
BOOK REVIEW

As a non-political pacifist I found “If We Must Die” by Stanley Manong extremely interesting. It draws back the curtain on a time in the history of our country about which many South Africans know very little – even to this day – 20 years into democracy.

The thorough research and meticulous detailing of resources gives Manong’s work a stamp of authenticity which cannot be challenged and it is obvious that an enormous amount of time and energy has gone into the telling of his story. His recall and personal knowledge of the many people mentioned, whether colleagues he respected or not, is based not only on memory but is backed up in comprehensive notes at the end of the book. Written in an easy style with the occasional touch of idiomatic whimsy and an injection of humour that at times lightens the seriousness of the subject matter, I found the story of Manong’s life as an ANC activist, a fascinating read.

I was struck in particular by the courage, honesty and integrity he projects as he leads the reader along his journey.

After reading his autobiography, I feel I must express my sincerest admiration and gratitude for the part Stanley Manong has played in ensuring our beloved country, with all its complexities, will hopefully in the not too distant future, be a home for all South Africans.

Richard Street

Retired Headmaster

Richard Street retired as an educationist, after 40 years in the game as Headmaster of Bergvliet Primary in Cape Town. He was previously Headmaster of Pinehurst Primary and Deputy Principal of Sacs Junior where he and his wife also ran the School Hostel. His early years of teaching were spent at CBC Pretoria and St. Agnes Primary in Woodstock.

BOOK REVIEW

Stanley Manong's book gives a deep insight into the complexities of South African life in exile during Apartheid. A talented student from Victoria West, the author left his home country in 1976 to join the ANC. He soon played a role in organising underground activities of its military wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK). To me, an European supporter of the liberation struggle, the book's analysis of ideological controversies and differences between MK and ZAPU (Zimbabwean African Peoples Union) in Zimbabwe on the nature of legitimate political and military targets, is of extreme interest. At the same time, Manong's detailed account of corruption, malfunctioning and elitism within the organisation, let alone conditions in certain camps, is appalling and will, I am sure, give way to controversies. Conditions improved due to the ANC's Kabwe Conference in which Manong participated. Actively supported by President Oliver Tambo, he was able to further his studies in Hungary. But soon another difficult situation emerged as in 1989, socialism in Eastern Europe began to crumble and the new political leaders and media largely renounced anti-imperialist solidarity. To my knowledge, this is the first account of how the system change in Eastern Europe impacted on the local (Southern) African diaspora.

Stanley Manong's life story goes beyond an individual biography but touches upon many unresolved topics in the history of South Africa's liberation struggle: the burden of exile, leadership ethics, effectiveness of the armed struggle and the role of international solidarity. There is no doubt regarding the author's ongoing political alignment. His frank approach however, supported by an incredible number of names and facts, will be relieving to some readers and disturbing to others. Hopefully, this process will finally contribute to truth and – if possible – facilitate reconciliation.

Dr Walter Sauer,

Former Chairperson of the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement;
Professor at the University of Vienna; and
Retired Head of International Department,
Austrian Trade Union Federation.



IF WE MUST DIE

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FORMER COMMANDER
OF uMKHONTO WE SIZWE.

STANLEY MANONG



NKULULEKO PUBLISHERS

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Front cover photo: "A political banner held aloft by mourners at the funeral of Dumisani Mbatha which was held on the 17 October 1976 at the Avalon Cemetery in Soweto, Johannesburg". (AP Photo) # Soweto # ZAF

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BASIL FEBRUARY

“A guerrilla is one who fights to free his people from bondage and enslavement. The prospect of death does not even arise in his mind as his life will go on in the hearts of a nation that will remember him”.

***Basil February a member of the Luthuli Detachment, one of the most outstanding cadres of uMkhonto we Sizwe, who fell in battle in Rhodesia in Figtree near Bulawayo on the 15 August 1967.
(courtesy: SA History archives)***



BARNEY MOLOKOANE

“If we must die, then we must die like soldiers...I will not die running away from the police. I will not die from being shot in the back. I will die in battle, and until they shoot me in my forehead the battle will continue. The area where such a battle will occur will be razed by the burnt bushes and grass.”

Barney Molokoane, a marksman and one of the most daring and celebrated commanders of MK.

“Man’s dearest possession is life. And since it is given to him but once to live, he must live so as to feel no torturing regrets for years to come, dying he must say: all my life and all my strength has been dedicated to the finest cause of the world – the fight for the Liberation of Mankind.”

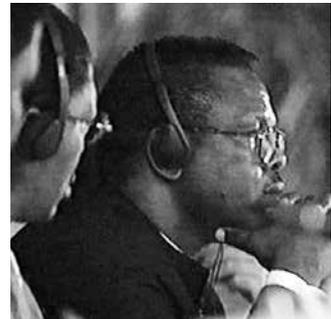
Nikolai Ostrovsky, How the Steel Was Tempered.

“I have taken this opportunity to speak the truth and to express my torturing regrets about the wasted years and my shame about a mean and petty past. ...I regard myself today as a disgrace to my mother, my family, and my relatives, my friends and the families of the Pebco Three and the nation as such. It is with my deepest remorse that I ask for forgiveness. I say it now here today as I could not have done so in the early days for obvious reasons. I thank you.”



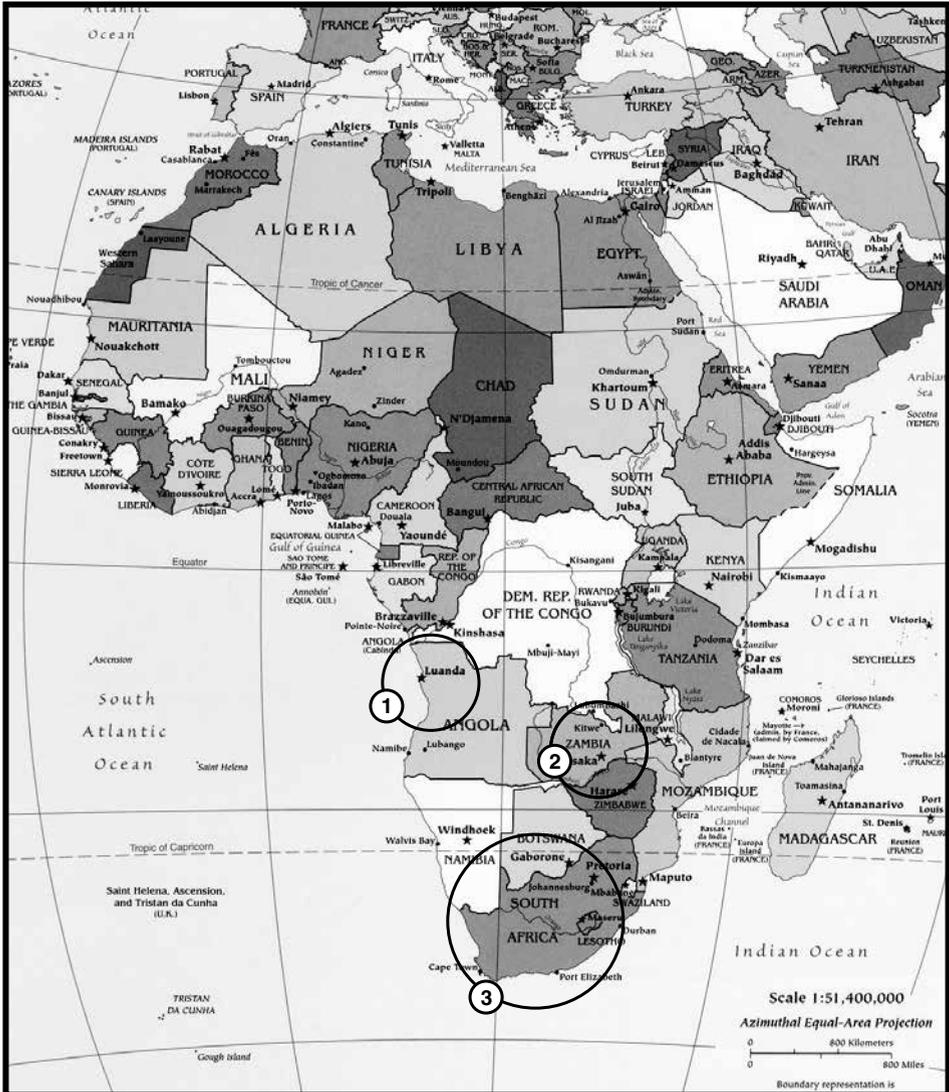
Kimpani Peter Mogoai, giving evidence during one of the TRC amnesty hearings regarding his role as an askari.

“In all my experience in this hellhole (referring to Vlakplaas), I have never come across a thing that is called “clean killing”. There is no such thing. It only exist in the minds of those who want to appear here as honest and decent gentlemen, who don’t want to subjugate other people into... into unnecessary pain. There’s nothing like that. People are killed brutally! They died worse than animals! And that is a fact. And their ideas is to inflict as much pain as possible. It was a sadistic, well-calculated method of killing people. And they know it. And I was part of it...”



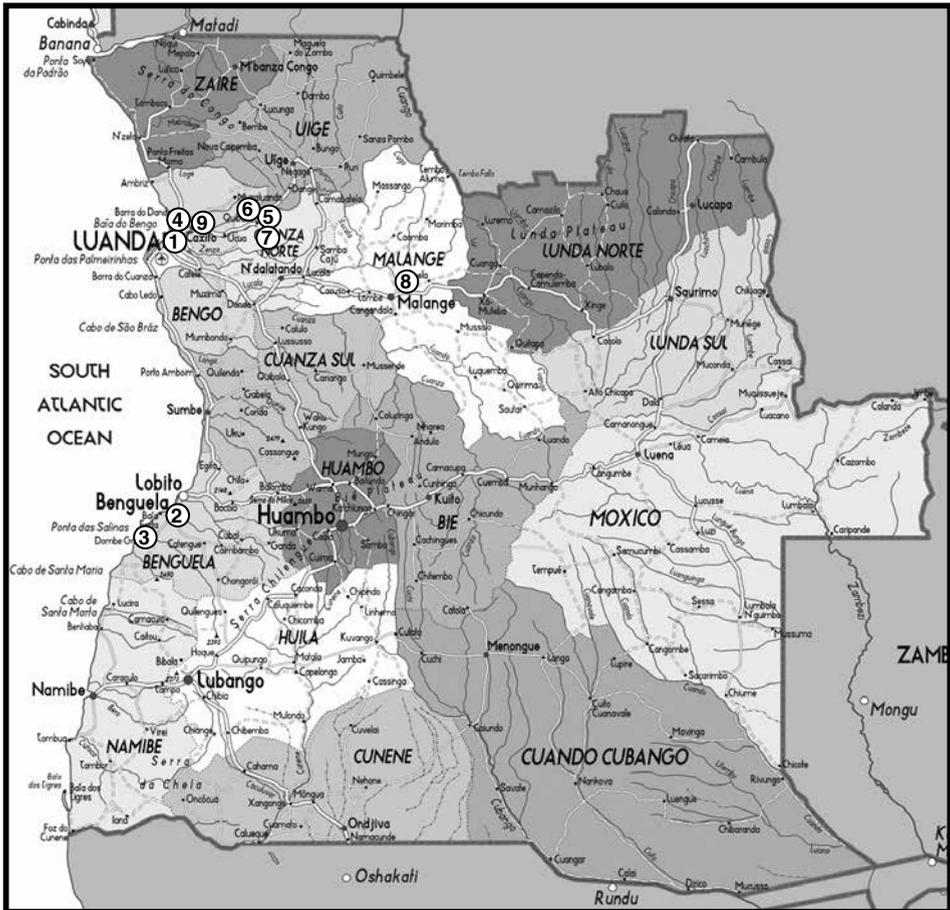
Joe Mamasela, a fellow askari, speaking at the same hearings of the TRC.

MAP OF AFRICA



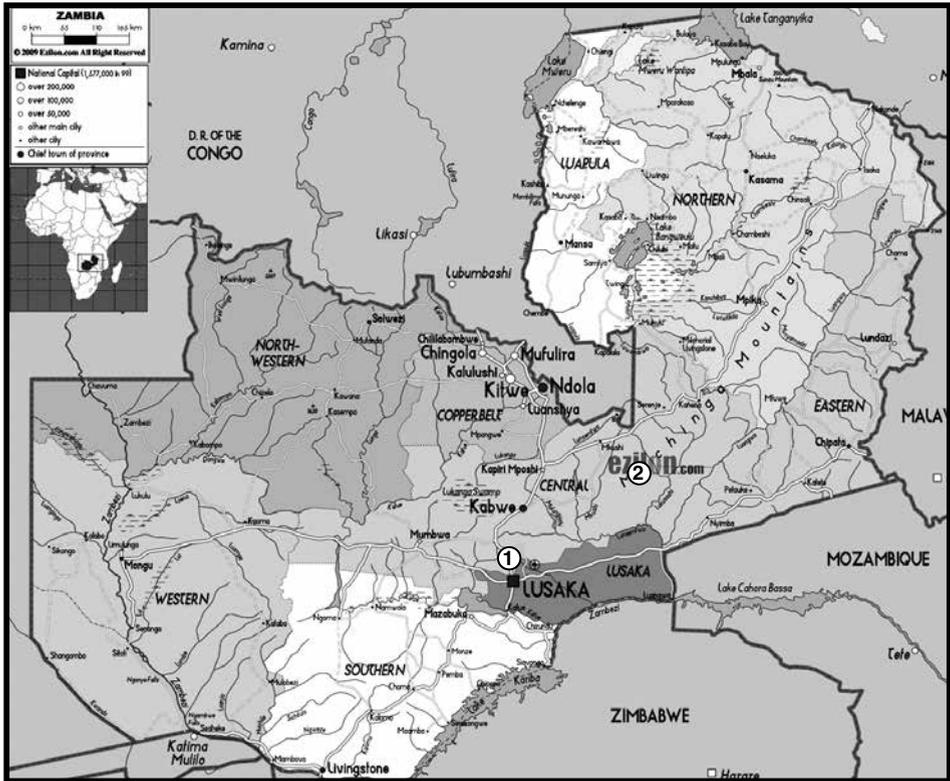
1. ANC Camps in Angola
2. ZIPRA Camps in Zambia where MK cadres underwent the survival course
3. Armed Operations Planned from Botswana

ANC CAMPS IN ANGOLA



1. Engineering Camp - Luanda
2. Benguela Transit Camp
3. Novo Catengue
4. Funda Camp
5. Quibaxe - Camp 13
6. Camp 32 - Quadro
7. Pango
8. Caculama - Malanje
9. Caxito

ZIPRA CAMPS IN ZAMBIA



1. FC (Freedom Camp) Near Lusaka
2. CGT 1-4 - ZIPRA Camps

ARMED OPERATIONS PLANNED FROM BOTSWANA



1. Vivo (near Alldays)
2. Witkleigat / Moshaneng
3. Between Mafikeng and Vryburg
4. Derdepoort / Sikwane
5. Cape Town Supreme Court

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

The task of having written and successfully published this book would not have been possible without the support, assistance and encouragement I received from numerous people. This includes many comrades with whom, in the bushes of Angola, we shared countless memorable moments. Some of these moments were joyful and entertaining, but some, unfortunately, were depressing and heartbreaking. Each time a book was published about the history of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC, a few of these comrades pestered and nagged me to produce what they call “our side of the story”. Their point of view, or perception, is that most historians who have written books about MK, did so after conducting lengthy interviews with some of those who actually participated in the struggle. There is nothing wrong in doing so except that sometimes, in the course of narrating these episodes, the truth is lost in translation. Of course, we have seen and read brilliant narratives about the past history of MK from those who actively participated in its activities, depicting the bravery, the daring and never-say-die attitude of thousands of MK combatants. Those who lived and managed to tell their stories include Ronnie Kasrils, “Armed and Dangerous”; James Ngculu, “The Honour To Serve”; Wonga Welile Bottoman, “The Making of an MK Cadre”; Barry Gilder, “Songs and Secrets” and Mzwakhe Ndlela, “For the Fallen”. Still many more will surely follow suit in narrating their stories, depicting the manner in which they contributed to the rich history of MK.

Unfortunately many did not live to tell their stories as they perished in the trenches of our battlefields scattered across the globe. How enriching it would have been if some of these finest and bravest sons and daughters of our beloved country could have outlived the apartheid system and managed to tell their own stories. Imagine how inspiring it would have been if one could have read a book authored by Basil February or Ghandi Hlekani about their escapades in the battlefields of Rhodesia or a book authored by Vuyisile Mini or Solomon Mahlangu or the Moroka Three about their contempt and utter disregard of the apartheid noose and their unflinching resolve that South Africa would one day be free. The task of narrating their stories has now become our national project. As Basil February used to say, “*A guerrilla is one who fights to free his*

people from bondage and enslavement. The prospect of death does not even arise in his mind as his life will go on in the hearts of a nation that will remember him."

In acknowledging the assistance rendered to me by various people and institutions, allow me first to thank the input of my family, brothers and sisters, especially my late sister, Magdalene Dikeni together with Enoch and Gertrude Manong, my elder brother and younger sister respectively, for having apprised me and brought me up to speed, sometimes in graphic detail (however traumatic), regarding the circumstances surrounding my mother's untimely and brutal death. Was it not for their explanations and guidance, the court records of the trial of those who killed her would have been difficult to follow as sometimes the role of State and Defence witnesses seemed to be blurred. Thank you, Mbulelo Manong, for the front cover design. My stay in Cradock would not have been properly captured were it not for the invaluable contribution of Tembisa Hlekani, the daughter of "Oom Jan" Hlekani and the younger sister of Ghandi Hlekani.

I am greatly indebted to Brigadier-General Joseph "John" Jabulani "JJ" Msimang (MK Themba "Scotch" Mlambo), Guy "China" Motjale (MK John Msibi), Roy "Tiny" Setlhapelo (MK Maxwell Ganya), Omry Makgoale (MK Sidwell "Mhlongo" Moroka) and Luvo Stanley Mbengo (MK Valdez Sibongile) for the varied and invaluable support they rendered to me during the course of writing this book. Brigadier-General "JJ" Msimang and I, were in the same group, including twenty-one other comrades, who constituted the very first group to have left Novo Catengue for Funda after completing our initial military training there. As memory has been fading over the years, his contribution became invaluable, as he refreshed my memory with names of the other comrades who were in the same group with us.

I am also grateful to Omry Makgoale and Valdez Sibongile for their respective input in relation to the Viana and Pango Mutinies. Although some of these events are well-captured in the Report of the Stuart Commission, some of the nitty-gritty aspects of the events that unfolded during the mutiny, needed someone who witnessed and bore testimony to them. Valdez participated in both the Viana and Pango mutinies and at one stage, was sentenced to death for his role in the Pango mutiny and his life was saved by the timely intervention of Gertrude Shope. It was with his assistance that I was able to check, counter-check, verify, interrogate and corroborate the Reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that dealt with the mutinies in Angola during 1984. I am also indebted to numerous comrades like Phindile Vena (MK Zakes Ndlovu) and Lulama Khabane (MK George Naledi) who provided me with crucial information at one stage or another.

It is no exaggeration to state that the TRC Reports served as the main resource that underpinned my research in producing this book. With the assistance of these various reports, I was able to record the mysterious

disappearance and killings of some of our comrades and the subsequent burial of their bodies in secret and unmarked graves by the apartheid security forces. In the same vein, I would also like to express my gratitude to Madeleine Fullard, Head of the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) Missing Persons Task Team, for having made my task easier. The ANC website also proved to be a valuable resource as most of those who died in exile, especially those executed by the ANC Military Tribunal, are listed in some of the documents that were submitted by the ANC to the TRC. The website was also valuable in providing me with names of comrades who occupied certain positions in certain structures at different times during the period the ANC was in exile. Without this, and other information, my task would not have been easier.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to the various staff members of the National Archives in Pretoria and its Provincial Office in Cape Town for granting me access to court files of various Treason Trials. In this regard, I would like to make special mention of Natalie Skomolo who was patient enough in ensuring that I received the visual material I was looking for from the archives of the TRC. I would be failing in my duty if I forgot to mention the support I received from the staff of the National Library in Cape Town and that of the Historical Papers Research Archive of the University of Witwatersrand. Thank you, Michele Pickover and Gabriele Mohale. To you, too, Graham Goddard of the Mayibuye Archives of the Western Cape University and to the editor of the Cape Times, Gasant Abarder, I say, thank you. Thank you, Pictuernet Africa and Times Media Limited for granting copyrights at a fraction of the actual cost for the front cover photo and the various newspaper articles respectively.

Philosophers say a journey of a thousand miles begin with one step. Writing a manuscript is just a small step towards the ultimate destination of publishing a book. One needs editors-in-chief, copy editors, reviewers, publishers and distributors in order to realise that dream. I say thank you, Tess Holland, for having meticulously gone through the manuscript with a fine tooth comb, dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's". When I was looking for a copy editor, I did not hesitate to contact her. Our association over the past decades, in work of a similar nature, made her the natural choice.

Similarly, when I was searching for a reputable editor-in-chief, I did not hesitate to contact Dr Snuki Zikalala. Dr Zikalala was my military commander in the late 1970's, based at the Central Military Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. When he decided to further his studies in Bulgaria, years later, I followed his footsteps by furthering my studies in Hungary, both countries having been partners of the Warsaw Pact, which was led by the Soviet Union. Choosing an editor might be a very delicate act in that he or she must identify with the message or sentiment which the author wants to express or convey to the readers. Fortunately for me, Dr Zikalala needed no persuasion or

convincing about the validity or morality of the message I am conveying in this book. It has been a pleasure working with him as at no stage during the editing process did he want to impose his views, a concern I had heard quite often being expressed by those who were involved in similar projects. I feel indebted to him as he burnt the midnight oil editing each and every draft of the manuscript as he insisted that all sources used in this book ought to be credible and verifiable.

One of the four pillars of our liberation struggle, was international solidarity. This book, therefore, would have been incomplete if I had ignored the crucial role that was played by the International Anti-Apartheid Movement in ending apartheid. Dr Walter Sauer, the former Chairperson of the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement, did not hesitate to write a foreword and a review of the manuscript when approached to do so. The bonds formed between the people of South Africa and their international brothers and sisters during the liberation struggle, are everlasting.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Yaasmeen Daniels and her colleagues from PE&R Business Solutions, Frederick Isaacs and Matthew Murray for managing the process of design, layout and printing of the book. It is also the team from PE&R that is responsible for the setting up of the website of the book. Looking at the final product, I have no doubt, that they have done an outstanding and awesome job!

To all the martyrs of our country, those heroes and heroines out there,
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, I say from the bottom of my heart:
MAY YOUR SHADOW NEVER GROW OLD!
IF WE MUST DIE!

Cape Town, January 2015

FOREWORD

Some time on July 20, 1989, I was informed by the office of the then Anti-Apartheid Movement in Vienna, Austria, that a South African student from Budapest, Hungary, had phoned, asking for an appointment with somebody from the leadership of the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement. He had been somehow evasive about the purpose of the meeting but said it was urgent as he had to return to Hungary as soon as possible. We agreed to meet at one of my favourite coffee houses later in the afternoon of the same day.

Café Sperl is one of these typical Viennese places where you not only have coffee or tea and read newspapers but where you also meet your friends or business partners. Café Sperl, in particular, has retained its traditional flair, with old furniture and a billiard table. Even today, it serves as a location for movies from time to time, and many people enjoy its nostalgic atmosphere.

Stanley Manong arrived exactly on time (he always did, as I got to know him over the years), looking a bit lost among all the mirrors and chandeliers and velvet upholstery. Apparently he was fascinated by his surroundings. We said hello and sat down to talk. Talking in such a situation is not easy. You don't know the background of the other person, and the other doesn't know yours. Both of us went about it with extreme care and mindfulness, asking certain questions, dropping names here and there. He was clearly in trouble, but you don't easily tell a stranger what exactly your troubles are. On my side, there was reason to be cautious as well: The Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement had repeatedly been contacted by South Africans, some of them with a genuine agenda, others not. Previously, I had received death threats, coupled with a flurry of defamation and destabilisation campaigns against the ANC and the Anti-Apartheid Movement orchestrated by the local Embassy of the Apartheid regime. In a letter to the editor of the then *Weekly Mail* (which is today known as the *Mail and Guardian*), I was accused in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and allegedly a protestant pastor, of being involved in drug smuggling.

What happened is that agents of the apartheid regime, based in Vienna (including a certain supporter of Inkatha) disseminated and peddled false information and tried to instigate internal conflicts. To put the record straight: I have never been a protestant pastor nor was I ever involved in drugs. But such were the methods applied against Anti-Apartheid Movements in Europe during those days.

But because of our common cause, and our hatred of the apartheid regime, gradually, confidence grew between the two of us. Stanley explained some of the challenges he and other South African students in Hungary were experiencing – in a country that was starting a painful transition process leading to a different political system, where people hitherto perceived as friends could easily turn into enemies. This meeting turned out to be the first in a whole series of encounters, as we, Elfriede, my late partner and myself, continued to meet both in Vienna and in Budapest (and later, after he had established his own engineering company, in Cape Town). During each meeting, Stanley would disclose more bits and pieces of his troubled biography in exile, including, at some stage, showing me a report published by Die Suid-Afrikaan about his mother’s shocking death. When in 1992 Stanley requested the assistance from the Anti-Apartheid Movement to sponsor him with a ticket to visit his relatives in South Africa, we did not hesitate to do so as we felt it was our obligation to facilitate such requests – especially when coming from someone who had studied civil engineering, which is a scarce and greatly needed expertise in his home country. Put in Stanley’s words, the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement “served the people of South Africa.”

This book is the first document, as far as I know, where Stanley gives a full narrative of his life. Here, Stanley finally deals with his past in a systematic way – and with the past of other individuals and organisations as well. I am sure there will be other stories to be told, some fitting well into his narrative, some contradicting it. His autobiography will meet with approval by some and will spark controversies with others. Hopefully, this debate will finally lead to truth and – if at all possible – facilitate reconciliation.

The worldwide Anti-Apartheid Movement, including the Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement, was part of all those forces that managed to dismantle apartheid. I therefore recommend this book to anyone, especially to those of us who were involved in Anti-Apartheid activities in order to understand as to how young people like Stanley Manong decided to take up arms against the apartheid regime and were able to endure long years of hardship and suffering in exile.

Dr Walter Sauer,
Former Chairperson
Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement;
Professor at the University of Vienna; and
Retired Head of International Department,
Austrian Trade Union Federation.



INTRODUCTION

It is Sunday morning, October 17 1976, I am attending the funeral of the 16-year-old Dumisani Mbatha at the Avalon Cemetery in Soweto. I had accompanied my friend and comrade, Mokete Ronald “Rocks” Mashinini who had assisted Izzy Gxuluwe, one of the leaders of the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) in organising the funeral under the auspices of the SSRC. Rocks Mashinini was the elder brother of Tsietsi Mashinini. Dumisani Mbatha died on 25 September 1976, two days after he was arrested by the apartheid security forces. He was one of a group of students who wanted to take the fight against apartheid to the city centre of Johannesburg by staging demonstrations there, and were prevented from doing so when they were intercepted by apartheid police before reaching their destination. His parents were never informed of his incarceration and only became aware for the first time when the police informed them of his death. The mood during the funeral was sombre but tense. Every speaker at the funeral vowed to avenge the untimely death of the young Dumisani Mbatha. The inscription on one of the banners displayed at the funeral summed-up the mood of the mourners: “FOR FREEDOM WE SHALL LAY DOWN OUR LIVES, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES.” One of the leaders of the SSRC, went about informing every mourner who attended the funeral that “tea” would be served in Rockville, at the house of one of the most hated apartheid police, Detective-Sergeant Orphan “Hlubi” Chapi. The term “tea” meant the attacking of the house of Hlubi.

As the mourners arrived at Hlubi’s house, they were met by the police and Hlubi himself, who arrived after the first batch of mourners managed to attack the house without causing damage. Some of us had to dodge bullets in-between, that were fired by the police contingent that came to the rescue of

Hlubi. As we all scattered for our dear lives, I could not wonder asking myself the simple question: until when are we going to die like lambs that are led to slaughter, and like sheep that are silent before their shearers. It is indeed a noble idea that “For freedom we shall lay down our lives”, but in what manner shall we continue to sacrifice our lives for freedom?

To me, the answer lay in the Manifesto of uMkhonto we Sizwe (the armed wing of the ANC), which proclaimed during its formation on 16 December 1961: *“The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices, submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future, and our freedom.”* Indeed the words echoed in the Manifesto of MK were put into action by Nelson Mandela, in his now famous speech during the Rivonia Treason Trial of 1964, when he said: *“...But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die”*. This was a clarion call to all members of the ANC and uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) to carry on the fight against the apartheid regime by returning racist fire with revolutionary fire so that even if we die or lay down our lives as the banner proclaimed, we would not die like lambs or sheep to the slaughter. We would die fighting.

In answering the call to arms, MK cadre Obed Jabu Masina, like thousands of his other comrades, who responded and obeyed the order of MK, of returning fire with fire, ultimately managed, on 25 June 1978, to execute Hlubi, who was one of the most notorious Black policemen who had actively collaborated with the apartheid regime in the killing and maiming of innocent Black civilians whose only crime was to fight for their birthright. In choosing a befitting title to this book, I did not hesitate to use the title of the poem of Claude McKay, “IF WE MUST DIE!”, which he wrote in 1922 in response to a rise in hate crime, race riots and overall violence that targeted Afro-Americans in the USA during the summer of 1919. The poem of Claude McKay was a clarion call to all Black Americans to be prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for their rights.

The poem reads:

“If We Must Die”

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While around us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.

If we must die, O let us nobly die
 So that our precious blood must not be shed
 In vain; then even the monsters we defy
 Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
 O kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!
 Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
 And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!
 What though before us lies the open grave?
 Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
 Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!¹

This book therefore, is a tribute, through the lens of my life, to all those members of the ANC and MK who dedicated their lives to the eradication of apartheid in our country. Those men and women, many of them who ultimately paid the supreme sacrifice, without expecting any personal material gain, except for the freedom of their compatriots. Indeed, in fighting for freedom, they felt honoured, in laying down their precious lives so that millions of our future generations can live in peace and harmony, free from the scourges of racism and poverty. In paying tribute to the many gallant fighters of MK, allow me to mention just a few. Solomon Mahlangu who has been the pioneer and a leading martyr of the post-June 16 1976 generation of MK combatants, is known to have said just before he was hanged by the apartheid noose: *‘My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight.’*² He reminded us of Julius Fucik, a journalist from Czechoslovakia, who was imprisoned, tortured and executed on 8 September 1943, by the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police of Adolf Hitler. Before he was hanged, Julius Fucik is said to have encouraged his fellow compatriots who had been languishing in the Nazi concentration camps to continue the fight against the Nazis when he wrote on pieces of cigarette paper and smuggled out of prison by sympathetic prison warders:

*‘You who survive these times must not forget. Forget neither the good nor the bad...I want this to be known: that there were no nameless heroes here; that they were people with names, faces, longings and hopes, and that the pain of the very last of them was no less than the pain of the very first...Man’s duty does not end with this fight, for to be a man will continue to demand a heroic heart as long as mankind is not quite human.’*³

Of course there was Barney Molokoane who was involved in numerous gun battles against the apartheid forces culminating in his death on 28 November 1985 with two other fellow comrades, following an attack at the SASOL II complex in Secunda, Eastern Transvaal. His first battle was at Moshaneng, near Witkleigat, in the Western Transvaal near the border with Botswana. In that battle, he commanded a unit of nine comrades that included

himself, which engaged the enemy forces from two o'clock in the afternoon until sunset without any loss suffered by the unit except for the capturing of Wilfred "Windy" Marwane in an earlier incident that led to the gunfight that I have just described.

I cannot forget Odirile Meshack Maponya (MK Mainstay Chibuku) who operated and survived for three years inside the country, from 1985 to 1988, under the noses of the Vlakplaas death-squads led by Eugene de Kock, before he lost his life through an alleged premature explosion of a limpet mine in Pretoria in 1988 whilst trying to place it. When Eugene de Kock and his unit got wind of the presence of Odirile Maponya inside the country, they detained his brother, Japie Maponya, and after failing to locate his whereabouts, decided to kidnap Japie and transported him across the border to Swaziland where De Kock ultimately managed to kill him with a spade. Despite the death of his brother, Odirile Maponya, not only eluded the apartheid security forces but managed to train other MK units inside the country that included Stanza Bopape.

As the apartheid security police were frantically searching for him, they managed to detain Stanza Bopape in June 1988, and after not getting any joy and cooperation from him, also decided to kill him, by electrocution, on 12 June 1988, two or three days after his arrest. Who can forget the "Moroka Three"; Simon Telle Mogoerane, Jerry Semano Mosoli and Marcus Motaung, who once instilled fear in the hearts of many policemen, after attacking one police station after another. From Moroka and Orlando Police Stations to Wonderboom Police Station. Their fate, too, like that of Solomon Mahlangu before them, was determined by the apartheid's noose. These heroes, like Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba, had vowed, when they picked up the spear: "though before us lie the open grave, like men, we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!."

Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba were sentenced to death and ultimately executed, despite international calls for clemency, in the Pretoria Central Prison on 6 November 1964 for allegedly killing a police informer. Ben Turok, who was serving a three-year prison sentence in the same prison where the three were executed, in an article entitled: "THEY DIED SINGING", published in *Sechaba*, the official organ of the ANC, described their last moments as follows:

"Vuyisile Mini's laugh was unforgettable...It was through his laugh that I became aware that Mini had arrived in the condemned section of Pretoria Central Prison...I marvelled at his daring.No one laughed out loud in Central Prison. It was absolutely forbidden...But Mini dared. And his comrades joined him in defiant mirth, thrusting aside with unconcealed scorn the atmosphere of crushing gloom that clung to the massive grey walls...The last evening was devastatingly sad as the heroic occupants of the death cells communicated to the prison in gentle melancholy song that

their end was near...It was late at night when the singing ceased, and the prison fell into uneasy silence.

I was already awake when the singing began again in the early morning. Once again the excruciatingly beautiful music floated through the barred windows, echoing round the brick exercise yard, losing itself in the vast prison yards. And then, unexpectedly, the voice of Vuyisile Mini came roaring down the hushed passages. Evidently standing on a stool, with his face reaching up to a barred vent in his cell, his unmistakable bass voice was enunciating his final message in Xhosa to the world he was leaving. In a voice charged with emotion but stubbornly defiant he spoke of the struggle waged by the African National Congress and his absolute conviction of the victory to come. And then it was Khayinga's turn, followed by Mkaba, as they too defied all prison rules to shout out their valedictions. Soon after, I heard the door of their cell being opened. Murmuring voices reached my straining ears, and then the three martyrs broke into a final poignant melody which seemed to fill the whole prison with sound and then gradually faded away into the distant depths of the condemn section.”²⁴

This book, like its forerunners, “Armed and Dangerous” by Ronnie Kasrils; “The Honour To Serve” by James Ngcucu, “The Making of an MK Cadre” by Wonga Welile Bottoman, “Songs and Secrets” by Barry Gilder and “For the Fallen” by Mzwakhe Ndlela, attempts to bring to the fore, the ideals and values that motivated and inspired these gallant fighters of MK. These noble ideals and values, including those that are enshrined in the Freedom Charter, were instilled in them through ANC’s political education. Mark Shope, a Politics instructor in the camps and a former Trade Unionist, used to say, “a soldier without politics, is a mercenary”.

In this book I tried to explain the role of ANC’s political education played in instilling values of discipline, dedication and commitment to the eradication of the apartheid regime. Despite all adversities, being wrongfully removed from Botswana, re-trained at ZAPU military camps in Zambia, incarcerated at ANC military camps in Angola, accused of being a spy and isolated from my comrades in the camps, I remained loyal, committed and a dedicated member of the ANC.

The ANC’s values that were instilled in us by Comrade Mark Shope were a pillar of strength in our struggle for liberation. Lack of political education and the instilling of our Constitutional values of respect, dignity, peace and harmony within our current police service resulted in the Marikana debacle. The reader ought not to look further than our present Safety and Security forces in establishing the veracity of that statement. The manner in which the current police, under a democratic government led by the ANC, deals with civil unrest, leaves much to be desired. A case in point is the incident of Marikana, where the Police, on August 16 2012, shot and killed 34 unarmed striking miners and injuring 78, who were protesting for a living wage and

better working conditions. Never in one's imagination during the years of struggle, did we ever fathom to think that a future democratic government led by the ANC, could mow down in such ruthlessness and brutality, unarmed workers who were yearning for some of the values enshrined in the Freedom Charter to be implemented, like, for instance, "There Shall Be Work and Security". Under the same clause, the Freedom Charter states: "*Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work.*"⁵

Yes, we were taught by Julius Mokoena during our military training in Novo Catengue, in Angola, whenever one's contribution to the struggle is appreciated and acknowledged, in return, one should respond by saying: "We serve the people of South Africa!". The book therefore highlights the manner in which these thousands of MK combatants managed, so bravely and courageously, to serve the people of South Africa. Not only does the book attempt to capture the various and numerous successes scored by MK on the battlefield, but also some of the setbacks, on and off the battlefield, that were encountered. The setbacks suffered by MK on the battlefield were mainly as a result of askaris (turned MK soldiers that collaborated with the enemy) betraying their units. The other off-the-battlefield setbacks manifested themselves in the form of mutinies that were staged by the rank and file in Angola, due to abuses perpetrated against them by the ANC's Security Department commonly known as imbokodo (a grinding stone).

The book analyses the causes of the mutinies as enumerated in the report of the Stuart Commission, and comes to various conclusions, the main ones being the reliance on military methods of instilling discipline among the cadres rather than self-conscious political discipline and coupled with the hero-worshipping of individual leaders. The book attempts to draw lessons from the history of the Soviet Union under Stalin where many loyal party members were killed because of the cult of the individual. Nikita Krushchev, who succeeded Stalin as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), once observed: "*Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation, and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint, and the correctness of his position, was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation.*"⁶ During our training in Novo Catengue, Mark Shope used to admonish us: "Never support a leader in his/her personal capacity, support him/her because of the correct political line he/she is following". It was after he posed a "tricky" question to us, asking us whom would we support between Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, were Mandela to be released from Robben Island at that particular moment.

This brings to the fore another aspect that has been dealt with extensively

in the book, that of the quality of the cadres of MK and by implication, the ANC. Writing about the experiences of Vietnam, the then General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Le Duan, once wrote: “*In the National Democratic Revolution, which was a long and arduous process... our Party trained batch after batch of cadres who lived up to President Ho Chi Minh’s teaching: ‘Be true to the Party and loyal to the people, fulfil any task, overcome any difficulty, and defeat any enemy’.*”⁷⁷ In the concluding chapter of this book, I examine the causes of this moral degeneration among some of the present cadres of the ANC who want to amass unspeakable wealth overnight.

In examining their conduct, I come to the conclusion that these cadres, the nascent entrepreneurial and parasitic bourgeoisie, are the direct cause of some of the reversal of the gains of our revolution, mainly the fight against racism and for economic emancipation of the masses of our people, as they act as the shock-absorber, through their connections with political power, for the greedy and racist sections of Monopoly Capital. There can be no doubt, in order to regain the successes achieved in the early years of our democracy, we need the ANC to redefine its political line. We cannot blame cadres in isolation of the present political line which is followed by the ANC. As Le Duan has clearly described the interrelationship between the two, when he wrote:

“The problem of cadres is posed under the premise that the line has been worked out. That is why, a wise political line is the pre-condition for the existence of good cadres. It is quite impossible to have good cadres if the line is wrong. Of course, a wise line alone cannot exclude the possibility of wrongdoing and degradation on the part of cadres because whether a cadre acts rightly and wrongly, is good or bad, depends on many other factors than the line, including his personal attributes. However, a correct line is the basic condition in bringing the revolutionary tasks to success, and as such it produces one batch after another of good cadres and keeps to a minimum the possibility of cadres committing errors in political orientation. To be sure, in a revolutionary movement it is hardly possible to prevent a few bad, opportunist elements from infiltrating into the revolutionary ranks.

*However, if we have a strong mass movement arising from and developing along a correct line, and if the majority of our cadres stand firmly on this correct line, noxious tendencies not only have little chance of swaying our cadres but also are very likely themselves to be swept aside. But the picture will be quite different if errors are committed in the political line. A wrong line will take the cadres away from a correct direction, throw confusion into their ranks, and push numbers of them into wrong doing. Of course, in such situations, there are always those who are alert enough to tell right from wrong and are able to defend the truth. But to bring the movement back on to the right path, the revolution must pay what is sometimes a very high price, including in terms of cadres, the most valuable asset of the revolution.”*⁷⁸

At the end, I have included an addendum of the 1968 Poqo Treason Trial court case of Victoria West, a tiny Karoo town in the Northern Cape, the place

of my birth. It is this case that had a direct bearing on my early and formative years of political consciousness. I felt obliged to inform the broader public as to how some innocent Black men and women of our country, were falsely incarcerated in apartheid dungeons after being charged and subsequently convicted of trumped-up charges. At the time, there were similar cases that took place in Graaff-Reinet, Molteno and other places in the Eastern Cape, where after lengthy trials, the innocent were convicted and imprisoned on Robben Island. Fortunately for those who were accused during the Victoria West Treason Trial, because of the excellent quality of legal service they received from the defence team, led by Advocate Leslie Weinkove and Judge Farlam, who was later appointed the Chairperson of the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, the charges against them were dismissed.

CHAPTER 1

The Return of The Stateless Citizen

It is May 1992, European Spring, and I am in Budapest, Hungary, where I have been studying for the past four years at the Technical University of Budapest for a Master of Science Degree in Civil Engineering. I recently received news from Vienna, the capital city of Austria, conveyed to me by Dr Walter Sauer, the Chairperson of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in that country, that they had managed to secure a return air ticket for me to visit my family in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, where they had recently relocated and settled. A return ticket, because I had at least another year left before completing the five year civil engineering course. I became very excited and overcome with emotion. Was it true that at last I would be able to see my relatives after spending a period of sixteen years in exile? Would I be able to fit in into the South African society after so many years of absence? At the same time I was apprehensive. I feared for my safety, especially after the problems I had encountered at the newly established South African Embassy in Budapest when I tried to apply for a passport. All African National Congress (ANC) students who were studying in Hungary after the unbanning of the ANC and other banned organisations in 1990 received their passports without any hassles. But when I went to apply for mine in 1991, I was refused on the grounds that I had submitted inaccurate details of my Reference Book which was commonly called a *dompas* (stupid pass book) in African Townships. I remember giving the officials at the Embassy the details of the previous number of my *dompas*, off the top of my head, like anybody else, as we did not have supporting documentation. But when others received their passports, mine was missing on the grounds that I had submitted wrong details.

Unbeknown to the embassy officials, a week before I went to enquire about my passport, I received a copy of my birth certificate from the offices

of the Magistrate at Victoria West, where I was born, with full details of my *dompas* written on it. The details contained therein were identical to those I had submitted to the Embassy when I made the application. After I had showed them the original copy of my birth certificate, they were embarrassed. The Ambassador, a certain Mr Nicky Scholtz, after apologising profusely, made a call to the South African Embassy in Austria, after which I was told to collect my passport after two weeks. To me this was a sign that South African authorities still had an axe to grind with me. It was not difficult to understand the reason why the apartheid government had such an attitude towards me. When I left the country, I joined *uMkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), the military wing of the ANC. After completing military training, I was deployed in Botswana where I was appointed Regional Chief of Operations, responsible for planning and directing military operations against the apartheid regime. During my stay in Botswana, I had worked with Peter Kimpani Mogoai (MK Thabo Mavuyo) and Joe Mamasela, at various times both of whom went on to become notorious and deadly *askaris*¹ (former MK members who became turncoats). In almost every crime and atrocity that was committed by the apartheid security forces in Black townships, one of them was implicated in such violent criminal acts.

By 1992 all South African students studying in Hungary had left leaving me with Peter Magapatona, the son of Patrick Magapatona, who was born and bred in Hungary. Roy “Tiny” Setlhapelo, another student, was leaving in June of that year. Peter had dual citizenship as his mother was Hungarian. Although, after the ordeal regarding my passport, when I decided not to set my foot in South Africa before the ANC came to power, homesickness and loneliness caused me to reconsider my decision. An opportunity to visit my relatives was made available to me by the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

I had arrived in Hungary in October 1986 with three other comrades from Angola after the ANC Kabwe Conference, held in Zambia in June 1985, had made it possible for MK cadres, especially those who were wasting away in camps in Angola, to further their education in various institutions abroad, something that was unthinkable before. It was somehow a mild and timid version of the *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*² that was introduced by Mikhail Gorbachov in the Soviet Union those days. The MK version of *Perestroika* was timid because it was forced upon the authorities after the staging of two mutinies by the rank and file in MK camps in Angola that followed each other in quick succession. Because of the loss of life that followed, authorities felt it would be better to send most of the disillusioned old guard that had been stagnating in the camps to school. The other three comrades were Roy “Tiny” Setlhapelo, Madoda Alex Nkosi (MK Edison “Kort” Mazibuko) and Duke Selepe. By 1992 all had completed their courses and had left Hungary for South Africa or were about to leave, as was the case with Tiny who was

completing his course in June of that year.

I was very nervous about returning to South Africa so soon after the unbanning of the ANC, especially after reading a lot of stories in the newspapers about the sudden disappearance of ex-MK cadres immediately after their arrival in the country only to find their dead bodies dumped somewhere in an isolated and open *veld*. By going back to South Africa and risking suffering the same fate as others, that of being killed mysteriously by apartheid death squads, would I not somehow indirectly undo the great assistance, advice and efforts rendered to me by both Chris Hani and O.R. Tambo (affectionately known in ANC circles as OR), the then Commissar of MK and President of the ANC respectively, when in their individual capacities they assisted and persuaded me to further my studies? When I was in Angola, when life appeared to have come to a standstill for me, it was Chris Hani who persuaded and assisted me to further my studies abroad. On arrival in Hungary, when all seemed to be lost when Hungarian State officials at first refused me entry to the university, citing the lack of proper documentation in support of my qualifications, it was the timely personal intervention of OR Tambo that made it possible for the Hungarian officials to allow me to study at the university.

What happened is that on arrival in Budapest in October 1986, officials from the Hungarian Solidarity Committee that were sponsoring our studies, refused to allow the four of us to further our studies at university simply because on the application forms that were received from the ANC in Angola it was stated that our highest qualification was standard six. The forms that we had personally completed whilst we were in Angola, in which we stated our qualifications, were never forwarded to them. We had to either accept that we might have to proceed to high school to study for another four years towards obtaining matric, or study at a vocational school where we could study for a course as artisans or, alternatively, if we insisted on furthering our studies at university, we could go back to Angola where we could submit new applications supported by proof of our qualifications. As going back to Angola was not an option, we decided to stay in Hungary, enrol at the language school, and after a year try to persuade both ANC and Hungarian officials to allow us to proceed to university.

After completing a year at the language school, the Hungarian authorities still refused to allow us to proceed to university, citing previous poor performances of ANC students at Hungarian universities after allowing them to study there without proof of qualifications. As I had not only completed matric in South Africa before going into exile, but also attended Technikon where I studied for a Diploma in Civil Engineering, I personally thought staying in Hungary would be a waste of my precious time and opted to return to Tanzania instead of Angola. By this time Tiny had joined me, as both Kort Mazibuko and Duke Selepe opted to stay in Hungary by pursuing

their education at vocational schools. A few days before we were going to leave for Tanzania, OR Tambo appeared on the scene, and after hearing our predicament, spoke directly to Janos Kadar, the then President of Hungary and the General Secretary of its Communist Party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, pleading with him to allow us to proceed to university.

With our bags packed and ready to fly back to Africa, we received the news from Sindiso Mfenyane, who was the Chief Representative of the ANC in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), and who was accompanying OR on his visit to Hungary, that Janos Kadar had agreed to instruct the Hungarian Solidarity Committee to allow us to study at a university of our choice. This is how we managed to remain and study in that country. Indeed OR had a big and a generous heart. One day after I had successfully completed my studies, I thought I would pay both OR and Chris Hani an official visit, in a free and democratic South Africa, to thank them for having given me the opportunity of furthering my studies. Now, by going back to South Africa prematurely before I completed my studies, although it would be for a short visit during the summer months (Northern Hemisphere) of June to August, there was a reasonable chance that I might not see that dream realised as South Africa was in a state of flux. Come what may, I decided to take a risk and visit the country not knowing what might lie ahead for me.

After completing my fourth year exams in June 1992, on 22 June, I boarded a train from Budapest bound for Vienna, where I was to take a connecting flight to Johannesburg on the evening of 24 June. On arrival in Vienna, as a precautionary measure, for in case I disappeared mysteriously once in South Africa, I gave Dr Walter Sauer, the Chairperson of the AAM, all the contact details of my relatives in Khayelitsha, including their telephone numbers, where I was to spend my holiday until early September of that year when the universities would be reopening. Before I left Budapest, I was in constant telephone contact with my elder sister, Magdalene Dikeni, with whom I was to spend my holiday since my mother had passed away in 1985 during my time in exile. As my mother was sixty-nine years old when she died, I was informed that she died of natural causes. I grew up without a father and I was brought up by my mother. The house of my elder sister was therefore the logical place where I should stay.

Just before I boarded my flight to the Jan Smuts International Airport in Johannesburg, I contacted Ronald "Rocks" Mashinini the elder brother of Tsietsi Mashinini, the famous student leader of the 1976 Soweto Students Uprisings, to fetch me at Jan Smuts International Airport. When I went into exile in December 1976, I left with Rocks with whom I had studied at the Mmadikoti Technikon in Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal. I used to stay at his parents place in Central Western Jabavu, Soweto, during my frequent visits there over the years. In the process, I became an honorary member of

the Mashinini family. Rocks also joined MK but had already returned to the country when the floodgates had opened with returning exiles immediately after February 1990. Tsietsi, who never joined the ANC, had died mysteriously on 25 July 1990³, whilst he was residing with Miriam Makeba in Guinea, West Africa, after marrying, divorcing and ultimately deciding to settle in that country. Rocks agreed to collect me at the airport the following morning.

On the morning of 25 June, as the plane descended on Johannesburg and approaching the Jan Smuts International Airport, I could not hold back my emotions as I looked through the windows seeing the blue and sunny skies of South Africa for the first time after such a long period. My memories went back to the days when we were at the camps in Angola, when we used to dream and fantasise about this day. I could hear the golden voice of Odirile Maponya (MK Mainstay Chibuku) ringing in my ears, when he used to sing:

*“Ma ebizwa amagama maqharwe, ngab’ elami ndolifica likbona,
Kobanjani ma siblezzi noTambo sesimtshe’ amabbun’ agingqiwe”.*

Loosely translated, it means:

*“When the Honours List (the Roll Call) is announced (after attaining freedom),
I hope my name would also be included,
How nice it would be sitting with Tambo
informing him how we had defeated and conquered the Boers”.*

After touching down, I nervously proceeded to the immigration office, not knowing which line to choose to follow, either the “*Returning Residents*” queue or the one reserved for “*Visitors*”. I was neither a returning resident in the true sense of the word nor a visitor as I left the country by skipping the borders without a passport. I was a “*Stateless Citizen*”, as written in all the passports I used to carry in exile including the one I received from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Botswana and the last one I had received from the Hungarian government. This was the stigma I had to endure and carry throughout my life as an exiled professional revolutionary. It was a stigma because no country wanted to allow visitors across their borders who were travelling with a “*Stateless Citizen*” passport. To me, therefore, this notion of a “*Returning Resident*” was quite new. In any event I decided to use this queue as I am a citizen of South Africa.

After grabbing my passport, the White immigration officer frantically searched for my particulars on the computer and to my horror, after not finding my details, made a few calls. When he started making the calls, I could feel rivers of sweat streaming down my spine as I began to panic. Was he calling Eugene de Kock and his death squads to come and collect me and finish me off? These were the sort of stories I was reading a lot about in the newspapers. Would De Kock be accompanied by Joe Mamasela or Peter Mogoai or both

who might still bear personal grudges against me. I was somewhat relieved, momentarily, when the immigration officer put down the telephone and after fiddling with the computer, finally said, “*Welcome to South Africa, Mr Manong! I hope you’ll enjoy your return to our shiny shores*”, as he stamped and returned my passport, clearing the way for me to proceed to the exit gates of the arrival lounge or should I say the entrance gates to South Africa.

Briskly, I walked past the throngs of people who were waiting for the return of their loved ones. As I walked past, I would now and then look at the crowds trying to see whether I could spot Rocks among them. I also had the dilemma of not wanting to be recognised by anybody else for fear of being picked up by the State’s rogue elements. When I did not see him, I jumped into a waiting taxi cab that was driven by an African man. After negotiating a fare to the Park Station in Johannesburg, I asked him to take me there as quickly as possible as I needed to leave Johannesburg immediately. After my arrival at the Park Station, I was faced with another dilemma of what to do next. I had not planned to go to the Park Station. I went there due to panicking. I called Rocks, but the phone at his place rang on end without anybody picking it up. I decided to call my relatives in Khayelitsha who advised me to take a Trans-Lux bus to Cape Town rather than the Trans-Karoo train I had thought of taking earlier. Fortunately the office of the Trans-Lux bus service was nearby and after making some enquiries, I bought a ticket to Cape Town. Unfortunately, the earliest departure was six o’clock in the evening. What to do in the meantime, was a million dollar question. Aha! Bra Peter Mashinini, Rocks’ uncle, used to work at the printing workshop of the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) way back in 1976. Maybe I could while away time by visiting him. Even if he was no longer working there, I did not want to stay and sit in the same place for the whole day lest some agents of the apartheid security forces recognised me.

Indeed, to my surprise, Bra Peter, was still working at the Wits Printing Press. Apart from looking much older, nothing seemed to have changed in his demeanour. Everybody at the Mashinini home was still in good health except for the sad news that I already mentioned about Tsietsi. After a long chat, I left after leaving a message for Rocks, informing him I was on my way to Cape Town and would visit him in September when I would be returning to Hungary. Back at the Park Station, I bumped into Levi, an MK cadre who I last met at the camps in Angola. He was with his fiancé on their way to East London, to negotiate with her parents about the non-payment of *lobola* (bride price for marrying her) as both were just from the camps and unemployed. At six o’clock in the evening I boarded the Trans-Lux bus. If I thought boarding was going to be a simple procedure, I was again reminded of the fact that I was no longer in Europe, but back in South Africa.

There was a White gentleman who was overseeing the process of literally “babysitting” every passenger who was boarding the bus making sure that a

White person did not sit next to a Black person and especially ensuring that a Black man did not sit next to a White woman. If a White woman was sitting alone, and there were only Black men to be seated, he would transfer an already seated Black woman from wherever she was sitting and let her rather sit next to the White woman and move the new Black man passenger to another seat. This was a classic case of managing the transition of integration. At least there were no incidents. As I sat in the bus I thought of how integration of buses in the USA in the 1950's proved to be highly divisive, something that prompted the famous bus boycotts that were championed by Martin Luther King Jnr and Rosa Parks. In the USA, when laws approving the integration of buses were passed, initially Blacks had to sit from the back of the buses and Whites from the front. If the bus was full, Blacks had to give their seats to Whites who could not find one. This led to the call for the boycotting of buses⁴. In the new South Africa, the seating was nicely and diplomatically managed.

As the bus departed for Cape Town, I felt a little bit uneasy at the sight of a White soldier sitting in front of me wearing his army uniform. As an ex-MK soldier, I always became paranoid about any scene of a SADF (South African Defence Force) soldier especially if seated so close to me. But I tried to keep my uneasiness within myself and not let anybody notice it. As the bus was moving on the N1 Route to Cape Town, I could not sleep as I was very nervous and excited at the same time. I had not seen my relatives for sixteen years. I was heading towards Khayelitsha, a place that did not exist before I left the country. What was awaiting me there, only time would tell. As the bus passed Richmond, Northern Cape, approaching Three Sisters, a place that used to be a small railway siding for years, in the dark of the night, I saw road signs pointing in the direction of Victoria West, a small town on the N12 Route to Kimberley. This is where I was born and bred. After the death of my mother, I am told, all my relatives moved to Khayelitsha. As I mentioned earlier, Victoria West is situated on the N12 National Road about three hundred and fifty kilometres south of Kimberley, halfway between Johannesburg and Cape Town. It is about hundred and thirty five kilometres north of Beaufort West and one hundred and eighty kilometres to the east, lies the scenic Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet, and a further hundred and thirty kilometres lies Cradock. As the bus was approaching Three Sisters I could not resist thinking about my upbringing in that small dusty town in the middle of the Great Karoo.

As the bus travelled through the flat and dry plains of the Karoo in the still of the night, the silence being broken by the occasional noise made by a buck running across the road at its own peril, my memories took me on a journey way back to 1960, when I started schooling at the local Bantu Community School in Victoria West after enrolling for Sub A. I started thinking about my first Physical Training (PT) lessons under the tutelage of our class teacher, Miss Lilian Noveve. As young kids we were made to jump high in the sky

demonstrating with our arms how big giants are, followed by crawling on the ground signifying the tiny size of dwarfs and in the process shouting, “*Izigebenga zingaka... oobili bangaka, izigebenga zingaka ... oobili bangaka, izi...*” Loosely translated into English, it means, “*the giants are like this...the dwarfs like that, the giants are like this, the dwarfs like that, the...*” By the end of the PT lessons, one would feel extremely exhausted.

Years later, in 1978, when I underwent the survival commando’s military course commonly known as *toyi-toyi* in Zambia, with the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union) led by Joshua Nkomo, my mind would go back to my early days of PT, except then we were no longer jumping like giants and crawling like dwarfs, but we were barking like dogs – *mnt’omnyama* (Black man!). Without being able to enjoy a night’s sleep, at about nine o’clock in the morning, the bus finally arrived at the Central Train Station in Cape Town and was met by my relatives, including Magdalene Dikeni and Gertrude Manong, my elder and younger sisters respectively. Upon seeing me, Gertrude, out of all my relatives, cried hysterically. I thought her cries were as a result of her excitement in meeting and seeing me for the first time since 1976. I had not been emotionally prepared myself for what I was about to hear.

After arriving at Magdalene’s house in Khayelitsha, and meeting and greeting old friends and acquaintances from Victoria West, who had heard of my imminent arrival, I was finally briefed about the actual cause of my mother’s death. My mother was burnt to death by local people from Victoria West during the disturbances of 1985. She was killed because of the allegations of “collaborator” that were levelled against Enoch, one of my elder brothers. The majority of those who were involved in her death were all known to me. They were either my blood relatives, close friends with whom I grew up or people who were ordinary acquaintances. As Victoria West is a small town of not more than four thousand inhabitants, of which a thousand were Africans, residents of the town knew one another very well. In order to understand the events that led to my mother’s death, I will briefly explain the political situation that prevailed there at the time.

Most African residents of the town consisted of people who were either former farm dwellers or unskilled labourers who provided cheap labour to the town’s small businesses that were predominantly White-owned. Following the enactment of the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 that established quasi local government structures in Black townships that were in urban areas, a Black Advisory Council (the “Council”) was established at Victoria West to help the Local Bantu Administration Board in managing the affairs of the small number of African residents that were residing in the local Black township. The Advisory Council consisted of five members of which Enoch, my elder brother, was one of them. None of the members of this newly established

Council, including my brother, had gone beyond standard six at school. In fact no African at Victoria West before 1976, except me, had managed to pass matric. Members of the Advisory Council worked on a part-time basis and received a monthly stipend of R35 per month. Enoch was employed full time as an assistant at the local hospital and like the rest of the members, only performed his Council duties over the weekends. In 1983 nationwide protests began against these puppet institutions and Victoria West was no exception. But in Victoria West, instead of the community directing their protests against this puppet institution, the protests were directed specifically at my brother and his close friend, Hamilton Majali, with whom he was employed at the local hospital.

What was strange about these protests, was that the stepchild of one of the members of the Council who was also its Chairperson, Kuku Qhiza, was at the forefront of the protests that called for the resignation of Enoch, whilst her step-father, Johnson Booyesen, remained the Chairperson of the Council, and throughout this period that was characterised by intense demonstrations, remained untouched. Similarly the other remaining two members of the Council were never harassed during this period. On the 25 May 1985⁵ our house was attacked by this unruly mob that masqueraded as members and comrades of non-existent street committees. In this attack, my mother escaped unhurt but our house was completely gutted by fire. She had to leave town and relocate to Taung in the North West Province where some of our relatives were staying.

After the arson attack my brothers and sisters opened a criminal case against the perpetrators of this crime. Although they were known to the police, no one was brought to book. In the meantime, my brother, together with all other members of the Council, resigned. Late in October of that year, after staying for four months in Taung, my mother decided to return to Victoria West. On 2 December⁶, just less than two months after her return from Taung, her house was again attacked in a similar fashion to the previous occasion. When she fled together with her grandchildren to seek refuge at a nearby camp that housed SADF soldiers who were safeguarding the town during the nationwide disturbances, the local White policemen evicted them from the camp and ordered them to return to her house which was still under a smouldering fire, on the pretext that civilians could not be accommodated in military establishments. On the night of 3 December⁷, these so-called protesters finally struck and managed to raze the house to the ground. This time my mother was not so lucky. She, together with my younger sister Gertrude, and other grandchildren, sustained serious burn wounds as a result of the arson attack and subsequently she was hospitalised.

On 7 December 1985⁸, four days after her admission to hospital, she passed away. The same mob that was responsible for the earlier arson attack on our

house, were also responsible for this attack that resulted in her death. What is interesting to note is the fact that although my family had laid criminal charges against some leaders of this riotous mob for the earlier attack, police did nothing to investigate that case⁹. Because of her sudden and unexpected death, the police were forced to pretend that they were arresting and charging the perpetrators. The death of my mother seemed sudden because, I am told, she died soon after my relatives had visited her in hospital. During the visit, my relatives say she was in high spirits despite her serious wounds and did not seem to be in severe physical or psychological distress. However, as they arrived home that evening after the visit to the hospital, they received a message that she had just passed away. Police eventually arrested and charged seven of the perpetrators most of whom were involved in the earlier arson attack. What was surprising was the fact that when the police decided to charge the arsonists, they left out the person who was the mastermind and the main brains behind this criminal act. His name was Henry “Bingo” Vas who was the Chairperson of the Victoria West Residents Association. The Residents Association was purportedly affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF) but it’s only known “political” activity at Victoria West was the killing of my mother. Bingo was my childhood friend and ultimately became my cousin-in-law as he was married to my cousin, Lumka Makulani. Lumka’s mother, Thandiwe, is my cousin as our mothers are sisters.

After a mock and a sham trial that lasted about nine months, all seven accused were acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence against them despite the fact that they were all involved in the earlier attack and notwithstanding the fact that their defence in the main murder case was found wanting. For instance the alibi of one of the accused, Attie Kwela, was suspect as he claimed he could not have participated in the arson attack against my mother simply because during the time of the attack, his leg was covered in an orthopaedic cast which is commonly known as PoP (Plaster of Paris). He claimed that the plaster was only removed in January 1986 four months after it was originally put in place. But the District Surgeon who treated him, a Dr Myburgh, confirmed that the plaster was originally placed on his leg on 4 September 1985¹⁰ and was removed by my brother, Enoch, who was the assistant to Dr Myburgh, six weeks later, which would have been towards the middle of October.

This was confirmed by both Enoch and Gertrude during their evidence. Coincidentally when Gertrude went to hospital for an unrelated matter, she found Enoch removing the plaster from Attie Kwela’s leg. When Dr Myburgh was called to confirm the date on which the plaster was removed from Kwela’s leg, he deliberately fudged the issue by claiming he was unable to record the date as he was not at the hospital at the time and had referred Kwela to Enoch for further attention and assistance as if Enoch was a trained medical officer.

To make matters worse, when Dr Myburgh, who conducted an autopsy on my mother's body, gave evidence on the cause of her death, he said my mother died of embolism¹¹. Embolism is a condition where the blood flow in an artery is blocked by a foreign body (embolus), such as a blood clot or an air bubble. In some cases it may result in a sudden heart attack. When the court wanted to see medical reports that confirmed the cause of death, Dr Myburgh said no medical tests were carried out to determine the cause of death. It was only his opinion from previous past experiences that after a person who had suffered fifty per cent burn wounds, died suddenly, the most likely cause of death was embolism. One would have thought the very aim of conducting an autopsy was to conclude scientific analysis from medical examinations.

What then led the lynch mob at Victoria West to kill my mother with impunity without fear of being prosecuted? What then led the police not only to refuse to protect my mother but to withdraw such help when it was provided by another organ of State Security? What then led Dr Myburgh and other medical officers who treated my mother before her death to deliberately provide inexplicably weak evidence in court in order to let the perpetrators off the hook? All these answers lie partly in the fact that in 1968 two of my brothers together with my brother-in-law were arrested and charged during a trial of twenty six men accused of furthering the aims of *Pogo* that lasted for more than eighteen months. But that is not the main reason. The main reason is because of my political activities where I joined *uMkhonto we Sizwe* and became one of its senior military commanders that directed armed attacks against the apartheid regime coupled by the stubbornness of my mother in refusing to collaborate with the Special Branch (SB) of the Police in trying to coax and cajole her into cooperating with them in tracking down my whereabouts.

Her problems started when she was called by the State in 1977 to act as a State witness in the political trial of Joe Mati in East London. Joe Mati was the head of the ANC underground in East London and was arrested after being caught organising activities for the banned ANC in the area. Among the many charges he faced, one was for recruiting people for the banned military wing of the ANC, *uMkhonto we Sizwe* (MK). In court papers, I was mentioned as one of those people he had recruited into MK. All parents of the children who were recruited by Joe Mati into MK, including my mother, were taken to court and asked to testify against him. My mother, who was accompanied by Magdalene, my elder sister, was transported by the Security Police to East London in order to testify. In court, instead of testifying against Mati, my mother is alleged to have said Mati should not be persecuted and prosecuted for the sins committed by their children. As I was twenty-two years old when I left the country, an adult for that matter, my mother is alleged to have said that I was solely responsible for my actions and as she was a devout Christian, God

would never forgive her in implicating Mati in my disappearance. With their plans in shambles and disappointed, the SB Police returned her to Victoria West without having achieved their goal.

The second episode in her tussle with the SB Police, came when she was receiving a regular allowance from the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) which was based in London. When I was in Angola in 1977 still undergoing military training, the ANC requested contact details and particulars of our parents, from those of us who were breadwinners, in order to be forwarded to the IDAF as it was providing financial assistance to the families of those who were engaged in the liberation struggle. I gave the contact details of my mother to Comrade Mzwai Piliso, who was the leader of the ANC in Angola at the time, who in turn forwarded these to the IDAF. The money was sent to my mother as if it was coming from a pensioner, one Margaret Priest, who was based in London. When my mother received the money from the local banks, it was in Pound Sterling. Bank officials refused to convert it into local currency and instead insisted that she should report at the local police station to explain who was sending the money to her. She only managed to receive the money in local currency after she had shown the police the letter that she received from Margaret Priest confirming her identity. But the SB Police were not fooled. They knew the money was coming from IDAF but had no way of proving it. IDAF was banned on 18 March 1966¹² in South Africa and henceforth all funding received from them was said to be illegal. It was therefore a criminal offence for anyone to have received money directly from them.

During the trial of those who killed my mother, Attie Kwela testified that he was employed as a casual labourer and was receiving a wage of R4 per day¹³ which translated roughly to R80 per month for a five day week. Compare that with the R500 per month my mother was receiving from IDAF, one could clearly see the seeds of resentment emanating from the broader community in general and to my close relatives in particular. To make matters worse, when I was in Botswana, I used to give Joe Mamasela (the *askari*) letters addressed to my mother for him to post inside the country as if they originated locally. It was clear to me afterwards that Mamasela had passed these on to his masters at the SB for their attention because I am told the SB Police from Oudtshoorn in the Southern Cape, used to visit her frequently to enquire about my whereabouts. Pretending not to know anything about my whereabouts, my mother would play along and promised to inform them as soon as she had received word from me unbeknown to her that they already had proof that I was communicating with her.

In the end the Security Police decided to get rid of her and as a decoy use some agents within the community and assisted by some of my close relatives in killing her. After the death of my mother, Attie Kwela, the casual labourer

who was earning R4 per day, was rewarded and appointed the first mayor of the Black Advisory Council, a puppet structure he apparently detested so much not long ago. When some members of the community protested against his participation in the Council, the regime armed him with a pistol to defend himself⁴. As for Bingo Vas, who tried to continue with the protests against the Advisory Council to show his true commitment and dedication to the anti-apartheid struggle, now that my mother was out of the way, the regime also had an answer for him. When he continued to taunt my family about the death of my mother, one of my cousins, Mncedisi Mdini, stabbed him to death. The Magistrate who presided over the case ensured that Mncedisi walked free as he managed to carry out the task that was in any event meant to be executed by State security agencies. The death of Bingo reminded me of the deaths of Moses Phemelo Nthelang¹⁵, Goodwill Sikhakhane¹⁶ and Brian Ngqulunga¹⁷ and many other former *askaris* who were eventually killed by their masters when they could no longer be trusted.

Eventually this is how my relatives were forced out of Victoria West. After hearing the story of how my mother was killed, I initially refused to go to visit her graveside at Victoria West as I had promised to do so before I left Budapest. How would I react when I saw all those who were implicated in her murder? Would I be able to control my emotions? Would I not also fall into a trap, like Mncedisi, when people might taunt me during my visit? These are some of the questions that went through my mind. After a lot of persuasion by my brothers and sisters, as it would have been un-African not to have visited her graveside before I returned to school, I reluctantly decided to go on condition that we would return on the same day of our visit without seeing anyone in the town including my old acquaintances. After visiting the graveside, I returned to Budapest with a heavy heart. A heart that was filled with bitterness and regret. Bitterness because of the way my mother was killed. Regret for partly blaming myself for her death. Why did I not foresee the fact that her receiving money from IDAF would put her life in jeopardy as she was inevitably going to be put under scrutiny by the regime's Security Police? Why did I not foresee that my correspondence to her from exile would endanger her life?

These are the questions I was left pondering as the plane flew from Jan Smuts International Airport destined for Vienna in Austria. I consoled myself by thinking that the miniscule pain I was feeling was felt by millions of other South Africans who were experiencing such atrocities and brutalities on a daily basis. I had just witnessed the pain of the mother of Tsietsi Mashinini, Nomkhitha, during my stopover in Johannesburg on my way to Jan Smuts International Airport. Although she tried to hide her pain during our conversation about the death of Tsietsi, she kept on saying if... and if... and only if Tsietsi was arrested before leaving the country, he might have been alive today as he would probably be incarcerated at Robben Island, and

after his release, would have served the community in a better and positive way. Like Mzwakhe Ndlela, who has written a book entitled, "*For the Fallen*", honouring the heroes and martyrs of our liberation struggle, I thought, as the plane touched down in Vienna, that I should and must write a book about all the fallen unsung heroes and heroines of our struggle, narrated through the lens of my life. About all those who joined and participated in the armed struggle, and who made it possible for me, for you, and for all of us to enjoy the rights we sometimes take for granted.

———— CHAPTER 2 ————

The First Cradock Four

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1967 was the year I was completing standard six, my last year at the Bantu community school in Victoria West. My class teacher was the principal, Mr Tamie Yose. Like all pupils at the school, I had no plans to further my studies, because of lack of money. It was only when Aaron Mkile joined us, that those plans changed. Aaron was born at Melton Wold. His father was a foreman at the farm. Melton Wold was not only called an oasis of the Karoo because of the exotic scenery it offered to tourists. Black people viewed Melton Wold as an oasis for different reasons. It was the only farm in Victoria West, probably in the whole of South Africa, where farm workers were treated with dignity. Brian Torr set up a school at the farm for the farm workers' children, which is where Aaron completed his lower grades. Once he passed standard five, he was transferred to Victoria West in order to complete his primary school education, as Melton Wold did not offer standard six. Aaron told us that Brian Torr had promised to assist him with his high school education should he succeed in completing standard six. This is how he became the only one in our class confident of furthering his studies. Unlike Aaron, the rest of us had

no hope of furthering our studies as our parents could not afford to send us to high school. In fact, in the history of Victoria West, there was only one child, Martin Vas, who managed to study for the Junior Certificate (JC). Martin was the elder brother of Bingo. He studied at Graaff-Reinet Bantu Secondary School, which was the closest secondary school to Victoria West where African children could further their studies. He became a drop-out after he failed his final examinations several times. Many other pupils who tried to emulate him, also failed dismally. This led to most parents being reluctant to send their children to high school as they felt doing so was a waste of scarce resources.

One day during the December holidays, after I had passed standard six, Mr Yose called me to his office where he asked me to assist him with his clerical duties. Mr Yose also revealed that he had made a late application to the Bantu Secondary School in Cradock for our admittance and was awaiting the outcome after he had successfully convinced my mother to send us to high school. It was likely that the outcome would only be revealed the following year as the schools had already closed. The reason he had applied to Cradock was because, unlike Graaff-Reinet, it was the only nearest secondary school that offered mathematics. I fully understood the reason why my mother was reluctant to send us to high school. As a domestic worker, she was only earning about R7 per month. Indeed late in January 1968, Mr Yose informed my mother that our application was successful and we were required to report for school immediately as the school year had already started. Frantic efforts were made to prepare me and Lindiwe for high school. As there was no money available, we had to wait until month-end. Finally we left for school during the second week of February. Mr Eric Bilaty, a local policeman, who was born and bred in Victoria West, volunteered to take us to school in his car as he was going to visit his relatives who were living in one of the farms just outside Cradock. We left Victoria West at around four o'clock on Saturday afternoon. On our way we passed Graaff-Reinet at around eight in the evening and were in Cradock after ten. As Mr Bilaty knew Cradock very well, he drove straight to the house of the principal of the Bantu Secondary School, Mr K.B. Tabata. After a brief introduction, he took us to the house of a family who would be our guardians until we completed our studies. Mr Tabata confessed that he had thought we were no longer coming as the classes had resumed more than three weeks before. Fortunately he understood our predicament which was the fate of almost every Black family in South Africa.

The name of the township we were staying in was commonly known as *Vergenoeg* because of its distance from the Central Business District of Cradock. Apparently it was a newly established township, also a product of the Group Areas Act. As part of the Group Areas Act, Africans and Coloureds in Cradock were moved from Magqubeni and other townships that were nearer the CBD to outlying far-flung areas. Of course Vergenoeg was just the

latest township to be added to a long list of its predecessors, called Zwelitha (new land or country), Tap-Tap, Langamore and Scoovet which were later amalgamated into one township called Lingelihle. Judging by the names of the new townships, it is clear that the people of Cradock were philosophical about their forced removal as some of the names of the new townships were of famous township dances or jives of the 1950's.

On Monday, the following day, Lindiwe and I, went to school for the very first time. Lindiwe was the daughter of Auntie Magda. As we entered the school yard, we saw the motto of the school: "*NOTHING VENTURE, NOTHING HAVE*" inscribed on a rockery in the garden. The buildings of the school consisted of one block of classrooms with a small office block housing the principal's office and the staffroom situated next to the classrooms in an L-shaped form. The principal, Mr Tabata, introduced us to our class teacher and other staff members. Our class teacher was Mr Matthew Goniwe. As a secondary school, the school had three grades or standards: Form 1, Form 2 and Form 3. Form 1 and Form 2 were each divided into two classes, Form 1A and Form 1B, Form 2A and Form 2B. Form 3 had only one class. We were admitted to Form 1A. Our class had sixty-seven learners whilst in Form 1B there were sixty-four. The school had only five classrooms which inevitably led to overcrowding. That year a building fee of R2 was levied on each learner which was meant to assist the school in constructing new additional classrooms. To our surprise, Aaron Mkile, the pupil from Melton Wold was also studying here in Cradock. We were accommodated in the same class. He had arrived at the beginning of the year. Nobody, not even Mr Yose, had told us that Aaron was also going to study at Cradock. It was a pleasant surprise to have met him at our new school. We were informed by Mr Goniwe that in two weeks time, in the beginning of March, the class was going to sit for the first quarter examinations. Mr Goniwe was teaching General Science to Form 1's and Mathematics and General Science to Form 2's and 3's. Mathematics was only taught from Form 2 onwards. Form 1's were taught Arithmetic as a foundation of Mathematics although the teaching of Arithmetic continued to Form 3. Latin was also offered as a subject.

In the olden days, before the advent of Bantu Education, it was compulsory for one to have studied Latin as a subject if one wanted to study law at University. With the coming of the Nationalists to power, Latin was gradually phased out and replaced by Afrikaans. That year we were the last students to have studied Latin, as Afrikaans was aggressively introduced to all schools in the country. Latin was taught by Miss Novukela. After a few days at school, I realised that Mr Goniwe was very popular among students. He was a very young teacher not even wearing a beard as he was only twenty-one years old. We did not have a textbook in General Science. Bulletin, as Mr Goniwe was fondly known by his students, never entered a classroom without

having prepared meticulously for a lesson. The absence of textbooks did not deter him from doing his work. After each lesson, he would dictate notes to the class. He made General Science not only interesting but he made it look easy. Among students, General Science was by far the most popular subject. Mr Goniwe was nicknamed “Bullet” because he was a keen boxer.

Every month-end my mother would send us an amount of R2 each for me and Lindiwe for pocket money. I started to enjoy staying at Cradock as I became familiar with its people and surroundings. I began to know more about its people and famous citizens. One of its famous citizens was the Rev James Arthur Calata. Rev Calata was a canon of the local Anglican Church. The Anglican Church was the biggest and busiest church in Cradock. It was also situated in Vergenoeg, in Ernest Tali Street. Rev Calata first became the Cape President of the ANC in 1930 and later became its Secretary General from 1936 to 1949². In Cradock he was affectionately known as Tatou (for Tata) and his wife Mamou (for Mamma). During his tenure as the head of the Anglican Church, the church was a place of social gatherings. For instance, the hall of the Anglican Church was used for entertainment where musical bands like Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, Gibson Kente and others used to perform. He was revered by everybody and became a people’s priest in the literal sense.

As a teenager, barely fourteen years of age, I knew nothing about politics. There was no political activity in Victoria West as the town was inhabited by Blacks who had little or no formal school education. Cradock was a different kettle of fish. Africans in Cradock had a long history of political resistance as embodied in the persona of Rev Calata who first came to Cradock in 1928³. Later that year, around September or October 1968, came the sad news that four of Cradock’s young brave warriors, had fallen in Rhodesia, at Wankie and Sipolilo, in March of that year. They were part of the Luthuli Detachment which was engaged in fierce battles against the joint Rhodesian and South African enemy forces. All four were fighting in the Sipolilo Front. The fallen heroes, the first Cradock Four, were: Ghandi Gangathumlungu Hlekani, Jacques Jamani Goniwe, Ben Ngalo and Lennox Melani. I heard the news on the evening bulletin of Radio Bantu that four “terrorists” were killed trying to enter South Africa through neighbouring Rhodesia. At school the following day, I was told the truth by my classmates that one of the four fallen heroes, Jamani Goniwe, was the elder brother of Matthew Goniwe. In my class were two cousins of Matthew Goniwe, Stanley and Margaret. After the news broke out about the death of the Cradock Four, Margaret did not attend school for a week as she was mourning the death of Jamani.

All four had relatives who were studying at the Secondary School. The younger sister of Lennox Melani was studying in Form 1B, the younger brothers of Ghandi Hlekani and Ben Ngalo, Jongi Hlekani and Lungile Ngalo,

were both in Form 2A. It was then that I was informed that they belonged to *uMkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), the military wing of the ANC, the ANC of Rev Calata. It was the first time that I heard about the ANC. What my mother used to talk about, though in hushed tones, was the Congress that led to the incarceration of both Mandela and Sobukhwe on Robben Island. This is what I used to hear when she was gossiping with other elderly people. The lessons about the history of the ANC and *uMkhonto we Sizwe* were really enlightening although some of them had to be taken with a pinch of salt. When Stanley Goniwe tried to explain to me how his uncle Jamani Goniwe died at Sipolilo, although it was alarming, it was also somehow encouraging. According to Stanley, the four were killed trying to land their aeroplane in South Africa after they had received military training in “Russia”. Unfortunately their aeroplane ran out of fuel and this led to their capture and subsequent killing by the apartheid security forces. It was encouraging to me because if the four were successful in landing their plane in South Africa, Black people would have been free by then, so I thought. This event, the death of the first Cradock Four, contributed immensely to my political consciousness and my subsequent joining in later years of the ANC and its military wing *uMkhonto we Sizwe*.

Amongst the four, there was a legend, Ghandi Hlekani. As my early political consciousness was brought about by his and the other three comrades’ untimely death, it would be proper and befitting that I dedicate a few lines to the history of his family. Ghandi’s father was Mr John Ndabeni Hlekani, a political giant in his own right. Mr John Hlekani was born on 14 February 1908 at Katkop, a small settlement just outside Cradock, and was affectionately known as “Oom Jan”. Oom Jan attended school at the famous St Peters Secondary School in Johannesburg which was also attended by OR Tambo. OR Tambo attended St Peters from 1934 to 1939 just when Oom Jan had completed his matric. Oom Jan had four children: Ghandi, Tembisa, Mncedikazi and Jongi. In the 1950’s he became the first principal of the Bantu Secondary School in Cradock. At the time of its inception, the Secondary School was built from prefabricated timber structures. As a political activist in the 1950’s and 1960’s, Oom Jan became an arch-enemy of the apartheid state as he was constantly harassed by the apartheid security police. As the principal of the Secondary School, he never received any material support from the Department of Bantu Education.

During his tenure as the principal, the buildings of the Secondary School, including education material such as textbooks, were completely gutted by fire. As a form of harassment, Juta Publishers and printers of the books, in conjunction with the Department of Bantu Education demanded that he repay the cost of the books and that of building a new school although the school buildings were insured. In addition, the Department wanted to remove him from being the Principal under the pretext that he did not possess a University

Degree. He was finally relieved of his duties in the beginning of the 1960's when he was arrested and detained for his political activities. He was later sentenced to five years imprisonment at the notorious East London prison which was called "*Nongqongqo*" because of its harsh conditions. Miriam Makeba even composed a song about the harsh conditions of the prison entitled "*Bableli bonke etilongweni, bableli bonke kwaNongqongqo*". Meaning, they are all detained in jail, they are all at *KwaNongqongqo*.

In 1958 Ghandi was deeply involved in the potato boycott as he himself was a victim of exploitation in one of the potato farms in the Orange Free State. Soon after the banning of the ANC in 1960, and after the formation of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC, in 1961, Ghandi went into exile and became a combatant of the Luthuli Detachment during the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns of 1967 and 1968. He ultimately met his untimely death on 26 March 1968, when his unit, that included Ben Ngalo, engaged the enemy forces. Jacques Goniwe died earlier on 18 March and Lennox Melani shortly thereafter in May 1968, killed in a gunfight⁴. In later years, in the 1980s, when I was in exile, comrade Chris Hani used to speak fondly of Ghandi as one of the greatest losses that MK suffered during the Wankie/Sipolilo campaign. May the souls of the first Cradock Four and the numerous gallant fighters of MK who perished during the Wankie/Sipolilo campaign, rest in peace. To us, the torchbearers are not just heroes, they were the real and actual *Masupatsela*, the pioneers. After the death of these comrades, their families, especially that of Oom Jan, were constantly harassed by the apartheid security police.

During the time of the death of these comrades, in the beginning of May 1968, I received a letter from Victoria West written by Jack Hila, my former classmate from primary school. He informed me that forty-two African men were arrested in Victoria West on 24 April 1968 for *Pogo* activities. Amongst them was my brother, Thembile, my brother-in-law, George Dikeni, and Mr Yose, the school principal. It was rumoured that these men had wanted to kill the local White population by putting poison into the drinking water of the reservoir that supplied water into the town. Jack requested me to destroy the letter after reading it. I was shocked in disbelief. I had never heard of any *Pogo* activities in Victoria West when I was growing up. *Pogo* was claimed by the PAC to be its military wing although history has demonstrated that it was a mere spontaneous movement born out of the frustration of Black people trying to resist the oppressive racist laws that operated at the time. But in Victoria West, I had never heard of *Pogo* activities. The last time I heard of *Pogo* was when I was a young boy around 1963 or 1964 when aeroplanes used to land at the Victoria West airport or fly past the town. In those days, every time we saw a plane flying past, one boy, Benjamin Phambo, used to scream and say it was Jimmy Phambo, his uncle, who was driving the aeroplane from

Congo. As I later understood, Jimmy Phambo was a member of the PAC who went into exile in 1961. He later joined the ANC. When I was in exile, I met him for the first time in Morogoro, Tanzania in 1987. I used to tell him how Benjamin used to boast about him flying aeroplanes. Other than him, there were no other political activists or political activity at Victoria West. A few days later, I also received a letter from my mother confirming the arrest of the forty-two men, including my brother, Thembile. To me and Lindiwe, the news came as a serious blow as Thembile was the most reliable amongst my brothers and the one who was actively assisting my mother in financing our education.

It was only during the winter school holidays in June 1968, after we returned home from school, that I realised the true impact the arrest of the forty-two men had on the African community of Victoria West. Most of the men arrested, including my brother-in-law, George, were sole breadwinners in their families. Auntie Magda was not working as she was a housewife and had to support six children all by herself. As if this was not enough, whilst we were still on school holiday in July of that year, the Special Branch Security Police from Oudtshoorn in the Southern Cape, came to arrest another group of men including my brother, Phakamile. To me and Lindiwe this was another blow to our prospects of furthering our studies. At the end of July, during the beginning of the new semester, my mother did not have money to buy train tickets for us. Again we had to wait until month-end to see whether my mother would be able to obtain enough money to enable us to pursue our studies. In the beginning of August, two weeks after the schools had opened after the winter break, Lindiwe and I managed to go to school by train after my mother managed to raise funds for our tickets. If our financial plight at school during the first semester was difficult, our situation became worse during the second semester. Phakamile and Enoch were the only ones who could assist my mother financially, and now Phakamile was also behind bars.

I remember the day when the Security Branch Officers came to fetch him in July. Normally, when they wanted to detain suspects, they would come at dawn whilst they were still asleep. But the day that they detained him, they collected him at work and took him home where he had to change his clothing. They made no effort to search his house. Before they drove away with him, he left a note on the kitchen table. The note read, *“Please don’t finish the soup and the bones as I will be back shortly.”* He never returned. Whilst I was trying to decipher the note for my mother, as she could neither read nor write, we soon found out what the meaning of the encrypted message was. My mother was cleaning Phakamile’s house because he was staying alone and while cleaning she stumbled upon a heap of sheepskins tucked underneath the fireplace in the kitchen. Inside the skins was a huge amount of meat. It was mutton. It was evident from the quantity that not one or two sheep were slaughtered, but

plenty of them. It became clear to us that Phakamile was involved in the illicit trade of stealing sheep from the neighbouring farm. Instead of being worried for being detained for *Pogo* activities, he was more worried about the soup and the bones that he used to enjoy from his loot. Had the Security Branch Officers bothered to search his house, they would have had valid reasons for detaining him.

At the end of the year, I managed to pass Form 1. In January 1969, I had to start preparing to go back to school as it was the beginning of the new year. Starting school as a Form 2 student, was quite a remarkable achievement, I thought. In Form 2, students had to choose between Mathematics and Latin. Initially I chose Latin but eventually Matthew Goniwe convinced me to choose Mathematics as it would be more beneficial in my future career in years to come. I am forever indebted to him for having advised me to study maths and science, instead of Latin.

Later that year, at the end of September, I received a letter from my mother. The unthinkable had happened. All the accused in the *Pogo* case were found not guilty and released. After a thirteen month trial, the court dismissed the charges against the accused as baseless and a fabrication⁵. The release of my brothers from prison came as a boost for my preparation of the year-end examinations. After I passed Form 2 in 1969, I eventually managed to sit for my final year Junior Certificate (JC) examinations at the end of 1970. A week before we sat for our final examinations in November, Rev Calata came to address us in our class with a view to encouraging us and to give us blessings for the tasks that lay ahead. As a young boy, I was not aware that he was once the Secretary General of the banned ANC. What people used to say was that he was just a prominent member of the Movement. During his moving address, I was pleasantly surprised at his speech. He spoke about the plight of Africans in South Africa generally and about African school children in particular. He said for an African child to sit for Junior Certificate examinations was a great achievement in itself. It was a great achievement against all odds. As students we had to overcome hunger and poverty at home. Our parents were sleeping on empty stomachs sacrificing everything for the sake of our education. Whilst White children were eating food rich in vitamins, African children were expected to be content with food overloaded with starch in the form of samp and pap. *“Sometimes at my age, I feel like acting rather than talking”*. Those were his parting words. What an encouraging speech it was.

After completing my examinations, I left, ending three memorable years in Cradock. Matthew Goniwe went on to teach in the then Transkei with “Oom Jan” Hlekani where they became inseparable and together founded the Holomisa Senior Secondary School in Mnqanduli. On 27 June 1985, Matthew together with his three comrades, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlawuli were assassinated by apartheid security forces and later

became famously known as the Cradock Four. Politically, to me, Cradock was enriching. Among my classmates were Nombuyiselo Zonke who later married Sicelo Mhlawuli, and Nonkululeko Mhlawuli, the younger sister of Sicelo.

———— CHAPTER 3 ————

Beginning of Political Activism

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CHAPTER 4

Meeting the ANC Underground

1975 was a fruitful year for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa that saw Mozambique and Angola gaining independence on 25 June 1975 and 11 November 1975 respectively. The balance of forces rapidly shifted in favour of liberation movements in Southern Africa. The South African apartheid state was politically and drastically weakened after its unsuccessful military intervention in Angola where it sought to impose the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as a ruling party over the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) which was considered to have had close ties with the ANC. During the Easter weekend of 1976, Rocks and I ultimately left for Swaziland on our long overdue mission of joining the ANC. We were accompanied by Rock's uncle, Peter Mashinini, who was kind enough to give us a lift in his VW Beetle, which was viewed as a car for revolutionaries in those days. We departed for Swaziland from Central Western Jabavu (CWJ) where I was staying with Rocks at his parents' home. Rocks parents' house at CWJ was just a stone's throw from Morris Isaacson High School where he and his younger brother Tsietsi attended High School. It was for the first time that I met Joseph Ramothibe Mashinini and Virginia Nomkhitha Mashinini the father and mother of Rocks respectively. Except for Tsietsi, Rocks had nine other brothers of whom Mpho and Lebakeng (Dee) were also later to become prominent political activists of their own. The reason we gave for going to Swaziland was that we were visiting our girlfriends as it was a popular destination for tourism. South African mixed couples used to enjoy themselves in Swaziland as the Immorality Act prohibited such relationships in South Africa.

On our arrival in Swaziland, we looked for ANC hideouts in Manzini especially where Keith Mokoape was staying. Fortunately, after some time,

somebody directed us to the house of Stanley Mabizela, who was a well-known teacher in Manzini. He was the Vice Principal of Salesian High School. After meeting with him, we introduced ourselves and told him how we got to know about the ANC. Unfortunately, he informed us that Keith Mokoape had left Swaziland. Mabizela asked us to come back the following day as he wanted to invite some of his comrades to meet with us. Indeed the following day he introduced us to another ANC stalwart, Bafana Duma. After Bafana Duma heard our story, he shook his head vehemently in disbelief. He did not believe what we told them was true. How can two young men from nowhere speak the language of the ANC and want to join the ANC without having been recruited or introduced to the ANC by someone who was a member or an underground operative. According to Bafana Duma, this was too good to be true. He suspected us of being enemy agents. He managed to sway Mabizela's opinion as Mabizela initially believed our story as we had told him the day before about Keith Mokoape. All of a sudden things changed for the worse. Mabizela said if our aim was to infiltrate the ANC as enemy spies, the ANC would deal with us severely as they had done so previously with other enemy agents. He ordered us to go back to South Africa and complete our studies. After that, we could think of joining the ANC.

What a blow! Fortunately for us we both remained calm. Before we left, we asked for more ANC literature as we wanted to distribute these to other students at the college. After exchanging eye contact with Duma, Mabizela went into a bedroom and came back with copies of *Sechaba*. We started discussing politics with them, especially about the recent expulsion of the Group of Eight from the ANC. People wanted to know exactly what was happening within the ANC in exile. After explaining the position of the Group of Eight, he went back into his bedroom where he collected two publications and gave us a copy each. One of the publications was entitled, "*Enemy Hidden Under The Same Colour*", a Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party (SACP) on the racist and anti-Communist activities of the Group of Eight recently expelled from the African National Congress. The other was entitled, "*A Call For A United Front*", a Statement issued by the ANC regarding calls for the formation of a united front against the apartheid regime.

He said we should return in June of that year during school holidays where perhaps we might be introduced to a short-course training in small firearms. As we left, Mabizela gave us two books about the history of the South African liberation struggle. One was written by Mary Benson entitled, "*Struggle for a Birthright*", and the other written by Brian Bunting entitled, "*The Rise of the South African Reich*". Before we left Swaziland, Rocks and I went to buy additional books from the Mbabane bookstore. We were looking for any books dealing with the South African struggle. We could not find much except

books about the American Civil Rights Movement. We bought many of these books including a book entitled, *“Black Like Me”*, written by John Howard Griffin, a White American journalist who darkened his skin to pass as a Black man with a view to experiencing the daily hardships that were experienced by Black Americans in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. On the Easter Monday we returned to South Africa. Although disappointed with our initial reception at Mabizela’s place, we were pleased with the overall trip.

On the Tuesday following the Easter Monday, as I prepared to board a train at Park Station back to King William’s Town, we bought a copy of the Rand Daily Mail where the news of the death of Joseph Mdluli, an ANC activist, was splashed across the front page. Joseph Mdluli died in detention on 18 March 1976 whilst in police custody. He was arrested after a taxi driver, Samson Lukhele¹, operating as an ANC courier between Natal and Swaziland was arrested by the South African police after receiving a tip off from both the Swazi police and some ANC recruits who were working as informers for the police. Under interrogation, Samson Lukhele provided information leading to the arrest of Joseph Mdluli on 18 March 1976, a central figure in the ANC underground in Durban, and to the kidnapping and subsequent arrest of Joseph Nduli and Cleophas Ndlovu near the Swaziland border where the pair were scheduled to receive MK recruits from Lukhele². At the time, both Nduli and Ndlovu were in exile and living in Swaziland since the early 1960’s where they had fled to after the banning of the ANC. Immediately we understood the reasons for the cold reception we received from the ANC in Swaziland. They thought we were part of the spying network of the South African government that was meant to infiltrate the ANC. Rocks and I decided after reading the article, to go back to Swaziland in June to explain our standpoint and point of view.

Back at College, political events in South Africa were beginning to unfold rapidly. Black people in the country were following with keen interest the trial of SASO and BPC leaders who were arrested for organising the pro-Frelimo rally of September 1974. High school students were beginning to organise marches against the enforced use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at school. The defeat of South Africa by the MPLA with the assistance of Cuban forces was a great inspiration to all freedom-loving people, especially to Black people. Even Idi Amin, the Ugandan dictator, promised to invade South Africa in order to liberate Black people from apartheid.

Unfortunately, during this time Radio Freedom was no longer on air. In its place, we were listening to the Voice of Zimbabwe, a similar programme of ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), which was broadcast from the studios of Radio Mozambique. The turning point came on 8 June when students at Naledi High School in Soweto torched a car belonging to the Security Police. The Security Police, arrogant as they were, vowed to return to

Naledi where they were expected to redeem themselves after the humiliation they had suffered. On Wednesday, June 16, 1976 Soweto literally exploded. Nobody had anticipated the events that followed. When the uprising spread to Alexander on Friday the 18th, the principal, Mr Horne, urgently called for a student assembly, where he announced that the college would be closed earlier than expected for the winter break because of the unfolding events. Mr Horne had taken over earlier that year from Mr Muller. The College was meant to close the following week Friday, 25 June. During this time, Tsietsi, the younger brother of Rocks, was in the news for having led the student uprising in Soweto. The very same day after the college was closed, we left. Rocks was worried about the safety of his family as their house was near Morris Isaacson, the centre of the uprising. I accompanied him to Soweto. After he ascertained that everybody was safe at home, the next Monday we boarded a train to Piet Retief from where we took a bus to Manzini, Swaziland, where we were to meet with Mabizela and other ANC members as agreed on our previous visit.

Mabizela was very thrilled to see us back in Manzini. After our last visit, their unit in Swaziland verified our credentials through an ANC underground unit based in Pietersburg. He did not reveal the identity of the unit but said they were given very positive feedback about the two of us. Now he wanted to give us some tasks to do. He was pleasantly surprised to hear Tsietsi was the younger brother of Rocks. Our first task would therefore be to recruit Tsietsi into the ANC and any other people who wanted to leave the country. I also informed him about my efforts of trying to recruit Mapetla Mohapi into the ANC. He was really pleased with the efforts we had made thus far without any proper guidance from an experienced underground structure of the ANC. After two days of lengthy deliberations, we left Swaziland for South Africa, but of course, not without buying more books at the local bookshop in Manzini. On arrival in Soweto, I collected my luggage which I had left at Rocks' place before proceeding to King William's Town.

A week before the college opened after the winter break, on Friday 16 July 1976, Mapetla Mohapi was detained by the Security Police. Two days later, Sunday 18 July, I returned to Mmadikoti as the college was opening on the Tuesday. As the schools were opening, South Africa continued to burn due to the students' unrest, which was the aftermath of the June 16 uprisings. Disturbances spread to the Cape Province, which until then, was not affected. As students at Mmadikoti, we felt duty-bound to show solidarity with what was happening countrywide. On Thursday, 5 August, we received the sad news over the radio that Mapetla Mohapi died in detention whilst detained at the Kei Road police station near King William's Town. The news came as a shock! I was deeply saddened by the untimely death of this patriot and revolutionary. If one had to look for someone who was sincere and committed to the ideals of freedom, one need not look further than Mapetla. He had the same qualities

as those of Matthew Goniwe. His death also put an end to my efforts of trying to recruit him to be at least a sympathiser, if not a full member of the ANC underground. The only way of mourning his death was to intensify the fight for freedom.

In mid-August, one of the pre-fabricated ablution blocks at the students' hostel was burnt down in solidarity with the countrywide students' protests. Although nobody expected this, one could sense from the reaction of the student body, that it was long overdue. In the aftermath of the arson attack on the ablution blocks, a group of students, including myself, were arrested and detained overnight at the Pietersburg Central Police Headquarters. Upon our release, we were informed to pack our bags and go home as the college was closed indefinitely. Each student had to re-apply for admission and state in his application why it was in the interest of the college that he/she should be re-admitted. It was clear students like us would be targeted and would not be re-admitted even if we wanted to continue with our studies. I had no intention of going back to the college anymore. Both Rocks and I had already made up our minds that we would leave the country and join MK. It was just a matter of time. Our main aim was to recruit Tsietsi into the ANC. Rocks knew it was going to be difficult as he had no control over him. Tsietsi was very close to Drake Koka, a leading Black Consciousness Movement activist. Secondly, unlike Rocks, Tsietsi was not yet politically mature to determine the ideological route to follow as the only political literature he was exposed to was the American Black Power literature which Rocks used to pass on to him. Back in King William's Town after I had left the college, the political mood was very tense as people were preparing for the funeral of Mapetla, which was to be held at Sterkspruit, his place of birth. Accusations were flying all over the place about who could have betrayed Mapetla. For security reasons I decided against attending his funeral, as I expected the security police to be out in numbers, monitoring the funeral proceedings.

Sometime in September, I was contacted by Thobile Mseleni who said he was contacted by Boy Mini and Siphiso Stammer about the possibility of them leaving the country. I knew Boy Mini from the days I worked at the Ciskei Public Service Commission. At the time he was the Private Secretary of one of the Homeland Cabinet Ministers, Mr L.L.Siyo, the Minister of Interior under whose jurisdiction fell the PSC. Siphiso Stammer was the son of a prominent schools inspector in Zwelitsha who was studying at the University of the North. After speaking to the two, I agreed to assist by taking them to Swaziland where they would join the ANC. Indeed, at the agreed time I boarded the train with them to Johannesburg, where I was to connect with Rocks. On arrival in Johannesburg, I left them at Park Station whilst I went to contact Rocks in Soweto. Rocks was supposed to have organised the transport that was to carry them to Swaziland. I was delayed in Soweto as I struggled

to make contact with Rocks as he was no longer sleeping at home because the police were constantly harassing his parents as they were looking for Tsietsi. I only managed to return to Park Station the following day.

By the time I arrived, both Boy and Sipiwo had gone. Fortunately, they left a note on my luggage which I had left at the luggage centre. They went to a place called Killarney, Orlando West, in Soweto, where we could find them. Arriving at the specified address, there was no one to be found. The owners of the house did not know such people. After three days of frantically searching for them, we eventually found them in Killarney at another address. It was a place that belonged to one of the relatives of Sipiwo. There was an error with the street address they had given us. In the meantime, Rocks had befriended Indres Naidoo, an old stalwart of the ANC, and had solicited his assistance in trying to transport the two to Swaziland. After a day or two consulting with other comrades of the ANC underground, Indres came back and declined to assist as the two seem to be fairly rich since they could afford staying at Killarney. Oh my word! Indres had confused the Killarney of Orlando West, with the affluent Killarney next to Houghton. What should we do? Rocks had also established good relations with the South African Council of Churches (SACC), especially with the Rev Reinhard Brueckner, a close friend of Dr Beyers Naude. Ironically, Rocks, was introduced to Rev Reinhard Brueckner by Indres. When Indres could not help, Brueckner was approached. Brueckner gave us money to hire a *kombi* and enough pocket money for food. Mabizela had told us to use the escape route near the Mahamba Border Post as it was near Nhlanguano in Swaziland. From Nhlanguano we could take public transport to Manzini. This was unchartered territory for us.

We left Johannesburg at nine o'clock in the evening and arrived at the Mahamba Border Post at three o'clock the following morning. We dropped Boy and Sipiwo next to the Border Gate and gave them money to take a taxi to Nhlanguano once they had entered Swaziland where we would meet at the taxi rank as explained to me by Mabizela. We were supposed to meet at Nhlanguano taxi rank at nine o'clock in the morning from there we would take a bus to Manzini. At six o'clock in the morning I went through the Mahamba Border Gate legally with my travel document. Rocks and Bheki, the driver of the *kombi*, were to return to Johannesburg. By eight o'clock I was already at Nhlanguano bus terminus and there was no one in sight. They had not yet arrived. After they did not arrive by nine o'clock, I began to panic. By ten o'clock when I was contemplating what steps to take next as it was becoming suspicious for me to have sat there for hours, I saw both Boy and Sipiwo walking in my direction, dehydrated and dog tired. As they arrived, I saw Bheki driving the *kombi* looking for me. Bheki had also panicked and thought we might have experienced some problems and wanted to find out how we were coping. What a coincidence!

He decided to transport us directly to Manzini, where he delivered us in front of the residence of Mabizela before he went to collect Rocks at Piet Retief where he had left him. After I had successfully handed over the two to Mabizela, I returned to South Africa. On our arrival in Soweto I briefed Rocks and Bheki about the success of our first and probably last operation. From Soweto, I proceeded to King William's Town. On arrival in King William's Town, I met Thobile Mseleni who had made contact with Mluleki George in the meantime. Both Mseleni and George were working as civil servants for the Ciskei Government. George was running an underground Marxist study group called the FRONT. The aim of the FRONT was to impart clandestine knowledge of Marxism to intellectuals in the Eastern Cape, especially those that were working for the Homelands. We decided to join the study group with a view to recruiting its members, including George himself, to the ANC. My involvement with the FRONT was a little bit bumpy, to say the least. I was trying to win George over to the ANC and in turn he tried to convince me that the ANC, like the PAC, was an expatriate organisation that was no longer rooted in South Africa and therefore no longer relevant. But I continued to attend the discussions as they were very useful and informative. The discussions analysed the Communist Manifesto, "*Das Kapital*" and a range of books, some of them on guerrilla warfare like "*The War of the Flea*" written by Robert Taber. We also analysed books on the South African struggle including, "*Time Longer Than Rope*" written by Eddie Roux, a dissident of the then Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) before it changed to the SACP. It was hence this distorted view of the ANC and the SACP that was openly canvassed in the book that influenced the opinion of Mluleki George and others.

Sometime in October when I was reading newspapers, I came across an article about a court case where Rocks' name was mentioned repeatedly. It was a case of a national from Lesotho who was charged for furthering the aims of communism. Mr Horne, the principal of Mmadikoti, was the main state witness at the trial. According to the newspaper reports, Mr Horne testified that Rocks was a leading Communist at Mmadikoti and was responsible for the unrest at the college. The accused was sentenced to four years imprisonment after being found guilty of furthering the aims of communism. Having read the newspaper report, I boarded a train to Johannesburg with a view to persuading Rocks to leave the country immediately as his life was without doubt now in danger, and I also began preparing for my eventual exit into exile. Contacting Rocks in Soweto was a problem. As I mentioned before, he was no longer staying at home as the Security Police were desperately looking for him. Eventually we managed to meet and I tried to convince him to leave the country immediately. On the day we met, Indres Naidoo also contacted him to brief him about the article. After Indres saw the article, he went to see Advocate Denis Kuny, who represented the accused in the trial. Indres

had good relations with Advocate Kuny. Apparently after speaking to Indres, Advocate Kuny advised that Rocks should leave the country immediately as his life was in danger.

What happened is that Mr Horne intercepted a letter at Mmadikoti written to Rocks by the accused. The letter arrived after we had already left the college. In the letter the accused praised Rocks for his courage in challenging apartheid. He concluded by saying that Marxism was the only solution in resolving the ills caused by the legacy of apartheid and racism. According to Mr Horne, this was enough proof of his long-held suspicions that Rocks was a pawn of the communists. He immediately took the letter to the Security Police who in turn arrested the accused. This is why Mr Horne became the main state witness during the trial. According to Advocate Kuny, because of the letter and the evidence led by Mr Horne, Rocks had no chance of escaping a long-term sentence on Robben Island. Because of Rocks imminent arrest, it was decided that he should leave the country. Measures were then put in place to take Rocks to Swaziland.

In the meantime Indres introduced me to a lady called Sindiswa Gwazela. Sindiswa is the sister of Nombulelo Makhubu³, the mother of Mbuyisa Makhubu, the young man who became the symbol of the June 16 uprising with his photo splashed all over the world as he picked up the dying Hector Pieterse. Sindiswa and others were planning a national day of solidarity on 16 December for the victims of the June 16 uprising. 16 December would have been the six month anniversary of the start of the unrest. Indres wanted MK to influence the coming events, as it would have been the fifteenth anniversary of the formation of MK. He said I should cooperate with Sindiswa by distributing the propaganda material meant for the planned National Day of Solidarity throughout the Eastern Cape. He gave me ANC contacts in Mdantsane near East London, which included the name of Mzwandile Mdingi with whom he had spent several years on Robben Island. Meanwhile Indres requested Jennifer Hayman and her husband, Clive Emden, who were both journalists at the weekly Sunday Express, to hide Rocks at their home in Sydenham, a wealthy White suburb in northern Johannesburg, where the police would not find him⁴. I returned to Zwelitsha in the beginning of November.

One evening towards the end of November, I heard a knock at the door. It was just after ten o'clock. Upon opening the door, I saw Thobile Mseleni, he was very agitated. The Security Police had just been at his place, he informed me. They were looking for me. They heard that I was carrying posters which were meant for distribution in the Eastern Cape. He told them that I had gone to Johannesburg and pretended not to have known anything about the posters. On my arrival from Johannesburg I had given the posters to Mzwandile Mdingi as advised by Indres. In all honesty, I was no longer interested in participating in any public demonstrations or protests, as I thought the best

way of contributing to the liberation struggle was to join MK. The last time I met Mzwandile Mdingi, he had introduced me to Joe Mati with whom he had also spent many years on Robben Island. I later found out that Joe Mati was the mastermind of the ANC underground in East London. Thobile then advised me to go and destroy the posters which were at Mdingi's place in Mdantsane as it was apparent now that Sindiswa Gwazela had exposed us. It was later confirmed that Sindiswa was arrested and detained on the 24 November 1976⁵. After her interrogation, she revealed the details of the plans for the day of solidarity. Thobile Mseleni also advised me to leave the country immediately.

I went to see Mluleki George who had a car and requested him to transport me to Mdantsane as I was in deep trouble. After I explained my situation to him, he offered to drop me at the place of one of his colleagues, Simon Mlonyeni, who was also staying in Mdantsane. He said Mlonyeni knew people who were operating a safe route to Botswana where I could join new recruits who were being assembled by Bokwe Mafuna, who was facilitating military training for new recruits in Libya. I diplomatically turned down the offer by saying I wanted first to make contact with my uncle who was also staying in Mdantsane. After seeing my uncle, I would then contact Mlonyeni. Indeed Mluleki George dropped me at the place of Mzwandile Mdingi from where I went to see Joe Mati after I had instructed Mdingi to destroy the posters. That was the last time I saw Mluleki George before I went into exile and he was subsequently arrested with his colleague, Simon Mlonyeni, for furthering the aims of communism and they were both imprisoned at Robben Island.

After 1994, Mluleki George became a Cabinet Minister in the new democratic government and later joined the Congress of the People (COPE) as a Member of Parliament. After I explained my predicament to Joe Mati, I requested him to transport me to Swaziland. As the transport was not yet ready by then, he took me to a village in Queenstown where I would wait in hiding until the day I would be fetched and transported to Swaziland. I only stayed three days at the village in Queenstown before I left for Victoria West. I was feeling homesick as I had not seen my mother and my other relatives for almost a year. I also had furniture and belongings in Zwelitsha, that I thought would be a good idea to hand over to my brothers.

I arrived at Victoria West at the beginning of December. After spending a few days with my family, I left for King William's Town with my brothers, Thembile and Enoch, and accompanied by my brother-in-law, George Dikeni. We hired a friend's car to fetch my possessions, including my furniture at Zwelitsha. I informed them that I no longer needed the furniture as I was going to work in Johannesburg. On arrival in Zwelitsha, I contacted Thobile Mseleni again. When I arrived at his place, I was unfortunately told that he had relocated to another place where I was directed to. I managed to meet with

him around midnight. He had a swollen face. The security police had beaten him to a pulp whilst looking for my whereabouts. He was surprised that I was still in South Africa and had not yet left the country. When I saw his physical condition, I became scared. Without saying much, I left his place. In the early hours of the morning I asked George Dikeni, to take me to Mdantsane. On arrival at Mdantsane I went to see Joe Mati and he was surprised to see me again as he thought I was still at the hideout in Queenstown. I explained to him what had happened, and although other members of the ANC underground distrusted me for having left the safe hideout, Joe Mati understood and accepted my explanation. Fortunately, Bra Joe, as I used to call him, was only staying with his wife while the children had gone to visit their grandparents in Port Elizabeth for the Christmas holidays.

We were to leave for Swaziland on Dingaan's Day, 16 December. A day or two before we left, South African newspapers reported on a grenade explosion incident that happened on 30 November, which involved Tokyo Sexwale's unit⁶. Because of police activity in and around the Swaziland border, Bra Joe postponed the trip by few days. In the meantime it was quite an experience to have stayed at his house during this time as I became aware of his political activities before and after he was imprisoned at Robben Island. Before he was imprisoned, he served in the same MK unit as Vuyisile Mini in Port Elizabeth. I later found out that he was a very close friend of Mini. After their arrest, the police tried to turn him a State witness against Mini in exchange for his freedom. He refused to do so. Such was the calibre and dedication of many unsung heroes of our struggle who dedicated their lives to the fight for freedom in this country. Before I left, I withdrew all of my money from the bank which was about one thousand rands in total. I sent half of it to my mother and I kept the rest.

CHAPTER 5

Journey into Exile

On 18 December 1976, I left for Swaziland accompanied by Bra Joe. We left at about eight o'clock in the morning instead of the planned five o'clock. The driver, Hamilton Busuku, was late as usual. I'm saying as usual, because Bra Joe had told me that he was looking for a new driver, as Busuku was not always punctual. Everybody knows what it means when one does not keep time when one is involved in underground work. As we left East London, I felt relieved. Days preceding my departure became unbearable as I was having nightmares after I had seen the physical condition of Thobile Mseleni and read in the newspapers about another death in detention of a political detainee, George Botha, who died on 15 December 1976 at the Sanlam Building in Port Elizabeth, where Steve Biko was to be detained, maimed and tortured the following year before he met his untimely and ultimately cruel fate. We arrived in Durban late in the afternoon and decided to sleep at Umlazi, at a house belonging to one of the relatives of Busuku. That night I did not sleep, this time, not because of nightmares, but because of excitement. At last I was leaving the country, unlike thousands who left without proper preparations, I had thoroughly prepared for my eventual exit. I had managed to visit my mother at Victoria West, handed over my belongings to my brothers and I was carrying a sum of five hundred rands with me for the unpredictable and unforeseen life of exile. I was also in possession of my valid travel document and *dompas* in case we met a roadblock on the way.

Early the following day, 19 December we left Umlazi for Swaziland via the Pongola/Golela border post. At midday we arrived near the border post and the driver stopped about three kilometers from the entrance of the gate where Bra Joe and I alighted in order to jump the border fence into Swaziland. Bra Joe was going for consultations in Swaziland with Mabizela and would

soon be returning to South Africa. As a banned person and partially leaving under house arrest, he was not allowed to travel outside the country. Skipping the fence in and out of South Africa was the only way he could communicate with the ANC in Swaziland.

As we were preparing to jump the fence, we saw a police van driving from the border post coming towards us at breakneck speed. The police had spotted us. In a moment of brilliance, Bra Joe screamed and ordered me to take off my pants as if we were about to relieve ourselves. By the time the police van stopped next to our car, Bra Joe was naked holding a branch of a tree and pretending to use it as a toilet paper. A White police constable screamed at us, “*Kaffirs, wat maak julle daar?*” (Kaffirs, what are you doing there?) “*Ons kak, baas*” (We are relieving ourselves). Bra Joe answered confidently without any trace of fear or panic in his voice. Until that stage I had had no urge or desire to go to the toilet. But as soon as the police constable screamed at us, my tummy started running very fast. When the White policeman saw that we really were relieving ourselves, he left immediately, driving in the direction of Pongola, the nearest town inside South Africa. Probably it was not a good scene for a White constable watching two kaffirs relieving themselves.

As soon as he left, Bra Joe jumped over the fence and shouted at me to follow suit. One hand still on my pants, I staggered along. One must remember Bra Joe had spent ten years on Robben Island going through the actual military school of political struggle, whilst I was just a novice, an aspirant without any experience. Months later, I would learn from Mark Shope, that one does not buy political experience from university. One has to gain it through involvement with the masses on the ground. Hamilton Busuku, our driver, drove through the border post and collected us on the road to Manzini where Bra Joe and I were waiting for him impatiently after entering Swaziland. After Busuku collected us, and driving towards Manzini, I was thrilled and started reciting the definition of a guerrilla fighter as defined by Che Guevara, which I read in the book by Robert Tabor, “*The War of the Flea*”. “*A guerrilla fighter is a social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protests of the people against their oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery*”¹.

In Manzini we met Mabizela, who was surprised that I had managed to connect with Bra Joe as he (Bra Joe) was masquerading in Mdantsane as someone who is no longer interested in politics. I explained how I managed luckily to connect with Bra Joe. When such incidents happen, the Hungarians say, “*The Lord brought you.*” The sad news was that Rocks had not yet arrived in Swaziland at the time of my arrival. I had thought that by then he would have arrived considering the fact that we took the decision to leave the country in November already. I became worried. The day after I arrived in Swaziland, Mabizela took me to the residence where new recruits were staying. It was

called White House because of the colour of its facade. Two or three days before Christmas day, Mabizela came to tell me that Rocks had just arrived that morning, accompanied by Joe Gqabi. I was elated, so too was Mabizela. Later that day I managed to speak to Rocks. He had to delay his departure for the same reasons we initially delayed ours. After the grenade incident, the road between Swaziland and Johannesburg was heavily patrolled and monitored by the South African Police. He did not want to take any chances. Ultimately, he was helped by Joe Gqabi on whom the police were already keeping a close watch. Rocks also informed me that the security police were also in hot pursuit of Indres and he too was biding his time before he left the country.

Regarding Sindiswa Gwazela, Rocks said Indres had told him that she had put everybody's life in danger. She blew the cover of every underground operative. The police wanted to nail Indres through her confessions, but waited for someone else who could corroborate her evidence, for example, someone like me whom Sindiswa confessed to have met through Indres. That is why the police were desperately trying to arrest me. Because of his newly acquired freedom, Rocks frequented public drinking places in Manzini as a way of relaxing after being "holed up" for more than a month in various hiding places. Around Christmas day he had left as usual with two other comrades, one of them being Gabriel Mthunzi Mthembu (MK Sizwe Mkhonto), to drink at the Manzini Arms, a popular drinking place in Manzini, when they were accosted by a group of Afrikaner men who drew pistols and tried to kidnap them. After the incident, ANC officials took precautionary measures by removing all new recruits from Swaziland, myself included, and transporting them across the border into Namaacha, a small town in the South Western part of Mozambique, bordering Swaziland.

Once we arrived in Namaacha we were placed in a small house, where we spent New Year's Day in isolation and very far from the festivities that were taking place during that time of the year. To make matters worse, Jacob Zuma, who received us from the Mozambiquan side of the border, as he was assisting Mongameli Johnson Tshali (MK Lennox Lagu), the ANC Chief Representative in that country, collected all the money we had in our possession, probably on the instructions of the ANC in Swaziland, under the pretence that they were intending to change the money into Mozambiquan Escudos, which was the prevailing currency at the time. The five hundred rands I had in my possession was taken away from me to my dismay. Others suffered the same fate. A similar amount was taken from Rocks. Both of us received a monthly salary of about hundred rands per month at Mmadikoti, excluding tuition fees, boarding and lodging, which were fully paid for by our respective sponsors. Those days the starting monthly salary of a Black teacher with a university degree was about hundred and fifty rands. The money that was taken from me was, therefore, more than three times the monthly salary

of a Black teacher with a university degree. One could therefore imagine what my feeling was at the time.

The house we stayed in at Namaacha was of typical Portuguese architecture. A multi-storey house with a kitchen on the ground floor and the lounge and bedrooms on the top floors. This type of architecture was also applied to one bed-roomed houses, which is not the norm in our country. After New Year's Day we were removed from Namaacha and taken to a safe house in Matola. Unlike Namaacha, Matola was exceedingly pleasant, resembling a typical leafy White suburb in South Africa. It is rumoured that Matola was used as a resort by the Portuguese colonial masters and the house we stayed in used to belong to the Chief Justice of Mozambique before Mozambique attained its independence. After 1975, FRELIMO gave the house to the ANC. The house we stayed in at Matola also resembled a typical house in suburban South Africa, large, single-storey main house, with two smaller houses at the back usually called granny flats in South Africa and a vast yard with abundant pawpaw (papaya) and mango trees. Welcome to independent Africa, where new guerrilla recruits were staying in leafy suburbs, this is what we thought at the time.

Whilst staying in Matola, I managed to make acquaintances with my fellow new recruits. As I mentioned before, Sizwe Mkhonto, who later became the Commander of Camp 32 in Angola, was one of them. Camp 32 was later to be notoriously known as Quadro where MK cadres and other ANC members suspected of being enemy agents were detained. In Portuguese "*quadro*" means "four" and Camp 32 got the name from the rank and file because it was synonymous with the Fort Prison in Johannesburg which was called Number Four. Because of his young age, Rocks nicknamed Sizwe "*Ngcosi*", meaning "*the young one*". He might have been about sixteen years old at the time. The other one was Johnny Sexwale, the younger brother of Tokyo Sexwale, whom Mabizela nicknamed "*the young soldier*" also because of his age. Others in our group were Abie Molaba (MK Goodman Soweto), Leslie 'Les' Dube (MK Gugulethu Nyanga), who later became a prominent driver of the ANC security in Angola that was nicknamed *imbokodo* ("grinding stone", in Zulu) and Paul Mashinini (MK Jackie Mabuza), who also later worked for Mbokodo. What was interesting about Jackie Mabuza was that he initially claimed to be related to Tsietsi Mashinini, not knowing that Rocks was his elder brother, operating under the new name of Oupa Mashigo.

My new travelling name was Mbangazwe Nkululeko, which loosely meant Politics Freedom. I probably got the name through my active political contributions during our political discussions at Matola. The name stuck to me to the extent that sometimes I thought, like many other MK soldiers, that it was probably my real name. Bhekimpi "Get Down" Gwala (Ngcobo) who was famous for doing the "get down" township dance of the 1970's, was also

part of our group. In Matola he used to entertain us continuously with the “get down” dance. There was also MK Joe “Ramshushu” Mthembu who later became a member of “*Conjundo*”, the AMANDLA cultural ensemble of the ANC.

As new recruits we were assigned various tasks to keep us busy. Some of these included cleaning, cooking, gardening and guard duties, although the actual security was the responsibility of trained MK soldiers who were armed with AK-47 rifles and hand grenades. In the afternoons we would analyse the breaking news from South Africa and indulge in other political discussions. Rocks, as the person responsible for transcribing the news, was in charge of the discussions. One day whilst transcribing the news, he heard the comments that were made by Tsietsi about the ANC whilst he was in London. Tsietsi denounced the ANC for its alleged corruption by alleging that some of its leaders were impregnating young girls. This made Rocks very nervous. He knew Tsietsi lacked political understanding, but did not expect him to go to such lengths of castigating the ANC. He asked me for advice in trying to stop Tsietsi continuing with his vitriol against the ANC. I advised him to request the authorities to allow him to contact Tsietsi with a view to persuading him to join the ANC, although it seemed more unlikely that he would agree to do so. He finally approached Jacob Zuma and requested permission to contact Tsietsi. He was referred to the ANC office in Tanzania that could make such arrangements. What was worrying to Rocks was that when he initially made the request to Mabizela in Swaziland, he was informed the ANC office in Maputo would be able to make such arrangements. Now he was being referred to Tanzania. In any event, I encouraged him to go to Tanzania and state his case for wanting to meet with Tsietsi. I also desperately wanted Tsietsi to join the ANC.

In less than two weeks at Matola, Jacob Zuma informed us that we were to leave for Angola the following day, which was a Friday. We had mixed feelings about going to Angola. We all thought we were destined for the Soviet Union and other socialist countries where we were to undergo our military training. Angola? We never thought for a moment that we would be expected to go there simply because civil war was still raging in that country. I remember seeing pictures of Angola and Luanda specifically, where buildings were razed to the ground and streets littered with damaged war machines like tanks, military trucks and armoured personnel carriers that had been put out of action by constant bombardment from either of the warring parties. That was the initial feeling I had after being informed about going to Angola. But at the same time I was really relieved and excited because the boredom and the suffocating heat experienced at Matola was finally coming to an end. Yes, the summer heat of Matola is even worse than the scorching heat of the Karoo where I grew up. The hot and extremely humid conditions of Matola as a result of the warm

Mozambique Current blowing from the Indian Ocean, made life unbearable. Since I arrived at Matola, I don't remember ever wearing a shirt, even at night. We all carried hand towels throughout the day, wiping away buckets of sweat as it streamed down our bodies. What made matters worse, was the constant nuisance caused by the tsetse flies and mosquitoes. I understood then why the Voortrekkers never managed to colonise Mozambique, they must have been defeated by the incessant attacks on them by the mosquitoes and the tsetse flies and decided to return to South Africa.

Early on that Friday, about fourteen of us were taken to the airport in Maputo. Rocks and the younger brother of Tokyo, Johnny Sexwale, and several others were destined for Tanzania. Amongst those who were destined for Tanzania, were students who opted to further their studies instead of undergoing military training. Yes, the ANC did not compel anyone to undergo military training, although at some stage some were informed that scholarships to study abroad had dried up because of the large number of students applying for scholarships and many had to wait for another year in Dar es Salaam whilst awaiting for scholarships. At least this is the message we were given when we were staying at Matola. As a result of the backlog of scholarships, some would-be students opted rather for military training. From Maputo we boarded DETA Airlines, Mozambique Airlines as it was known then. As youngsters from the dusty streets of the townships, it was for the first time that all of us boarded an aeroplane. Bhekimpi "Get Down" made the most fun of it. After the four hour trip to Luanda, apparently the one who was sitting next to him during the flight, started chewing the small packet of butter supplied with meals, thinking it was a piece of cheese long after he had finished eating the dry bread with coffee. According to Get Down the comrade sprinkled the coffee with salt as he could not distinguish between sugar and salt as everything was written in Portuguese.

On arrival in Luanda, two middle-aged African men speaking broken English joined our group. They had been on the same flight with us from Maputo. They stood next to me and said they were returning from South Africa as migrant labourers from working in the mines in Johannesburg. I was surprised to have heard for the first time that Angolans, too, were recruited as mine migrant workers to Johannesburg as I thought that only Mozambiquans from former Portuguese speaking territories worked in South African mines. During the Angolan civil war, Western media was fond of reporting about the so-called scramble for the mineral wealth of that country. The main reason why both South Africa and Cuba supported the antagonists in the war, we were told, was because of the mineral wealth of that country. With that type of mineral wealth, who needed to work in South Africa? What raised my suspicions was that the two gentlemen were inquisitive. They wanted to know from me where we were going to sleep that night, as if they already knew who

we were and where we were coming from. I alerted the other comrades in the group and reported the two to the ANC personnel who came to collect us. One of the comrades who collected us at the airport was Adie Josias Chabalala (MK Siphso Dlamini) who comrades used to call Siphso Fapla because he always wore the military uniform of FAPLA, the Angolan People's Army, and would as such resemble one of its soldiers. As we were about to board the military land rovers that came to fetch us, I saw airport security personnel chasing after the two men. It was later discovered that they were agents under the employ of BOSS, the South African Intelligence Services. We were later informed by Siphso that the two were subsequently arrested and detained after confessing to being enemy agents.

Later that afternoon we were driven to a military camp situated in Luanda. The camp was called "Engineering" as it derived its name from the military Engineering Unit that used to occupy it during the war of independence. After we were debriefed, we were given military uniforms and boots. The uniforms were far from convincing. We were under the impression that we would be wearing camouflage gear with long boots signifying militant guerrillas, a picture that was always depicted of guerrilla fighters. Now we were given uniforms that made us look like cleaners. To make matters worse, I could not get new boots as there was no longer stock left. I was given an old pair commonly called "*pao*". I later found out the boots derived the name from their looks, which resembled a Portuguese roll or loaf of bread. Regarding the uniform itself, it was a uniform of factory workers of the Soviet Union and donated to the ANC as a form of solidarity with the workers of South Africa after the June 16 uprisings. Some said the uniform was donated to the ANC by the Organisation of African Unity's Liberation Committee.

The following day we were introduced to our units. It was during the morning assembly that we managed to meet the other new recruits. The camp housed almost three hundred new recruits. Young people who still bore the scars of June 16. I was reunited with Boy Mini who had been in Angola since November 1976. He told me that Siphwiwo Stamper was taken to school after he suffered a series of life-threatening asthma attacks. There were also quite a number of Cuban and Angolan soldiers in the camp who were very friendly to us. Some of them used to discuss their battle experiences with us. My Platoon Commander was Oupa Khoza (MK Dumisani Tyala) and the Platoon Commissar was Joel Netshitenzhe (MK Peter Ramokoa and later called Peter Mayibuye when he became the editor of Mayibuye). Some of us who came from Matola were deployed in this platoon, including Get Down, Jackie Mabuza, Goodman Soweto and many others. Also another two, Kimpani Peter Mogoai (MK Thabo Mavuyo) and Phaki Gabriel Moshoeu (MK Rogers Mayalo), the brother of Gordon Moshoeu (Grenade), who arrived simultaneously with us, but came from Botswana, were also deployed in this unit. Thabo Mavuyo later

became one of the first *askaris*, when he defected to the enemy, whilst Rogers Mayalo was executed in Camp 32 in the 1980's.

Our daily routine started with an assembly in the morning where news was read, followed by an announcement of the day's timetable by Petrus Tshikeshe (MK Julius Mokoena), who was the Commander of the Detachment. The Commissar of the Detachment was Allan Madolwana (MK Francis Sizwe Meli) and Mark Shope was the Politics Instructor. There were other instructors. Prominent amongst them was Banda. At this stage, Politics, Small Firearms, March and Drill and Military Combat Work (MCW) were taught as subjects. Of all of the subjects, March and Drill was my nemesis. I disliked it with a passion. Comrades in my platoon used to tease me by saying I was marching like Donald Duck. Instead of lifting my legs straight, almost ninety degrees relative to my torso, as required when marching, I was kicking my legs wide at an obtuse angle. Wearing old second-hand "*pao*" boots did not assist my efforts as my feet were hurting on impact with the ground. My struggle with March and Drill seemed to encourage the instructor, Chris "Ningizimu" Mthuli to further humiliate me by instructing us to march alone in turns so that we could master the technique. The tropical summer heat of Luanda further exacerbated my predicament.

My favourite subject alongside Politics was MCW as it taught us methods of survival when doing underground work. As a former underground operative (although briefly) the subject directly related to the activities I was engaged in. In the evenings we were allowed to attend cinemas where we watched Soviet-made films or movies, especially about the Second World War. The cinemas we frequented were called Miramar and Tivoli. I remember watching a film called "*42 days*" which was about the Yugoslav anti-fascist resistance movement called the Partisans led by Josip Broz Tito. The name was derived from the fact that the Partisans attacked and defeated the Nazi occupation forces and succeeded to take control of some of the land that was occupied by the Nazis and declared it the "Miners Republic". However, the Miners Republic only lasted for forty-two days as the Nazis regained the lost territory before they were ultimately defeated in 1945². Towards the end of my first week at the Engineering camp, a group of forty comrades left for the German Democratic Republic (GDR), East Germany, where they underwent military training. The group included, amongst others, Tebello Motapanyane, Omry Makgoale (MK Sidwell "Mhlongo" Moroka), David Phaundi Mabaso (MK Bob Mazwi) and Bushy Swartbooi (MK Jerry "Kruschev" Mlonzi). It was the first time I had met Tebello Motapanyane and I used to read a lot about him in South African newspapers.

A week after the group had left for the GDR, we were informed by the ANC leadership, which included Mzwandile "Mzwai" Piliso that at last we would be leaving for Southern Angola, where we would commence with our military

training. When we arrived at the Engineering Camp from Mozambique, we met some prominent leaders of the ANC, which included Joe Slovo and Duma Nokwe. To me it was heartening to have personally met these two leaders as their names were always mentioned in the South African media, especially the name of Joe Slovo. Until then, I had never heard of Mzwai Piliso because as it turned out Comrade Mzwai has been living in exile since the 1950's practising as a pharmacist in England³. After the banning of the ANC in 1960, President Tambo requested him to assist in setting up training bases in Africa for MK operatives⁴. When the opportunity presented itself, he obliged, and became the Head of Personnel and Training, and was mostly based in Angola.

When President OR Tambo left South Africa in 1960, after the banning of the ANC, he met Comrade Mzwai in England where he was staying after graduating as a pharmacist in Edinburgh and working in Britain to earn enough money to open his own pharmacy in the Transkei where he was born. After Tambo convinced him to stay on and assist in the building of ANC structures in exile, Comrade Mzwai became a full-time activist, and was appointed the first ANC Chief Representative in Egypt in 1962, following the dissolution of the South African United Front, in which Comrade Mzwai represented the ANC in its offices in Egypt⁵. It was here in Egypt where Comrade Mzwai started to be involved in the facilitation of training for MK cadres. Not only did he facilitate military training, he also organised the routes that these cadres took from Dar es Salaam to Cairo and back from Cairo to Dar es Salaam. At the Morogoro Conference in Tanzania, where the ANC held its First National Consultative Conference in 1969, Comrade Mzwai was elected a member of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC). Comrade Mzwai was part of the Tribunal that was set up to charge Chris Hani and his co-signatories of the Memorandum which severely criticised the ANC leadership for the events leading to and after the Wankie/Sipolilo operations. He was one of the few members of the Tribunal that objected to the majority decision that also included Joe Modise, favouring the imposition of the death penalty on Chris Hani and his co-signatories.⁶ This is one of the reasons that might have led him to be elected to the NEC of the ANC in Morogoro.

 CHAPTER 6

Welcome to Our New Camp in Benguela

On the eve of our journey to Southern Angola, the day before our departure, comrades started singing spontaneously from the late afternoon. We were singing revolutionary songs. Everybody was happy, at last the day of reckoning for Vorster had come, when the youth of South Africa would be armed with AK-47 rifles ready to liberate their country from racist oppression. Throughout the night comrades sang and did the March and Drill at the same time. The most popular songs at the time by far were “*Singamasoja ka Luthuli*” (We are soldiers of Luthuli) and “*Vorster; Vorster... uVorster uyasibhupha ngemithetho yamapasi thina sifuna ukuya ekhaya siyobath’ izwe lethu. Sobhala incwadi sibhalele uTambo... thina sifuna ukuya ekhaya siyobath’ izwe lethu...*” (Vorster is causing trouble because of his pass laws, we want to go home and reclaim our country. We will write a letter to Tambo and tell him that we want to go back home and reclaim our country...)

Even me, the Donald Duck, joined in the March and Drill. Samson Donga was leading the singing with his powerful voice. Guess who was leading the March and Drill? Thabo Mavuyo who marched until his uniform was soaked in his sweat. Rather than taking a break from time to time as all of us did, he marched continuously, displaying his naked upper body and swerving his big tummy up and down, left to right as most comrades looked on in amazement at his unbelievable stamina. The following morning we departed on approximately ten buses. We were more than two hundred in number, bearing in mind some comrades had departed to various European destinations a week before our departure. There were about ten female comrades on board, some of them I met for the first time as they had not stayed with us at the Engineering Camp and were housed in different residences. Comrade Mzwai accompanied us. After reaching Novo Redondo at midday, as Sumbe was known then, we took

a break. We were very hungry and tired because of the singing and dancing of the previous night. Comrade Mzwai said he could not locate the trucks that were transporting our logistics, including the food we were supposed to have eaten on the way as part of our “*padkos*”. He entered a nearby restaurant where he bought a few “*paos*” (rolls). Because of the civil war, only limited supplies of food were available in restaurants. He gave the “*paos*” mainly to the “*pioneros*” (the young ones) and to the female comrades as there was not enough to feed the rest of us. After some Angolan bus drivers noticed that we were not armed, they momentarily refused or were reluctant to proceed with the journey. They feared the armed attacks that were staged by UNITA on passenger vehicles which was almost a daily occurrence in the area. I don’t know what Comrade Mzwai said to them, but they agreed to proceed to our destination. Typical of ANC security measures, we were not told where we were going to and we did not ask any questions as we were recently taught in our MCW classes that an underground operative must only be limited to the information required to execute his or her duties or mission.

We arrived at the southern port city of Benguela, which is situated more than four hundred kilometres south of Luanda, at around four o’clock in the afternoon. A beautiful city but still bearing scars of the civil war. A city that was occupied by South Africa during its invasion on their way to their failed bid of capturing the capital, Luanda, in trying to install UNITA as a governing party. On their retreat towards the Namibian border in southern Angola, after they were pursued by the MPLA with the assistance of Cuban forces, the South African Defence Force (SADF) blew up the Benguela rail line that connected Angola with the rest of independent Africa. Hence the importance of the city as its port is strategically situated. On arrival in Benguela, we were driven to a place on the outskirts of the city that resembled a farmstead where we off-loaded our belongings. Immediately thereafter, the buses left. We all wondered whether this was our final destination or not. The place had a double-storey main house and a large building that resembled a barn situated about twenty metres behind the main house. Attached to the large building or barn was another building with suspended timber floors with a side entrance on the western side of the building. It resembled a market place where crops were sold or auctioned. Comrades called this place “the market”.

After off-loading our belongings, Comrade Mzwai called for an assembly where he addressed us. His first words were, “*Welcome to our new camp in Buengela.*” We all laughed thinking Comrade Mzwai was just teasing us. Not a single one of us believed that this was our final destination. The place did not resemble a facility that could produce fighters capable of overthrowing the apartheid regime. But it later dawned on us that this was, if not permanently, but for the foreseeable future at least, our place of abode. This came about when Comrade Mzwai explained that he was still negotiating for a permanent

military camp with the Angolan authorities. Because of the delay in finding a suitable place, the Angolan authorities decided to place us temporarily at this particular place. Everybody was disappointed especially those who left South Africa straight after the June 16 uprisings. Everyone thought we would receive military training and quickly return to the country in order to topple the apartheid regime. Now it seemed that dream was becoming elusive. What made matters worse was the fact that we were all hungry and exhausted. There was no food. The trucks that carried our food supplies had not yet arrived. After some time the trucks arrived and the food was prepared.

There were initially three companies, some with three platoons and others with only two. A platoon consisted of three sections, each with ten personnel. Each section had a commander and a commissar. The section commander was the head of the section whilst the section commissar was responsible for the welfare and political well-being of the soldiers in the section. The platoon commander was the overall head of the platoon whilst the platoon commissar was his deputy and also responsible for the political education of the personnel in the platoon. In total a platoon had 32 soldiers. In regular armies, three or more companies may constitute a battalion whereas in guerrilla armies like uMkhonto we Sizwe, the term Detachment is normally preferred to the word battalion. I belonged to Platoon Two of Company Two. As I have already mentioned, our Platoon Commander was Dumisani Khoza and his Commissar was Joel Netshitenzhe. Our platoon was allocated “the market” as our sleeping place whilst the First Company, including Platoon One of the Second Company, were sleeping inside the large hall. Because of lack of accommodation, the Third Company slept in tents which were pitched on the eastern side of the large hall. Trained comrades who provided security also slept in tents. The camp administration together with the female comrades slept in the main house. A small outlying building situated adjacent to the main house, was used as a kitchen. After eating and organising our sleeping place, we rested for the night.

The following day, 23 January 1977¹, after we had had our breakfast, Comrade Mzwai hurriedly called for an assembly. Word had gone around that Joshua Nkomo, the President of ZAPU, the Zimbabwean African People’s Union, had been assassinated in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, by a parcel bomb. He addressed us about this alleged incident. Comrade Mzwai delivered a moving tribute about the life and times of Joshua Nkomo. Sometime later it was found out that it was not Joshua Nkomo who was killed by the parcel bomb, but it was his Deputy, Jason “JZ” Moyo. The misunderstanding was caused by the source of the news. At the time nobody, including the camp administration, had any access to radio as the trucks carrying the main logistics had not yet arrived. Only one comrade, Bennet Pantese Komane (MK Raymond), who was nick-named “*Magoeboeloo*” or Bra Ray, had access

to a radio which he bought whilst undergoing military training in the Soviet Union. As Jason Moyo was the Acting President of ZAPU at the time of his death, Magoeboeloo, or “Goebie” as he was called by everybody, in his zealotry, ran to the camp administration as soon as he heard that the Acting President of ZAPU was killed and reported that Joshua Nkomo was the one who was killed. On his second visit to the camp, Comrade Mzwai corrected the error although by that time we all knew it was Jason Moyo and not Joshua Nkomo who was assassinated. The problem with Magoeboeloo is that nobody was allowed to touch his radio and listen to news because he was not a “moegoe” as he only listened to the jazz of Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

The camp administration introduced a temporary programme for our training until such time as we were to relocate to our permanent training camp. Comrade Mzwai had confirmed that Julius Mokoena was the Camp Commander, Francis Sizwe Meli, the Camp Commissar and Mark Shope, the Politics Instructor. Initially there was no Chief of Staff but sometime in February, Muzi Ngwenya (MK Thami Zulu) was appointed the new Chief of Staff. He arrived at the camp in February with a group of other comrades who underwent military training in the Soviet Union. They were accompanied by about two platoons of new recruits who were also integrated into the Detachment.

Banda, a veteran of the Luthuli Detachment, was appointed the Convenor of Instructors and at the same time he was an instructor of Military Tactics. He made Tactics very interesting. His classes were very lively. He always made practical examples of how to attack military installations, especially police stations. His favourite “target” was the Moroka Police Station in Soweto. One day as he was teaching how to plan an attack on the Moroka Police Station, one comrade stood up and questioned his wisdom of using Moroka Police Station as an example because the said police station was “demolished” a long time ago and relocated somewhere else. Banda was visibly embarrassed by this as he always taught us that the information used to plan any attack should always be accurate and current. He had left the country in the early 1960s and his lack of current information was now evident. As he tried to apologise for this oversight, one comrade saved his blushes by saying the Moroka Police Station still existed, comrades just wanted to see how accurate and current his knowledge was about the Moroka Police Station.

When the Moroka Police Station was attacked on 03 May 1979, I did not stop thinking about how proud Banda might have been after receiving the news. The attack on the police station was carried out by General Solly Shoke, who is currently the Chief of the SANDF, Telle Simon Mogoerane (MK Seiso Moletsane), Nicky Sangele and Marcus Thabo Motaung². Simon Mogoerane, Jerry Semano Mosolodi (MK Dragon Mosepedi) and Marcus Motaung were later sentenced to death and were ultimately hanged for their part in this and

other attacks on various police stations in and around the Witwatersrand. Mogoerane and Mosolodi were both trainees at Benguela. This is how South African newspapers reported the attack on the Moroka Police station: *“Three guerrillas attacked from the front, killing the guard at the gate, while two entered the building and the other stayed outside to keep watch. A fire was also started in the record office. According to a policeman on duty, hand grenades were thrown into the charge office and other rooms. The guerrillas then entered the police station and fired their AK-47’s. Three policemen were killed and two injured, while the police records were completely destroyed”*³.

The Transvaal Post of the 5 May 1979, described eye-witness accounts as follows: Mr Joseph Mncube, a plumber, who was sleeping with others in a shack in the yard when the attack took place, said he fainted with fright when Moroka police station was rocked by gun blasts on the night of 03 May. *“I heard gunshots and was frightened,” he said. “I do not know what happened thereafter. I did not see the ambulance nor the fire brigades. I might have probably fainted because after the first shots, I became scared and covered my head with blankets. I was feeling dazed and the world was spinning around me. Therafter, I cannot tell what happened.”*⁴

Another eye-witness, Mr Sam Sangweni, a taxi driver from Meadowlands, who was hit by a bullet in his left thigh, said he was so scared that when he found a group of policemen under a small table in the charge office, he “bluntly” forced himself under the same table. He said everybody was so terrified that police themselves could not even fire a single shot in return. He had gone to the police station to report a car case. He parked his car outside and went into the yard. He was suddenly confronted by four armed men, one with a short machine gun and the others with long rifles. *“I immediately went cold. I was confused and I felt death was near. They gave me a stack of papers and told me to move and fast. There was nowhere I could go but into the charge office. They opened fire as I was running towards the charge office. I do not even know when I was hit because I immediately dived under a table where a group of policemen were already hiding themselves. There were horrifying screams all over the office and children were crying. I heard one policeman say ‘safa bo’ (we are dying). I personally gave out a loud cry as I went for the small table,”* he said.⁵

The firearms instructors were Benjamin Mongalo (MK Moss) and Peter Dikgosi, both being *mgwenya* (veterans) from the Luthuli Detachment. They were still relatively young when they left the country as they were still in their late-teens during the 1960’s. Joseph Hlophe (MK Jabu Zikalala) was our instructor in military topography. He trained in the Soviet Union early in 1976 before the June 16 uprisings together with Mwezi Twala (MK Khotso Morena), Dumile Yokwe (MK Selby Mbele), Chris “*Ningizimu*” Mthuli, Magoeboeloo and others who were also in Benguela assisting the camp authorities either as assistant instructors or in the maintenance of general security. Jabu Zikalala was later executed by *imbokodo* after being accused of

being a police informer⁶, and Selby Mbele died in prison after being arrested during the mutiny of January 1984 in Vianna, Angola⁷. Khotso was part of the Committee of Ten that was appointed during the mutiny. Chairman, another assistant instructor of firearms, was killed during the SADF attack of Novo Catengue in March 1979.

In February, as I have mentioned, two platoons of new recruits had joined us accompanied by other trained comrades that included Thami Zulu. In the same period we were also joined by a platoon that was based in Gabela, a small town just south of Luanda, that underwent military training with FAPLA, the Angolan Army. This was the first group of comrades that arrived in Angola in September 1976. Rather than allowing them to idle in Luanda whilst the ANC was sorting out its training facilities, the ANC requested the Angolan Army to introduce them to military warfare hence their stay in Gabela. When they joined us, the comrades at the camp called them FAPLA-MKHONTO because of their association with FAPLA, something they did not take kindly to, simply because it had an element of undermining about it. As this group has been in Angola for almost six months, they had endured the brunt of the tropical sun of Angola and when wearing the military uniform of FAPLA, it was therefore very difficult or almost impossible to distinguish them from Angolan soldiers. With the majority of recruits originally from Soweto, one could sense that subtle element of regarding the group as peasants from Angola. The Platoon Commissar of the group was Pule Moses Malebane (MK Elliot “Piper” Mazibuko)⁸ who was later executed in 1984 by *imbokodo* for being accused also of being an agent of the South African Police. Another group that joined us during that time was a platoon that trained with SWAPO in southern Angola. They were led by Patrick Diphoko (MK Simon Faku) and the Commissar of the group was Lebona Mosia (MK Zoyisile “Zet” Mati). Comrades also called them SWAPO-MKHONTO because of their connection with SWAPO.

During his first political lesson, Mark Shope introduced himself although he had done so previously on many occasions as he had stayed with some of the early recruits in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania since September 1976. “*Sons and daughters of the working class of South Africa, good morning.*” A voice from a man who was fifty-eight years of age greeted us in our first political lesson.

“*My name is Mark Shope, I have been deployed by the leadership of the African National Congress especially by Comrade President OR Tambo to come and impart to you the history of our struggle in general and about ANC politics in particular,*” he introduced himself. “*Why should we learn politics? We did not come from South Africa to waste time in Angola by listening to your propaganda here. All we want are weapons. We need AK-47’s in order to go back to South Africa and confront the enemy. People are dying at home,*” retorted one of the young recruits with much approval from the rest of us.

“Suppose you are provided with the military training you require and equipped with the most sophisticated weapons available, and you are infiltrated back into South Africa, what would you do?” Came a question from the smiling face of Comrade Mark. The class answered in unison, “We will destroy the apartheid regime and drive all Whites into the sea!” Mark Shope had a good laugh.

“Comrades, a soldier without politics is a mercenary. MK is a peoples’ army and the ANC is waging a peoples’ war against the enemy. Do you know what a peoples’ war is?” asked Comrade Mark.

“No!” answered the class.

“You need to understand politics. Without people’s politics, there can be no peoples’ army and without a peoples’ army there can be no peoples’ war.” So began our political education by Comrade Mark Shope. Mark William Shope was born on 1 January 1919. He never attended formal schooling. He worked most of his life as a labourer in the mines. It was during his work as a miner that he was recruited into the South African Communist Party (SACP) by Uncle J.B. Marks, who later became its Chairman. At the time of joining the SACP, Mark Shope was a Trade Unionist. Because of his dedication to the workers struggle, he later became the General Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). It was only when he was in exile in the late 1960’s that he furthered his education in the then Republic of Czechoslovakia. In this chapter I will not deal with the outline of the Politics course as he repeated it later in Novo Catengue when we officially started our military training. I will only deal with specific issues that related to our stay in Benguela.

Explaining why he maintained that a soldier without politics is a mercenary, one morning during one of his lessons, Mark Shope analysed the news bulletin of the day that reported about an incident in Nigeria where police opened fire on unarmed civilians who were protesting about the rise in food prices. Several people were killed and scores of others injured. “In a free South Africa, comrades, would you shoot and kill your own people for protesting against poor living conditions?” That was a serious question from Mark Shope. Before we could answer, he continued, “It is only a soldier without politics that is capable of shooting and killing his own people.” Mark Shope explained by saying it was only in Africa and other third-world (developing) countries where security forces were capable of maiming and killing their own civilians. He concluded by saying a soldier that understands politics would refuse to carry-out an order to kill unarmed civilians. Asked what would the consequences be to a soldier defying such an order, Mark Shope answered with a rhetorical question, “What was the fate of the Nazi soldiers that obeyed Hitler in executing millions of people in gas chambers?” As he spoke, he shook his head and tears started rolling down his cheeks which was his trademark reaction when his heart was touched by similar events.

I remember a similar tragic incident that happened sometime in March

also in Benguela. One comrade called Moses Maphetho (MK Samson), who was trained in the Soviet Union, committed suicide by shooting himself in the head whilst performing guard duties at night. The cause of the suicide was a total misunderstanding between himself and Joe Modise, the army Commander. When Joe Modise visited the camp earlier in February, Samson went to see him and requested to do further military training. Samson was illiterate and had never gone to school. During his training in the Soviet Union, it was reported that he struggled to grasp the lessons that were given in class because of him being unable to read or write. Furthermore, in Buenguela, when he was acting as a March and Drill instructor or acting as an officer on duty (OD), comrades used to laugh at him as he could not pronounce the letter “r”. When he was instructing us to March and Drill, he would say, “left light, left light... comlades light turn!” “Nihlekani macomlades?” (What are you laughing at comrades?) was his question when he observed that everybody was laughing). Because of this, Joe Modise thought that Samson wanted re-training as he had not properly grasped his previous lessons whilst he underwent military training. As a result of his request for further training, the camp administration deployed him in the FAPLA-MKHONTO Platoon which consisted of comrades who were at least advanced in their military training.

By further military training, Samson had meant a more advanced military course overseas as he had an ambition of becoming a military general one day. He perceived his new deployment in the FAPLA-MKHONTO platoon as a demotion as it did not make sense to him. His suicide note was read at his memorial service that was held the following day. In the note he basically mentioned all the points that I had mentioned above and concluded by saying he had no doubt that MK would defeat the apartheid racist regime and the ANC would eventually rule South Africa and implement the ideals enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Mark Shope was the main speaker at his memorial service. He said Samson, despite his limitations and the difficulties he was confronted with, like Uncle J.B. Marks, never lost hope of being free one day. When Comrade Mark spoke about Uncle JB, as he was affectionately called, he broke down and shed a tear. I will deal with the life and times of Uncle JB later in the book when dealing with the events leading to the mutiny of 1984. Suffice to say that Mark Shope was greatly influenced by the teachings of Uncle JB, that of living a frugal life to the end. In trying to encourage us to live the life of Uncle JB, Mark Shope gave us a verse from the book of *“How the Steel was Tempered”* written by Nikolai Ostrovsky:

“Man’s dearest possession is life. And since it is given to him but once to live, he must live so as to feel no torturing regrets for years to come, dying he must say: all my life and all my strength has been dedicated to the finest cause of the world – the fight for the Liberation of Mankind.”

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CHAPTER 7

Undergoing Military Training

After three months, late in April 1977, we eventually left Benguela for Novo Catengue, a camp that was situated only about fifty kilometres south from the town of Benguela itself. A company of new recruits from Luanda, about four platoons totalling about a hundred and twenty personnel, joined us on our way to Novo Catengue. We were escorted by Cubans. Unlike our earlier arrival from Luanda in January, this time the ANC did not take any chances regarding our security. We felt at ease compared to our previous journey when Angolan drivers became nervous after hearing we were not armed. When we eventually arrived at the camp, we were impressed with the layout. The camp resembled a proper military or educational institution with various blocks of buildings that were used as barracks, camp administration, medical posts, kitchen and so on, a far cry from our previous situation in Benguela. Because of its location, between mountains and far from places inhabited by civilians, the camp did not have as many mosquitoes as our previous camp and therefore cases of malaria were less frequent. Most cases of malaria were a result of dormant viruses, that had been contracted either in Benguela or Luanda, becoming active.

The first few days were used to clean the camp and its surroundings. We were divided into four companies with each company having four platoons. The camp administration added a platoon to each of the three companies that existed in Benguela from the company of comrades that had just joined us from Luanda. The surplus personnel then constituted the fourth company. The FAPLA-MKHONTO platoon of Benguela, made up of comrades who had initially stayed at Gabella, constituted the nucleus of the fourth company. Each company was allocated a Commander and a Commissar from the comrades who had already completed their military training overseas. The Commander

of the second company that I belonged to was Desert and his Commissar was January Masilela (MK Che Ogara), who later became a Regional Commissar in Angola and after 1994 became an MEC in Mpumalanga before he was appointed the Secretary of the Department of Defence.

I still belonged to the third platoon of the second company. Each company also had a corresponding Cuban command structure. The Cuban Commander of the second company was Phi (Fai). He was tall and dark in complexion, well built and resembled a typical African man who could sometimes be mistaken for an inhabitant of, say, Joe Slovo or Cyril Ramaphosa informal settlement. The name of our Cuban Platoon Commander was Perez Perreira, short and stout, also dark in complexion, but unlike Phi, he resembled, more or less, our cousins from Mitchell's Plain on the Cape Flats, rather than our brothers from Joe Slovo informal settlement. It was a joy to be in the company of Phi. He always cracked jokes. The biggest stumbling block between us and him was the language barrier. Although there were Spanish interpreters, one felt that the interpreter was not always conveying his jokes properly. Most of the time the essence of the jokes was lost in translation. As a result Phi tried to learn English very fast.

The camp administration was the same as the one appointed at Benguela except for Richard Mdala (MK Alfred Wana), who joined us as Chief of Security. Siphon "Fapla" Dlamini acted as the Recording Officer who worked with Wana in vetting the personnel and checking their backgrounds. However, shortly after our arrival from Benguela, Sizwe Meli, the Camp Commissar, was appointed the new editor of SECHABA, the ANC's official journal, after the death of its former editor, M. P. Naicker. Sizwe was replaced by Mark Shope as the Camp Commissar. On 27 May 1977, news came of an attempted *coup d'état* in Angola. The plotters of the *coup* were led by Nito Alves who was the Minister of Internal Administration. They wanted to topple the government of President Agostinho Neto, who was seen as too close to Cuba and the Soviet Union, and tried to replace it with a puppet administration that would be pliable to the West and to South Africa in particular.

In June, when Comrade Mzwai returned from Luanda on a visit to the camp, he explained the negative role that Nito Alves played since Angola declared its independence in November 1975, leading to the time that the MPLA waged war against UNITA supported by South Africa until he was appointed Minister of Internal Administration. He went on to explain his attitude towards the presence of the ANC in that country. Comrade Mzwai said Nito Alves, as the Minister of Internal Administration, was given the task by President Neto of allocating military training facilities to the ANC immediately after the June 16 uprisings in 1976. Instead of allocating the facilities to the ANC, Nito Alves impeded and ultimately frustrated every effort aimed at making the facilities available. By making the Benguela Camp available to the ANC, which was

not suitable for military training, Nito Alves was buying time to forestall the training of MK soldiers and ultimately preventing the ANC from operating in that country when he hoped to be installed as the new President of Angola. Comrade Mzwai said we did not know how close we were to being handed over to the South African government if the *coup* had succeeded.

Months later we were assured by a high ranking MPLA official, who visited the camp with Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, the then Chairman of the SACP, who was also accompanied by Florence Moposho, the Head of the ANC Women's Section, that Angola "*was a liberated zone*" of South Africa. "*Angola e sera por vontande propria trincheira firme da Revolucao em Africa.*" (Angola is and will be by its own free will be a firm trench of the revolution in Africa.) After uttering these words, the official received prolonged applause from the rest of us. He was often quoting the inspirational words of his principal, the legendary Agostinho Neto, who used to say, "*O mais importante e resolver os problemas do povo.*" (The most important thing is to resolve the problems of the people). Agostinho Neto had no time for corruption which has become the norm in our country, South Africa, today.

Our military instructors were mainly Cubans assisted by South Africans. Banda, the *mgwenya* (veteran) from Benguela, still became the convenor of instructors liaising closely with his Cuban counterparts in determining the content or syllabus of our training. Our military training included the following courses: Military Topography, Military Engineering, Military Tactics, Firearms, Artillery, First Aid and above all, Political Education. During our training we also held night classes, mainly in Tactics and Firearms. Our Cuban instructors would hold regular competitions in night shooting to determine the best company (out of the four), that was most proficient in the course. The aim was to ensure that by the time we completed our training, we would be virtually "marksmen" and capable of matching the apartheid security forces bullet for bullet in the battlefield. Our company, the second company, never won the shooting competition. It always came second. The competition was usually won by either the first or the third company.

This made Phi, our Cuban Company Commander, very anxious and agitated. As the training went on, he managed to learn a few English words, which he used effectively to show his disappointment at our lack of shooting skills. One day after the monthly competition results were announced, and our company came second as usual, Phi burst out in anger and frustration, "*Comrades, coming number two always, why? Number two company coming number two, always.*" He violently shook his head in disbelief and continued to impress us with his newly acquired English vocabulary skills, "*Freedom Charter good. But Vorster no understand Freedom Charter. ANC run to United Nations and shout, we want Freedom. Vorster laughs, ha! ha! ha! Me no give freedom, says Vorster. But when ANC shoot, shoot and shoot, Vorster say, stop! Please don't shoot, me give freedom.*"

Castro no talk. Castro shoot and shoot. Imperialists listen.” To us the message was clear. The ANC could be experts in championing the ideals of the Freedom Charter, but as long as it was unable to use the armed struggle effectively, no one would listen. Thereafter we heard that Phi had a nervous breakdown and was taken to Benguela to recuperate.

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 CHAPTER 8

This is Urban Guerrilla Warfare

Early in the morning of 7 November, twenty-one comrades and I boarded a bus that was destined for Luanda. Among the group were the following comrades, Thandi Modise, who later became the Premier of the North West Province; Richard Barney Molokoane (MK Mmutle Ramanase), one of uMkhonto's most daring field commanders and respected marksman who was killed in action on 28 November 1985 together with two other fellow combatants¹; Robert Mokoena (MK George Sello), who was also killed in action on 10 May 1981, near the Bushbuckridge railway station in the then Eastern Transvaal. According to a police statement, George Sello detonated a hand grenade whilst being transported in the back of a police van causing an explosion that led to his death. However, upon exhumation, his body was found with a bullet wound in his head that led to speculation that he was summarily executed by the Security Police². Bhekizitha Steven Mbanda (MK Jackson Sithungu), who later became an *askari*; MK Richard "Blessing" Zungu; Guy Motjale (MK John "China" Msibi); Thibe Jimmy Ngobeni (MK Mzizi), a close friend of Dumisani Khoza, who was later arrested in December 1978 and charged as accused number four with eleven other comrades in the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial of 1979. He was alleged to have tried to establish secret bases for MK operatives in Malamulele, Gazankulu in the North-Eastern Transvaal. He was later sentenced and subsequently imprisoned on Robben Island and upon his release was said to have tragically passed away.

Other comrades in the group included Jabulani Joseph "JJ" Msimang (MK Themba "Scotch" Mlambo), who is a Brigadier General at the SANDF; Johnson Lubisi (MK Jimmy Dyantyi) who was sentenced to death together with Petrus Mashigo and Naphtali Manana for their role in the attack on the

Soekmeaar police station in the North Eastern Transvaal. The sentences were later commuted to life imprisonment after a successful appeal at the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein coupled with a sustained international campaign to release them. Frank Msekwa (MK Gerald “Casper” Pitje), who also became an *askari* was also in the group. It was alleged that Casper accompanied the SADF troops and pinpointed the residences where our comrades were staying during the Matola raid of January 1981. Amongst the group was Ace Phetla (MK Ace Molotoane) and his brother, Serge Wellington Phetla. They had a sister, Maria Malebelo Phetla (MK Rhoda) who also underwent military training with us and who was best known for her poem entitled “*This train, the ANC...*”, which she recited at Benguela during our commemoration of the International Women’s Day.

Others included MK Ntemi Khuzwayo; Simon Mohale (MK Maxwell Mfazwe) the brother of Pauline Mohale, who was arrested in 1976 and later charged under the Terrorism Act together with eleven others including Tokyo Sexwale; Thabo Paulos Makgaga (MK Jacob), who also became an *askari* after deserting his unit near Derdepoort in the Western Transvaal; MK Victor Sello, who was Chief Logistics at the Quibaxe Camp when he was shot and injured in the leg in 1982 when our truck was ambushed by UNITA on its way to Luanda; Sibonego Wilfred Marwane (MK Windy) who was captured in the beginning of August 1978 when he entered the country with a unit commanded by Barney Molokoane near Moshaneng/ Witkleigat in the Western Transvaal near the border of Botswana.

He was jailed and upon his release was mysteriously shot dead on the 19 January 1987 outside his home in Emdeni, Soweto³. Jackson Tsepho, Thami Mlambo and Sureboy Dali (MK Titus “Charles Bronson” Ntombela) were also part of the group. Titus Ntombela got his nickname of Charles Bronson because of his similar looks to the famous actor of the renowned films of the 1960’s and 70’s that included films like “*Death Wish*” and others. He and Lesaja Sexwale (MK Reggie Gladman), the younger brother of Tokyo Sexwale; Thabo Rakubu (MK Shakes Mde Lungile) and Mthimkhulu Mavuso (MK Patrick Xesi aka Zola Mqadi) were members of a unit deployed in the former Transkei. On 7 August 1981 they were caught in a police roadblock near Elliot in the Eastern Cape where a shootout ensued that resulted in the deaths of Shakes Lungile and Zola Mqadi. Charles Bronson and Sexwale escaped but were cornered on 13 August 1981 at Barkley Pass and, after a fierce battle, were killed⁴. Charles Bronson was also the Commander of Platoon One, Company Three, whose Platoon Commissar was Tebogo Mafole (MK Dan Cindi) who married Lyndall Shope, the eldest daughter of Mark Shope.

The bus was manned by the Cubans, although the security they provided seemed to be light at the time as they only carried M-52 semi-automatic rifles (carbines) instead of AK-47’s. An M-52 rifle was mainly used by snipers who

were usually supported by other personnel carrying heavy calibre weapons. This is what we were just taught during our training and we felt that if UNITA would have launched an attack on our bus, we stood no chance of surviving. But we arrived in Luanda without any incident and with our morale being very high. We were dropped at the residence of the ANC's Chief Representative to Angola, Job Tabane (MK Cassius Maake), who was assisted by Max Moabi, his deputy. We met Thabo Mavuyo at the residence in Luanda as he had left Novo Catengue some weeks earlier for medical treatment. The following day we were transported to Funda, an ANC transit camp situated about thirty-five kilometres on the outskirts of Luanda. A few days later, surprisingly, Thabo Mavuyo joined us although when we had seen him earlier in Luanda he seemed to be on his deathbed and looked like someone who needed a priest to perform his last rites. We later found out that he used his good relations with Joe Modise to persuade the authorities not to return him to Novo Catengue, but instead to include him in our group which was rumoured to be on the verge of being deployed back into the country.

The Commander of the Camp at Funda was Siphwe Clement Maphumulo (MK Zakes Nkosi) and the Commissar was Motlalentoa Lieta (MK Siph Mtswala). It was a very small camp. The features of this camp were similar to those of the Benguela Camp, although much smaller. There was a main house which was used to house female comrades and the camp administration. Zakes Nkosi and Siph Mtswala comprised the only two permanent members of the administration, although in reality there were no differences between the camp administration, military instructors and the rank and file. The military instructors and the rank and file were housed in an adjacent building that resembled living quarters for farm workers or storage facilities. A small open plan building with a thatched roof, situated behind the main house, was used as a kitchen.

Job Magasela (MK Jerry Simelane) was the Chief of Ordinance, who later became a Brigadier General at the SANDF and passed away on 27 February 2011. On our arrival we were briefed that we were to undergo a six week course on Urban Guerrilla Warfare after which we were to be infiltrated inside the country. The Urban Guerrilla Warfare course consisted of the following courses: Sabotage and Urban Guerrilla Warfare; Military Combat Work (MCW); Explosives and Small Firearms suited for urban guerrilla-warfare. The instructor for Sabotage and Urban Guerrilla Warfare was MK Peter Stewart, who was known to be the grandson of Mary Moodley, an old stalwart of the ANC who stayed in Wattville, Benoni in the East Rand of Transvaal. Stewart was very young and could have been in his late teens or early twenties at the time. He was literally a "cowboy" and a trigger happy fellow. He taught us all types of booby traps, incendiary explosives and urban guerrilla warfare tactics. Some of the booby traps he taught us were such that

once they were placed in position and primed, to be activated by means of a time delaying mechanism, no person, whether it was the person who placed the booby trap itself or an explosives expert, could deactivate them. They could only be deactivated by means of a controlled explosion that would result in its detonation.

Vusi was the instructor for MCW. MCW is the use of clandestine operations to outwit the enemy with the use of codes and dead letter boxes (DLB's). A DLB is a place where messages can be left and collected without the sender and recipient meeting. Basically MCW is meant to conceal one's tracks. In later years the ANC stopped the teaching of MCW to its cadres simply because it was used to deceive the ANC when its members were involved in criminal activities including the smuggling of dagga into the camps and the illicit brewing of liquor. Ephraim Thusi (MK Mike Ngozi) taught explosives. It was the same course we did at Novo Catengue except that emphasis was put on urban guerrilla warfare. We received more practical training in plastic explosives as this type of explosive was more readily available in urban areas than the TNT we were used to. Jerry Simelane was also the firearms instructor. As Chief of Ordinance he was responsible for the issuing and safe keeping of arms and ammunition in the camp.

We underwent training in all types of small firearms, both East and West European models, whether they were pistols, revolvers and various machine pistols or sub-machine guns, which were commonly used in urban areas like the most popular Israeli-made Uzi which was popularised by David Protter in South Africa when he attacked the offices of the Israeli Consulate at the Carlton Centre in Johannesburg in April 1975. We also learned about the Scorpion, a Czech sub-machine gun or machine pistol that was first used in South Africa by the unit of Solomon Mahlangu, George Mahlangu (MK George Mazibuko) and Mandy Motlaung. The three combatants also received their training at Funda before they were infiltrated into the country. Solomon Mahlangu was later sentenced to death for his role in what became known as the Goch Street incident.

The sabotage and urban guerrilla warfare course that was taught by Peter Stewart, incorporated all aspects of the other courses. In urban guerrilla warfare, one had to know the principles of MCW, military engineering and small firearms. At times Stewart would be in charge of pistol shooting lessons as he went berserk destroying "targets" with his favourite weapon which was the revolver. When we tried to find out where he received and acquired his vast knowledge of urban guerrilla warfare, especially the booby-trap technology, we were amazed at what he told us. All the instructors at the Funda Camp at the time were trained by members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who trained them in an underground safe house in Luanda. But when OR Tambo heard about their presence, he became livid and ordered them to leave

immediately as he was never informed about their involvement with MK. Even if he was informed, he would never have given permission for IRA operatives to be involved in our camps because of the grave consequences and the severe repercussions our association with IRA would have led to. Firstly, the ANC's biggest office outside Africa was in the United Kingdom. Associating ourselves with IRA would therefore have been suicidal.

The biggest anti-apartheid support the ANC received was from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain whose members mostly viewed the IRA as a terrorist organisation. Secondly, the IRA had no ideology whilst the ideology of the ANC was the Freedom Charter. Mark Shope used to say we should reply to anybody who asked what the ideology of the ANC was by saying it was the Freedom Charter. Its detractors who said the Freedom Charter was a communist document were wrong. The implementation of the Freedom Charter would have laid the basis for the National Democratic Revolution which was the ultimate goal of the ANC, whilst the SACP viewed the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as a transition towards building socialism. Hence I was surprised at the recent conference of the ANC which was held in Mangaung in December 2012 where others tried to proclaim a view that the ANC was entering a second phase of the NDR. According to Mark Shope, the NDR has no phases. To the ANC, the unambiguous implementation of the Freedom Charter would have spelled the end of its vision for South Africa whilst to the SACP it would have been a transition or the beginning of a long journey towards socialism.

Peter Stewart also confirmed that in their deliberations and interactions with the IRA members, they (the IRA members) were loathe to discuss politics as their main aim was just to drive out the "British occupational" forces from Northern Island. According to Mark Shope, a soldier without politics is a mercenary. The duration of our course was six weeks beginning from 7 November to just before 16 December, which was the anniversary of MK. The original idea was to have the group infiltrated into South Africa just before 16 December to assist in the marking of MK celebrations inside the country with the theme, "*ANC LIVES, ANC LEADS*". Unfortunately, as things turned out, we were unable to be infiltrated inside the country. Instead, 16 December saw a visit to the camp from Joe Modise followed later by a visit from Joe Slovo. Joe Modise delivered the main speech at the camp and I was asked by the Camp Commissar, Siphso Mtswala, to prepare a speech on the history of MK. Barney Molokoane led us in his favourite freedom song, "*uMandela inkokheli yethu thina madelakufa*." (Mandela is our leader, we the volunteers.)

Few people know that Mmutle, as Barney was known in the camps, had a wonderful singing voice. In Funda he led us in song whenever we had reason to rejoice or celebrate. Joe Modise was very impressed with the paper I delivered and the singing that was led by Barney. After the ceremony he called me and

congratulated us. The last time he spoke to me was in Benguela when he wanted to find out more about the civil engineering course I had completed at Mmadikoti. He briefly commented about my involvement with Joe Mati from the East London underground. What happened was that in the beginning of December whilst I was reading the ANC news briefing, I came across an article about the arrest of Joe Mati. The ANC used to produce a newsletter called the “*ANC News Briefing*” which was a collection of newspaper articles mainly from various South African newspapers. As I read the News Briefing, I saw an article that dealt with the court case of Joe Mati.

My name featured prominently in the article. Hamilton Busuku, the driver who took us to Swaziland, was the main State witness in the trial. He alleged that Bra Joe recruited me to join the ANC and subsequently handed me over to Stanley Mabizela to enable me to undergo military training. Asked by the court what made him certain to think that I had joined MK, Busuku said the things I had said in the car after entering Swaziland whilst driving to Manzini convinced him that I was not intending to further my studies. What came to mind was the time when I started to recite in the car the definition of a guerrilla fighter as described by Che Guevara. Bra Joe was found guilty of contravening Section Six of the Terrorism Act and was sentenced to five years imprisonment on Robben Island where he served his second term.

After reading the article I went to inform Montso Mokgabudi (MK Obadi) who was based in Luanda but responsible for the camp and the deployment of cadres to the forward areas. I requested him not to deploy me in the Eastern Cape as almost everybody in the area knew about my whereabouts as the trial of Bra Joe was the only high profile political trial in the area during that time and had continued for months. Years later, in the 1980's, comrades in the camps, especially those who were from East London and surrounding areas, used to discuss how the trial of Bra Joe was eagerly followed by everybody as if it was a soap opera. Every time the court adjourned, and the proceedings of the trial were splashed in newspapers the following day, more people wanted to know about the activities of MK in the Eastern Cape. Most comrades who left the country from East London during that time, confessed to have been influenced by the underground activities of Bra Joe into leaving the country. After the June 16 uprising, most of the people who left the country were from the Transvaal which was bordering neighbouring states. The trial of Bra Joe, therefore, taught the people that the ANC was also active in the Eastern Cape. This is what Joe Modise discussed with me after I had delivered the paper.

Although we completed our training in mid-December, we continued with our informal training especially with shooting lessons. We acquainted ourselves with all types of pistols as we practised target shooting. The most popular pistols were the Soviet-made Makarov and the Tokarev, which was commonly called the “TT”. As we had already completed our training, we had

enough time to practice target shooting with all sorts of weapons ranging from pistols and revolvers to various types of sten guns, sub-machine guns, machine pistols and assault rifles. For the first time in our training we had actually used live ammunition to compare the characteristics of the Western made G3 and FN assault rifles with the Soviet made AK-47. Without exaggeration, the AK-47 proved to be a more versatile weapon compared to the two.

It was during this time of target shooting that President Tambo visited the camp. It was in the beginning of January 1978 and a group of new recruits had just joined us who had come for a short course in order to be infiltrated back into the country or deployed in the forward areas. The total number of personnel at the camp was just less than fifty. After he had addressed us, OR said we must learn to shoot at the head of the target rather than at the body. “*Go for the head!*” was the command from the Commander-in-Chief. He requested Zakes Nkosi to organise a quick competition on target shooting with AK-47’s concentrating solely on the head of the target. We were each given five bullets and the target placed a hundred metres away.

After we had finished, President Tambo took his turn at shooting at the head of the target. The result was astonishing. Out of five bullets he managed to hit the head of the target with three bullets. The only person in our unit who managed to equal that feat was Barney Molokoane. What was amazing was the fact that the remaining two bullets, which missed the head, hit the shoulders of the target. Most of us including myself came out worse. OR Tambo commented about my poor showing and attributed it to nervousness. Indeed I was very nervous and over-awed by the occasion having been supervised and observed by the President of the ANC at a shooting range, something that did not occur on a daily basis.

To my knowledge, that was the only occasion that OR went to the shooting range and participated with the rank and file in shooting exercises. Years later it would be almost impossible, or a criminal offence, for the ordinary rank and file to carry a weapon during a visit by OR to the camps. That was the time when the ANC solely relied on the self-conscious discipline of its cadres in maintaining security in its camps. Of course I was not the only one who was nervous about the visit of OR to the camp. Even Zakes Nkosi, the commander, was nervous. When OR arrived at the camp, Zakes, as the Camp Commander, had to salute OR and present to him the report of the camp. After giving the report, in terms of the military regime, the one submitting the report must state his name and position. To us in the army, this was routine. But on that day, Zakes was very nervous. After reporting, instead of giving his travelling name of Zakes Nkosi, he gave OR his real name of Sphiwe Clement Maphumulo . When he realised his mistake, he corrected himself by giving his *nom de guerre* to the amazement of everybody, including OR.

Subsequent to OR’s visit, a large consignment of arms was delivered which

were mainly an assortment of Western-made sten guns and Eastern-made machine pistols or sub-machine guns of which the Soviet-made Papashai (PPSh-41) featured prominently. The Papashai was the main infantry weapon used by Soviet troops during the Second World War. The weapons were brought by Jacob “Mavili” Masondo who was the Chief of Ordinance and a member of the Revolutionary Council (RC). During that time his assistant, Mary Msimanga, visited the camp regularly. We were required to “zero” the weapons. Zeroing a weapon means aligning its sights, the rear and the front, to enable the shooter to hit the given target with precision and high accuracy. As most of the weapons were new, they needed to be properly aligned before being shipped into the country.

The machine pistols or sten guns were ideal for urban guerrilla warfare but not suited for rural warfare as their effective range was far shorter than that of conventional assault rifles like AK's and G3's. We spent most of our time at the shooting range zeroing these weapons under the supervision of Jerry Simelane. Zeroing the weapons provided us with a constructive way of spending our time whilst we were waiting to be deployed inside the country. By the end of January we had almost completed the task of aligning the weapons and comrades started becoming involved in various activities some of which were not in line with the basic norms expected from a disciplined MK soldier. Whilst the majority of comrades maintained their discipline, by keeping themselves busy by accompanying the hunting team that was sometimes led by Zakes and Stewart, that hunted wild animals, especially wild pigs and buffaloes at night, some comrades started drinking home-made brew procured from local peasants.

The camp was integrated with the local peasant community with whom we officially bartered with our tinned food in exchange for fruit and vegetables. A group of comrades led by Thabo Mavuyo used to sneak out in the evenings and procure liquor and return to the camp in a drunken state. Generally, Angolans love their home-made liquor. The most famous of these is *Kapuka* made from sugarcane which the locals used to call vodka, *Caporoto* made from maize, and the most popular and enjoyable one in Funda was *Maluva*, which was prepared from palm oil. Thabo Mavuyo and his group loved *Maluva* which was nick-named “*tho tho tho*” because of the sound caused by the drips of the falling drops of palm juice or oil into the receiving container or bucket placed at the bottom of the palm tree.

A local Commander of the Angolan People's Militia, ODP, named Domingo, used to hunt with the comrades at night as he was a good sniper. The camp used to supply him with food and clothing for his family and in return Domingo used to invite Thabo Mavuyo and his group for a drink of ‘*tho tho tho*’. On their return to the camp the comrades would pretend to be sober only to be exposed by Domingo who would shout revolutionary slogans

which was his trademark after having a drink or two. His favourite slogan was “*abaixo tho tho tho!*” (Down with *tho tho tho!*) Asked as to the reason why he was condemning *tho tho tho* whilst consuming it, Domingo would reply by saying it was because he wanted promotion. In order for one to be promoted, one should display commitment to revolutionary ideals which included abstaining from drinking homemade concoctions. What was worrisome about this group was that it included people like Jacob who were chain dagga smokers. It was therefore no coincidence when both Thabo Mavuyo and Jacob later became *askaris*.

As a group we regularly held criticism and self-criticism meetings where some of us would raise our concerns about the drinking habits of some of the comrades. The fortunate part about Funda, although it was a military camp, it allowed us to live the lives of civilians. There were no rigid or routine military activities which I thought was by design of the authorities to enable us to get used to civilian life as most of the cadres were destined to be deployed inside the country. It was also helpful in the sense that we were able to monitor the behaviour of one another under normal civilian conditions unlike under the normal camp conditions where we were subjected to military discipline. Funda was the most enjoyable MK camp as long as one behaved in a normal and exemplary manner. The camp administration mixed freely with the rank and file and never imposed rigid military discipline.

There were very few female comrades and their number did not exceed five at any given time. Male comrades always tried to make their female counterparts feel at home and comfortable as the female comrades were far outnumbered. At the time we were at Funda, Thandi Modise was staying with one female colleague most of the time. Her name was Seanokeng. She was very young, soft spoken and above all very attractive. She always diligently executed her military duties with oomph and zeal as if she was making a statement. The biggest drawback of Funda was its infestation of mosquitoes. The camp was situated near a river that was infested with crocodiles. As a result of the river, the surroundings of the camp were marshy and became a haven for mosquitoes. Our beds were fitted with mosquito nets as a way of protecting us against contracting malaria. A problem would occur when a lone mosquito was able to bridge the defences and enter the net unnoticed. In such a case one would be unable to sleep when hearing the buzzing sound of a mosquito trying to land on one’s unprotected face. Undetected, a lone mosquito might prevent one from falling asleep and as a result ruining a good night’s rest. This was one of the reasons why the leadership of the ANC decided to close the camp in 1979 and relocate to another camp in Caxito.

In December 1977 the camp commissar, Siphso Motswala, requested me to assist in compiling the news. It was the norm in every camp to have a propaganda unit that compiled the news and prepared commentary on issues

relating to current affairs that were major news features during the week. I was assisted by Jackson Sithungu and Charles Bronson. The National Commissar, Andrew Masondo, frequently visited the camp during our stay especially days before Solomon Mahlangu was sentenced to death. Sensing the impact that the sentencing of Mahlangu would have on our morale, as we were being prepared to be deployed in the frontline, the National Commissar spent 2 March 1978, the day Mahlangu was sentenced to death, at the camp. Immediately after the verdict of the death sentence was announced, he addressed us on the significance of the sentence in view of the fact that Mahlangu received his military training at Funda. His speech was basically meant to motivate us instead of being deterred by the harshness of the sentence. In all honesty, nobody at the camp seemed deterred. We all wanted an opportunity to emulate the heroic deeds of Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu.

A few weeks earlier, Keith Mokoape had visited the camp where he interviewed some comrades about the possibility of being deployed inside the country. I was one of the comrades who was interviewed. Keith was known as a commander who worked and operated from Botswana. A week after the sentencing of Mahlangu, Obadi informed me to prepare my clothing as I was going to leave the camp and be deployed in the country. He asked with whom I preferred to operate in a unit of two from those who were in the camp at the time. I immediately named Douglas as my first choice. Douglas had arrived at the camp in the beginning of December 1977 when he underwent a short course in firearms. Although he was not part of our group, I had great admiration for him because he was middle-aged and seemed to be someone with a high sense of responsibility and discipline. I did not want to operate with someone who would be a nuisance to me.

After mentioning Douglas' name, Obadi vehemently shook his head in disapproval. He just said Douglas was to be deployed somewhere else. As he was still busy completing some other tasks in the camp, he said I could approach him before he left when I had decided with whom I wanted to operate, as he was going to collect me the following day. Before he left, he told me that he had decided to pair me with Thabo Mavuyo. I strongly protested as I told him in no uncertain terms that Thabo was ill-disciplined as he was often going out to drink "*tho tho tho*" with the local peasants. Obadi seemed to be unfazed as he told me that we were not going to be deployed inside the country, but in one of the frontline states. I relented because at least I received an assurance that I would not be deployed with Thabo inside the country. After Obadi left, I started packing my belongings in preparation for his visit the following day.

Although I was not supposed to inform anybody about my impending departure, I decided to inform Douglas about what had happened. I informed him how I would prefer to operate with him and had initially refused to operate with Thabo. Douglas had the same concerns as me about Thabo and

his group. Douglas went on to become the Regional Head of Construction in Angola before his mysterious death in 1985. The following day, late on Saturday afternoon, Obadi collected me and Thabo and went to drop us at a flat that belonged to the propaganda unit of Radio Freedom. That evening we were both given our false South African passports and told to prepare for our journey the following day, which was heading to Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, from where we would receive our next orders. We had to memorise the particulars of our passports in order to assume the identity of the former owners.

My passport used to belong to a certain Mabaso who had travelled extensively between South Africa, Britain and Portugal. My alibi was that I was studying Civil Engineering in South Africa and had visited these other two countries on a student exchange program. I had to figure out on my own the names of the universities in Lisbon and London that I had visited, something not difficult to do as someone who had just completed MCW, Obadi quipped with a wry smile before he left. After memorising the particulars of our passports and completing the “*immigration officer versus passenger*” game we were playing together with Thabo Mavuyo, we went to bed. The game entailed one acting as an immigration officer questioning the passenger about the contents of his passport and about his intended destination. We left nothing to chance.

CHAPTER 9

Deployment to The Front

Early on the Sunday morning, Obadi collected us from the flat and drove us to the airport where we boarded an ALITALIA flight at about 11:00 destined for Salisbury (now Harare) with a stop-over in Lusaka. Obadi had given us about thirty US dollars each for pocket money. After a two and a half hour flight we arrived safely in Lusaka and waited for Keith Mokoape to collect us at the airport. Our international vaccine certificates were not in order. It was clearly evident that they were forged. Quick thinking from Thabo Mavuyo saved our blushes when he managed to push discretely two boxes of Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes in the direction of the immigration officer. Thabo had bought a carton of cigarettes on the plane with some of the money Obadi had given us. With hindsight we thought it was a good idea that he had bought the cigarettes as it became handy under the circumstances. We were directed to a waiting area where we patiently waited for Keith to collect us. After collecting us, Keith drove us to a house in Danga Road situated in the township of Chunga in Lusaka. I later discovered that this was the official house of Joe Modise. At the house we found some comrades to whom we were introduced. They were in charge of the Botswana MK underground machinery. Victor Modise (MK Thabo or Bob were his other underground names in Botswana) was introduced as the commander of the MK machinery. Shaheed Rajie (MK Steve or Daniel Simons) was the Commissar and the third comrade was Abe Maseke (MK George Mandla). We knew George Mandla from Benguela where he was an assistant instructor in military tactics. He used to assist Banda in field work as Banda was no longer young and could no longer cope with the physicality of military tactics. We were also introduced to Snuki Zikalala. Snuki was working closely with Keith.

Later in the day we were joined by both Joe Modise (JM) and Joe Slovo

(JS) on whose behest the meeting was convened. The meeting was aimed at re-organising the Botswana MK machinery after the withdrawal of Keith and Snuki from Botswana. Both Snuki and Keith had been based in Botswana since 1974 and 1976 respectively. They were both declared prohibited immigrants after the Botswana officials instructed by the South African regime raided ANC underground houses in Botswana and discovered large caches of weapons and ammunition destined for South Africa. When they were in Botswana, they were involved in every activity of the ANC whether it was receiving and processing of new ANC recruits from inside the country bound for military training or schooling abroad or reviving and establishing ANC underground structures inside the country or planning MK operations. They controlled and mastered almost everything. Their downfall came in September 1977 when an MK unit destined for operations inside the country was intercepted and arrested in Mafikeng. One of the members of the unit, who was trained inside the country, Eidken Ramudzuli, broke down under police interrogation and divulged the existence of other MK units inside the country that led to the shooting and subsequent killing of Nicholas Molokwane, who was dubbed the “Dobsonville teacher”.

Ramudzuli also disclosed that Keith and Snuki were his handlers in Botswana. The South African government pressurised the Botswana government into deporting both Keith and Snuki. After both were asked to leave, it was decided that Thabo Mavuyo and I would replace them in Botswana. Our meeting in Lusaka took place when new MK structures were introduced. The Revolutionary Council (RC) established a Central Military Headquarters (CHQ) based in Lusaka. As the RC controlled all aspects of MK activities, the CHQ was tasked purely to develop armed struggle internally. Joe Modise, assisted by Keith and Snuki, was responsible for Botswana, code-named the Western Front and Joe Slovo was responsible for Swaziland (Eastern Front) and was assisted by Sello Motau (MK Paul Dikeledi), Lennox Lagu and Jacob Zuma. Under the CHQ were Regional Military Headquarters (RHQ's) based in Swaziland and Botswana.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce new members of the restructured RHQ of the Western Front, including their duties. Victor Modise and Shaheed Rajie retained their respective positions of Commander and Commissar. In addition to his duties as a Commissar, Shaheed was also the Treasurer. I was introduced as the Chief of Operations, George Mandla as the Chief of Logistics and Thabo Mavuyo as the Chief of Reconnaissance and Infiltration. My main duties as the Chief of Operations were to plan military operations inside the country in conjunction with the RHQ and to brief MK operatives who were destined to go inside the country about the nature of their military targets. It was emphasised that all military targets should conform to the policies of the ANC where loss of civilian life ought to be avoided at all

costs. It was also my duty to oversee the welfare and well-being of all military units destined for the country.

George Mandla's duties were to ensure that all military hardware were stored properly, safely and always in good working condition. Lastly, the duties of Thabo Mavuyo were to reconnoitre the borders of Botswana and South Africa and to ensure that military units destined for the country were using safe and secure routes. Our immediate task as the RHQ was to firstly ensure our (mine and Thabo's) safe infiltration into Botswana and establish ourselves as official refugees in that country and to establish safe transit accommodation for units destined into South Africa. It was decided that the RHQ would have regular meetings with the CHQ preferably on a monthly basis to review the progress of the operations inside the country. The mandate of the RHQ was the planning of military operations inside the country on the western half of South Africa starting from Messina in the Northern Transvaal to Cape Town, whilst the Eastern Front (Swaziland) was responsible for the area east of Messina and also up to Cape Town. After the meeting, the rest of us held informal discussions with Joe Slovo (JS) as Joe Modise (JM) had excused himself as he had other engagements.

I later became aware that it was a tradition for comrades of the RHQ to buy duty-free whiskey on the plane on their way to Lusaka so as to enjoy a drink or two during the informal discussions after the main meeting was concluded. The aim of the informal discussions was to share experiences about the successes and the set-backs of military operations inside the country. During that particular discussion, the incident of Nicholas Molokwane, the Dobsonville teacher, was discussed. In that incident Nicholas and Eidken Ramudzuli were trained in Botswana whilst working legally as teachers in South Africa. They were trained in the usage of the Scorpion machine pistol, explosives and hand grenades. They were sent back into the country together with a fully trained comrade who underwent military training in the Soviet Union and whose travelling name was Mandla. Inside the country, the unit of three were incompatible because Eidken and Mandla were ill-disciplined as they used to consume alcohol excessively. Nicholas went back to Botswana and reported the behaviour of the two to the RHQ. In Botswana, the RHQ decided to separate the unit by allowing Nicholas to operate alone and intended to reinforce him with a fully trained comrade from the camps.

In the meantime they sent him back to South Africa as he was legally employed as a teacher. The other two were infiltrated back into the country and Eidken served as a host to Mandla as he (Eidken) was also legally employed. After Eidken and Mandla were infiltrated into the country, they were arrested at the Mafikeng train station after consuming excessive alcohol. After interrogation by the Security Branch of the Police, they revealed the identity of Nicholas who was no longer operating with them and who had

gone back to Dobsonville. They divulged to the police that Nicholas also received military training in Botswana. As a result of the information given to police, a convoy of South African Police with military vehicles descended on Nicholas's house in Dobsonville on the 26 September 1977 where they surrounded it and shouted at him to surrender.

According to witnesses who were at the house during the incident, Nicholas took out the Scorpion machine pistol as soon as the police knocked at the door. As the police were busy shouting and screaming at him, he decided to shoot through the front door and injured a Major, who was the Commander of the police unit and a sergeant. The police responded with a barrage of gunfire and subsequently overpowered him. He died on the scene. The lesson from this incident was that Mandla was supposed to have been sent back to the camps immediately after reports surfaced of his ill-discipline. What made matters worse was the fact that Mandla became a turncoat and was used as a State witness in some political trials where MK soldiers were involved. To me, as someone deployed as Chief of Operations, the informal discussions were very useful and informative as Slovo used to share his experiences of the Eastern Front with the rest of the comrades.

Days later, Thabo and I had to be infiltrated into Botswana so that we could be declared as refugees in order to establish ourselves officially in that country. The plan was that we would fly into Botswana with our forged South African passports pretending to be in transit to South Africa. Once in Botswana, we would vanish without a trace and re-appear after some weeks pretending to be newly arrived refugees from South Africa seeking political asylum in Botswana. The arrangements were that I would fly into Gaborone and pretend to be seeing a colleague, Dr Thabo Mokoena, who was a Senior Lecturer of Chemistry at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS) and sleep over at his place and then the following morning I would take the Bulawayo train from Rhodesia destined to Johannesburg. Thabo Mavuyo would follow but would disembark at Selebi-Pikwe Airport, a small town in northern Botswana, from where he would take the Bulawayo train to Gaborone.

I boarded the Botswana Airways plane in the morning from Lusaka and arrived in Gaborone around lunchtime. I made sure that I was the last person to go through immigration. Normally the immigration officials were very strict in scrutinising the passports of those first in the queue and I also wanted to hear the type of questions they were posing to other passengers. When my turn came, I calmly handed over my passport to the immigration officer. After scrutinising my passport, the officer seemed to be fascinated by the places I had visited in Europe, London and Lisbon.

Immigration Officer: Mr Mabaso, where are you coming from?

Me: Lisbon, via London.

Immigration Officer: What did you do in Lisbon? Of all places you

- chose to go to Lisbon?
A roar of laughter followed from other immigration officers who were listening to our discussion.
- Me: Please don't undermine the Portuguese.
They invented the latest methods of curing concrete. I attended a civil engineering seminar in Lisbon that dealt with the latest methods of curing rapid- hardening cement.
- Immigration Officer: Mr Mabaso, you seem to be a well educated man, especially for a Black South African.
What is your occupation?
- Me: Civil Engineer.
- Immigration Officer: Whom are you visiting now in Botswana?
- Me: I am in transit to Johannesburg. I intend boarding the morning train to Johannesburg. I want to visit my old friend for a night and tomorrow I will proceed to Johannesburg.
- Immigration Officer: Who is your friend?
- Me: Dr Mokoena, a Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at the UBLS.
- Immigration Officer: I know him very well. He has travelled extensively around the world. I can grant you a visa for seven days if you want to extend your stay in Botswana.
- Me: Thank you very much for the offer, but I need to go back to South Africa tomorrow.
- Immigration Officer: Well done! We Batswana are also proud to see Black South Africans involved in professions like Civil Engineering.
- Me: Thank you!

I grabbed my passport and left the terminal building and looked for the man who was going to pick me up from the airport. I was told his head was clean shaven and he was light in complexion. In underground circles he was referred to as "Cleanhead". His name was George Phahle. A well-known comrade and socialite in Botswana who was killed in Gaborone on 14 June 1985 together with his wife and other South African exiles during a military raid by the South African Defence Force on houses of people suspected to be members of the ANC. He was driving a fawn or beige Toyota Hi-Lux bakkie which was his means of transport throughout the years he spent in Botswana. After introducing myself, Bra George drove me to his place where I had to wait for Victor Modise to pick me up in the evening as he was not supposed to be seen with Victor in public. He was still staying alone as he had not yet married his wife, Lindi Malaza.

As it was already lunchtime, “Bra G”, as he was affectionately called by his close colleagues and comrades, prepared lunch. It was the first normal meal I had had in almost fifteen months. As I was devouring my meal to the astonishment of Bra G, I could not help but think of how Sizwe Meli, the Camp Commissar of Benguela, used to mock us when our morale was low because there was no food in the camp. Sizwe used to say, *“When there is no food, comrades say uMkhonto is bad, but when there is food, comrades say – Hamba Kable Mkhonto.”* Basically he was admonishing us that our morale should not be based on anything other than our political conviction. As I was eating my meal I could not stop saying *“Hamba Kable Mkhonto”* (bon voyage Mkhonto). Years later Bra G used to comment about how astonished he was to see me completing the meal within a split second, but understood my predicament as I had come from the camps.

Whilst waiting for Victor, Bra G de-briefed me about the political situation in Botswana especially about the hostility the majority of South African refugees displayed towards the ANC. At least while I was in Lusaka, Keith and Snuki did brief me about the climate under which the ANC was operating in Botswana. A typical story that Keith and Snuki used to narrate was that of Lefifi Tladi who was a well-known Black Consciousness artist of DASHIKI fame who fled South Africa into Botswana after June 16, 1976. According to them, Lefifi Tladi was very hostile to the ANC in Botswana because of its non-racial policy of admitting Whites into its ranks. In 1977 Nigeria hosted the Pan African Arts Festival which was commonly known as FASTAC. Lefifi wanted to participate in the festival but could not as only the ANC and the PAC were recognised by the organisers of the festival. Although he was more sympathetic to the PAC, the PAC had no means to send him to Nigeria. As a last resort, he turned to the ANC for assistance with the promise that he would join the ANC if it succeeded to take him to Nigeria in order to attend the festival. Indeed the ANC sponsored him to the FASTAC Festival. On his return, he still refused to join the ANC. When asked why, then, did he use the ANC to attend FASTAC, Lefifi answered, *“If one can use a crocodile to swim across a flooded river, why not?”* But his luck ran out when he wanted to use the same tactic in attending the eleventh World Festival of Youth and Students that was held in Cuba in 1978. This time the crocodile was in no mood to be used by Lefifi for crossing the river, hence his attempts of trying to attend the festival collapsed.

In the evening, Victor collected me and I went to sleep at his place. The following day Thabo arrived and we were all staying together. It was already the end of March. Thabo and I were transported to Goodhope, Barolong Farms in Southern Botswana near the South African border. The place is not very far from Mafikeng. We stayed at a house that belonged to one of the relatives of Nat Serache. Nat Serache was a journalist employed by the Rand

Daily Mail in Johannesburg and also worked as a freelance journalist for the BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation. He left South Africa for Botswana in April 1977 after being on the run from the South African Security Police. We were to remain there underground for a month until we resurfaced as refugees seeking political asylum. On the day we went to Goodhope, we were also accompanied by Nat as he introduced us as his colleagues from the BBC. Years later, on 13 February 1985, Nat Serache narrowly escaped death when his house was also attacked and blown up in a cross-border raid by the South African Defence Force. We stayed in the village for about two weeks after which we returned to Gaborone. By that time we had completely changed our identity. I had already introduced myself as Pascal, which was my new assumed name in Botswana. Thabo became known as Mpho.

After arriving in Gaborone we had to report to the police the following day to declare as refugees. As planned I reported to the police. I had rehearsed my alibi to fit into my new identity. My official name was Rex Themba Mali born and bred in Cradock, in the Eastern Cape. I fled the country because I was a member of AZAPO who attended the funeral of Robert Sobukwe which was held at Graaff-Reinet on 11 March 1978. The South African Security Police were looking for me because I was one of those who stoned Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi during the funeral. After reading my report, the police officer seemed to be agitated, *“Why are you using a funeral for political reasons?”* My answer was, *“We South Africans don’t like Homeland leaders.”* I kept my answers short as I did not want to be involved in an argument with him. *“So what are you going to do now? Are you still a member of AZAPO?”* was the next question. *“I am really undecided because most of my friends told me that AZAPO is not that strong in exile.”* Was my answer. As if he was waiting for my answer, the officer told me diplomatically that there were two strong Liberation Movements from South Africa, the ANC and the PAC. But, if I join the ANC, they will immediately take me to school or for military training. Would I consider joining the ANC, if so, they could contact an ANC official to collect me. *“No, no, no...”* Was my next answer. *“I am non-aligned. Give me a chance to decide my next options.”*

Although the officer accepted my explanation, he was visibly disappointed. Disappointed because the Botswana Government and especially its citizens, were becoming impatient with so many South African refugees aimlessly roaming the streets of Botswana and some of them becoming involved in serious crime. The ANC was perceived as the only Liberation Movement capable of providing its members with either schooling or military training. My calmness was temporarily disturbed when the officer took a photo of me and some fingerprints. I became apprehensive as most refugees suspected that the Botswana Police were handing copies of these to their South African counterparts. In that event, the South African Police would find out that Rex Themba Mali was a fictitious person. Unfortunately, such incidents were

unavoidable as the law in Botswana required that all refugees entering the country ought to be fingerprinted.

My next challenge was to get accommodation of my own. Fortunately before the end of April, Snuki arrived in Gaborone and introduced me to an old friend who used to be one of his contacts. The friend's name was Daphne. She was born and bred in Mohlakeng, a Black township south of Randfontein in South Africa, but relocated to Botswana in the 1960's. Snuki managed to persuade her to allow me to rent the servant's quarters of her house in Broadhurst, which was a room and a toilet situated at the back of the house. Broadhurst was a fast growing middle-class suburb of Gaborone where its upcoming rich and young inhabitants were making their mark. Daphne was a single mother with three teenage children, two boys and a girl. The eldest boy was Barend followed by a girl named Mumsy and then the last born, a boy, named Tebogo. I also discovered that Daphne was a very close friend of Bra G (George Phahle). Bra G used to spend a lot of his time at her house. When Snuki introduced me to Daphne, he requested her not to divulge to anyone that I had been introduced to her by him because of fear of exposing my cover as a "non-aligned" refugee.

There were three other boys who were staying with Daphne who left South Africa and also became refugees. They were her relatives from Mohlakeng. All were brothers, the two younger ones being twins. The backyard neighbours were also refugees from South Africa. There were more than ten refugees staying at the house at any given time all of them being hostile to the ANC. From time to time they would try to recruit me into their group, but I would refuse to join them. At one stage, Letlapa Mpahlele, the former President of the PAC, was staying with them. The three brothers staying at Daphne's house used to request food from me whenever there was no food in the main house. I reckon that Daphne used to lock the food away when she went to work, otherwise the boys would be at home all day long feasting on her groceries.

One day the elder brother came into my room. I thought he was looking for food. When I offered him food, he vehemently pushed the food away. I was surprised by his conduct. Before I could say anything, he told me that he was disappointed that all along I was feeding him with Russian White food. The Russian White food he referred to was ostensibly the food that I was getting from the ANC because the ANC was supported by the Soviet Union. By White food he meant the widespread international solidarity support the ANC was enjoying from most countries in Europe. There was a perception amongst South African refugees that the international community, especially European countries favoured the ANC over other organisations because of its non-racial policies. I was stunned by this young man's reaction as I did not know how he found out that I was a member of the ANC. I later found out that in the heat of the moment, when Daphne was questioning them about

their wisdom of refusing to go to school or undergoing military training and above all, their total dependency on her for everything, she snapped by telling them that they should join the ANC like me as all ANC members were not burdensome or a nuisance to anybody. This is what led to the rant about the Russian White food. The hostility towards the ANC those days in Botswana amongst South African refugees was palpable.

What exacerbated the situation was the presence in Botswana of some members of the Group of Eight, like Tennyson Makiwane, who were expelled from the ANC in September 1975. They continuously spread malicious propaganda about the ANC and specifically about Oliver Tambo within the South African refugee community that was based in that country. George Phahle used to narrate how Tennyson Makiwane used to continuously repeat his accusations which were directed at the ANC and its President, initially contained in their statement made public in London in December 1975 on the occasion of the launch of a rival organisation to the ANC called the ANC (African Nationalists). In that statement, which was read by Tennyson Makiwane on behalf of the Group of Eight, the Group of Eight proclaimed:

“Oliver Tambo, his hand always clutching to a passport, always on the point of flying off somewhere, makes a remarkable contrast to a leader like Samora Machel, who during the struggle was seen always having a gun slung over his shoulder, leading his men into the fight...”¹

In later years, this hostility against the ANC would wane drastically after the ANC managed to stage spectacular attacks against the apartheid regime and its collaborators including the assassination of Sergeant-Detective Orphan “Hlubi” Chapi and the very Tennyson Makiwane, who later joined the Transkei Bantustan led by Kaiser Matanzima. Orphan “Hlubi” Chapi, who was staying in Rockville, Soweto, was gunned down by Jabu Obed Masina, a cadre of uMkhonto we Sizwe, on the 25 June 1978² whilst Tennyson Makiwane was killed in June 1980 in Mthatha after joining the Transkei Bantustan in February 1979.³

One day as I walked through the CBD of Gaborone I saw Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo walking towards me. They were coming from the Nigerian Embassy. I ducked immediately and looked away pretending that I was window shopping. After they had passed, I stood there motionless not knowing what to do. I knew trying to talk to Tsietsi to convince him to join the ANC at that late stage would be foolhardy on my part. But what about informing him about the whereabouts of his elder brother, Rocks, something that might have persuaded him to rethink his hostility towards the ANC. But again I thought speaking to him would blow my cover and endanger my life. For days on end I pondered this without coming to a definite conclusion. But someone I did not hesitate to speak to when I met her was Sindiswa Gwazela, the aunt of Mbuyisa Makhubo.

I met her at a time when she was ostracized by many refugees in Gaborone. Some spread malicious rumours about her to the effect that she was an informer for the South African Government. The rumours emanated from the fact that she exposed the cover of many underground fighters during the time when she was detained. I tried to find out from her what led to her arrest in the first place and what the Security Police knew about me. She could not answer and I observed that she was under tremendous stress as she seemed to be aware of the negative rumours that were circulating about her in Botswana. As I no longer had an interest in her activities, I decided not to pursue the matter any further.

———— CHAPTER 10 ————

IF WE MUST DIE

“THIS CHAPTER IS NOT PART OF
THE LIMITED INTERNET EDITION”

“THIS CHAPTER IS NOT PART OF
THE LIMITED INTERNET EDITION”

“THIS CHAPTER IS NOT PART OF
THE LIMITED INTERNET EDITION”

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CHAPTER 11

EMAGOJINI - Doing The TOYI-TOYI

I joined one of the ZIPRA camps in mid-September 1978 to undergo the two-week survival course. The camp in which I underwent training was known as CGT2 situated near Mkushi, a town three hundred kilometres north of the capital, Lusaka. At the time we did not know the meaning of CGT, but Peter J.H. Petter-Bowyer, a former Rhodesian combat pilot, in his autobiography, *“Winds of Destruction”*, claims the acronym stood for Communist Guerrilla Training bases which, according to him, were ZIPRA camps in Zambia and were four in total and identified with the numerals 1 – 4 because the Rhodesian Army did not know the ZIPRA names for the said bases¹. My arrival at the camp came at a time when ZIPRA guerrillas shot down, on 3 September, Air Rhodesia Flight 825 carrying fifty-six passengers en route from Kariba to Salisbury (as Harare was known then)². At the time newspapers reported that eighteen passengers survived the crash but ZIPRA guerrillas shot and killed ten of the survivors on the ground and the remaining eight managed to escape, including five who had left earlier to ask for water at a neighbouring village³.

I joined a unit of six comrades whose commander was David Tshabalala (MK Gilbert “Spartacus” Setlhomola). Other comrades included Jerry Matsile (MK Donald Magaxa aka Magaqa), who passed away in April 2013; George Mandla, also from the RHQ who was being redeployed by the CHQ; Mosely Hlatshwayo (MK Thibe “Moscow” Lesole) who later became the Chief of Staff of Pango and Commander of Caculama Camp in Angola; Baba (Babes) who later became a prominent driver of the ANC in Angola and Benjamin (MK Doctor) who was killed in Zimbabwe in 1979. Comrades who were in the unit of Doctor in Zimbabwe when he was killed say after his death, the enemy security forces severed his hand from his corpse and took it

away. This was probably for fingerprint identification, as the South African apartheid government wanted conclusive proof about the presence of MK combatants in that country, which until then was kept secret by the ANC leadership. The ZIPRA commander who was in charge of our training was known as Chapayev, nicknamed after a famous Soviet military commander of the Bolsheviks. His assistant, who was in charge of our physical training, was commonly known as “Makepusi”, the one who is always wearing a cap. What became clear to us from the beginning was the fact that no politics was taught amongst the ranks of ZIPRA. Anybody trying to discuss politics, especially ANC politics, in particular the Freedom Charter, wherein it is stated South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people, was viewed as an “intellectual” – *intelekusha*. According to some ZIPRA guerrilla fighters, the ANC was intellectualising the National Liberation Struggle.

This was made worse by some of us who were questioning the wisdom of shooting down a civilian plane and executing most of the survivors. As far as some of these commanders of ZIPRA were concerned, the South African political situation could not be compared with the political situation that prevailed in Zimbabwe at the time. Whilst in South Africa our Liberation Movement boasted famous names of White revolutionaries like Bram Fischer, Joe Slovo, Ruth First and so on, who were prepared to lay down their lives for the freedom of their Black compatriots, the same could not be said about White Rhodesians. According to them, White Rhodesians were firmly behind the Ian Smith regime and most of the White farming community were responsible for the atrocities perpetrated against Black civilians in the rural areas. Most of the ZIPRA commanders viewed the ANC as a microcosm of the United Nations – big talk and bravado with no visible and tangible actions to show on the ground. Our criticism of them shooting down the civilian plane was therefore misplaced. I soon realised in their slogans when doing *toyitoyi* that they viewed the farmers as equal prime military targets as soldiers and other security forces.

Our training used to commence with physical training early in the morning before we were allowed to have a much needed bath in the stream that was meandering through the camp. There was no breakfast. Only one meal a day, lunch, which was served at noon. After we had a bath, we would commence with the day’s military activities which included military tactics and sometimes military engineering. Military engineering was later discontinued because the ZIPRA instructors felt the unit was too good and excelled in the subject. By noon we could not wait to have our only meal as the exertion of the physical exercise had taken its toll on our bodies. The lunch mainly consisted of *isitsbwala*, mealiepap in *isiNdebele*, with carpenter,

a popular name used to denote cooked sardines that were originally cured with salt and left to dry seemingly for ages. It tasted horrible. I detested it with a passion. This was the standard and only meal of the day that was served to the thousands of ZIPRA fighters who were staying at the camp. At any given time, it was estimated that about three thousand soldiers were housed in that camp.

The incredible stories that Barney Molokoane used to narrate about ZIPRA fighters squabbling over guinea-fowl in the camps started to make sense to me. Otherwise, how could one survive on such a meagre meal a day that was devoid of any nutrients at a time when the body needed these the most. I began to envy the meals we used to receive in MK camps in Angola, especially the guarantee that one would receive three meals a day whatever the circumstances that prevailed at the time. I started wondering how nice it would be to devour some of the baboon meat we once tried to vomit in Novo Catengue and the nutritious python meat I used to shun in Funda which was frequently brought to us by the local peasants in exchange for the *slava* canned meat from the Soviet Union. Even the *slava* canned meat seemed to be a five star delicacy compared to the carpenter we were now eating. During the first day, in my naivety, I did not eat my meal as I could not withstand the smell and the taste of the carpenter, a decision that I would greatly regret in the days to come.

After lunch, Makepusi, the physical training instructor, informed us that we were to embark on a short five kilometre march. I was relieved because my body was feeling a little bit weak from the exhaustive physical exercises we had undergone that morning, coupled with the lack of proper meals. How I was mistaken! The short march was our rude introduction to *toyi-toyi*. The camp was situated in a hilly, mountainous terrain which was full of gorges (popularly known as “*emagojini*” within MK circles) with rivulets snaking through the camp like pythons in marshes and moorlands. Just before we started the short march, Makepusi informed us that he was going to shout slogans as we were marching and in response we must shout the words, “*HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!*”, like a barking dog. With our arms out-stretched holding our AK’s in an upright position, our short march to freedom began. As we were walking, Makepusi instructed us to walk briskly, the brisk walk changed into a trot and eventually the trot became a gallop. As we galloped, Makepusi started shouting his slogans and as directed, we responded with our loud barks.

The slogans would go on as follows:

“ZIPRA noMkhonto maCommandos”
 (ZIPRA and MK are commandos)
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “AYEZA maCommandos”
 (Commandos are coming)
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “TSHEL’ UMANDELA, maCOMMANDOS”
 (inform Mandela, Commandos are coming)
 “SIBAKHULULE EMAJELE!” (We’ll release them from jail)
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “KILL THE BOER, THE FARMER!”
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “KILL THE SON, THE DAUGHTER!”
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “KILL THE SISTER, THE BROTHER!”
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “BULALA! BULALA KONKE!”
 (KILL, KILL EVERYBODY)
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “BARK LIKE A DOG, MNTOMNYAMA (Black man)!”
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “BARK LIKE A DOG, NYAMAZANA (wild animal)!”
 “HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”
 “JAMBO PHEZULU ! PHEZULU !”
 (“Jambo” is a slang for military boots) (Boots up! Up!)
 “HAWU ! HAWU, HAWU !”
 “GIRI GIDIYA ! GIDIYA !”
 “HAWU ! HAWU, HAWU !”

In the beginning of the *toy-toyi*, we all responded and shouted with oomph and vigour. By the time we reached the five kilometre mark, the shouts were reduced to a murmur. At the end of the five kilometres, instead of resting, we returned to the camp with the same tempo and intensity of the *toy-toyi* with which we started. By the time we reached almost half the distance to the camp, the body could hardly withstand the physical exertion. This prompted Babes (Baba) who was the oldest in our unit, to stop running as he could no longer cope. When Makepusi observed that Babes had stopped running, he yelled at him saying, “*Hey, Mdala gijima lapbo!*” Meaning he better run fast. In Nguni, *Mdala* means an elderly man and because Babes was the oldest in our group, they felt it proper to address him as Mdala. But, we later found out that

the term in ZIPRA camps also referred to anyone who could not cope with the *toyi-toyi*. Despite the yelling, shouting and screaming of the instructors at Babes to increase his running speed, Babes could no longer take it. By the time the rest of the instructors joined in goading him with the butts of AK rifles, Babes had had enough. He exploded finally by standing up from a crouching position and told Makepusi and Chapayev that the ZIPRA survival course was meant for mercenaries and not for revolutionaries otherwise how does one explain the slogan of killing everybody. This is not what the ANC had taught us in the camps in Angola.

In addition, Babes asked in amazement and astonishment, what the constant running was all about and that soldiers should be able to think and analyse each given situation rather than depending on mercenary tactics. As if they expected our reaction, Makepusi and Chapayev did not even give Babes time to finish what he was saying when they simultaneously pounced on him by telling him that the survival course was not United Nations or rather they were not Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary General of the United Nations, who was inclined to entertain political discussions. With those words, they started goading everybody with the butts of AK47's, yelling at us to speed up.

I suffer from chronic hay fever and it becomes worse during spring, which was the time we underwent the survival course. Because of the hay fever, my chest became blocked and I could no longer breathe properly. The faster we ran, the more I suffocated and as a result I stopped running. As I stopped running I screamed and informed the instructors that I could no longer breathe properly because of the hay fever. I received a quick and prompt response from the instructors yelling at me, "*yifa soja loMkhonto*" (die, MK soldier). "*Mandela would be very happy to hear that one of his soldiers died during training whilst preparing to release him from Robben Island,*" The cheeky answer came from both Makepusi and Chapayev. With that answer, Makepusi resumed shouting the slogans as if he was rubbing salt into our physically wounded and tired bodies:

“SIBAKHULULE EMAJELE!”

“HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”

“KILL THE BOER, THE FARMER!”

“HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”

“BULALA! BULALA KONKE!”

“HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”

“BARK LIKE A DOG, MNTOMNYAMA!”

“HAWU! HAWU, HAWU!”

“BARK LIKE A DOG, NYAMAZANA!”

By the time we arrived at the camp, we were completely exhausted and physically drained. I had never thought or imagined that the human body could withstand such a physical onslaught.

Normally after training at night we would wash our bodies in the streams. But that night, after we had completed the *toyi-toyi*, we wanted nothing else but to sleep. We slept in foxholes with one blanket each. One's pyjamas were the very army uniform that was soaked in one's sweat. This was survival, a course that was geared towards acclimatising MK soldiers to actual conditions of rural guerrilla warfare. The following morning at five o'clock, we were awakened by one of the physical training instructors who put us through our paces by forcing us to run up and down the hilly terrain at breakneck speed. If we thought the physical training exercises would be light in view of the previous day's *toyi-toyi*, then we were horribly mistaken. Whilst the *toyi-toyi* concentrated on exercises that were meant to test the breaking or fracture point, which in engineering science is called the yield-point, of each and every limb of one's body, the physical training exercises concentrated on speed and manoeuvres. The morning exercises lasted only an hour but seemed to go on forever.

After the morning exercise, we were allowed to wash and have some good rest until eight o'clock when other classes would continue. Field tactics and explosives were to be followed by a long march. We enjoyed field tactics with live ammunition and the destruction of "targets" using high explosives. For a change even Makepusi and Chapayev were extremely impressed with our knowledge of and remarkable acumen in dealing with explosives. Unbeknown to them, most of the members in our unit, except for me and George Mandla, were part of a group that left Nova Catengue for Moscow in the Soviet Union where they specialised in Military Engineering. Of course I had earlier specialised in Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Funda, Angola. Because of our advanced knowledge in field tactics and explosives, the ZIPRA instructors concentrated in training us in the actual survival techniques that included long marches without food where we were given only three bullets to survive in the hostile terrain that was home to many wild animals. After the conclusion of our training, at the beginning of October, Snuki Zikalala accompanied by Comrade Mzwai Piliso came to fetch me.

Snuki informed us that Makepusi and Chapayev were extremely impressed with our knowledge of tactics and military engineering. They also conceded that we were the most disciplined unit of MK that had ever trained at the ZIPRA camps until that stage. Comrade Mzwai was not happy that Snuki had divulged that information to us as he felt it would make us relax instead of striving to improve our discipline. After Snuki and Comrade Mzwai had spoken, we all responded in unison, "*We serve the people of South Africa!*" as we were taught in our camps in Benguela and Nova Catengue before I was whisked

away to Lusaka where I would wait for my redeployment into Botswana.

On our way to Lusaka, Snuki confided in me how the ZIPRA instructors had valued and appreciated our level of discipline in view of the myriad of problems, most of them related to discipline, that MK soldiers had caused within the ZIPRA camps. Apparently some of the MK comrades, that included Samuel Mngqibisa (MK Elty Mhlekezi), were not happy with the treatment they had received under ZIPRA commanders. As I mentioned earlier, the methods used by ZIPRA instructors during training were diametrically opposed to those used by MK in Angola at the time. Whilst in the camps in Angola, MK relied on political persuasion to instil discipline, while ZIPRA solely relied on force (goading trainees with butts of AK-47's) to attain the same objectives and as a result most MK soldiers did not take kindly to the treatment. We found the unit of Elty Mhlekezi already at the CGT2 camp when we arrived for training and they confided to us about the harsh treatment that was meted out to them by the ZIPRA commanders. In later months, Elty was detained under sub-human conditions and his story is well documented in one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports⁴.

In Lusaka I stayed in Danga Road, a house in the suburb of Chunga that belonged to Joe Modise. This is the same house I stayed in when Thabo Mavuyo and I arrived from Angola. Most of the MK soldiers that completed the survival course were staying at this house, and some were staying in other houses scattered all over Lusaka. What struck me most was the aggression and the political intolerance displayed by the graduates of the ZIPRA survival course. On a weekly basis South African Newspapers, including the Rand Daily Mail, the Post and the Sunday Times and magazines like Drum, Bona and so forth, were delivered at various MK residences including the house in Chunga. The aim was to acquaint and equip MK soldiers with knowledge of the latest developments inside the country. At the time the Drum and Bona magazines, which catered exclusively for African readers, would show how the apartheid regime was rolling out electricity and telephone lines to the Black townships, especially into Soweto. When we left South Africa in 1976, there were very few houses in African townships, if any, that had electricity and telephone lines. The advent of this technology was seen as a threat to our National Liberation Struggle by some of the comrades.

All of a sudden, some of the comrades started asking why some African families installed telephone lines in their houses? Do they want to inform the Special Branch about the presence of MK soldiers in their midst? Why are there so many Africans owning elegant and stylishly luxurious cars like Mercedes Benzes and BMW's? Where do they get the money from? Why is IBM and other multinationals offering so many bursaries to young Africans to study in the USA? Are they trying to create a middle-class? HAWU! They think we are stupid. They think we do not see their aim of creating a Black

middle-class in South Africa that would resist the implementation of the Freedom Charter? These are sell-outs! Ngama-“*intelekusha*” – intellectuals.

“KILL THE SON, THE DAUGHTER!”
 “KILL THE SISTER, THE BROTHER!”
 “BULALA! BULALA KONKE!”

This was the beginning of the militaristic tendencies that were planted by ZIPRA into MK ranks that had a devastating effect on the lives of so many MK soldiers in years to come in Angola. The slogan, “*Kill the Boer! Kill the Farmer!*”, which was popularised by Peter Mokaba, the late firebrand ANC youth leader, is a ZIPRA slogan that was imported into the MK ranks including *toy-toyi* by those MK combatants who underwent military training with ZIPRA in Lusaka, Zambia in the late 1970’s. The effect of the *toy-toyisation* of MK in Angola in subsequent years will be dealt with in later chapters of this book.

On 19 October 1978, whilst I was staying at Chunga, the Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith attacked the Freedom Camp (FC) situated about sixteen kilometres northeast of Lusaka, which was used as a transit camp for ZAPU refugees⁵. In this camp, there was also a presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) personnel. This attack was in retaliation for the attack on Air Rhodesia Flight 825 which was carried out on 3 September by ZIPRA guerrillas, described previously. FC was also used as a transit facility by MK cadres who were from Angola destined to undergo the survival course in other ZIPRA camps. Unlike other camps of ZIPRA which were heavily armed and defended with surface to air missiles (SAM) by ZIPRA’s own personnel, FC had no defence mechanism and equipment of its own simply because it was situated very close to the capital, Lusaka. Because of its proximity to the capital, the Zambian authorities were reluctant to allow ZIPRA to install heavy calibre weapons at the FC next to a densely populated urban area as the camp was under the supervision of the UNHCR.

In addition, the Zambian Defence Force (ZDF) felt it was not necessary to have additional security at FC as their own security forces were more than capable of thwarting and repelling any attack or threat to the security of FC. How they were mistaken! The Rhodesian Air Force used Canberra aircraft and Vampire jet fighters supported by Lynx helicopters in attacking the camp. After the attack on FC, the Rhodesian Air Force attacked the Mkushi camp further to the north, which was mostly inhabited by female ZIPRA soldiers. The last camp to be attacked was CGT2 where we had just completed our training⁶. In the FC, ZAPU refugees suffered heavy casualties where more than two hundred refugees were killed and more than six hundred wounded. Miraculously in this attack MK suffered the loss of only one soldier, whose travelling name was David, and a handful of injured amongst whom were

Themba “Scotch” Mlambo (Brigadier General John Msimang), Ngoza Zizi, Keith Masemola and Victor Thamage (MK Elliot Thula)⁷. During this attack the ZDF never made any effort to repel the attack by the Rhodesian Air Force (RAF).

At the time, it was rumoured that some elements from the ZDF connived and collaborated with the RAF in planning the attacks. Before the RAF dropped their bombs on FC, their squadron leader, one Chris Dixon, flew over the Lusaka International Airport with the sole aim of preventing any military intervention by the Zambian Air Force. His message to the Zambian Air Force was recorded as follows:

“Lusaka Tower this is Green Leader. This is a message for the Station Commander at Mumbwa from the Rhodesian Air Force. We are attacking the terrorist base at Westlands Farm at this time. This attack is against Rhodesian dissidents and not against Zambia. Rhodesia has no quarrel – repeat no quarrel – with Zambia or her Security Forces. We therefore ask you not to intervene or oppose our attack. However, we are orbiting your airfield at this time and are under orders to shoot down any Zambian aircraft that does not comply with this request and attempts to take off. Did you copy that?”⁸

The Zambian Air Force duly complied. However, the attack on CGT2 was not that plain-sailing. Because of the heavy calibre anti-aircraft gunfire directed at the invading forces, the RAF was quick to retreat.

Days following the attack, I was asked by Snuki to accompany him to the ANC ordinance Department where he sought weapons for our comrades who were trapped at FC. As FC was a refugee camp, no one was allowed to carry weapons in that camp. Unfortunately, despite his best efforts, he struggled to procure the weapons as only Joe Modise could request the office of President Tambo to release AK’s if they were to be used in Zambia. A week after the attack, on Friday, 27 October 1978, I left Zambia destined for Botswana.

When I arrived in Gaborone, I was briefed by the RHQ on the progress of our military operations inside the country. The previous day, on 26 October, a unit of three comrades had been infiltrated into the country near Mahikeng. The three comrades were Cyprian Hlatshwayo (MK Bismark), Vuyani Goniwe (MK Jorrisen) and Tladitsagae Moses “Moss/ Ngcosi” Molefe. The following day, 28 October, we heard in the news that two armed combatants of MK were killed near Mafikeng and the third was captured. We knew immediately that the news item referred to the said unit of three. The incident was reported in the Rand Daily Mail of 28 October as the main story under the headline: *“Terrorists die in gun battle”*.

The Rand Daily Mail (RDM) reported that the unit threw a grenade at a patrol of three Bophuthatswana policemen when they were stopped on suspicion of being “terrorists”. In return the police opened fire killing two and the one escaped. The RDM quoted the Commissioner of Police, Colonel J.

G. Bekker, as follows:

*“My men were out on a normal patrol. They came across the three men who were wearing blue overalls. The men were also wearing boots which we suspect are worn by terrorists. They confronted the men. One threw a hand grenade, but the policemen were not injured and they shot two of them dead. The third one fled and we launched an intensive hunt for him”.*⁹

The third person in the unit was later captured and imprisoned. The two who were killed were Bismark and Jorrisen. Moss Molefe, who was captured, was subsequently charged as accused number two together with John “Willie” Sekete, Magoeboeloes and nine others during the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial. Vusumuzi Nicholas Zulu (MK Mogomane Seretse) who was also in the platoon of Dumisani Khoza during our training in Novo Catengue, was also charged as accused number eleven during the Treason Trial¹⁰. He later became the main bodyguard of Nelson Mandela after Mandela was released from prison. On Friday, 13 July 2012, the Missing Person’s Task Team of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) led by Madeleine Fullard, exhumed the remains of Bismark and Jorrisen which were buried in a single grave at the Old Mmabatho Cemetery. The exhumation was attended by the families of the two comrades and the Premier of the North West, Thandi Modise. The same article of the RDM also reported about the earlier incident of Moshaneng (Witkleigat) which occurred on 1 August. Regarding the incident, the newspaper reported as follows:

*“A shopkeeper in the Witkleigat area, about 70 kilometres from Zeerust, alerted police about two men who tried to buy vast amounts of food and supplies. Earlier that week about R700 had been stolen from another shop in the district. When police arrived the two men fled. One of them stopped and hurled a hand grenade at them. Nobody was hurt. The man was soon captured, but his companion fled into the bush”*¹¹.

The article refers to the incident when Muzorewa and Windy were confronted by police when they tried to buy food from the shop. Indeed when the said shopkeeper who alerted the police discovered that these were MK guerrillas and not thieves as he originally thought, he went to see the ANC in Botswana where he apologised for the mistaken identity. Zakes Tolo, who was based at the ANC residence in Gaborone at the time, named the shopkeeper as “Scotch”. Apparently Scotch said that if he knew that the two were MK guerrillas he would have supplied the food to them free of charge as he personally identified with our liberation struggle.

I was also updated about the progress of the unit of Ali Makhobokana Makhosini who were sent to do reconnaissance in North Western Transvaal. When I left for Zambia late in August, the unit was still waiting for the third member as one of their members had been deported. In the beginning of October, when no reinforcement had yet arrived, the RHQ decided to incorporate Bob, who was one of our resident reconnaissance units based in

Selebi Phikwe in Northern Botswana, into the unit as the other two members, Ali Makhosini and Vusi Lerole, had been waiting in Botswana for more than two months. Bob was not a fully trained MK soldier. He only received a crash course in reconnaissance at the ZIPRA camps in Zambia and had a limited knowledge in handling firearms. In Botswana, his main duty involved the surveillance of the border between Botswana and South Africa with a view to determining safe routes into the country. With his background, the RHQ felt he would be more than capable of fulfilling the tasks of their reconnaissance mission. The unit of three was despatched into the country in the beginning of October. By 27 October, the unit had not yet returned from inside the country.

On 30 October, news came of an armed clash between a group of MK guerrillas and police fifty kilometres west of Louis Trichardt in the Northern Transvaal. The RDM of 31 October reported the incident as follows:

*“A gang of terrorists yesterday ambushed a police patrol and shot and wounded its commander on a farm fifty kilometres west of Louis Trichardt. Sergeant Thinus Nel, 33 was shot in the chest and arm... The drama began when a black farm labourer spotted the heavily armed gang on the empty farm, Poeraspan. The police were called. As Sergeant Nel and his party of six, armed mainly with sten guns, crossed a clearing, the terrorists opened up with automatic rifles from about 100 metres... It was not known how many terrorists were in the gang, but three had been seen”.*¹²

After hearing the news, we knew that it was the unit of Ali that was involved in the clash. For days to follow we were made to sit on the edge of our seats as the drama between the police and the three armed MK combatants played itself out on the South African Broadcasting Corporation TV news bulletins in front of millions of TV viewers as the police gave regular confident updates of their progress in pursuit of the combatants. The RDM of 01 November dedicated a special page¹³ on the progress of the so-called “hot pursuit”. In reporting the police operation, the RDM stated as follows:

“Police were yesterday closing the net on three fleeing terrorists heading for Botswana after a skirmish in the Northern Transvaal this week. The Commissioner of Police, General Mike Geldenbuys, said yesterday, “The terrorists are armed to the teeth.” Police launched a massive ground and air search, using helicopters, a spotter plane, dogs and the country’s crack police anti-terrorist unit, headed by Colonel Sarel Verwey. Road blocks were set up in and around towns along the terror gang’s escape route and police vehicles patrolled roads in the vicinity... All the units, at road blocks, on roads and in the fields were linked by radio... A policeman was heard to say, “These men are very clever. They use every trick in the book. They walk on clumps of grass and along the wire strands of fences in an effort to elude their pursuers.”

Despite the tight security, the unit managed to escape and elude the security net and arrived safely in Botswana where they were apprehended by the Botswana Police. We received news from our contacts within the

Botswana Police in Selebi Phikwe, where the unit was held in police holding cells, that the Botswana Police intended either to deport the three to Zambia or hand them over to the South African Police as they (South African Police) were pressurising the Botswana Police to hand them over. Victor Modise, our commander, went to inform Comrade Isaac Makopo, who was the Chief Representative of the ANC in Botswana, to contact the Botswana Police with a view to informing them that the three were members of MK and should not be handed over to South Africa.

Comrade Makopo wanted a letter from Lusaka confirming this. He was reluctant to confront the Botswana Police without a letter from Lusaka mandating him to do so. When we told Joe Modise about Makopo's conduct, he was livid. According to Joe Modise, the delay in requesting for the release of the three might play into the hands of the South African Police whereby they could pressurise Botswana to hand over the three or they might even try to kidnap them and take them back to South Africa. Ultimately Botswana deported them back to Lusaka. Before that, I managed to talk to Ali Makhosini who was the commander of the unit. He confirmed most of the reports published in the newspapers. According to him, they were betrayed by two African farm labourers who spotted them whilst hiding on the premises of the farm reported as Puraspan (sometimes written as Poeraspan)¹⁴ west of Louis Trichardt whilst carrying their AK-47's.

They briefly detained the two farm workers pleading with them not to inform their boss or the police about their presence on the farm as they were armed combatants of the ANC fighting for the release of Nelson Mandela from Robben Island. They tried to politicise the two to dissuade them from reporting them to the police. At one stage they thought of using ZIPRA tactics in dealing with them. In terms of the experience gained from ZIPRA, when one is confronted with such a situation, depending on the merits, it is either that one detains the individuals until night falls and then releases them at a time when one could easily escape into neighbouring places with sufficient shelter or if one does not feel comfortable in releasing them, to kidnap them for days and release them when one feels absolutely certain that even if they are released, they will not pose danger to one's security. The last option and the worst case scenario is to execute them if they display some hostility towards you. In this case Ali said the two pretended to understand their explanation and they decided to release them.

A few minutes after they had released them, they saw a police unit led by Sergeant Nel (as reported in the RDM) approaching their hideout. Sergeant Nel was holding one of the labourers by the scruff of his neck and shouting at him in Afrikaans to show them where the unit was hiding. "*Waar is bulle? Jy het mos gesê julle het terrorieste gesien!*" said the agitated voice of Sergeant Nel. At that moment Ali, without warning, decided to aim and opened fire on

Sergeant Nel. The other two, Vusi and Bob, also opened fire. He hit Sergeant Nel in the chest and arm. All the policemen immediately took cover and didn't try to respond with fire. A farmer, Mr Victor Miller, who accompanied the police to the scene, when interviewed after the incident, remarked as follows: *"The bush was very sparse. They could have got us very easily. But they probably thought they had finished us off with the first burst...I am lucky to be alive."*¹⁵

During the commotion, they managed to escape. Ali said for more than a week they survived by occupying farm houses during the day and walking during the night. The majority of farm houses were vacant and unoccupied as the owners were absentee landlords staying in the urban areas of Witwatersrand. The police never bothered to search the farms because they thought it would have been unthinkable for them to hide in these farmsteads. One of the problems they encountered was the lack of discipline from Bob as he could not cope with the vicissitudes of their mission. We understood the source of the problem as Bob was not a fully trained soldier. Vusi Lerole was ultimately killed in 1983 with Tony Geoffrey Ramokopeloa (MK Dan April) near Louis Trichardt during a gunfight with the apartheid security forces¹⁶. Dan April also received his training at Catengue. He was in Platoon Three of Company Three. Their remains were reburied in Rustenburg on 4 December 2010.¹⁷

CHAPTER 12

Betrayed By *ASKARIS*

S ometime in November, after we had submitted our report to the CHQ regarding Ali's unit, the RHQ was called to Lusaka for a very important briefing. All three permanent members of the CHQ, Joe Modise, Keith Mokoape and Snuki Zikalala, were present. The meeting was also attended by Joe Slovo. As usual, Joe Modise chaired the meeting. In view of the incidents of Moshaneng (Witkleigat), Mafikeng, involving the death of Bismark and Jorrisen, and now the incident involving Ali's unit, the NEC had instructed the CHQ to halt all military operations inside the country. All these incidents had one thing in common, the betrayal of our combatants by the very people whom we professed to liberate from the apartheid regime. It was because of similar incidents that occurred throughout the country that the leadership of the ANC decided during the previous month to visit Vietnam to learn from their experiences as to how they managed to defeat the Americans, despite their military strength.

After the ANC's visit to Vietnam, it was felt that MK must suspend its military operations in order to consolidate the political underground structures of the ANC. The analysis of the NEC regarding operations of MK inside the country was that the operations lacked popular support, as the masses of our country were not yet ready for armed struggle, especially those residing in rural areas. Instead of engaging in a full-scale guerrilla warfare inside the country, it was decided that MK should help to consolidate the political underground structures by means of armed propaganda. According to Joe Slovo and Joe Modise, armed propaganda entailed the carrying out of operations in support of mass political protests and strikes. For instance, in an area where there were mass upheavals, MK combatants could support the masses by attacking the marauding police force with hand grenades and

so on. But what about the rural areas where there were no political protests taking place? Joe Slovo said that in rural areas MK units had to resort to what he called “probing”. Probing units of MK could be established in rural areas by accommodating them in safe bases after reconnoitring the area. Instead of carrying out conventional operations against military installations, the units would carefully select targets that would complement the political activities of rural people around land reform and in support of their actions against evictions.

From the meeting we could deduce that the NEC, especially the Internal Political Reconstruction Committee headed by John Motshabi and deputised by Mac Maharaj, was not happy with the militaristic approach adopted by MK of continuing with armed operations inside the country without the necessary political support from the masses of our people. Some members of the NEC strongly felt that MK was committing the same mistake that was committed by Che Guevara in Bolivia, that of fomenting a revolution without the political support of the masses.

After the conclusion of the meeting, Joe Slovo and Joe Modise arranged for an informal meeting between us and John Motshabi, Joe Nhlanhla, who was the Administrative Secretary in the Office of the President, and Andrew Masondo, who was the National Commissar. Both Joe Slovo and Joe Modise did not attend this meeting as they had prior engagements. I understood why both Slovo and Modise could not attend the meeting. Both, especially Slovo, had some serious political differences with Mac Maharaj regarding the execution of the armed struggle. Whilst Maharaj favoured the more classical and conventional approach to guerrilla warfare, that is, to wait for a revolutionary situation to arise before launching a full-scale guerrilla warfare, Slovo favoured the Che Guevara approach, that of ‘creating’ a revolutionary situation. Howard Barrell states that Maharaj once accused the CHQ of having not only ignored the urgency of political reconstruction by political means but repeatedly frustrated attempts to achieve it.¹ On the other hand, writing in his article about Regis Debray², the revolutionary French journalist, in the African Communist, Slovo, quoting Che Guevara in his book, “Guerrilla Warfare”, remarked: *“This conclusion (that of creating a revolutionary situation as was the case in Cuba) refutes ‘those who feel the need to wait until, in some perfect way, all the required objective and subjective conditions are at hand, instead of hastening to bring these conditions about through their own efforts.’”*³

Our meeting with Motshabi left us with more questions than answers as it gave us the impression that some members of the NEC wanted to stop all armed operations inside the country until such time that South Africa was totally engulfed in mass political uprisings. In any event, the CHQ did not stop us from sending more armed units into the country. The meeting was more of a precaution than an order about the impending restructuring of

political organs that were geared towards the prosecution of armed struggle inside the country.

Back in Botswana, the RHQ started preparations for the infiltration of our next combat unit inside the country after the setback of Moshaneng and Mafikeng. When I arrived in Botswana after I had undergone the (*toyitoyi*) survival course, I found Thabo Paulos Makgaga (MK Jacob) already in Gaborone staying alone in a safe underground house. He was sent earlier from Lusaka to reinforce the Ali Makhosini and Vusi Lerole's unit. Unfortunately by the time he arrived in Gaborone, the unit had already been dispatched into the country. It was thought that Jacob would join the unit immediately after it had returned to Botswana after completing its reconnaissance mission. But after the unit was arrested and deported back to Zambia, it was decided that Jacob would join the Barney Molokoane's unit that was previously involved in the Moshaneng armed clashes. Only four of the original nine members remained as Barney was injured and was receiving treatment in Lusaka. Windy was captured and Willie did not return to Botswana with the rest of the unit. Ace became very sick and had to be sent back to Lusaka for medical treatment. Simon "Pedro" Faku was struggling with a recurrence of an appendix which had troubled him whilst undergoing further training in the Soviet Union. When I informed Jacob that he was going to join the said unit, he was hesitant. He said to me that the reason he was hesitant was because of what Comrade Solomon "Solly" Simelane had said to him whilst he was in Lusaka after completing the survival course at the ZIPRA camps. Solly was working for the ANC's Department of Intelligence in Lusaka.⁴

Apparently Solly discovered that Jacob was smoking dagga, and after confronting him, according to Jacob, Solly threatened to send him to a place where he would no longer be able to smoke dagga again in his entire life. This had made him believe that Solly had meant that he would be sent into the country so that he could be killed. I tried to convince Jacob that was not what Solly had meant. Even if he had meant that he would be sent into the country, was that not the noble goal of every MK soldier? To fight for the liberation of his fellow oppressed countrymen? I posed a rhetorical question to him. Eventually Jacob joined the group after managing to "convince" him. In the absence of Barney, Muzorewa was appointed the commander.

Magaqa, Moscow and Jacob joined the unit as reinforcements. I was in the same unit as Magaqa and Moscow who did the survival course in ZIPRA camps in Zambia. On Friday night, 12 January 1979, the unit of seven comrades was infiltrated near the village of Sikwane in Botswana, which is close to Derdepoort, a small town in South Africa. On Saturday evening, 13 January, as I was listening to the evening news on the SABC radio, it was reported that an armed clash with seven ANC "terrorists" had taken place earlier that day near the town of Derdepoort next to the border of Botswana. One so-called

terrorist was shot dead and one captured. Arms and ammunition were also said to have been captured.

Before the unit was infiltrated into the country, it was staying at a safe house in Lobatse. Because of the reported incident, I expected the comrades to retreat back to Botswana. After hearing the news of the armed clash, I had a sinking feeling. I could not stop wondering why all of our units became involved in unplanned skirmishes with the police soon after entering the country. Early the following day, the Sunday morning, I left for Lobatse accompanied by Victor Modise. We found the remaining five of the unit at the house. They were all shattered. What happened is that Jacob was given the task of operating the LMG (light machine gun) by Muzorewa. In the morning (the Saturday), the unit decided to rest under trees in dense bushes as they could not walk for a long distance because the terrain in front of them was sparsely populated with vegetation. They decided to wait until the fall of darkness when they would proceed with their journey towards Garankuwa, a Black township outside Pretoria, a place that was well known to Muzorewa.

About noon, whilst they were resting, Jacob requested to relieve himself as he purportedly had a “runny” tummy. He left the LMG with Muzorewa and decided to arm himself with only two defensive grenades despite the advice of his comrades that he should have at least armed himself with an AK rifle. Hours went by without Jacob returning. Around four o’clock that afternoon they heard gunshots. Police were firing at their positions. Muzorewa managed to grab the LMG and fired back, with the rest of the unit responding with a volley of rapid fire. Muzorewa asked the unit to retreat whilst he was covering them. As the unit retreated, the police managed to subdue and ultimately killed him but he saved the lives of five of his comrades in the process. At night fall, Stalin Ngwekazi and China Msibi decided to return to the battle scene where they found the lifeless body of Muzorewa lying prostrate. They managed to cover the body which was surrounded by a pool of blood before retrieving the LMG, which was in itself an act of bravery. Both Stalin and China rejoined the unit as they retreated towards Botswana.

Jacob later became an *askari* who operated at Vlakplaas under the command of Eugene de Kock with deadly impunity. After betraying his comrades at Derdepoort, Jacob became a regular State witness in political trials involving captured MK soldiers. One of these trials where he testified as Mr X, was the trial of what became known as the “Soekmekaar Three”, involving Johnson Lubisi (MK Jimmy Dyantyi), Petrus Mashigo and Naphtali “Shoes” Manana, who were sentenced to death for their role in the attack of the Soekmekaar Police Station in the North-Eastern Transvaal. Their sentences were later commuted to life imprisonment upon successfully appealing at the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein. Testifying at the case, Jacob gave evidence as to how he managed to betray his comrades that day.

He said after leaving the unit under the false pretences of going to relieve himself, he managed to stop a passing White motorist who was driving from the direction of the South African border with Botswana. He asked the motorist to take him to the nearest police station where he wanted to hand himself over as he was a trained MK guerrilla. To prove his point, he handed over to the motorist the defensive hand grenades he had in his possession. Convinced of his credentials, the motorist allowed him into his car and drove back towards the border where the South African Police were camping. This resulted in the shoot-out that led to the death of Muzorewa.⁵

*“But such are called informers; men that live by treason as rat-catchers do by poison.”*⁶

In September 1943, Julius Fucik, the famous Czechoslovak journalist who was executed by the Nazis during the Second World War, wrote in his *“Notes from the Gallows”* just before he was executed, which were written on pieces of cigarette paper and smuggled out of prison by sympathetic prison warders:

*“He had paled before the rod of Gestapo and ratted to save his own skin... He had lost everything because he had begun to think of himself. To save his own skin he had sacrificed his comrades. He had given way to cowardice, and out of cowardice had turned traitor... He had deserted a glorious army and earned the contempt of the foulest of enemies...”*⁷

In view of the circumstances, Victor and I decided to relocate the comrades to a safer house in Mogoditshane, a village outside Gaborone. Every time someone was arrested inside the country, we closed the hideout and relocated to a safe house. This time the situation was even worse because Jacob had willingly betrayed his comrades. Both the Lobatse and Mogoditshane houses were procured by Snuki through his contacts. In Mogoditshane, the ANC had a residence which served as transit for its new recruits who were destined to either study abroad or undergo military training. Our safe house was situated far away from the residence of the ANC and would in no way have been suspected of housing MK soldiers.

In the months to come, more incidents took place which were similar in nature to the actions of Jacob. In February 1979, we continued to receive units that were destined to do reconnaissance in various parts of the Western Transvaal. One of these was the one involving Jeffrey Motutuzele Bosigo (MK Alex Mokahli, also known as Mahlepe in Botswana), the younger brother of Godfrey Bosigo (MK Oshkosh Khumalo). Jeffrey Bosigo was destined to operate in a unit with Abraham Mogopodi (MK Simpi Malefane). Once he arrived in Botswana, he deserted his unit and went to stay in Kanye, a town in the South East of Botswana, with a girlfriend before deciding to formally join the ranks of the South African Police. During this time, we had observed Thabo Mavuyo, who was in charge of infiltration, gradually becoming undisciplined. He was drinking liquor excessively, signs he exhibited whilst

we were training at Funda. Thabo was assisted in his duties by two comrades who underwent military training in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) with the group including Tebello Motapanyane and Omry Makgoale. One was the younger brother of Vusi Mayekso (Derrick Lobelo), Joshua Kaone Lobelo (MK Donald Siphon) and Ephraim Mfalapitsa (MK Francis “Shorty” Tladi).

Both comrades reported to Victor that it was impossible to work in harmony with Thabo. The two reported that whenever they were required to do reconnaissance along the borders of South Africa, Thabo would sometimes drop them at the border without the required equipment like binoculars, for instance, necessary in order to carry out a proper reconnaissance. As most of the time they were also expected to go into South Africa, they felt in many instances that the missions were ill-planned and sometimes they had a feeling that Thabo was gambling with their lives. Despite our efforts at counselling him, Thabo’s conduct became worse and he became more aggressive and defensive for no apparent reason. The RHQ reported his conduct to the CHQ with the recommendation that he be removed from Botswana and deployed elsewhere. After some persuasion, the CHQ reluctantly agreed to recall him to Lusaka where he would receive further instructions. As he did not have travelling documents, Victor escorted him to Francistown where he was to be transported by ZAPU in one of their chartered flights to Lusaka.

On their way to Francistown, Thabo Mavuyo deliberately picked a fight with Victor after he had consumed a lot of alcohol. Because of the in-fighting between the two, they never reached Francistown and as a result both had to turn back to Gaborone without reaching their intended destination. Back in Gaborone, Thabo managed to convince the RHQ that it would be better for him to travel alone by train to Francistown rather than be escorted by someone else as he was an adult and no longer a child. Because of the problems he had caused within the RHQ, we readily agreed to his suggestion as we did not want to have anything to do with him any longer. As agreed, Thabo left Gaborone destined for Francistown en-route to Lusaka. All this happened in the beginning of March 1979. After George Mandla, who was the RHQ Chief of Logistics, was redeployed, Thabo also became in charge of our logistics. He knew exactly where all of our weapons were stored in Botswana. For security reasons, we had stored our weapons in cattle posts throughout the length and breadth of Botswana. Some were stored in houses owned by some of our sympathisers, under the pretext that the metal trunks, in which the weapons were stored, contained books that we used during the time when we studied at university and no longer needed them except when we were conducting research. Our sympathisers, depending on the size of the cattle post, would store the metal trunks in a place that would be accessible whenever we wanted to refer to our “books” whilst we were conducting our “research”. This also became the main task of Thabo, to look for safe places where we could hide

our weapons.

On the morning of 14 March 1979⁸, as I was listening to the SABC news, it was reported that the South African Defence Force (SADF) had bombed an enemy camp deep in Angola. One of the planes belonging to the SADF, did not return to base, feared to have been shot down by enemy fire. In the same bulletin it was reported that the Botswana Police raided the homes and residences belonging to the ANC and its members, seizing a large number of arms and ammunition in the process. According to the news bulletin, some of the weapons were found in Mogoditshane, an ANC residence purportedly used to house South African refugees destined to study abroad. This was dramatic news indeed. I went to alert Victor Modise about what I had just heard. As I arrived at his place, Victor had just received news of the arrest of Ntate Maru, Powderhead, the Head of Ordinance in Botswana. We decided that he must inform Shaheed (Steve) whilst I went to inform Shorty Mfalapitsa to warn them about the latest developments in order for them to take the necessary precautions. Shorty was staying at the servant's quarters of the house belonging to Mrs Oliphant, the widow of the former mayor of Gaborone.

Mrs Oliphant was the mother of Dr Pinky Zikalala, the wife of Dr Snuki Zikalala. Shorty got to stay at Mrs Oliphant's house because Snuki had organised the accommodation for him. As I entered the house, I found Mrs Oliphant sitting on the bed. I asked to see Shorty. The first question she asked was, "*Who are you?*" When I introduced myself as a close friend of both Shorty and Snuki, Mrs Oliphant burst into tears. After she regained her composure, she told me that Shorty was arrested that morning by Botswana Police who found a cache of weapons in his bedroom. "*My son, I have never seen such a lot of weapons in my life.*" Mrs Oliphant confessed. She went on to say, "*What are the people of Gaborone going to say about me after the police found such a lot of weapons in my house and also me being the widow of the former mayor of Gaborone?*" She kept on sobbing. At that moment, many questions started running through my mind. What had gone wrong? Who might have betrayed Shorty and Ntate Maru? Only one person knew that Shorty was keeping weapons at his place, and that person was Thabo Mavuyo, whose real name we later discovered to be Peter Kimpani Mogoai! My immediate concern was how to deal with the pain and suffering of Mrs Oliphant caused by the arrest of Shorty and the subsequent repercussions and fallout that might follow. What was painful to me was the scene of her house after the police had managed to detain Shorty. The police had ransacked her house, with her furniture and belongings turned upside down whilst they were searching for weapons. After I had sympathised with her, and apologised for the pain inflicted on her by Shorty, I left, returning to Victor's place where we agreed to meet that morning for an unscheduled meeting of the RHQ.

I found both Victor and Shaheed in a sombre mood. They informed me

that a week before, Thabo, accompanied by the South African Security Police, collected all the weapons we had stored at different cattle posts throughout Botswana and transported them across the border into South Africa. Thus ended the era of Thabo Mavuyo and began the ruthless reign of terror of Sergeant Peter Kimpani Mogoai, who operated with impunity as an *askari*, also under the command of Eugene de Kock at Vlakplaas. Accompanied by Victor, I went to Mogoditshane to alert the unit of five that had been involved in the Derdepoort incident. Our aim was to evacuate the unit to another safe hideout, hopefully by then it was not yet arrested by the Botswana Police.

The unit had relocated to the place only in January, after the Derdepoort incident. We had to move out very fast as the house was no longer a safe underground place as Sergeant Mogoai knew of its existence. As it was during the day and we were not sure whether the place had been visited by the police, we decided to park our car at a distance and walk to the house. We found the comrades relaxed and listening to music. We informed them of what had happened that morning and that Thabo had deserted the ranks of MK. Fortunately the Botswana Police raided the wrong place in Mogoditshane. After receiving information from Sergeant Mogoai, that an MK unit was staying in Mogoditshane, the South African Police conveyed the message to their Botswana counterparts who in turn raided the ANC residence in Mogoditshane that was housing new recruits. Contrary to what the SABC had reported, fortunately no weapons were found there and the Botswana Police did not bother to search anywhere else.

As we were travelling in a Land Cruiser that had a canopy, we collected the comrades and transported them to a transit house. We decided not to take any clothing as it would have raised suspicions at that time of the day. The comrades were six in all, having been joined by Simon Faku who could not manage to go into the country during their previous mission. We eventually housed the comrades in the same house in Mochudi that was evacuated after the 1 August 1978 shoot-out in Moshaneng. As we did not have an alternate place, in the meantime, under the circumstances, we felt the house to be safe for use, as Sergeant Mogoai knew that we had abandoned the place and were no longer utilising it. A total of seven metal trunks full of arms and ammunition were taken by the enemy which was virtually the bulk of our stock in Botswana. We later discovered that the “enemy camp” that was reportedly attacked by the SADF in Angola and referred to in the SABC news bulletin, was Novo Catengue. The SADF attacked Novo Catengue with three Mirage Jet fighters and two Canberra bombers. The camp was completely flattened and destroyed. Fortunately, only two MK soldiers out of a total of five hundred were killed. In turn MK anti-aircraft guns downed a Mirage Jet fighter. The ANC leadership received intelligence reports that the camp was to be attacked and it was evacuated just days before the raid took place.⁹

A few weeks later, after Sergeant Mogoai had deserted, President Oliver Tambo wanted to speak to us, the three remaining members of the RHQ, to acquaint himself with the facts of what actually happened. We flew to Lusaka where the meeting was held at the offices of the RC (Revolutionary Council). Moses Mabhida, the Secretary of the RC, chaired the meeting. The meeting was also attended by other members, including Peter “Maqabane” and Solly Simelane, who both represented the intelligence structures of the ANC. OR Tambo wanted to know how it was possible for us not to have detected that Sergeant Mogoai was an enemy agent. I informed the meeting that I had never wanted to operate with him from the time we were deployed from Funda. This I had communicated to Obadi at the time. We also informed the meeting that we had requested on numerous occasions that CHQ should remove him from Botswana because of his conduct. But each and every time we requested his removal, the CHQ refused. Keith Mokoape, who was representing the CHQ, said that Joe Modise refused to remove him because of lack of sufficient evidence against him. Joe Modise could not attend the meeting as he had to go to Angola in the aftermath of the bombing of Novo Cantengue. OR’s response was, *“Now that he has sufficient evidence, Joe must bring him back to the HQ.”*

During the meeting Solly revealed another bombshell which I heard for the first time in that meeting. In December 1978, just before the Derdepoort unit of seven were to be infiltrated into the country, he flew to Botswana where he had a meeting with Victor regarding intelligence reports coming from their moles within the South African Security Services. According to the reports, the South African Police had received intelligence reports from Botswana that a unit of twelve MK soldiers was about to be infiltrated into the country along the Botswana border. According to the report, all twelve men would be wearing green overalls. Solly wanted Victor to verify the veracity of the reports and also who might be responsible within the RHQ for leaking such reports. Victor said he decided to proceed with the operation of Derdepoort despite warnings from Solly because the intelligence reports were not entirely correct. He informed Solly that if any reports could leak to the enemy it would be through Sergeant Mogoai as he was the most ill-disciplined amongst us. Solly also revealed that he had warned Keith about Jacob, the *askari*, because of his lack of discipline at the ZIPRA camps, and had recommended to Keith that Jacob should not be deployed in the forward areas. Despite his warnings, and to Solly’s surprise, Jacob was deployed.

OR also wanted to know why we deployed the unit of nine that was involved in the skirmishes of Moshaneng (Witkleigat) as it seemed to be too large. After we explained the rationale behind the decision and the events that took place before the decision was taken, he seemed to be satisfied with our answers. After we gave our report about our activities in Botswana, both OR and Moses Mabhida were hugely impressed. Mabhida conceded to have

been taken by surprise at the amount of work the RHQ had undertaken and the continuous security measures we had put in place in the region despite the hostile atmosphere. He concluded the meeting by saying that the youth of June 16, 1976, through its integration within MK, had been transformed into commandos. The CHQ decided that Victor was going to be deployed in Lusaka to replace Snuki who had received a scholarship to study in Bulgaria. Shaheed (Steve) was redeployed to the Internal Political Reconstruction Committee headed by John Motshabi and Mac Maharaj. I was given the task of rebuilding a new RHQ but without me participating in its activities as I was already exposed.

As I had studied Civil Engineering at Mmadikoti, I was instructed to look for a job in the Civil Engineering industry and try to “lie low” in Botswana until such time that I might be reintegrated into the structures of MK. Simon Faku was appointed the new Commander of the restructured RHQ and Moscow appointed the Commissar. Basically, the Derdepoort unit formed the nucleus of the new restructured RHQ. Other members were China, Stalin, Mike Mhlongo and Magaqa.

Years later, during the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) hearings on the activities of the death squads of the apartheid regime, Peter Mogoai revealed his reasons for having betrayed his comrades. On the 12 November 1997, when he applied for amnesty for participating in the killing of the PEBCO Three in Port Elizabeth¹⁰, in reply to questions put to him by his lawyer, Advocate Lamey, who was leading evidence, Mogoai had this to say:

ADV LAMEY: In paragraph 7(a) on page 26 you say that you were a member of the ANC, of the military wing of the ANC, UMkhonto we Sizwe at one stage?

MR MOGOAI: That is correct.

ADV LAMEY: Paragraph (b) you say that between 1977 and 1979 you were an Infiltration Officer stationed at the ANC Regional Headquarters in Botswana and that you were tasked with the establishment of infiltration routes of MK members from Botswana to the RSA and that you were also tasked to establish arms caches in Botswana?

MR MOGOAI: Yes, that is correct.

ADV LAMEY: In paragraph 8(a) you say that you were also in the employ of the State, specifically the South African Police’s Security Branch, Vlakplaas, from 1980 to approximately 1986?

MR MOGOAI: That is correct Sir.

ADV LAMEY: And that you were at Security Headquarters from 1986 to 1992?

MR MOGOAI: That is correct Sir.

- ADV LAMEY: Relating to the question as to the capacity in which you were in the employ of the State, you said that you were a South African Police askari involved in the detection of terrorists from about 1980 to 1986 and thereafter you were stationed at Head Office in the Intelligence section where you were particularly involved in counter propaganda against the liberation movements?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct Sir...*
- ADV LAMEY: ...Mr Mogoai, as far as your background is concerned, you said that in 1979 you decided to leave the ANC and to go back to your wife and children in South Africa, that was in Krugersdorp?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct Sir.*
- ADV LAMEY: At that stage you say the ANC wanted to re-transfer you to Zambia which you didn't want and at that stage you were also disillusioned with the ANC?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct sir.*
- ADV LAMEY: This return you manoevered by means of contact through means of a previous employer in Krugersdorp who made contact with the South African Police, Security Police, and you had discussion with them in Botswana?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct.*
- ADV LAMEY: You wanted to make clear to them what your intentions were so they would not be of the impression that you were still in South Africa with the view of promoting the objectives of the ANC?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct.*
- ADV LAMEY: Discussions took place with Colonel Jan Coetzee, General Erasmus and Major Le Roux?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct.*
- ADV LAMEY: And they also requested you to help the Security Police in respect of weapons of the ANC to get this from Botswana and to hand it over to the Security Police, which you did?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct Sir.*
- ADV LAMEY: After that, you stayed in Sebokeng with your family for a period of time, you had no work, no income, you were also aware of the fact that the Security Police were at that stage recruiting people and you decided to join?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct.*
- ADV LAMEY: After you joined, you became part of the Vlakplaas Unit in 1980. The Vlakplaas Unit was in its infancy at that stage?*
- MR MOGOAI: That is correct...*

ADV LAMEY: And you say that although the main reason for joining the Security Police was because you were unemployed and had to earn an income to look after your family, you also say that you were particularly disillusioned with the ANC due to the fact that more and more prominent leaders in the ANC were members of the South African Communist Party, or other communistic organisations and that they in particular played a prominent role in uMkhonto we Sizwe, that was the reason for your disillusionment?

MR MOGOAI: The way you explained you say I was a member of the South African Communist Party, that is why I have a problem?

ADV LAMEY: No let me rephrase the question. You said that you were disillusioned with the ANC because several prominent leaders in the ANC were also members of the South African Communist Party or other communist organisations and that they played a particularly prominent role in uMkhonto we Sizwe, is that correct?

MR MOGOAI: That is correct.

ADV LAMEY: You also say that when you joined the Security Police, the ANC also regarded you as a traitor and you became aware of the fact that instruction had been given to kill you?

MR MOGOAI: That is correct.¹¹

———— CHAPTER 13 ————

Meeting Joe Mamasela

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China informed me when he was in Botswana, immediately after I had left, that it was widely reported in local newspapers in Botswana that Joe Mamasela fled to the local police station in Gaborone where he reported that Moss and Roller killed his brother and also wanted to kill him. Before they could kill him, he managed to escape and reported the matter to the police¹. According to China, it was reported that Mamasela alleged that Moss and Roller accused them of being police informers. Botswana police were looking for both Moss and Roller and as a result both managed to escape to Zimbabwe where they sought political refuge. Furthermore, China informed me that as he was preparing to report to Lusaka after being ordered to do so, he received a telephone call from Ephraim “Shorty” Mfalapitsa, who was based in Lusaka by then, frantically pleading with him not to go to Lusaka as he was going to be killed there. According to China, Shorty told him that Joe Modise and Keith Mokoape had killed many comrades in Zambia since the beginning of that year. China ignored the advice of Shorty as he thought it was just an exaggeration and did not believe that Modise and Mokoape could have been involved in such activities. Since 1980 Shorty was based in Zambia after he was found guilty in Botswana of being in possession of firearms and ammunition. He was sentenced to three years in prison but was deported to Zambia after serving only six months of his sentence. In Zambia he worked closely with Keith Mokoape after Victor Modise was arrested and detained in Quadro for suspicion of being an enemy agent, something of which he was falsely accused.

Only when he was incarcerated and tortured in Iran, did China remember the advice given to him by Shorty. Months later we heard over the news, whilst we were still in Iran, that Shorty had defected and handed himself over to the South African Police. He became a well known *askari* and was based in Vlakplaas. He, together with Jeffrey Motutuzele Bosigo (Oshkosh’s

younger brother) and Nokonono Delphine Kave, testified at the Denton Commission in the United States, set up in 1981 to probe the so-called links of Liberation Movements of Southern Africa, namely SWAPO and the ANC, with communism.² Testifying in his application for amnesty at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in July 2000, Mfalapitsa said he defected to the South African Police whilst he was on an MK mission in Botswana.³

He handed himself in at the Derdepoort Police Station after realising that he could no longer justify the torture and maiming of his fellow comrades by senior members of the ANC. At the TRC he testified that he had witnessed how Joe Modise and Keith Mokoape were beating other fellow comrades whom they suspected of being enemy agents. Amongst those he witnessed being tortured were Oshkosh Khumalo, Disco and Dumisani Khoza⁴. Mfalapitsa applied for amnesty for the killing of an MK cadre, Thembisile “Shorty” Tuku, whilst he was in Zambia. According to his testimony, he was ordered by both Modise and Mokoape to execute Tuku although the actual killing was done by Simelane and Simon⁵. Tuku was one of the comrades who were deployed by MK in Zimbabwe before Zimbabwe obtained its independence in April 1980. After the coming of Mugabe into power, MK units in Zimbabwe were ordered to retreat and some were redeployed to Angola. Apparently Tuku was one of those who refused to go back to Angola and was perceived to have posed a security risk. Initially Keith Mokoape applied for amnesty for “causing the arrest of several people and collecting information in respect of Dumisani Khoza which was then passed to the ANC’s security department.” He later withdrew the application before it was heard by the TRC.⁶

Ephraim Mfalapitsa also applied for amnesty for the killing of three youths who were members of COSAS⁷ (Congress of South African Students) including the attempted murder of the fourth, Zandisile Musi, after leading them into a trap. Zandisile Musi is the younger brother of Mbulelo Musi (MK Moss Thema) who trained in the German Democratic Republic with Mfalapitsa together with Bob Mazwi as part of the group that included Tebello Motapanyane which I had mentioned in the earlier chapters of this book. Early in 1982, shortly after Mfalapitsa began operating as an askari, he was approached by Zandisile Musi and his other three comrades, who requested his assistance in leaving the country in order to undergo military training in exile as Zandisile was aware that Mfalapitsa had undergone military training with his elder brother. Zandisile had no idea that Mfalapitsa was operating as an askari.

After convincing them not to leave the country, as he would be able to provide them with military training inside the country, Mfalapitsa took them to a pumphouse on a disused mine near Krugersdorp where the four were led to believe that he would conduct the training. Mfalapitsa was accompanied by Joe Mamasela who was the driver of the car they were using. Immediately after

entering the building, Mfalapitsa left the four inside under the pretext that he was going to fetch more explosives from the car they were travelling in which were to be used as part of the training material. It was then that the explosives which were planted inside the building by the Vlakplaas unit of the security police were detonated and instantly killing the three comrades of Zandisile and left him (Zandisile) severely injured.⁸

As for Joe Mamasela, he testified at the TRC in March 1998 during the amnesty application of Gideon Niewoudt and his fellow applicants for the killing of the PEBCO three, Champion Galela, Siphos Hashe and Qaqawuli Godolozzi in 1985, that he became an *askari* after he was betrayed by his own organisation, the ANC. In his own words, “*The ANC murdered my brother. I had to identify his charred and semi-decomposed remains. And then I knew, I had to avenge his death.*”⁹ I suppose he was referring to the killing of his brother in Botswana by Moss Mongalo and Roller Masinga, the incident that Moscow and I witnessed near Otse along the road to Lobatse. In his affidavit to the Harms Commission in 1990, which was established to investigate the activities of the apartheid death squads, Mamasela confessed to have been recruited by the Security Branch Police during or on about May 1979¹⁰. He alleged to have been recruited by Major Gerhard Kruger, who was operating from the offices of the SB Police in Krugersdorp.¹¹

In his own words, Mamasela states, “*In late 1979 to early 1980, I was recruited by the ANC and I was sent on an intelligence course in Botswana. Two of the people who attended the course with me, were Lilian Keagile and Ernest Moabi Dipale*¹²...*During the winter of 1981, my role as an agent of the SAP was discovered by the ANC. My friend, with whom I had travelled to Botswana, was kidnapped and murdered. I was kidnapped at Gaborone, inter alia by Ernest Dipale, Lilian Keagile and Gilbert Phoshoko, and taken to Selebi Phikwe, which is approximately four hundred kilometres from Gaborone. I managed to escape, and thereafter the Botswana Police apprehended and held in custody Ernest Dipale, Lilian Keagile and Gilbert Phoshoko. I spent the next four to five weeks in Botswana assisting the Botswana Police in their investigations into the murder of my friend and my own kidnapping.*”¹³

It is clear from the above statement that Mamasela corroborates my earlier version of events that he was recruited by the Security Police after Peter Mogoai defected in March 1979. It is worthwhile to note that Major Kruger who was based at the Krugersdorp offices of the Special Branch, might have been the handler of Peter Mogoai who was also originally from Krugersdorp. What is not clear is whether the brother he refers to in his evidence to the TRC is the same person he describes in his affidavit as his friend who was murdered in Botswana.

Dirk Coetzee and Butana Almond Nofomela testified at the TRC that they had kidnapped Ernest Dipale in October 1981 looking for the whereabouts of his sister, Joyce Dipale. Nofomela confirmed that he and Mamasela went to

the house of Ernest Dipale in Soweto where Mamasela forcibly abducted him on the false pretence that Dipale owed him money¹⁴. After he was abducted, Dipale was first taken to Roodepoort and later to Zeerust where he was assaulted during interrogation. It was during this spell of interrogation that the Security Police became aware that Joyce Dipale had fled to Botswana. On 26 November 1981, Dirk Coetzee accompanied by Mamasela, Nofomela and David Spyker Tshikalanga, another *askari*, among others, attacked the house where Joyce Dipale was staying with her husband, Roller Masinga in Gaborone, Botswana¹⁵.

Coetzee, in his testimony, described how the attack was carried out after Mamasela and Nofomela entered the house around midnight and observed two women moving in the kitchen with a lit candle, “*Mamasela grabbed one of the women around the neck, closed her mouth, and shot her at point blank range. After firing more shots, they left the house believing Joyce Dipale had been killed. It was only later discovered that Mamasela had shot the wrong woman, who survived the attack, and that Joyce was still alive.*”¹⁶ The wrong woman who was mistakenly shot was later named as Shadi Mkwanyane. It was also discovered that Roller Masinga was not at the house at the time as he had taken a flight out of Botswana earlier that afternoon.

Ernest Dipale later died in detention at John Vorster Square on 8 August 1982. Police said he was found hanged in his cell. An inquiry held into his death found nobody criminally responsible for his death.¹⁷ However, I find the statement made by Mamasela to the Harms Commission highly unreliable and improbable in the sense that he accused Ernest Dipale of having been involved in his abduction earlier during the winter of 1981 whilst he managed to communicate with him again during October of that year when they were looking for his sister. It also seems after interrogation, Ernest Dipale was released and subsequently re-arrested in August 1982 when he was ultimately killed in detention. Mamasela’s evidence at the TRC is also misleading in that he claimed to have turned an *askari* after the ANC murdered his brother which was in the winter of 1981, long after he was recruited to work for the Security Police.

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———— CHAPTER 15 ————

Quibaxe – Camp 13

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Kimpani Peter Mogoai (MK Thabo Mavuyo), one of the first MK cadres to have become an askari in March 1979, testifying before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), on the 12/11/1997, about his role in the killing of the PEBCO 3. (Courtesy: National Archives).

Below: Joe Mamasela, a fellow askari, testifying at the same hearing of the PEBCO 3. Although he did not seek amnesty for his role in the killings, he nevertheless described in graphic details as to how the victims were severely tortured and brutalised before they were ultimately killed by their tormentors.





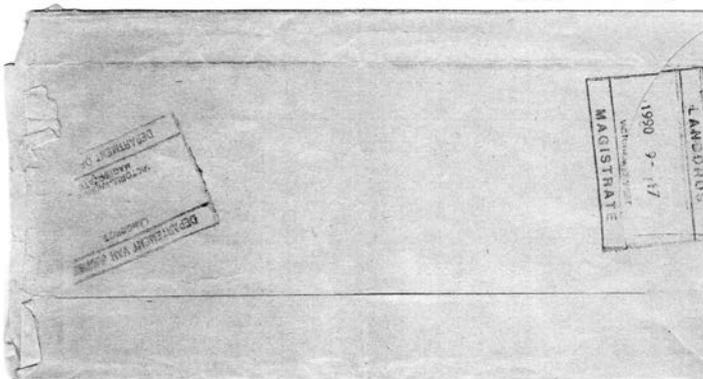
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DEPARTEMENT VAN SAMEWERKING EN ONTWIKKELING
DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENTVerkorte Geboortesertifikaat
Abridged Birth Certificate

Van Surname	<i>Maroela</i>	Geboortedatum Date of birth	<i>15: 5: 1954</i>
Voornam Christian names	<i>Stadley</i>		
Geslag Sex	<i>Male</i>	Etniese groep Ethnic group	<i>Black</i>
Burgerskap Citizenship	<i>SA</i>	Plek en distrik van geboorte Place and district of birth	<i>VICTORIA WEST</i>
Inskrywingsnommer Entry number	<i>412/54</i>	Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die geboorteregister te wees. Certified a true extract from the birth register.	
Plek Place	<i>1990 - 9 - 14</i>		
Datum Date	<i>VICTORIA-WES/WEST</i>		
	MAGISTRATE		

S. Mabilese
DISTRIKSMAGISTRATEUR - VES/DEPT. VAN HUIWELIKE EN
DISTRICT REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS,
VICTORIA-WES/WEST



Author's abridged birth certificate submitted to the South African Embassy in Budapest in support of his application for a passport;



Top: photos of Emily Manong, the mother of the author, just before she was murdered in December 1985 (family album);
Bottom: Emily Manong's death certificate;

G.P. 5 3034-1980 DSO 692


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 DEPARTEMENT VAN SAMEWERKING EN ONTWIKKELING
 DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A 030404

VERKORTE SERTIFIKAAT VAN REGISTRASIE VAN DOOD
ABRIDGED CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Van Surname..... <u>Manong</u> Voornamen First names..... <u>Emily</u> Sterfdatum Date of death..... <u>7-12-1985</u> Etniese groep Ethnic group..... <u>Xhosa</u> Geboortedatum Date of birth..... <u>71 JR</u> Oorsaak van dood Cause of death..... <u>Brandwonde</u> Geneesheer Medical practitioner..... <u>Dr G Myburgh</u>	*Bewysboek-/Identiteits-/Paspoortnommer *Reference book/Identity/Passport number..... <u>5/0 713033</u> Distrik van afsterwe District of death..... <u>Wentworth</u> Geslag Sex..... <u>Heurek</u> Huwelikstaats Marital status..... <u>Weduwe</u>
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Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die sterfgevallenregister 1985.
 Certified to be a true extract from the death register.


 Direkteur-Generaal/Registrar
 Director-General/Registrar

Plaas Place..... <u>LANODDUS</u> Datum Date..... <u>1985-12-07</u> Inskrywingsnommer Entry number..... <u>125/85/19</u>	Pick Place..... <u>1985-11-04</u> Datum Date..... <u>1985-12-07</u> Inskrywingsnommer Entry number..... <u>125/85/19</u>
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* Skop wat nie van toepassing is op gevalle waarvan dit nie van toepassing is.



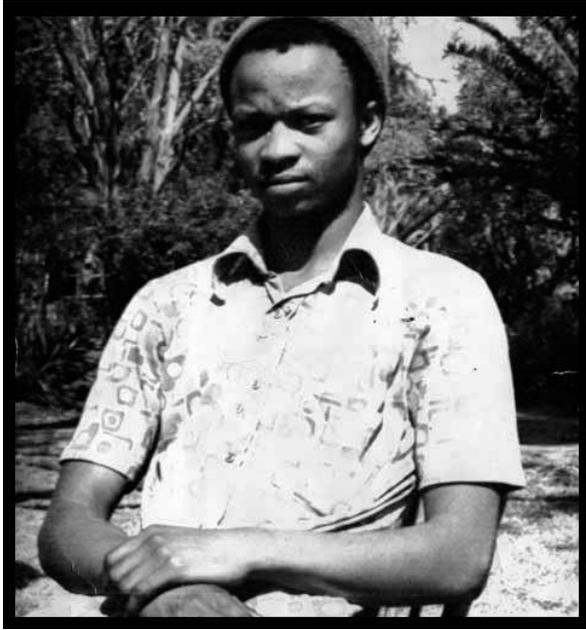
The house that belonged to the author's mother after it was gutted by fire (family album);





The tombstone of Emily Manong before and after desecration (family album);





Top: Tsietsi Mashinini the 1976 student leader

Below: Nomkhitha Virginia Mashinini, the mother of Tsietsi and the author. Photo taken in September 1992 during the author's brief visit to the country (family album);





Top: Rocks Mashinini (lying on the ground in front), Ben Mooki (also lying on the ground in the middle), the author (on the left) and Thanduxolo Mazwi during a working visit at ISCOR in Pretoria as students of the Mmadikoti College (family album);

Below: The author in Umgababa holiday resort in Durban in September 1975. (family album),

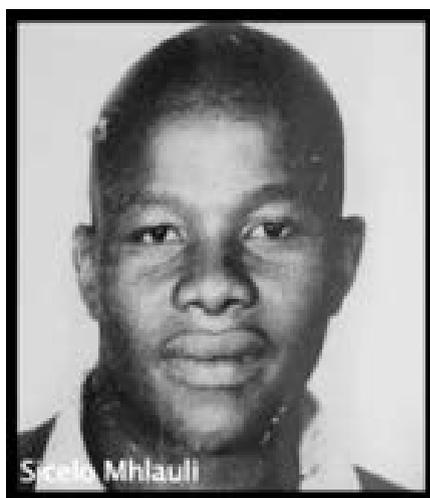




Top: Matthew Goniwe who was killed by the apartheid death squads on the 27 June 1985, together with his other three comrades, known as the Cradock Four, was the maths and science teacher of the author in the late 1960's. (courtesy: SA History archives)



Rev James Arthur Calata, former Secretary-General of the ANC from 1936-1949, was a source of inspiration to the author during the time he studied in Cradock.



Sicelo Mhlawuli, one of the Cradock Four, who was a former schoolmate of the author;



979



1781



1147



1783



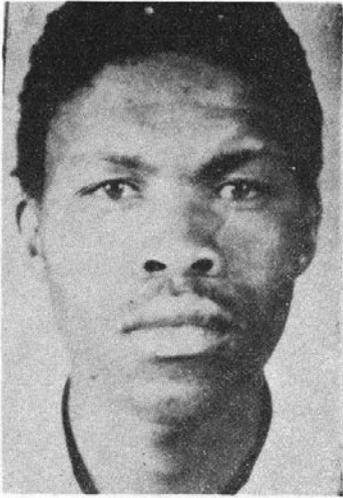
1997



1874

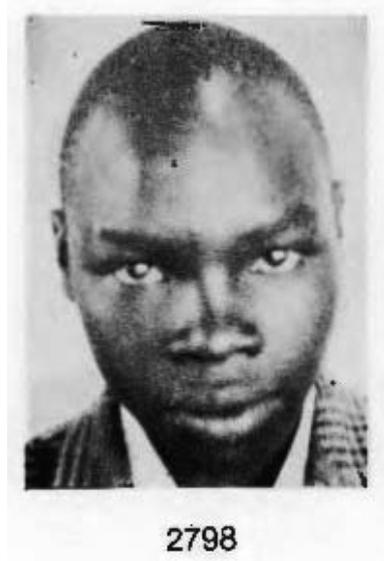
Photos from the old security police files:

- Photo 979 – Xola Ernest Magqwashe (MK Kenneth Plato) accidentally killed in Angola in 1983;
- Photo 1781 – the author;
- Photo 1147 Simphiwe Clement Maphumulo (MK Zakes Nkosi) who was the commander at Funda;
- Photo 1783 – Odirile Meshack Maponya (MK Mainstay Chibuku) who eluded Eugene de Kock and his death-squads for more than three years until he was allegedly killed by the premature explosion of a limpet mine he was trying to place;
- Photo 1997 – David Phaundi Mabaso (MK Bob Mazwi) who made an outstanding contribution before and during the Kabwe Conference of June 1985;
- Photo 1874 – John Montshiwa Ismael Matlhaku (MK Simon Faru). Photo taken before he lost the use of one of his eyes. He was later executed by the ANC Military Tribunal in Angola after being accused of working as an agent of the South African security police;



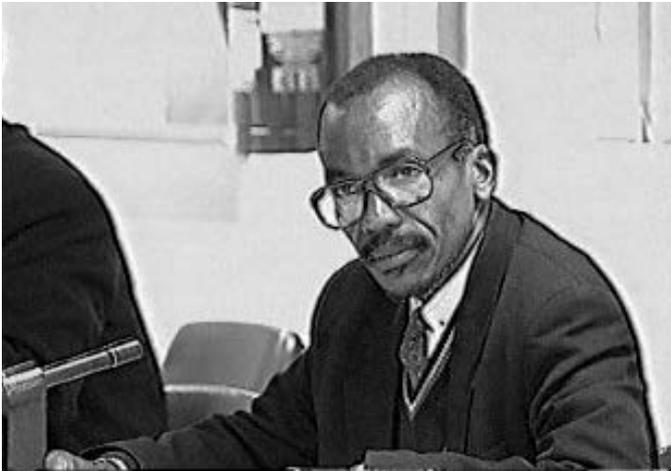
80

Photo 80 - Samuel Mpayipheli Besho (MK Johannes Nkosi) who committed suicide in June 1985 immediately after the Kabwe Conference by blowing himself with a hand grenade;



2798

Photo 2798 – Sithembiso Alfred Nyangiwe (MK Amos Aluko) who also committed suicide in similar circumstances as Johannes Nkosi;



Ephraim Tlhamedi Mfalapitsa (MK Francis “Shorty” Tladi) a former MK commander turned askari, testifying at the TRC about his role as an askari. Mfalapitsa worked very closely with Mogoai in Botswana and later worked in tandem with both Mamasela and Mogoai at Vlakplaas. (courtesy: National Archives).



Top: Families of the Moroka Three unveiling their tombstones
(Courtesy: Mayibuye Archives)

Bottom: Nomkhosi “Mary” Mini, the daughter of Vuyisile Mini who was killed by the apartheid security forces in Lesotho in 1985
(Courtesy: Mayibuye Archives);





Top: Jack and Ray Simons at their house in Vredehoek, Cape Town. Photo taken by the author in 1993.

Bottom: Mark Shope (Courtesy: SA History Archives);





Top: Joe Mati, his daughter Nonkululeko and the author (family album);
Bottom: The author at the Budapest International Airport, July 1993, before his departure to South Africa, signalling the end of his period in exile. (family album);





Top: Dr Walter Sauer and his partner Elfriede, my wife and children. Photo taken in Cape Town in 1995 during one of Dr Sauer's visits to South Africa. (Courtesy: Sauer family album);

Bottom: Dr Walter Sauer next to the family grave site in one of the cemeteries in Viena. (family album)



Down
Banyo

GEORGE	DEKEMI ✓	71 BEN	VAS
NICHAEAL	HABAHALA ✓	72 PETER	TOTO
ZOLELE	CACADU ✓	73 STOFFEL	
SEPAEMBEU	MAYA ✓	74 FREDDIE	
WILLIE	MANENE ✓	75 HENDRIK	MATYOBEHI
EDWARD	FATA ✓	76 MURE	
LANGMAN	DARU ✓	77 HERRY	MAPHYRI ✓
JOHN	ZENKANGHE ✓	78 ELIAS	MANONG
JOHNSON	BOGHESEN ✓	79 T.V.	YOSE ✓
BILLY	NET ✓		
SAMUEL	NET ✓		
MONDE	YOYO ✓		
WILLIAM	MAKULANI ✓		
DAVID	PHAMBO ✓		
ROBERT	MOSIA ✓		
FAN	MAYA ✓		
BEN	JOHANNES ✓		
WILLIE	NKILLIE ✓		
WILLIAM	SIMANGA ✓		
JOHN	YELAND ✓		
ALVINUS	MRALAS I ✓		
STREKKIE	JACK ✓		
MUGLA	MBANJWA ✓		
KHEPHU	GQAGQA ✓		
MAJOLA			
KLAAS	MAYA ✓		
JIMMY	TSHABANGU ✓		
BEN	FULANYANA ✓		
BEUTI	JOHANNES ✓		
FRANS	MANENE ✓		
SOLDAT	NTLOKOMPANE ✓		
SAM	FULA ✓		
NAKIE	GEYA ✓		
BOOI	FAAS ✓		
WILLIAM	DUMA ✓		
JERRY	NTLOKOMPANE ✓		
SIMON	MBANJWA ✓		
SKERT	NKHOSANA ✓		
FATMAN	QHIZA ✓		
ELIJAH	KHUZO ✓		
JAMES	MOSIA ✓		
WILSON	MAFUYA ✓		
MARTIN	VASS ✓		
SIMON	MAKHAKHE ✓		
DANIEL	MAPETE ✓		
EDIE	VASS ✓		
TSILITSO	PHALITHA ✓		
LUKA	MAJALI ✓		
DAMPIES	VASS ✓		
BENJAMIN	HALAHALA ✓		
SAKKIE	MARUMO ✓		
JOHN	MAGAMA ✓		
JACK	MESUYA ✓		
BOOTJIE	MATYOBEHI ✓		
JACK	MDINI ✓		
PEPPERSON	QHIZA ✓		
STEPHEN	VASS ✓		
ENOCK	MANONG ✓		
TOTOSE	JOSEPH ✓		
TOM	SOLIS ✓		
THEMBA	SIMANGA ✓		
PHILLIP	MANENE ✓		
PETRUS	HILA ✓		
PUN	NKOHLA ✓		
TELLARD	BOOTSE ✓		
PHAKAMILE	HORN ✓		
WILLIAM	NADUNA ✓		
NJANI	MANENE ✓		
BUTANA	BARNES ✓		
DUMTIR	T. T. K. W. A.		

Pakalwa

list of those who were alleged to be members of Poqo. Forty two of them were initially arrested (Court File: 274/1968);

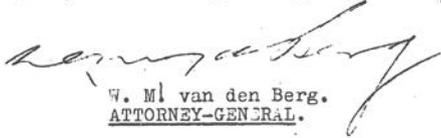
ORDER ISSUED UNDER SECTION 108 BIS (1) OF ACT 56 OF 1955
AS AMENDED.

AS I, WILLEM MARTIN VAN DEN BERG, ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE PROVINCE OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, consider it necessary in the interest of the administration of justice I hereby order that

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. TAMIE VICTOR YOSE | 14. ROBERT MOSIA |
| 2. NTWENINTSHI GEORGE DIKENI | 15. ZOLILE DAVID CACADU |
| 3. PAULUS THABISO JACK MABUYA | 16. BILLY MEI |
| 4. MICHAEL HALAHALA | 17. MOLETI SAAIMAN MBANJWA |
| 5. RORWANA WILLIAM MAKULANI | 18. LUKA MAJALI |
| 6. BEN JOHANNES | 19. MADONA WILLIAM VELAPI JOHNSON |
| 7. STEPHEN VASS | 20. SOLDAT NTLOKOMPANA |
| 8. DAMPIES VASS | 21. ELIAS TENBILE MANONG |
| 9. JAN MAYA | 22. SITETO JOHNSON BOOYSEN |
| 10. SAM BOOI FAAS | 23. WILLEM MADUNA |
| 11. ALEC JACOBS | 24. HAIMENE STOFFEL HUMBWA |
| 12. MAFULANA JOHN ZINGANGE | 25. KARABELO SAMUEL NTOANYANE |
| 13. SAKKIE MARUMO | 26. ALVINUS MRALASI |

who have been arrested on a charge of having committed the offence of Sabotage, in contravention of section 21(1) of act 76 of 1962, alternatively contravening section 3(1)(a(iv) read with section 11(c) and 11(i) of Act 44 of 1950, as amended, shall not be released on bail or otherwise before sentence has been passed or before they have been discharged, as the case may be.

Given under my hand at Cape Town, this 2nd day of August, 1968.


W. M. van den Berg.
ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

TO:

1. The Magistrate,
VICTORIA WEST.
2. The above accused.

list of the 26 who were ultimately charged for treason. The author's brother-in-law, George Dikeni was accused no.2 and the author's brother, Elias Tembile Manong, was accused no.21 (Court File: 274/1968);

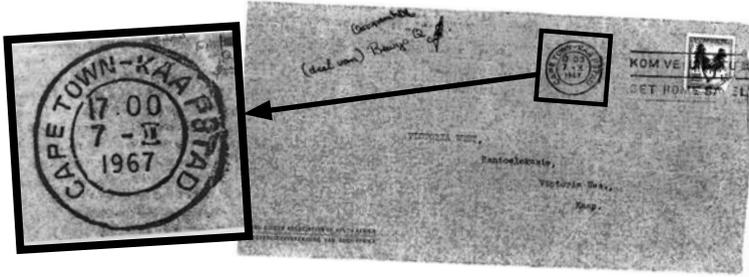
DATE STAMP IMPRESSION SHEET

IN USE AT CAPE TOWN ON Monday

Handwritten: 11-11-68
Signature: [illegible]

<i>204</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>204</i>
<i>204</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>
<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>	<i>11-11-68</i>
<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	

NOTE: NO DATE STAMP SHOULD BE USED UNLESS ITS IMPRESSION IS FIRST OBTAINED UPON THIS SHEET AND INITIALED AS BEING CORRECT BY



Official impressions of date stamps that were in use at the time. On the date stamps, the letters A,B,C,D and E denote the name of the post office and the franking machine where the letter originated. Below the impressions: An envelope which formed part of court exhibit "Q", which was purportedly found in the typewriter of accused number one, Tamie Victor Yose, containing the list of the alleged members of Poqo. The State alleged that the letter was posted from Cape Town although the date stamp on the envelope differed markedly from the official date stamps shown above and submitted to court. The date stamp on the envelope also did not have a code. The use of Arabic and Roman letters in combination, to denote the date, convinced the court that exhibit 'Q' was a fake. (Court File: 274/1968);

Telegramadres: "LANDDROS"
Telegraphic Address: "MAGISTRATE"

Telefoon 6210007
Telephone

Skakelkode 053
Dialling Code

Privaatsak X316
Private Bag

Poskode 7070
Postal Code



DEPARTEMENT VAN JUSTISIE • DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1418
Verwysings
Reference 1/2/1
Mnr A Fourie

LANDROSKANTOOR
MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE

Messrs Manong & Associates
P/O Box 15095
VLAEBERG
8081

VICTORIA WEST

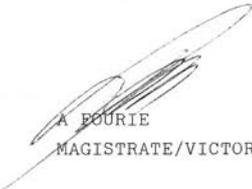
16 July 1998

Dear Mister Manong

REBURIAL OF THE REMAINS OF THE LATE EMILY MANONG
YOUR LETTER DATED 6 JULY 1998 REFERS;

1. I do not have any objectives to the reburial of the remains of the late Emily Manong
2. It appears however, that you require the permission of the Premier of the Northern Cape as well.
3. I include a copy of Cape Ord. 12 of 1980 for your convenience. It is self explanatory.

Yours faithfully



A FOURIE
MAGISTRATE/VICTORIA WEST



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

KANTORO YA TONAKGOLLO

I-OFISI YE NKULUMBUSO

KANTOOR VAN DIE PREMIER

Provincial Building, Chapel Street
Private Bag X5016
KIMBERLEY
8300

Isakhiwo Sephondo, Chapel Street
Private Bag X5016
KIMBERLEY
8300

Tel. (0531) 809333
809555

Kago ya Profesi, Chapel Street
Kgatesanaposi X5016
KIMBERLEY
8300

Provinsiale Gebou, Chapelstraat
Privaatsak X5016
KIMBERLEY
8300

Fax (0531) 814475
827871

Enquiries :
Dipatlisiso :
Imbuzo :
Navrae :

S A MAJIEDT

Reference :
Tshupelo :
Isatathiso :
Verwysings :

Date :
Leshupelo :
Umhla :
Datum :

20 AUGUST 1998

Manong & Associates CC
P. O. Box 15095
VLAEBERG
8018

FAX : 021 - 23 4742

ATTENTION : MR. STANLEY MANONG

REBURIAL OF THE REMAINS OF THE LATER MRS. EMILY MANONG

Your fax of 19 August 1998 has reference.
We foresee no problem whatsoever in obtaining the required consent as provided for in section 3(1)(a) of Ordinance 12 of 1980.

We point out, however, that the competent authority in this instance is not the Premier, but the MEC for Health & Welfare, Dr. M. F. Matlaopane.
The powers contained in Ordinance 12 of 1980 have been assigned to the said MEC in terms of Proclamation 108 of 17 June 1994.

We do require, however, that you comply with the provisions contained in section 3(2)(a) and 3(2)(b) of the said Ordinance so as to enable the MEC to consider the matter properly.

We await your earliest reversion herein.

With kind regards.

S. A. MAJIEDT
CHIEF PROVINCIAL STATE LAW ADVISER

SAM444/csf



Victoria-Wes Munisipaliteit

Victoria West Municipality

Alle korrespondensie moet aan die Stadsklerk gerig word
All correspondence must be addressed to the Town Clerk

☎ 053 - 6210026
FAX 053 - 6210368

PRIVAATSAK
PRIVATE BAG
X 329

VICTORIA-WES
VICTORIA WEST
7070

U VERWYSING
YOUR REFERENCE

ONS VERWYSING
OUR REFERENCE 1/2/1 (Rathenam)

2 Maart 1998

Mnr. Stanley Manong
Posbus/5095
VLAEBERG
8018

Meneer

AANSOEK OM HERBEGRAWE VAN WYLE MEV. EMILY MANONG

U skrywe van 5 Januarie 1998 verwys.

Hiermee wens ek u in kennis te stal dat die Raad tydens 'n Raadsvergadering gehou op 29 Januarie 1998 as volg besluit het:

1. dat die Raad in beginsel geen probleem met 'n herbegrafnis het nie op voorwaarde die aansoeker by die Landdros aansoek doen en alle formele regulasies en wetgewing in hierdie verband nagekom word.

Die uwe

EMIL NOTHNAGEL PrSK
UITVOERENDE HOOF/STADSKLERK

RAND
Daily Mail
**The puzzling death
of a caddie**

THE CASE of the dead Pietersburg caddie is cause for disquiet. The caddie, William Sekhatsa, aged 15, was shot by Constable I. J. J. van Vuuren on November 30 last year during an investigation into the reported theft of R2. The R2 had disappeared from the golf bag of the son of a Pietersburg golfer, Mr. Frank Ivy.

An inquest was duly held and resulted in a finding by the magistrate that William's death had been brought about by an act of negligence on the part of Const Van Vuuren.

During the inquest it was alleged in evidence that, even before the fatal shooting, there had been a series of assaults: by Mr Ivy, by Const Van Vuuren and by a police sergeant. The policemen denied they had taken part in the assaults.

Even without this aspect, the magistrate's finding seemed specific enough to warrant charges being brought as a result of William's death. Yet the Attorney-

General of the Transvaal decided that no prosecution would ensue. When challenged on this by an academic lawyer he gave the advice that the inquest record should be read.

That has now been done. We have read it and have consulted our legal adviser about it. The Sunday Express has read it and has consulted lawyers about it.

The unanimous view is that the facts presented at the inquest point to the need for prosecution. Not only is there the fact of a life having been lost, but there are puzzling inconsistencies between the account given by Const Van Vuuren and the testimony of other witnesses—and particularly the expert forensic evidence.

And then again there is the fact of the magistrate's finding after hearing all the evidence.

There is only one way for the issue to be resolved—and that is by trial in open court. On the details available, it must be reason for surprise that this is not being done.

Stained by silence

WHEN STUBBORN MEN get desperate they debate the moral values on which they purport to fight. They also tend to defend their errors as Burke once said, as if they were defending their inheritance.

This is exactly what Mr Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front Party must think it is doing by muzzling parliamentary debate on the Karima Kraal atrocities alleged to have been committed by security forces. It believes it is reinforcing the stand against the "insurgent scourge" and ensuring the highest morale possible among security forces. The Front thinks it can protect/save its country by hiding it from the truth.

"It defies comprehension therefore that any Rhodesian can raise

in this House the motion proposed," said the Smith lieutenant who fitted the muzzle.

Heavens above! It is this reasoning that defies comprehension. Troops are publicly accused of the Mylai-type massacre of 20 civilians, including nine children, and this is not worth debating?

As long as this attitude prevails it is practically an admission that the atrocities had taken place. That the authorities are covering the truth. If so, Smith and his men are desperately without honour.

By appearing to protect the perpetrators of a massacre they too become stained with the crime. They demean their cause and maim the hopes of a bloodless settlement to Rhodesia's problems.

Beauty beyond words

IT PROBABLY SAYS SOMETHING for the current Miss South Africa, Vera Johns, that the judges were so dazzled by her beauty that they omitted to ask her if she spoke Afrikaans. Although the Genootskap vir die Handhawing van Afrikaans objects to her lack of proficiency in the language, it's unlikely she will be challenged on it when she goes to the world contest in London.

PIK BOTHA AT UN

08/09/1975

08/09/1975



WHEN you are tired of marvelling at the antics of our various food control boards in South Africa, you might care for a change of scenery and consider what is happening in the EEC, or European Economic Community.

The combined brains of the Ministries of Agriculture of the EEC countries don't seem to be doing much better than our chaps in Pretoria.

Their biggest current headache is a mountain of powdered milk, now estimated as likely to reach the staggering total of a million tons by the end of the year.

Mountains

Nobody seems to know what to do with it all and hundreds of tons of the stuff will have to be sold to underdeveloped countries at knock-down prices, with the difference being made up by European taxpayers.

But what caused this powdered milk mountain to accumulate? Why, the butter mountain, of course. The butter surplus began to build up two

JUST IN PAST
A. B. H
Tow
mud

years ago, but for reasons the EEC allow the price of to be reduced. Inst authorities in Brit lowed dairy far large increase in of powdered milk.

This huge sea I can't make out there is now a shortage, but I was surprised.

This powdered jusis hits the EEC w still reeling from facts of the wine o

appeared early in because apparentl was no way of stop grapes from growi way, 13-million b of wine had to be ed into industrial to save the wine.

The reported death of a golf caddie that prompted the author and his colleague to confront the office of Dr Cedric Phatudi, the then Chief Minister of the Lebowa Homeland;

POST

TRANSVAAL

7c

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 1978



Sibongile Mthembu's granny Mrs Elizabeth Mishi gave evidence in mitigation of her beloved Bongis's sentence in the Kempton Park Circuit Court this week. (See Page 2).

COP FEARED DEAD

POLICE STATION BOMBED

Gunfire rocks Moroka

By ZWELAKE SISULU and THAMI MAZWAI

IN A bizarre act, three men brandishing what is believed to be Russian-made automatic guns, burst into Moroka Police Station spraying bullets into the charge office.

One policeman is believed to have been killed and two others injured. But no confirmation could be

obtained early this morning.

This is the second attack on a Soweto police station in the last four years.

The other police station is Jabulani when a bomb explosion rocked the police station in 1977.

The injured policemen were taken to hospital. According to a policeman on the scene, the three men were dressed in brown overalls and were armed with what is believed to be AK47 machine guns.

They started firing at the gate where two policemen were standing on guard and dashed to the charge office.

A few metres away from the gate, they fired at policemen on duty.

They then retreated firing and vanished into the night.

The attack occurred between 3.30 and 10 pm. The Jabulani Fire Brigade was called in to douse the flames.

The police station yard was cordoned off and ballistic experts were on the scene within a few minutes.

According to a resident who stays next to the police station, a burst of gunfire was heard. Another burst was heard shortly thereafter and then followed an explosion, and more bursts of fire.

"Within minutes ambulance sirens were heard and then came the fire engine," the resident said. Ambulance and fire engine crew returning from the police station refused to give details to POST, but they were from the police station. It was confirmed.

ARMED COPS MOVE INTO TURFLOOP

A CONTINGENT of about 70 policemen armed with rifles and dogs moved into the University of the North campus yesterday afternoon after the students defied an order by the Rector, Professor William Kgware, to return to classes immediately.

By late yesterday afternoon, the police (mainly black) were patrolling the campus while students stood outside the main gate. The police were holding transparent shields and batons.

The police moved to clear a meeting between

the students and the Rector at the "Tiro" Hall earlier in the morning ended in uproar after the Rector had ordered the students to return to lectures, but refused to answer their questions.

The meeting was called

to resolve the impasse in the two-day long sit-in sparked by the explosion this week of another student for alleged political activities.

The expelled student

●To Page 2

LION AT THE FAIR

THERE will be a lion (in Shamba clothing) prancing around POST's Fine Food Fair at Diepkloof Hall at 3.30 pm today.

Just in case that's not enough to excite the kids, there's something else at the same time that will appeal to both them and their parents — the Reckitt and Coleman hot-air balloon (if the weather's suitable).

And tomorrow at 7.30 pm three Radio 58 stars will attend the Fair to record messages visitors wish to send to friends.

They will be Cooby "Two Bull" Thothothemaj, Basille Lovhe and Mash-Napela.



WELCOMES

DOBIE GRAY

MIDNIGHT DIAMOND DOBIE GRAY ONLY

5,88

FEATURING: Miss You Nights, I Can See Clearly Now, You Can Do It and other great hits

K-MART would like to thank DOBIE GRAY for coming out to open our new Discount Record Giant.



BRANCHES AT:
The Discount Record Giant, 123 2nd Street, Johannesburg 2001

HERE SHE IS! OUR WOMAN OF THE YEAR!

COPS PROBE BLAST

Mrs Irene Ntintli, winner of our POST / Cinzano Woman of the Year title, has concentrated her community work on one aspect of our social life which is often overlooked — our aged. She pipped Mrs Urbana Mthopeng and Mrs Muggie Nkwe in a closely-contested final. See Page 6.



POLICE have launched an intensive manhunt for the three men who distributed leaflets of the banned African National Congress (ANC) after shooting three black policemen and three civilians at Moroka police station on Thursday night.

Brigadier J J Gerber, deputy head of the Soweto police, said the manhunt for the three men was in operation soon after the incident which also resulted in the burning of a charge office and two other rooms at the police station.

By Willie Bokala and Ike Motsapi

One of the policemen Constable B B Themba, was last night reported to have died in hospital. However, no police confirmation could be obtained.

A Press liaison officer from the police headquarters at Pretoria, Brigadier Fourie said leaflets concerning the incident with the banned ANC were found after the three men had attacked the Moroka police with AK47 rifles.

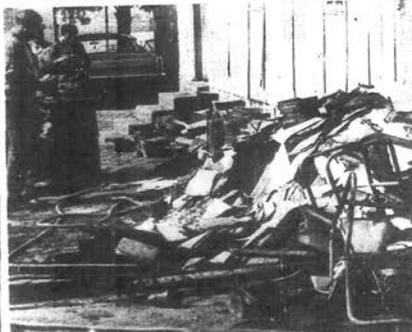
Commenting on the attack, Brigadier Fourie said the three armed men invaded the police station at about 9 pm on Thursday.

He said three black policemen and three civilians were injured when the three men opened fire. He also said the charge office and three rooms were burned down.

Brigadier Gerber, deputy head of the Soweto police said two of the three shot policemen were in serious condition. They are Constables B B Themba and M E Moremi. The other, Constable B Nkosi, was treated and discharged.

The three civilians who were treated and discharged are Mrs D Magagula of 2015 Moroka Village, Mr Godfrey Tshabalala of 125 White City Jouberts and Mr Sam Salateli Sangweni (32), a taxi owner from 17 Zose K, Meadowlands.

The three were rushed to Sargweath hospital where they were treated and discharged. (See Page 3)



A pile of burnt police dockets and files are seen next to the charge office which was also gutted by fire.

Here's the perfect way to save and manage your everyday money matters...

Allied's EVERYDAY Account

The new "Everyday" Account can make life easier for you by making sure you don't have to carry big sums of money with you.

Other advantages include:

YOU NEED ONLY R1 to open an account. NO LIMIT on the number of withdrawals. WITHDRAW from any branch, on suitable identification.

ACCOUNT PASSBOOK — so you always know how much money you have.

CHEQUES made out in favour of third parties. Open an Allied "Everyday" Account today.

ALLIED
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Assets exceed R1 000 000 000



320 (S) Lindsay Smithers, PCB

Guns, fear at Moroka



The debris at Moroka police station. Burnt-out articles were taken out after the attack on Thursday night.

A MIGRANT labourer from Natal, Mr Joseph Mncube (38), fainted with fright when Moroka police station was rocked by gun blasts on Thursday night.

A plumber, he said he was sleeping with others in a shack in the yard.

"I heard gunshots and was frightened," he said. "I do not know what happened thereafter. I did not see the ambulance nor the fire brigades.

"I might have probably fainted because after the

By **LEN KALANE**
Pictures: **LEN KUMALO**

first shots I became scared and covered my head with blankets. I was feeling dazed and the world was spinning around me. Thereafter, I cannot tell what happened."

Mr Mncube said he awoke the next morning to be greeted by the grim sight of the scorched police station.

"I do not even know up to now what the story is," he said.

"I understand my friends were injured and that there was a fire." Nearby Rockville res-

idents said they were awakened by the sound of gunshots, sirens and wailing streams of ambulance and fire brigade vehicles.

A large wall of fire hung over the Moroka police station immediately after gunshots roared.

Said Mrs Constance Matielu (28): "I was listening to radio news. Suddenly we heard shots. Several others followed. We peeped through the window and other shots

hanged. "Soon thereafter there was a huge explosion and there was smoke in the direction of the police station. There was some fire and I saw police running in all directions. Crowds gathered and

soon fire brigade arrived."

Mrs Cecilia Dlamini said: "I was sleeping when I heard loud bursts. I thought it was an aeroplane. Other bursts followed and I peeped out and saw the police station on fire."

Mrs Jane Manguba said she also heard the shots. She rushed out as far as the gate.

"I then saw the police station on fire," she said.

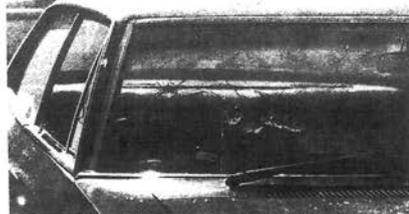
Beatrice Dlamini (20), said she heard shots too, wailing sirens and saw smoke from the direction of the police station but was too scared to go outside.

Mr Geoffrey Nkudlane said: "We heard loud banging and my own sought shelter under the table of my kitchen.

More and more shots followed and the police station was burning."

Mrs Mamofola (37), said she was not at home but her sister, a nursing sister at Berea hospital, told her there was trouble at the police station that night.

Her sister said some policemen were admitted to the hospital with serious burns.



This police car was sprayed with bullets.



Mr Joseph Mncube



Mrs Constance Matielu



Books damaged in the attack.



Beatrice Dlamini



Mrs Cecilia Dlamini

Man describes Moroka siege

By Willie Bokala
ONE of the three residents treated for gunfire wounds suffered during the Moroka police station siege yesterday told POST how he was caught in the midst of gunfire.

Mr Sam Salatiel Sangweni (52), a taxi owner from Meadowlands, said he was so scared that when he found a group of policemen under a small table in the charge office, he bluntly forced himself under the same table.

He said there were deafening screams from people in the office. Children who had come with their mothers to the police station were crying, he said, as everybody was confused and there was a big rush for cover.

A pregnant Motolo woman, Mrs Daphne Magagula, was among the peo-

ple hit by gun fire. When POST visited her 2909 Motolo Village home yesterday, relatives said she was still at the hospital. Police have, however, said all three civilians have been discharged. The other is Mr Godfrey Tababalala of 732C White City Jabavu.

Mr Sangweni, showing a bullet wound in his left thigh said everybody was so terrified that police themselves could

not even fire a single shot in return.

He said he had gone to the police station to report a car case. He parked his car outside and went into the yard. He was suddenly confronted by four armed men, one with a short machine gun and the others with long rifles.

"I immediately went cold. I was confused and I felt death was near. They gave me a stack of papers and told me to

move and fast. There was nowhere I could go but into the charge office.

"They opened fire as I was running towards the charge office. I do not even know when I was hit because I immediately dived under a table where a group of policemen were already hiding themselves.

"There were horri-fic screams all over the office and children were crying. I heard one po-

liceman say 'safa bo' (we are dying). I personally gave out a loud cry as I went for the small table," he said.

He said he did not even know what happened to the stack of papers which the men gave him. "I must have dropped them when they started shooting," he said.

He said he was too confused to describe the clothes the men were wearing.



One of the Moroka Police Station's victims, Mr Sam Salatiel Sangweni, points at the wound he suffered during the shooting.



How Margaret Singana stays fresh and feminine with Body Mist.

Top singing star Margaret Singana knows how hot she can get when she's performing.



That's why she always uses Body Mist. It's an all-over deodorant she can rely on.

Especially when she's giving her whole heart and soul to the audience.

A NEW NAME FOR PLURALS

THE Department of Plural Relations and Development is being renamed the Department of Co-Operation and Development.

This was announced by the Minister responsible for this portfolio, Dr Piet Koornhof, when he spoke during his budget vote in Parliament yesterday.

Dr Koornhof also announced that South African "black states" (homelands) would get as full and as just a share possible "within the sphere of influence of the economic metropolises or economic growth areas."

Pupils boycott classes in sympathy

MORE than 400 school-children at a school in Basmalanz yesterday commemorated the South African Defence Force raid at Cassinga in Angola this time last year by refusing to attend classes.

A total of 413 children gathered on the playing fields of the Petrus Kameh secondary school early yesterday and handed a letter to the principal saying their action was in sympathy with the Cassinga victims.

A senior police officer said only six pupils attended classes. There are no reports of any further incidences in Namibia, he said.



Margaret says: "Body Mist keeps me fresh, on stage and off. And it's got a really super perfume."



All-over body deodorants to keep you fresh and feminine all the time.

SHOT CRITICAL STILL

POST REPORTERS

CONSTABLE M E MOREMI, one of the policemen badly hurt in the Moroka Police Station shooting, is still critical in the intensive care ward at Baragwanath Hospital.

Nurses at the door of the ward told POST reporters yesterday that nobody but his wife was allowed to see him. The intensive care ward is not easily entered under normal circumstances, but this time a tight security net has been thrown around it.

According to SUNDAY POST, the Minister of Justice has reported that people are infiltrating into the country and it is expected that more sporadic attacks would be mounted.

SUNDAY POST also reported Mr Kruger as saying that the ANC, which is believed to be responsible for the attack, had received R7,7 million from various international agencies over the past year.

An Afrikaans newspaper also said yesterday South Africa would face increased onslaughts by urban guerrillas financed by West and East European governments.

According to the newspaper, the Minister of Justice and Police, Mr J Kruger claimed:—

- The ANC which was responsible for the attack received more than R8-million from abroad.
 - Norway and Sweden are two countries that willingly and knowingly spent large sums of money supporting the guerrillas.
 - South African police have arrested 25 blacks who were on their way from across the borders, and altogether 26 armours and explosive hideouts have been traced in the north and eastern Transvaal.
 - A huge collection of weapons, ammunition and explosives have been seized.
- It has also been established that the outlawed ANC was making stronger links with Cuba and East Germany. The ANC has put up an office in East Germany which is used as a base for a connection with Cuba.
- Nearer home it has been established that Mr Joe Slovo, one of the leaders of the ANC and a chief member of the banned SA Communist Party, was in the middle of the anti-SA plots.

He operates from an office in Maputo. Up to now the guerrillas have been busy collecting weapons and explosives according to Mr Kruger. They also planned escape routes.

It was therefore easy for the three Moroka station attackers to have escaped. They used the same kind of explosives used on the rail line near Verreuging not so long ago.

The three urban guerrillas are part of the several groups that have escaped police vigilance and slipped into the country. In this event the Moroka police station attack can be seen as an isolated incident and widespread attacks were not expected, Mr Kruger said.

The police liaison department in Pretoria said yesterday that all information on the latest developments into investigations would be made available today.



Mr J T Kruger . . . more sporadic attacks.

Lebowa fraud probe call

THE Lebowa Legislative Assembly has passed a motion calling on the State President to appoint a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate allegations of fraud in the homeland's Department of Finance.

The motion was moved by former Security policeman, Mr M J Dube of Sechiso and seconded by former Minister of Education, Mr I K K. Moloko.

The alleged misappropriation of funds first came to light in January this year when an assist-

ant accountant in the department, Mr Billy Mahlangu, who was facing charges of forging cheques, told the court that he had forged the cheques to expose some fraudulent senior officials in the department.

He told the court that he had, after forging the cheques, asked his seniors for an independent audit to trace irregularities in the department. This request was refused, he added.

He named the senior accountant, Mr W S Mopho, as one of the officials allegedly forging cheques.

After the hearing, where Mr Mahlangu was fined R300 or six months suspended for three years and further ordered to repay the R600 he had obtained fraudulently, the secretary for finance, Mr A P. Karemako, told POST the departmental inspectors were probing Mr Mahlangu's allegations.

He also said the investigation results would be known in two weeks time but when contacted later, he said the investigations were still on.

Mr Karemako could not be reached for comment and it is not known whether the departmental inspectors would still continue with their probe now that a judicial commission of inquiry has been asked for.

In a similar case in Venda, three clerks appeared in the Sibasa Magistrate's Court last week on charges of fraud.

The clerks, Mr B Makhwa, Mr P Babeda and Mr D Mofima, were all employed by the Department of Public Works. The case was remanded to a later date and all three are still on bail. Police are still investigating.

So much more to enjoy...

Peter Stuyvesant
FILTER 20
1972
RICH HOUSE TOBACCO
KING SIZE

Today the Mail's Jackpot jumps Plus Blaupunkt bonus

Terrorists die in gun battle

By BRIAN O'FLAHERTY and JAYNE LA MONT

SECURITY Forces in BophuthaTswana yesterday killed two terrorists and launched a massive ground and air hunt for a third after they clashed inside a country — about 300 km from Johannesburg.

The terror gang hurled a grenade at a patrol of three BophuthaTswana policemen when they were stopped on suspicion of being terrorists. The three men were armed with Russian weapons.

Ground forces and security helicopters will continue the search for the missing terrorist this morning.

Colonel J G Bekker, the Commissioner of Police for BophuthaTswana, said early today the terrorists were apparently on their way to Johannesburg when the contact happened.

"An intensive hunt with helicopters is under way for the third man who fled in the direction of Botswana," he said.

The terrorists ran into the policemen between Vryburg and Mafeking.

Col Bekker said: "My men were out on a normal patrol. They came across the three men who were wearing blue overalls. The men were also wearing boots which we suspect are worn by terrorists.

"They confronted the men. One threw a hand grenade but the policemen were not injured and they shot two of them dead. The third one fled and we launched an intensive hunt for him," Col Bekker said.

Yesterday's clash with terrorists was the second in three months in BophuthaTswana — the former South African homeland which became independent last year.

The first clash, which involved a running gun battle between at least two terrorists and police from BophuthaTswana and South Africa, happened on August 13 this year.

A shopkeeper in the Witgatland area, about 70km from Zwerst, alerted police about two men who tried to buy vast amounts of food and supplies. Earlier that week about 1000 had been stolen from another shop in the district.

When police arrived the two men fled. One of them stopped and hurled a hand grenade at them. Nobody was hurt. The man was soon captured, but his companion fled into the bush.

BophuthaTswana called on the South African Police to help them capture the other man, who was believed to have fled with at least one other terrorist in the direction of Botswana.

Two helicopters and a large ground force were involved in a running gun battle with the terrorists.

The men, who were believed to have been on their way to Soweto, were dressed in civilian clothes. A man in this gun, two Russian AK7 semi-automatic rifles, hand grenades, ammunition, food and rucksacks were discovered by police.

Pay Donald Duck

WASHINGTON — The US Government has been forced into meeting a 100 day wage to Donald Duck.

The trick was pulled by a Congressional watchdog agency, which was investigating abuse of the \$100-million dollar paid by the Government in overtime each year. It fed the computer the name and out came the cheque.

Best wishes

Suicide bid foiled by local radio hams

By SIMON WILLIAMS

HAM radio enthusiasts in Johannesburg thwarted a suicide bid last night.

Mrs Lorraine Cohen of Newwood picked up a cryptic call about a man who had tried to shoot himself but had been disarmed and had been barricaded himself in a shop in Bransby.

Mrs Cohen, whose call sign is "Crystal Clear", alerted other hams in the area and coordinated a remarkable SSB operation.

Within minutes, hams "Charlie T", "Big A" and "Double J" arrived at the shop. Acting on advice from Suicide Anonymous, the rescuers broke into the shop and stopped the man from hanging himself, apparently with a wire snare.

"Crystal Clear" was jubilant about the rescue. "I think it's marvellous."



The shape of a winner. The "silhouette formula" 300 kw BMW 325, specially built for the new South African Manufacturers Challenge class during next Saturday's Wynms 1000 season car endurance race at Kyalami. Eddie Keizan, who will be driving the car — the only one of its type in the world — took it for its first trial runs at the circuit yesterday. Eddie and American-based British racing ace David Hobbs will be behind the wheel for the big race. The car is expected to exceed 250 km/h on the straight. PHOTO: DAVID PHOENIX-PARLEY

Highway murderer stole only R28

Frerics Bureau

TWENTY EIGHT RAND — That was the killer's loot after the brutal attack on Mr and Mrs Gabriel Harold near Nylstroom this week.

The 1000-registered bodies of Mr Harold, 41, and his wife, Sarah, 42, were found about 4 km north of the town on Thursday morning.

Mr Harold's body had been covered by a blanket near their car. Mrs Har-

Aspirins good for pot plants

One Overprescription

LONDON — Aspirins are good for pot plants.

The old wives' tale has been proved by Professor Ronald Laing-Lawson of the University of Lancaster.

"He has found that aspirin reduces the rate at which the leaves lose moisture. So the plants live longer. He believes that an aspirin spray could save crops from drying during drought."

OSLO — PRESIDENT Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Israeli Prime Minister Mr Menachem Begin have won the 1978 Nobel Peace prize — ironically at a time when a crisis appears to be brewing in the Middle East.

They were cited for the peace negotiations which originated with Mr Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November, 1977. The trip breached a hole in the psychological wall which had kept the two countries apart for 30 years, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said yesterday.

But meanwhile yesterday the Egyptian government was reported in Cairo to be considering recalling its top negotiators from Washington in a move indicating displeasure with the Israeli cabinet's decision to expand Jewish settlements in occupied Arab lands.

Cairo Radio said the Israeli decision was a "basic obstacle" jeopardising the future of the peace negotiations and vowed Egypt would not "remain with folded arms".

In a strongly-worded statement, the radio said the Israeli move aroused "surprise, resentment and apprehensions" about the future of the peace negotiations.

In Washington, the United States Secretary of State,

SWA — the d

THE Editor of the Rand D Sparks, has just returned from West Africa and today gives what is happening there.

He concludes that we are handicapped in an attempt to get concessions which are beyond power to get Swazis to accept playing directly into the hands of those who want violence.

© See Page

R1 TO BE RICH & CHAMP

Now Richard Espo brings you the chance to prove your prowess in selecting the greatest horse ever as the 1st South African horse to be the 1000th Grand Champion!

PRIZES
1st R1 000 and a trip to
2nd R1 000
3rd R1 000
plus 500 sets of Pictobills the 1st to the 1000 runners up

How to play a winner with R1
 On December 2 1976 South Africa's greatest horse twenty years — a 1000th anniversary — will appear before the sporting gods in a contest that is the most momentous of these legends.

He believes that an aspirin spray could save crops from drying during drought.

The Secretary General,
Hungarian Solidarity Committee,
1360 Belgrád rkp 24,
Budapest.

1st August, 1988.

Dear Comrade Suto,

Re: Final Certificate - Mr Bangazwe Nkululeko

The Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa
in the German Democratic Republic herewith requests the
Hungarian Solidarity Committee to assist Mr Bangazwe Nkululeko
(pseudo name) that his final certificate be issued with the
following true data? -

name: Mr Stanley Mongezi Manong
date of birth: 15 May 1954
place of birth: Cape Town, South Africa.

Thanking you in advance for your kind co-operation and
assistance, I remain



Yours comradely,

Sinyana
Sindiso Mfeyana
ANC(SA) Chief Representative
in the GDR.



Mr Bangazwe Nkululeko,
ANC(SA) Students' Union,
Magy Lajos Kiraly ut. 202
Budapest
1149
HUNGARY

Privaatsak 141,
PRETORIA.
29 -8- 1969

DIE SEKRETARIS VAN JUSTISIE (In drievoud)
Aandag: Wnr. Taljaard

Sabotasieverhoor - Kaapstad

Ek heg vir u inligting n afskrif aan van n berig oor n sabotasieverhoor aanstaande maand in Kaapstad, wat in die "Sunday Express" van 17 Augustus 1969 geplaas is.

In die geval dat die aangeklaagdes skuldig bevind word sal dit waardeer word indien u 45 afgerolde afskrifte van die regter se opsomming en vonnis in die saak aan my beskikbaar kan stel, vir verspreiding onder ons missies in die buiteland.

V.R.W. STEWARD
SEKRETARIS VAN BUITELANDSE SAKE

21 TO FACE SABOTAGE CHARGES NEXT MONTH

S. EXPRESS REPORTER

17.8.69
A GROUP of 21 Africans will face charges of sabotage in the Cape Town Supreme Court next month, according to the court roll released today by the Attorney-General in Cape Town.

Their trial has been set down for the whole month and is expected to be one of the biggest sabotage trials heard in South Africa in recent years.

At a summary hearing at Cape Town Criminal sessions this week, three Africans originally charged were discharged by Mr. Justice Theron on the ground that the State had brought insufficient evidence against them.

The other 21 were alleged to have been members of the banned Pogo organisation and had allegedly conspired to kill the White inhabitants of Victoria West.

LOST JOB

During the eight-day hearing, the counsel for the defence, Mr. Ian G. Farlam, argued that the accused had been victims of an "impudent forgery" by a secret police agent, identified at the hearing as X-54.

Mr. Farlam submitted that X-54 had spent a year at Victoria West and had probably fallen into debt through gambling. He had lost his job as a petrol attendant at a garage in the town and had been sent to the garage workshops at less pay.

Mr. Farlam also told the court that the 21 accused would be

entitled to judgment against X-54 in a civil action for malicious prosecution.

Mr. Farlam, Mr. Leslie Walker, Mr. S. Sillemmer, and Mr. H. C. van Riebeeck appeared for the accused. Mr. D. B. Brantje, assisted by Mr. T. H. Louw, for the State.



REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

14/15
109/5

VJT
E.A. 42

DEPARTEMENT VAN JUSTISIE
PRETORIA
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15 -10-1969
DEURGESTUUR OP/SENT THROUGH ON
15/10/69 <i>Lawill</i>
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DEPARTEMENT VAN BUITELANDSE SAKE,
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

PRIVAATSAK 141,

PRETORIA.

14 -10-1969

DIE SEKRETARIS VAN JUSTISIE
(Aandag mnr. Taljaard)

Pogo-verhoor : Kaapstad

Volgens die nuusmedia se berigte het regter Theron tydens n kriminele strafsitting op 30 September in Kaapstad 21 Bantoes van Victoria-wes, wat in terme van die Sabotasiewetgewing van Pogo-bedrywighede aangekla is, na n 13 maande lange verhoor vrygespreek.

Dit sal waardeer word indien n afskrif van die regter se opsomming in bogenoemde saak aan hierdie Departement beskikbaar gestel kan word vir die moontlike inligting van ons Missies in die buiteland.

M. Taljaard
SEKRETARIS VAN BUITELANDSE SAKE



Telegrammer: "JUSTISE."
Alle briewe gesondsaar te word aan
SEKRETARIS VAN JUSTISIE.

Telegraphic Address: "JUSTICE."
All communications to be addressed to
SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE.

Tel. No. 8-2931 x



REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA — REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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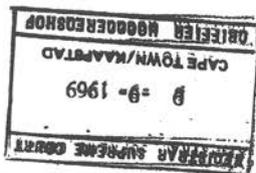
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In reply please quote:
1/481/12/2

No.

DEPARTEMENT VAN JUSTISIE,
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,

Veritasgebou,
Veritas Building,

Privaatsak 81,
Private Bag 81,
PRETORIA.



Die Griffier van die
Provinsiale Afdeling Kaap
die Goeie Hoop van die
Hooggeregshof van Suid-Afrika,
KAAPSTAD.

SABOTASIEVERHOOR : KAAPSTAD.

Afskrifte van die Sekretaris van Buitelandse
Sake se diensbrief No. 53/5 oor 136/4/1/11 van
29 Augustus 1969 en die aanhangsel daarby is vir u
inligting aangeheg.

Geliewe in die geval van 'n skuldigbevinding,
die gevraagde aantal afskrifte direk aan die Sekretaris
van Buitelandse Sake te stuur en, ongeag die uitspraak,
die Departement ~~met~~ een afskrif te voorsien.

Steyn
SEKRETARIS VAN JUSTISIE.

AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned

JOSEPH TSHEPO MAMASELA

hereby make oath and say:

1.

I am an adult Black male, and a member of the Security Branch of the South African Police. I am stationed at the Security Branch Headquarters in Pretoria and I hold the rank of sergeant.

2.

I was born in Johannesburg on the 2nd June 1953. I attended the Morris Isaacson Secondary School in Soweto. There was a high incidence of political activity at the school, and during 1976, when I was in St 9, a number of my friends and I at the school were involved in rioting in Soweto. As a result of such activities many of my friends

fled the country, and most of them joined the African National Congress (ANC), and I was hard pressed to join them. However, I refused to do so, as I had a duty of support to my parents. I did not return to school, but set myself up in business as a trader in soft goods.

3.

During or about May 1979 I was arrested by members of the South African Police (SAP) on a charge of housebreaking and theft. I was completely innocent, and while I was an awaiting trial prisoner, I co-operated with the police in their endeavours to find the real culprits. Eventually the real culprits were apprehended, and my innocence having been established, I was released from custody and all charges against me were dropped.

4.

However, while I was an awaiting trial prisoner, I was treated as a convicted prisoner, and inter alia I was required to work. This I refused to do. I was then regarded as a troublemaker, and Major Gerhard Kruger - at the time he was a lieutenant attached to the Security Branch of the SAP at Krugersdorp - was called in to inter-

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

view me. I may add that Maj Kruger was transferred to the Security Branch of the SAP in Durban during 1981, and that he is still there. I explained my standpoint to Maj Kruger, in which he concurred. He thereafter took the matter up with the authorities, and I was thereafter properly treated as an awaiting trial prisoner. During the course of my conversation with Maj Kruger he asked me whether I would be prepared to assist him in combatting terrorism after my release from prison. I told him that I would consider it, whereafter he gave me his telephone number with the request that, should I have any information which could assist him, I should call him.

5.

Although I had always been an ANC sympathiser, I came to the realisation that the violent methods employed by the ANC to achieve its political objectives were wrong and injurious to the people of South Africa. Another factor which served to estrange my allegiance to the ANC was the fact that one SIPHO MAKOPO, the younger brother of a chief representative of the ANC (ISAAC MAKOPO) had started spreading stories about me and I was disillusioned to find how quickly the ANC was willing to believe scurrilous reports. I had information as to several activities of the ANC on the West Rand, and in June 1979 I decided to take up Maj Kruger's offer. Maj Kruger caused me to be registered as a source and thereafter I received remuneration for information that I supplied.

W.H. Brigg

6.

In late 1979 to early 1980 I was recruited by the ANC and I was sent on an intelligence course in Botswana. Two of the people who attended the course with me, were LILIAN KEAGILE and ERNEST MOABI DIPALE.

7.

I kept Maj Kruger informed of my activities at all times. During early 1980 I came to be regarded as a very important source and I was approached by Maj Kruger for my consent to have Colonel Jan Coetzee of the Security Branch at Krugersdorp brought in as a second handler. I consented thereto and it was done. I may add that early in 1981, when Maj Kruger was transferred to Durban, Captain Blignaut of Krugersdorp was brought in to replace him as my second handler.

8.

During the winter of 1981 my role as an agent of the SAP was discovered by the ANC. My friend, with whom I had travelled to Botswana, was kidnapped and murdered. I was kidnapped at Gabarone, inter alia by ERNEST DIPALE, LILIAN KEAGILE and GILBERT PHOSHOKO, and taken to SELEBI PIKWE, which is approximately 400 kilometres from Gabarone. I

W. Blignaut

managed to escape, and thereafter the Botswana Police apprehended and held in custody ERNEST DIPALE, LILIAN KEAGILE and GILBERT PHOSHOKO. I spent the next four to five weeks in Botswana assisting the Botswana Police in their investigations into the murder of my friend and my own kidnapping. Thereafter I returned to Botswana on a few occasions until about August 1981, but because of the great danger to my personal safety I have not returned to Botswana since.

9.

During the remainder of 1981 and early 1982 I pursued my activities as a source of the SAP, while continuing my business in soft goods.

10.

In the beginning of 1982 Colonel Coetzee was transferred to Vlakplaas near Pretoria. He discussed the matter with me and it was then decided that I should join the SAP, and that I should be stationed at Vlakplaas.

I joined the SAP on the 4th February 1982, and as proof of my appointment I annex hereto a copy of my Record of Service as Annexure "JM.1".

Although I was stationed at Vlakplaas after my appointment, and I was involved in the activities at Vlakplaas, I was never resident there. At the time I was married and my wife and I had a young son. I maintained my household, and I returned thereto as often as I could after operations in the field. However, on a few occasions, we returned to Vlakplaas too late for me to travel home, and on these occasions I slept at Vlakplaas.

11.

My work at Vlakplaas involved the tracing of insurgents in the whole of South Africa, mostly the insurgents were armed and very dangerous, because they could be expected, and on several occasions actually did, shoot their way out to avoid being apprehended. We were therefore armed.

12.

I did not know DIRK COETZEE at all during 1981. After I was stationed at Vlakplaas, I saw DIRK COETZEE on several occasions, when he visited Vlakplaas socially. He was not officially attached to or involved with Vlakplaas in 1982 and thereafter.

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

13.

I also met ALMOND NOFEMELA when I was stationed at Vlakplaas. I did not know him at all before 1982.

I may add that during 1981 I received information as to an attack on Voortrekkerhoogte by members of the ANC. Despite being forewarned, the police and army were not able to avoid the attack, which actually took place. During the course of the investigations concerning such attack I was taken to Vlakplaas by Colonel Coetzee on, as far as I can recall, two occasions in order to make certain identifications. However, on both occasions I was heavily disguised, and my identity was not revealed.

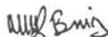
14.

In what follows I propose to deal with the allegations levelled against me *seriatim*.

15.

I emphatically deny that I was in Durban in November 1981, and that I was involved in the murder of GRIFFITH MXENGE in





any way whatsoever. As set out herein before, at the time I was operating as an under cover source of the SAP and I had no involvement with or attachment to Vlakplaas whatsoever. To the best of my knowledge Colonel Coetzee also did not have any involvement with or attachment to Vlakplaas at the time. As set out herein before, I did not know DIRK COETZEE and ALMOND NOFEMELA. As a matter of fact, I did not even know of their existence. The same applies to BRIAN NGQULUNGA and DAVID TSHIKALANGA. I only got to know them after I was stationed at Vlakplaas.

16.

I emphatically deny that I had anything to do with the murder of a diamond dealer at or near Lindley. I am advised that such murder is alleged to have occurred during 1981, and I reiterate that during 1981 I did not even know of the existence of DIRK COETZEE, ALMOND NOFEMELA and DAVID TSHIKALANGA.

17.

I deny any involvement in the alleged kidnapping of ERNEST DIPALE during October 1981. I must emphasise that I was well known to ERNEST DIPALE and his family. It would have been foolhardy of me and my handlers to have involved me in

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

a patently illegal act such as the alleged kidnapping of DIPALE.

As will more fully appear from the copy of a crypto message form of the 5th August 1982, which I annex hereto as Annexure "JM.2", I was involved in the arrest of ERNEST DIPALE in August 1982. ERNEST DIPALE was being sought by the Police, and during the evening of the 4th August 1982 I saw him in a vehicle in Soweto. I tried to apprehend him, but he managed to get away in the vehicle in which he was travelling. I gave chase, and in the process fired four shots from my revolver at the vehicle, but DIPALE and his companion managed to escape. I reported the occurrence and a description of the vehicle and, as appears from Annexure "JM.2", DIPALE was subsequently apprehended and detained by other members of the SAP. I was later informed that DIPALE had committed suicide by hanging himself in the cell in which he was being detained.

18.

I am advised that I am alleged to have been involved in the killing of three Black men at an old mine site at Westgate on the 16th February 1982. I am advised that these three men died in an explosion in a bunker-type building on the said mine site. I am further advised that one ZANDISILE ZANDO MUSI survived the blast. I emphatically deny any

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involvement whatsoever in such occurrence. I also do not know the said MUSI at all.

19.

I am further advised that ALMOND NOFEMELA and DIRK COETZEE allege that a "hit-squad" or "murder-squad" existed at Vlakplaas, and that in later years NOFEMELA and I were the prominent members thereof. I emphatically deny these allegations. During the time that I was attached to Vlakplaas there never was a murder- or hit-squad. As stated before, our work involved the tracing and identification of insurgents. During my time at Vlakplaas approximately 20 insurgents were apprehended. I may add, however, that during 1984 and 1985 I was Brig Cronje's driver, and I drove him where-ever he went. During such time I was not actively involved in the tracing of insurgents. In November 1985 I was transferred from Vlakplaas to my present station at Security Headquarters in Pretoria.

20.

I am further advised that DIRK COETZEE alleges that I participated in the theft of a car in Port Elizabeth, an Audi, which belonged to a Union leader. This car was

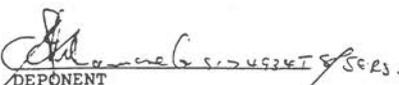
Dirk *W. B. B. B.*

allegedly left at the Police Station in Jeffreys Bay. I deny these allegations.

21.

Lastly I wish to state that there has never been any love lost between me and NOFEMELA. From the beginning of our acquaintance we disliked one another, and this dislike soon developed into open animosity. The matter came to a head in 1983, when we came to blows in an incident involving money, and I managed to give NOFEMELA a comprehensive hiding. Thereafter the relationship between us was so bad that we were kept apart by those in command of us.

I am fully prepared to testify under oath before the Harms-Commission.


DEPONENT

I certify that on the 18th day of April 1990 in my presence at Porton the deponent has signed this declaration and declared that:

1. He knew and understood the contents hereof;
2. He had no objections to taking this Oath;
3. He considered this Oath to be binding on his conscience,

he then uttered the words: "I swear that the contents of this declaration is true, so help me God".

 CHAPTER 16

The Eastern Front

There were about twenty comrades who left the camp destined for the Eastern Front. The truck that was transporting us first went to Pango where it picked up more comrades. Tiny, a former inmate of Iran, was also in the group that joined us from Pango. It was in Pango where I met Moscow for the first time since we parted ways after our arrival from Botswana. He had just been appointed the Chief of Staff of Pango after completing a reorientation course with Magaqa at Caculama, a new training camp that was opened in the beginning of 1981. According to him, the so-called reorientation course entailed the handling of small firearms and a lot of physical exercise but nothing close to what we had undergone at “*emagojini*” (ZIPRA camps). After being deployed as a company commander, he was transferred to Pango where he was promoted to the position of CoS. After leaving Pango, our next stop was Viana, a transit camp on the outskirts of Luanda where we spent a day or two before proceeding to Malanje.

In Viana I again met with Tebello Motapanyane who had earlier left Quibaxe because of ill-health. He was sharing accommodation with Solly Sibeko, also a former inmate of Iran. After our arrival in Viana, I was taken aback by the popularity of Motapanyane amongst the rank and file. Wherever he was, he was thronged by admirers who were shouting and saluting him as “*Phuthebo!*” whenever they met him. He would respond to the many admirers with his trademark “*Ke tla le tshepa jwang!*” salute. He told me that the salute had been forbidden or banned by the authorities as they perceived it to be in conflict with the conduct and ethos of MK. Despite the ban, Motapanyane continued as if nothing had happened. But someone who bore the brunt of the wrath of the authorities for continuing to use the term was Solly Sibeko.

As I mentioned earlier, Solly suffered from epilepsy, and apparently

the seizures became more frequent and serious when he was “grounded” at Viana after being released from Iran. The authorities refused to give him proper treatment as he was deemed to be ill-disciplined for criticising some leaders of the ANC. Because of the alleged ill-treatment he received from the authorities, he in turn decided to join the “*phuthebo*” chorus by constantly shouting “*Ke tla le tshepa jwang*” at the authorities. As Solly became an irritant, the authorities started locking him up in one of the metal goods containers which had absolutely no ventilation. Whilst being locked in these containers, Solly suffered more seizures and as a result his physical and mental health started deteriorating. By the time we arrived in Viana, there were already signs of him suffering from a mental breakdown.

After spending a day or two in Viana, we proceeded to Cacuso, after we were joined by more than fifty other comrades who were deployed in and around Luanda. Cacuso is situated about three hundred and ten kilometres south east of Luanda in the Province of Malanje and about seventy kilometers from the provincial capital city of the same name, Malanje, which was further to the east. This is where the headquarters of the ANC for the Eastern Front campaign was situated. We joined other comrades who had left earlier from the northern camps of Quibaxe. It is here in Cacuso where I met some comrades whom I last saw either in 1977 when we were undergoing training in Catengue or at home in the 1960’s. Some of the comrades whom I last saw back at home included Daniel Masoleng (MK Sidima), who was our scrum-half in rugby at the Cradock Secondary School and Buyisile Ntoni (MK Mazolani Sikhwebu), who also attended the Cradock Secondary School at the time I was a student there. I was overjoyed when I met the two in Cacuso simply because their presence within the ranks of MK confirmed the tremendous political influence Reverend Calata wielded over the lives of many African people of Cradock. When I met Daniel Masoleng, we reflected about the life and times of Reverend Calata who had just passed away that year on 16 June at the age of eighty-eight years, a befitting day to have left this eternal world.

A week or so after we had arrived in Cacuso, a serious incident took place. The majority of the MK battalion that was deployed there was sleeping in a large building that was a warehouse before it was converted into a makeshift barracks. Comrades used to go out and drink in town and return late in the evening in violation of a dusk to dawn curfew which was enforced from six o’clock in the evening to six o’clock in the morning. One evening whilst we were inside the building, just after seven o’clock, we heard a volley of gunfire coming from outside directed towards us. We all scrambled for cover thinking it was an attack from UNITA. After some of the comrades returned fire in panic, everything returned to normal within minutes. I am saying in panic because nobody knew who or where the enemy was. We later discovered that two comrades, Mazolani Sikhwebu and Siphso Bam (MK Skhumbuzo Philane)

who were returning from town after a drinking spree, were responsible for the incident.

Apparently when the security at the barracks started questioning them about their late arrival, both became aggressive and Skhumbuzo opened fire without notice on those who were taking him to task for his unbecoming conduct. One comrade called Ace, who was inside the building with us when this happened, returned fire by shooting in the direction where the original gunshots were coming from. In the confusion that ensued, Banzi, the younger brother of James “Rooi” Tladi (MK Ali Bhutto) was accidentally hit by a stray bullet and died on the scene. The following day Skhumbuzo was executed by an order of the Military Tribunal which was chaired by Chris Hanu and also attended by Mongameli Johnson Tshali (MK Lennox Lagu) who was also a veteran of the Wankie/Sipolilo campaigns.

Generally the duties of MK soldiers based at Cacuso included patrolling the town whilst they were awaiting deployment in outlying areas where UNITA was extremely active. Whilst patrolling the town, local residents would narrate to us how they were disappointed with the MPLA, the ruling party, and put the blame squarely on its shoulders for the increased military activity of UNITA since the death of Dr Agostinho Neto, the first President of Angola. They used to tell stories about how Agostinho Neto, during his short term as the President, put into practice his political slogans especially the one saying, “*The most important thing is to resolve the problems of the people.*” During his term in office, Neto had a zero tolerance approach on corruption. If a senior official of the ruling party was found to have been involved in corruption, Neto would remove him immediately after receiving complaints from the people. If the transgression was serious, like hoarding food that was meant for poor people, Neto would order the execution of the “*candongero*”, a Portuguese word for a person who is smuggling (*candongo*) in the black market. But after Neto passed away and Dos Santos came into power, the ruling party became more tolerant of corruption, as a result many people started supporting UNITA.

After we arrived, the authorities announced a new military structure that was geared towards fulfilling its mandate of taking the war to UNITA. Vusi Mndebele (MK Siphon Mathebula) was appointed the Battalion Commander and Dan Pietersen, the former camp commissar of Pango, his Commissar. The Battalion had many Companies and I was appointed a platoon commissar which was under the company of Themba Michael Nkabinde (MK Vusi Mthombeni) and Mauldin Maziyane (MK Zenzile Phungulwa), who was later killed during the mutiny in Pango. My appointment as a platoon commissar was on the recommendation of Rogers Mevi who was deployed to Botswana immediately after we had arrived in Cacuso. Rogers was later tragically assassinated by the apartheid death squads in Gaborone on 14 May 1985 when a bomb exploded after he had switched on the ignition of his car.

I must say my relationship with company commander Vusi Mthombeni was very good. Although he was a commander, Vusi would never issue unreasonable instructions and was always prepared to listen to sound advice, something that could not be said about his commissar, Zenzile. Although he was a commissar, instead of becoming a restraining voice, Zenzile would sometimes issue instructions which nobody was keen to execute and when advised about the possible negative reaction or consequences those instructions might generate, Zenzile would sometimes bypass the platoon command structure by insinuating that if a commander or commissar was not willing to command, then he as a company commissar was prepared to issue direct instructions to subordinates. The coming together of so many comrades from different camps resulted in comrades sharing their experiences about how they had been treated by camp authorities in one way or another, something that was not foreseen when the leadership decided to deploy the majority of its forces in the Eastern Front. Those comrades who were formerly deployed in the Frontline States and were later grounded to Angola, were the most critical of the leadership, and their opinion about the direction the Movement (ANC) was taking, carried more weight than any other opinion simply because the younger comrades who joined MK in later years respected their opinion.

To make matters worse, around October 1983, whilst we were based in Cacuso, we received copies of the 4th Quarter of the “*African Communist*” (AC), the official journal of the South African Communist Party. The African Communist was readily distributed in all camps on a regular basis. In that edition, there was an extract from a speech delivered by Joe Slovo at a SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) seminar held at Morogoro, Tanzania, in March of that year, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Uncle J.B. Marks’ birth on March 21, 1903¹. Joe Slovo opened his speech by saying:

“J.B. Marks was a truly a towering man, and not only in physical appearance. If he commanded respect, it was not won through fear or bullying or arrogance, but through the very opposite qualities of human warmth, gentleness and charm. He was a true example of how a leader should be. We have had many leaders in our history, both past and present, whom we can admire, but J.B. belongs to that select group whom we can love as well. We have heard from some of the veterans in exile of the terrible hardships in the Tanzanian bush in Kongwa, and they indicated to you that there seemed a time when all seemed lost. It was JB above all who gave them the will and the stamina to go on. Those who lived through that period know that when things became really bad it was JB who was the one who came to face the music. Another quality of his, which unfortunately is only too rare in leaders, is that he listened to and even believed he could learn from the rank and file. He never used that catchphrase of bourgeois armies – ‘You are a soldier; yours is not to reason why, yours is just to do and die’. He understood perhaps more than anyone that without people’s politics, there

can be no people's army, and without a people's army there can be no people's war. JB yearned for home, and, never allowed the urgency of working to get back home to be blunted by the lure of exile safety and comfort".²

Joe Slovo concluded his speech by saying: "*JB was an internationalist not just by conviction, not just by ideology; he was an internationalist by his nature. He really hated racism, tribalism and any form of regionalism. He detested the kind of nationalism represented by Jomo Kenyatta, a man who had attended the Lenin School with JB. JB believed that to lead people in a struggle for liberation you have to be a liberated person yourself and JB was just that; he was truly a liberated person*".³

The article in the AC that contained the above speech of Slovo spread like wildfire in Cacuso. Comrades started discussing it openly and started comparing the things that Joe Slovo mentioned in the article with the things that were prevailing in the ranks of MK at the time. For instance when Joe Slovo mentioned the conditions in Kongwa in Tanzania, comrades started comparing those conditions with the conditions that existed in Angola. When Slovo described what type of a leader Uncle JB was, comrades started comparing the qualities of Uncle JB as espoused in the article with those of some of the leaders of the ANC, especially with the qualities of those leaders who were based in Angola at one time or another, like Mzwai Piliso, Joe Modise and Andrew Masondo, and found their leadership qualities wanting.

In the same speech Slovo quoted extensively from Lenin's "*What is to be Done?*",⁴ and comrades cynically started interpreting this to mean the removal of those leaders who did not fit the profile of a leader as described by Slovo. Word had reached *imbokodo* that comrades were interpreting the article in a way that suited them and *imbokodo* therefore felt the article was no longer desirable and ordered its confiscation. Anybody who was in possession of a copy of the AC was asked to surrender it. As the suggestion was viewed as ludicrous by the rank and file, nobody obeyed the instruction. Instead of handing over the copies as requested, comrades started hiding them from the prying eyes of *imbokodo* and its informers. That was the beginning of serious things to come within the ranks of MK. One could sense that the rank and file was fed up with the bullying tactics of *imbokodo*.

In November reports came of heightened UNITA military activity in and around the villages close to Cacuso and surrounding areas. It was decided that the best form of defence was to attack UNITA and flush it out from its bases across the River Cuanza, which was situated in the south of the country. In order to achieve that, firstly UNITA had to be driven back across Cuanza whilst at the same time its bases across the Cuanza were to be destroyed. Chris Hani and Lennox Lagu were also based in Cacuso and were responsible in directing the military operations against UNITA. One day we were instructed to proceed to a village called Camatete, which was situated about fifty

kilometres south-east of Cacuso. Reports were received that UNITA was very active in the area. Two companies consisting of just less than two hundred comrades were sent to Camatete for this operation of trying to destroy the bases of UNITA in the area. I was part of the group that left for Camatete. Both Chris Hani and Lennox Lagu also accompanied the group as head of the MK contingent as FAPLA had also sent Captain Sabastiao, who was the Brigade Commander and the most senior military official stationed at Cacuso at the time.

We camped at the village for a week without coming into contact with any UNITA bandits (what we called them) as they managed to flee as soon as we arrived in the area. After a week of patrolling the surrounding villages without success, we decided to return to Cacuso. On the day we returned, I was deployed in a reconnaissance section that was moving ahead of the military convoy that provided security to one of our engineering units that was detecting and neutralising possible landmines on our way back. There were two reconnaissance units deployed on either side of the road that were protecting the landmine units. I was deployed in the reconnaissance unit that was marching on the left hand side of the road. Tiny was also in this section. As we proceeded, Captain Sabastiao spoke to a local villager who had accompanied our convoy on the basis that he knew the local terrain very well and could be of assistance in pin-pointing some of the possible ambush spots that UNITA could utilise in trying to ambush our convoy. As our unit was marching ahead of the convoy, the local villager who was walking in front of our section, suddenly diverted us from the main road and led us into the bush. When we tried to ask him where he was taking us to, because of poor communication, we half-heartedly accepted his explanation although we did not fully understand what he was trying to convey. He was speaking in Portuguese and amongst us, very few understood the language. Those who understood a little bit of Portuguese, thought he was saying he wanted to show us a possible place where UNITA might be waylaying the convoy next to the road for a possible ambush.

As the villager was moving deeper into the bush, we started asking questions amongst ourselves as to where we were heading. The villager, undeterred by our protestations, kept on walking deeper and deeper into the bush and before we realised, we found ourselves in the middle of a big UNITA base. As we walked into the base, we observed a fresh fire that was still burning. We were all shocked to have walked into a UNITA base without warning. Fortunately there was no one inside the base. Whilst we were still shell-shocked, the villager who had suddenly turned into a tracker, said we must pursue UNITA and led us towards the direction in which he thought the UNITA bandits had gone to. Apprehensively we followed, although some of us thought it was suicidal to follow the villager-now-turned-tracker simply because we were not

ready militarily to engage UNITA without the support of other comrades. Our main problem at that stage was how we could rejoin the main group from which we had gone astray. We were at the mercy of the tracker. Despite our reservations, we followed the tracker as he in turn followed the tracks of the bandits. The tracks were leading us back to Camatete, but in a roundabout route which was different from the one we used before.

There were only about twelve of us. In our unit, there was a comrade who was carrying a PKM (company machine gun), another was carrying an RPG 7 bazooka (Rocket Launcher) and the rest of us were carrying AK's. As we were marching, without any forewarning, I heard a barrage of machine gunfire coming from our unit. We all took cover without anyone having ordered us to do so. Whilst I was trying to find out what was happening, a comrade carrying the bazooka launched a missile and all hell broke loose. The rest of the unit started firing short bursts of gunfire. I heard one comrade shouting UNITA, UNITA, FIRE! Without seeing any target in front of me, I also released a long burst of fire directed at an imaginary target. The main thing was to create an impression to the bandits that more than a thousand people were shooting at them. War is often psychological.

At that time I remembered what the ZIPRA tactics instructors used to tell us during our lessons. They used to say sometimes when they were engaged in fierce battles in Zimbabwe against the Rhodesian security forces, whilst the battle was still raging on, they would suddenly hear a voice of a commander from the Rhodesian forces shouting, *"One down... two down...three down... surrender terrorist you are surrounded!"* This time I thought if I was fluent in Portuguese, I would have applied the same tactic. Whilst we were engaging the bandits in gunfire, we heard loud sounds followed by huge explosions of rockets. The firing of rockets was coming from the direction of Camatete, at the exact positions where we were based for the week. It was the sound of mortar bombs and cannon shells that were exploding. All of a sudden to my relief, I saw the bandits literally fleeing. It was a platoon of more than thirty. We kept on firing until the bandits vanished from the battle scene. After the battle, we discovered a dead body of one of the bandits with an AK lying next to him. The machine gunfire cut his body to pieces. Luckily no one amongst us was injured. When we arrived back at Camatete, we found the battalion waiting for us anxiously.

What happened is that when we went astray from the main convoy, the convoy could not proceed as they did not know what happened to us. They decided to return to Camatete where they waited anxiously for the news of our whereabouts. Just as Chris Hani was instructing the battalion to go and search for us, they heard a burst of gunfire coming from the bush in the direction where we had disappeared. They knew it was our unit that was engaged in the skirmishes. As they were unaware of our exact whereabouts, the artillery

unit led by Mbomboshe, an MK veteran who was involved in some operations in Natal inside the country, fired rockets randomly in the direction where the gunfire was coming from. Hearing the sounds of mortar and cannon projectiles exploding, the bandits were convinced that they were literally surrounded. That is why at that point they decided to flee.

Back at Camatete, we told Comrade Chris that we suspected foul play because it was clear that the villager had knowingly led us into an ambush after speaking to Captain Sabastiao. It was clear that Captain Sabastiao and the villager knew all along where UNITA bandits were hiding but did not divulge that information until the day when we were about to leave. Fortunately Comrade Chris, too, came to the same conclusion, and decided to be careful in future dealings with the Captain who was commonly known as Kapitao.

The following day we left for Cacuso without any major incidents happening again. A week after the incident at Camatete, the majority of us who were involved in that skirmish were told to pack our belongings as we were being taken back to Luanda. The total number of those who left for Luanda was just over twenty. After arriving in Viana, we were told that we were being sent back to the camps in Quibaxe and Pango to reinforce the personnel at those camps as there was not enough manpower to man the two camps. Tiny was also in the group that returned to the camps. On arrival in the town of Quibaxe, about ten of the group were taken to Pango and the rest of us to Quibaxe. This time Tiny was redeployed at Quibaxe rather than at his old camp at Pango. Indeed, on arrival in Quibaxe we observed that the camp was running on a skeleton staff and needed additional reinforcements.

———— CHAPTER 17 ————

The Viana and Pango Mutinies

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THE LIMITED INTERNET EDITION”

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CHAPTER 18

The Road To Kabwe

After the arrival of the comrades from Pango, another group of comrades, numbering about twenty in total, were removed from the camp and transferred to the PLOT in Luanda where the ANC was building a vocational school sponsored by the United Nations and the Finn Solidarity Movement from Finland. I was very disappointed at being left behind and not included in the group after spending so many years in the camps. I really needed a break from the daily camp routine especially as I had relevant qualifications and experience in civil engineering, skills that I could have easily applied for the benefit of the project that was under construction. I personally felt it was a snub not having been included in the group. I was gradually becoming tired of camp life. I did not understand the reasons for my having been overlooked for redeployment elsewhere, not only on this particular occasion but on numerous other occasions as well. I came to the conclusion that Joe Modise might have had an influence over my predicament as he might have been cross with me for having disclosed his reluctance to OR in refusing to withdraw Sergeant Mogoai from Botswana when the signs were already there, long before he defected, that he might have been an enemy agent. I pondered as to whether the recent events that had unfolded in Angola, the staging of the two mutinies that followed in rapid succession, might at least influence and persuade the ANC leadership into reconsidering the plight of those comrades who were left to waste away in the camps. I consoled myself by comparing my situation with those of other comrades who were in worse predicaments than mine.

Some of the cases that came to mind were those of Clifford Lefatshe Ngaba (MK Raymond Mvundla) and Mvula Bethinja. Both these comrades had spent an inordinate amount of time wasting away in camps. In the case

of Raymond Mvundla, it was reported that he arrived in Angola around 1978. After receiving military training, he was deployed in Pango and was never again given an opportunity to leave the camps. One day in 1983, because of the length of time he spent in the camps, he secretly sneaked out of the camp and went to a nearby village where he raped and murdered an elderly Angolan woman. After he was caught and apprehended, he was later executed publicly in full view of the local people of Quibaxe¹. Similarly, Mvula Bethinja was deployed for a long time at the ZGU base in Quibaxe before being deployed in the Eastern Front. One could only guess that his involvement in the Pango mutiny might have been an act of desperation caused by years of frustration after a long time of being overlooked for deployment elsewhere outside Angola. During the time we spent at the camps, some comrades proposed to Andrew Masondo, the National Commissar, that comrades should be allowed to leave the camps regularly in order to mix freely with local civilians, as a way of reducing the rising number of incidents where some of the comrades were found guilty of raping and murdering Angolan women. Masondo was alleged to have said that masturbation was not a crime in the ANC.

After 26 June, the day when the NEC of the ANC took a decision to convene a Second National Consultative Conference², word was received from Lusaka that the NEC had finally agreed to hold a National Consultative Conference (NCC). All regions of the ANC throughout the world were therefore instructed to prepare for the holding of the conference that would be held sometime in 1985. The forthcoming conference would have been the Second NCC since the Morogoro Conference was held in Tanzania in 1969 after the banning of the ANC in 1960. Following the announcement, authorities in Angola were quick to say that the decision taken by the NEC to hold a conference was not as a result of the pressure exerted by those who were calling for the holding of a conference when the mutiny was staged in Viana. The ANC leadership had long been thinking and contemplating holding such a conference but an appropriate time could not be finalised, we were told³. What we could not understand was why it had taken such a long time, almost fifteen years, for the leadership of the ANC to decide to hold another conference. We were also informed that Regional Conferences would be held prior to the holding of the National Conference in order to elect delegates that would represent each region.

After the announcement, comrades were happy that a National Consultative Conference would at last be held, which was a victory indeed. Although, the general feeling was that it would have been inopportune and inappropriate to have held a Regional Conference in Angola at that time before attending the NCC bearing in mind that the wounds caused by the recent conflict were still fresh and too deep to ignore. What would be the common ground between the rank and file and those who were defending the status

quo? What prospects and chances existed for reconciliation between the two antagonistic groups as each warring party still stuck to its respective positions? After carefully analysing and deliberating the issue, comrades decided to reject the idea of holding a Regional Conference. It was decided the best thing to do would be to send our delegates from the camp straight to the NCC without having to dilute our views through a Regional Conference. As time went by, we received the discussion documents from the National Preparatory Committee (NPC) that was established to coordinate preparations for the NCC, which was based in Lusaka. The NPC was constituted of ten members of which six were members of the NEC and the rest ordinary members. The Secretary General, Alfred Nzo, was the convener and Dan Tloome his deputy, with Thabo Mbeki, Joe Nhlanhla, Josiah Jele and Simon Makana being the other members of the NEC. James Stuart, Pallo Jordan, Joel Netshitenzhe and Manala Manzini completed the rest of the members⁴.

The discussion documents contained broad guidelines that were meant to initiate discussions. Some of these guidelines included documents on the (1) Internal Political Situation and the ANC Underground; (2) Structures, Constitutional Guidelines and Open Membership; (3) The armed struggle (People's War); (4) Strategy and Tactics and (5) The International Political Situation. We were required to set up commissions that would have dealt with each discussion document. The comrades favoured the establishment of a permanent committee constituted of myself, Zakes Ndllovu and Thamsanqa Mnyanda (MK Elticott Dau) and two other comrades as the core group that would lead the discussions on all topics whilst the camp authorities, led by Johannes Nkosi, the camp commissar, favoured the appointment of a chairperson for each commission on a rotational basis, the camp Politics Department to play a major role in steering and leading the discussions.

The head of the Politics Department was Pringle, a former member of *imbokodo* who was once a warder at Quadro and his deputy was Fieldmore Mapeto assisted by Joe Maseko. The aim of the camp authorities was to try and control the discussions as much as possible and steer them in a direction that would suit their agenda. Sharp disagreements emerged as a result of the opposing views regarding how the discussions should proceed with neither group prepared to compromise. A meeting of senior commanders and commissars was held with camp authorities to resolve these differences. The meeting became acrimonious to such an extent that at one stage one of the comrades, Lucky Magingxa, asked Johannes Nkosi whether the conduct of the authorities was indicative of the future behaviour of the ANC after attaining our liberation whereby the views of the masses would be totally ignored by the powers-that-be in pursuit of self-interest.

To avoid the collapse of the preparations for the Conference, before they even started, Johannes Nkosi suggested that we should start our preparations

by discussing the less controversial documents dealing with the International Political Situation and proposed that I should become the Chairperson of that Commission whilst a final solution to the *impasse* was being negotiated. Grudgingly the comrades accepted the proposal. It was accepted because the comrades did not want anybody from the Politics Department to play any role whatsoever in leading the discussions as they were seen as being too close to the camp authorities. The comrades ended the meeting by informing the authorities that their agreeing to me serving as Chairperson of the first commission should not be seen as an end in itself but a means to an end. After the first commission was concluded, Johannes Nkosi had no other alternative but to allow me and Elticott Dau to alternate in chairing other commissions as Pringle had suffered a nervous breakdown, probably as a result of the stress caused by the acrimonious political differences between himself and the rest of the comrades.

During our preparations for the Conference, we studied every single book that was in the camp library. We read books extensively dealing with the history of the ANC and South Africa, especially any book dealing with our liberation struggle, and also other books dealing with the experiences of other National Liberation Struggles. The writings about the experiences of Vietnam by its leaders like Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap and Le Duan proved to be a great source of inspiration to us. We left nothing to chance. We wanted to use the opportunity of participating in the National Consultative Conference to serve as a lasting legacy and a valuable experience to all the members of the ANC and future generations to come as to how a progressive Liberation Movement like the ANC, in its quest to liberate our people from racial oppression, managed to overcome a myriad of problems that it faced emanating within its ranks and externally, some of course being the creation of the enemy. Contrary to what the detractors of those who were involved in the mutiny were thinking and saying, that the aim of those who were calling for a conference was the ultimate destruction of the ANC, ours was to show that in reality, a conference could be used to regenerate and invigorate the masses of our people into consolidating Peoples' Power in our country. The authorities wanted us to forget about the past, that is, we should forget about the gross violation of human rights and the excesses committed against innocent and ordinary rank and file members of MK, and wanted us to believe that the best way forward was to concentrate on the task ahead, the liberation of our people.

As I mentioned earlier, we were reading almost everything that was in our library as we were looking for solutions and precedents as to how other countries and Liberation Movements managed to overcome similar problems to those faced by the ANC at the time. We looked for inspiration from Soviet history books dealing with the Second World War to see how they managed to defeat Nazi Germany whilst progressive communists within the Soviet Union

were facing persecution from Stalin's death squads and some still languishing in Stalin's dungeons. We read the Memoirs of Marshall Zhukov about the Second World War. Marshall Zhukov was the Soviet commander who was responsible for the successful assault and storming of the Reichstag and the Soviet General who oversaw the subsequent surrender of many Nazi military Generals who were loyal to Hitler. For those who said the Soviet Union, that lost more than twenty million of its citizens, and the Jewish people, who lost more than six million of their brethren during the Second World War, must forget about the past, Marshall Zhukov had this to say, "*Those who think about the past, also have the future in mind. And those who plan the future, do not have a right to forget the past.*"

This is also applicable to those who today say Black people in this country should just forget about what happened in the past. Another Soviet book, that similarly proved to be an inspiration to us, was a novel written by Konstantin Simonov called the "*The Living and the Dead*". Simonov was a journalist by profession and during the Second World War was deployed in the Soviet Army, which was commonly known as the Red Army, and served at the Western Front that was engaged in fierce battles defending the Soviet Union against the invasion by Nazi Germany. In his book, which was a fiction based on his own personal war experiences, he narrates how a Soviet military journalist, Vanya Sintsov, who was covering the war, was involved in numerous life threatening events after being surrounded and captured by the Nazis. Instead of surrendering to the Nazis to save his life, bearing in mind the suffering some of his people in the Soviet Union underwent during the purges that were conducted by Stalin from the mid-1930's up to the beginning of the Second World War, Sintsov managed to escape. He had to choose between the defence of the Soviet Union, which by implication was the defence of Stalin, or surrendering to the Nazis who were involved in mass pogroms. To him there was no alternative. The excesses of Stalin were in no way comparable to the mass genocide that was committed by Hitler during that time. For him it was therefore unthinkable to betray the people of the Soviet Union and the rest of mankind by surrendering to the Nazis. After he managed to escape from Nazi captivity, Sintsov fought on until the Nazis were defeated. To us this served as an inspiration for not betraying the fight against apartheid despite being unsure at the time as to whether we would wake up alive or not the following day.

Amongst its midst, Quibaxe boasted a number of many young, brave, brilliant and articulate cadres who had risen in the ranks of MK despite their humble beginnings. Some of these brave young men included Vusikhaya Gqeza (MK Steven "Mgorilla" Qwabe), Stanley Luvo Mbengo (MK Valdez Sibongile), Sibusiso Radebe (MK Ngemntu), Lulama Khabane (MK George Naledi), Lucas Mati (MK Oriel "Worker" Msebenzi), MK Michael "Mashumi"

Dingiswayo (Ten-Ten) and many others. For instance, Steven Qwabe was self-taught in the camps and had never attended formal schooling in his lifetime but he spoke impeccable English with a sharp analytical mind. He was also involved in the Pango mutiny. Likewise Valdez Sibongile was also involved in the Pango mutiny and was one of the nine who was sentenced to death and their sentences later commuted to community service. That did not deter him from speaking out against the authorities during our preparations for the national conference. Sibusiso Radebe, the mastermind of the Pyramid 2000 Scheme, who was alleged to have worked as an *askari* from 1988 to 1993, also possessed tremendous intellectual capabilities. This is borne out by his successful attempt at setting up the Pyramid Scheme which duped many innocent investors⁵. George Naledi, who was one of the three mutineers who went to solicit help from the FAPLA Commissar in Quibaxe during the Pango mutiny, was known for his abilities to shoot from the hip whenever an opportunity presented itself. Ten-Ten Mashumi, although a clown by nature, sometimes entertained us about abounding allegations regarding the lifestyle some of the leaders of the ANC were leading in Lusaka and elsewhere.

Later that year some members of the NPC led by Joe Nhlanhla, arrived at the camp during their road show to Angola which was aimed at briefing the rank and file about the progress of the preparations for the NCC. Nhlanhla was accompanied by Manala Manzini from the NPC and Wolfie Kodesh from the Treasurer General's Office in Lusaka. Also in the delegation was January Masilela (MK Che Ogara) who was the Regional Commissar, and Albert Mabeleng who was the Regional Chief of Logistics. It was clear during our discussions with the members of the NPC that their main reason why they had visited the camp was their concern about our reluctance to agree to the holding of a Regional Conference before we could proceed to the NCC. Joe Nhlanhla tried in vain to explain the importance of holding a Regional Conference, as its aim, was to consolidate our different opinions and divergent views into a unified position that would reflect the views of the region. Comrades did not want to hear any of it. Their main argument was how could a wolf and a sheep sit at the same table whilst the menu on offer was mutton. The reluctance of the comrades to accept the explanation offered by Joe Nhlanhla for holding a Regional Conference seemed to annoy both Joe Nhlanhla and Che Ogara as their tone gradually changed from diplomacy to aggression as their patience was beginning to run out.

The change in their tone seemed to spur the comrades on as it perfectly suited those who by then were waiting in ambush for the leadership to come and brief them about the preparations for the holding of the NCC. Since the announcement was made about the holding of a conference, comrades felt, correctly so, that the momentum of change that was sweeping within the ranks of the ANC was in their favour. They felt if there was a time to put an

end to the abuse that was taking place in the camps, this was the time. Lenin once said: *“It is not enough for revolution that the exploited and the oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes, it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way...”*⁶. Of course Mao Tse Tung’s famous saying came to mind, “When the enemy advances we retreat; when it camps, we harass; when it tires, we attack; when it retreats, we pursue.” The general feeling amongst comrades was that it was the ideal time to pursue those who were guilty of harassing the rank and file. When Joe Nhlanhla criticised the comrades of lacking discipline and political consciousness, I felt the need had come at last for me to break my silence.

When I spoke, I said it was strange to hear the leadership accusing the rank and file of lacking discipline and political consciousness as if these qualities were in abundance within the ranks of senior commanders. One could not expect to reap grapes when one had planted mealies, I went on. At this point I quoted from the Selected Writings of Le Duan, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam in his writings about building a contingent of strong cadres. Le Duan said:

*“For instance, in looking for the strong points and weaknesses of Party cadres and members, if we confine ourselves to examining their ideological qualities and assessing their ideological standard separately from the question of organisation, if we fail to see the influence and impact of organisation on cadres, then we are overlooking one main ground for the correct examination and resolution of the cadre problem. A strong Party branch and a strong Party executive committee give rise to strong Party members and cadres. Wherever the Party branch and committee are rickety, the Party members and cadres find their fighting strength reduced and are prone to degeneration and backsliding. Of course, the reverse in this case is completely true, because in their relations with the organisation, Party cadres and members are at the same time the effect and the cause.....We must realise that the question of individuals here is essentially a question of organisation and must base our criticism of the ideology of these individuals on the organisation; we must base ourselves on the requirements of the organisation, on the criteria and principles of the organisation and the ideology itself that is required by the organisation when we have to determine the responsibility of individuals. That is the principled method of work.”*⁷

Le Duan went on to say,

*“In an organisation where functions and tasks are not clear, where the distribution of work is irrational, where norms of work and the allocation of responsibility are not well defined, where the relationship and cohesion among the various component parts or their homogeneity are lacking, any person in it will tend to become impotent and inefficient because it is a weak organisation...”*⁸

I went on to say that the complete disregard of political education and the lack of revolutionary ethics or morality in our training camps in favour of toyi-

toy coupled with the ill-treatment of trainees by fastening them onto trees as a form of punishment, was the main cause of the so-called lack of discipline and political awareness amongst our cadres. If there were soldiers who lacked discipline, then fingers must be pointed at the Regional Command who have allowed a culture of impunity in the camps by allowing camp authorities to treat the rank and file as their domestic servants. Turning to Albert Mabeleng, the Regional Chief of Logistics, I said the Logistics Department was hoarding food that was destined for the camps similar to Nito Alves, the Angolan leader, who was alleged to have hoarded food that was meant to be distributed amongst the villagers. It was later discovered that Nito Alves deliberately withheld the food supplies in order to cause discontent amongst the civilian population and the troops. Mabeleng knew exactly where I was leading to. Many comrades had previously complained how Mabeleng was hoarding food destined for the camps. These supplies ultimately ended up in the black market.

A typical case was when in June 1983 Job Tabane (MK Cassius Maake) who was the National Chief of Ordinance of MK and with whom I had worked very closely in Botswana, had instructed Mabeleng to supply me with clothing as I had left all my clothing in Botswana during the time I was recalled. When I went to collect the clothing at the stores, to my surprise, Mabeleng refused saying I would only receive clothing when everybody in Viana was allowed to do so as he could not give me preferential treatment. After hearing what Mabeleng had said, Cassius immediately accompanied me to the stores where Mabeleng was based and ordered him to make the clothing available to me. That was not the end of the matter. Finally, when Mabeleng allowed me to choose "*umphando*" (a common word in MK camps referring to the second hand clothing we were receiving from overseas), it did not come without stringent conditions. Mabeleng informed me without a blink in the eyes that certain bales were out of bounds and were only meant for senior commanders and for those comrades who were destined to the forward areas. Because my story was not unique, in criticising Mabeleng, I felt I should highlight the views of the general membership and the perception they had about him.

Joe Nhlanhla and his delegation never expected such a hostile reception. If they did not know what the causes of the mutiny were, then from that day they should have known. In reply, Nhlanhla said if I was tired of being in the army, the door was then open for me to go to school. The meeting ended in disarray. Early the following morning, we received notice that Che Ogara had arranged a follow up meeting to the one held the previous day. I arrived late at the meeting as it was called at short notice. Before I could even sit down, Che directed his venom at me and said Le Duan could go to hell if what he wrote meant the justification of not holding a Regional Conference. He also said the political background of some of us ought to be closely scrutinised to determine as to whether we were genuine MK soldiers, implying that some

of us, especially myself, might be an enemy agent. After insulting us, he left. Before leaving, he confessed that he was unable to sleep the previous night because of what we said during the meeting. The short meeting thus ended without him giving us the right to reply to his insults and innuendoes. The insults spewed by Che just seemed to invigorate and motivate the rest of us into continuing with our mission of making the conference a success. Isaac Newton's third law of motion states, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The political discussions in preparation for the NCC that took place in the camp just proved how true Isaac Newton's laws of motion were.

The next time Chris Hani visited the camp, he summoned various comrades to the administration for questioning about various statements they had allegedly made about the leadership of the ANC during the course of deliberating and digesting the issues raised in the discussion documents. At times comrades made some comments that seemed to earn the ire and wrath of the camp authorities especially when they challenged the input of Johannes Nkosi and Refiloe who was the joint Recording Officer with Bernard, the younger brother of Andile Ndzanga. Faku Mtuyedwa, the former Recording Officer, had left at the beginning of the discussions for the NCC. Before the beginning of the discussions, we took a decision amongst ourselves, that when we discussed the documents, we must concentrate on policy and refrain from discussing personalities as the NCC was not about individuals but about how the ANC had deviated from its policies.

Comrades were therefore forewarned not to mention the names of any leaders, be it Joe Modise, Andrew Masekela or Mzwai Piliso, by name whenever we discussed the role they had played within MK. One of the comrades who was summoned to the admin by Chris Hani was Ten-Ten Mashumi. He was asked to identify by name the "big fish" who was undermining our struggle and who he referred to during our deliberations. During the discussions, Ten-Ten said there was a "big fish" in the NEC and the MK High Command that was undermining our struggle by secretly collaborating with the enemy. "*We must fish him out!*" Ten-Ten said to the amusement of the rest of us. Now his day of reckoning was nigh. Chris wanted an explanation of who this big fish was. By the time he left the administration building, Ten-Ten suddenly fell ill, presumably suffering from malaria as he had a very high fever.

Another comrade who was summoned was George Naledi. He was summoned for disputing the fact that the ANC leadership was tried and tested. George criticised Johannes Nkosi for always referring to the "tried and tested" leadership of the ANC. George used to ask Johannes where was this leadership of his, "tried and tested". To the camp authorities this was a typical case of insubordination. The time had now arrived for him to account for his views. Unlike Mashumi (Ten-Ten), George did not deny that he had questioned the

wisdom of Johannes for using those words. When he was asked to explain his reasons for questioning the use of the words, George instead directed a rhetorical question to Johannes asking him to provide proof as to how the leadership of the ANC was tried and tested. Knowing that Chris was involved in the Wankie campaign, George used the occasion to diplomatically cast aspersions on the integrity of Joe Modise. George said a military leader of the ANC cannot be said to be tried and tested unless he has been involved in the actual combat against the enemy where he could have proved his credentials beyond doubt. *“How many MK leaders were involved in combat operations?”* George in turn asked Johannes Nkosi in the presence of Chris. As to his assertions that “nationalists” (non-communists) within the ANC were more corrupt than communists, George said he mainly referred to the article of Joe Slovo about Uncle JB Marks and asked Johannes to come with concrete evidence to prove that his assertions were wrong. According to George, at this point Chris smiled and said the arguments put forward by George was evidence of the fact that MK soldiers were well read and concluded by saying the differences in opinion should not be antagonistic as seemed to be the case in Quibaxe.

Indeed in their quest to compel us to toe the line, the camp authorities alienated the rank and file to such an extent that if some of the comrades had been armed, there would have probably been a repeat of the earlier incidents that played out in Pango. Because of the antagonistic nature of our discussions, I was also disarmed. I had been the head of the armoury and I was allowed to keep my AK long after the events of Pango, even after the authorities had removed all weapons from the armoury. But, because I was too vocal during the visit of Joe Nhlanhla, the authorities decided to disarm me because of the possible threat I could have posed to the security of the camp, so they reasoned. When Joe Maseko left the camp, Fieldmore Mapheto became the only member of the Politics Department. In reality the Politics Department became dysfunctional. Chris Hani requested me to assist in the Politics Department and subsequently Johannes Nkosi approached me with the same request. Although I initially agreed to the proposal, I never joined simply because I could not foresee myself working harmoniously with Johannes Nkosi.

In the beginning of 1985 we were informed that a Regional Conference was to be held in February of that year in preparation of the National Conference. We were informed that details regarding the election of delegates would be forwarded in due course. Whilst there was no word coming from the authorities, reports reaching us from Viana indicated that preparations for the Regional Conference had reached an advanced stage in many camps. One evening when I was on guard duty as an officer on duty with Bhekokwakhe Gumede (MK Dudula Duduza), who was the head of propaganda, a delegation from Luanda, led by Uriah Mokeba, the Chief Representative, arrived

accompanied by Che Ogara. The delegation held a meeting with the rest of the comrades. I could not attend the meeting as the authorities had instructed Dudula to attend. I wondered what led the authorities to hold a meeting in the evening as it was not usual practice to do so. Most leaders who visited the camp usually arrived in the morning to address the detachment and we would be informed to make advanced preparations although the actual date and time of their arrival would be kept as a closed secret. An hour after the meeting had started, Dudula came to call me as he was instructed to do so after I was elected as a delegate to the Regional Conference. Elected as a delegate to the Regional Conference? When were the elections to be held? On what basis were they held? These were some of the questions I posed to him. Before he could answer, someone else came to inform me to hurry up as the Chief Rep was waiting.

Hurriedly, I left. As I entered the venue of the meeting, I was greeted with thunderous applause by the comrades. Dazed and dumbfounded by the applause, Mokeba greeted me and said I was voted as a delegate to the Regional Conference with a majority of votes. He said the rest of his delegation wanted to see this person who received such massive votes. For the sake of transparency, he had decided to read out the names of the delegates who were elected to the Regional Conference and the number of votes each delegate had received. After reading my name and confirming that I had received 38 votes, he read the name of Elticott Dau who received 32 votes and after reading the name of the third delegate, which was Johannes Nkosi, Che Ogara prevented him from reading the number of votes Johannes had received before Mokeba could do so. Johannes Nkosi was the last of three delegates that would represent the camp at the Regional Conference. After his name was announced, there was a deafening silence, because nobody expected him to be voted as a delegate. After the results were announced, I was told to leave and return to the Guard House where I was stationed.

It was only the following day that I managed to understand what had transpired during the meeting with Mokeba. Mokeba, as a Convener of elections for the Regional Conference, informed the comrades that they had come to supervise the holding of elections for the Regional Conference. After he spoke, he invited questions from the comrades. That was when all hell broke loose. The comrades wanted firstly to know why they were ambushed and not given notice in advance to prepare for the elections as was the case with other centres. Secondly, what was the criteria of determining the number of delegates and the manner in which they were to be elected. Lastly, comrades informed Mokeba that they wanted to appoint their own observer to oversee the fairness of the elections as they did not have any confidence in Fieldmore Mapheto who was appointed by the camp administration to be an observer on behalf of the camp.

Mokeba explained the rationale behind the formula that was used to determine the number of delegates to the Regional Conference. One delegate was to be elected for every twenty members. After long deliberations, the delegation refused to accede to the request of having one of the comrades to monitor the election. After the announcement of Johannes Nkosi as one of the delegates, it was clear from the beginning that the intention was to defraud the election process as much as possible. I received a tip-off from one of the comrades who said he was secretly informed by one of his acquaintances who was part of the delegation that Johannes Nkosi received only 6 votes and Zakes Ndlovu received 36 votes. The Regional Commissariat, headed by Che Ogara, had decided by hook or by crook, come what may, that all camp commissars would form part of camp delegates to the Regional Conference. The fraud in electing delegates to the Regional Conference therefore extended to the whole of Angola.

It became clear to us, despite our clamour and protestations, complaining about this massive fraud, even the NPC had decided to turn a blind eye to the fraudulent conduct of the Regional Commissariat that was spearheaded by Che Ogara. As head of the Quibaxe delegation, by virtue of me having received the most numerous votes, comrades mandated me to query the manner in which the elections were run and the circumstances that led to the “election” of Johannes Nkosi as a delegate. I went to Fieldmore Mapheto who was appointed as an observer and asked him how many votes Johannes had received and he confirmed that indeed he had received a mere 6 votes. Without even waiting for his confirmation of the number of votes Zakes Ndlovu had allegedly received, I asked how it was possible then for Johannes to be elected ahead of Zakes when Zakes had received 36 votes. There was stunned silence. “*Fieldmore, I need an answer from you.*” I said, in an excited and raised voice. Silence. His silence was therefore a confirmation to me that the fraud was legal and he (Fieldmore) was part of a link in the long chain.

The Regional Conference was held in Viana in February 1985. As delegates, before we departed for the conference, we decided to hold a meeting with the comrades in order to receive a final mandate from them about the main issues they wanted us to specifically raise at the conference. One comrade, who was called Bhubesi (a lion in Zulu), and a regular contributor to our political discussions in the camp, said the main issue I should raise was the fraudulent “election” of Johannes Nkosi as a delegate to the conference. Even David Thebehali of the infamous Soweto Urban Bantu Council had received six percent of the votes, which was fairly sizeable compared to what Johannes had received, which is what Bhubesi emphasised as he took his seat⁹. This was said and done in the presence of Johannes Nkosi. Before the start of the Regional Conference, in a Plenary Session, in the presence of Joe Nhlanhla, I raised the manner in which Johannes Nkosi was appointed. Judging by the composition

of delegates, which was overwhelmingly attended by camp commissars and their cronies, it became clear that my complaint was an exercise in futility. One would have expected Joe Nhlanhla, who was representing the NPC, to have taken a keen interest in my complaint. Instead he became irritated each and every time I spoke about the issue.

The majority of delegates came from Caculama, a training camp in Malanje. Most of the delegates from Caculama were trainees who had just arrived from inside the country. It was therefore apparent that their presence signified nothing else other than being voting fodder for Che Ogara whose sole aim was the drowning of whatever popular demands were tabled during the conference by those who were interested in the resolution of the problems that were prevailing in the region at the time. Fortunately during the Plenary, I was supported by Bob Mazwi, also a former inmate of Iran, who voiced similar concerns about the voting in Pango. Bob Mazwi and Gordon Yekelo (MK Nicholas Radebe) represented Pango. Nicholas “Nick” Radebe was the Convener of Instructors in Pango and a member of the camp administration there. Unlike most members of the various camp administrations who chose to toe the line, in contrast, Nick Radebe, for the duration of the conference, supported each and every motion that was proposed by, Elticott Dau and Bob Mazwi and I. The delegates from Quibaxe and Pango represented by the four of us including Nick, proved to be the only delegates that debated issues that were pertinent to the daily lives of the general members of MK.

For instance, when the issue of discipline or the lack thereof was discussed, I stood up and repeated exactly what I said previously to Joe Nhlanhla when he was in Quibaxe by quoting the relevant passages from *Le Duan*. When Che tried to ridicule me, Nick intervened on my behalf by stating how camp authorities, by default the Regional Command, had violated the basic revolutionary principles and rights of trainees through their ill-treatment. When other delegates who were mainly the handpicked camp commissars tried to support Che by attacking me and Nick, Ronnie Kasrils who was attending the conference with Chris Hani, came to our rescue by saying he (Kasrils) wanted Nick to explain in detail to the conference how life was in the camps during the time Nick was undergoing training.

Apparently Nick, as the Chairperson of the Commission on Social and Political Life in MK during the Regional Conference, and as a member of the Madinoge Detachment who trained in Quibaxe in 1978, was in a better position to describe, compare and explain the differences between the situation that prevailed then and the current situation that was taking place at the camps at the time. In his opinion, Nick also came to the same conclusion that the training methods and the course content needed to be changed as MK was producing cadres who were no longer on the same political level as their predecessors of the June 16, Moncada and Madinoge Detachments.

At this point, Chris Hani launched an unprecedented blistering attack on all senior commanders and commissars in the region. He was annoyed by the manner in which they were trying to close ranks each and every time the Quibaxe and Pango delegates were trying to make a meaningful contribution. He said the senior commanders had literally become fat cats by refusing to exercise in the morning and expecting only the rank and file to participate in physical exercises. They had become overweight as they utilised soldiers as their domestic servants. These practices would come to an end in due course as the status quo in the region could no longer remain the same as it was unsustainable, Chris concluded. Joe Nhlanhla was sitting quietly with a glum face as Chris was flaying the commanders. Drama was about to unfold. When we discussed the mutiny, I said one of the causes was the practice of fastening soldiers onto trees and letting them endure such humiliation throughout the night whilst standing fastened in such a position. I said this in the presence of Thami Zulu who was also attending the conference as an observer. It was under his watch that such practices had taken root in MK camps in the late 1970's.

Wow! Like a swarm of bees attracted to honey, I endured the wrath of the rest of the commanders and commissars. They attacked me for what they perceived as me "justifying" mutiny. My greatest disappointment was to see Amos Aluko, who was in the same platoon as me when we underwent training in Catengue, singing the same hymn as the rest of the commissars. Aluko became a prolific writer of political articles and was once the editor of DAWN, the official mouthpiece of MK. His weakness was the excessive drinking of liquor. Because of his excessive drinking habits, he became a political hostage of the authorities. He therefore had no choice but to toe the line as the authorities would have assassinated his character should he have tried to speak the truth. Other prominent commissars who were in this group included MK John Zulu, who was the camp commissar of Viana and MK Mountain Xhoso, who was the camp commissar of Quadro. There was no basis for mutiny as it was reactionary, the conference heard one commissar after another informing the delegates.

Naledi Sehume, who was the Recording Officer in Pango when the mutiny took place there and was subsequently injured in the hand, said the definition of mutiny in MK should not be the same as the definition of mutiny in other countries, say for instance in a country like Kenya which was under imperialist control. In MK, mutiny should be defined as a reactionary and a counter-revolutionary act sponsored by the enemy. According to him, since I had just justified the dastardly act of mutiny, I had therefore also joined the ranks of mutineers. He concluded by saying that I was one of the remnants of mutineers. When I was about to respond to what Naledi had just said about me, Elticott persuaded me not to respond and advised me not to compete for space with Naledi.

Fortunately at that point Ronnie Kasrils stood up and said the definition of mutiny that was proffered by Naledi was too complicated. The definition of mutiny in all armies, irrespective as to whether it was a Western or Progressive army, was the same. Mutiny is the use or the threat of use of arms against authority, Kasrils explained. He further said he was interested in the reasons for the mutiny. In his call for reasons, he was supported by Chris Hani. After they spoke, Che Ogara and his commissars were stunned into silence. Observing that Che and his commissars were on the back foot, Joe Nhlahla stood up and angrily denounced anybody who said there were reasons for the mutiny. He said all those people who were saying there were reasons for the mutiny were themselves populists who were trying to solicit favours from the rank and file. At that moment, after he had spoken, the plenary adjourned for a few minutes break.

After the break, it was reported that both Chris Hani and Ronnie Kasrils had left the venue and would no longer return that day as they had prior commitments. It was clear they had walked out in disgust after Joe Nhlanhla insinuated that they were populists. Despite Chris Hani and Kasrils not returning, the Quibaxe and Pango delegates supported by Christina More, a female comrade who was also a product of Mark Shope in Catengue and was a delegate representing Viana, continued to fight albeit under difficult conditions. Milton Mazungula (MK Nduku “Pele” Mpompi aka Pages) who was a delegate from the PLOT, asked the plenary to discuss the rumours that were circulating in Luanda by then that the mutiny was instigated by the Xhosas. Apparently these rumours were started by some members of *imbokodo* during their interrogation of those who were detained for supporting the mutiny. It was reported that they had claimed that the call for the removal of Joe Modise was spearheaded by Xhosas simply because Joe Modise was Tswana speaking. But these people who were spreading such rumours forgot to note that out of the three leaders who were the most unpopular in Angola, two of them, Mzwai Piliso and Andrew Masondo, were Xhosa speaking. Although Masondo’s father was Zulu speaking, he spent most of his adult life in the Cape. I must confess, such rumours never reached us in Quibaxe. In any event nobody during the conference ever tried to respond to the call of Pele to discuss this issue simply because it was not true.

Chris Hani and Ronnie Kasrils returned during the last day of the conference which was reserved for the election of delegates to the NCC. It was clear from the composition of the delegates that we as delegates from Pango and Quibaxe stood no chance of being elected as delegates to the NCC. Forty delegates were elected to represent Angola in the NCC. To my surprise, Bob Mazwi, Christina More and I were elected as delegates at positions 40, 39 and 38 respectively. It might be that we were democratically elected by other delegates to the conference, but I suspect we were included in the delegation

because of the intervention of both Hani and Kasrils. The reason why I am making such a pronouncement is because of what Ronnie Kasrils said to me, Elticott, Bob and Nick immediately after we had voted.

He found the four of us standing alone, isolated from the rest of the delegates, debating the conduct of elections and the wisdom of sending new recruits who had just arrived from inside the country as delegates to the National Conference. In our discussions with him, Ronnie promised to monitor the counting of ballots and to ensure that at least each camp had a delegate in the final list of delegates to be sent to the NCC. In my opinion, our inclusion was purely due to the intervention of both Chris and Ronnie. I am mentioning this because sometimes historians have a tendency to distort the facts in trying to rewrite history. Stephen Ellis in his book, *External Mission, the ANC in Exile*, when writing about the Kabwe Conference, states, “*the largest voting block was the army, expertly organised by Chris Hani to ensure that it voted for positions caucused by the Party*”¹⁰. After reading my account about events before and during the Regional Conference, it is clear that the above assertion by Stephen Ellis is false. Far from trying to manipulate the situation, Hani and Kasrils were the ones who were the restraining voices in an atmosphere of intolerance.

Immediately after the conference was concluded, Chris Hani called me aside and requested me to assist the office of the Chief Rep in repairing the roads leading to the agricultural farm of the ANC which was also situated in the Province of Malanje. The last time he was in Quibaxe, he asked me whether the authorities knew I once studied civil engineering back at home as he could not understand why I was not included in the group that was deployed at the PLOT. He requested me not to refuse my deployment to the farm. I immediately knew it was a tactical move of removing me from Quibaxe from where it was said I was masterminding new attempts of undermining the leadership of the ANC. When I agreed to his request, he said I should no longer return to Quibaxe as he would send other people to go and fetch my belongings. One could see that he had received numerous negative reports about my role in Quibaxe and wanted me to get out of that place. It was at this time that he proposed that I should consider studying civil engineering overseas. As the idea was always on my mind whilst I was rotting away in the camps, it did not take me long to agree to further my studies. But I explained to him that I had to go back to the camp and report about the proceedings of the conference as the comrades would never forgive me for deserting them if I agreed not to go back to the camp any more. Fortunately he agreed with my sentiments and thus I returned to the camp in order to brief the rest of the comrades.

Back in Quibaxe, during our report back, the meeting degenerated into a fracas as Johannes Nkosi was blowing his horn about how the Regional

Conference had managed to silence our delegation when it adopted resolutions that were contrary to what comrades had hoped for. He quoted the resolution on mutiny as an example in proving his point. The Regional Conference took a resolution that stated that the mutiny was a reactionary and counter-revolutionary act. Initially I tried diplomatically to explain what had taken place during the debate of this issue. But, as Johannes Nkosi continuously boasted about how our delegation was crushed at the conference, I momentarily lost my temper and replied by saying the resolution was sponsored by anti-communists who did not have capabilities of reaching scientific conclusions whilst communist leaders like Kasrils acknowledged the fact that there were reasons for the mutiny. The reason why I had to invoke the anti-communist innuendo, was because for the duration of the Regional Conference, whenever these handpicked commissars were trying to justify their positions, they would quote Marx and Lenin at great length. By that time it was also rumoured and later proven to be true that Che Ogara was a member of the SACP¹¹.

Unlike Kasrils, who was a known member of the Central Committee of the SACP, at the time few of us knew or even suspected that Chris Hani was a member of the Communist Party. I also explained how Hani and Kasrils walked out after Nhlanhla had called them populists. Before the meeting came to an end, which ended as a brawl in any case, the comrades requested me to ask for the tabling of the Stuart Commission Report at the National Conference before any discussion about the mutiny could take place. Immediately after the Regional Conference, Johannes Nkosi was transferred to the Caculama camp where he became a camp commissar. In the meantime, authorities in Quibaxe refused to release me to go back to Viana as proposed by Hani where I would await my deployment to the farm. Timothy Mokoena, the Regional Commander, had to fetch me personally from the camp as the authorities were reluctant to release me. I was ultimately deployed at the PLOT where I assisted in building the vocational school and a clinic which was meant for the use of MK members.

Word came from Lusaka that the ANC's Second National Consultative Conference (SNCC) would be held somewhere in Africa from 16 to 25 June 1985. Shortly thereafter, there was a flurry of visits made by senior leaders of the ANC to the region including visits by Alfred Nzo, the Secretary General, who was not known for having visited the region before. Joe Modise also made a rare appearance since the days of the Viana mutiny. It was evident from the visits made by these leaders that they interpreted Angola to be their main stronghold especially after the conclusion of the Regional Conference. This was coupled by the continued incarceration of members of the Committee of Ten and the other twenty comrades who were arrested with them. As a token gesture, about thirteen comrades who were arrested during the Viana mutiny were released in April 1985¹², including Jabu Mofolo who was a member of the

Committee of Ten and the commissar of Amandla Cultural Ensemble. The group also included Mike Mkhwanazi, Moss Thema, Grace Mofokeng, Kate Mhlongo and Ronnie “Singer” Masango.

Less than a week before the Angolan delegation departed for the SNCC, the delegates were instructed to assemble in Luanda where amendments to some of our resolutions were required. To my surprise, the main resolution to be amended, was the resolution dealing with the mutiny. In opening the discussions, Che Ogara, who was chairing the meeting, said with hindsight that it was necessary to have discussed in detail the reasons for the mutiny so as to properly understand what had happened. Was this a question of a genuine change of heart from Che and his colleagues? It was evident from the unconfirmed reports that we received from other areas, that the overwhelming resolutions of other Regional Conferences dealt in detail with the reasons for the mutiny. It was therefore clear that someone like Joe Nhlanhla, who was a member of the NPC, had forewarned Che Ogara that the Angolan delegation would be a laughing stock if it stuck to its absurd, unscientific and unpopular position regarding the mutiny. Before we could discuss this important amendment, Che reported to the meeting that when I reported back to my constituency in Quibaxe regarding the resolutions taken at the Regional Conference, I exaggerated like the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) what had transpired during the conference when Hani and Kasrils had to leave because of prior commitments. Instead of reporting the correct position, I chose to dramatise the situation.

I immediately stood up and answered by saying I was happy to be compared to the BBC. Unlike RSA (Radio South Africa), that would choose to ignore the signs of a gathering storm by declaring the weather to be fine and warm, the BBC would at least report the weather as overcast, I concluded before sitting down. The message was loud and clear. The fight would go on until the NCC made binding resolutions regarding most of the issues we had disagreements about. When the meeting started to discuss the reasons for the mutiny, I chose not to participate as I viewed these discussions to be completely fallacious and were motivated as a way of saving face rather than a change of heart.

We left Angola not knowing where the conference would be held. We were informed to proceed to Zambia where we would receive further instructions. The Angolan delegation was the first to arrive in Zambia and we were accommodated at the ANC farm in Chongella. Joe Nhlanhla was the first senior leader of the ANC to welcome the delegation. Two days before the start of the SNCC, we were transported to the Zambian town of Kabwe which was to be the venue. By this time the international community knew the ANC was to hold its conference which was to start on 16 June. But, for security reasons, the location of the venue was kept top secret. As a form of destabilisation, the apartheid security forces raided Botswana on

14 June, just two days before the start of the Kabwe Conference, where they attacked houses of civilians including those sympathetic to the ANC. Twelve people were killed including eight South Africans, two citizens of Botswana, a Somali and a Lesotho citizen. Only five of the eight South Africans were members of the ANC amongst whom were George “Cleanhead” and Lindi Phahle¹³. Bra George was the one who collected me from the airport in Gaborone when I first arrived in that country. Earlier, exactly a month before, on 14 May, Vernon Nkadimeng (MK Rogers “TYT” Mevi), who was the camp commissar at Quibaxe, was also killed by a bomb in Gaborone. May their souls rest in peace. The conference was opened by OR Tambo who requested the conference to send a delegation to Botswana in order to assist with the funeral arrangements of the deceased and render whatever material and moral support was required by the bereaved families. It was decided that Andrew Masondo assisted by Gertrude Shope, both members of the NEC, should lead the delegation.

The Kabwe Conference hence begun on a sombre note with John Nkadimeng, the father of Rogers, seated in the podium next to OR. The opening speech to the conference by OR was rousing. It was carefully thought through, highly articulate and interspersed with the use of impeccable English as its trademark. It was during his speech that OR revealed that the leadership of the ANC had been engaged in secret or clandestine talks with Steve Biko aimed at winning him over to the side of the Liberation Movement. He revealed that shortly before his death, Steve Biko had agreed to meet the leadership of the ANC, that would have included Tambo himself, to be held in a secret venue in Swaziland. Unfortunately, because of his untimely death, the meeting could not take place.

As a delegate from Angola, especially representing those who were involved in the mutiny, my measurement of the success or failure of the conference would depend on whether the grievances of the comrades submitted to the Stuart Commission were adequately addressed. Some of these included the improvement of the camp conditions vis-à-vis the welfare of comrades, political life, military training, escalation of the armed struggle to avoid the undue and long staying of comrades in the camps and finally the curbing of the excessive powers *imbokodo* was wielding in the region. Of course the removal of those leaders who were responsible for this malaise and the radical decline in the living conditions within the camps was a prerequisite for MK to move forward if it was to shed its ignominious and shameful past.

On a national level, the opening of membership to the NEC to White, Coloured and Indian comrades was also a decisive factor as to how successful the conference would be. A day before the conference started, I had a brief chat with Albie Sachs, who was also a fellow delegate and who later became a Judge of the Constitutional Court, regarding the issue of admitting non-African

members into the NEC. He had asked me how this issue was handled and debated in the camps. After our deliberations, he told me that the constitution of the ANC which was drafted and approved in January 1958, opened the doors of membership to all race groups. He was referring to article 3(a) of that constitution that stated that, “*Membership of the Congress shall be open to any person over the age of 18,...*” Indeed throughout our discussions, that preceded the holding of the conference, no one ever noticed or raised this point simply because we were all engrossed in the previous resolutions of the Morogoro Conference that restricted membership of the NEC to only Africans.

After the opening address made by OR, just before we broke into commissions, Che Ogara approached me and suggested that I should join the Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work as I seemed to be well versed in that field. I viewed his suggestion as cheeky especially after saying Le Duan could go to hell if his writings on cadre policy meant the foregoing of the holding of the Regional Conference. At the time I first quoted Le Duan, most comrades, including Che himself knew nothing about his writings. It was only months before the holding of the Kabwe Conference, when writer after writer who were contributing to the African Communist (AC) started quoting his Selected Works, that many people started acknowledging his expert contributions in that field.

I decided to join the Commission on National Structures, Constitutional Guidelines and Codes of Conduct for the simple reason that during our preparations for the conference, the comrades in Quibaxe had proposed the formulation of a new code of conduct that would be in line with the progressive policies of the ANC. We had looked at the codes of conduct of many countries and organisations and felt the ANC, as it was a signatory to the United Nations Geneva Convention of 1949 and Protocol 1 of 1977, should formulate its new code of conduct to be in line with the Geneva Convention and Protocol 1¹⁴. The Commission on Constitutional Guidelines was chaired by Zola Skweyiya, discussions led by Kader Asmal, and Albie Sachs was the Rapporteur.

I would be failing in my duty not to mention that Zola Skweyiya, and to some extent Kader Asmal, were sometimes intolerant of views that were critical about the establishment. Instead of being impartial as a Chairperson, Zola Skweyiya would abruptly interject anyone whose views were opposed to those who were supporting the status quo. I remember one specific disagreement regarding the issue of torture of detainees who were in ANC custody. I proposed, as the ANC was a signatory to the Geneva Convention, that it adheres to its principles and guidelines pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war whenever it interrogated its detainees. I had in mind the manner in which those comrades who were involved in the mutiny at Pango were tortured through the use of dripping melted plastic on their naked bodies. After raising the issue of torture, I immediately received a hostile reaction

from both Skweyiya and Asmal. Asmal went further by saying that as the ANC was involved in a War of Liberation, some of the recommendations contained in the Geneva Convention and Protocol were not practical.

Some of the delegates from Tanzania supported my point of view. During our discussions in the Commission, no decision was taken on this issue as the opinions expressed were diverse. In the Plenary, when the recommendations of the Commission were tabled, Albie Sachs, who was the Rapporteur, highlighted this fact. The recommendation captured the mood within the commission when it stated, "*There was a debate as to whether to keep the clause dealing with intensive interrogation. Some comrades felt it should be understood and not put in black and White*".¹⁵

Another contentious issue during the Conference was the Secretary General's (SG) Organisational Report dealing with the Security Department. Delegates felt that the report glossed over the shortcomings and excesses that were perpetrated by some members of this Department. President OR Tambo had to quickly draft another report himself and present it to Plenary in order to satisfy the needs of the majority of delegates. Tambo, who had an incisive mind and intellect, judging by the mood of delegates, could sense that the manner in which the report was presented fell far short from the expectations of what most delegates wanted to hear. The majority of delegates wanted *imbokodo* to be reined-in. Before he presented the report, OR took the delegates down memory lane by narrating the history of the ANC, extolling its virtues and sometimes its setbacks. He dealt briefly with the setbacks that the ANC encountered when Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord which resulted in Mozambique closing some of its offices in that country.

He also briefly dealt with the relations between the ANC and the Government of Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe. The relations between the two parties were not cordial. In the beginning, Mugabe was very hostile to the ANC. Whenever Tambo arranged appointments to see Mugabe, after initially agreeing to meet with Tambo, Mugabe would sometimes inexplicably cancel the appointments. But with perseverance, Mugabe gradually warmed to the ANC. One of the reasons for his change of attitude was the strength of the Mass Democratic Movement inside the country which was led by the United Democratic Front (UDF). Mugabe did not want to be seen to be openly hostile against the ANC as the UDF was its ally. Mugabe therefore did not want to be unpopular with the oppressed people of South Africa. The reason why OR had to narrate all this to the Conference, was because a deeply divided ANC would not only play into the hands of the apartheid regime, but it would also deeply demoralise the people inside the country who were looking upon the ANC as its leader and the vanguard of the South African Revolution.

Tambo, as the President of the ANC, had to sometimes endure the humiliation of witnessing the harassment of the ANC by member countries of

the Frontline States manifesting itself in various forms, including the signing of individual security agreements with the apartheid regime as Mozambique had done in the case of the Nkomati agreement. But at no stage did he think of publicly criticising the leaders of the Frontline States simply because if he had done so, the people of South Africa would have been the main losers. He was therefore calling upon us as delegates, in the interest of unity, to always have at heart the interests of the people of South Africa whenever we were discussing issues at the conference.

He then went on to table his report on the Security Department which was fairly balanced, considering the short space of time he had at his disposal. Balanced in the sense that he tabled information that showed how the enemy was trying to destroy the ANC by infiltrating its ranks with spies and at the same time acknowledged the fact that the enemy had managed to infiltrate the ranks of the Security Department. Through some of the actions of the enemy agents operating within the Security Department, they managed to discredit the ANC through the use of disproportionate force against ordinary members. After he presented his report, there was definite silence. Delegates seemed to say, *“ukbulumile u commander”* meaning “the commander has spoken”. Such were the powers of OR. He had the ability to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Another interesting moment came when the Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work presented its findings in the Plenary. Essop Pahad, who was the representative of the SACP on the editorial council of the World Marxist Review in Prague, Czechoslovakia, was the Rapporteur of that Commission. When he tabled the report of the Commission, he started by saying the ANC could not expect an MK soldier with a hungry stomach to march victoriously into Pretoria. He was referring to the appalling living conditions under which MK soldiers were living in camps in Angola. He made an example of the tinned meat made of offal that was commonly known as *“skop”* (from the Afrikaans word *“kop”* meaning “head”) which used to be the only source of protein in the camps for a very long time. The meat was sent from France and rumoured to have been a delicatessen for dogs in Europe but sent to Angola as a form of solidarity. It tasted very badly. Comrades sometimes called it *“Miterrand”* after the French President who was in power at the time. Essop Pahad came to eat *skop* whilst he was in Pango undergoing a crash course in military training and experienced at first hand the terrible conditions under which MK soldiers were living. His comments unnerved most senior leaders who were present, including OR. They perceived his comments to be fuelling divisions amongst the delegates whilst they were trying to preserve unity at all cost. Years later after I met him in Parliament in 1994, he confessed to have been heavily criticised by many senior leaders for having made those statements.

Most of the recommendations of the Commission were good and were in line with some of the contributions we had made in Quibaxe. For instance, under Promotion and Accountability, the Commission recommended, “*The political performance of cadres should at all times be the guide for placement and promotions. There should be no favouritism, opportunism, regionalism and ethnic (tribal) or sex discrimination.*” After the report was tabled, Bob Mazwi stood up and went to the podium where he said in order to understand the plight of MK soldiers in Angola, the recommendations of the Stuart Commission should be tabled for discussion. Immediately Chris Hani stood up and vehemently castigated Bob Mazwi by saying the Conference ought to be vigilant as it was being ambushed by Bob. Why was Bob not saying the recommendations of the Commission should be implemented instead of being tabled at the Conference, Hani concluded. Seeing Bob being under siege, I felt I should come to his rescue by supporting his proposal although our cause seemed to have been lost after Hani had spoken bearing in mind what OR had earlier stated regarding unity.

How on earth could Hani propose the implementation of the recommendations of the Stuart Commission without us having seen them in the first place, I thought. In any event I took to the podium where I supported Bob’s proposal but quickly turned to the above recommendation made by the Commission which stated that there should be no favouritism and opportunism when placement of cadres were made. I continued by saying it was a wide and accepted practice in Angola where the promotion of opportunists and careerists was the norm. Before I could finish, the three minutes allocated to each delegate had expired. As expected, Che Ogara took to the podium where he severely criticised Bob and I. He was supported by other camp commissars, especially by Johannes Nkosi. Both Bob and I were not fazed by their criticism. We were used to the conduct of Che and his fellow commissars and expected their reaction. Our aim was to represent our respective constituencies who were clamouring for justice.

History would never have forgiven us if we had kept quiet throughout the conference proceedings without voicing the wishes of those who voted us as delegates to the conference. The following day elections were held for the new members of the NEC after the conference had voted overwhelmingly in favour of incorporating non-African members into the NEC. It was during this time that I met Jabulani Nxumalo (MK Khumalo “Mzala” Migwe), a comrade who was known for his prolific writing and later became the author of the book entitled, “*Gatsba Buthelezi: the Chief with a Double Agenda*” which was released in 1988. He came to see me after I had spoken in the Plenary the previous night. He offered words of encouragement by saying the majority of delegates were disappointed with the fact that the Chairperson of the Plenary, Ruth Mompati, did not afford me more time to speak because most delegates

wanted to hear what was happening in Angola. He was also not surprised by the way other fellow delegates attacked Bob and I because they had been foretold that the Angolan delegation was handpicked.

After the election of new NEC members, the conference came to an end on 22 June instead of the 25 June as planned. Andrew Masondo was not re-elected to the NEC whilst, Joe Modise and Mzwai Piliso retained their positions. Unlike what many historians have written about the Kabwe Conference, despite the re-election of both Modise and Piliso to the NEC, it was reasonably successful as not a single proposal we had made in Quibaxe during our preparations, was in conflict with the main resolutions of the conference. In stark contrast, the resolutions passed previously by the Regional Conference in Angola were in all respects contradicting the resolutions of the Kabwe Conference.

A day after arriving from the Kabwe Conference, on 23 June, Johannes Nkosi committed suicide by blowing himself up with a hand grenade at the Caculama camp where he had been the camp commissar¹⁶. No reasons were given for him having committed suicide. But Che Ogara, when he informed the camp in Viana about the incident, said that although Johannes Nkosi played a very important role leading up to the Kabwe Conference, he ultimately became a coward for not being able to face difficulties. At the time I was stationed at the PLOT, a mere ten kilometres away from the camp in Viana and to my surprise Che never ever bothered to come and inform us about the death of Johannes Nkosi, although he travelled the length and breadth of Angola informing all ANC members about his sudden and unexpected death.

Eighteen months later, on 30 December 1986, Amos Aluko, who had been appointed to replace Johannes Nkosi as a camp commissar of Caculama, also blew himself with a grenade during a visit by OR to the camp¹⁷. He was said to have consumed too much alcohol and exposed his manhood to female comrades whilst bingeing. Both he and Johannes Nkosi had two things in common, the uncritical and unequivocal support for those who committed gross human rights violations against ordinary members of MK in Angola and the manner in which they had taken their lives, was identical.

———— CHAPTER 19 ————

The Stuart Commission Report

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THE LIMITED INTERNET EDITION”

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CHAPTER 20

Farewell to O.R. Tambo

Life in Angola after the Kabwe Conference did not become a bed of roses by any stretch of the imagination. If we thought this might happen, then we were mistaken. On 22 June 1985, the day the Angolan delegation returned from the conference, I slept at the Viana transit camp as there was no transport to take me to the PLOT, where I was deployed. The following day when I arrived at the PLOT, I was surrounded by an anxious and almost apprehensive group of comrades who wanted to know the outcome of the Kabwe Conference. After I had explained to them what the resolutions of the conference were, I was asked to confirm the veracity of the reports that were given by Bobo, the Political Commissar at the PLOT, that the conference had taken a resolution condoning the excesses that were committed by the Security Department against the rank and file.

Furthermore, Bobo went on to say that the conference encouraged members of the said department to continue using corporal punishment as a means of instilling and maintaining discipline within the ranks of MK. Apparently when the conference delegation arrived from Zambia, Bobo was immediately transported to the PLOT, although I was informed there was no transport available at that time of the evening to transport me. On his arrival at the PLOT, well after nine o'clock in the evening, Bobo called for an urgent report back meeting to discuss the resolutions of the conference. It was a controversial decision indeed for having called a meeting at such a short notice and at such an awkward time as most of the comrades were already asleep at that time of night.

The comrades further informed me, before Bobo reported about the conference, that he accused the comrades of having stolen his blankets whilst he was away attending the conference. Stealing of food and clothing was rife

at the PLOT and in the camps in general as these were commodities that were in great demand from local residents. Normally comrades would exchange (“*trocar*” in Portuguese) these commodities mainly for liquor and sex. It would have appeared, from the look of things, that someone stole his blankets in order to “*trocar*” these in the black market. As the loss of his blankets had apparently upset him, as a way of a deterrent, he then decided to inform the rank and file about some of the relevant resolutions that were passed at the conference that had a direct bearing on what he perceived as ill-discipline.

In order to avoid controversy, I reported to the comrades verbatim what OR had said when he delivered the report on the Security Department, something that was not even close to what Bobo had reported. Months later, one comrade who was staying at the PLOT and was said to be close to Bobo’s girlfriend, an Angolan, reported that he saw the blankets at the place of the girlfriend of Bobo during a routine visit. When asked where she got the blankets from, she said Bobo had donated them to her before he went to “America” for a two weeks’ visit in June of that year. Presumably it was at the time he had attended the Kabwe Conference.

A few days after I had arrived from the conference, I was called to the camp administration by Thobile Richard Stuurman (MK Kenny Majozi) who was the Recording Officer at the PLOT. He wanted me to brief him about the deliberations of Kabwe, especially about the resolutions that were passed regarding the Security Department, as he was requested by the Regional Command to present a formal report to the comrades, something I found very strange indeed as he was not one of the delegates. Patiently, again, I repeated verbatim what OR had said and tried not to interpret his report into my own words. I could see Majozi was trying to verify certain reports he might have received about me personally or about what transpired at Kabwe. I pretended that I was totally oblivious to his machinations.

A few days after speaking to him, I was again called to the administration, this time by no other than Andrew Masondo. I found him in the company of Bobo. Without even waiting for me to settle down, he fired the first salvos. “*Why did you go about misleading the comrades by saying the conference had condoned the staging of both mutinies?*”, was his question. “*Where and when did I utter such words?*”, was my response to his rather emotional outburst. He said he had received information from the camp administration to the effect that I was going about the PLOT in a jovial mood telling everyone that the conference had condoned the mutinies. Initially I had tried strenuously to avoid confrontation with him as he was not known for his skills of engaging in a rational argument. But, because he had already made up his mind, that I was guilty of all the allegations that were levelled against me, at that point, I could no longer contain my emotions properly.

I replied by saying that if he was trying to build a case against me based

on false reports, then he had better say so, rather than hiding behind faceless people. The person who needed to account to the leadership of the ANC was Bobo for having said the conference had taken a resolution encouraging *imbokodo* to continue meting out corporal punishment to the rank and file. If those allegations were proven to be true, then Bobo should be made accountable for deliberately having misled the comrades. I suddenly noticed a change in Masondo's body language as he turned to speak to Bobo. Indeed he never expected this answer from me. As Bobo was seated next to him, Masondo asked Bobo to confirm whether he had uttered those words. When Bobo remained silent, Masondo said if that was proven to be true, then it would have been construed as if Bobo wanted the comrades to stage another mutiny against the leadership of the ANC. As I was very furious with Masondo for having summoned me to answer to such baseless allegations, I promised to report the matter to the leadership, whenever I had the first opportunity to do so, as I viewed it as a provocation. I viewed his actions as being vindictive, especially as he had lost his seat on the NEC during the conference.

After the meeting that ended unceremoniously, I went to see Kenny Majози regarding what Masondo had just said to me as I thought he was also partly responsible for his conduct in view of the previous meeting I had held with him (Majози). To my surprise, Majози distanced himself from the conduct of Masondo. He said he had warned him not to confront me regarding such unfounded allegations as they seemed to have emanated from Mandla, a comrade who was suffering from a nervous breakdown. Mandla was one of the group of sixteen that escaped from Pango during the mutiny and headed north to the Northern Province of Uige before they were captured. Apparently Mandla went to report to the administration that I was going around telling comrades that the conference had condoned the staging of the mutinies. After he (Majози) had spoken to me and after he had realised that Mandla was suffering from a nervous breakdown, he decided that the rumours were unfounded and I should not be confronted about such allegations. Despite the advice, Masondo decided in any event to go ahead and confront me. Maybe his ultimate aim was to ensure that I be silenced, in whatever way the authorities deemed fit, as it was probably one of his last visits to the region since he was no longer a member of the NEC nor the National Commissar.

A few weeks after the visit of Masondo, Mzwai Piliso visited the PLOT during its official opening ceremony. It was renamed the Viana Vocational School after the completion of phase one. The event was attended by dignitaries from the UNHCR and the Finn Solidarity Movement. During the occasion, Majози managed to arrange a meeting between me and Comrade Mzwai in connection with my earlier concerns that I had voiced regarding the conduct of Masondo, although in fairness I was reluctant to direct my complaints at him as I thought the two of them were birds of the same

feather. To my surprise I found Comrade Mzwai approachable. He actually commended me for the discipline I had displayed during the difficult period leading up to Kabwe. He knew in detail everything I had said during our preparations for the conference. I was not surprised as he was the Head of the Security Department and his subordinates were expected to report everything to him that was said during that time. What was of interest to note was his acknowledgement that he and his colleagues (read Modise and Masondo) had committed grave mistakes in the region when they were trying to defend the ANC from alleged infiltration by enemy agents and provocateurs. He said that if he had been given another chance to undo the damage that had already been done, he would have done things differently. I am not sure as to whether he was saying all this because we were all enjoying a few glasses of Cuban Rum and Russian Vodka, but to me Comrade Mzwai appeared to be sincere and genuine in showing remorse for all that happened under his watch.

Of course Comrade Mzwai knew me very well from his previous frequent visits to the camps, and the last time I saw him was when he visited the ZIPRA camps in Luasaka, Zambia accompanied by Snuki. His unrestrained outpouring of his feelings and emotions was therefore not just made up on the spur of the moment, but was a carefully thought-out re-introspection of the gross mistakes he and his colleagues had allegedly committed in the region. At some point, Kenny Majozi, who was listening to our conversation all along, tried to drag him away from me as he might have thought Comrade Mzwai was on the point of breaking down. I discovered afterwards that Majozi made the appointment for me to meet Comrade Mzwai because Comrade Mzwai also wanted to have a discussion with me. What apparently impressed Comrade Mzwai about my conduct, according to him, is that throughout our political discussions when we were preparing for the conference, I had not even once blamed a particular leader for the mistakes that were committed. I always put the blame on the fact that policies of the ANC were violated and not followed to the letter. This is what Mark Shope used to teach us when we were undergoing training as new recruits, that we must always hold the leadership accountable whenever it deviated from the policies of the ANC.

In his works, Le Duan, when dealing with the *“Collective Method of Work and Individual Responsibility”*, writes:

“Here, we must point out that the role of those who head an organisation, the leaders, is very great and has a decisive character. That is why they must meet very high requirements. The leaders must embody loyalty and dedication in the implementation of the line and policies of the Party and State and must have the necessary capabilities and determination to bring these line and policies into effect. They must have rich experience, foresight and aliveness to the new, a creative, imaginative mind to combine collective leadership with the ability to make clear sighted decisions on the basis of a deep knowledge of the tasks assigned and a firm grasp of the situation... They

must show high sense of responsibility, great determination and a principled attitude in handling affairs. They must take into account and really respect the opinion of others, and calmly listen to the suggestions of the masses even if they do not agree with them. They must have a generous attitude toward others, and a high sense of self-criticism, must dare to admit their errors and mistakes and have the determination to correct them. These are indispensable qualities in leaders. If they possess these qualities, leaders will enjoy the necessary prestige and trust without which they cannot lead".¹

But the generousness shown by Comrade Mzwai was not reciprocated and appreciated by some of his colleagues, including Masondo and Modise and other political formations within the Regional Command, like the Regional Commissariat. Since the conclusion of the Kabwe Conference the Regional Commissariat, led by Che Ogara, visited the camps to brief the rank and file about the resolutions of the conference. At each and every camp they visited, I was told, they reported that OR Tambo in his report presented to the conference, praised the Security Department for the "wonderful" work it performed in protecting the Movement against infiltration from enemy agents. Nothing was said about the unbecoming behaviour of some rogue elements within that department. Unfortunately the Regional Commissariat never went to the PLOT to give feedback about the deliberations of the conference, probably because I was stationed there. I came to the conclusion that the aim of deliberately misrepresenting the report of OR was to demoralise the overwhelming majority of the soldiers in the army who were desperately yearning for change, especially those who were involved in the mutiny.

One of the sacred duties of a Political Commissar is to enhance the level of morale, welfare and political education within the armed forces. Low morale and dissatisfaction within the army have led to dangerous consequences in the past as epitomised by the mutinies that took place. Instead of trying to improve the level of morale, the conduct of the Regional Commissariat had the opposite effect. Mao Tse Tung once wrote, "*Every communist must grasp the truth, political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. Our principle is to have the Party control (command) the gun, and never allow the gun to control (command) the Party*"². In essence, the events that were condoned and defended by the Regional Commissariat were where the gun enjoyed supremacy over political education. One would therefore like to know what benefit the Regional Commissariat derived from a demoralised and restive army. The answer lies in the fact that most of the resolutions of Kabwe were in stark contrast to the Regional Conference resolutions of Angola.

The Regional Commissariat was trying to save face by misleading the rank and file as if there was not much difference between the resolutions of the two conferences. Secondly, continued instability in the region was playing into the hands of the securocrats who believed the sword to be mightier than political education and self-conscious discipline. I could therefore no longer reconcile

myself with the political state of affairs that was taking place in Angola at the time and desperately wanted a way out. Another reason why I wanted a way out, was because of the unconfirmed reports that were circulating in the camps after the death of David Rabkin. Rabkin, a SACP activist, who had died in Pango on 22 November 1985 whilst undergoing a short course in military training there. He died accidentally of injuries sustained when an explosive device delay-mechanism, malfunctioned during practical training³. There were unconfirmed reports that Nick Radebe, as a result of the incident, was held solely responsible after authorities allegedly put the blame on him for the incident as he was the camp Convener of Instructors though he was nowhere near the training area on the fateful day. At the time of the accident, Nick Radebe was not on good terms with the authorities because of the role he played prior and during the Regional Conference that was held in February of that year. There was a general feeling amongst the comrades that he was allegedly unfairly treated. Nobody ever confirmed whether these unconfirmed reports that were circulating about Nick were true or not, but I certainly treated them seriously in light of the recent conduct of Masondo.

After a long and protracted battle with the Regional Authorities refusing to facilitate the granting of a scholarship to enable me to study overseas, I was eventually allowed to leave Angola to study abroad but not without the assistance of Chris Hani. On Friday 17 October 1986, I, together with Kort Mazibuko, Tiny Setlhapelo and Duke Selepe, finally left Angola en route to Budapest, the capital city of Hungary, on a scholarship, where we would ultimately spend our last days in exile. It was one of the most memorable things to have happened in my life, to have at last escaped from the claws of the junta. I had spent five of my prime years of life wasting away in the camps in Angola without any tangible reason whatsoever. I looked forward to starting a new life by furthering my education and hoped that one day I could utilise my newly acquired skills in the reconstruction and development of a future democratic South Africa.

My excitement was short lived though, as the following Monday, 20 October, in our first meeting with one of the officials from the Hungarian Solidarity Committee, Istvan Farago, who was in charge of educational support in the Committee, informed us, to our disbelief, that we were not eligible to study at a University as we did not possess the necessary qualifications that would have enabled us to further our studies there. According to the forms that were forwarded to them from our office in Angola, it was stated we were only in possession of a Standard Six Primary School Certificate. In support of his argument, Farago showed us the forms that were forwarded by our office in Luanda. The original forms that we had completed were nowhere to be seen. From what we could see, it was quite obvious that the authorities in Angola had done everything in their power to undermine and derail our efforts in furthering

our education. It was quite clear that our trip to Hungary was approved under duress after Chris Hani had intervened. For tactical reasons we decided to accept the offer of furthering our studies at Vocational Schools as returning to Angola, with all our past and previous experience there, was definitely not an option. But, before we could proceed to study at any institution of learning, we had to complete a year studying the Hungarian language.

In June 1987, after we had completed the year's course in Hungarian, we were allowed to proceed to any Vocational School of our choice. Studying Hungarian language was one of the most difficult things I have ever done in my life. Although the structure of the Hungarian language is based on the Latin alphabet, it is not related to any language in the world. Fortunately we managed to cope with our studies as the level of the language was meant for those students who wanted to pursue their studies at Vocational Schools. Instead of proceeding as required, Tiny and I, decided once more to approach Farago of the Solidarity Committee, pleading with him to allow us to enrol for university education. Farago did not want to hear any of it. It was either that we proceeded to Vocational School or we packed our bags to go back to Africa. The choice was ours and the ball was in our court. When we realised by the beginning of the new academic year of September 1987, that the Hungarian Solidarity Committee was not prepared to change their mind, we decided to pack our bags and return to Tanzania instead of Angola. I could not imagine myself starting at High School again after having completed Matric and an additional three years of education at Mmadikoti Technikon. Although I was desperate to further my studies, it was not to be at all cost, to a point where I would sacrifice my dignity. Kort and Duke had decided to accept their fate and agreed to study at Vocational Schools although both of them were in possession of Matric.

As I mentioned in chapter one, before we could leave Hungary, we received word that OR Tambo was about to arrive in Budapest in late September of that year, on a two day official visit. When the Hungarian authorities requested us to collect our air tickets to return to Tanzania, we informed them to wait until we had met with OR and managed to brief him about our predicament. Instead of being sympathetic to our plight, they became livid as they viewed our request as a delaying tactic. We were even shown a letter signed by the Hungarian Minister of Education confirming their refusal to allow us to enrol for university education. They had had enough of ANC students claiming to have passed Matric only to get stuck at the pre-university entrance examinations that were written before one could be allowed to study at university. OR Tambo was visiting Hungary at the invitation of its President, Janos Kadar, who was at the same time the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP). At the time, Kadar was at the helm of both the HSWP and the country since 1956.

The arrival of OR gave us hope that there might be a solution to our plight. A day after his arrival in Budapest with Sindiso Mfenyane who was the ANC Chief Representative in Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), as East Germany was known then, all ANC students who were based in Budapest were invited to meet with him. During the meeting, OR appeared to be extremely relaxed, joking along as we introduced ourselves. He recognised me instantly from our previous meetings in Africa and not the least during my input at the recently held Kabwe Conference. He opened the meeting by acknowledging that fact, although not mentioning anybody by name. He wanted to talk to us and hear our views and concerns about various issues affecting our daily lives. After hearing our plight and dilemma, OR wholeheartedly agreed with our sentiments and the decision of returning back to Africa as he, as the President of the ANC, could not support a decision that condemned us to perpetual inferior education. We had to endure inferior education under Bantu Education and now in a Socialist Country we were not allowed to pursue courses of our choice, he said.

Although repeating a class sometimes might help, he said that in my case he would not recommend it. OR narrated how he had to repeat standard six twice as his parents did not have money to enable him to further his studies although he was a top student in class. Having to repeat standard six many times, helped him in later years when he completed his Junior Certificate (JC) with a first class distinction at St Peters Secondary School in Rosettenville, Johannesburg, being one of only two African boys to have achieved such a feat in the whole of South Africa. It was indeed history as never before in South Africa had African students achieved such success. He later went to pass matric with a first class achieving a distinction in mathematics. But in my case, he would not recommend me to attend a vocational school as I had already completed three years at a Technikon. As he was having a meeting with the country's president later that evening, he promised to raise our plight with him. In the event that he did not succeed, he would strongly advise me in particular to go back to Tanzania where I could assist in building a school in Dakawa. OR could not believe how authorities in Angola could have bungled our applications in this embarrassing fashion.

Without anyone in the meeting speculating what might have prompted the authorities there to have bungled our applications in such a manner, OR went on to explain how he had issued several warnings to the authorities there to stop molesting and harassing the rank and file. Despite his several warnings, he continued to receive numerous reports about commanders failing to adhere to his instructions. Heads would roll, he promised. This was vintage Tambo, calm and looking extremely relaxed. He probably raised the issue of *imbokodo* because of the concerns I had raised during the Kabwe Conference. I left the meeting in awe of him. I had met him before, but had never seen him in this

joyial mood. The following day we were informed by Sindiso Mfenyane that Janos Kadar had given his permission to allow us to enrol at university. When we went to the Solidarity Committee, no one knew about this instruction. Days later we were reluctantly informed by Hungarian officials that indeed we were to proceed to the Hungarian International Preparatory Institute where after another year, we would be able to sit for our university entrance examinations. Again I had to study the Hungarian language and other Science subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Descriptive Geometry at the Preparatory School, subjects I did not study during the previous year as the level then was geared towards Vocational Schools.

It was during my time at the Preparatory School that I began to appreciate the reasons why the Hungarian Solidarity Committee was reluctant to allow South African students to study at their universities without proof of having passed matric. Firstly, the level of the Hungarian language taught at the Preparatory School for University was more difficult than the one taught at the language school for Vocational education. Secondly, the Hungarians viewed themselves as the “home of mathematics” as they were leaders of the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) for years. For instance, from 1959 (when the records of the IMO first became available) to 1975, Hungary was always among the top three best performing countries in the Maths Olympiad, out of more than 200 participating countries. From 1976 to the year 2000, Hungary only fell thrice outside the top ten best performing countries in the Maths Olympiad⁴.

The studies at the International Preparatory School, that is, the studying of the Hungarian language coupled with the studying of maths and science, which was at an advanced level, were therefore extremely difficult. Fortunately I had the advantage of having completed advanced mathematics at the Technikon in South Africa and at the time I went to the International Preparatory School, I also had the advantage of having studied the Hungarian language the previous year, albeit on a lower level. No wonder I was the first and the last South African student to have entered the Budapest Technical University and successfully completed his studies. Thank you OR for having made it possible for me to have studied at the Budapest Technical University for a Master of Science Degree in Civil Engineering. I made a promise to thank him after completing my studies, for having given me the opportunity to further my studies.

Although life was not easy in Budapest, I managed to complete my studies under very difficult and trying conditions. My stay in Budapest came at a time when the world witnessed the collapse of the Socialist System and its iconic symbol, the Berlin wall. Years of jackboot and iron fist rule gave birth to a new form of ultra-nationalism, which saw the mirage of harmonious co-existence of nationalities being replaced by a new form of right-wing nationalism which

had all the hallmarks of fascism. In a chain reaction, resembling a set of dominoes, country after country, even semi-autonomous states, disintegrated like a stack of cards as each declared its independence from the former Federal States of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. This neo-fascism and neo-Nazism in Central Europe, manifested itself by the growing numbers of skinheads, youngsters with shaven heads as their trademark. The skinheads targeted Africans and the Roma people, who are known as the Gypsies. For instance, towards the end of 1992 and 1993, skinheads in Germany targeted and killed ethnic Turks who were German citizens demanding their repatriation to Turkey, although they had played a vital role in the reconstruction of Germany after the Second World War. During these attacks, some of these skinheads were overheard shouting, “Heil Hitler!”⁵

During this time, copycat incidents in Budapest by local skinheads also directed against Africans and Gypsies, were widespread and became the norm. In one reported incident in Budapest, a Nigerian student fled to neighbouring Austria after stabbing a skinhead to death. Instead of blaming the skinheads, the local media exacerbated the situation by claiming that Africans in Budapest were hell-bent on killing innocent Hungarian citizens. As a consequence, it became a dangerous operation to be seen walking the streets of Budapest wearing a Black skin. African students had to carry all sorts of weapons, including knives, in order to defend themselves. One evening as I walked to the students’ hostel from the bus terminus, I was accosted by approximately ten skinheads who were wearing their trademark black leather jackets and brandishing whips. As they tried to attack me, I took out a bread knife from the inside pocket of my jacket. The knife had a nine inch (200 millimetres) blade and I started pointing in their direction ensuring that it was clearly visible to them. After seeing me with a knife, the skinheads backed-off. As I walked to the hostel, I could not stop thinking about how Bantu Education English school dictionaries used to define a “*tsotsi*” (gangster). They defined a *tsotsi* as a Bantu that takes out a knife with the slightest provocation. Indeed that evening I became an exiled “communist” Bantu.

The limited solidarity support that the ANC used to receive from the Hungarian Government gave way to the establishment of diplomatic relations between apartheid South Africa and Hungary which were sealed by Pik Botha on 4 January 1990 during his first official visit to a former member country of the Warsaw Pact. At times it seemed as if I would not be able to complete my studies as planned due to the economic conditions that prevailed at the time in all former Socialist countries in general and in Hungary in particular. In July 1989, during the summer (Northern Hemisphere) school holidays, I was literally compelled to go to neighbouring Austria where I went in search of casual work during the vacation period. Unbeknown to me, no foreign citizen was allowed to procure casual work in Austria as they sought to protect

their citizens against the huge influx of refugees from neighbouring Socialist countries. After failing to find casual work, I was introduced to Dr Walter Sauer and his late partner, Elfriede, who were leading the Anti-Apartheid Movement in that country. The financial support they rendered to me in the years to come enabled me to complete my studies. Completing my studies within the stipulated time frame therefore became a priority. I completed my studies in June 1993.

As I was preparing to sit for my final State Examinations, on 10 April 1993, tragedy struck. Chris Hani was assassinated. Whilst our country and progressive mankind were still grieving the loss of this outstanding revolutionary, on 24 April, exactly two weeks after his death, came the sad news of the final demise of Oliver Reginald Tambo. He had been sick and unwell for some time after suffering a massive stroke in 1989. The death of Hani might have aggravated his condition. After receiving this sad news, I remembered vividly OR saying during the Kabwe Conference that his health was failing but “*will be consumed by the struggle*” to a long but subdued applause from all two hundred and fifty delegates that attended the conference. I had never seen and witnessed a leader, or any individual for that matter, with similar capabilities to those of OR, operating under very unfavourable and most of the time hostile conditions, who could manage to touch and influence the lives of so many people in such a positive manner in the way OR succeeded to do. Never in the history of any Liberation Movement in Africa has a leader succeeded to unite his followers with such unquestionable loyalty in the manner in which OR managed to lead the ANC.

Yes, there were moments during the history of the ANC, especially for those who were in Kongwa, in MK camps in Tanzania in the late 1960's, as Joe Slovo once mentioned, when everything seemed to have been lost. Yes, there were moments, during the time when the mutinies took place in Angola, when comrades started questioning his leadership credentials. Again, true to the quality of his leadership, the mass executions of mutineers, which was a norm and had been witnessed and written about in various books dealing with the history of Liberation Movements in Southern Africa, was averted. Although seven mutineers were initially executed, the situation could have been worse were it not for his timely intervention. This pales into insignificance when compared to the mass executions that took place within FRELIMO, ZANU, ZAPU, SWAPO and our very own PAC in South Africa.

Tambo was astute, intelligent, sharp-witted, with an unbelievable philosophical and scientific mind. Were it not for his foresight and ability to foresee and discern danger from afar, the Kabwe Conference could easily have degenerated and descended into another Polokwane Conference, where opposite factions of the ANC were baying for the blood of their opponents⁶. In paying tribute to OR, allow me to plagiarise his speech which he delivered

on 29 March 1986 on the occasion of the death of Moses Mabhida, which could have easily been used as a fitting tribute to his long and outstanding leadership of the ANC:

“We who have walked with giants know that Oliver Reginald Tambo belongs in that company too. We who have failed among the ranks know that he was proud to count himself a foot soldier. A colossus because he was supremely human, O.R. Tambo has departed from our midst. A seeming void occupies his space, the air so still without his voice. Like the note of a bungle, that voice rose from the depths of the Engeli Mountains, and multiplied. It rose and grew and multiplied, reverberating from Kantolo in Bizana until it was heard in Lusaka and Havana, Moscow and Managua, London and Jakarta, Beijing and Rio de Janeiro, Prague and Washington. It is rarely given to a people that they should produce a single person who epitomises their hopes and expresses their common resolve as OR Tambo did. In simple language he could convey the aspirations of all of our people in their magnificent variety, explain the fears and prejudices of the unorganised and sense the feelings of even the most humble among our people.

Oliver Tambo could do all this because he was of the people, a product of the stern university of mass struggle and the life experience of the exploited and downtrodden workers and peasants of our country. That is why OR Tambo fought hard and long to ensure that nothing should turn the ANC into a rabble of black chauvinists or a clique of leftist demagogues. He battled against all conspiracies designed to weaken the ANC as a fighting organisation of the people, a true national movement loyal to the great principles which inspired its creation and have guided it to this day. Oliver Tambo will not be with us on the glorious day of liberation. He will not be there when the voice of the liberators proclaim from the height of the spine of our land – the sacred mountains of Engeli – that the cause for which so many perished has triumphed. Today OR walks in the company of Albert Lutshuli, JB Marks and Yusuf Dadoo. With these our standard bearers, we can never be defeated. We cannot be but victorious. Farewell, dear leader. Uhambe kable Comrade”.⁷

How I personally wished that the new democratic South Africa, governed by the very organisation he led and nurtured over three decades, for which he lived and ultimately lay down his life, could have done more to honour his legacy and memory. Sad and heartbroken, I knew then that my wish of thanking him personally for what he had done for me, would no longer be realised.

After completing my studies in July of that year, I left Budapest en-route to Cape Town with a stop-over in Frankfurt, Germany. My excitement of finally returning home was briefly interrupted after the flight landed at Frankfurt. As the rest of the passengers disembarked from the plane intending to board the bus that would have taken us to the Terminal Buildings, I was confronted by two airport security officials who demanded to see my passport and ticket. As I was the only one who was asked to produce these documents before

boarding the bus, I refused asking why I was singled out for such a treatment although I knew the reason for such behaviour was probably because I was the only African on the flight. When the officials refused to allow me into the bus, I relented as my refusal to cooperate was delaying other passengers. At the Terminal Building, when the immigration official noticed I was a South African, he loudly exclaimed in excitement so that everybody in the vicinity could hear, *“Do you think South Africa will ever become normal one day when Blacks are killing one another like barbarians?”*

The officer was referring to the violence that was taking place in Natal between the supporters of the UDF and Inkatha and which was widely reported as being engineered by the “Third Force”. Fresh from my encounter with the security officials, I was in no mood to back down. I felt this was the appropriate time to depart from Europe with a parting shot. In reply, in a similar loud and excited voice, I said, *“Do you think Germany will ever be normal? As if you were not content in killing six million Jews and more than twenty million Soviet citizens during the Second World War, once again, you have shown your true colours by killing ethnic Turks after you had invited them to assist you in reconstructing and rebuilding war ravaged Germany”*. After I grabbed my passport, I proceeded to a bar that served alcohol where I spent my time waiting for my connecting flight to Johannesburg. Once at the bar, I was offered free drinks by a British couple who were very impressed with the manner in which I had responded to the demeaning behaviour of the immigration official.

Later that evening, I eventually boarded a connecting flight to Jan Smuts International Airport. As I touched down at Jan Smuts International Airport, after returning safely from exile, I could not forget but be grateful for how blessed and lucky I was to have returned alive to the country of my birth when some of my comrades perished in different places in exile and even many more inside the country in the cause of liberating this country from the yoke of apartheid and racial oppression.

———— CHAPTER 21 ————

Why Do You Want to Eat Alone ?

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