it possible to reconcile his 'confession' of failure with his previous eulogies to the great leaders of the USSR? And equally, of the 'crimes' of all those in the USSR and the Communist Parties across the world who were critical of Stalin's role? Is this really Slovo who speaks of:

The mounting chronicle of crimes and distortions in the history of existing socialism, its economic failures and the divide which has developed between socialism and democracy...

Ignoring his misuse of the word 'socialism' and the use of that curious phrase 'existing socialism' — as if there could be socialism without democracy — this is a damning indictment. Perhaps I had misjudged the man: perhaps Slovo was capable, even at this late stage, of putting the record straight. Perhaps, just perhaps, he would find that his past threats against Trotskyists (all of whom should be shot, he had declared when last heard in South Africa in the 1960s) were...in error? He might even apologise, not only to the people he threatened, but also to his own party comrades whom he helped mislead for so many years. After all, he does condemn Stalin (and the Stalinists) and he does reject Ceaucescu, and even more crucially says that it is vital 'to subject the past of "existing socialism" to an unsparing critique.'

I read on: there was talk of the crimes of those leaders, and also, as Slovo says, the disastrous thinking that 'infected virtually every party (including ours) and moulded its members for so many years.' It is not enough, he declares,

merely to engage in the self-pitying cry: 'we were misled': we should rather ask why so many communists allowed themselves to become so blinded for so long. And, more importantly, why they behaved like Stalinists towards those of their comrades who raised even the slightest doubt about the 'purity' of Stalin's brand of socialism.

As I continued, just a shadow of a doubt crept in. Was this genuine, or was I being subjected to a massive con-trick? There has been no change in Slovo. The old arguments are still in place, the old mis-information is being presented, but in new clothes. Reading this in the year 1990, after nearly seven decades of duplicity, these words demand careful appraisal. Indeed, let us ask Comrade Slovo why he and his fellow workers behaved like petty dictators, branded all critics as traitors or 'fascists', forced them out of their party (or murdered them where they had the opportunity). Once again, there is no explanation. They were all conned in the past — or did the conning themselves. The USSR was the home of socialism, the epitome of democracy, the font of all socialist wisdom...

Now, they have seen the truth...and, conveniently, they can heap all the blame on one man, Stalin. They trusted him, they adored him, they paid homage to him, they sacrificed all to him. Some, undoubtedly, would have given their lives for him. Some did give the lives of their one-time comrades for him. They were blinded and imitated him, they acted in his image and set out to destroy all those who would not toe the line. And he, this false god, took them down the garden path and betrayed them.

Having seen beyond Stalin, Slovo provides a new hero — or to be exact, two heroes. There is Gorbachev in whom we can place all our trust, and of course, there was Lenin. Marxism has produced two great men and we can all breathe safely again. There was also one great woman — Rosa Luxemburg — not of course when she was living, and not for the next seventy years, but now, in the spirit of the churchmen of yore, St Rosa can be resurrected to provide an argument for Slovo. Thus are the historic personages to be raised from the dead to whip those who won't hasten into line.

Stalin, No! — Stalinism, Yes

The central issue that Slovo set out to discuss is the demise of the Stalin myth and the fate of the country that calls itself the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As is patently obvious to all, the name of this country bears no resemblance to reality. There is no socialism — and nothing vaguely resembling socialism. There is no working class control and there are no worker's Soviets (or Councils). If it is a union, this is only because the Russian state has imposed its rule on republics that demand the right to secede. Those that belonged to the Tsarist empire, and those that were annexed under the Stalin-Hitler pact. And now, irony of ironies, it is Russia itself that threatens to secede from this union of republics!

Slovo speaks of 'bureaucratic distortions' in this state. These 'distortions' he says were 'rationalised at the ideological level by a mechanical and out-of-context invocation of Marxist dogma'...by the 'tragic misapplication of socialist theory in new realities which were not foreseen by the founders of Marxism.' I am old fashioned enough to believe that there is no 'Marxist dogma', and that the method of Marx is opposed to dogma in any shape or form. What passed for Marxism in Stalin's Russia (and was deified by Slovo and his party) consisted of the latest catch-phrase coined in the USSR. Slovo may wriggle as he likes, but he will not get the equation right until he takes stock of that system that he called Marxism. Stalin used excessive centralism and appeals to patriotism to prevent the fragmentation of the USSR; police terror, the Gulag, and confinement to mental homes were the method employed to silence dissent; flattery was the path to privilege. Soviet policy was not out-of-context as Slovo asserts, but all too cynically, designed to justify the latest turn in *Realpolitik*. That is not the end of the confusion Slovo offers in these few sentences. The 'founders of Marxism' he says, presumably meaning Marx and Engels, had not foreseen the 'new realities'.

Slovo then offers his explanation for these 'new realities':

Socialist power was first won in the most backward outpost of European capitalism, without a democratic political tradition...To this must be added the years of isolation, economic siege and armed intervention which, in the immediate post-October period, led to the decimation of the Soviet Union's relatively small working class.

In the course of time, he concludes, 'the party leadership was transformed into a command post with overbearing centralism and very little democracy, even in relation to its own membership.'

These 'new realities' were known to the Bolshevik leaders in 1918, although Slovo seems unaware of this basic fact. The communist leadership tried to break through their isolation by appealing to the German workers, and they even tried, by military means, to establish a common border with Germany. If it was only a matter of isolation, the communist parties should have been alerted to what occurred seventy years ago. But it is precisely because this simplistic answer does not explain what happened that the problems as seen in 1917-18 must be re-examined.

Firstly, it is not enough to say that Russia was the most backward outpost of European capitalism, although that was a central factor in the collapse of the Tsarist regime. If that was all, there could be no understanding of how the Bolsheviks came to play the role they did through the year 1917. Commencing in the 1890s, massive investments poured into Russia to build a railway across the continent and to establish vast industrial complexes in St Petersburg (later Leningrad) and Moscow. Thousands of workers were concentrated in the large factory and it was their mobilization, more than anything else that led to the transformation of the first, February revolution of 1917, into the second,

October revolution. It was this uneven and combined development of the Tsarist state that provided the basis for the proletariat, in alliance with the soldiers and peasants, to seize state power³.

But, secondly, the Bolshevik leaders, in 'making their revolution permanent' (to quote the words of Marx and Engels in 1850), believed that they could retain power in Russia and build socialism only if the working class of the more advanced European states also took power and joined forces with the transformed Russian state. That is, socialism to succeed had to be international, and the workers of all lands were called upon to work towards this end.

Thirdly it was believed that production would be in the hands of worker's councils in the factories, and in the hands of the peasant's councils in the countryside. The exigencies of civil war and the decimation of the working class in the process did lay the state open to degeneration if not collapse. In fact, if it had not been for the exhaustion of the capitalist states in Europe the new workers' republic might have been overthrown by 1920. Then, with the failure of the 1923 revolution in Germany, the Soviet state was doomed to isolation. By this stage restricted market forces had been reintroduced. This was acknowledged at the time as a set-back, and henceforth market forces and socialist production were bound to compete for control of the Soviet economy. It was the arbitrary dissolution of that market economy, without consideration of the economic consequences, that initiated a system of production in which the needs of a new technology were never satisfied, and the needs of the Soviet citizens were never provided.

Fourthly, the Bolsheviks believed that they had assumed power in order to start abolishing the state. This could be done only in tandem with the workers of other European states, and could not be effected by an isolated republic. However, two issues seemed clear to the Bolshevik party. Firstly, the democracy they envisaged, based on workers councils, with the right of recall of any council member, would be a more effective democracy than any seen elsewhere. Secondly, Lenin did not reject democracy—but said that a 'democratic' state, based on the parliamentary system in operation in Europe and America could only be generated by the capitalism they were trying to abolish. However, worker's soviets ceased to exist under Stalin and there was no bourgeois democracy. Instead, control was in the hands of a triumvirate of party, army and secret police, in which contending forces were played off against one another by the General Secretary of the Communist Party. All power lay in his hands and party functionaries excelled in only one thing: the extremes to which they would go in fawning on this 'little father' of all Russia, Stalin.

The dismantling of the Soviet system under Stalin has been told many times but whatever Slovo heard or saw, he did not raise these issues. Instead, he helped spread the myth of socialist progress, and praised the Soviet authorities for whatever turn they executed. He also said nothing about the destruction of the old Bolshevik leaders. Except for Lenin who died, and

some Commissars who were killed during the civil war, every member of the Communist Party who served in the government was condemned as a counter-revolutionary, spirited away to die, or charged with treason and executed. All, except Stalin. Slovo knew this and applauded. Did he really think that every one of Lenin's associates was in the pay of the counter-revolution? Or perhaps it should be asked: did he really think at all?³

In the process of destroying all opposition an attack was mounted on Trotsky and his theory of permanent revolution, the very theory that Lenin accepted in April 1917 when he called for a second revolution – against the policy of most leading Bolsheviks (including Stalin and Molotov) who supported the provisional bourgeois government of Kerensky. From late 1923, those who accepted Trotsky's theory were condemned as traitors to the cause of communism. Does Slovo still believe that, or does he believe with Gorbachev that Trotsky was wrong? In fact, does he know, even now, what this co-founder of the Soviet state ever said or wrote?

There were major setbacks for the Bolsheviks when the revolution in Germany failed, and when the civil war was launched on Soviet soil by right-wing military forces, backed by the European and American governments. In the process the new Soviet state was bled dry, the economy (already weakened by the Great War in eastern Europe of 1914–17) shattered and many of the old revolutionary vanguard wiped out. Famine added to the misery of the people. Many, weakened by lack of food then fell prey to devastating epidemics of cholera. The transport system was in a state of collapse, the factories closed and the peasants refused to produce food for the towns. In a move that Lenin described as a necessary retreat, market conditions were reintroduced and all factions in the party were declared illegal – for the first time in the history of the social-democratic movement.

In this atmosphere the country was ripe for a counter-revolutionary force: either through a military defeat (engineered from outside the Soviet Union) or a thermidorian coup within the party. This was a social phenomenon, and not the doings of a 'wicked' man – although few would deny that Stalin was a cold-blooded executioner. If there had been no Stalin some other person would have taken control of the party, and through that party, every section of the society. To believe, as members of the SACP now do, that history can be reshaped by one person, and a wicked one at that, has nothing in common with the method of Marx.

Lies followed lies, and every new departure in the USSR was justified by members of the communist parties throughout the world. Internationalism, the touchstone of Marxism, was replaced by Soviet patriotism that demanded acceptance of the belief that Socialism could be built in one country. Every Communist Party in the world was expected to give its first loyalty to the preservation of the Soviet state and the Communist International was converted into a machine for this one purpose.

Instead of the state shedding its authority (as Lenin had anticipated), it was strengthened and the secret police took control of the doings of every citizen.

All critics were removed and party members humiliated themselves in their praise of 'the great leader.' The country lurched from adventure to adventure, collectivizing the land in a move that killed off millions of peasants; throwing the blame for industrial mismanagement on groups of workers – foreign and local; destroying the military infrastructure in case the generals intervened to remove Stalin.

As for worker's councils and control of the means of production, or of co-operatives to regulate the economy, these were scrapped. Industrialization, so essential for the advancement of agriculture and the production of consumer goods was managed bureaucratically. False quotas were set, statistics were cooked, and the shops were emptied of essential goods. Housing was in disrepair, roads in a state of decay, technology remained backward. Technicians and workers were accused of working for the 'enemy', and after staged trials many were executed; others were sent to the Gulag to work in slave camps from which they never returned. Slovo and his friends applauded and offered this as an example for the workers of the world to follow.

The USSR was held up as an example to oppressed people everywhere, as the state in which minority peoples were championed and their cultures fostered. In fact, minorities were trampled on, persecuted and even transported to impoverished regions. Stakhanovites ('heroes of labour') were hailed as men of the future – when in fact they were bully-boys who set the workers impossible targets. Soviet culture was lauded – while artists were condemned as degenerate and hounded; great writers refused permission to publish; great musicians reprimanded because Stalin wanted music that could compete with the songs of the Paris cafe.

Work in the natural sciences were retarded by party hacks who led attacks on 'bourgeois' science. Lysenko's absurdities led to the retardation of botanical processes and had a disastrous effect on Soviet agriculture; Stalin's attack on cybernetics as 'bourgeois' mystification was a barrier to computer technology; and Soviet dismissal of solid state physics (again as 'bourgeois' mysticism) hampered investigations in metallurgy. The Nazis learnt a thing or two from the leaders of the USSR.

Despite their pretensions, it seems that the leaders of the SACP followed the same path: they gloried in the 'triumphs of socialism' in the USSR, and denied that there were any faults in this 'Socialist Sixth of the World.' They read all the literature that poured off the Soviet presses, extolling the 'new woman', the 'new youth', and of course they read and quoted the works of Stalin (or his ghost-writers) on history, botany, or linguistics. They praised the sickly sweet products of 'socialist realism' and 'proletarian literature'; the posters and statues, the wedding cake buildings, the military parades; and they condemned the dissidents, cursed the opposition and applauded when one-time Bolshevik leaders were condemned to death. To the horror of people who were outside the ranks of the Communist Party, they revelled in the Stalin-Hitler pact; greeted the invasion of Finland, the partition of Poland

and the annexation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; and were silent when Jewish socialists were murdered—or when the so-called ‘Jewish doctors plot’ was denounced. The party-line had to be maintained, even when the expellers of yesterday were the expelled of today.

In offering this brief summary of events I have undoubtedly over-simplified. The reader who wishes to know more can find fuller answers in the books written by critics over the years. But besides describing events, I have also offered a sketch of the social conditions that led to the emergence of Stalin (and Stalinism) in the USSR. This is no idle exercise: only a study of what allowed the counter-revolution to emerge will allow socialists in the future to avoid those pitfalls. Yet, even this is not enough. To understand what happened in any country it is necessary to follow the method of Marx—both philosophically and in terms of a critique of political economy. Only in this way will it be possible to understand the laws of motion of that country. Furthermore, only an analysis of the class structure of that country will the struggles for change be understood. Finally the nature of a given country’s development must be seen inside its international context. If Slovo had offered any analysis of the course of events in the USSR I might have agreed or disagreed. But he has no explanation, no theory, no discussion of the economic or social structure of the USSR. Stalin the god, has given way to Stalin the devil. And with this we are supposed to be satisfied.

Marxism Through the Eyes of Slovo

‘We believe,’ says Slovo, ‘that the theory of Marxism in all its essential respects, remains valid and provides an indispensable guide to achieve a society free of all forms of exploitation of person by person.’ Perhaps, then, it is still possible to find common ground with him. Provided, that is, we can discover what it is he believes Marxism to be. The theory of Marxism either provides a basis for understanding the past (as well as the future) or it must be discarded. What then is offered in this document to make Marxism ‘an indispensable guide to achieve a society free of all forms of exploitation...’? After making this bold declaration Slovo is remarkably thin on concrete ideas, and is horribly wrong in his discussion of both the USSR and South Africa.

He says that Marxism ‘maintains that the class struggle is the motor of human history’⁴. He says there is a temptation to jettison the theory of class struggle ‘by some commentators in the socialist media.’ Slovo will have none of this: It is this class struggle which ‘remains valid as an explanation of past social transformations, and as a guide to the strategies and tactics of the struggle to win a socialist order.’ This is not over-convincing on two counts. The method of Marxism, if that is what he used, was not very useful to Slovo in the past. By his own account he, and his party, failed to understand the events in the USSR, in eastern Europe, and presumably in China as well. Did he get it right in other parts of the world, in western Europe, the America, and indeed in South Africa? How does he justify the dissolution of his party in 1950 when

threatened by the state? Where was the theory of class struggle at that critical juncture? Nor does he explain the very core of SACP ideology — the theory of 'Colonialism of a Special Type,' which relegates the class struggle to the bottom of the list and is an act of faith for all party members?

However, although Marx does stress the importance of the class struggle, and any attempt to jettison it must be rejected, he did not start at his analysis with that concept. Marx began with an analysis of social systems, which, he said, had a beginning, a rise to maturity and then an end. The factors that lead to this birth, growth and ultimate death must be found in the internal contradictions of successive system — the unravelling of which will allow for an understanding of their ultimate crises and collapse. Social systems emerged and disappeared, each one transcending its predecessor by virtue of its superior technology and greater material resources. Out of each new mode of production a class emerged that challenged the very system to which it owed its existence. This was an inevitable consequence of the contradictions inherent in that system. The class struggle is not the primary factor in historical change, but the consequence of a basic dislocation in the old mode of production. It is this that must be understood in order to understand its significance.

This is not an academic point, but a position central to Marx's method. It separates out what he called the essence from the phenomenal. It placed an understanding of political economy at the centre of Marx's method, and indicated how the surface phenomena were to be understood in historical investigations. It is using this method — which is alien to anything said in Mr Slovo's pamphlet — that it becomes possible to understand what happened in the Soviet Union, in Europe and the US, in Asia, and obviously in South Africa. It is because Slovo has reduced Marxism to a set of simple formulae that his pamphlet fails to provide an understanding of what happened in the past and what can happen in the future.

In his discussion of the contemporary position in the USSR Slovo is completely at sea. Not only because he cannot grasp the dynamic of events today, but also because he is stuck with Stalin's simplistic explanation of the revolution of 1917. I have already touched on the nature of the revolution and cannot probe much further here. Suffice to say that in the years 1890–905, Marxists in Russia examined the nature of the political economy of their country and traced the contradictions emerging in a social system in which the most modern technology had been implanted in a backward society. It was from this that they wrote theses on the nature of the coming revolution — and they differed widely in their prognoses. They argued strenuously, and there was a bitterness in their polemics that is open to criticism today. But this did not lead to the open warfare that was experienced wherever Communist Parties obtained a toehold after 1918. It was in that debate that the concept of continuous or permanent revolution was revived by Trotsky and acted as one of the guiding lights for the revolution of 1917.

In the light of the discussions then and later, the claim now that Mr Gorbachev has contributed something new to the theory of socialism is poppycock. The man who proposes throwing the economy open to the free market, selling off state enterprises, doubling and trebling the prices of basic necessities and introducing a reserve army of ten million unemployed, is a worthy partner of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Bush, but has nothing in common with Marxism. Confrontation between 'different systems' he maintained in the USA, has given way to co-operation. Is he the worthy heir to Lenin?

Slovo is wrong about Mr Gorbachev, and although the workers of South Africa might be able to live with that, they cannot follow the path that Slovo lays down for South Africa – unless they want to see themselves left where they are now: a low-paid work force denied the possibility of improving their daily lives.

Slovo's message to the working class is that they must accept the ANC 'as the head of the liberation alliance,' and must work for a post-apartheid society which in its first stage will be national democratic multi-party democracy. After this, he claims, 'the way will be open for a peaceful progression towards our ultimate objective – a socialist South Africa.' No talk about a class struggle, no anti-imperialist message, no internationalism (factors whose absence he has decried). And all so easy. The capitalists will have disappeared, rival nationalisms will have been erased, states outside South Africa (on its borders or beyond) are not involved. There will be a peaceful progression to a socialist South Africa.

This is not a Marxist interpretation, and if this is all that we have learnt from seventy years of failure, then no wonder socialism (as understood by Joe Slovo) has failed. Indeed, these have been seven wasted decades and new studies are required to chart the course ahead. The workers need better arguments, more thorough investigations, if they are to prepare themselves for the greatest undertaking yet known in history: the removal of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist commonwealth that must flow well beyond the borders of any one state. Only then will it be possible to build a genuine democracy, free of exploitation, free of coercion, and free of those false prophets who maintained for most of this century that a vicious dictatorship was the socialism to which the workers aspired.

References

1. See George Paloczzi-Horvath, *Khrushchev: The Road to Power*, Secker and Warburg, 1960, p.9: 'Contrary to the rest of the world, in the Soviet Union the future is certain...while the past is most uncertain. The events of the past are constantly changed to fit the actuality of the present.' For the author the past was all too real: he served 5 years of a 15 year sentence in Hungary before being released by Imry Nagy, and 'rehabilitated.' Nagy's past was somewhat less fortunate: he was executed.

2. The capitalist development of Tsarist Russia is well documented by bourgeois and socialist commentators, from Lenin through to Nove. What is less well known is the work of Trotsky in 1904. In this he discussed the uneven and combined development of Russian capitalism and predicted that the concentration of workers would lead to their becoming the vanguard of the revolution. He adopted Marx's words in calling on the workers to *make the revolution permanent*. See the article in this issue on the path to negotiations in South Africa.

3. On 22 October 1988 Slovo was reported as saying: 'I was defending the Stalinist trials of the thirties...It's not that we did not know what was going on, but we just rejected whatever evidence was produced and rationalized our way out of it...It resulted in a defence in principle of everything Russia did both domestically and internationally.' I owe this quotation to Heribert Adam, 'Eastern Europe and South African Socialism', Africa Seminar paper, University of Cape Town, April 1990.

4. I make no endeavour to correct the many misquotations or errors of fact in this article. Slovo is not noted for the accuracy of his writing but my concern is with his basic arguments rather than the crudities of his representation.

POSTSCRIPT

'None So Blind As Those Who Won't See'

I had just completed the above when, through the post, came the *South African Labour Bulletin*, of March 1990. The back cover has a 'Welcome Home' to Ray Alexander, member of the SACP since 1929, co-author, with her husband J.H. Simons, of *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*, and trade union leader. Obviously, the SALB carries a profile of Ms Alexander and some of her comments on events in eastern Europe.

Ray Alexander has followed the party line without wavering through the long dog days of Stalin and his successors. A member of the Central Committee since at least the late 1930s she played her part in laying down the line in South Africa and spreading the myth of 'socialist achievement' in the USSR. In the light of the events of 1989 the least that can be said is that her reflections on current events are remarkable understatements. I quote the relevant passages:

When the situation in Eastern Europe broke out it was a great shock to me personally. I have been in the movement for a long, long time, 60 years. And I defended the Soviet Union at all times, and Eastern Europe. And when I came out in exile I went to Czechoslovakia, the GDR, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania and to Bulgaria. I haven't been to Yugoslavia.

Therefore the news that broke, well it made me very unhappy. I felt in a way that I had been bluffed. Many times I had arguments in our house.

My own children would say: 'Mummy, this is what we hear is happening in the socialist countries.' And I would tell them what I have seen. But I had not seen what other people had seen. Because I was put in a posh hotel. I was going from one meeting to another meeting. I went to factories, but I've never really been in the homes of people, except in Hungary

Ms Alexander then spoke of her surprise in 1989 when bus workers in Moscow went on strike for a rest room – something which the workers in Cape Town won in 1932. She continued:

So altogether it was a big shock to me. I have been told perestroika will bring about greater improvements in the economy. But I did not know their economy was in a bad way. Remember, the Soviet Union has been helping us a great deal. Food and clothing. They were and are great supporters of our movement.

As far as Romania is concerned, that is a great tragedy. I went to Romania and saw things for myself. That was in 1974 or 75. I was not at all impressed, because I saw that the upper groups in the leadership of the trade unions, the women and in the party were living high. Now the GDR was a great disappointment to me. I thought that they were democrats. But to my mind they had not been democrats, they were not socialists.

A new crop of people have come up, the leaders who will be dedicated socialists, and that is where the hope lies. I am a great believer that socialism will triumph in the Soviet Union and in the other countries. I think they will reorganise.

That is all this communist leader can tell us about the vast rejection of the regimes of eastern Europe and the unrest in the USSR. She went into posh hotels and never saw how people lived, she went into factories and never saw that the products were unsalable, she saw corruption in Romania and kept quiet, she thought that the leaders of the GDR were democrats and never saw the controls placed on the population, she visited Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and never sensed the resentment against Soviet control. Now, as uncritically as ever before she has hope in new 'dedicated socialists' who wish to introduce the free market economy – so that 'socialism will triumph...'

Are we to take seriously this person's claim to speak for the workers of South Africa?

INSIDE QUADRO

End of an Era

The first-hand testimony by former combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) about the ANC prison regime, together with press reports that began to appear in Britain in March this year, are an event in South African history. Never before has such concentrated factual evidence been presented about the inner nature of the ANC and its *eminence grise*, the South African Communist Party.

If people wish to understand the operation of the ANC/SACP, they must look here. This is the view behind the proscenium arch, behind the scenery, where the machinery that runs the whole show is revealed in its actual workings.

The ANC/SACP did a very good job in preventing public knowledge of its secret history from emerging, and the testimony of the Nairobi five shows how. (Two other South Africans, both women, are with the five in Nairobi at the time of writing, but they have not yet come public about their experiences). Those who survived the Gulag system of the ANC/SACP did so knowing that to reveal what they had been through meant re-arrest, renewed tortures and in all probability, death. They had to sign a form committing them to silence.

As they repeat in this issue, the ex-detainees in Nairobi have revealed that other prisoners, including Leon Madakeni, star of the South African film *Wanaka*, as well as Nomhlanhla Makhuba and another person known as Mark, committed suicide rather than suffer re-arrest at the hands of their KGB-trained guardians. Madakeni drove a tractor up a steep incline in Angola, put it into neutral and died as it somersaulted down the hill (*Sunday Correspondent*, 8 April).

The ex-guerrillas in Nairobi displayed immense courage in speaking out publicly, first through the *Sunday Correspondent* in Britain on April 8 and then in the *Times* on April 11. It was another indicator of the crack-up of Stalinism internationally: a snippet of South African *glasnost*.

Their courage might have contributed to secure the lives of eight colleagues who had fled Tanzania through Malawi, hoping to reach South Africa on the principle that better a South African jail than the ANC 'security.' This group, including two leaders of the mutiny in the ANC camps in Angola in 1984, arrived in South Africa in April, were immediately detained at Jan Smuts Airport by the security police for interrogation, and then released three weeks later. The day after their release they gave a press conference in Johannesburg, confirming the account of the mutiny published here.

This regime of terror, extending beyond the gates of the ANC/SACP 'Buchenwald' of Quadro, was a necessary element in the total practice of repression and deception which made the Anti-Apartheid Movement the

most successful Popular Front lobby for Stalinism anywhere in the world. No international Stalinist-run public organization has ever had such an influence and shown such stability, reaching into so many major countries, for so long.

In its thirty years' existence, the AAM put international collaborative organisations of the period of the Spanish Civil War and of the Stalin–Roosevelt–Churchill alliance to shame. Extending to the press, the churches, the bourgeois political parties, the trade unions and the radical, even 'trotskyist' left, the AAM has been an outstanding success for Stalinism, as the review of Victoria Brittain's book in this issue shows.

Vital to its success has been a practice of open and covert censorship, now blown wide open, in which individuals such as Ms Brittain have played a sterling part. The ANC's prisoners were its necessary sacrificial victims.

The KGB in Africa

The prison system to which they were subject goes back to the late 1960s. It was the successor and the complement to the prison system on which blacks in South Africa are weaned with their mothers' milk. In 1969 one of the editors of this journal met two South Africans in London who said they had fought in the first MK guerrilla operation in mid-1967 – a disastrous fiasco across the Zambezi River into the Wankie area of Rhodesia, along with guerrillas from the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), then led by James Chikerema. (The ZAPU president, Joshua Nkomo, was in detention). The two men described how they had eventually succeeded in escaping from Rhodesia, and how their criticism of the operation had led to their imprisonment in an ANC camp in Tanzania. An article on the theme appeared the same year in the British radical newspaper, *Black Dwarf*, then edited by Tariq Ali.

The revelations by the Nairobi five indicate how little has changed. In his book on black politics in South Africa since 1945, Tom Lodge, (*Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, Ravan, 1987), writes:

In 1968 a batch of Umkhonto defectors from camps in Tanzania sought asylum in Kenya, alleging that there was widespread dissatisfaction within the camps. They accused their commanders of extravagant living and ethnic favouritism. The first Rhodesian mission, they alleged, was a suicide mission to eliminate dissenters. In political discussions no challenge to a pro-Soviet position was allowed (p.300).

From 1968 to 1990, nothing basic altered in the ANC's internal regime in the camps, except that in the high noon of the Brezhnev era it operated para-statal powers under civil war conditions in Angola, where a large Cuban and Soviet presence permitted the ANC security apparatus to 'bestride the narrow world like a Colossus.'

From the account of the ex-mutineers, ANC administrative bodies ruled over its elected bodies, the security department ruled over the administrative organs, and KGB-trained officials — no doubt members of the SACP — ruled over the security apparatus. Umkhonto we Sizwe functioned as an extension in Africa of the KGB. Its role in the civil war in Angola was to serve primarily as a surrogate to Soviet foreign policy interests, so that when the ANC rebels proposed that their fight be diverted to South Africa this counted as unpardonable cheek, to be ruthlessly punished. Over its own members, the ANC security apparatus ruled with all the arrogance of a totalitarian power.

There is a direct line of connection between the ANC reign of terror in its prisons — which a UN High Commission for Refugees official described as more frightening than Swapo prisons — and the 'necklace' killings exercised by ANC supporters within South Africa, especially during the period of the 1984-86 township revolt, but now once again revived against oppositional groupings such as Azapo. (The ANC's 'necklace' politics was also a definite contributory element provoking the carnage in Natal). Two former ANC prisoners, Similo Boltina and his wife Nosisana, were in fact necklaced on their return to South Africa in 1986, after having been repatriated by the Red Cross (letter from Bandile Ketelo, 9 April 1990).

This is the significance of the 'Winnie issue.' When on 16 February last year, leaders of the Mass Democratic Movement publicly expressed their 'outrage' at Winnie Mandela's 'obvious complicity' in the abduction and assault on 14 year-old Stompie Moeketsi Seipei, leading to his murder, this was in response to very widespread and very well-founded revulsion among Soweto residents — especially ANC supporters such as members of the Federation of Transvaal Women (Fetraw). They were enraged by the jackboot politics of the so-called Mandela United Football Team, whose 'coach' — to the satisfaction of Fetraw members — has been convicted of Stompie's murder.

This squad of thugs, based in Mrs Mandela's house, acted within Soweto in the same way that the ANC/SACP security acted abroad, in Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Uganda. (According to the ex-detainees, the KGB-apparatus in the ANC even sent its troops to Rhodesia in 1979 to fight against the guerrillas of the Zimbabwe African National Union: ZANU, which was not a Soviet client).

For this reason, the integration of certain members of MK into the South African army and police — as the MK commander, Joe Modise, and his second in command, Chris Hani, are seeking — should not present any serious problems. They speak the same language, they are 'all South Africans.' The welcome of Captain Dirk Coetzee, head of the regime's assassination squad, into the arms of the ANC is an indication of the future course of development, as is the decision by the new Swapo government in Namibia to appoint a number of top South African security policemen, including the former chief of police in the Ovambo region, Derek Brune, to head its secret organs of coercion.

The South African prison system was replicated in the ANC prisons even into everyday terminology, above all at Quadro. This is a name that requires to become common currency in political discourse: it is the Portuguese for 'No.4' the name used throughout South Africa for the notorious black section of the prison at the Fort. Sneers by warders at soft conditions in 'Five Star Hotels', the common description of punishment cells as 'kulukudu' (*Sunday Correspondent*, 8 April) and the whole atmosphere of brutal crassness is quintessentially South African, spiced with the added sadism of the Gulag. The ANC prison system combined the worst of South African and of Russian conditions fused together, and it is this new social type — as a refinement and augmentation of each — that is now offered to the people of South Africa as the symbol of freedom.

Beginning of an Era

In returning to South Africa, the ex-ANC detainees have the advantage of the Namibian experience before them. They need an organization of their relatives, along the lines of the Committee of Parents in Namibia, and an organization of former prisoners themselves, such as the Political Consultative Council of Ex-Swapo Detainees (PCC). The ex-detainees who returned to Johannesburg in April have already mentioned that they intend to form an association of 'parents of those who died or were detained in exile' (*Liberation*, 17 May).

These young people - the Nairobi five are aged between 28 and 33 - represent the flower of the generation of the Soweto students' revolt. This was the beginning of their political awakening. The experience of Stalinist and nationalist terror at the hands of the ANC/SACP represents a second phase in a cruel journey of consciousness. A third phase is now beginning, in which these young people will be required to discover what further changes in society and thought are needed to bring a richly expressive democracy into being in southern Africa.

Compared with the Namibian experience (see *Searchlight South Africa* No.4 and this issue), South African conditions are both more and less favourable. Unlike in Namibia, the churches in South Africa are not absolutely glued to the torturers. A letter from the group in Nairobi was sympathetically received by the Rev Frank Chikane, secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Archbishop Desmond Tutu met the ex-detainees when he was in Nairobi early in April and arranged for them to get accommodation at the YMCA there, paid for by the All-African Council of Churches. (Up to that time they had first been in prison in Kenya, since they had arrived absolutely without documents, and had then been living rough). The Archbishop later took up the mutineers' demand for a commission of inquiry with the National Executive Committee of the ANC. He got no response.

We join with these ex-detainees in demanding that the ANC set up an independent commission of enquiry into the atrocities perpetrated in the Umkhonto we Sizwe camps.

Mandela's statement acknowledging that torture had taken place was in any case very different from the ferocious silence of President Nujoma, the chief architect of Swapo's purges. The ex-detainees' demand for action against top leaders of the ANC, however, goes way beyond what the organization is likely to be able to concede. Therein lies its radical character.

These positive currents, however, are negated by the convergence of very powerful capitalist and Stalinist interests which together aim to fix the future with the utmost *Realpolitik*. The leaders of the unions, previously independent and now politically prisoners of the SACP, have become the engineers of the SACP/capitalist fix, and the workers – even when eager for socialism – are disoriented.

It is likely that there will be a very violent period as the ANC's drive for its supposed target of six million members gets under way, through which it aims to wipe the floor with rival groupings that accuse it of sell-out. It is possible that the methods of Quadro will become part of the daily metabolism of South African life. Future capitalist profitability requires in any case that a massive defeat be inflicted on the workers. The Young Upwardly Mobile (Yuppy) stratum of black petty bourgeoisie will ruthlessly attempt to enforce and secure the conditions for its material advance.

Under these conditions, the ex-detainees will need to find the route to the consciousness of the workers, both to win a base of support for their own defence (even survival) and to help speed up the process of political clarification about the nature of the ANC. In the meantime, defensive alliances need urgently to be made: with the left wing of the unions, socialist political groupings of whatever kind, opponents of the new capitalist/ANC autocracy, concerned individuals in the press, the universities and the legal system; and not least, with the ex-Swapo detainees in Namibia.

As a yeast in which the fermentation of new ideas can develop, the ex-ANC detainees on their return to South Africa will prove one of the most favourable of human resources for a democratic future. They know the future governors of South Africa from the inside. They need the greatest possible international and local support to protect them under very dangerous conditions of life in the townships.

They too will need beware the siren voices of their KGB-trained persecutors, who seek to persuade them that the Brezhnev wolf in Angola has been transformed into a Gorbachev lamb in South Africa. In particular, they will need to inquire whether Joe Slovo, the scourge of Joseph Stalin in 1990, and general secretary of the SACP, is the same Slovo who was chief of staff of MK in the glory days of Quadro. What did he know? When did he know it? And what did he do about it?

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 Kanganjala, 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.

AN OPEN LETTER TO NELSON MANDELA FROM EX-ANC DETAINEES

YMCA Shauri Moyo

P.O.Box 17073

Nairobi.

14.04.90

Dear Cde Mandela
Revolutionary Greetings!

The news through the press about our horrific experiences at the hands of the ANC security organs must have left you in a state of bewilderment. Fully aware of that, we realise the need to write you this letter giving an account of our vicissitudes in combating the enemies of democracy within the ANC and putting across also our incessant efforts to have these problems resolved democratically with the full participation of the entire membership. By this we hope to dispel any misunderstandings regarding our decision to expose this disgraceful and shameful page in the history of our organisation, which we hold at high esteem, even at this hour.

First, it is a fact, undisputable indeed, that the 1984 mutiny was a spontaneous reaction of the overwhelming majority of the cadres of MK to crimes and misdeeds, incompatible with the noble and humane ideals of our political objectives, carried out by certain elements in the leadership of the ANC. These included, among other things, acts of torture and murder through beatings, committed by the ANC Security personnel under the leadership of Mzwandile Piliso; brutal suppression of democracy denying the membership of the ANC any opportunity, for a period exceeding thirteen years, to decide through democratic elections who should lead them; and misleading our people's army by locking it into diversional battles from which our struggle did not benefit, thereby weakening and destroying its fighting capacity.

Second, it remains our firm belief that, had the ANC leadership acted honestly at the very early stages of mutiny, and most of all, had President Tambo responded responsibly to our appeal for his immediate and direct intervention, many lives could have been saved. Regrettably, in a manner identical to our political enemy, the South African regime, the ANC leadership fished out the "ringleaders" and their most plainspoken opponents and unleashed virulent brutalities against them.

Third, having gone through close to five years without trial in the most notorious prison within the ANC, and having endured the humiliating, dehumanising and hazardous conditions in which some of us perished, we remained committed to the ANC. This was in recognition of the justness of our cause, in honour of men like you and the multitudes in our beleaguered

homeland who languished in racist dungeons and got murdered in this noble cause, and lest we forget our comrades whose lives were cut short by those who deceptively made noise and declarations about democracy on behalf of our people.

Fourth, embarrassed at the way the ANC community in Dakawa absolved us by electing us into the political structures in the Tanzanian ANC region, Chris Hani and Stanley Mabizela, acting on behalf of the National Executive Committee, then muzzled us by banning us from participating freely in ANC political life and dissolving democratically elected structures. Our efforts to challenge such an undemocratic action and to explain the causes of the 1984 mutiny for which we were being unjustifiably treated were answered by shouts from Hani himself, taking us down [from] the platform and even calling for armed Tanzanian Task Force Unit to surround the hall.

It's the realization of the last-named factor that sealed and shattered our long-standing commitments and hopes to reform the ANC from within, and we resigned in December last year. But let it be stressed still, that even at that time, we still limited our activities to consulting the internal leadership of our movement[,] avoiding embarrassing the organisation we so dearly loved. We contacted through letters and attempted to send our document (captured at the Dar-es-Salaam Airport by ANC and Tanzanian security) to such stalwarts of our anti-apartheid struggle as Frank Chikane, General Secretary of SACC, leadership from prison and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Knowing you as a personality who distinguished himself by unflinchingly fighting and standing for human rights and ideals of highest democracy, we receive with bitterness your praises showered at these corrupt and atrocious elements, whilst a shroud of secrecy wraps around the noblest sons and daughters of South Africa who perished in pursuit of the same ideals as yours[,] at the hands of these fake custodians of our people's political aspirations. It is this that pricks our conscience to remove this shroud. Nothing can be more treacherous than to allow such crimes to go unchallenged and unknown. Nothing can be more hypocritical when some of us even at this hour are languishing in those concentration camps. Even much more disturbing is that these enemies of democracy are to be part of that noble delegation of the ANC to negotiate the centuries-long denied democratic freedoms of our people. What a mockery! What a scorn to our people's sacrifices for freedom! We back your tireless efforts and of all those peace-loving South Africans who see the need for a peaceful settlement of our problems, but we also believe that our people's yearnings for justice can only be competently secured by a morally clean leadership.

We know how difficult it is to accept these bitter but objective truths, and how mammoth the task is of taking appropriate actions against these individuals. But we know also how [undermined ?] they are even within the ANC membership, and we are certain also that, if only they could talk, much more horrific stories will come out of those who tasted the bitterness of the ANC security's treatment. Hence, our sincere call to you and the fighting

masses in South Africa and within the ANC to back our demand for a commission to inquire into these atrocities. This, *contrary to short-sighted ideas*, will not weaken the ANC, but will demonstrate to our people and the world the ANC's uncompromising commitment to justice and democracy. No better guarantee can be made to our people that when our organisation ascends to power, their rights and freedoms will thrive in competent and responsible hands.

*Amandla!! NGAWETHU!!
POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!
Yours in the Struggle,
Ex-ANC Detainees*

(Copy from fax-message)

THE KISSINGER/VORSTER/KAUNDA DETENTE: GENESIS OF THE SWAPO 'SPY-DRAMA' – Part I

Paul Trehwela

'The agents of the South African regime and imperialists have been rooted out of our movement, and the Central Committee carried out a systematic purge of all the traitors'

Sam Nujoma, 5 August 1976.¹

A Religious Experience

Independence day in Namibia on 21st March was welcomed by the international media in a mood of rapture. It was a variety of religious experience. As the rites of passage took place in Windhoek on the 30th anniversary of the massacres at Sharpeville and Langa in South Africa, the social and political relations within Namibia underwent a mystical transfiguration.

The past was to be forgotten. Reconciliation was all. Namibia was 'free' (*Guardian*), the outcome was a United Nations 'triumph' (*Independent*), Sam Nujoma the new president was 'a kind man' (*Independent on Sunday*). The tone of wonder appeared at its most elevated in the *Observer*, owned by Tiny Rowland's Lonrho corporation. Under the headline 'Namibia set to become Africa's model state,' its correspondent in Windhoek, the South African journalist Allister Sparks, declared: 'there is an atmosphere now of something quite unbelievable and almost magical happening.'

It was 'almost to good to be true.' Namibia had the prospect of becoming 'the continent's most genuinely democratic and economically viable country,' with 'black Africa's only authentic multi-party system.' The miracle in Windhoek acquired not merely continental but universal significance: 'The whole world, it seems, wants to celebrate this deliciously unexpected event.' Similar compliments on the 'birth of democratic Namibia' were expressed by Glenys Kinnock of the Labour Party and by David Steel, former leader of the Liberal Party, in a letter to the British press.

To these spiritual chords were added the choirs of cash registers jingling, and not principally either for Windhoek's hoteliers and the bed-and-breakfast industry. In the words of the *Observer*, of 18 March,

The mood among businessmen is bullish. 'It ranges from cautiously optimistic to very optimistic', says Ude Freuse, who runs a consultative forum that brings government and business leaders together. 'Swapo [the South West Africa People's Organization] has been de-demonized and now businessmen see that it is opening new doors to the world for them'

To this could be added the comment of the US financial pundit Eliot Janeway, published in the British press on the eve of Namibia's independence: 'South Africa is the gateway to black Africa, which is the new market about to explode in the world' (*Guardian*, 20 March).

Seldom have the ecstasies of faith ascended to heaven so purely from the cash nexus.

The Case of Andreas Shipanga

The whole affair was characterized by the grotesque. In the fairy tale, Beauty fell in love with the Beast (actually a handsome prince), but in the case of Swapo it is something bestial that is celebrated as beautiful. Under conditions of permanent terror inflicted by the South African regime in Namibia, Swapo in exile was shaped by a history of purges of its members during the 1980s which reached lunatic proportions. Over this period over a thousand Swapo members were purged in southern Angola: tortured, forced to confess to fabricated charges of being South African spies, imprisoned in pits in the ground for up to seven years, executed at will, and very frequently worked, starved or beaten to death. One man who returned to Windhoek with other ex-Swapo prisoners in July last year lost seven brothers in this way. Even President Nujoma's wife was arrested at one point. Some of the best-known heroes of the Namibian resistance were murdered and defamed, in addition to a host of others.

Searchlight South Africa, No. 4, was the first (and perhaps still is the only) South African political journal to make the cause of the ex-Swapo detainees its own, to report extensively on the 'spy-drama' of the 1980s, to interview its victims and to call for an independent international inquiry, as the former detainees themselves demand. (See the statement of the Political Consultative Council of Ex-Swapo Detainees [PCC] in this issue).

Former Swapo prisoners now in Namibia are convinced that very many of their fellows who have not returned continue to be held by Swapo elsewhere in Africa, if they have not already been murdered. Their return is the PCC's first demand. *Searchlight South Africa* undertook to return to the question of Swapo's prisons, and this guided the research resulting in this article. Both the original material on Swapo's prisons and the present article were written in the knowledge that similar atrocities had happened in ANC camps, and that the question of Swapo was an acid test for politics in South Africa. The publication of the first, extended, first-hand account by former ANC members of their experiences at the hands of the ANC's jailers and torturers, appearing in the London *Sunday Correspondent* on 8 April, followed by the ex-ANC members' Open Letter to Nelson Mandela of 14 April, completely vindicated this perspective.

The present article investigates the historical forces that propelled Swapo towards its cycle of tortures and executions, and locates them in complex

inter-relations of global and regional politics of the mid-1970s, focussed on the civil war in Angola. This was not the beginning of Swapo's descent to barbarism, as former Swapo prisoners see it. They report an early rebellion by members of Swapo's military wing at Kongwa in Tanzania in the 1960s, put down by the Tanzanian army on behalf of Swapo's leaders. Very little is known about this event. According to ex-Swapo prisoners, the Kongwa rebellion 'has never been fully discussed even at the highest levels of the organization. To this date, a veil of secrecy prevails over it' ('A Report to the Namibian People'). It is not yet possible to appraise its significance for Swapo's future evolution.

The present article, however, does present the first comprehensive picture of conditions in the 1970s that determined Swapo's fatal course: towards eating its own children. It is a matter that requires a great deal of further research. Yet already a picture emerges of one of the great hidden scandals of southern Africa, centred on political and military collaboration of Swapo's top leaders with the South African government and with Unita when Angola was invaded by the South African army in September/October 1975. Several of the leaders of Swapo most active in the events of that time now head the government of Namibia, including the president, Nujoma, the minister of defence, Peter Mueshikange, and the minister of security, Peter Sheehama.

Swapo's collaboration with the South African government expressed itself perversely, and in a manner that reversed the real relationships, in the so-called 'Shipanga affair' of 1976. The episode is named after Andreas Shipanga, Swapo's former secretary for information, born in 1931 to a rural family in Ovamboland in northern Namibia. After working in Ovamboland, in Angola, on the gold mines of the Witwatersdrand and in Rhodesia, he went to Cape Town in the 1957 where he was an early member of Swapo's parent body, the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC). In the early 1960s he was one of Swapo's leaders in Cape Town, and also a member of the Yu Chi Chen Club, a small discussion group with members drawn from several political organizations who shared a common interest in theories of guerrilla warfare². The club was a product of the times: of the all-pervasive conviction after the Sharpeville shootings, that only violence could remove the regimes that ruled in southern Africa.

In June 1963, YCC Club members in Cape Town were arrested and jailed. Among these, Dr Neville Alexander—now a leader of the Cape Action League—and Elizabeth van den Heever spent more than 15 years in prison. Shipanga escaped arrest and returned to Namibia. At the same time, another Namibian associated with the YCC Club, Dr Kenneth Abrahams, was saved from arrest by local people in his native Rehoboth in central Namibia. Shipanga and Abrahams escaped to Botswana (then Bechuanaland, still under British control), along with two of Abrahams' rescuers, Paul Smit and Hermanus Christofel Beukes, one of the first Namibians to petition the United Nations. There the four men were kidnapped by South African police, subjected to a ferocious beating and smuggled back. Abrahams was flown to

Cape Town, the others imprisoned in Namibia. After heated demands from the British government, the South African government was compelled to return the four men to Bechuanaland.

Shipanga then joined other Swapo leaders in exile. Swapo had opened its first mission in Dar es Salaam in 1961, with missions in Cairo in 1962 and Algeria in 1963. Its future course was decided with the setting up of the African Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, which channelled funds from member states to nationalist parties that took up arms against the white regimes in their countries. This was decisive for Swapo, since its main rival in Namibia—the South West African National Union (SWANU), with support originally among Herero-speakers—did not get funding from the OAU because it did not take up the gun.

The first batch of Swapo members arrived for military training in Cairo in 1964. The first guerrillas then entered Ovamboland in the early months of 1966, crossing through Zambia into the Caprivi Strip from their headquarters in Tanzania, and, after a period of preparation, began attacks on police posts. Swapo marks 26 August 1966 as the launch of its armed struggle, the date when South African police attacked a guerrilla training camp. Mass arrests, tortures, very long periods of imprisonment, killings and a military/police reign of terror now became the rule especially in northern Namibia, as Swapo fought the South African state in arms. The huge cost in lives of this war is the permanent background to the Swapo spy-drama.

The Demand for a Congress

Swapo's first two national congresses were held within Namibia in 1961 and 1963, but after the turn to arms the third congress was held at Tanga, in Tanzania, from 26 December 1969 to 3 January 1970. No further congress was held during the next six years. Since the demand for a fourth national congress was central to the internal crisis in Swapo between 1974 and 1976, a knowledge of Swapo's organizational structure at this period becomes important. Shipanga (appointed to the national executive committee as secretary for information at the third congress) describes Swapo's formal structure at this time as follows:

The National Congress is the supreme policy-making body of Swapo, bringing together people from...the military, the National Executive Committee, and humble cell members from inside Namibia. The resolutions passed by the Congress determine principles and policies and guide the work of all members.

...the Congress also elects, and where necessary suspends, members of the two other main national structures, the National Executive Committee and the Central Committee. In 1974–75 the National Executive was composed of sixteen members selected from the Central

Committee and was responsible for the day-to-day execution of Swapo policy, ensuring that the resolutions of the Congress were carried out by all organs of Swapo, including the military...

The Central Committee, with 35 members, was the watchdog of the National Executive: it was meant to oversee its work and make recommendations to it, and all important decisions of the National Executive required the approval of the Central Committee (Armstrong, p.99).

Between 1974 and 1976, however, Swapo's internal workings became enmeshed in a vast international and sub-continental embroglio. By the time Shipanga joined the national executive, Swapo had become the personal fiefdom of a small number of top leaders including two from the days of the OPC: the president, Sam Nujoma, and the secretary for defence, Peter Eneas Nanyemba³. They disregarded Swapo's constitution, using the national executive committee as a fortress against the whole organization. At the time of the internal crisis of 1974-76, according to Shipanga, something like a state of siege existed in Swapo. He states:

Since the Tanga Congress not even the Central Committee had met. The situation was totally unhealthy, because power was concentrated in the Executive Committee, and the military wing, PLAN [the People's Liberation Army of Namibia], had no representation on the Executive, only in the Central Committee (op.cit., p.100).

For militants in the front line fighting the South African state — both within PLAN, waging its military campaign mainly from Zambian bases and in the Swapo Youth League, active politically both inside and outside Namibia — this was unacceptable. It became increasingly insufferable during 1974. As Shipanga reports, the Tanga congress had resolved 'unanimously' that the next national congress would be called at the end of five years, in December 1974. Shipanga says that he constantly urged the Executive that a steering committee be appointed to prepare the 1974 congress.

Nujoma and Nanyemba kept saying no, there was no need for a Congress. In 1973 they said the same thing. Then, after the military coup in Lisbon, on 25 April 1974, came the sudden collapse of Portugal's African empire (ibid).

The coup propelled Swapo, with its undemocratic and unconstitutional internal regime, into the vortex of great power politics, completely destabilizing relations between members and leaders of the organization. Unable to cope in a revolutionary manner with the powerful currents set loose in central and southern Africa by the developments of 1974, Swapo was pulled into a fatal downward spiral of repression and falsification.

The Slide into the Abyss

At the time of the Portuguese career officers' coup, there were three separate nationalist movements in Angola, each with its own military cadre and specific ethnic base. In the north-east, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), led by Holden Roberto, had organized an uprising on the coffee plantations in March 1961. Based in neighbouring Zaire, and corruptly bound up with the Zairean elite, it rested on Angola's third biggest ethnic grouping, the Bakongo people.

In the capital Luanda, situated in the north-west on the coast, the major organization was the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). It had participated in an urban insurrection in Luanda against Portuguese rule in February 1961. After a period of intense factional strife and dormancy before the coup in Portugal, it was to emerge triumphant from the anti-Portuguese struggle and the subsequent civil war, aided by massive supplies of Soviet heavy arms and the deployment of thousands of Cuban troops, as well as Cuban administrative, teaching and medical personnel. MPLA politics was determined by the association of its major leader, Dr Agostinho Neto, with the rigid Stalinism of the Portuguese Communist Party during long years of exile (and many of imprisonment) in Portugal. Its base was the workers in the *muçiques* (hill slums) of Luanda, the intellectuals, the relatively less oppressed urban *mestico* (or mixed race) population, and the second most numerous of the tribal groupings in Angola, the Mbundu, living in the eastern hinterland of Luanda.

The largest ethnic grouping in the country, the Ovimbundu, formed the mass base for the third of Angola's nationalist parties, the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (Unita). The Ovimbundu occupied the central region of Angola, along the Benguela Railway running east-west from Zambia through southern Zaire to the port at Lobito. The founder and leader of Unita, Dr Jonas Savimbi (a graduate of the University of Lausanne, with a thesis on the Yalta conference), was previously foreign secretary of the FNLA but broke from it in 1964, condemning it as tribalist and incompetent. At this point the Chinese government, seeking a base distinct from the Soviet-backed MPLA after the Sino-Soviet split, provided Savimbi and eleven followers with military training in China in 1965-66. It is not irrelevant to the future development of Swapo that Unita's 'Chinese Eleven' were smuggled back into Angola by Swapo, located first in Tanzania and then in Zambia (Bridgland, pp.67-71).

In January 1975, ten months after the coup in Portugal, the three organizations signed a declaration of unity at Alvor in Portugal. Independence was to follow on 11 November, after elections in October for a constituent assembly. The elections never happened. No one party had support across the whole country, and a combination of international great power politics and internal antagonisms propelled them to civil war. Between June and August 1974, the FNLA based in Zaire received arms from China and Romania, as well as

military instructors from China. From July 1974 the United States, unofficially through the CIA, and from January 1975 officially through the '40 Committee' of the National Security Council, provided the FNLA with large sums of money, which was used to finance an attempted coup. Then, in late August 1974, the USSR sent huge quantities of weapons to the MPLA and in December a big contingent of MPLA officers left for the USSR for intensive military training. The scene was set.

Followers of Agostinho Neto — the leading grouping of the MPLA — attacked members of a rival faction led by Daniel Chipenda in Luanda in February 1975, killing fifteen. Chipenda and his followers fled from Luanda and joined the FNLA, bringing about 3,000 soldiers. The next month, swollen and super-confident with its CIA funds, the FNLA carried out its attempted coup in Luanda; it was driven out by the MPLA in July after massive killings on both sides. In June, MPLA troops massacred Unita members in the suburb of Pica-Pau in Luanda, compelling Unita to withdraw to central Angola where its support was concentrated. Savimbi then flew to Zambia for discussions with President Kenneth Kaunda, and shortly afterwards, on 4 August, after MPLA troops fired on Savimbi's jet at Silva Porto, Unita entered the civil war against the MPLA.

In July, US President Gerald Ford authorized \$14m for covert supply of arms to the FNLA and Unita; and on 20 August the chief of the CIA task force in Angola, John Stockwell, arrived in Unita territory on a visit of inspection, dressed as a priest, having previously joined the FNLA's march on Luanda from the north. Information on the US operation comes mainly from Stockwell, a veteran of operations in Vietnam, Zaire and Burundi, who broke with 'the company' in December 1976 and published a book on his role.

In September and October 1975, nearly a thousand Cuban troops arrived by sea to bolster the MPLA. It was they that decisively turned the tide against the FNLA when a second assault was launched on Luanda in November 1975, supported by two regular battalions of the Zairean army, aimed at capturing the capital before independence day, 11 November. The FNLA was routed, never again to appear as a factor in Angolan affairs. Between June 1974 and September 1975 Angola became a cockpit of the superpowers. The mass supply of Soviet war materiel (tanks, armoured cars, trucks, helicopters, MIG-21 jet fighters, rocket launchers, small arms plus the 122mm cannon), together with the Cuban expeditionary force — between 1,100 to 4,000 troops by November 1975, rising to 12,000 by January 1976 — decided the first phase of the Angolan war in favour of the MPLA, in addition to the important factor of popular support in the capital, Luanda. This produced a paroxysm throughout the sub-continent, with profound and grotesque effects on Swapo.

The Detente Scenario

What decided Swapo's evolution in 1974-76 was the response of the government of Zambia to the war in Angola. Swapo had its military bases in Zambia, and was directly accountable to President Kaunda and his army. The Zambian regime was thrown into panic by the war. The country had become independent in October 1964 under the leadership of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), headed by Kaunda, and governed since 1973 as a one-party state⁴. After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Smith regime in Rhodesia in November 1965, Zambia was the most 'frontline' of all the frontline states. Its economy, dependent on the mining of a single product, copper, remained in the hands of the Anglo American Corporation (based in South Africa) and Lonrho, based in Britain. Landlocked, and with a border with Angola of 1,300 kilometres, all its exports and 95 per cent of its imports at the time of independence travelled east and west through the railway systems of Mozambique and Angola, or south through Rhodesia and South Africa. Access to the coast by the shortest route, through Rhodesia to Beira in Mozambique, was cut off after UDI. By the time of the civil war in Angola, Zambia depended heavily on the Benguela Railway, taking copper from the Copperbelt through southern Zaire, and westward through central Angola to the port of Lobito. Clear passage for Zambia's main export along the Benguela Railway was a chief concern of Kaunda throughout the war. This was made even more urgent by the end of 1974, when a fall in the price of copper, brought about by the international recession, left the Zambian economy in a perilous condition.

The combination of world recession and civil war in Angola made Zambia all the more dependent economically on South Africa. While his army raced towards Luanda, the South African minister of economic affairs visited Lusaka in October 1975 to arrange an export credit deal worth a quarter of Zambia's annual imports: the Kaunda regime was desperate for hard currency. South Africa was believed to have become Zambia's most important foreign supplier (*Economist*, 20 December 1975). Official talk of a boycott of South African goods was dropped, a regular air freight service began between Johannesburg and Lusaka, and there were rumours that South Africa had agreed to finance Zambia's soaring bill for oil (which had increased nearly threefold between 1973 and 1974).

At the same time, Zambia depended for its electricity supply on the Kariba dam, the turbines and switchgear for which lay on the Rhodesian side of the Zambezi river. As David Martin and Phyllis Johnson point out in their study of the war in Zimbabwe⁵, this left Zambia a 'hostage state', at the mercy of the Rhodesian government which 'could cut off electricity at any time, blacking out Lusaka and the Copper Belt, and flooding the mines when the pumps ceased working' (1981, p.130).

Very shortly after independence, Kaunda's government had given permission to Zimbabwean guerrillas to build bases in Zambia for action against the

Smith regime. Less than two years later, guerrillas from the two main nationalist parties, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU, which had split from ZAPU in 1963), crossed the Zambezi to prepare for military activity inside Rhodesia, which began seriously in April 1966. In October 1966, the Zambian authorities permitted Swapo guerrillas, trained in Ghana and Egypt, to set up military camps for action in Namibia, striking through the Caprivi Strip. At this stage Kaunda's government favoured the MPLA in Angola. Host to guerrillas against white-ruled territories on three of its frontiers — in Mozambique to the east, Rhodesia and Namibia to the south, and Angola to the west — the Zambian government attempted to balance contradictory interests, with its political imperatives at odds with its immediate economic needs.

Soon after UDI, Kaunda had sought and got assurances of increased access for trade from the Portuguese dictator, Dr Salazar. Because of these ties with Portugal, and with Lord Colyton, chairman of Tanganyika Concessions (owner of the Benguela Railway), Kaunda was approached by representatives of the Portuguese military in Mozambique to act as a mediator towards the end of 1973, shortly before the coup in Portugal. Kaunda was warned that the regime was about to collapse (Martin and Johnson, 1981, p.127). Early in 1974 he briefed Rowland about his contacts with the Portuguese military (but neglected to inform Frelimo, the nationalist movement fighting in Mozambique).

Through Rowland and Dr Marquard de Villiers, a South African director of Lonrho, Kaunda's information was passed on to the South African prime minister B.J. Vorster in Pretoria on 29 March. De Villiers again met Vorster, together with General Hendrik van den Bergh, the head of the South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS), the day before the coup in Portugal. According to Martin and Johnson, 'Lonrho's intention from the outset was to bring Kaunda and Vorster together' (1981, p.129), and it succeeded famously. The subsequent continental strategy of the South African government bears all the marks of a major policy orientation of the secret Afrikaner Broederbond: all the major actors in the South African government were members. It also bears the mark of the international interests headed by Rowland, castigated in Britain not long previously by former prime minister Edward Heath as 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'.

Early in July, de Villiers and van den Bergh met in Paris with Mark Chona, special political assistant to Kaunda, and a major figure in the subsequent relations between the two states. Chona then made several visits to meet Vorster in Cape Town to fix this indelicate 'special relationship'. In this way Lonrho provided the 'bridge' (ibid, p.137) to the subsequent Vorster/Kaunda detente that prepared the way for the first South African military invasion of Angola in October 1975. Following a meeting between the Zambian and South African foreign ministers in New York in September 1974, a secret document known as the detente 'scenario' was agreed between Chona, de Villiers and van den Bergh, typed at State House in Lusaka on 8 October,

and endorsed by Vorster and Kaunda. This document was the prototype to all subsequent negotiations over Namibia, and expresses the essence of the current negotiating process over South Africa⁶.

Entitled 'Towards the Summit: An Approach to Peaceful Change in Southern Africa', the document noted that a military solution to problems in southern Africa was 'futile', and that the South African government had called for a meeting between Vorster and Kaunda⁷. The document looked to the release of Zimbabwean detainees and political prisoners, as well as the lifting of the ban on ZAPU (headed by Joshua Nkomo) and ZANU, then headed by the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole. Leaders from both parties had been in detention in Rhodesia since 1964. The detente document envisaged circumstances in which 'the current armed struggle will be replaced by a new spirit of co-operation and racial harmony...' Zambia 'and friends' would 'use their influence to ensure that ZANU and ZAPU desist from armed struggle and engage in the mechanics for finding a political solution in Rhodesia.' A similar clause relating to South Africa covered 'ANC or other insurgent activities.' In addition Zambia 'and friends' undertook to persuade Swapo 'to declare themselves a party not committed to violence provided the SAG [South African Government] allows their registration as a political party and allows them to function freely as such' – a minimal concession, since Swapo was already technically legal within Namibia, despite unrelenting harassment. Point six of the section on Namibia reads: 'Swapo to desist from armed struggle under conditions in paragraph 5 above.' Martin and Johnson continue:

Swapo were not consulted about this commitment being made on their behalf by Zambia and soon thereafter they received a letter from the Zambian government signed by the Minister of State for Defence, General Kingsley Chinkuli, ordering them to stop fighting from Zambia' (pp.138–42).

This order from the Zambian military, expressing the interests of the South African and Zambian regimes, cast the die for the subsequent cycle of purges in Swapo. Already in September the foreign press corps in Zambia learnt that the government was intercepting international arms deliveries to Swapo, and reported that it had prohibited all Swapo military activities from Zambian soil. Nujoma and the Zambian foreign minister, Rupiah Banda (another leading figure involved with the South Africans), publicly denied the reports, despite or rather because of their being true. However, the South African press published the story, together with statements welcoming Zambia's action by General van den Bergh and Jannie de Wet, the Commissioner 'for Indigenous People' in Namibia. Again and again, the diplomatic talents of Nujoma extended to a crude denial of a sordid reality.

According to de Villiers, the aim of the detente exercise was 'to sell Mr Vorster to Africa as a moderate and reasonable person'. Indeed he was 'sold'. Within weeks of the drafting of the document, in speeches 'carefully or-

chestrated as part of the detente "scenario" (Martin and Johnson, 1981), Vorster spoke of 'bringing and giving order' to close neighbours in Africa, while Kaunda— recently author of a book on humanism— described Vorster's speech as 'the voice of reason for which Africa and the world have waited for many years' (Ibid, pp.142–44). The siren voice of South African reason and order was to sing through a wasteland. Less than two years later, the regime of this 'moderate and reasonable' person had brought about the massacre of school students in Soweto, and Angola had been laid open, not to permanent revolution, but to permanent warfare. A recent study of modern Africa reports:

No one can calculate how many billions of dollars Angola has lost in a decade of war, nor how many civilians have died. But the effect is clear. The country has returned to the same sort of barter economy the Portuguese found centuries ago. Instead of slaves for trinkets, it is coffee for food. Since so many roads are cut, and so few airplanes fly, communication with the interior is hardly better than it was before colonialism (Rosenblum and Williamson, p.189).

The genesis of these conditions was at the same time the genesis of the Swapo spy-drama, the worst of which was acted out in southern Angola between 1984 and 1989.

Enter Kissinger, Stage Right

By October 1974, Kaunda had become particularly disillusioned in the MPLA, then preparing to make its grand bid for power in Angola. According to Bridgland, Reuters correspondent in Lusaka at the time, there had been a 'rapid rundown' in the MPLA's fight against the Portuguese during the early 1970s, as well as 'bitter and bloody strife between its factions on Zambian soil,' including a particularly hideous set of executions of dissidents in August (Bridgland, p.110). As the cycle of violence intensified within Angola, and as the tide of Soviet arms and Cuban troops flowing to the MPLA escalated to fresh heights, Kaunda switched Zambian support from the MPLA to Unita. By August 1975, Savimbi had the use of a jet on loan from Lonrho, together with British pilots, 'provided by Kaunda's close friend, Tiny Rowland', for his military and political forays around the sub-continent (ibid, p.127): a matter not unconnected with the pivotal place of Lonrho in the detente 'scenario'.

James Callaghan, the British Labour Party foreign secretary was informed in August 1974, by Chona and Zambia's then foreign minister, Vernon Mwaanga, of Kaunda's approach to Vorster (Martin and Johnson, 1981, p.137). In December, he sent his political adviser, Tom McNally, to Lusaka to 'find out just how far detente had gone' (ibid, p.193). At the end of the year he made a personal visit to southern Africa, and had talks with Kaunda and Vorster. Then, in the spring of 1975, during a visit to Washington, Callaghan

sought active support for the Vorster/Kaunda detente from the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger (ibid, p.233). About the same time, on 19 and 20 April, Kaunda visited Washington and was received by President Ford. According to Bridgland,

While public attention was drawn by a White House speech of Kaunda's, criticizing American policy in South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia, privately he was warning Ford and Henry Kissinger of Soviet intentions in Angola and encouraging them to react effectively and give assistance to Unita and the FNLA (p.120).

This discrepancy between 'public' and 'private' was to mark the whole of the detente exercise, including direct military support by the Zambian government for the joint South African/United States military operation against the MPLA in 1975-76. In addition, systematic deceit by the principal Swapo leaders against their own members – starting from Nujoma at the pinnacle – was printed into the fabric of the organization.

The Storm in Zambia

Lusaka was a focal base of intervention of the world bourgeois countries in the civil war in Angola. Between July and December 1975, Brand Fourie, the top civil servant in the South African foreign ministry, made more than twenty clandestine trips to Zambia to see Kaunda. The US ambassador to Zambia, Jean Wilkowski, according to Bridgland, bustled around Kaunda's presidential office suite at State House 'as if she owned it. She clearly had been at home there for some time' (p.157). A frequent visitor to Lusaka over this period, in his Lonrho jet, was Savimbi. Stockwell comments:

The South Africans had some encouragement to go into Angola. Savimbi invited them, after conferring with Mobutu [of Zaire], Kaunda, Felix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal, all of whom favoured a moderate, pro-West government in Angola (p.186).

The initial advance of the South African military into Angola, as it raced towards Luanda in October and November 1975 from its seat in northern Namibia, took place under the guise of being unspecified white mercenaries fighting for Unita⁷. According to a document issued in December 1975 as *Unita's Official Position* on the war, South African troops first entered southern Angola the previous July. A permanent patrol was established on the Angolan side of the Kunene river in August, and a major force of 800-1,000 troops was in place in September (Legum, 1976b, p.36). Given the preceding history of the detente process and the full-scale invasion of Angola that immediately followed, it is not hard to imagine the content of the meeting between Vorster and Kaunda on 26 August on the White Train on a disused

railway bridge above the Victoria Falls. This was the meeting called for the previous October in the secret document drawn up by van den Bergh, de Villiers and Chona at State House in Lusaka.

It is not true that this meeting was only a 'new exercise in futility', as Martin and Johnson assert (p.216), or that Vorster and Kaunda acted merely as 'umpire' to the — actually futile — meeting between Ian Smith and the Zimbabwe nationalist leaders, Nkomo, Sithole and Muzorewa (Legum, 1976a, p.23). Shipanga is almost certainly correct: the main event on this theatrical occasion was the separate and secret discussions between Kaunda (accompanied by Chona and his new foreign minister Rupiah Banda) and Vorster (with van den Bergh and foreign minister Hilgard Muller), in which the 'main topic' could only have been the coming South African invasion of Angola. Shipanga states that officials of the UN Commission for Namibia later reported South African troops moving by truck and air through western Zambia into eastern Angola. Further, the meeting of Vorster and Kaunda could only have 'reinforced their common commitment to put the lid on SWAPO' (Armstrong, p.118).

The relation of the Swapo fighters to this convergence with Unita and the South Africans could only have been explosive. In effect, they were now required by the Zambian state to collaborate with the armed forces of the regime they were fighting to overthrow. The equivocal relation of the Swapo leaders to the basic military dynamic of the organization they had founded now came into conflict with the idealism of the fighters of PLAN and the militants of the SYL in Zambia. With no internal democracy and the refusal of Swapo leaders to call a national congress, all the elements were in place for rebellion. According to Shipanga,

Discontent was rising everywhere in Swapo, but it first manifested itself among the guerrillas and some of their commanders. From 1974 the commanders were travelling more than three hundred miles from the front in south-western Zambia, where the country borders briefly on Namibia at the eastern end of the Caprivi Strip, to my home in Lusaka to complain of neglect by Nujoma and Nanyemba (Armstrong, p.100).

Swapo had in fact been coopted into the 'scenario', and it was resistance to this by the mass of militants in Zambia — together with a few individuals at leadership level, such as Shipanga and Solomon Mishima, a fellow founder of Swapo and fellow executive member — which produced the misnamed 'Shipanga affair.' It was in truth the affair of Swapo.

The first fruits of the Vorster/Kaunda detente had appeared in December 1974, when ZANU loyalists in Lusaka were attacked by a group of the guerrilla fighters from the front in Mozambique, led by a senior commander, Thomas Nhari. Martin and Johnson indicate that Nhari had been in touch with Rhodesian military and intelligence since September, 'about the same time as Zambian and South African officials were meeting in New York' (p.159). ZANU survived the revolt, with about sixty deaths from both sides.

Then, on 18 March 1975, in one of the seminal events of the detente period, the principal ZANU leader not in detention, Herbert Chitepo — an adamant opponent of the detente politics of the Zambian government — was assassinated outside his house in Lusaka. Nyerere, who at this time also strongly supported detente, had angrily described Chitepo as a 'black Napoleon' because of his insistence on continuing the military struggle (Martin and Johnson, 1981, p.155). By this time Vorster and Kaunda were 'in daily contact through their secret envoys' (*Observer*, 9 March 1975). A week after Chitepo's murder, ZANU leaders meeting in Rhodesia decided to move their base of military operations from Zambia, sending Mugabe and Edgar Tekere secretly out of Rhodesia to a Frelimo camp in Mozambique to begin preparations. This was a military necessity. The day after Chitepo's funeral, the Zambian government had begun mass arrests of ZANU members. Soon over a thousand fighters from ZANU's military wing were held at Mboroma camp at Kabwe, north of Lusaka: they were not released until nine months later. Rhodesian government and military officials were 'delighted' (*Star*, Johannesburg, 22 March 1975).

In mid-April 1975, top military leaders of ZANU based in Mozambique were lured into Zambia by the government, arrested by Zambian police, tortured, presented with falsified confessions and brought to trial a year later, in the week before Kissinger arrived in Lusaka. In October 1976 the case was thrown out of court, with the judge concluding that one of the accused had been the 'victim of unfair and improper conduct of the part of the police authorities' (Martin and Johnson, 1981, p.181). The judge, afterwards labelled 'anti-Zambian' by Kaunda, further asked the director of public prosecutions to begin proceedings against the police. (Nothing was done). Thus during the crucial period of the Vorster-Kaunda-CIA detente covering the South African invasion of Angola, a crippled ZANU ceased to be a threat either to the white regime in Rhodesia or to Kaunda's regime in Zambia.

Unable to admit the truth about its own pivotal role in the line-up of world imperialism in Angola — referred to by Stockwell, the CIA task force director, as 'our war against the MPLA' (p.155) — the Zambian government had no other resort except repression and falsification. It faced three potentially dangerous sources of resistance. Firstly, there were substantial bodies of highly politicized, armed and trained fighters on Zambian soil not directly amenable to Zambian *raison d'etat*. These were above all the guerrillas of ZANU, then operating out of south-eastern Zambia through Mozambique into eastern Zimbabwe, and the guerrillas of Swapo, operating out of south-western Zambia into Namibia and penetrating into southern Angola.

The Zambian state's attempt to suborn the military forces of ZANU, and to subordinate it to the detente 'scenario', is described in detail by Martin and Johnson. They reveal the extent of Zambian repression of the ZANU fighters, which was not different to that inflicted on Swapo shortly afterwards. What differed was the response to it of the top nationalist leadership and the leading guerrilla commanders. Whereas in Swapo the result was systematic

destruction of the most anti-imperialist cadres, in ZANU the outcome was the 'emergence of a strong, radicalized and relatively autonomous' military leadership, which for over a year 'virtually ran the situation on the ground' in Zimbabwe (*Big Flame*, p.10), compelling major concessions for a period by ZANU political leaders to the guerrillas.

Secondly, the Kaunda regime faced rebellion from within its own armed forces. From Bridgland's investigations, it appears that in late January 1976 — after the Clark Amendment in the US Senate had banned all covert US aid to Unita and the FNLA, and at the very moment when the South African military had begun to withdraw — the Zambian Air Force was ordered to bomb the one important centre on the Benguela Railway inside Angola then not held by Unita and the South Africans, at Teixeira de Sousa on the border with Zaire. The attack failed. Ordered from State House to return to the attack, the pilots refused, supported by their Air Commodore. Seven men then died in a gunfight in the militarized area of Lusaka Airport. Zambian student leaders secretly described the affair at the time as a 'small mutiny' (Bridgland, p.188).

Thirdly, the Zambian government's collaboration with South Africa, the United States and Britain — which through MI6 and agents of the electronics firm Racal placed long-range radio transmitters for Unita in Angola and Lusaka (Bridgland, p.167) — now produced an anti-imperialist rebellious climate within Zambia among the students. In meetings, leaflets and demonstrations, the student union at the University of Zambia in Lusaka condemned the government's support for Unita, challenging the rule of the weak Zambian bourgeoisie and its monopoly of politics. The students gave voice to the most threatening crisis to date in the existence of the Zambian state, and it reacted with violence. On 28 January 1976, Kaunda declared a state of emergency, attacking an unnamed 'socialist imperialist power.' Students and lecturers were arrested, riot police sent to close the university (which was daubed with pro-MPLA slogans) and the students sent home. The Angolan war had compelled the students' union to 'charge the Zambian ruling clique, headed by Dr Kaunda, "our beloved President", with criminal treachery' (Bridgland, p.180).(6)

NOTES

1. Quoted in Armstrong, p.133.

2. According to Shipanga, the Club's name was taken from the Chinese title of a booklet with texts on guerrilla warfare by Mao Zedong and Che Guevara.

3. Nanyemba died in southern Angola in 1983, reportedly in a car crash, after serious disputes between Swapo's military leadership and the security apparatus.

4. In May this year, following the Stalinist collapse in eastern Europe which was its model, Kaunda broached the idea that one-party rule in Zambia come to an end.

The problem in relation to many African countries is that forthright representatives of capitalism, such as the British Conservative MP, Neil Hamilton, a 'long-standing Thatcherite radical', are often factually correct, while the left and the reformist centre glamourize despotism. Concerning Zambia, Hamilton writes: 'All candidates for parliament must belong to his (Kaunda's) United National Independence Party and support the incumbent president. Trade unions also have to be extensions of the UNIP regime; even then, most strikes are banned.

'All national newspapers, radio and television networks are state-controlled. The courts are subject to the president's decree powers and the police have automatic rights to search the individual and his property without a warrant. There is a permanent state of emergency under which the president can order detention without trial of any alleged opponent to the regime' (*Independent*, 5 May 1990). What Hamilton and his kind omit to mention is how serviceable this is to imperialism, that of his country in particular, as the detente operation showed. As for the left and the reformists, most would be outraged – correctly – if the same conditions appeared, say, in Britain. As apologists for despotism, they operate a double standard in relation to Africa, with an actually racist content. The essence of their outlook is that blacks are not fit for anything better.

5. This book provides an understanding of the politics of the sub-continent during the 1970s. Martin covered the Zimbabwe struggle at the time for the *Observer*, Johnson for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

6. Bledowska and Bloch write: 'Bizarrely, Van den Bergh believed that he could torture blacks at home in South Africa but then act as a conciliator for detente with other black African states' (p.89). Van den Bergh not only believed this, he practised it. For two years at least (1974–76), he did reconcile torture and detente. As author and administrator of Vorster's torture system, inflicted systematically on SWAPO members (among them the present minister of mines and energy, Toivo ja Toivo), he succeeded through Kaunda in drawing Nujoma and Nanyemba into Vorster's military strategy. Van den Bergh was the spider at the centre of the web in the Swapo spy-drama.

7. There is a fascinating but unexplained reference in a table listing meetings in 1974–75 that needs further research. Anglin and Shaw, table 7.1 (p.274) indicates that between 21 and 25 October 1974, a meeting took place in Lusaka between Presidents Kaunda, Nyerere, Machel, and Mobutu together with Chitepo of ZANU and J.Z. Moyo of ZAPU (both later assassinated), as well as the South Africans Oppenheimer and Luyt. This presumably refers to the leading capitalists Harry Oppenheimer and Louis Luyt. If so, it would indicate that direct capitalist involvement in the detente process went far beyond Lonhro. This meeting took place two weeks after the detente 'scenario had been typed at State House.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anglin, Douglas, and Timothy Shaw (1979), *Zambia's Foreign Policy: Studies in Diplomacy and Dependence*, Westview Press, Colorado.
- Armstrong, Sue (1989), *In Search of Freedom; The Andreas Shipanga Story, As Told to Sue Armstrong*, Ashanti, Gibraltar.
- Astrow, Andre (1983), *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?*, Zed.
- Basson, Nico, and Ben Motinga [eds.](1989), *Call Them Spies: A Documentary Account of the Namibian Spy Drama*, African Communication Projects, Windhoek/Johannesburg.
- Big Flame, Southern Africa Group (1980), 'Zimbabwe: How Much of a Victory for ZANU and ZAPU?', Conference on Zimbabwe, University of Leeds, June.
- Bledowska, Celina, and Jonathan Bloch (1987), *KGB/CIA: Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Operations*, Bison.
- Bridgland, Fred (1986), *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*, Mainstream, Edinburgh.
- Cliffe, Lionel (1980), 'Towards an Evaluation of the Zimbabwe Nationalist Movement', Annual Conference, Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom, University of Exeter.
- Davidson, Basil (1975), *In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's People*, Penguin.
- , Joe Slovo and Anthony R. Wilkinson (1976), *Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution*, Pelican.
- Ex-Swapo Detainees (1989), 'A Report to the Namibian People. Historical account of the Swapo spy-drama', Windhoek.
- Herbstein, Denis, and John Evenson (1989), *The Devils are Among Us; The War for Namibia*, Zed.
- Hodges, Tony (1976), 'How the MPLA Won in Angola', in Legum and Hodges.
- Ignatyev, Oleg (1977), *Secret Weapon in Africa*, Progress, Moscow.
- Independent Group, The (1987), 'SWAPO. The 1976 Anti-Corruption Rebellion: A Fully Documented History', Windhoek.
- Katjavivi, Peter H. (1988), *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, UNESCO/James Currey.
- Legum, Colin (1976a), *Vorster's Gamble for Africa: How the Search for Peace Failed*, Rex Collings.
- , and Tony Hodges (1976), *After Angola: The War Over Southern Africa*, Rex Collings.
- (1976b), 'A Study of Foreign Intervention in Angola', in Legum and Hodges.
- Marcum, John (1978), *The Angolan Revolution, Volume 2: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962-1976)*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.
- Martin, David, and Phyllis Johnson (1981), *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*, Faber and Faber.
- (1985), *The Chitepo Assassination*, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare.
- Political Consultative Council of Ex-Swapo Detainees [PCC] (1989), 'Murdered by Swapo', Windhoek.
- Rambally, Asha [ed.](1977), *Black Review 1975-1976*, Black Community Programmes, Lovedale, South Africa.

Ranger, Terence (1980), 'Politicians and Soldiers: The Re-emergence of the Zimbabwe African National Union', Conference on Zimbabwe, University of Leeds.

Rosenblum, Mort, and Doug Williamson (1987), *Squandering Eden: Africa at the Edge*, Bodley Head.

Soggot, David (1986), *Namibia: The Violent Heritage*, Rex Collings.

Stockwell, John (1978), *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*, W.W.Norton, New York.

ZANU (1975), *Zimbabwe Chimurenga*, Vol.2, No.3, Stockholm, March.

Zimbabwe Solidarity Front (1976), *Revolutionary Zimbabwe*, No.3, London.

Press

Independent, Guardian, Observer, Independent on Sunday, Economist (Britain), Star (Johannesburg).

To be continued in No.6

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Featuring a wide range of articles from the revolutionary Marxist movement which have been unattainable for many years or have not appeared before in English translation.

Vol.2, No.4, Spring 1990: The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution.

With articles by Zheng Chaolin, Peng Shuzi, Wang Fanxi, Frank Glass.

Subscriptions (4 issues)

Back copies available

Surface Mail

UK £12, Rest of World £15.50

Air Mail

North Africa and Middle East £21; USA, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, India £23; Australia, New Zealand, Japan £25

International money order or UK cheques to Socialist Platform Ltd, c/o Barry Buitekant, 111 Riverside Cl, Mount Pleasant Hill, London E5.

A QUESTION OF TRUTHFULNESS

Paul Trehwela

Victoria Brittain, *Hidden Lives, Hidden Deaths: South Africa's Crippling of a Continent*, Faber and Faber, new edition, 1990.

The Zhdanov/Vyshinsky Prize for truthfulness in the media must go to Victoria Brittain for this book, which includes up-dated material after having first appeared in 1988. Ms Brittain is editor of the Third World Review page of the British newspaper, the *Guardian*.

The most recent historical material in her book is dated 16 July 1989 (p.178). This date is important for appraisal of the reliability of Ms Brittain as a journalist and historian, because on 4 July a planeload of 153 ex-Swapo detainees arrived back in Windhoek from prison camps in which they had been held in southern Angola. They had earlier been interviewed by the international press in Angola after having been released by Swapo, but after 4 July they were easily accessible to any serious journalist, including Ms Brittain, had she wished to find out the truth about them.

Their return was well publicized. They were met at J.G. Strijdom Airport by a large and vocal demonstration in their support, including relatives, the Committee of Parents and two left-wing groups, each with banners. It was the front-page lead story in the *Times of Namibia* (5 July). Several of the returned detainees spoke at a press conference in Windhoek on 7 July. Their organization, the Political Consultative Council of Ex-Swapo Detainees (PCC), within days issued a list of over 300 prisoners who had not yet returned, a list of prisoners who had died or been killed, and a list of their torturers. In the same period, the present foreign minister of Namibia, Theo-Ben Gurirab, announced in Rehoboth that 'if SWAPO officials had tortured dissidents, they [the SWAPO leadership] were obligated to bring such officers to justice' (quoted in a press statement by R.A.Kaakunga, chairman of the PCC, 20 July 1989). Yet Ms Brittain states that the ex-Swapo prisoners were 'mostly fictitious people allegedly held by the liberation movement' (p.128).

In her book of 200 pages she gives a total of five references. One of these five is the report on the Angolan civil war and the South African invasion of 1975-76 by John Stockwell, the chief of the CIA task force in Angola, who coordinated the US war effort in the region. Stockwell's book, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (1978), is one of the most important factual sources on this crucial period, by a leading participant with unrivalled access to its secret and public currents. Stockwell resigned from the CIA in December 1976 after

the end of his mission. I am not aware of any query as to the integrity of his account. In an important passage in the book, Stockwell writes:

The South Africans had some encouragement to go into Angola. Savimbi invited them, after conferring with Mobutu [of Zaire], Kaunda, Felix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal, all of whom favoured a moderate, pro-West government in Angola (p.186).

The book could not be plainer: the Zambian government, headed by Dr Kenneth Kaunda, actively supported Unita and the South African army throughout the whole of this phase of the war. Nobody who cared to write anything serious about this period in the war could miss this book, and nobody who did read it could miss Stockwell's references to the role of Kaunda's government.

Stockwell's account is supported by Fred Bridgland, former Reuters correspondent in Lusaka, who in November 1975 broke the story of the South African invasion. Bridgland's enthusiasm for Savimbi in his book, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (1986), is less an obstacle to his merit as a historian than Ms Brittain's enthusiasm for Savimbi's opponents. He gives extensive evidence of Zambian government support for Unita, and for the South African invasion, including details of an attempted Zambian air strike on an MPLA/Cuban base on the Benguela Railway on the eve of the South African withdrawal. Yet Ms Brittain writes of the 'Zambian leader, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, a supporter of Savimbi in the days *before* [my stress - P.T.] the UNITA leader had entered his open alliance with the South Africans' (p.170). Ms Brittain reverses Stockwell's testimony, in order to present Kaunda in a more flattering light. There is no reference at all to Bridgland's book.

She states that when the South African army invaded Angola, 'old UNITA allies...soon wanted to sever relations.' She writes that

SWAPO, like the governments of Zambia and Tanzania, withdrew from cooperation with UNITA, although communications difficulties in the bush and inevitable shortages of information, made the cut-off a confused and protracted business (p.83).

In their study of Zambian foreign policy, Anglin and Shaw conclude that while 'most American supplies were funneled through Zaire' during the war in Angola, 'at a later stage some undoubtedly reached Unita through Zambia' (p.331). In any case, the then US secretary of state Henry Kissinger told a hearing of the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the US Senate on 6 February 1976 that 'Zambia, along with Zaire, asked the US to provide assistance to Unita and FNLA' (quoted in *ibid*, p.348). This indicates a completely different relationship between the Zambian government and Unita during the war from that suggested by Ms Brittain.

Her statement is further belied by the autobiography of the former Swapo leader Andreas Shipanga, published in 1989, for which Bridgland wrote an introduction. Bridgland states there that

President Kaunda of Zambia, together with Gerald Ford, president of the USA, had encouraged the South Africans to invade Angola...Kaunda complied with Vorster's request to restrain SWAPO...Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, a former senior official of the United Nations Commission for Namibia, has written of that period: 'For reasons best known to himself, Sam Nujoma (the President of SWAPO) for a time backed UNITA and Dr. Savimbi...SWAPO guerrillas found themselves engaged on the same side as the South African troops...' (Sue Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom: The Andreas Shipanga Story*, p.ii).

Documents published in 1987 in Windhoek in a pamphlet under the title, 'SWAPO: The 1976 Anti-Corruption Rebellion', sustain the interpretation of the events of 1974-76 by Bridgland and Shipanga. These documents consist of letters, statements and minutes of a meeting with the Swapo Executive Committee drawn up by Swapo members in Zambia in 1975-76, indicating extensive collaboration between Swapo leaders and Unita, plus military action by Swapo alongside the South African army. This collaboration, together with lack of democracy in the organization, produced a mutiny within it in the early months of 1976, which the Zambian regime suppressed with mass arrests, eagerly helped by Swapo leaders.

Uncritically identifying herself with the Swapo leaders, Brittain dismisses the substantive issues posed within Swapo at this time as a mere 'power struggle', and asserts that 'Behind the power struggle was South Africa' (pp.82-83). She makes no attempt to prove her assertion. The demand for democracy by the Swapo Youth League and the military wing, which together opposed Swapo's collaboration with the South African army and Unita, is airily dismissed. For her it is the work of 'apparent new SWAPO recruits later revealed as South African agents - the classic trick of the *agent provocateur* exposing an ill-prepared movement to an unequal trial of strength' (p.83).

Swapo's victims of this period are slandered as 'Shipanga and his group of assorted South African agents and manipulable youths' (p.85). Concerning the subsequent purges, a hundred Swapo members held in prisons in Angola by the organization in 1986 are referred to as '100 South African collaborators' (*ibid*). The International Society for Human Rights had campaigned on the issue 'Save the Swapo 100.' Ms Brittain's remark might very well be considered libellous in a British court.

Those who tried to save members of their families from the internal purges in Swapo in exile in the 1980s are sneered at as the authors of 'dubious telexes from Windhoek purporting to be from the families of the 'disappeared' victims of SWAPO' (*ibid*). Many of these appeals have been published: in *Namibia: A Struggle Betrayed*, by Hewat Beukes, Erica Beukes and Attie

Beukes, Rehoboth, Namibia (n.d., c.1986), and in the more complete book of documents edited by Nico Basson and Ben Motinga (himself an ex-detainee), *Call Them Spies*, Windhoek and Johannesburg, 1989.

One needs only read these appeals, which received almost no response, to know how little they were 'dubious'. Photocopies and print-outs are freely available in Windhoek. Ms Brittain did not even bother to interview those who wrote them.

The tone of her remarks gives an adequate impression of her concerns as a writer on southern Africa. For a journalist who has edited the *Guardian's* Third World Review page since 1982, and who has been a correspondent for *The Times*, *New Statesman*, *Afrique Asie*, *Le Monde Diplomatique* and the BBC, such prejudice raises serious problems. Political animus prevents her from coping with elementary journalistic requirements. She disapproves, for instance, of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) because it is hostile to the ANC and the SACP. This is the only possible explanation for the fact that she gives its name incorrectly as the 'Pan African Congress' (pp.xiv, 159), despite the fact that the PAC has been in existence under the same name for over thirty years and its status as the second of South Africa's two main nationalist organizations. Similarly, there is no reference at all in the book to the Azanian People's Organization (Azapo), although Azapo played a prominent (if secondary) part in the early phase of the 1984-86 township revolt. One may as well excise Laertes from *Hamlet*.

Ms Brittain's comments like her omissions merely promote confusion. Despite the great importance of her major topic (the destruction of human life and resources throughout southern Africa by the South African regime), and despite some informative material, her project is vitiated by an overt method of political censorship and falsification. Any unfounded assertion will do. Readers are not permitted to reach their own conclusions. Material presented by her as fact, without supporting evidence, cannot be taken on trust, for example this classic statement on South Africa:

The promotion of far-left divisive splinter groups was also a CIA tactic (p.157).

What can one say? The real question is not Ms Brittain. Rather, the concern is the quality of the media organs which publish her work. This kind of journalism informs the mainstream of left/liberal opinion. It is hard to imagine that there is any other region on earth, outside of southern Africa, towards which the orthodoxy of 1990 upholds so devoutly the sentiments and methodology of the Moscow Trials. Ms Brittain is its faithful exponent.

O brave new world, that has such people in't...

Financial Sanctions: A Rebuttal

Paul Trehwela's article 'Financial sanctions and South Africa' (*Searchlight South Africa*, No.4) rests upon a mammoth *non sequitur* which fatally mars an otherwise interesting and well written piece. In addressing this, I rest upon two premises that are only briefly developed here: 1) that socialist principles do not preclude engaging in popular struggle in the realm of *circulation* of capital; and 2) that experience in numerous citizens' campaigns against US banks suggests that *local* financial sanctions can help poor and working people take some important intermediate steps on the road to socialism.

First the fatal flaw. Trehwela's leap of logic in asserting that 'By their advocacy of financial sanctions, a relationship in which coercive power is exercised by the banks through debt, the ANC and the SACP thus relate uncritically to the tendency to mass pauperization in the system as a whole' (p.22); indeed he argues, 'instead of trying to influence the policy of the bourgeois governments, as before, the ANC [now] becomes the medium for distribution of the policy thinking of the banks and treasuries of various bourgeois states' (p.19).

Yet amongst the wealth of details on the mechanics of the financial sanctions campaign in 1989, Trehwela cannot produce evidence either that financial sanctions as a movement policy neglects debt-induced pauperization, or that the ANC is insensitive about such pauperization and now acts as the medium for the banks. The closest Trehwela comes is to infer that because the short-term convergence of interests of the ANC-led anti-apartheid movement and a small fraction of imperialism (represented by Canada's Clarke and Australia's Hawke in the Commonwealth, while the Thatcher and Bush administrations rejected the initiative). 'it is in the hands of the IMF that the politics of the ANC must end' (p.23)

That convergence in favour of financial sanctions is based on the near-universal recognition that, as Trehwela acknowledges, the July 1985 bank pullout 'set in motion the sole effective process of economic sanctions so far' (p.17). This, as many progressive analysts have argued, produced a temporary but significant rethink by major SA capitalists and more than any other single factor set the stage, over the medium term, for Pretoria to move into its current reform posture. Most importantly, financial sanctions were chosen by a wide spectrum of anti-apartheid forces as a focus of attention in 1989 because they can create an extreme liquidity crunch in South Africa — hence hastening the crisis of the state and transfer of political power to the majority, without requiring intensified sanctions in the real sector which would, it is argued, leave an economic wasteland.

Only by stretching and pulling in a most unrigorous way can this convergence pass as a 'logic of the relation binding sanctions politics to the IMF' (p.23). International finance capital, for whose advancement of interests the

IMF is the institution most responsible, was most annoyed about widespread activist interference in matters of a purely business nature between creditor and debtor. At the 1989 IMF/World Bank annual meeting in Washington, DC, one banker characterized the impact of the financial sanctions campaign thus: 'To be seen dealing with South Africa is tantamount to being diagnosed positive for AIDS' (*Business Day*, 29/9/89). Avoiding the street heat of the anti-apartheid movement was the primary reason why the banks did the third SA debt rescheduling deal in October 1989, nine months ahead of schedule. Trehwela repeatedly implies, somehow, that the financial sanctions campaign actually *serves* the interests of international capital, which is manifestly false.

What Trehwela is concerned with, apparently, is that after having made an arrangement with imperialism—using SA's 'debt as a weapon to bring political and social change' (p.22)—the ANC will necessarily be so beholden to international financial capital that the next logical step will be to welcome the IMF into the post-apartheid SA thus continuing the policy of transferring the bill from SA's financial crisis to the purses of poor and working people. But this is still largely hypothetical, and the test of ANC policy on who bears the cost of devaluation of SA's substantial foreign debt (not to mention the general international weight of debt and speculation) will only come in the decisions a post-apartheid government takes over its repayment.

At this writing (March 1990), there is no certain indication that the ANC will invite the IMF back to SA, with all that that implies, notwithstanding the pressure of the Commonwealth governments (Trehwela, p.23) and various US enlightened capitalists and politicians (*Business Day*, 16/1/90). ANC leaders may very well back Trehwela's argument that the IMF and banks propped up apartheid-capitalism in its time of direct need, and hence they may well be true to their constituents and to internationalist principles—by defaulting, by helping to organize a debtor's cartel of Third World nations, and by using whatever control they'll have over not insignificant gold reserves to influence the broader global financial devaluation that lies ahead.

Had Trehwela developed his argument about such a devaluation process in the 1920s just a bit further (p.22) he would have had to admit that those indebted neocolonial Latin countries were so backed against the wall that a huge wave of sovereign defaults in the 1930s was the only logical answer. The ANC, along with leaders of Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines and other countries facing substantial internal dissent over IMF austerity, may find that in the event of a global slump in the 1990s, a default—perhaps through a cartel—serves the interests of all South Africans, even the national bourgeoisie.

On the other hand the ANC may not come to that conclusion; I imagine that like many economic policy questions it's a matter of struggle—presently and in the future—within the organization. But for progressives in South Africa and throughout the world, what would seem absolutely crucial at this stage is to link financial sanctions against apartheid to the *not* contradictory drive to shift the burden of the global debt devaluation from the current victims—

e.g. Third World peasants, midwestern US farmers, workers across the globe inexplicably unemployed because of debt-induced corporate cannibalism, Northern taxpayers – to those who deserve to bear it: the international banks and their state supporters.

One step is for the international solidarity community to begin thinking about how, in the future, to force banks to write off apartheid debts that an ANC government would otherwise sacrifice social programmes to pay for, in the course of other campaigns (eg, by War on Want in the UK) to punish banks for Third World lending. Though such intervention in the circulation of capital may be a far cry from point of production organizing that Trotskyists favour, it should be clear that, as was the case in the 1930s, the manner in which (now, several trillions of dollars of) overaccumulated financial capital is devalued over the next decade, will have much to do with the uneven spatial development of capitalism, the nature of the international division of capital, and the geo-political arrangements that socialists will confront in the twenty-first century. (Hence the increased importance in the 1980s and 1990s of the uncertain role of monetary authorities in determining how the historically unprecedented levels of debt and speculation are to be maintained, through alternating fits of inflation and recession, without, they dearly hope, causing the immediate bankruptcy of the world's banking system and capital markets)

This is one reason why some socialists exploited the ties between their countries' banks and South Africa, and used these in all manner of creative struggles to unveil the anti-social activities of finance capital. It is here that Trehwela's argument – 'The debt strategy of the ANC/SACP is as foolish as it is hostile to the needs of the majority of the people' (p.22) – is particularly uninformed and pernicious. For even in backward US, in a variety of *local* financial sanctions campaigns against banks such as the infamous Chase Manhattan – aimed at ending credit or correspondent bank arrangements with SA – activists put together community/labour coalitions that also address other cutting-edge progressive concerns: bank 'redlining' of (ie, discrimination against) inner-city ghettos; farm foreclosures; Central American drug money laundering; Third World debt peonage; unfair student loan terms; and bank financing of union-busting corporations, to name a few (see, eg, *Dollars and Sense*, June 1987). Indeed, such a broad based coalition was an integral component of the United Mine Workers of America strategy against the Pittston Company in the US' most militant labour struggle in recent memory. This led in late 1989 to Manufacturers Hanover Trust facing civil disobedience and a boycott on the combined grounds of its lead position in a \$100 million loan to Pittston, its redlining practices in Brooklyn, and its \$210mn role in the South African debt rollover (*US Guardian*, 15/11/89).

What does this accomplish, though, towards hastening the next mode of production? 1) consciousness-raising about the lack of control communities have over their own capital and destiny in the face of ascendent international finance. 2) mass mobilising that represents some of the toughest anti-corporate politics in the US. 3) wresting concessions from the banks (eg,

low-interest loans) which go a long way to support the worker-owned cooperatives, housing trusts, non-profit community credit unions and other embryonic reflections of empowerment and self-emancipation of the working class, in the process solving local bread and butter economic development problems democratically and with grassroots control. Four, building a broader movement (in the US, the 'Financial Democracy Campaign,' led by Jesse Jackson) explicitly aimed at fighting financial capital on major policy debates over the distribution of resources and over banking policy (eg, the \$200 billion taxpayer bailout of US building societies). And five, promoting a class-conscious internationalism that is otherwise rather hard to locate in the US working class. Are these aspects of anti-finance campaigns useful as models for South African socialists? Probably, given the country's explosion of domestic corporate and consumer debt, though to be successful they would require a strategic redirection away from the current MDM ambivalence on the role of liberal financial capitalists in the democratic coalition.

In this vein, finally, while NUMSA and Moses Mayekiso can speak for themselves if they feel the need to do so, it's hard to see the logic of writing off a militant industrial union and community/labour leader (in Trehwela's words, 'formerly a leader of the left wing of the unions' (p.15) — and criticizing Cosatu for 'endorsing the ANC strategy of working through finance capital' (p.29 — *at exactly the moment* when NUMSA is bravely rejecting employee share schemes and fighting both ISCOR and council housing privatizations, and when, led by NUMSA, the unions have just mounted attacks against Barlow Rand and JCI using the very presumption (and hence strategy and tactics) that these firms represent centralised finance capital incarnate. Thanks to Mayekiso's leadership, NUMSA and the Alexandra Civic Organization are apparently considering seriously means by which union pension funds can be invested in a large housing cooperative on Alex's Far East Bank that would help the township withstand the wave of private housing finance that threatens to impose possessive-individualist values on the working class, as was done in the US in similar circumstances in the 1930s.

It might be reasoned that any political actors not explicitly demanding worker control of the means of production tomorrow are worthy of such derision as Trehwela heaps, but history is not played out purely in terms of capital-labour conflicts on the shopfloor. Every so often there arise massive *intercapitalist* contradictions within an overcompetitive world economy — exemplified by the current frantic flow of capital from productive to financial/speculative circuits — the resolution of which deeply affects the process of local surplus value extraction for decades to come. And Trehwela's simplistic utter rejection of popular battles against international financial capital which exacerbate these contradictions on behalf of progressive movements (like the ANC), is but an unfortunate side effect of ultraleftism.

Patrick Bond

Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zimbabwe.

SEARCHLIGHT BOOK SALES

Special offer to subscribers of *Searchlight South Africa*

Year of Fire, Year of Ashes, The Soweto Revolt, Roots of a Revolution? Zed, 1979, by Baruch Hirson.

An account of the emergent trade unions and student protests of 1976-77.

Including a critical appraisal of 'Black Consciousness'.

Now out of print: £4.50 (£5 abroad)

Yours for the Union: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa, 1930-47, by Baruch Hirson, Zed, 1990.

A history set in the era of depression and war which saw the emergence of black industrial trade unions and community struggles

Includes accounts of urban riots, rural struggles, bus boycotts and shanty-town movements, and the war time strikes of the black working class.

Our price £6.50 (£7 abroad) — list price £9.95.

Essentialism in the Thought of Karl Marx, by Scott Meikle, Duckworth, 1985.

A guide to the philosophy of Marx that avoids the jargon of 'diamat' and lays the foundation for understanding the organistic methodology of Marxism.

Our price £7 — list price £9.95.

SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

ISSN: 0954-3384

Subscriptions (4 issues):

UK: Individuals £12, Institutions £24

Abroad: Individuals £16 (\$25), Institutions £28 (\$45)

Students, UK £9, abroad £13 (\$20)

Single issues (including back copies) £3.50 (Sterling only).

Money/Cheques to *Searchlight South Africa*
c/o BCM 7646, London WC1N 3XX