

Mastering the Art of Winning Victory

COMRADE AMOS ALUKO, A COMBATANT OF OUR PEOPLE'S ARMY,
DISCUSSES THE MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ORGANI-
SATIONAL ROLE OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE IN
OUR WAR FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION.

The challenging task facing our vanguard movement for national liberation, the African National Congress, our allies, as well as our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, can be summed up as follows: to "master the art of winning victory". True, this has been the primary task of our entire liberation movement since its inception. But at this present moment in our liberation struggle the urgency of the need to fulfil this task with the greatest success has acquired marked prominence. To see this clearly one needs only take a close look at the tasks arising out of the achievements made by our movement and entire people in the recent past and the new possibilities that have emerged; the deepening economic and political crisis which is hitting the entire apartheid system; the all-out counter-offensive by the Pretoria colonial-fascist regime, its puppets and US-led imperialist partners.

ART OF WINNING VICTORY

The task before us is a crucial one. The pace of intensifying our liberation struggle and finally the winning of victory by our long-suffering but fighting people will depend on the extent to which we are able to fulfil the task successfully. The task involves raising to the highest level possible the transformation into action of our understanding of the struggle to destroy the oppressive and exploitative apartheid system and build on its ruins a new society of the Freedom Charter in which "The People Shall Govern" and share in the country's wealth. Central to this understanding of revolutionary struggle is the time-honoured truth that the people are the real makers of history and that to carry out this historic mission the masses need a dedicated leadership armed with a correct revolutionary theory to organise and lead them to victory. The organisation and leading of the masses to victory is a task which falls squarely on the shoulders of the vanguard organisation and its ability to fulfil such a demanding task is what mastering the art of winning victory actually means.

The approach of the revolutionary leadership of the heroic people of Vietnam as expressed in the writings of Le Duan has great relevance to our situation today. Basing himself on the teachings of V.I. Lenin on the art of revolutionary leadership, Le Duan says: "... the art of revolutionary leadership lies in knowing how to win step by step in judicious fashion... From the initial steps to the final victory, a revolution must of necessity go through many stages of struggle beset with difficulties and complexities and full of twists and bends, in order to clear one obstacle after another and gradually change the relation of forces between the revolution and the counter-revolution, until overwhelming superiority is achieved over the ruling classes. To push the enemy back and wrest one success after another for the revolution and proceed to the total defeat of the enemy and a complete victory for the revolution...

"A revolution is not a coup d'etat; it is not the upshot of plots. It is the work of the masses. Hence, to mobilise and rally the forces of the masses, to set up and expand the political army of the revolution, is a fundamental, decisive problem. This task must be attended to in an unflinching and sustained way through all periods, both when no revolutionary situation has appeared as yet and when such a situation has risen and matured. To this end, one must mingle with the masses in everyday life and be active wherever the masses are, even within enemy organisations; one must keep abreast of the situation both in the enemy's camp and in ours, correctly appraise all schemes, moves and capabilities of the enemy, accurately assess all changes happening in his ranks, and at the same time be fully aware of the state of mind, wishes and potential power of the masses. In this way one will be able to put forward appropriate slogans, both incisive and timely, which will rouse the broadest masses to action and take them from the lower to the higher forms of struggle, thereby ceaselessly heightening their political consciousness and building up the army of the revolution both in scope and in depth."

History has it on record that the Vietnamese revolutionaries basing themselves on this sound understanding of the forces at work in their revolutionary struggle and the decisive force of change, organised, inspired and led the Vietnamese people to win the most heroic and inspiring victory by a colonised people fighting against the most powerful and reactionary imperialist power, the United States. Likewise, history has assigned the ANC, our allies and Umkhonto we Sizwe the task of leading our people to victory over the most reactionary fascist regime Africa and the whole world have ever known in recent times. To emerge victorious in this fierce conflict, as we must, demands that we strain every nerve and muscle to live up to the challenges of the moment.

Our main tasks are clear and they must be fulfilled with the urgency they deserve. These were set out in the January 8 address of the National Executive Committee of our people's vanguard organisation as follows:-

"To increase our offensive power we must organise the people into strong mass democratic organisations. We must organise all revolutionaries into underground units of the ANC. We must organise all democratic forces into one front for national liberation."

Such are the crucial tasks whose fulfilment will really take our people to the shores of victory. Success demands that every section of our movement should fully play its role in our drive to master the art of winning victory.

What is the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe in this campaign?

We must address ourselves to this question. While all of us agree that what our situation calls for is more resolute action it must at the same time be clear that this action must be guided by understanding. An examination of the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe, therefore, is an inseparable part of our day to day efforts aimed at meeting the challenges posed by the urgent need to advance our revolutionary struggle to even greater heights. Here we shall focus our attention on two main aspects of the role of our People's Army, that is the military and the politico-organisational.

STRIKING FORCE

Umkhonto we Sizwe is our people's army, the very core of our people's effort to put up organised military resistance against the Pretoria regime's reactionary violence aimed at drowning our people's resistance in blood for the purpose of defending the oppressive and exploitative apartheid system. Umkhonto we Sizwe is "the striking force of the people for liberty, for rights and for their final liberation". While the pre-condition for our liberation - both politically and economically, as clearly set out in our programme, the Freedom Charter - is the seizure of political power - the capacity to mould society according to their will - by the oppressed and exploited masses, the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe is to create the conditions necessary for this transfer of power from the racist rulers to the people. This means that our People's Army must strike at the chief instruments of the colonial fascist state machinery, the army and police, so that finally the oppressors cannot use this instrument to suppress the masses when they, having acquired in the course of freedom struggle the highest level of political consciousness, organisation and unity, rise up, armed and unarmed, to storm the citadel of racist rule and take power into their hands.

In other words Umkhonto we Sizwe, which in the past has been the most effective weapon of our movement for applying the tactic of armed propaganda suited to the situation which emerged after the Soweto Upsurges will now begin to raise our military offensive to higher levels. Step by step our People's Army will be engaging the enemy personnel applying guerrilla tactics as outlined in the "Strategy and Tactics of the ANC".



Our people saluted Mosololi, Motaung and Mogoerane (Cape Town meeting).

This, then, is the primary role of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the military sphere. (However it should be borne in mind that the seizure of power by our people will not be a result of military confrontation only but instead of a combination of both this confrontation and organised, united and sustained mass political actions).

But that is not all. As the core of our people's organised military resistance the role of Umkhonto is a broad one. It also includes ensuring that the broad masses of our people take an active part in the military offensive. The point is that even in the military confrontation, victory can only be achieved when the masses of our people, that is apart from the large numbers which must be drawn into the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe, also fight the enemy with modern weapons, when we are, therefore, waging a people's war in the true sense of the word.

For this reason it is necessary that our People's Army must fulfil two related tasks: firstly to equip our people with at least elementary skills of modern warfare and, secondly, to organise and lead the people in actual confrontation beginning with the simplest operations. It is only on this basis, that is from the military point of view, that the principle of arming the masses can acquire meaning in our situation in which the oppressor regime denies the vast majority of the oppressed masses an opportunity to acquire military skills. As to how this should be done practically is a matter which will become clearer as we actually carry it out. The

very people's experience in political struggle, the movement's wealth of experience in working underground as well as the creative application of the wide range of methods used before us by other peoples in their struggle to our own situation present us with many possibilities which must be tested and proved in action.

POLITICAL ORGANISER

The other aspect of the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe at the present stage of our liberation struggle is a politico-organisational one. Our main tasks in this connection have already been referred to as stated in the January 8 address of our National Executive Committee. The fulfilment of these tasks is geared towards moulding our entire people into a conquering political force able "to harass the enemy politically so that his forces are dispersed and therefore weakened". This in fact is another vital aspect of waging a people's war which as our movement correctly understands it is fought not only with the gun but also with the devisive weapon of the masses, political organisation, which is the very basis of conducting successful military operations.

It is clear that this crucial task of organising, inspiring and leading the broad masses into conscious and united political action with the seizure of power as the strategic goal can only be successfully carried out by a political organisation armed with a revolutionary theory and a dedicated leadership with experience in leading the masses, in other words the ANC. But this does not mean that our People's Army has no role to play in organising the masses and to say this does not at all contradict the preceding statement. This is not only based on the consideration that the task is so urgent that every capable revolutionary must contribute in its fulfilment, which is a fact. It is especially based on our understanding of the nature of our army, an army whose combatants are first and foremost militants of the ANC, vanguard fighters. We may add that in practice combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe have already proved themselves capable of being political organisers.

The role of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the political mass actions of our people, therefore, is not confined to that of giving a cutting edge to these actions with military operations which is very important and has produced great success during the post Soweto period and especially in our movement's three year programme of laying the foundation for deepened mass mobilisation (1979 the Year of the Spear, to 1982 the Year of Unity in Action), a role which is certainly going to develop further qualitatively as our struggle unfolds.

It also includes the actual painstaking work of organising the masses,

involving the creation and strengthening of mass democratic organisations, creating underground units of the ANC and recruiting for Umkhonto we Sizwe, conducting propaganda and agitation to raise the political consciousness of the masses and to inspire them into resolute action which grows in intensity with every new campaign; involving the masses in deciding upon and taking action, etc. In short, an MK combatant must also play the role of a political organiser, he must be where the masses are and fight with them.

CONCLUSION

In raising the pace and broadening the scope of our liberation struggle both in the military and political spheres our movement and entire people will not be moving from nowhere. Our activities in the recent past which were based on the progress made earlier have ensured great achievements. To quote our National Executive Committee: "... our movement is not only an opponent of the apartheid regime but has actually emerged as an alternative power which has won over the conscious and active support of the majority of our people... Our policy document - the Freedom Charter - adopted in 1955, has not only stood the test of time but is winning the hearts and minds of growing numbers of our people, including honest patriots and democrats in the white community as well."

It is also clear, and this can be deduced from the very assessment cited above, that through its pounding sophisticated blows against the regime's strategic installations like oil depots, police stations, military bases and nuclear power stations our People's Army has once more proved to our entire people and the whole world that the African National Congress is worthy of its historic mission of leading our people to victory and that our people can effectively confront the enemy bullet for bullet and emerge victorious. This experience is rich with lessons on which we must build in developing the support given by the masses of our people to the struggle into committed active participation.

Concerning the deepening of the role of MK combatants in fulfilling the urgent tasks of political mobilisation it must be pointed out that to succeed in the whole drive in mastering the art of winning victory certainly demands a certain measure of specialisation. In the political field this means that the political programme in our army should pay more attention to training all-round political organisers capable of efficiently combining propaganda, agitational and every other aspect of political organisational work. This, naturally, should be coordinated with the essential task of drawing all revolutionaries into underground units of the ANC. Besides that the practical situation is such that MK combatants even if his specific task is not that of political organiser will now and then have to switch over to it. That is why we must be all-rounders, soldier-political organisers.

Success in fulfilling all the crucial tasks which confront us today demands that we display the greatest courage, skill and initiative - always aware that as we advance the enemy's counter-offensive intensifies correspondingly and that we must therefore be able to frustrate the enemy and advance even further. Above all we must always be guided and inspired by our revolutionary understanding that, as our "Strategy and Tactics" states: "The winning of our freedom by armed struggle - the only method left open

MK**SOLDIER**

LET US ORGANISE

OUR TASK TO THE WORKING PEOPLE

- PART THREE

- KHUMALO MIGWE

In our time only a mass movement that is accompanied by a people's army shall destroy the Apartheid forces, only an organisation that will organise a revolutionary army of the whole people shall lead the new revolutionary state of people's democracy in South Africa. This building of a powerful revolutionary army, composed of the working masses, whose strength should logically correspond to its historic task, is another urgent historic demand.

Often people who have no knowledge at all of what a social revolution in modern times really means and requires, gloss over the practical importance of this question of military organisation and people's participation in the armed struggle. But the more such people fail to see this need, the more they tend to see 'militarism' lurking whenever mention is made of the need for military organisation of our working people, the more we are mystifying the practical requirements of our liberation.

Our working people, daily massacred or tortured to death by the fascists, have developed a serious conviction over this question of revolutionary and organised mass violence, they have learned lessons from the fascist experience and they now advance the slogan: "Freedom or Death", which has reverberated throughout South Africa in the heroic combat assaults of Umkhonto we Sizwe.