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## Judicial Murder- The 'ANC three'

Thelle Simon Mogoerane (23), Jerry Semano Mosololi (25) and Marcus Thabo Motaung (27), the ANC Three, were sentenced to death on charges of high treason for attacks on police stations and sabotage of railway lines. In order to force Mogoerane to disclose the location of their weapons, the police tied a rope around his neck and one of his hands behind his back. They pulled a plastic bag over his head to make his breathing difficult. He was hanged from a tree and made to stand on his toes and a dog made to bite him. Later he was given electric shocks while suspended between a chair and a table. While he was being interrogated a pistol was placed in his mouth by a security officer while another banged the table, simulating the noise of a shot being fired. In evidence, Mogoerane said, "I actually wished a bullet had gone off." He made a statement when the police threatened to arrest his mother.<sup>37</sup>

His co-accused, Jerry Semano Mosololi, suffered the same pattern of police violence. He was made to lie on the ground, with his hands tied behind his back and a plastic bag partially suffocating him. Then a dog was set on him, after which he was given electric shock torture. Security police treatment was even more brutal in the case of Motaung, the third combatant, who narrowly escaped death at their hands.

Marcus Thabo Motaung was actually shot three times by the police in the course of his arrest. He received no treatment for two days. When the district surgeon saw him, the doctor failed to dress the wounds and urged instead that

he help the police with their enquiries. When eventually he was admitted to hospital, it was discovered that he had been bleeding internally for two days.<sup>38</sup>

An international campaign failed to save the lives of these men and to gain prisoner of war status for them and for all captured combatants. The world-wide pressure to save the lives of the ANC Three registered the international outrage against the racist regime in South Africa. A call for clemency was made by 136 nations. The judicial death of these three prisoners of war failed to stem the tide of opposition to the structures of apartheid or to deflect activists from the struggle. Mosololi's mother epitomised the intensity of this resistance when she said, shortly before her son's execution: "Go well, my son, I love you. I am proud of you because you are to die for your people ... You must know the struggle will not end after your death."<sup>39</sup>

At their trial a pattern of brutal police assaults was established by former detainees who gave evidence of how they had been forced to make statements after being tortured. One of the detainees, Themba Shongwe, said that during lengthy interrogation over several days, he was made to stand naked and handcuffed in a corridor during winter. He had been repeatedly beaten and subjected to electric shocks, with his hands and feet bound together. A second detainee, Masedi Monyepote, substantiated Shongwe's evidence. He had been subjected to the same treatment for five nights consecutively. He had also been placed between two chairs after being blindfolded, made to hold a brick high above his head and jog for a long time while being hit with a length of hosepipe. Like several other detainees, he had been made to sit in an imaginary chair for a long time. Security police techniques of humiliating their victims by making them stand naked and then subjecting them to extremes of cold, followed by electric shocks and techniques that induce unendurable fatigue have repeatedly been revealed by detainees. Frequently, zealous security police over-reach themselves in the physical assaults of their victims, as they did with Tsotsobe, Shabangu and Moise.



MARCUS MOTAUNG:  
EXECUTED 9.6.83



JERRY MOSOLOLI:  
EXECUTED 9.6.83



SIMON MOGOERANE:  
EXECUTED 9.6.83