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DAWN



Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe



SOUVENIR ISSUE



25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MK

DAWN

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Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly at a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of moderation? The past thirty years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all.

— Chief AJM Luthuli —

Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the government and its policies of race oppression. It will be the striking force of the people for liberty, for rights and for their final liberation.

— MK manifesto

What were we, the leaders of our people, to do? Were we to give in to the show of force and the implied threat against future action, or were we to fight it and, if so, how?

We had no doubt that we had to continue the fight. Anything else would have been abject surrender. Our problem was not whether to fight, but was how to continue the fight. We of the ANC had always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart than they already were. But the hard facts were that fifth years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation, and fewer and fewer rights.

It may not be easy for this court to understand, but it is a fact that for a long time the people had been talking of violence — of the day when they would fight the white man and win back their country — and we, the leaders of the ANC, had nevertheless always prevailed upon them to avoid violence and to pursue peaceful methods. When some of us discussed this in May and June of 1961, it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial state by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism.

— Nelson Mandela, First Commander-in-Chief of MK

In building up our own popular army we aim therefore not only at the overthrow of the fascist regime, we aim also at building up a politically conscious and revolutionary army, conscious of its popular origin, unwavering in its democratic functions and guided by our revolutionary orientation.

Commander-in-Chief O.R. Tambo.

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Umkhonto is a people's army fighting a people's war. We fight to liberate our oppressed and exploited people. We fight for their interests. Umkhonto has no mercenaries, no paid soldiers or conscripted troops. It consists of the sons and daughters of the most oppressed, the most exploited sections of our people. For these reasons we claim with pride and truth: Umkhonto is the Spear of the Nation.

— MK military code *

victory or death

Statement of the NEC of the ANC delivered by Comrade Commander - in Chief OR Tambo on Heroes Day, December 16, 1986 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of MK.

THIS day 25 years ago bomb blasts in several main centres rocked South Africa. Thus was born Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army of our country.

By that time the demands of our people were loud, persistent and clear: All our efforts as a people, the whole record of relentless struggle under the leadership of the African National Congress were being met with ever increasing violence and repression by the racist state. The time had arrived when we needed to reinforce our mass political action with the hammer blows of an armed struggle.

The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe was a response to these needs and the demands of our people. December 16 1961 accordingly marked an historic turning point in our long march to freedom. With the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe our people were now better equipped to grasp history into their own hands.

Born of the people, combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe pledged themselves in our Manifesto to complement the actions of our national liberation movement by means of organised revolutionary violence. These past 25 years are a proud record of a risen people making their own history with their blood, sweat and tears as we live out that commitment.

From those small beginnings Umkhonto we Sizwe has emerged today as the guarantor of our people's future and the indispensable fighting arm of our people.

Combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, you are the flower of successive generations of our

youth tempered in the crucible of battle. On behalf of the African National Congress and its allies I salute you on this the 25th anniversary of the birth of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Umkhonto we Sizwe was born out of a sense of the heavy responsibility that history had thrust upon our people. We had sought by every non-violent means at our disposal to realise the liberation of our people. In pursuit of this goal, the decade of the fifties demonstrated the overwhelming commitment of the masses of our oppressed peoples to freedom. Under the leadership of the Congress Alliance headed by the African National Congress all classes and strata as well as the diverse population groups of our country steadfastly pursued this objective. Our people mobilised as never before to challenge white minority rule. The decade of the fifties was a decade of truly great achievements. But true to the traditions of colonialist rule and the ideology of race superiority the rulers of our country paid no heed to the demands of our people. They drowned our efforts in blood and brutality. The Sharpeville massacre of March 1960 epitomised this reality.

The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe was our people's answer to this historic challenge from the racist rulers of South Africa. In the clarion call of our Manifesto we declared that "the time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices: submit or fight" and that South Africa's rulers had left us with no alternative but to "hit back by all means within our power in

defence of our people, our future and freedom." We knew then, as we stated in the Manifesto, that we were "striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people"; that once we took that road there would be no going back; a road that was going to necessitate total dedication, self-sacrifice and a determination that knew no surrender; a road along which the commitment not to submit but to fight would have to be transformed into the uncompromising warrior pledge - Victory or Death!

Let us cast our minds back to those days, 25 years ago, to understand the immensity of that decision and the courage of those patriots who founded and participated in the early actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Not since the Bambatha Uprising in 1906 had patriots taken to arms in an organised form. The people's reaction to State violence had continued down the years. With the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe we were gathering together in an organised form all the best fighting traditions of our past in order to stride into the future along the path of the seizure of power by the majority of the people.

We knew then that anger alone would not bring victory. We knew that our people had been deliberately deprived of the skills of modern warfare and denied access to weaponry. We knew then that our terrain presented its own special problems which could not be answered from the classical textbooks of guerrilla warfare. We knew then that despite the sweep of the African Revolution we would have to develop the armed struggle without the advantage of rear bases in the neighbouring States. We knew then that we faced a formidable foe underpinned by imperialism.

If this was the reality that confronted us with so many disadvantages how were we to move forward? Above all else we knew

too that our strength lay in the masses; that in striking out along a new road for liberation nothing would count as much as our faith in the masses; we knew that Umkhonto we Sizwe, born of the people, had to be rooted in the masses and strive with the people. Despite the immensity of the odds but immersed with this faith, those early combatants took to battle. With home-made bombs and explosives taken from the enemy we blazed a glorious trail.

And what a glorious trail it has been!

Those early exploits struck fear into the hearts of the enemy. Not since the battle of Isandhlwana in 1879 had our rulers been so shaken by our fighting formations. They could not understand what moved giants like Mini, Mkhaba and Khayinga to go singing defiantly to the gallows rather than trade their lives for the life of a fellow combatant by giving evidence for the state. The Minis, like many before them and many more since, emblazoned with their lives into the emblem of Umkhonto we Sizwe the uncompromising motto: **Victory or Death!** Let us on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of MK salute these heroes for their commitment to the justness of our cause and for imprinting in the history of our struggle a standard that we must live up to. Let it be recorded today that this has been our standard from the first days of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Even in those early days by what cruel twists history sought to underscore both our mistakes and the immense difficulties that our revolution faced. Within less than a year our first commander, Cde. Nelson Mandela, was captured by the enemy. Within two years of our birth the cream of our leadership was captured at Rivonia farm, brought to trial with Cde. Mandela and sentenced to life imprisonment where they remain to this day. In his statement to the court Cde. Mandela, confronted with the prospect of the gallows, defended the justness of our cause and defiantly proclaimed that for these actions "I am prepared to die" By the end of 1964, with the

imprisonment of Wilton Mkwayi and others, it appeared as if the guns of MK had been silenced for all time.

Unprecedented state repression and enemy conduct which violated every norm of humanity combined to smash our network within the country. Even the courage of our masses appeared to have cowed before the tyrant's might.

But the founders of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the leaders of our national liberation movement had already taken steps which would ensure that whatever the twists of history, our people would soldier on to vic-



Commander-in-Chief O.R. Tambo

tory. Thus it was that in the face of such a massive setback the only cohesive organised force of our revolution that remained at the time was the comrades who had been sent out of the country to train in politics and the art of modern warfare. We had left our country in search of knowledge and skills denied to us in the country of our birth. We had left our homes imbued with the dream that we would surge back into South Africa to lock immediately into battle with our fascist rulers. We had left our country in the belief that when we came back with our martial skills we would be received by our leaders occupying the front trenches and guiding us into battle. And now we were faced with the imponderable prospect of being cut off from the lifeblood of our revolution — our people.

But if our enemy reckoned that the struggle for liberation by a people could be snuffed out by victory in one battle, how wrong they were to be proved. Within the country, in the prisons and in remote military camps situated in distant countries of our mother continent Africa we set out on the long journey of regrouping ourselves replenishing our courage and resolve and fighting back inch by inch to realise a dream that seemed to vanish into such a distant future.

Looking back over those 25 years let us today accord proper place and recognition to that generation of MK we know as umgwenya who by force of circumstance and in the face of such diversity became the core for our regrouping and the torch-bearers of our revolution. With super-human dedication to the cause of our people they held aloft our dream and lived with only one purpose in mind — to get back into our country, to be enjoined once more in the bosom of our people whose servants we are and to pursue the revolution. This is not the place to record every effort, to recount every ingenious means with which we pursued this goal. Let it be sufficient to note that we traversed many countries on foot and by other means. Every failure to reach home became a spur to further efforts and greater daring. We sought to go by land, by sea and by air. We even had comrades traverse our country to reach Lesotho. Our umgwenya never gave up hope and never spared their efforts. In that phase of our history we lost many comrades, among them Cde. Flag Boshielo, member of the NEC of the African National Congress and commissar in Umkhonto we Sizwe. In Portuguese-ruled Mozambique we joined forces with our brothers-in-arms Frelimo to probe our way into our country. But the true epic of that period belongs to the effort we made in 1967 when as a combined force of ANC and ZAPU fighters we crossed the Zambezi into the then Rhodesia in order to hack a path home and for our brothers to entrench themselves in their mother country. That daring ef-

fort is known as the Wankie Campaign in which our combatants fought gloriously against the combined racist South African and Smith forces. How the enemy forces were rendered panic-stricken by the relentless courage of our combined forces who, on the banks of the Zambezi, before they marched into the hostile territory of Rhodesia, were named, in memory of our great leader, the late President-General of the African National Congress, Chief Albert Lutuli, and who are known since then and for all posterity as the Lutuli Detachment. In battle after battle the racist forces were overwhelmed by the courage and firepower of our gallant fighters. In instance after instance the cowardly enemy broke ranks and fled, abandoning their weapons, their injured and their dead. Many members of that indomitable detachment fell in battle in Wankie and on the Eastern front. Their names are inscribed in the roll-call of honour of our revolution. On this day, every year, we pay special tribute to those illustrious combatants who fell on the sacred fields of Zimbabwe with the warrior cry "Victory or Death" on their lips, immortal fighters such as Peter Mhlongo, Delmas Sibanyoni, James Masimini, and Basil February who in several battles refused to retreat, fought the enemy to the last bullet; heroes such as Patrick Molaoa, President of the African National Congress Yough League, Michael Poe, Andries Motsepe, Jack Simelane and Gandi Hlekane, all of whom gave their lives in the noble cause of our revolution.

Why do we recall these exploits? Surely it cannot be simply to record the difficulties we faced and the endurance and courage we showed. More. In the unfolding of our revolution it became the sacred duty of Umkhonto we Sizwe to revive the spirit of revolt among our people, to kindle the embers so that the flame of revolution would once more flare up. How Wankie revived the spirits of our people inside our country, restored courage in the face of repression and revitalised the revolution! That indelible page in the history of

our struggle is written in the annals of the Lutuli Detachment. That role of Umkhonto we Sizwe has been emulated over and over again. Let us on this occasion salute the Lutuli Detachment whose members lie buried in many countries, whose members languish in prison and whose members even today serve in our front ranks. If the revolution survived those dark days, it survived to a significant extent because of our Lutuli Detachment.

try. From then on our revolution caught alight with renewed intensity and our people have surged ahead in united mass action such as never before seen in the history of our struggle.

The imperative of the armed struggle as the key component of our revolutionary way forward which underlay the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 was burned into the minds of our Soweto generation by the savage massacres perpetrated by



At the same time our comrades who were incarcerated in the prisons turned prison into a battleground. Cut off from the masses, they waged campaign after campaign and their invincible spirit flowed out of the prisons to inspire our people.

The flame held aloft by the Lutuli Detachment and the spirit that continuously surged from the prisons where our leaders and fighters have been held in captivity inspired and merged with the revival of the fighting capacity of our people inside South Africa. Activists who had been cut off by wave after wave of repression and activists re-emerging from the fascist prisons joined forces with a new generation of freedom fighters and set about organising the masses. The wave of strikes waged by our workers in 1973 became the precursor to the Soweto explosion of 1976 that shook our coun-

the racist soldiers and police! The brutal gunning down of 13 year old Hector Petersen turned the protesting youth of 1976 into the warriors who flowed into the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe giving fresh impetus to our armed activities. Almost overnight the Soweto generation finally enabled us to breach the barriers by which the enemy had sought to separate us from the masses. The enemy which by design and fortuity had deprived us of the generation of the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies now unwittingly threw into the ranks of the revolution an army of youth whose anger and courage knew no bounds. Within the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe and under the tutelage of the umgwenya they proudly absorbed the heritage of struggle that resides in the various formations of our national liberation movement and were awarded the title of the

June 16 Detachment. They were to be rapidly joined by the Moncada Detachment who have been followed by detachment after detachment swelling the ranks of our revolutionary people's army.

And what glorious pages they are writing!

In the decade since the Soweto Uprising Umkhonto we Sizwe has become entrenched inside our country. Combat operations have dramatically increased in number, in daring, audacity and sophistication. Our combatants, by our operations, have wrenched away the mask of invincibility that the enemy sought to wear. Inspiration and hope and the certainty of victory today surge through the veins of the masses of our people.

The catalogue of achievements is studded with the brilliant attacks on Sasol, the military headquarters at Voortrekhoogte, the nuclear power station at Koeberg, the bomb blast outside the headquarters in Pretoria of the racist South African Air Force, the attacks on enemy communications, the limpet and landmine attacks inside the borders and deep within the country. Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants merging with the combat groups that are springing up all over in the townships have made grenade attacks an everyday event. Even John Vorster Square, the headquarters of the hated Security Police, has reverberated from the explosion of the limpet mine. At last enemy soldiers and police walk fearfully in our townships and they are learning that they cannot escape death as they have been led to believe.

We have a long road ahead and many obstacles to overcome but we can justly say that there is no target that is impervious to our combatants, there is no area of our country beyond our reach and that the oppressor and his army will be conquered.

In this decade of mass revolt the traditions of the Minis have been relived by the Solomon Mahlangu, the Jerry Mosololis, the Marcus Motaungs and the Simon Mogoeranes who have proudly faced Pretoria's hangmen living up to our pledge "Victory or Death" On this day we solemnly recall those warriors who fell at Matola, Maseru and

elsewhere such as Motso Mokgabu-di, Mduduzi Guma, Krish Rabilal, Zwelakhe Nyanda, Nomkhosi Mini (daughter of Vuyisile), David Skosana, Titus Jobo and Harold Dantile (Morris). The spirit of the Patrick Molaoas and Basil Februarys who fell in Rhodesia has been relived by combatants who have fought it out to the last bullet or handgrenade, comrades such as the Silverton heroes, Thami Makhubo, Wilfred Madela and Fani Mafoko, Linda Jabane - 'the lion of Chiawelo' - Khuduga Molokwane, the Dobsonville schoolteacher, and Clifford Brown.

We recall and salute Richard Molokoane (Barney), one of our most outstanding field commanders who died with Victor Khayiyane and Vincent Sekete during a daring bid to attack Sasol once again with rockets, Linda Khuzwayo, who fell in Ingwavuma, Livingstone Gaza, Vincent Tshabalala, Lucas Njongwe, Eldridge Yakiti, Jerry Nene, Clement Molapo and Samuel Segola, and many more, courageous combatants to the last who were prepared to welcome death in order that our people should be victorious in the end. They have been immortalised by our revolution, their deaths gave meaning to life, their deeds shall inspire our army and our people for all time and their spears have been picked up by others.

Only if we place Soweto and the decade since into historical perspective are we able to see that these events have an added dimension of significance. Between the Rivonia arrests and the Soweto Uprising it can be said that the question as to how to advance revolutionary warfare without safe rear bases in the neighbouring States appeared to elude practical answers. The renewed actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe on a sustained basis and the continuous upsurge of the masses provided the answer to this question and showed that our bases would of necessity have to be located among our people. Along this path our theory and practice of revolutionary warfare came to be properly understood in terms of People's War.

The special significance of these lessons has been the growth in the understanding as to how the masses should be mobilised to fulfil this perspective. Accordingly, we have had to elaborate on concrete programmes that would enable the masses to be transformed into political revolutionary bases. It has also meant that we have had to develop a deep and thorough-going understanding of the inter-relationships between the four pillars of our struggle which we have characterised as the building of the underground network of our movement, the mass action of our people, the expansion of Umkhonto we Sizwe inside South Africa and the further mobilisation of the international community aimed at the total isolation of the apartheid regime.

MK has played and continues to play a crucial role in the development of our masses into political revolutionary bases. By their heroism and tenacity combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe have won not only the respect of our peoples but their willingness to engage themselves in the armed struggle. Without the all-round active participation of the masses we cannot develop People's War in the fullest sense.

The revolt of the masses of our people has become a tidal wave which no amount of repression and violence on the part of the racist state is any longer capable of containing. The State of Emergency - martial law in reality - has become a permanent instrument for the racists' uncertain survival. The masses have made our country ungovernable for the regime and rendered apartheid unworkable.

How far then are we from truly realising People's War? In our daily lives our people have abundantly demonstrated that apartheid has become intolerable. At the level of united mass action our people are surging ahead. Every organised formation of our people - our workers, our women, our rural people, our youth and students, the township residents, religious congregations and leaders, our teachers and those in various profes-

sions, our progressive whites — are beginning to act in concert.

Revolutionary violence has become part of the arsenal of our people. It is imperative that all classes and strata, especially our workers and the rural population, should become part of the combat forces of our revolution. Our youth should not be left to shoulder this burden alone. This is the true significance of our call to the people: Every patriot a combatant — every combatant a patriot!

We are witnessing today the masses steadily taking to arms; we are in the midst of death-defying deeds where combat groups supported by the people are erecting barricades, stringing barbed wire across roads, digging defence trenches, driving enemy forces into death traps, raining petrol bombs against armoured vehicles, arming themselves by dispossessing the enemy of his weapons, ridding our townships of informers and collaborators, eliminating enemy personnel.

The full majesty of these actions lies in the determination of our people to lock in battle with the enemy forces and annihilate them physically.

MK units are today being welcomed and their leadership and guidance sought by our people. Side by side with this development, township after township is building the foundations of People's Power which are transforming them into fortresses of the revolution.

Through centuries of white domination our people have learnt how to die for a future. Today even our eight-year old children in the townships defiantly pit their strength against the might of the racist soldiers and police. The cream of our youth have begun to mobilise themselves into mass combat groups determined to ensure that the regime will never again restore its control over the lives and destiny of our people. The enemy forces are being compelled to recognise that the only cause that they have to defend is the survival of a dying order; that even in death they can only die for the past and not for the

future — they therefore only defend a cause already lost whose path is increasing demoralization. It is only in this framework that we who know how to die for the future can understand the majesty of our young lions who have taken to war and side by side with Umkhonto we Sizwe moved our masses to make People's War a reality. As a tribute to these heroic young lions who are daily losing their lives it is appropriate that we in Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army, should on this 25th anniversary of our foundation pledge ourselves that they shall not die in vain. And that our revolution in its triumph shall rebuild for them the childhood that they have lost.

At this moment, as we reach into the high tide of our revolution, let us remind ourselves that we face a vicious and inhuman foe. Our enemy is now committed irrevocably to a course aimed at destroying the mass resistance of our people to the extent of perpetrating genocide. It has marshalled all its power to destroy Umkhonto we Sizwe, the African National Congress and its allies, within and outside our country. It has firmly set its course on marauding the independent states of Southern Africa in pursuit of reducing them to abject client states. It has exposed itself as a cancer in the body politic of our beloved continent and a threat to world peace. It has left independent Africa with no choice but to share trenches with us in the front line of battle.

We cannot let this day pass without paying homage to that great son of Africa, our comrade-in-arms, the late President Samora Machel of Mozambique, cruelly murdered by the Pretoria regime. His life and his death symbolise the close unity in struggle of our people. MK combatants trained together with him and other Frelimo comrades; for years we shared the same military camps; at times we even shared the same trenches on Mozambican soil before its liberation. And he lost his life on South African soil at the hands of our common enemy. We pledge to bring his murderers to

account!

In tribute to the independent states of Southern Africa and other states in the far-flung corners of our continent who have enabled us to become the force that we are and at this moment when the racist army with the support, tacit or otherwise, of imperialism are threatening their independence and sovereignty we make this pledge: We have always shared the common and noble ideal of freeing our continent of colonialism and racism. As we in Umkhonto we Sizwe tenaciously pursue the enemy in his den, wherever we find you, our friends and brothers, threatened, we shall unhesitatingly stand shoulder to shoulder with you in defence of your independence against this common enemy. We salute the independent states of Southern Africa fighting to preserve their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity!

We pledge our unity in battle with the heroic fighting people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO and its armed wing PLAN!

At this critical moment in our history we need to be ever-vigilant against every manoeuvre not only to annihilate our movement but to deflect our people from the realisation of our goals.

The forces of reaction and counter-revolution have already spelled out their strategy. Faced with the reality of our strength, they seek to entice us with the possibilities of peaceful change by demanding of the African National Congress that we renounce violence, that we abandon the alliance with the South African Communist Party and that we sever our relations with the socialist countries, in particular with the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Cuba.

What do these demands amount to? What is the fundamental lesson that comes out of 25 years of existence of Umkhonto we Sizwe?

Our people have only been taken seriously whether in Pretoria, London, Washington or Bonn because of our armed ac-

tivity! Combatants of MK, you are the guarantors of our future; without you our people and the leader of our revolution, the African National Congress, would be a voice without force. Our history has taught us that people's power cannot come through a change of heart from the rulers.

Those who ask us to desert our allies ask us to forget the enduring bonds that we have developed together in the trenches. The South African Communist Party in particular is inextricably woven into the fabric of our struggle and by its commitment and actions earned itself the honourable place of being a worthy and indispensable component of the national liberation movement. As for the socialist countries, let it be said unequivocally that they have proved by word and deed that they are true friends of our people's cause; that without them and other friends Umkhonto and our national liberation movement headed by the African National Congress would not have become the force that we are today.

On this historic occasion let us pledge ourselves once more to the unity of our struggle; commit ourselves again to defend the Alliance and always uphold the fraternal bonds that unite us with the socialist countries, those western countries which have unreservedly aligned themselves with our just struggle and the democratic and peace-loving forces throughout the world.

Let us repeat we shall never allow Umkhonto we Sizwe to be emasculated! When we took to the road of armed struggle those 25 years ago we knew that there would be no turning back. Our leaders in prison have repeatedly

been offered their release if only they would renounce so-called violence. Our commander Nelson Mandela firmly thrust aside these overtures by getting to the heart of the matter. All the violence in our situation emanates from the racist regime. It is the racists who have to renounce violence not us.

When we resorted to the armed struggles we said in our manifesto that this choice is not ours, it has been forced on us by the violence of the apartheid state. Until our people have won their freedom there can be no turning back.

It was not by accident that we launched MK on December 16. White South Africa observes that day as the triumph of their military might over our people. The violence that they celebrate is the violence of a minority aimed at subjugating the majority of the people of our country; the violence of white over black. In reality it is a celebration of injustice and inhumanity of man against man. We chose that day to show how different we were: to show that the path that had been forced upon us was in pursuit of the establishment of justice and humanity for all the people of our country — black and white. The racists celebrate December 16 in the name of a false god — a celebration of war in pursuit of an unjust cause. We celebrate December 16, our Heroes Day, to underline our commitment that we are waging a just war in pursuit of freedom, democracy and peace.

The racist regime is today trapped in an irreversible crisis and our road to victory is open. We shall have to face many obstacles. The history of these 25 years of Umkhonto we Sizwe proves that there is no obstacle which we cannot overcome.

In the course of this long march we have scored great achievements. We have also made many mistakes but we are where we are today because we have always had the capacity to learn from our mistakes as well as from our achievements; to learn from our people as they learn from us.

We are born of the people. As long as we remain part of the people and move ahead with the people victory is certain. Conditions have now matured in our country for us, together with our people, to mount an all-round offensive in order to advance to People's Power.

It is within this context that I now present you, our glorious People's Army, with your Battle Orders of the day:

I order:

- * train, arm and lead our people into battle;
- * defend our people in town and countryside;
- * sever the enemy's lines of communication and power;
- * disperse and immobilise the enemy forces;
- * destroy the enemy's economic resources;
- * attack the enemy on all fronts and annihilate his forces;
- * make People's War flourish in all its dimensions in every part of our country.

Victory or Death, we shall win!
 Forward to People's Power!
 Long Live the Alliance of our People!
 Long Live Umkhonto we Sizwe!
 Long Live the African National Congress!
 Amandlha Ngawethu!
 Maatla ke Arona!
 All Power to the People!
 Mayihlome ke nako!



THE LONGEST THREE MINUTES IN MY LIFE

AN EPISODE BY COMRADE
JOE SLOVO, CHIEF-OF-STAFF
OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

THEORY apart, this venture into a new area of struggle found us ill-equipped at many levels. Among the lot of us we did not have a single pistol. No one we knew had ever engaged in urban sabotage with home-made explosives. Some of us had been in the army but, for all practical purposes, our knowledge of the techniques required for this early phase of the struggle was extremely rudimentary.

The most experienced military man among us was Jack Hodgson who was appointed to the Johannesburg Regional Command of MK. Unlike me, he had really been through the war; a veteran of the Abyssinian campaign and a 'desert rat' during the early stages of the North African war, he was demobilised for medical reasons. He returned to civilian life to become one of the full-time leaders of the ex-service organisation — the Springbok Legion.

I have learned not to assume that every person who puts on a Communist garb is necessarily a dedicated revolutionary. But Jack certainly wore that garb



Jack Hodgson

with distinction. He expected neither position nor personal recognition in return for sacrifice. Jack and Rica's flat became our Johannesburg bomb factory. Sacks of permanganate of potash were bought and we spent days with mortars and pestles grinding this substance to a fine powder. After December 16 most of our houses were raided in search of clues. By a stroke of enormous luck the Hodgson flat was not among the targets. Had the police gone there they would have found that permanganate of



Joe Slovo

potash permeated walls, curtains, carpets and every crevice.

We had learned that this substance more commonly used in washing lettuce mixed with aluminium powder and catalysed by a drop of acid, could make an effective explosion. For timing device we had to experiment with various thicknesses of paper and cardboard in order to establish the time it took for the acid to eat through. We also managed to improvise an incendiary device using acid as the catalyst. The acid was placed in small bottle whose outlet was covered by a specific thickness of paper or cardboard and just before placing the device in the target area, one had to turn the bottle upside down.

PRIMITIVE DEVICE

It was with this rather primitive device that I set out to burn down the Johannesburg Drill Hall which had housed the preparatory examination of the Treason Trial (1956). I had reconnoitred it carefully on more than one occasion and had chosen the spot which would have ignited not only the enormous wooden floor but also the hundreds of wooden chairs which

covered it. But when the moment came, I found that the military authorities had decided to have their monthly spring-clean. I entered the hall through a side door and found myself in the presence of about fifty Black cleaners who were removing the chairs, polishing the floor, etc.

I wondered through the complex in an attempt to locate another suitable spot. It was past five in the afternoon and the Administrative offices seemed empty of staff. I chose an office with huge wooden cupboards, turned the bottle upside down and was about to place the carrier bag behind one of the cupboard when a clipped military voice came from behind me:

"Can I do anything for you, sir?" Although I feared that it might be too late, I had prepared for this moment.

I told him that my brother had received call-up papers but was about to take an important exam and could I be informed who I see about a possible exemption. The sergeant-major, who obviously had no inkling of my real intentions, politely asked me to follow him. I did so with racing pulse, knowing that the acid in that small bottle had begun to eat away at the flimsy cardboard. Had our kitchen laboratory calculated the fifteen minutes correctly?

Fortunately for both of us the officer dealing with exemptions had already left and I was politely advised to come back another day. I gave him a sweaty hand and walked briskly away. As soon as I decently could, I opened the tennis ball cylinder box which housed all the ingredients and snatched the bottle. The three or four minutes which preceded this were perhaps the longest in my whole life.

We were to discover the following day that Molefe, the first MK cadre to die in action, was killed in the vicinity of his target by a premature explosion which must have been caused by a defect in the acid bottle cover. Some hours after the drift hall incident I felt somewhat redeemed when, as part of a team Jack Hodgson and Rusty Bernstein, we dealt successfully with a manhole in the Johannesburg/Pretoria road which housed the telephone cables between the two cities.

THE FIRST KNOWN EXPLOSION

In this article, one of the founding members of our People's Army relates some of his experiences with comrade Nelson Mandela, the first Commander-in-Chief of our army.

The year was 1961. The call for a national convention had been ignored by the government. During the three-day strike called for by Mandela in his speech in Pietermaritzburg, many comrades had been beaten, shot and gaoled. But the forces of the regime felt frustrated. They were unable to arrest the leaders, or determine where they were hiding out. Their enemy No. 1, Nelson Mandela, had been named the "Black Pimpernel" by the media. They certainly were seeking him here, there and everywhere, but there was not a sign, not a clue, of his whereabouts. Every policeman in South Africa had been alerted to keep a look-out for him, and to hold him, to capture him at all costs. But not a finger had been laid on him. He was like a fish swimming in the area of his own people.

There were important matters to be attended to. The decision had already been taken by the movement to move into the area of armed conflict. A High Command had been established, with Mandela as the Commander-in-Chief. Various area commands had also been established, and recruiting was very selective. It was made crystal clear to every MK cadre that politics took precedence over military affairs, but that armed struggle would now become part and parcel of the fight for freedom until implementation of all the clauses of the Freedom Charter had begun, in a free and democratic South Africa.

FACTORY

What needed to be done at that time was to get a factory established for the making of the bombs, before going into action on December 16th. This day had been deliberately chosen. It was the day on which the racists celebrate their so-called victory over the 'Bantu' at Blood River. At the same time, the great majority of the people of South Africa, namely the Africans, regard the day as one of pride for that great warrior, Dingane, who was killed leading his people into battle against a

foe which, with superior arms, was ruthlessly plundering the land.

The late Jack Hodgson, a veteran of the war against Hitler, together with others, had been summoned to help in organising the forces and weapons necessary. He was a master at improvisation. He set to work with a will, to produce the bombs and Molotov cocktails, which were the initial weapons to be used. We had already tested the possibility of cutting telephone wires, electrical wires, and various other means of dislocating communications. The operations took place months before MK as such started operations.

We would hit at all the symbols of apartheid, but under no cir-



Nelson Mandela

stances were we to kill or maim members of the population. Ours was not a terrorist organisation; the real terrorists were the all-white government and its supporters. Reconnaissance work had been carefully undertaken. The targets had been chosen. The synchronisation for action throughout the country, in all the main areas, was being finalised. Action stations were chosen, and very careful briefing undertaken. But in the couple of remaining months, the weapons were to be carefully and thoroughly tested.

Jack indicated that we were ready to test about a dozen Molotov cocktails and an improvised bomb. He warned that we would need extraordinary

care to ensure secrecy and safety, for, if the bomb blast was detected or the blaze created by the Molotov cocktails spotted, the whole operation would be endangered, and our plans revealed.

Reading this, comrades in MK must remember that we had no access to the sophisticated weapons available to them today. Everything was a hazard. Almost all of us were being closely watched by the Special Branch — we had been known for years. And under these circumstances, right under the noses of the SB, we had to undertake all these very sensitive and exceedingly dangerous experiments and operations. Just the slightest mistake could be fatal.

A place had to be found. This place would have to satisfy the High Command. We found it; it was a disused brickworks known to one of the comrades involved in the operation. We reconnoitred the area. It satisfied everybody. Derelict buildings still remained, and several pits from which the clay had been extracted, surrounded by all sorts of paraphernalia. All brickworks are allowed to use dynamite to blast, so as to loosen the soil for making bricks. This was ideal, as any blast coming from any brickworks (and there were several in the area) would not attract any attention.

The team of inspection had been chosen. It, of course, included the Commander-in-Chief who insisted on being present, in spite of the fact that the police were out looking for him. We had arrived at the scene of operations and hidden the car, when a man emerged out of a galvanised iron building and strode menacingly towards our group. He was the watchman of the place. This spelt danger for us, and it seemed that this unforeseen circumstance would prevent us from continuing with our plan.

PERSUASIVE QUALITIES

But we had calculated without the persuasive qualities of our Commander-in-Chief. He immediately sized up the situation. We could not abandon the exercise at this stage. He signalled to us to bring the equipment forward, while he took aside this man, who was Zulu-speaking. Soon



SOON THE TWO OF THEM WERE IN DEEP CONVERSATION

the two of them were in deep conversation, with one arm of Comrade Nelson around the shoulder of his newly acquired friend. We noticed that the watchman was nodding his head vigorously, and then he walked away from the scene. We waited for him to disappear. Comrade Nelson explained that he'd persuaded the man to accept our presence there.

One of the buildings was soon being bombarded with Motolov cocktails. Every time a bottle exploded and burst into flames, Comrade Nelson shook his head gleefully, and smiled the smile of victory. We all joined in his glee and enthusiasm, of course.

These were the first explosions of the new era.

But there was more to come.

After dowsing any flames still licking at the walls and other pieces of wood and rubbish lying around, we moved to the open spaces, and chose our pit for testing the bomb.

According to our calculations, that container placed at the bottom of the pit would explode within fifteen minutes. We all stood waiting expectantly, as near to the edge of the hole as we dared. Five minutes went by. Ten minutes. Fifteen minutes. No explosion. Twenty minutes. Still no explosion.

ALMIGHTY EXPLOSION

What to do? We certainly could not leave it there, for obvious reasons. Nor would we know its effectiveness or not.

A decision had to be made. One of the more experienced comrades clambered down, gingerly lifted the contraption and slowly brought it up; an impulsive act, it is true, but it worked. Soon Jack adjusted the charge, everything was again placed in position, and many hands were proffered



Jack Hodgson

to pull the comrade out of the pit. Hardly had he been lifted clear, and positions of relative safety taken by all, when an almighty explosion took place, causing a huge cloud of dust to rise up into the air, and tons of earth to go tumbling down to drown anything left of the bomb.

This was not the normal bang of dynamite. It sounded more like that of a giant thousand-pounder.

Further curiosity about the

effects were abandoned, all of us made a very hurried bee-line for the automobile, piled in, and made as hurried and bumpy an exit from that territory as any automobile has ever made.

But we felt triumphant and cheered at the effect created.

Comrade Mandela was buoyant with pleasure and excitement. He advised very soberly that certain adjustments and alterations be attended to, and congratulated and thanked the comrades all round as we sped away from the scene. He proposed that as soon as we were certain that the timing was properly mastered, we should report to the High Command so that every other unit throughout the area be put on alert and properly briefed as to the correct use and working of the anti-apartheid bomb.

Several days after, a reconnaissance of the scene was made. The watchman smilingly assured us that, although it had been an unusually loud explosion, nobody had made any enquiries, and all was well.

Today, those who have been trained to use more sophisticated equipment would be aghast at the contraption which was contrived for use in the initial stages of sabotage. But one can only have admiration for those who constructed the device. Comrade Jack was a genius at this specialised work. You will understand what I mean when I tell you that part of the timing of the explosion included the thin tubing contained in plastic ball pens. You can also imagine the surprise of some shopkeepers when we bought up all their stocks of this particular kind of biro.

I have often wondered over the years exactly what Comrade Mandela said to this man, and also whether the subsequent events made any impact on him. But I am sure of one thing: Comrade Nelson Mandela was an excellent judge of our people the ordinary people of our country. And this judgement of his inspired many of us to have faith in the ordinary working man of our country. For if his judgement had been wrong, that watchman could have led the police to catch up with us.

I shudder to think, also, what the owner of that brickworks would think if he were told today how Umknonto we Sizwe tested its first bomb on his property

the happiest moment in my life

JOE MODISE, THE ARMY COMMANDER OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE, RELATES HIS ROLE DURING THE FORMATIVE DAYS OF OUR PEOPLE'S ARMY.

PRIOR TO THE launching of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 there was a feeling among the youth that the old form of struggle, which was non-violence, was not going to meet the demands of our situation and bring about the desired change. We as a disciplined group of young people felt that if the movement felt that the policy of non-violence was correct, we had to follow it. But we had misgivings about it. However with the suppression of the African National Congress after the Sharpeville massacre, this feeling of a different method of struggle gained a lot of prominence in our discussions and many people felt that there was no other way except to resort to armed struggle.

We acted even earlier than the actual launching of MK. With the declaration of the racist republic in May 1961, people were organised to strike. We felt that in order to strengthen this call we should also act independently but in a different way, no longer in a passive and peaceful way. So the late Comrade Joe Gqabi, myself and a number of other comrades decided to stop the trains that ran between Soweto and Johannesburg. We consulted technician friends who told us that if we threw a wire over the mains that supplies power to the electric trains, this would bring about a short circuit and there would be no power generated onto the line to enable the trains to move.

I led a unit that went to New Canada. We arrived there at about 3 in the morning, took a stone, tied it to a wire and threw it across the line that was supplying electricity. We saw a blue flame coming out of the electric wire when the contact was made and were sure that there was going to be a short circuit. But to our disappointment an hour later the train passed.

Comrade Gqabi took a unit that was going to blow a railway line with a stick of dynamite smuggled out of the mines. The stick of dynamite was attached to the railway line and according to their report it went off but the damage was minimal. This was due to the fact that apart from the lack of material we also had very little experience.

Realising that this was not a very big success, we undertook to carry out another operation aimed at destroying the telephone communications. We went



Joe Modise

to a place called Mondeor where there was a trunk line with lots of telephone lines running underground. Our aim was to destroy this, using the knowledge imparted to us by the late Comrade Jack Hodgson who was a thoroughly efficient teacher. We had a pliers and cutters with which we ripped the wires off completely. On our way towards home we felt that not enough work had been done. We thought we should give the enemy a little more work in restoring communications. We decided to go for the overhead telephone lines. We cut off some barbed wire from the fence next to the road, tied it to a stone and threw it over the telephone lines, then tied the wire to the back of the car and pulled it. We felt satisfied that for the night

we'd done a reasonable job. The following morning it was reported in the newspaper that saboteurs destroyed the main communications as well as the overhead telephone lines linking the Vaal Triangle and Johannesburg. These were some of our first actions before the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Discussions continued amongst the leaders and I was contacted, apparently because my involvement in these early actions was known. I had discussions with some of the top leaders at the time, like the late Comrade Duma Nokwe and Comrade Walter Sisulu. We had discussions separately before we were officially brought together in Stanger, Natal, at Chief Albert Luthuli's place where the African National Congress, South African Communist Party, Coloured People's Congress, South African Indian Congress and Congress of Democrats met to discuss this new method of struggle. After two days of consultations, it was agreed that the ANC and SACP were going to undertake this new form of struggle whilst the other movements that were still legal should continue working legally. It was then decided that MK was going to be launched. I was told that I had to serve in MK and instructed to report to a house in Ophirton. When I got there I found the late Comrade Jacob Masedo, the late Comrade Andrew Mashaba and another comrade from the East Rand. Then to our surprise, (we were not told whom we were going to meet) I walked Comrade Nelson Mandela who was in hiding at that time. He told us that the movement had decided to embark on armed struggle and that we were going to be part of that machinery. I think we were amongst the first units. I don't think we were the only group because subsequently when we went to collect our material and get the little training that was given to us, we met other comrades who were also coming for theirs. At that time things were still done a bit amateurishly and the question of security was not given proper attention.

DECEMBER 16

I was given the responsibility for units in the Soweto area, Comrades Masondo and Mashaba were given the Pretoria area. But for December 16 the former and myself were given tasks in the Soweto area. I was to deal with the post office in Kliptown and Comrade Masondo together with the other comrades in Soweto were to deal with the administration offices in Meadowlands and White City. In my unit were Comrade Tladi and a comrade who was the chief of volunteers in Alexandra township. We were told that we would get our materials at a place which was going to be given to us later.

I was later contacted and instructed to go to a place in the centre of Johannesburg. I went into the basement where I was given a bundle of dynamite sticks with fuses. When I walked out of that basement where I got my training and a little paperbag where I put in my material, in walked Comrade Uriah Mokeba* wearing a big overcoat. It was obvious we had come for the same purpose because after I had left and moved towards the bus rank, I saw him also coming with his little parcel on his way towards Soweto.

As I've said, our unit consisted of three people. One was going to place explosives on the wall, the other one was going to set it alight and the third would be keeping watch for our security. We went to reconnoitre the place and noticed that it was fenced behind with a 2 metre high diamond mesh wire. We organised a pliers that could cut the wire and handgloves to so that when we touched the wire no finger prints would remain. Comrade Masondo's unit was to use chemical explosives, a mixture of permanganate of potash and aluminium powder which would be detonated by the introduction of glycerine.

We were going to deal with one object because the distance we had to cover was long and they were going to deal with two objects because they were going to use chemical explosives. This would give them enough time to place both and retreat, whereas we were going to use dynamite which goes off instantaneously. So we wouldn't have the opportunity of placing the charge at one and then move to the second

before the first one exploded. So we moved to our targets from my place which was our meeting point

BIG EXPLOSION

On our way, halfway towards our target we heard a very big explosion. We got worried because the whole operation throughout South Africa was coordinated, so as to ensure the security of the comrades who were going to the various areas because if these explosions, particularly those in the same locality, went off before the others, the enemy would be alerted. And whilst the enemy would be looking for people who might have been involved, it would come across people who were still going to their targets. We were a bit worried and thought that it might have been because of lack of discipline or may be the



Joe Gqabi

comrades had not understood the instructions correctly. Nevertheless we continued, got to our target and took position. It was 23h30.

Comrade Tladi, who was our observer, was also given the task of opening a gap for us to enter from behind, because in front were security guards and there was also a small building which I thought was being used as a police station because there were always policemen in that area and we knew that they always sat in front of this place. We went in. I had a piece of clay which I used to position the explosive against the wall, whilst my comrade lit it with a burning cigarette by applying the cigarette tip to the fuse. As soon as the fuse caught fire, sparks began coming out and we knew it was

burning and started moving towards the fence rapidly.

It had been drilled into us during our training (of not more than five minutes) that under no circumstances should we be near these explosives when they go off because we would be blown to pieces. So our main concern was to get away from the point where the explosion was going to take place. We reached the fence. Under normal circumstances even at night it's not a serious problem to move back to the point which you used for entering a yard, but under these circumstances and especially because of our fear for explosives, it was difficult for us even to see the opening. When we eventually found it, it was a problem to get through. It appeared as if it had shrunk. Nevertheless we managed to get through and ran towards the trees that form a boundary between Pimville and Kliptown.

To our surprise we found the three minutes taking too long, much longer than the three minutes that had been determined by our instructors. I suppose this was due to anxiety on our part because we started getting worried and thought that something might have gone wrong. We started asking one another what could have happened but before we could finish the explosion took place. It was big bang. I've never been so happy in my life. I felt that the actual struggle had begun.

FIRST CASUALTY

We rushed home, running for about 12-13 kilometres. On our way we heard other explosions going off. We heard explosions in the direction of White City and Orlando East and thirty minutes later, whilst we were still running home, we saw police cars moving in various directions. We reached home safely and found Comrade Masondo back with his unit. He and other comrades, also from Alexandra township, slept at my place.

The following morning news was brought to me (I think by Comrade Duma) that an accident took place. The explosion that we heard on our way to Kliptown was at the Dube municipal office. The late Comrade Johannes Molefe was blown up in that accident. He was together with Comrade Ramotse who sustained burns on the hands and face. He was taken to hospital, which was a mistake on our part, because he was arrested after ex-

* Uriah Mokeba is the ANC Chief Representative to Angola.

perts checked his clothes and established that he was involved in that explosion. We struggled to bail him and to our surprise the regime agreed. I think at that time they were not as prepared and vicious as they are now. After his release on bail, it was decided that he should leave the country. I brought him out of the country. We travelled in a car of one of the comrades past Dinokaneng where the two of us were dropped and proceeded on foot up to Lobatse, where arrangements were made for Comrade Ramotse to go abroad.

After the December 16 operations I was given the task by the High Command (that is before I was incorporated into it) of helping with the creation of MK on the ground. We had to organise Umkhonto in Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Kimberly. I went out initially by car, drove up to Durban where I met comrades who were already brought together and we established the Natal Command. From there I went to Port Elizabeth where I met Comrade Govan Mbeki who handed me over to comrades who were going to form a regional command. I then proceeded to Cape Town, set up the Cape Town machinery and returned to headquarters.

I went back to Port Elizabeth on a second occasion to get reports as to how far the command structure had organised units on the ground.

As I was leaving Port Elizabeth on my way to Cape Town, I realised that I was being trailed by police. This surveillance was constant right up to Cape Town where I had a very difficult time. They chased me all over the place until I managed to shake them off, using back doors and passages. I saw the Unit in Cape Town and took their reports. I then had to go to Kimberly to set up the machinery there. For security reasons I was to board the train in Paarl and was driven there by a white female comrade.

But to my surprise when I got into the train I discovered one of the white Security Branch officers who were chasing me around Cape Town on the same train. It was obvious that I was being followed even to Kimberley. I did not know the place and I was going there for the first time. I was given an address and was afraid that if I get off in Kimberley, I would lead these security police to the people I was going to meet. I decided to go back to

Johannesburg and just before we got to Johannesburg (at Randfontein) I jumped off just when the train pulled off and made it impossible for them to get off. Fortunately another train pulled up which I boarded to Johannesburg and got off before I reached Johannesburg, at Westbury, where I took local transport home.

TRAINING ABROAD

During this period whilst I was going through all these areas I was also given instructions to inform comrades that they should start recruiting cadres that were going to be trained abroad. I also had to work out methods of communication so that when the comrades were sent from Natal, Eastern and Western Cape to Johannesburg, headquarters had to be informed in time.

After some time comrades started coming out. The first unit that came out was from the Eastern Cape.

Subsequently units came also from Natal and the Western Cape. They came to Johannesburg where we found accommodation for them amongst supporters of the movement. We then organised transport for them to be taken to Botswana. The first group to leave was taken straight to Francistown. From there we hired a truck that took them to the border between Botswana and Rhodesia (Both still under British rule). Locals near the border informed us that provided they had the local Rhodesian currency it wouldn't be difficult for them to get transport. This we acquired at the border through exchanging with people coming down from Rhodesia. We gave them directions as to how they were going to get to Dar-Es-Salaam.

From Rhodesia they found their way up to Lusaka and from there they proceeded to Tanzania. The next group that came out came up to Kazungula. At the time the roads were clear only from Lobatse up to Francetown. Between Francetown and Kazungula there were no roads to talk about, just a little bush track which was so faint, and at some places there was nothing at all. The Rhodesian route was used once. The second time there were students who were coming out (the comrades amongst whom was Thabo Mbeki). They were arrested and deported, fortunately to Botswana.

We then had to use charters and managed to get a charter

that flew them out. But because we were aware that we could not be able to use charters for a long time, firstly because South Africa and the British would exert pressure on the owners, and, secondly, they were very expensive, we reconnoitred a route to Kazungula. We found a local person who was willing to assist us. I was involved in the reconnaissance with this man and when we returned he agreed to help us with transport as he had a truck.

Meanwhile the charters went on. There may have been two or three more until the one which was to charter the headquarters was sabotaged by the boers. So the Kazungula route became the main route. From Kazungula, recruits went to Livingstone where we acquired the assistance of UNIP. Zambia too was still under the British.

We managed to get a few loads of comrades through Livingstone. Sometimes we would come with a group of about 30 comrades on the truck, at times 35.

Transportation of comrades from their areas up to Johannesburg from there to Botswana, Zambia and finally to Tanzania cost a lot. At that time the movement did not have the resources that we are having now, even friends then were not as many as today. So the question of funds was a serious problem. Most of the money that was used for transport during those days came from the movement. It was only in Tanzania where we got assistance from some of the governments that were going to give us training facilities. We got assistance from the Ethiopian, Egyptian and later the Algerian governments. The Algerians sponsored our initial training and later the Chinese. I think we sent one group to China from then onwards we acquired most of our training from the Soviet Union. We had one unfortunate incident that also made me to leave in a hurry. Some comrades crossed, we gave them instructions and we hoped they would make it with the assistance of UNIP. Unfortunately when they got to Livingstone, they were arrested and deported to South Africa. After this incident it became clear (I was already serving in the High Command in Rivonia) that as soon as they reached South Africa and were tortured I was going to be

arrested. After their return, the enemy started looking for me and I had to leave. I left South Africa with Comrade Raymond

Mhlaba, we came through Rhodesia with false Malawian documents, stating that we'd been deported from South Africa.

This enabled us to pass through Plumtree without any problem up to Lusaka where we were assisted by UNIP up to Tanzania.

DECEMBER SIXTEEN, '61 IN DURBAN

ERIC MTSHALI

It is a known fact that I was in the first Regional Command of MK in Natal. I say it is a known fact because one of the members of that first Regional Command wrote a book "My Road to the Left". That was Bruno Mtolo who was known as 'Mr X' in the Rivonia Trial. In this book he exposed everything and everybody, and in some cases exaggerated things. But Bruno, myself and the other Comrades; Billy, Cumick and Ronnie, were in the first Regional Command of MK in Natal. We got elementary training in explosives from the late Comrade Jack Hodgson, known as the "desert rat". We also learned some other techniques from Bruno himself who taught us how to make a time bomb.

Our first target in Durban was the Durban pass office. Billy, Cumick, Bruno and myself went to plant a bomb there which we had made out of aluminium, potassium permanganate and coffee. I don't remember what other mixtures were there. We planted this bomb at the door of the main office of the pass office in Ordinance road. When we were a few steps away, Bruno said there was something that we did not put correctly and he ran back to correct that. We then proceeded to another area where a pylon was to be blown up. This pylon was situated at a place called Morning Side, in Durban. First we went to prepare the material, placed it at the target retreated. We then heard a big explosion going off. A big cloud of smoke and flames covered that pylon. It was a new experience to us, and we were very proud. We read about it the following day in the *Natal Mercury*. The damage was quite substantial. This operation was more successful than the one in Ordinance road where the bomb did not explode properly and caused very little damage. Well, we thought it was because we were amateurs but later we suspected that Bruno must have sabotaged it when he went back after we had placed everything

correctly.

We then sat down and reviewed our operations and came to the conclusion that although our operations were a success, they were then not what we wanted them to be. We attributed that to our being inexperienced in the field of explosives and we were determined to improve and perfect ourselves. We did not have



Eric Mtshali

any material to use until Bruno discovered a dynamite dump at a road-building site. So we went for it. It was quite an interesting operation. The most exciting one in our case. We took 230 kilograms of explosives from that dump. It was a very clean operation. No one was caught and it was very interesting when we read the following morning in the *Natal Mercury*. The enemy reported that about 230 kilograms of dynamite had been stolen by communists. We then took it to our hiding place and later removed it and dug some dead letter boxes in other townships where we hid part of it. Some of that dynamite was sent to comrades in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

These were the two operations I was involved in. After that we were involved in organisational work. The idea was not that we should also be directly involved

because we were the military command in the region. We had to direct operations, recruit and establish new units. That is why we could not immediately embark on new operations after December 16. Secondly, we wanted to make sure that when we recruit, we recruited the best of people to serve in MK.

We had no knowledge of explosives or military science. We had never been in the army, all of us were young trade unionists who were combining trade union work with MK tasks. We started bringing in some other comrades into the units and because of our strategic positions as trade unionists dealing with workers, we could recruit the best out of the working class. This applied to other areas of the country as well. Therefore, people who went out for military training during that period of the 60's, were mostly workers, starting from the very first group; Mkwazi, Mhlaba, Gqabi and Mlangeni.

The reaction of the people was very good. MK was timely, especially to young people of our days and its formation was welcomed with great enthusiasm. We organised units in Durban central, Pinetown and Pietermaritzburg.

I was then selected by my region to go and acquire the necessary skills so as to teach others upon my return. Our group, which was the second group to leave the country (the first being that of the High Command) consisted of 32 young workers from Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, East London and Pietermaritzburg. We left in June 1962, and were supposed to come back before December. That is we were given strictly six months. But the situation changed and we could not return in six months as instructed. Some of those comrades fell in Wankie. Others were given prison sentences of 18 years and more, Billy and Cumick are out of Robben Island and active in the trade unions and the UDF.

THOUGH WE HAD NO AK47's NOR REVOLVERS

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim is a founder member of Umkhonto we Sizwe. He served in the Natal Regional High Command of MK with Comrades Billy Nair, Goerge Naicker, and Curnick Ndlovu. He was arrested in 1963, became accused No. 1 in the ensuing Durban Trial, and was sentenced to fifteen years on Robben Island. He spoke to DAWN.

I was approached to join Umkhonto we Sizwe at its formation in 1961. The leadership had identified certain activists from the Congress movement and someone would be delegated to approach you. At that time of course the question of a change in the methods of struggle and armed struggle was dominating the debates at all levels of the movement. So from those discussions the leadership would pick the cadres whom they thought were favourably disposed to the armed struggle.

The emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 sparked off lots of enthusiasm among the people. Although we were not that many in the beginning, our actions were very widespread. With my unit we carried out at least eight acts of sabotage in the Durban Central area alone. They resulted in many people coming forward in search of MK. Most of the people who came wanting to join the organisation were subsequently sent out of the country to undergo military training.

A significant feature of our operations was that we were not well-trained. We had received a very crude type of training. We lacked the professionalism that our cadres display now and we were not exposed to the facilities of training we enjoy today. The only form of explosive we used was dynamite, which we stole, and that was all we had. We had no revolvers and AK-47's, let alone knowing how to use them. But given all that, we really had the state worried, for in that period, lots and lots of sabotage attacks were launched.

There's a bit of a story I recall about this dynamite we stole. Next to the road construction sites then there used to be little sheds where dynamite was stored. Not knowing how big the dynamite is and how it looks, we went with a carrier bag, only to find that there were big boxes. There were also little metal pieces which we later learnt



Billy Nair

were detonators. We did not know what they were and we threw them all away. Then we had to learn how to store and use it. And from that little stock of dynamite we were able to supply other provinces as well.

Despite that we were not well-trained, we suffered no casualties. None of us were arrested. Nobody was blown up. We really had the police worried. Despite their intensive investigations, they were not able to uncover us. At one stage, for instance, they had themselves so organised: I was living in an area called Greyville. There was a police station nearby. Immediately there occurs an act of sabotage anywhere in the area, the police would check on me.

They did that with a number of cadres whom they suspected were members of MK. At times they would wake me at two in the morning, demanding to know when I came home. Then I would know that there had been an attack somewhere. But despite that, with the correct use of timing devices, we would plant an explosive charge at a target and reach home in time, and when the police came they always found us at our homes. It was only with the introduction of the 90 days detention without trial law, the solitary confinement and torture that went with it, that the police were able to uncover some of our units and bring some of us to trial.

TIMING DEVICES

We also did not have factory-made timing devices. We had to solve the problem of how to ignite the fuse. We discovered that if you pour a certain chemical (acid) onto sulphuric powder, fire results. Then we had to develop methods of delaying the liquid from contacting the powder. We found that if you put it in a capsule, it takes about half an hour to eat through it. So once it eats through the capsule, it will contact the powder which in turn will burn, igniting the fuse. To prolong the delay to about an hour, we would pour the acid into a small capsule and put that small capsule into a bigger one. At most, that was the time required by our transport to deliver us at our respective homes.

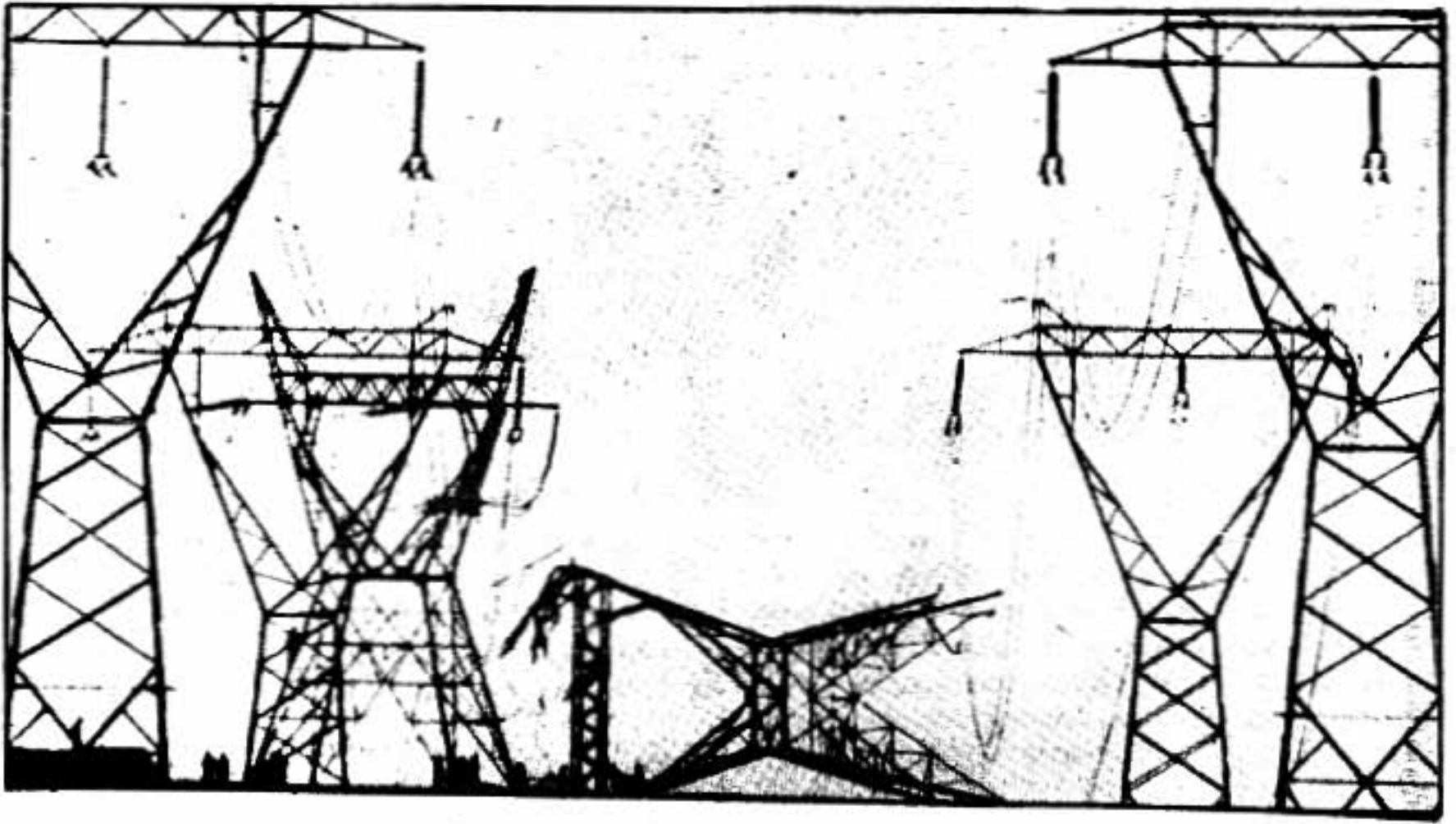
The attacks we were carrying out were mainly on government installations: power lines, telephone cables, railway lines, offices, etc. The instructions were that we had to be very careful not to endanger or harm human lives. Only once did we blow up the offices of the Nationalist Party newspaper — *Natalia* — and there were two minor injuries. But on the whole no lives were lost.

BIG OPERATION

One big operation I was involved in was when we plunged the whole of the Durban area into darkness for many hours. We blew up a very big pylon in a place called Montclair, just outside Durban. Ronnie Kasrils and I had gone to the area weeks earlier to conduct reconnaissance. The place was hilly and sparsely populated. We worked out a route passing through some houses.

One night we went to this area. We were four, including Billy Nair. We planted the dynamites on two legs of the pylon. This required lot of work. You had to place the dynamite against the object and tape it to stick, get the fuse and put it into the charge. Then, at the spot, you had to fill the capsule with acid, making sure that the acid does not touch you. Which is not a very enviable task. Of course you had to use gloves.

As I was walking home with a



friend, the whole Durban area went dark. I then knew that our operation had been successful. At this stage I was working for *New Age*, our newspaper. Of course the editor, Comrade M.P. Naicker did not know that I was involved in this act.

The next morning the radio and the press carried it. I took my camera and went to the area in the afternoon to photograph the pylon that was blown up. I went to the local population to enquire where the pylon was so that nobody would think I knew the place. When I got there I took the photographs for *New Age*, and those were the first actual sabotage pictures to be published in *New Age*.

VICTORIA BRIDGE

Another operation I was involved in was in the Durban Central Area. People who know Durban will remember Victoria bridge in the old days. Underneath trains were passing. Even here we did thorough reconnaissance of the area. We studied the time-table and established all the times for the trains. We did not want to destroy the railway line when there was a train passing, in accordance with the instruction that we should not endanger lives. We also established the location of the watchmen, the railway police and how they operated.

Again we used dynamite. At this time the enemy was making good use of police dogs. Meaning that even if you had left the area you still had to see to it that no traces remained behind. Someone suggested that we use chilli powder. After planting our charges, we left the area safely.

An enormous explosion followed. I was living about 3½ kilometres from this area and I could

hear the explosion. That operation earned a lot of publicity. When I walked past the area the following morning on my way to work, I could see hundreds of people crowding the area, watching the damaged lines. The trains were delayed for many hours.

We also blew up an office of a stooge, A.I. Kadjee. He was collaborating with the government. We decided to get to his office in the early evening. It was in a passage. There were people upstairs. We thought we would break in through a window and put the explosive in the office so as to blow up the whole office. When we were about to break the window, we saw the night watchman approaching. He shouted at us. We had to run away and he gave chase. He thought we were thieves. So we left the place to conduct fresh reconnaissance. This time we decided to make a very quick job. We put the explosives next to the door whilst somebody was keeping watch on the night watchman. After placing the charge we made a run for it, disappearing into the busy streets of Durban.

We were away for hardly five minutes when we heard a big explosion. The damage caused to the office was quite extensive. This was one place where we could not use the timing device because we thought the night watchman would discover the explosive before it went off.

Those were some of the big operations, in the sense of that time, I was involved in. There were other small operations. There were also a lot of experiments that did not work out. For instance, once we devised what was called a pipe-bomb. We took

pipes, sealed them and put the explosive powder inside.

We wanted to blow up a telephone cable. We then put this pipe-bomb on it. We do not know what happened because when we went to check three days later, we found the pipe-bomb still hanging there. It had gone off but nobody even noticed it because it had done absolutely no harm to the telephone cable.

Also as an experiment, we attacked goods trains with Molotov cocktails. We would stand on top of a bridge and throw the petrol bombs on passing goods trains. As you know, they are covered with thick canvas. That also did not seem to work. In some cases it did but with very minor damage inflicted.

NATAL COMMAND

Serving with me in the Natal Regional High Command were Curnick Ndlovu, Billy Nair, George Naicker, Ronnie Kasrils. At first we did experiment some form of ranking system but abandoned it later. There was just a leader of the group, Curnick Ndlovu. I was the leader of the Durban Central Group.

After the arrest of Curnick Ndlovu and later Billy Nair, Ronnie and I decided to go underground, establishing the underground structure of the Natal Regional High Command. Unfortunately Bruno Mtolo, Mr X in the Rivonia Trial, was also a member. He is the man who decided to break and collaborate with the police after his arrest. He led to many arrests, including mine. He also became the main state witness during our trial.

THE LEAST DRAMATIC CONTRIBUTION

Albie Sachs

Of all the people on the scene at the time, I think I can lay claim to having made the least dramatic contribution towards the launching of MK.

I was an advocate in Cape Town, and one day a comrade whom I had frequently defended appeared at my "chambers", closed the door behind him, and bent down as if to tie his shoelaces. Dipping his fingers in his sock, he pulled out a tightly folded piece of paper and said: "Can you keep this for a little while, someone will call for it?"

Some while later, I was back at my desk working through some law reports, the slip of paper securely tucked in my sock, when another comrade appeared. This time I bent down as if to tie my laces, pulled at the piece of paper and handed it to him; he of course, in turn bent down as if to tie his laces.... and the piece of paper was soon on its way out into the corridor down the lift and into the street. Only afterwards did I learn, or, rather, guess from something which someone had let slip, that that piece of paper had contained the MK oath, and that I had done my bit towards the launching of armed struggle in South Africa.

I was in my mid twenties then, part of a generation that had grown up politically in the golden decade of the 1950s. We had taken part as youth in the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People and the national work stoppage after Sharpeville. Often, during these years we had asked older comrades to explain to us 'from a theoretical point of view' how it was possible to believe in a non-violent end to apartheid, let alone to capitalism in South Africa (we were all socialists, and came to nationalism through socialism, just as a different generation today is coming to socialism through nationalism).

Our older comrades resolutely defended the possibility of peaceful change, if the people, especially the workers, were sufficiently mobilised, and if the world took a strong enough stand, then it was possible to destroy apartheid and build a new society peacefully. The fact is that at that time, when the ANC was legal

and could lead mass campaigns without serious repression, when papers like Guardian could openly express the people's wishes, the masses were not in a mood nor were they physically prepared for armed confrontation with the regime. It was the State of Emergency and the banning of the ANC in 1960 that convinced us all, not theoretically, but in practice, that new forms of struggle had to be found.

The Stayaway Campaign of 1961, timed to coincide with the declaration of South Africa as a racist republic, was the last attempt at using mass pressure on its own. We threw everything into it, but with meetings, newspapers and individuals progressively



Denis Goldberg

banned, we just knew there had to be a different response. The question then became: when armed struggle started, where would it be, who would take part, what form would it take?

I was doing a lot of public work, in the courts, writing and addressing meetings. Denis Goldberg seemed to be around less and less, other people one knew seemed to disappear. No one asked any questions. It was better not to know.

KEEN MOUNTAINEER

One day, Denis rolled up at my place and asked if, seeing that I was a keen mountaineer, I could take a crowd of young people for a very vigorous hike on Table Mountain one Sunday. I agreed, and we met near the Kirstenbosch Gardens, and I really took them up hill and down dale, till they were gasping and exhausted, though none of them complained openly,

since they were not going to let a white man (me) do better than them.

Later Denis asked if I could give a class to a group of campers on a political education holiday at a place called Mamre not very far from Cape Town. I agreed, and a few weeks afterwards I was sitting in a tent, baking hot, talking about the history of South Africa from a people's point of view. It was mid summer, and I don't remember what I said, but I do recall some of those present dozing off. The person in charge, Looksmart Solwandle, had a thin branch in his hand, and every-time someone's eyes closed, he would flick the branch on the person's arm to wake him up.

"If the teacher makes them fall asleep" I told comrade Looksmart "you should hit the teacher". Looksmart, the gentlest of comrades was quite stern when it came to respecting the teacher, however, in any event, the class was interrupted: the police had arrived, and in large numbers. The place was surrounded, we were taken off to the nearest police station, and processed one by one. There was no hard evidence against anyone, and we were told to be ready to face charges on some technical violation or other. (Those were the days when the police needed evidence!)

About a year or so later, another knock on the door in my 'chambers', and this time it was a woman who introduced herself to me as the wife of comrade Looksmart. Slowly she took me through the story of how her husband had been detained under the 90 day law, how the police had moved him from one police station to the next. I kept interrupting to say sadly that there was nothing we lawyers could do, until she reached the end of the story: comrade Looksmart had been found dead, allegedly after hanging himself in his cell. This was the first time in our generation that a comrade had been tortured to death. The shock was overwhelming. But there was something we as lawyers could do. We could demand an inquest, and at least try to expose what

had happened.

HEAVY BLOWS

This was a bitter time for all of us. Our movement was taking heavy blows. The dark decade of the 1960s was upon us. Our main function was to survive and regroup. The capture of our leaders at Rivonia, with Denis amongst them (so that was where he had been!), led to more and more detentions, and soon I was amongst them, being questioned on a whole range of things, including the camp at Mamre. Fortunately, we had managed to get many comrades out, which was not all that easy, Cape Town being far from any border. One of them we were especially sorry to see go. His name was Martin, and although he seemed a bit soft for the city, having spent most of his life in educational institutions in the Transkei, he had been virtually the only ANC intellectual in what we called 'the locations', the other intellectuals being mainly with the PAC.

I remember going to fetch Martin one night to take him to a safe hideout, the police were after him. A car in which he was travelling had been found to contain ANC pamphlets, and this required real courage on my part, since the dogs in the location set up such a howl, and there was no way of convincing them that this white man marching along nervously was a comrade who believed in the Freedom Charter.

Twenty and more years later, at the ANC National Consultative Conference in Kabwe, a comrade comes up to me, stares in my face, looks again, and asks if I am comrade Albie Sachs. I stare back at him, there is something familiar about him, but I can't really recognise him. "Remember me?" he asks "from the camp in Mamre..." And another comrade, and another, all were in the first detachments of MK, and saw action in Zimbabwe before being imprisoned for a dozen years by Smith's forces. Now they and I are together again, all of us still struggling, active and alive, parts of this indestructible thing called the ANC, hugging each other in celebration of our survival and of our confidence in the future. And there up on the platform, is the soft, solitary intellectual, only now he is not called Martin any more, he is known as Chris.

* The Chris (Martin) referred to is the Army Commissar of MK.

DYNAMITE THIEVES

Ronnie Kasrils

"You're not doing enough!" the burly figure of our commander, Joe Modise, snapped at us.

We were meeting him secretly in a sugar cane field near Durban. The year was 1962. He was down from Johannesburg, shortly after the arrest of our Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela, and he was addressing Curnick Ndlovu, Billy Nair, myself and other members of the Natal Regional Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We had opened our combat account on December 16th 1961, with home-made bomb attacks on government targets and were busy building our network. After comrade Mandela's arrest in July, 1962 we had recorded our protest with petrol bomb attacks on goods trains and regime offices. But to be honest we had not been active enough.

In the Transvaal there had been some spectacular actions with dynamite smuggled out of the mines. One of our number proffered the excuse: "If only we had dynamite like you comrades on the Reef, comrade Joe." Modise cut in: "We're getting small quantities from sympathetic mine workers. You've got quarries here in Natal", he growled, "get your own supplies and get on with it!"

With that the meeting was over and we felt both sheepish and determined to prove we could deliver the goods. We ordered comrades to be on the lookout for sources of dynamite. Word soon came in of a road construction camp outside Pine-town, near Marianhill, that was using dynamite. Curnick Ndlovu, our regional commander, ordered me to reconnoiter the place. I drove out with a fellow MK cadre, Eleanor Anderson (later my wife) to locate the place. We packed a picnic lunch and after some searching found the site.

A road was being blasted out of the hills. There was a hive of activity with vehicles and workers busy on the mammoth task. Unperturbed we set-out our picnic quite close to a formidable barbed-wire enclosure with a pair of red-boxed magazines.

It was a challenging sight and we imagined the desirable sticks of dynamite stored inside. No

one paid this peculiar white couple much attention. We placidly munched our sandwiches and sipped our cokes even though, what with the dust and commotion and distant booming of dynamite blasting in the hills, the once rustic scene now scarcely qualified as your ideal picnic spot.

I knitted my brows, puzzling how we would need to cut our way through the tough-looking fencing. Eleanor was much more practical than I. Her solution was simplicity itself. "If only we could get over to that padlocked gate and check the manufacture and number of the lock we wouldn't even need wire-cutters" she observed.

In answer to my puzzled expression she explained: "Once you can get the number of any lock it's possible to buy the self-same one and with it the key. All the makes are on sale in the hardware shops and that padlock looks a common type to me" she confidently concluded.

The suggestion seemed worthwhile exploring and taking advantage of a lull in the activity in our vicinity I sauntered over to the gate in question. To my surprise I immediately noticed the brand name and serial number engraved on the padlock, yet another example of the better observation qualities possessed by the so-called fairer sex (at least over this male anyway)! we finished our picnic and departed.

During the next week we checked-out the various hardware stores in Durban. Eleanor returned from one such excursion to Henwoods in West Street. "Here you are" she coolly announced, handing me a copy of the padlock and key I had seen at Marianhill.

One night a week later Billy, Eric Mtshali, Mannie Isaacs who was our driver, and I assembled for the raid. Additional reconnaissance had established that a solitary guard always went drinking between 8 and 10 pm.

We arrived at our destination leaving Mannie parked by some bushes. He had no idea about the true nature of the mission and thought we were attending yet another clandestine meeting in the bush. We approached the object of our interest with bated

breath. I clutched Eleanor's key in my sweaty palm still doubting whether it had the power to open the gate. Billy and Eric had large wire-cutters in case the key failed us. We carried crow-bars to force open the magazines - burglar-style! I had a pistol in my belt but fortunately the watchman was relaxing, as expected, at a local shebeen.

DESPERADOS

We skulked up to the gate and quite a band of desperados we must have looked. I fiddled with the padlock and engaged the key. It fitted easily enough. One turn and the lock clicked open. What a gratifying sound that was. We were in!

We went quickly to work as though we were professional safe crackers. Sparks cut the night air as we jemmied the magazine doors open. We began emptying the contents. Box upon box of explosives piled up. We had not anticipated that there would be such a quantity and realised we should have come with a truck. We sweated heavily from the labour and excitement as we carried box after box over to Mannie's station wagon. He was perplexed at the sight of all the boxes and Billy told him we were collecting propaganda material. There were so many boxes we tossed what we could not take away into a nearby stream.

"Get moving!" Billy shouted and Mannie drove off in a cloud of dust. Eric and I lay on the boxes of dynamite in the rear of the vehicle as we careered along a bumpy, gravel road. The idea had been to take our haul to Eleanor's flat in central Durban but we had not expected such a large booty. We needed somewhere more remote. "Head for George Naicker's place". Billy commanded and after forty minutes of the adrenalin racing through our veins and the vehicle speeding through the night we reached our destination on the outskirts of town.

George was as cool as an English cucumber. On his instructions the goodies were stashed in the store-room of a school opposite his home. It was school holidays and he had access to the store-room key.

Next morning the Durban newspapers carried the sensational headlines: "HALF-A-TON OF DYNAMITE STOLEN NEAR PINETOWN!" as Mannie Isaacs drove to work he glimpsed the news posters carrying that headline and in a daze drove

through a red traffic signal and collided with another car.

We knew next to nothing about using dynamite let alone storing it. I was dispatched to the Durban library to consult books on mining and explosives. To my horror I read the safety regulations: "Never drive in excess of 15 m.p.h. when transporting dynamite" was one rule; "It is forbidden to strike a match or make sparks where dynamite is stored" was another; "Dynamite must be stored under cool, well ventilated conditions" was yet one more chilling rule.

What alarmed me far more than the recollection of the



Ronnie Kasrils

violent way we had cracked-open the magazines and our rapid get-a-way was the horrific thought of our explosives sweating miserably in the small, stuffy store-room of the school. Now I realised why the magazines had ventilation slats and other such design features.

We soon installed an electric fan in the storeroom and proceeded to construct caches around the outskirts of Durban. Thoughts were already turned to our next round of MK action.

"DESERT RAT"

For that we required expert advice. Jack Hodgson, "the desert rat" who had taught us how to manufacture our first chemically based bombs was sent from Johannesburg to give us expert tuition. He was not only a war veteran having served against the fascists in the North African campaign, hence his nickname, but he was also an ex-miner and knew as much about dynamite as Alfred Nobel himself. We could not have asked for a better qualified, more cheerful and inspiring instructor. At that stage our policy was not to endanger

human life but Jack never ceased to tell us that "the best sight in the world was dead fascists cops in the gutter". He was simply delighted with our success and warmly congratulated us for our initiative and daring.

Joe Modise was a happy man too. He dispatched Abdullay Jassat to us to collect supplies for the Reef and the Cape. Comrade Modise also sent detonators because although we found dynamite sticks, gelignite, cordex and safety fuses in our haul we must have dumped the all-essential detonating caps in the stream. MK now had teeth of dynamite and our sabotage campaign took-off with a vengeance. Electric pylons, railway lines and electrification masts as well as transformers were cut as though made of butter and pass offices and other administrative objects were demolished.

Next step would be combat action proper when trained cadres and weaponry would arrive from abroad. Eric Mtshali was one of the first from Durban to take the underground road north. But we underestimated the enemy's reaction. We had not mastered the art of clandestine organisation sufficiently. More particularly we trusted the ability of comrades to withstand solitary confinement and torture. Many cracked under interrogation and some rats sold-out to save their own miserable skins revealing our secrets. It was this rather than the enemy's skills of detection that led to the collapse of our underground network.

Cumick and Billy were amongst many who were arrested. They were sentenced to twenty years each but emerged from prison with no regrets and have thrown themselves back into the fray. George Naicker served 14 years and is with us in exile as cheerful and unperturbed as ever. Eleanor and Abdullhay were arrested but both made daring escapes. The three of us met up in Dar Es Salaam where I was fortunate to marry Eleanor in 1965. We also met Jack abroad and were privileged to work with him until his death in London in 1978. Mannie dropped out of things and died of natural causes in Durban. To this day I still work closely with Joe Modise in our People's Army, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

Those were thrilling, pioneering days of MK. We would not have changed them for anything in the world!

VUYISILE MINI

(Adapted from a radio script by RMT Ngqungwana)

When we speak of martyrs and heroes of Umkhonto we Sizwe we speak of men and women who were deliberately murdered by the racists for their ideas and activities; we speak of men who were killed for their part in the struggle to rid South Africa of the scourge of racial and class oppression. We speak of the heroic Vuyisile Mini, whose courage never faltered even as he marched fist clenched, singing freedom songs to the gallows.

Vuyisile Mini along with Wilson Khayingo and Zinakile Mkhamba were the first Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants to be murdered by the racist hangman in 1964. He was a man who was never daunted by the possibility of danger. Mini was a member of the volunteer corps of the ANC and forerunner of Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was a youth leader and trade union organiser charged with many tasks like being the organising secretary of the Port Elizabeth branch of the Stevedoring and Dock-workers Union which was an affiliate of SACTU.

He was an active participant in the 1952 Defiance Campaign. For his role he was sentenced to three months imprisonment. He was also later to be arrested during the 1956 Treason Trial of 156 leaders of the Congress Alliance. The trial ended in acquittal because the state failed to prove treason in the activities of the then peace preaching ANC and its sister organisations.

This was however not to be the end as he was again to be detained in Rooi Hell (the North End Prison in Port Elizabeth) with Govan Mbeki and Raymond Mhlaba. It was here that Mini was to experience real hell when the prison officials forbade him to sing revolutionary songs in his famous baritone voice. The sadistic warders were to react to his refusal to stop singing by locking him and his fellow detainees up for twenty four hours a day.

UNDERGROUND

The racist regime was getting more violent. The African National Congress was finally banned. But this did not silence comrades like Mini and he, like many others, decided to go underground.

During this period of mobilisation and reorganisation Mini and his family were to suffer continuous harassment, as he had become very well known throughout the country by the police.

By 1961 Mini was going up and down the country fully involved in the formation of our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. These travels are filled with many stories and escapades: Around August 1961 Mini and a fellow comrade Brian were travelling for consultations in Johannesburg. From that trip the infant MK was to acquire one of its first weapons. They made this gain during a confrontation with a



Vuyisile Mini

boer train guard. While Mini was standing in the passage of the carriage, the boer guard who was trying to get past spoke to him in a very naughty manner. Mini faced him and said: "Look here you must mind your language, brother" he said, looking the man straight in the eyes. The guard was taken aback and produced a revolver. Through quick work they disarmed him, and left the train making a speedy detour.

He handled all situations in a cool, calm and collected manner, this being one of the major factors for his appointment to the Eastern Cape Command. He was a member not from recklessness or a sense of adventurism but from a deep conviction that this was the only method that would achieve the freedom of his people.

The cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe were drawn from the active youth of the congress movement. It was the dedication of men like Mini that steered the infant MK into shape. The work involved great risk. The fundamental training was carried out secretly in houses and in the bush. At one time a football field was used for demonstrating manoeuvres and how to place bombs on a target. Arms and explosives had to be manufactured and distributed. None of the command had ever received thorough military training as no African had ever been drafted into military service.

DECEMBER 16

On the evening of Saturday December the 16th 1961 the whole country was to reverberate from explosions, taking the whole country by surprise. The regime's natural response was to arrest anybody and everybody they suspected, like Mini and semi-blind old men, some of whom did not even believe that the ANC could be involved in 'terrorist' activities. The ECC (Eastern Cape Command) was not crippled. The following day after their release the Eastern Cape was rocked by explosions.

Coupled with all this work of pioneering the formation of MK, he was also actively involved in the work of the ANC and SACTU. But time was running out for him as the reign of terror was being intensified. The notorious special branch policeman Donald J Card was specially dispatched from East London to hunt and hound Mini. But it was becoming apparent that the fly was within. Mini was arrested and tried along with Wilson Khayingo and Zinakile Mkhamba. During the trial Mini displayed his heroism and courage. This was illustrated by Mini's refusal to give evidence against Wilton Mkwazi even though he was certain he would be executed. He refused to be reprieved at the expense of a fellow patriot, a comrade-in-arms.

His voice, his beliefs, his ideas still live on in his songs, in his work, in our history and shall continue to do so even beyond the attainment of freedom in South Africa.

His name shall be written in bold letters on the Roll of Honour.

HOW MK GREW

Bobby Pillay

I joined MK in 1961 when I was recruited into the Durban Central unit. We were four in our unit and my commander was Ebrahim Ismail. One of the first acts of sabotage we committed was blowing up an office of an Indian businessman who was closely collaborating with the enemy, namely A. Kadjee. Our charge was a fire-bomb made out of a mixture of petrol and oil. Unfortunately a guard spotted us and we had to retreat. We ran in different directions with the guard chasing us, blowing his whistle. Fortunately we were too fast for him and got away. We reassembled at an agreed spot and decided to still do something that night. We went to the Durban municipal bus depot, with the intention of burning a number of buses, but again to our disappointment the depot was well guarded.

Subsequently we went to the Durban Central Railway station, bought tickets to the Lower North Coast and boarded a train at about 2100hrs. Once inside the coach, two of us, (one later turned a state witness. He is in London now, David Perumal) took up strategic positions so as to keep guard just in case anything happened (we were still armed with the incendiary bomb which was in the possession of one comrade). I covered my face with a newspaper as if I was reading so passengers could not see me clearly. Suddenly I saw Ebrahim and the other comrade running out of the coach. The train was about to reach the first station and it was already braking. We also ran and the passengers realised that there was something amiss and began to panic. As the train was about to stop we jumped out of the still moving train, crossed an overhead bridge and disappeared. Subsequently, during our trial, we learned that the bomb was placed under the seat of an old black man. Thanks God it did not go off. It seems there was something wrong with the timing device. If one recollects now and look at what is happening today one would regard that as a soft target. At that time we were a bit adventurous. We wanted to act by all means that night whatever the cost. Fortunately the bomb did not go off otherwise the result would have been disastrous with serious conseque-



nces for the movement as this would have been a kind of terrorism. I think the judge when considering sentence realised that the regional command had not instructed our unit to carry out that act. The judge was convinced, and rightly so, that MK had always spared human lives. Our targets were government structures, powerlines, railway lines, etc.

We then planned once more to blow up the Kadjee building. It was late afternoon around 1700 hrs and this time we were making use of proper explosives. If I remember well we used either gelignite or dynamite. Our squad consisted of four, one was on guard while the other three carried out the act. It was a very successful operation. I walked past the office the following day and found the office totally smashed. The safe of the owner was also destroyed. There was a lot of publicity given to the destruction of this office by the forces of MK. On my way home (I was living in Cato Manor about 6-7Km out of town whilst the other comrades stayed within the city) I was stopped by the police. They demanded my identity and asked where I came from. I told them that I had gone to visit a friend. (I had pre-arranged with my friend that in the event of any eventuality he was to say I had been with him from early afternoon till late).

They took me to my friend's house, left me outside and inquired from my friend whether he knew me. He said of course he knew me and I was a good friend of his. On further ques-

tioning my friend convinced them that I was at his place for about 2-3 hours listening to music.

Our second operation was blowing the Victoria railway lines below the Victoria bridge. This was one of our major operations. We blew up three tracks and a signal box. Here again going home was a problem for me. It was very late at night and I had to catch a taxi and jump off at least 2 Km away from home and run home to be on time in case one came and asked what time I came home (I had told my mother earlier that in case the police asked what time I came home she was to say at nine). And indeed whilst I was asleep I heard a knock and as usual the police were there. They left after a brief questioning.

The next operation we carried out was unsuccessful using a pipe-bomb. Our engineering squad was experimenting with different forms of charges because we had difficulty getting material. We created this pipe-bomb using certain chemicals. We put this charge against an electric pole. The charge did not go off and the following morning when I passed the place I could still see the charge attached to the pole.

One of our (I personally was not involved) most dramatic acts of sabotage not only in Natal but the country as a whole was the destruction of the pylons in Montclear, New Germany and Sania. There were three very strategic pylons. The unit that carried out that operation was a select group consisting of Ebrahim Ismail, Billy Nair and the traitor Bruno Mtolo. What made this operation such a success was the proper co-ordination and timely reconnaissance, studying and intelligence work. The state also acknowledged this during our trial and came out with maps captured at Rivonia. Due to proper planning and intelligence gathering we practically put the whole of Durban and surrounding areas into darkness. The enemy did not expect that at that stage MK would be in a position to carry out such professional acts of sabotage. The following morning newspapers ran bold headlines about the presence of Cubans and Algerians in the country who carried out the act. What a joke it was to us.

We were given very rudimentary training and used basic

SAWING ELECTRIC PYLONS

chemicals to make timing devices. We did not use watches and modern electronic devices for timing. We merely used sulphuric and nitric acid and capsules. We were also not armed like MK is today. But we were already involved in the struggle and we knew the enemy. We were learning, and the enemy was also learning, learning from us, from the mistakes we were making. Eventually it was the passing of the ninety-day detention law and the Bruno Mtolo's that led to our capture. Many key members of the regional and district command broke under torture not only in our region but throughout the country. This led to a chain reaction and of course I was also rounded up on the 7th August 1963. They came to my working place, a restaurant where I was employed as a waiter. I had no chance of escaping, the back door was locked. The security branch led by Steenkamp who subsequently became a deputy commissioner of police detained me.

I was taken home and the place was thoroughly searched. Let me add that I had realised the dragnet was closing and although I had a passport I decided not to leave the country as I was not instructed by my command. Little did I know that the dragnet was also closing in our command which was set up at Kloof in Northern part of Durban after the Rivonia arrests and called Little Rivonia. I was heavily tortured and I realised the police had all the information which they obtained from other members of my squad and of course the traitor Bruno Mtolo. Our trial ran simultaneously with the Rivonia Trial and lasted for four months. There were 18 of us. The minimum sentence given was five years and the maximum was 20 years, given to Billy and Curnick who are out now and once again playing a prominent role in the UDF and trade unions. I got ten years and was released in 1974.

Finally the birth of MK was practically, in a very classical sense, the beginning of people's war. The very first phase of this form of struggle was initiated by the people themselves. Our organisation was inside, our base was inside and our rear was inside. Our strength was within the masses, the oppressed masses. This is how a people's army grows, this is how MK grew.

Comrade Andrew Masondo is the Director of the ANC Department of Manpower Development. A veteran of MK, he relates his role during the Sabotage Campaign.

The Sharpeville and Langa massacres in 1960 and the banning of the African National Congress created a new atmosphere amongst the people of South Africa and within the liberation movement. People began to question the concept of a non-violent struggle. There began sporadic acts of violence. Even liberal elements began to think of resorting to violence and consequently began to form an organisation committed to armed action, the African Resistance Movement (ARM).

Some members of the Congress Movement were attracted towards ARM. This was an indication of the impatience of the membership of the movement with the concept of non-violence in the midst of the brutality of the racist regime.

The idea of the movement moving away from its non-violent stance was discussed within youth circles even earlier than 1960. I remember that a group of us at Fort Hare actually formed a group to prepare for the eventuality of an armed struggle taking place.

We gave ourselves the task to gather information about military camps in the country. The group did not go far because we then lost contact as some left the country and others did not keep up the correspondence. One of the weaknesses of the group was that we were not a homogenous group ideologically. Therefore it is not surprising that the group died.

When Umkhonto we Sizwe announced itself, for me it was something I received with enthusiasm and envy because I was not a member of the founding group. I promised myself that I shall join Umkhonto we Sizwe as soon as I could find out how.

One day I discussed the whole question with Comrade Govan Mbeki. He told me that he was not very much interested in me joining Umkhonto we Sizwe because he had given me a task which he thought was as important. At that time I was working as a rural area organiser in the area from King Williams Town to Fort Beaufort.

In the Regional Rural Areas Committee I was working with people like Castro (Kati Maya), Vuyisile Mini. It was these two comrades with whom I was very close and both were active in Volunteer Corps that I expressed my desire to join Umkhonto we Sizwe and be involved in violent struggle. Though I did not know then that Mini was in the Regional Command.

It was not until October 1962 when Mini came back from the Lobatse Conference that he recruited me into Umkhonto we Sizwe. He reminded me that the two of us were in fact being indisciplined, going against the word of our Chief, Govan, who had advised against my joining Umkhonto we Sizwe. He then told me that my task was to create MK units and command them. I was not to involve myself in acts of sabotage. In spite of the oath to obey instructions of my senior commanders I once more defied another order.

I created three units in the Victoria East area and one in the Middledrift area. The Victoria East units consisted of one in Fort Hare, and two in Ntselamanzi. We used to act in all the units and acted with all of them.

I continued to do my work as an organiser in the rural areas. One of the burning questions at the time was the culling of stock and the rehabilitation scheme. The peasants were against this scheme. They were against the fencing of the land and the contouring of their fields. In Gaga one of the peasants ploughed against the contour lines and we had to go to court and fight his case.

One of our units was detailed to cut the fences and we did this consistently. The peasants were employed to build the fences and we agreed that they had no work. In this way we organised the peasants and developed a powerful movement of peasants.

OBSTACLES

One of the obstacles we faced was lack of explosives

I could not get explosive chemicals from the university because they were guarded closely. We started to reconnoitre the pillboxes that were found in the quarries.

One day we left Alice for Debe Nek where there was a quarry and decided to go and break the pillbox to get dynamite. We sent one of our comrades in KwaNgwenya to reconnoitre the place. He gave us the information that the pillbox was the usual one made of planks. This was false because when we reached the target we found that it was steel and we could not open it. We had taken a risk and had travelled the distance for nothing. While we had no explosives we busied ourselves with cutting telephone wires. This we did every week.

We were very close with the students in Lovedale Institution because we had an ANC branch there. We kept on hearing that one of the teachers was playing a foul game against the students who were political. They kept on saying we must do something about him. I was not happy about these reports and told my two comrades, Rex Lupondwana and Relu that I am not sure if the reports were true.

One day one of the African Special Branch told me that this teacher was working for the enemy. Even then I was not convinced, until one day when I had gone to a meeting in the mountains with the peasants at night and I was passing through the town I saw the SB's car and I hid myself. To my surprise I saw this teacher with the white Special Branch.

We then decided to petrol bomb him. We prepared our bottles. It was myself, Rex and Relu. We then threw the bottles through the window. Unfortunately when Rex threw his bottle he held it with a hankie which had his name. The following day he was picked up with Relu. Relu had a good alibi. Rex was then arrested but he never squealed against us. We got him a good lawyer and he was sentenced to 5 years. This was in December 1962.

ELECTRIC PYLONS

The fact that we had no explosives was frustrating us because we wanted to blow some electric pylons. One day whilst travelling by car from East London to Alice we noted that some pylons were made of wood. This gave me an idea of



Andrew Masondo

how we should deal with the pylons. I then checked on the information about the grid and how the switches work. It became clear to me that we could saw the pylons and pull them down. I also found that if there is a cut the switches go off and that if we chose a good pylon we could affect a big area.

I then instructed one of the comrades from Ntselamanzi to reconnoitre a particular pylon I had spotted as one on a junction to a number of lines. I instructed him to check the place day and night to check on traffic.

During this period I went to Port Elizabeth to consult with the Regional Command. I used to do so periodically to give reports and get instructions. It was during these times that I made acquaintance with Wilson Kayingo and Zinakile Mkaba. My immediate contact was Koli-sile Mdwai, who sold out later.

One day Mdwai told me that we should go to Peter in the Red Location (New Brighton) to make arrangements to get a 303 rifle so that in the evening we could practise how to use it. We went and then in the evening we went to Peter by car driven by one comrade. We took the rifle and on the way we picked up comrade Mkaba and went to the house of the driver's brother who was away with the family. Mkaba was the instructor.

Mdwai and I were in front of him. He showed us how to load and cock. He was demonstrating how to balance the rifle for shooting. The rifle was pointing in our direction. He then pulled the trigger thinking that there was no bullet in the chamber. The next moment we heard a

loud shot just above Mdwai's head. It is a pity he did not hit him because if he did maybe he, Khayingo and Mini would be still alive. It was Mdwai who sold them. We left the house quickly.

Later we sent one of our comrades to plaster the hole in the wall. He did not take the bullet out. He also painted the wall. After I had been arrested Mdwai took the police to Peter to get the rifles, but fortunately Peter denied knowledge and when the police searched they did not get the rifles, because he had shifted them. Then Mdwai took the police to the house and they dug the hole and found the bullet. Mdwai said it was Peter who did that. Peter was not even there that night but he got 20 years for it.

Whilst I was in Port Elizabeth we had discussed the elimination of one of the Bantustan leaders who would be coming to Fort Hare in April 1963. In February 1963 Mdwai was sent to bring me a pistol to do the job. He brought the pistol. Fortunately for me I was arrested in March 1963. He would have sold me out if I had done the job as he sold out the other comrades we worked with.

Middle of February 1963 I asked the comrade I had sent to reconnoitre the pylon to report as we wanted to do the job the very week. He had no report. I then told him we were no longer going to do the job. Instead I did the reconnaissance myself and decided to use the new unit I had formed at the University.

It was a unit consisting of four, and comrade Nelson Dick who came from Ntselamanzi but was not at the university. This man was my best comrade. The two of us were involved with all the units. He was brave and I trusted him.

The two comrades from the university were Vakala and Mdingi. I arranged with Nelson to prepare the tools for sawing the pylon, and he was to meet me in the evening at 20h00. I told the other comrades to come to my house at 19h00.

The comrades came at 19h00. When we were preparing to go out, we went to the gate and I then said to them that I had an uneasy feeling and therefore the job had to be dropped. We went back to the house. At 19h30 it began to rain. I then told them we had to go because

the weather was good for the job.

We then left and at 20h00 we reached the spot where I said we would meet Nelson but he was not there. So we crossed the river and went to his place. We found him and started our journey which was a mile from Fort Hare.

I had a pistol, a .22 Browning, which Nelson and I had bought, for \$5 from a friend, who said he had dug it out of his garden. It was rusted and had no part which was moving. We then oiled it for some time and ultimately we got it working. To our happiness when we took out the magazine it had six bullets.

When we reached the spot

When the friend with the shoes left he was intercepted. They took the shoes and told him not to tell me and he did likewise. The next mistake I made was not to wash the jersey I had on. We washed everything except that jersey. We left it in the bathroom.

Unfortunately I also had some documents which were incriminating. I had the Freedom Charter, Ten Point programme and the PAC basic document. I was making a comparative study. I also had Guerrilla Warfare by Che Guavara, the April Thesis by Lenin and 2 boxes of Mandela's Speech in court. I had distributed two boxes and was going to send these two boxes to East London. Before I left for the job I had said that the following day I

We were charged and three of us were sentenced. I got 12 years, Nelson 9 and Mdingi 8. Vakala was discharged. Then in 1965 I was charged again for furthering the aims of the ANC, membership of the ANC and soliciting funds for the ANC. The charge for furthering the aims of the ANC was withdrawn and I got one year for membership and 2 years for soliciting funds. The two years ran concurrently with the twelve years. I therefore served 13 years on Robben Island.

During the second trial a comrade who was part of our MK servicing unit gave evidence against me. It was a pity because he was very useful to me. He used to work at the post office and could get all parcels ad-



we started to work on the pylon. We sawed the pole, and then pushed it. When the cables broke the air was electrified and we fell. We woke up and started running. One of the cables had landed on Nelson's thigh and burnt him but because of the situation he ran with us, feeling the pain. After reaching my house we all dispersed. We had been working in the rain and we were wet and muddy.

Then my wife told me that the police were there at home. I then gave one of my friends who were occupying my servant's quarters my shoes to take to another worker friend of mine. This was a mistake because when the police left because of the darkness caused by our operation they left a policeman three houses from mine to observe.

would take this material to the places where I used to keep it. This was another mistake. I should have cleaned before I left.

The comrade who did not fulfil his task of reconnoitring did us a great deal of harm because we would have acted a week before.

The police had said I should go to the police station to sign for the documents. The following day I went. They asked me where I had been, I told them it was not their business. They then made me sign and left me. It was on a Sunday. On Monday at about 16h00 the sabotage squad led by Donald Card came to the house, searched and found the jersey with the wood chips. I was arrested. Then later my

dressed to me in my many pseudonyms. The member of our unit who did not do his work and thus caused our arrest also gave evidence.

I shall always salute the late Rex. He died on his way to Lesotho in a car accident. When I was in Umlazi he was on his way to see me when he was involved in a car accident that killed his fiancée. I dip my revolutionary cap to my comrades who went to the gallows singing, Mini, Mkaba and Kayingo.



The sabotage campaign

JOE SLOVO

The launching of MK and the sabotage phase which followed up to 1963 is a distinct stage in the development of MK. First of all it was the formative period with the basic purpose of the sabotage campaign which was undertaken being to make a break, in revolutionary practice, with the previous half-century of non-violent politics.

Non-violence had quite deep roots in the movement as a whole and it was necessary to demonstrate on the ground that a new phase had been embarked upon. We must remember that, initially at any rate, Umkhonto We Sizwe was not proclaimed as the wing of the liberation movement be it the ANC or any other body. When MK was formed it was decided to project it initially as an independent military body which would announce that it was acting in support of the liberation movement.

That was deliberate and there were a number of legal reasons for it. One of the political, ideological and organisational reasons for it was that we had just emerged from a phase when the whole congress movement had not officially broken with old policies. Some sectors of the alliance like the Indian Congress were very deeply committed to approaches of defiance rather than active aggression. To make an open break with the past therefore was one of the purposes of that phase.

TARGETS CHOSEN

The nature of targets chosen had a specific meaning. At that stage it was deliberately decided to go in for rather low scale kind of objectives. The proclamation (MK Manifesto-ed) which accompanied the opening of the sabotage campaign contained in it an appeal to the authorities which in effect said to them: *We are demonstrating what we can do and will grow and escalate. This is just the beginning, a mild beginning. It is not yet too late to change course and there may yet be still time for reason to break through.*

Nobody in their wild imaginings dreamt that one could actually overthrow the regime or bring about a revolution through overturning a few pylons and

putting some rather weak homemade explosives in relatively innocuous targets. Politically they were effective blows but innocuous from the point of view of the kind of target one thinks of in terms of hurting the enemy and his personnel.

We attacked the symbols of the economy like pylons, symbols of oppression like pass offices, and making sure that it was all done at night so that nobody would be injured. Not taking life at that stage was also a deliberate approach. It fitted in with the whole nature of this beginning.

The response of the regime was increased repression. It was clear to all and we had demonstrated to the movement and to the leadership elements which were in doubt that there was no way forward short of preparing for effective escalation of revolutionary violence. And, as matter of historic record, it is clear that we were not ready organisationally to take the counter offensive which was eventually launched against all levels of the movement. It is also a matter of historic record that Rivonia occurred and in the few years following Rivonia all the heroic efforts made by the movement to reconstitute in the underground failed. And for all practical purposes the internal movement as an organised structure had been destroyed.

FORESIGHT

Fortunately there was a certain degree of foresight during that period of rather low level of military activity, i.e. the sabotage campaign. When it became clear towards the middle of that campaign that it was necessary to prepare for a long term build up of a real people's army, a large part of the energy of the High Command and its structures was then devoted to sending out of the country a contingent of many hundreds of experienced political cadres at all levels who were subsequently trained in the art of guerrilla warfare and military struggle.

THE HIGH COMMAND AND THE OPERATION MAYIBUYE

To constitute the High Command the ANC appointed Mandela and the Party appointed me. We were instructed by both

bodies to make recommendations about the balance of the members of the High Command, which we did and it was endorsed. We were then given the mandate to proceed to create MK structures in all the main regions. Regional commands were established in the main urban centres, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London.

Initially the command consisted of Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Mlangeni and Mhlaba. Joe Modise was put onto it later, before he left the country. Kathrada, Goldreich and Goldberg were involved as auxiliaries and were part of the Johannesburg Regional Command together with Hodgson and Motsoaledi. This high command produced a document called 'Operation Mayibuye', which was discussed both by the ANC and the Party. Basically its purpose was to plan for the return of the people who had been sent out to be trained as guerrillas and simultaneously to prepare politically for their return to the country.

The whole country was divided into a number of operational regions. Political organisers for each region were to be employed immediately so that structures would be prepared. At the same time a political campaign was to be prepared to coincide with the return of this trained personnel to the various parts of the country. We had a rather euphoric expectation of what the African states would be prepared to do for us. We thought they could even provide aeroplanes to drop our personnel. We were a little naive.

This is the point where I left the country. A meeting of both the ANC and the Party, having examined 'Operation Mayibuye' and having in principle adopted its main guidelines but still having to discuss details of the implementation, decided that it was urgent that this plan be taken to the external mission of the ANC so that our needs could be discussed further with the African governments. It was decided to send me and JB Marks with 'Operation Mayibuye'.

We met Tambo and the whole leadership of the external mission and discussed with them the contents of 'Operation Mayibuye'. Steps to send missions to Algeria and other places with the pur-

pose of establishing what was possible and what was not were immediately taken. Within about six weeks of my arrival there (I was due to go back with the answers and to then continue functioning underground), while awaiting for these missions to come back, Rivonia occurred. It became virtually useless to attempt to implement 'Operation Mayibuye' because of the destruction which had occurred.

Internally we had decided on a very extensive programme of beginning to manufacture our own equipment inside the country in preparation for the implementation of 'Operation Mayibuye'. Denis Goldberg was in charge of that aspect of the work. We had a programme for the manufacture of 50 000 hand-grenades. We had a way of doing it successfully, using local material. But of course everything fell by the way as a result of the Rivonia arrests.

POST MORTEM

I always say that looking back on a situation is easier than looking forward to it, because when you look back on it you know things that people in that situation did not know, which were still ahead of them. There were a number of factors which influenced the rather inexperienced approaches to aspects of what we had to do. First of all an important factor was our misassessment of the situation. We were still working on the approach that the enemy security apparatus was what we knew in the fifties. We did not sufficiently realise that the beginnings of armed struggle would lead to the very steps which the enemy took. The enemy sent out specialists for training in Algeria, the United States, from the North Korea war, Vietnam etc. They came back and completely refashioned the security apparatus. However firm the old type of policemen like Spengler were, they were not torturers.

Not only did they create a new force but they also began to legislate for new techniques. In a sense up to about 1960/61 the underground struggle was fought on a gentlemanly terrain. There was still a rule of law. You had a fair trial in their courts. Nobody could be kept in isolation. Up to 1963 I know of no incident of any political prisoner being tortured. The whole legal structure which existed lulled us into feeling that we could

do much more than we eventually discovered we could. We underestimated the potential for the growth in viciousness of the enemy security apparatus and the fact that the counter revolution learns from the revolution.

We, of course, made many wrong estimations of what could be done. Rivonia too, looking back on it, was bound to be discovered and destroyed. For an example, people like me were in Rivonia three times every day, moving from my chambers. Same with Bram Fischer and others. People who came to see the leadership from other parts of the country were taken to Rivonia. And this in a way was also determined partly by the contempt in which we held the enemy.

This euphoria was influenced

by facts like: the Communist Party was made illegal in 1950. Between 1950 and 1963 there was not a single communist or sympathiser convicted of participating in the underground. True, we had not engaged in public propaganda but our existence was known. All of us were both in the Party and the ANC, from the early 50's onwards. We had been banned and subjected to all kinds of restrictions. Yet we committed three crimes every single day of our lives: attending meetings, leaving the area you were prevented from leaving except with permission, etc. and we were hardly ever caught. The point I am trying to make is that we had a decade where the weakness of the other side lulled us into a feeling that we could do much more than in fact we were able to do later.

MK IS BORN

STEVE TSHWETE

The banning of the African National Congress in 1960 closed the chapter of "legal" non-violent struggle against the fascist clique in Pretoria. Throughout the country the pertinent question in the minds of the oppressed South Africans was what was to be done now that the vanguard of the national democratic struggle had been banned without the demands of the oppressed and exploited being met. It was a legitimate question by the majority of our people who had seen the ANC amassing strength and generating tremors of fear and panic within the ruling classes in our country.

There were views that the struggle could still be prosecuted and led by the same movement under a different name. But such a conception would have presupposed a smothering of the revolutionary demands and aims of the movement. It would also have meant a deep-going revision of our entire tactical approach to a struggle whose mass character could not be jettisoned for purposes of protecting legality.

At the same time there was the more popular idea that somehow some other methods of struggle other than "legal" should be pursued for the realisation of the freedoms enshrined in the Freedom Charter.

At that level - i.e. the masses' own understanding of the situation - there could, of course, be no precise stipulation or identification of these "other methods of struggle". Understandably so, if one takes into account the fact that at that time the reality of armed struggle still remained a strange concept to the whole of the sub-continent.

But the very idea itself of the exploration of other means and ways by which liberation could be attained was an important signal for the democratic movement spearheaded by the ANC. It was a vindication of the correctness of our strategy and tactics in just over 48 years of legal political agitation, i.e. taking the masses along with us every inch of the way and getting them to say, with their own vanguard organisation; "*Here we stood and here we fell. Here we retreated and here we still fell, so let's go forward and fall marching forward*".

For in the absence of that frame of mind, in a situation where the biggest majority of the people feel that other methods other than revolutionary violence could still be explored, the prospects of armed struggle cannot auger well. In our case, we plodded with the masses all the way right up to the All-

in-Africa Conference in Pietermaritzburg in 1961 where the oppressed people of our country chanted the clarion call to action against the fascists: "No ba kubi siyaya enkululekweni - Even if it is hard we are getting to freedom". Nothing had changed in their conditions of existence!

They had seen the Langa and Sharpeville massacres, they had gone through the state of emergency and experienced the intensification of savage oppression and brutal exploitation in a country which refused to see them as human beings.

So, when on the 16th of December 25 years ago explosive devices were detonated in major cities and towns of the country excitement leapt heavens high.

"Is it possible?" "Yes, it is. We have done it. We have proved the point that the African is not inferior" "A bomb by an African?" "Yes. You must go and see the post office".

This type of whispered conversations one would come across in trains and buses, even in sheebens. A tremendous achievement by MK within hours of its birth. It did not only raise hopes in the hearts of millions of admirers, but also instilled confidence in their own ability to liberate themselves. It blasted to smithereens the myth that by reason of our colour and race we were fatally confined to the knob-kierie and the assegai. The African can do it. MK became the apple of our people's eye. They just loved it.

I remember one instance when one old man was reminiscing to me along these lines: "You see, my boy!" he pulled his grizzled white beard. "The name of this army is fantastic. In the olden days in our traditional society we would take the spear in defence of our very existence as people. Even when things start going wrong within a given family, we would take the spear and go to the kraal to propitiate the ancestors. And things would go right. No more cattle giving birth to still-born calves or makotis (newly weds) breaking their legs. That is the effect of Umkhonto, my boy. It is a fitting name and I am sure that we are going to get what we have set ourselves".

He took his tobacco pouch made of goat skin, tottered towards the kraal and there urinated in an obviously agitated frame of mind. He has since passed away, but I remember

his words when puppet Sebe named his so-called crack military unit Ikrele leSizwe - Sword of the nation. And I laughed when I remembered that the instrument in our whole way of life, that it is to-day associated with tsotsism and thuggery. But not MK. It is our people's army for the express purpose of correcting the ills in that society and defending the health of a post-apartheid South Africa.

RECEPTION

But the reception of the new child was not homogeneous. As we have just said, the oppressed and exploited South Africans blessed the baby and even showered it with adoring nicknames. On the other hand the privileged white clique sneered, jeered and cursed. The birth of the child was a nuisance to their God-ordained orderly life. It was an expression once again of the barbaric character of a savage race of infidels. "Maar julle kan nie ver gaan nie, Koos, ek se vir jou. Ons sal die donor se kaffirs vlinters slaan. Nie daar die kak hier so nie".

A typical drinking mutual reassurance among Afrikaners in cheap pubs and other drinking sports. In no way very much different about the foregoing type of gossip about MK in its early days, one would read high pitched speeches by prominent ruling class spokespersons about the capability of Africans ever waging a successful armed struggle against the "baas". "Daar is niks van daardie soort. Waar het jy sien 'n kaffir skiet?"

They were obviously attaching racist connotations to the entire notion of armed struggle as conducted by black people. That is why they desperately tried to convince their followers that Moscow was practically involved in the sabotage campaign. We did not care what they said and thought about MK. In due course, the nature of our own operations would demonstrate that this was a popular disciplined army, and not a mercenary assortment of thugs who have no respect for human life which does not belong to the "mense".

DISCIPLINE

The men and women who were recruited to the ranks of MK thus became an embodiment in concrete form of revolutionary discipline, that peculiar blend of discipline which is

inspired by one's love for his country and the people to be liberated. Oh, yes, that preparedness to lay down one's own life so that others might live. They so treasured life that they were prepared to lose theirs to ensure others of theirs. Invariably they were the physical representation of the spirit of no-surrender, the sort of attitude of mind that is characteristic of the main core of MK combatants and the young lions in our township streets today.

"DIE ALONE"

When it came to how one should deal with the police in the event of arrest, the slogan was "die alone". Under no circumstances were you expected to reveal the positions of the underground. If the degree of torture had become so intense that you could no longer take it, the way out was to implicate yourself and nobody else. The underground was not there for one to trade to the Boers for one's escape from the cells.

There were lapses here and there, and some in commanding sectors of the underground. But it was only almost after two years that the fascists were able to root us out with the help of those of us who had succumbed. But even those who broke under torture knew perfectly well that they had betrayed the people's army and compromised the revolutionary aims of the ANC by such actions.

The way our people are hostile to informers and traitors today in the conditions of ungovernability reminds one of the early days of MK. Hatred for an informer, an enemy agent and collaborators is a reflection of a high degree of political consciousness. There can be no justification for one crossing over to the enemy for fear of physical death when one is already dead spiritually by the very thought of giving in to the enemy. The early combatants knew this moral. And for those who would not abide by it the option was there to stay at home and play with the cat.

The police knew it, too. I remember an instance when one cadre was told by one of the most notorious torturers: "Look here! I used to understand the old Congress of Luthuli, not this thing of Mandela. This is not an organisation but a bloody f--- army. You are therefore a soldier and I am going to bliksem you like is done to a captured soldier".

The policeman, true to type in all places of reaction everywhere in the world failed to read the new signs. He did not realise that changed circumstances demanded changed methods of struggle. But it was important and very significant for our movement and our entire people that he acknowledged the fact that MK was an army. In so far as treatment of captured combatants was concerned we do not share his sentiments nor do we expect mercy from him since it was by no accident that one found oneself in the ranks of the people's army.

DISCIPLINE

Revolutionary discipline also manifested itself in the selection of targets for assault. The point was made abundantly clear to all and sundry that loss of human life should be avoided by all means possible. It took a leadership to make such a directive in a situation where a particular racial group has taken it upon itself to carry out an obviously genocidal campaign against another racial group. In such a situation of racial arrogance and brutality as one finds in South Africa where every single deprivation that befalls a black person is generated from the white clique camp, it is even more difficult.

But the ANC has never even dreamt about the possibility of abandoning its principled and scientific approach to the problem facing our country. It has always resisted the temptation of seeing the whites as a homogeneous satanic grouping and the blacks as an equally homogeneous but upright entity. This perspective had to filter down every command structure of the young MK.

I am not aware of any liberation army having to exercise such restraint in such outrageous conditions of racial oppression and exploitation, where every white person is virtually a licence bearer to kill and maim in the interests of so-called western civilisation. When we look back over our shoulders and see how twenty-five years of restraint and ordered control have dealt such telling blows within the white ruling classes in apartheid South Africa, we cannot but beat our breast with pride and look forward to a bright future for all South Africans - black and white.

Post Offices, power lines and stations, railway installations and

all structures that are an expression of that satanic system called apartheid had to be blasted and set ablaze. And dynamite and fire were exceptionally good messengers in conveying to the white reactionary clique that the ANC and the oppressed people of our country had now entered a new phase of armed struggle. The sort of good life that they enjoy by their villification of our own life had to be terminated forthwith. For too long they had been lotting on the lap of luxury and privilege while our people were sweating blood in the gold mines and potato fields of the Transvaal. The young MK had just to knock them in the nose and this it did with tremendous effect for an organisation whose combatants could only be afforded just the very elementary skills in the art of this type of warfare.

There was no question of a "rear" base. Tanzania and Ghana were thousands of miles away. The young MK base was an empty room in a residence in the township, suburb or somewhere along a bushy river bank. In a word our own people became the base. Similarly with logistical resources! The young MK relied on resources inside the country - and these were and are still galore - loving South Africans had to come up and give what they were able to acquire to boost the striking capacity of the young people's army. Anything - including an ordinary carpenter's saw - that could help bring down a pylon, dislodge a rail line or set on fire a pass office was welcome in the MK armoury.

It did, of course, happen that in certain regions the directive to spare human life was flouted. This was particularly the case in the Border and Eastern Cape regions where houses of collaborators and informers were attacked with resultant loss of life. This should not, however, be seen as an instance of indiscipline. Rather it should be looked at against the background of enemy reactionary activity in this part of the country.

The Verwoerd regime had just started its course of setting up what today are the so-called independent homelands. Transkei's Matanzima had become their blue-eye boy and as such had the task to do his master's dirty work - to become the grease-boy of the machinery of fragmentation, oppression and exploitation.

To give some veneer of reality to the concept of a "free" bantustan he started working energetically in East London where a long line of "ambassadors" representing all the reactionary chiefs in the Transkei was set up. This sort of divisive arrangement had not yet been introduced to this extent in other areas of our country. The peculiarity of a "free" homeland was still an exclusive experience of this part of the country.

And were the white people so happy with it! They never even bothered to think about the prophetic observation by one Comrade Zanzolo in the African Communist that "independence and freedom are such dynamic concepts in the continent of Africa today that whosoever tries with them is playing with fire". (Quotation remember. It might not be exact). "Yes", they would say, quite happy with themselves, "you are going to rule yourself in your own country away from the baas".

The people were very angry with this sort of tom-foolery. The people had never seen Matanzima as belonging to them. He had been persecuting them all along the line for their refusal to be alienated from what historically and naturally belongs to them. He had burnt down their kraals and extorted taxes from them to finance his brutal schemes. They hated him and they detested his ambassador henchmen who had made life difficult for them once back at home in the Transkei from the city.

The young MK command structures in the area found themselves caught up in this situation. What should they do? Should they allow Matanzima to build up bases and divert those thousands of ANC and MK supporters by force into the Verwoerd camp? They were certainly proud of the image of the democratic movement in the area and out of conviction were tempted to believe, quite correctly, that blasting a Matanzima is not that much different from blasting a pass office.

These slight departures apart, I want to say that the performance of the young MK between 1961 and 1963 was exceptionally good. It took a considerable period of time before the fascists could unravel our underground structures in spite of the close

frequency in our operations. Draconian legislation, which allowed for indefinite detention in their torture chambers, had to be introduced to crack the pioneering combatants. They were tough, and the new skills they had acquired inside the country under the nose of the enemy inspired them throughout their operational life. Some died under torture, refusing to part with any information that could compromise the revolutionary movement they so dearly loved. Others had to leave the country for more advanced training whilst a few broke down and sold out.

There were no pitched battles against the enemy personnel. But demolition work by means of explosives at hand was the major thrust and this was quite successful in the major regions such as Natal, the Transvaal, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. There were very few cases in which comrades were caught in the act. This can be attributed to the high sense of secrecy, vigilance and discipline. These attributes themselves were historically acquired because most of the cadres who manned the underground command structures were drawn, in the main, from the ranks of people who were members of the movement before and after the ban. So that underground unit work was not something strange to them.

Combat readiness was also yet another tenet that was uncompromisingly taught to all members. When you go to bed you must not think that the day has ended. You could be called to duty any time of the day, which meant that you had to remain sober all the time. Drunkenness was never to be countenanced.

At the same time, if you had to be away from home at a particular point in time, then your immediate command had to know where you could be found.

Besides discipline, vigilance and secrecy, organisation had thus become one other important factor in the early days of this invincible people's army. Even personal organisation. Your own family programme had to be made to fit the movement one and not vice versa.

It is on the basis of all these points that one can safely conclude that the 1961-63 operational period was quite good and with more propitious time at its disposal the young MK would have messed up the Boer regime.

JOE SLOVO

Magagula

How does one begin to write a profile on Joe Slovo? He has been operating in underground conditions for the last thirty-six years. These have not been ordinary years in the history of our struggle. They have been and continue to be pregnant with the hazards of torture, detentions, assassinations, massacres and executions. Yet this has been a period which has witnessed the gathering of revolutionary storms and hurricanes in our country. In this heroic period, Joe Slovo has found himself in perfect relation with both great men and events. It is said that great people fly best and easiest in the hurricane.

Of course, Joe Slovo is not marching alone in this great journey. He is together with the best sons and daughters of our motherland. No single important event in South Africa can be attributed to him alone but one can be sure to always find his well defined footprints in the thorny path that has been and continues to be walked by so many of our oppressed people.

For obvious reasons one cannot write a complete profile on a man who has played a leading role in the formulation, planning and execution of almost all the telling blows against our common enemy. There will come a day when we shall be able to do this.

SMEAR CAMPAIGN

If there is any leader of the African National Congress and indeed the South African National Liberation Movement as a whole who has been singled out and targetted for a smear campaign by the enemy in all its shades, it is Joe Slovo. These have varied from the South African racist regime and their international allies, the Pan Africanist Congress, the Group of Eight and the backward elements within the black consciousness movement on the one hand and the ultra leftists on the other. He has been called by various names; "a KGB Colonel who has infiltrated the ANC on behalf of Moscow, public enemy number one, an assassin, a hard core terrorist, a hooligan etc."

If the enemy believed that

by applying these slanderous techniques it would be able to distance and isolate Joe Slovo from our people, history has proved it fatally wrong. Joe Slovo has become a household name among our people. Schools and parks in the black ghettos have been defiantly named after him. Songs like 'USlovo noTambo amakhomando' have become a permanent feature among the revolutionary ranks. Among his fellow comrades in Umkhonto We Sizwe he is simply and affectionately known as OUR ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF.

Sometimes when people are showered with these praises they begin to develop a cancer of personality cult. But Joe Slovo's political clarity and his sincere belief in the might of our people as the true makers of history has made him to rise above this fatal disease. Perhaps this is a unique feature of the ANC.

He has remained as modest as ever though he can be very persistent and vigorous in pushing across his point when he believes he is correct. Anyway modesty can be a sign of immodesty. Over the years he has developed an extraordinary quality of listening to the views of others no matter what rank one holds. He is truly an independent person. Of course, he does not swallow everything. In fact his interventions can be as sharp and penetrating as a fish bone.

In Dar-es-Salaam I once asked Comrade Violet Weinberg when she first knew Joe Slovo. She replied me with these simple words: "I knew him as a young boy selling newspapers. Did you think he has never been a young boy?" Then I knew why he is so humble and humane. He rose from the ranks and he understands the problems of the rank and file. When you come to him even with a personal problem he tries his best to help solve it. He will never say 'I do not have time for it.' He is extremely approachable and sensitive to problems that concern the revolution. This is one of the qualities of a real leader.

Let us briefly look at his humble growth and development. Joe Slovo was born sixty years ago in Lithuania in the Soviet Union. He immigrated to South Africa with his parents at the

age of nine. He has never been officially naturalised for when he applied for this it was rejected on political grounds. Of course, Joe Slovo was not applying to be part of the racist clique but part of the patriotic forces of our country. He has been duly naturalised by the fighting forces of South Africa.

At the age of sixteen he threw himself into a new course of life - a course of struggle which has become the essence and meaning of his life. He became a member and a shop steward of the National Union of Distributive Workers. Thus his ideas and actions from the very beginning were forged and fused with those of the working class even though perhaps at that time it was still a class in itself. As a non-racialist he could understand even at that time that no section of the working class can boast of freedom when the other remains oppressed.

Naturally his cherished idea of the power of the working class led him to its highest form of organisation - the Communist Party of South Africa.

WORLD WAR 2

Then the period of the Second World War was ushered in by Hitler's barbarous attacks against most European nations. Joe Slovo as an internationalist saw war in Italy. He was inspired by the fact that the Italians who formed the backbone of the anti-Hitler Mussolini Axis in Italy were organised and led by the underground Communist Party of Italy. He must have known that the burden of the war was being shouldered by the Soviet Union whose citizens lost nine lives every minute of the war. This was to him a lesson of how far a socialist country can sacrifice for world peace. It must have also occurred to him that one day there will come a time when the South African patriots will take up arms against South African fascism whose seeds were already germinating.

Ironically, three years after the defeat of fascism in Europe a fascist party in South Africa - the Nationalist Party - assumed office. Not that before this the patriotic forces had been spared of victimisation, but this event exacerbated repression in South Africa to an unprecedented level.

The first act of the Nationalist Party was to ban the CPSA under the notorious Suppression of Communism Act. This in fact was the beginning of a string of

bannings of all those who opposed apartheid. This situation did not find Joe Slovo wanting. Involvement in the political struggle and experience of the war had prepared him and his colleagues to fight through these obstacles. By this time Joe had risen in the Party ranks to become a member of the Party District Committee of Johannesburg - the industrial heart of South Africa.

In spite of all these problems the National Liberation Movement led by the African National Congress grew in leaps and bounds. Joe Slovo, having practical experience of the importance of the National Liberation Front in fighting fascism, played no lesser part in this endeavour. This was a period of mass campaigns.

Joe Slovo was one of those who did not see the banning of the Party and the suppression of the revolutionary forces as an excuse for passivity. To him this meant further consolidating the ties and links with the masses. He was one of those who played a leading role in organising for the People's Congress in 1955 which adopted the Freedom Charter. He was one of the accused in the 1956 Treason Trial, and used his skills and profession as lawyer to defend his colleagues.

By 1961 the racists had closed all avenues for peaceful struggle by banning the ANC. No leadership worth its salt could abandon the struggle and leave our people in perpetual servitude. The way forward had to be found. On December 16, 1961 Umkhonto We Sizwe was formed. From the very beginning Joe Slovo played a vital role in the building of MK. He worked closely with our first Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela.

On his way to exile he went with that outstanding leader of the South African revolution the late Chairman of the SACP and veteran member of the NEC of the ANC Uncle JB Marks. By coincidence on their way from Francistown to Dar-es-Salaam they met Samora Machel and Peter Nanyemba of FRELIMO and SWAPO respectively. They were stranded and asked if there was no space in the chartered Dakota plane. Two of our comrades remained behind to provide space for them. These two men played leading roles in the liberation of our sub-continent. Unfortunately both of these great giants left us

in different accidents at a time when our region is yearning for their steadfastness and farsightedness. But they have planted the seeds of genuine peace, a lasting peace that can only be a product of stern struggle for the total liberation of our sub-continent.

Under the harsh conditions of exile Joe has played a vital role to once more build bridges for our people. It can be justly said that when you see our people rising up in their multitudes against the enemy and moving from ungovernability to people's power today, Joe Slovo did and continue to play more than his share in this revolutionary task.

It is not surprising why Slovo occupies so many responsible positions in our movement. He was a member of the REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. Today he has risen in the ranks of MK to become its Chief-of-Staff. He is also a member of the Politico-Military Council and the National Executive Committee of the ANC while at the same time serving as Chairman of the SACP. He finds no contradiction in serving the ANC as loyally as he serves the Party. Over the years he has fully grasped the fact that true patriotism and proletarian internationalism are not mutually exclusive and repulsive but reinforce one another. He is one of the patriots who have built the unconquerable alliance between the ANC and SACP. He always insists that true liberation does not only consist in the hoisting of a new flag and the singing of a new national anthem.

As an army Chief-of-Staff he is playing a vital role in the actions of MK combatants inside the country and the building of our army among our people. He has articulated many politico-military concepts. As an army man he is cut in the model of Marshal Vorishilov, one of the first marshals of the Soviet Union who used to insist on personal inspection on even the finest detail of military preparedness of the army. A great optimist yet an arch-enemy of demagogy and rhetoric.

It is often said a chief-of-staff is a dynamo, an engine of his military unit. Joe Slovo is a well-oiled engine of Umkhonto We Sizwe. This is the man who has helped to forge and build our military organisation upon whose bayonets the fate of the South African Revolution depends.

WASHINGTON MPUMELELO BONCO

- STEVE TSHWETE

BORN in Mount Coke, a small village on the outskirts of King Williams Town, Wellington Bongco is one of the most outstanding fighters the National Liberation Movement has ever produced.

He was never much to school, only up to standard four or so. He worked hard to build the African National Congress during the 'roaring fifties'. In the Trade Union field he devoted all his energies towards founding and building a strong SACTU branch in East London. He worked closely with Masiza who died serving a twenty year prison term in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Masiza, a member of the Luthuli Detachment of MK, was captured in action in Rhodesia during the 1967/68 Wankie/Sipolilo campaigns.

REGIONAL COMMANDER

Bongco was the Border Regional Commander of MK. He was arrested several times during his life of political activity in the ANC, and was a true embodiment of the principle of 'no surrender' and the idea of 'die alone!'. He was foremost in the preaching of his particular concept. "You must never reveal anybody with whom you are working to the enemy, and if you are tortured to a point where you can no longer hold out, then the best you can say is about yourself. Never involve the next man in it". That is what he used to say. A very energetic man he was. I grew up under his tutelage in a sense.

Bongco would work overtime, right through the night and in all sorts of weather. His dedication to Congress work cost him loss of his job and had a telling effect on his health. Once he contracted TB and had to be hospitalised but he stuck to his work as the MK commander in the region. At times he had to escape from hospital to carry out personally certain MK operations. All this was revealed during his trial. We close as we were to him, did not know about some of his escapades. It is the people who turned against him and gave evidence in court who revealed all these things, and he did not deny a single one of them. He told the court that he had to do all these things for the liberation of his country and people.

He was arrested in March 1963 and was heavily assaulted by the police. When they released him (it was before the major swoop in the Border region in June and subsequent months) they were just escaping responsibility of him dying in their hands. When I paid him a visit at Frere Hospital where he was admitted from the cells I was frightened. It was my first time to see a man assaulted and tortured to that degree.

From the shoulders to the head it was just one big block. You would not differentiate the head from the shoulder. The eyes were just red like red meat. I was sure he was not going to survive. That is the occasion that inspired me to write my first and perhaps last article in a newspaper independently. I wrote in New Age what I saw of Bongco at Frere Hospital: 'Third Degree Methods in East London.'

Very miraculously he recovered from that assault and when we went to Hospital to check him as we were paying visits regularly, we were told that he had been discharged. We rushed to his place and only found his wife who told us she had not seen him. We wondered what could have happened to him. Had he left the country maybe since there were instructions already from the National High Command that he leaves the country.

What happened was that on discharge from Hospital he went straight to the headquarters of the sabotage squad of the security police in Fleet street, East London. There he met Card, the man who had assaulted him. Sergeant Card was in charge of the sabotage squad in East London. Bongco told Card that he had been beaten up terribly and had reached that point where he felt he could no longer carry on with the struggle. "I must now work for you. I am going to give you information, and I am starting right now." He told Card that some time that week, on a particular day, time and spot, there was going to be a sabotage instructor from Johannesburg. "He is going to meet us there. I am giving you this information and urging you to go and surprise that meeting. And you must not bring a lot of men because that might arouse suspicion.

"I would prefer a situation where you carry your radio. Take your men and post them at the nearest police station to the spot, which is the Duncan Village Police Station. In the event of some trouble you can communicate with them. But I am giving you my head for it. He is going to be there but you must go alone. Just for you to see that they are there and radio your men to come thereafter," Bongco said to Card.

Card was excited with this piece of information. He then apologised to Bongco and was happy with him. He instructed Bongco to go back to the movement and to never divulge that to any one. Bongco agreed and left. But as he was leaving Card called him back. He demanded that he surrender his reference book, so that in the event of anything happening to him (Card) that day the command at the Police station would know that he was out on a tip-off by Bongco. He also made him sign the following undertaking, 'I Wellington Mpumelelo Bongco am

responsible for anything that might happen to you on this day and vouch that this is true information.' Bongco signed and went away.

AMBUSH

On that day he and another comrade had guns and went to lay an ambush for Card. They were going to kill Card. Card had become a nuisance not only in the Border region but throughout the country. Bongco never told us about this experience. We only learnt about it when it was led as evidence in court. Card produced all the documents Bongco had signed and when he was in the witness box the prosecutor asked him if it was true and he replied: "If Card had gone to that spot that day he would now be lying on his back and reading the 'Daily Dispatch' six feet under the ground". That was his popular saying, used whenever he was going to eliminate an enemy agent.

Bongco was arrested in August 1963. I was already in detention then, and we appeared together in court. We were supposed to be seven but were five when we appeared in court. The sixth Masiza (referred to above) had already left the country, and the seventh, Mdubi proved to have been a snoop. He had been infiltrated in the regional command. Bongco was sentenced to death on March 23 in Queenstown. When the judge wanted to know if he had anything to say before a sentence of death was imposed upon him he said he had and was called upon to say it. He said, 'You are going to hang Bongco but you will never hang freedom', and kept quiet.

That was my first time to be with a man sentenced to death. We shared the same cell. For the rest of us it was difficult even to eat the food we were given in prison. Bongco ate his and invited us to join him but we just had no appetite. Among the five of us only him and me smoked. He then made a 'zol' and gave a 'skyf' and I was not even in the form of smoking. We were just at a loss of words, not knowing what to say to him. When we parted (that is when he was taken to Pretoria) he gave his clothing to me to give it to his wife, which I subsequently did.

The Boers hanged him, but like he said, they will never be able to hang freedom. A thousand Bongcos have emerged to take his place and advance the fight for freedom. The revolutionary upsurge sweeping throughout the country is clear evidence.

LONG LIVE HIS MEMORY!

THE LONGEST NIGHT

Immediately after the 16th of December 1961 the Security Branch raided a number of houses throughout the country trying to find a clue as to who the saboteurs were that struck on that day. Reggie's house was one of those raided where the police found a gas pistol, some test tubes and some nitro-glycerine. As a result he was amongst those who were arrested in December 1961.

The Security Branch were convinced that Reggie was involved in the acts of sabotage that took place. But the only evidence they had was those items found at his place. Reggie appeared in court and was remanded (at that time there were no detention clauses and people had to appear in court within 72 hrs of their arrests). That meant that Reggie had to spend Christmas and New Year 1961 in custody. When Reggie appeared in court in January 1962 he was found guilty but he had a very good alibi as to why he had these items. Reggie was given a minor fine of about R50 but the S.B. were not happy at all and decided to keep a tab on his activities. The regional Command decided to suspend Reggie from the activities of MK for a short while.

DIFFICULT PERIOD

This period was a very difficult one for all of us. We were all very young, had no experience in underground work and we were all well known (S.B. knew all of us active members of the Congress Movement) and yet at this stage we were going into the underground. We were untrained, our training was on the actual job. We were learning how to use dynamite, how to make Molotov Cocktail, pipe bombs and did a lot of reading. (At the time of my arrest the police found a book published by the Americans which dealt with guerilla warfare as espoused by Che' Guevara and Mao tse Tung, published as a counter-insurgency book but very useful to us). We were told not to carry any weapons, to be absolutely certain that we take no lives and to be very diligent.

A serious problem that we faced was the fact that we were all involved in the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress, the South African Peace Council and other organisations. We used to sell the movement's newspapers,

Indres Naidoo



Spark, New Age, etc. But after the formation of MK our first allegiance was to MK which meant the other work had to suffer. Coincidentally I was elected Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Youth League at this particular time and as a result of the added MK duties my tasks as Secretary were neglected. This was noticeable because when we assembled for an appointment either myself, Shirish or Reggie would be absent. We were accused of becoming lazy and it became difficult for us to find excuses.

Once we demanded a meeting with senior Congress members because there were lots of issues that we wanted to clear up. After a long time this meeting was finally to materialise, but when we were supposed to proceed to the meeting Reggie and Shirish reminded me of some duties relating to MK. I tried to explain that as Secretary I had to be present but they convinced me and off we went and as a result I missed the meeting. My mother, my brothers and sisters all fought with me but it was difficult for me to explain. The following day at the offices the young people gave me hell. They accused me of all kinds of things and I could just not explain my way out. Reggie and Shirish each concocted some stories. Shirish said that his uncle was sick and he had to drive his father to his uncle's home. I could not make such an excuse because my mother, sisters and brothers were at the meeting.

Another difficulty we faced was transporting explosives etc. If I think of our comrades carrying the AK 47 through the

streets of T J, how they are moving material today reminds me of an incident. I had a pistol which I had to move from my house to a place about 5-6 km away. I was very nervous and wrapped it in paper, made a nice parcel out of it, put it in a plastic packet and over it I put lots of food and other things. I carried it through the heart of T J but every time I saw a policeman I imagined that he could see right through the plastic bag. I was on pins and needles right up to my destination. I remember another incident very well. I was sitting with Aziz and Essop Pahad in the restaurant owned by the elder Pahad when a chap came up to us and said he's got a machine-gun to sell for R100. We did not know this man and told him that we had nothing to do with it. But it worried us that here we let go a machine-gun which could be useful to MK.

DYNAMITE

When Reggie got back into the unit a man approached him in his house and offered to sell him a box of dynamite. At that stage it was very difficult to get hold of dynamite and in every region an instruction was given to try and find dynamite. Reggie of course naturally told this man that he is not interested, but informed the unit. The region was informed and promised to investigate this man whose name is Gamat Jardien. After three months of investigation they found that Gamat Jardien stayed in Booyens, was a petty crook with tremendous knowledge in the use of dynamite. The region thought not only should we buy the dynamite from him but we also try to recruit him. Reggie talked to him and found him a very willing person and was keen to join MK. He was then recruited and introduced to me and Shirish. We had a number of political discussions with him and also pointed out frankly to him that as MK we were very naive in the use of explosives. He then promised to teach us and we later went out for experiments.

I remember one time going to a farm about 15 km north of T J. Gamat Jardien merely took out the dynamite, stuck it onto a tree and lit it. It felled the tree. We were impressed with how he felled that tree. He then showed us how to go about it.

Then 1963 came along. Gamat Jardien had shown us a very good target near a Coloured township called Riverlee. We went over to the target and observed it and reported to the region. The region fully agreed that it should be our next target and decided that we should go on the job on the 16th April 1963. Everything was planned but for some strange reasons which I can't recall, at the last minute the region decided that we should postpone it for the next day.

Gamat came on the agreed time with his car and the dynamite and we informed him of the postponement. Gamat seemed very anxious and dissatisfied and tried to persuade us to tackle the job as planned. We explained that when the region takes a decision it is final. He then persuaded us to go and check the area and the target again. We got to the scene, everything was planned, where we'd stop, how we were going to move, etc. We then observed the target again.

After our reconnaissance, on our return as we were coming down Bree street we heard a knock in the car. We stopped and thought that could be a serious problem as we needed the car for the job the following day. I walked home while Gamat took the other two comrades home, (it was on his route) in his broken down car. The following day, the 17th April we prepared ourselves to go on the job. Shirish and I attended a meeting earlier that evening and from the meeting we went to Doornfontein. I put on jeans, a black jersey and gloves. We left home at about eleven in the evening and I remember my mother asking where I was going to that time of the night.

We went to where Reggie was working as a waiter and he immediately informed us that he was not happy with the behaviour of Gamat Jardien. We were very surprised that he could give us the assurance that the car would be fixed. And indeed as we were talking he arrived with the car fixed as promised. He told us he took the car in the early morning and told them that he wanted it before five and got it. All three of us got into the car and drove to Reggie's home. Reggie and myself got off and went into the house. Reggie gave me a rod to keep and told me with the first false move Gamat make I must hit him very hard. At that time Reggie was a very big guy, he weighed almost

200Lbs, not fat this was all muscle. We then agreed that if anything happened Reggie would be the guy to lead the attack on him. We returned to the car and moved towards Riverlea. We parked the car as planned and got out. Shirish and I went to the signal post, Gamat went to the tool shed and Reggie stood guard approximately 10-15 metres away. Suddenly there was a strange noise, a long hooter sound. We all looked up. The sound died and yet there was no car in sight. The main road was about 150 metres away from where we were and no one could see a car passing. Nevertheless we wrote it off as some passing car. We then decided to go on with the job and as I was fixing the dynamite to the signal post we noticed that Gamat had made a little fire near the tool shed. I shouted at him asking him what the hell he was doing. Reggie on the other hand became impatient and shouted at me to light the "bloody" fuse. I lit the fuse and as I lit it we heard a police whistle. Reggie shouted telling us to run for our lives. We ran, I jumped a fence of more than one metre in my attempt to get away.

We ran to where Reggie was and the three of us, noticing that Gamat Jardien was not around, searched for him but Gamat had disappeared. As we were approaching the car the whole place lit up. It was like broad day-light and the next thing we heard was "stop, put up your hands." All of us stopped simultaneously. A revolver went off and my hand was hit. I did not realise that I was shot. It was only later when I saw blood that I realised I was shot. We were surrounded by dozens of policemen wearing railway balaclavas.

It was early April and it was bitterly cold. We were asked what we were doing there that time of the night. All of us without hesitation replied we'd come with Gamat Jardien. They asked us where Gamat Jardien was and we told them that his sister lived in Riverlea and he had gone to her as we were having a problem with our car. A cop was sent to look for Gamat but came back within a minute saying there was no Gamat. At that point the explosion went off. It went off with a tremendous bang and Swanepoel shouted "Ahah Mandela se soldate".

They then got stuck into us. I was first in line and they hit me down. Reggie tried to protest asking them if they could not see

that I'd been shot. "Hey Koolie jy is harde bek ne?", with that they brought him down. They then worked on him breaking a couple of his ribs. We were bundled into cars and taken to the police station. At the police station my hand became very swollen. It felt as if the whole arm from the shoulder was collapsing on me. I pleaded for a doctor or to be taken to hospital, but they refused, telling me: "Hey you gonna die here". The policeman in charge later made a call (presumably consulting some senior) and when he came back said "Vat die koolie hospital toe". I was taken by about four policemen who literally picked me up and threw me into the pick-up van. At Coronationville Hospital the doctor, who was a very nice guy, had to tear my clothing off and then he saw the bullet sticking out just next to the shoulder blade. The bullet entered through my arm and passed on to between the shoulder blades where it got stuck. All the doctor did was to pull it out using a tweezer. He ordered that I be admitted but the cops refused. He then asked them to sign a document stating that they were taking full responsibility because as far as he was concerned I was to be hospitalised. He, I want to emphasise, was very pleasant. He gave me some pain-killers which they took away later.

When we returned to the police station Reggie and Shirish were not there. The next I heard was their screams. I heard them pleading: "Please help, leave me. I don't know anything." I realised that these chaps were being beaten up and I thought to myself: "my God I'm next." When Shirish came out of that room I couldn't recognise him. His face was battered. He couldn't even put his glasses on. Reggie could hardly walk. They put us all into separate cars and I was taken home. When we got to Doornfontein the cops just started banging the door. My two brothers, two sisters and my mother were shocked when they saw me. I was in very bad shape and my family demanded an explanation. They started their search, cutting open pillows and mattresses.

They broke the tiles of the fire place looking for arms and ammunition. On finding the book I earlier referred to they remarked "Oh so you are reading guerilla warfare." They also found

lots of letters. Mac Maharaj was staying at my place and ran a newspaper called Parade. In fact it was one of our papers. Mac was the editor and the sole journalist on. They went through all those letters which included letters to SANROC and other sporting organisations and took them away. During all this my family became very agitated and refused the cops to sit down. I was taken back to Marshall Square, locked in a cell all by myself, with no blankets and I was in terrible pain. It was the longest night in my life.

After sentence, when we were in prison we hoped that MK would continue. We sat and listened to hear of MK activities and sporadically here and there we got news of an explosion and we would jump with joy. We met comrades who had gone for training in Ethiopia. Amongst them were James Chirwa, a Malawian comrade who has just completed a sentence of 20 years, Ernest Malgas known as Jumbo, Henry Fazzie, and others. These comrades were a source of tremendous encouragement to us. We questioned them about what was happening in Africa, whether they met O.R. Tambo when they passed through Tanzania, what he said to them etc. They brought some new songs to us and we sang them.

Then there followed a long spell of lull when nothing happened but we still had confidence in our MK. We then heard of the Wankie Campaign and later some of the comrades who were involved landed on the Island. We questioned them at length about the nature of their training, what happened to them, how it was in the battlefield, etc. We kept on getting news of comrades infiltrating the country. There was the case of James April and the case of the comrades who were picked up in 1972. All this gave us a lot of encouragement.

When I was released in 1973 there were hardly any visible activities of MK. The 1976 uprising took place and shortly after there was the handgrenade incident on the border with Swaziland where two policemen were severely injured. I finally left the country in 1977 and came to Maputo where for the first time I came into direct contact with the new breed of MK. The MK of today is a completely different MK. It is an MK that is sophisticated, using the AK 47, limpet mines

and RPG 7. An MK that has proved its worth in the battlefield.

MK has become a household word in S.A. When we think our days when very few people talked of MK and today when almost every young person,

almost everyone in South Africa talks of MK, one realises the tremendous strides we have taken. MK has come a long way and it's through MK activities and the leadership of the ANC. I'm certain it won't be long before South Africa is free.

The second stage: Attempts to get back

Joe Slovo

... From then it became clear that we were entering the second phase, which was the attempt to reconstruct the political underground and to attempt to return to the country those activists who had been trained in the art and science of people's military struggle.

Of course in one sense the two sides of these endeavours stand in contradiction with one another. On the one hand you cannot fight a people's war without the leadership of a political organisation. You need an underground, which is capable of providing both political and military leadership. On the other hand the post-Sharpeville and post-Rivonia successes of the enemy had created such a demoralisation that without the beginnings of armed activity, without a demonstration of our capacity to hit at the enemy, it was difficult to conceive of people getting together in, any large measure to reconstitute the political underground.

To put it more simply; without a political underground network and internal leadership it is not possible to engage effectively in people's armed struggle and, in our situation, without the beginnings of military struggle the task of political reconstruction assumed difficult proportions. And thereafter we entered a phase in which it became necessary, however long it was going to take, to find ways of getting back into the situation and to demonstrate that we were able to hit the enemy as an important factor in helping to stimulate the process of political regeneration. So one would say from 1965/66 onwards the attention of MK and its leadership, the ANC, was devoted to attempting to get our trained political and military cadres back. This is the second phase: attempts to get back.

WANKIE/SIPOLILO

There was the 1967/68 attempt to move through Smith's Rhodesia. Thereafter endless attempts were made to try to send cadres back to the country. These attempts literally involved land, sea and air routes. South Africa was at that stage still surrounded by a cordon sanitaire of imperialist dominated states: Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia. So we were completely cut off from the borders. But despite enormous objective difficulties efforts were made to infiltrate personnel back into the situation through these territories, most of them (efforts) were unsuccessful.

A big project, code named 'Operation J' by our president, of landing about forty-five cadres on the coast was planned in the early seventies. We bought a boat in the Mediterranean and we managed to get a friendly party to provide a crew for it. Unfortunately the Suez Canal was closed then. This meant that the boat had to be taken to a friendly port on Africa's East coast, all the way round the continent of Africa. It in fact docked in Cape Town and Durban to refuel. But of course it was quite clean at that point.

The boat arrived safely at the port from which the operation was to be launched. We were given very generous assistance from that friendly government. At one point the boat was not on schedule and this government sent out its Airforce to check on it. They pinpointed it on its way up to the coast of Africa. That was quite a moving commitment to our struggle.

The operation was very complicated. It involved having structures inside the country ready to receive the cadres on the various landing points which had been chosen for the purpose. The landing was to take place in

actual landing boats of the mother ship. Radio signals were worked out from inside, from the beaches, to indicate safety. Arms and equipment were specially prepared so that they could float in. Trucks, bicycles and other means of transport were ready to take the men to various parts of the country. Caches had been prepared in various mountains, ready to receive a vast quantity of armament. Moubaris was involved in some reconnaissance work connected with the beaches which were eventually selected, and also in receiving the men as they came in. He was one amongst quite a big team.

The boat set off and, within a day-and-a-half, returned, with the captain reporting that the radar equipment, which was quite necessary for the purpose of this project, was not functioning. Within a week we flew in new radar equipment. By this time it was becoming clear that this captain and his crew were getting cold feet. When they made other excuses we started testing the boat once again and discovered that both engines were not functioning. We suspected sabotage but at that stage we could not prove it.

We dismissed this crew and went to search for another crew from another fraternal party. We found it and flew it in within two weeks. This crew was absolutely remarkable. They refused to surrender to any complication. Eventually they got one engine working and decided to move with it, against the warning by experts against it. The danger is that the boat, which did not operate by means of sails, would eventually be smashed against the rocks if that engine failed. But this crew said they were quite prepared to take a chance.

So we embarked again. They set out and within about sixteen hours we received a radio signal that the engine had collapsed. Fortunately it was near enough to port and a tug went out and towed the boat in. So the operation failed.

We then attempted to find other ways of getting the same comrades back into the country. We used various techniques, including routes through what was then still Portuguese Mozambique, Swaziland and Bechuanaland. We also used Jan Smuts airport. James April and others were many whom we tried in various ways to put back into

the situation. This went on till 1976 I would say, with one project or another, with none of them really succeeding. But our failures, although one does not plan for them have some kind of impact. It could be seen by everyone that the ANC was persisting in its efforts without end despite enormous difficulties. People were becoming aware

that here was a committed and dedicated group which was just going to continue knocking their heads against this wall until somehow there was a crack in it. I think this was a very important side-product of the efforts most of which ended in failures. But one wonders where we would have been without these stubborn attempts to find the answer..

THE WANKIE CAMPAIGN

Chris Hani

The Luthuli Detachment was one of those detachments that were well prepared and well trained. I'm saying this because I personally participated in the preparations. A lot of time was allocated for the detachment to be together in the bush to be able to train together in order to ensure that physically we were ready for the rigorous task that lay ahead. But in addition to the physical preparation there was also the political preparation, the need for us to forge an understanding between the forces of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the forces of ZAPU and to understand the historical necessity of the battles of Wankie.

There was a need for us to feel that we were not participating merely to help ZAPU and the people of Zimbabwe, but it was important to see it in its global perspective, the need for the people of Zimbabwe and the people of South Africa to fight against an enemy, an enemy which had forged an alliance. We all know about the alliance between Smith and Vorster. For us South Africans what was also important was the fact that we were moving home to participate in the struggle of our people inside South Africa. So there was also this added dimension.

When we began the process of crossing we were ready for anything and the spirit of MK combatants was very high. The crossing point was not an easy one, it was a place which was quite rocky and the current of the Zambezi was strong. But these seeming obstacles and difficulties did not deter us at all. After crossing the river, there was a spirit of elation and joy,

due to the fact that we had already crossed the first obstacle, mainly the river and we were now all looking forward to participating in the long march deep into Zimbabwe and ultimately reaching our destination, South Africa.

The spirit of cohesion and unity between ourselves and ZAPU was magnificent. We were working together as one unit, consulting and discussing together. There was no friction whatsoever within this unit. This is important to point out if one wants to give an objective assessment of the operations of the Luthuli Detachment or the Wankie detachment.

From the very beginning we began to notice that we were not at all conversant with the terrain across the river. For instance, moving away from the Zambezi river we had expected to come across streams and rivulets with water, but as soon as we moved a few kilometres from the Zambezi river we realised that it was quite a dry area. There were no rivers, no streams, and people were getting water from boreholes. So this problem of no rivers necessitated an earlier contact with the people. According to our original plans we were not going to contact the people that early. We were going to postpone meeting the people until we reached strategic areas within Zimbabwe. But the reality of not having water at all forced us to establish this contact.

Secondly, we were beginning to run low on food supplies. So again we had to contact the people. It is important in all

military preparations, whatever military strategy is worked out, to emphasise the need to contact people. But it is dangerous to contact the people at random and that is what we were forced to do. It is important to follow your own preparations, your own deliberately worked out decisions as to at what point you are going to establish contact with the people, who these people are, what their political views are, etc.

Of course things do not follow a pattern always, sometimes you get into an area where the organisation has no contact and you have got to try very hard to establish a contact. There is an advantage if you actually go into a given area with a contact in hand. In our case there was no contact, we had literally to establish our own contact.

That has got its own dangers because you are likely sometimes to go to a person who is hostile to the liberation movement or you might meet somebody who is actually working for the enemy. But in all fairness when we established this contact we were met with enthusiasm by the people. We were given water and even fresh supplies of food. This was very useful and enabled us to continue for a few days marching towards the South of Zimbabwe. Within the game reserve of Wankie a decision had been taken by our H.Q. in Lusaka that the unit had to split into two. There was the unit that had to move towards the east, towards an area called Lupane, and there was also the main unit which had to march towards the South. Within the unit moving towards the South was quite a substantial number of those comrades whose mission was eventually to reach South Africa and establish MK units within the country. In the unit moving towards the South with the eventual aim of getting to South Africa were comrades Lennox Lagu, myself, Peter Mfene, Douglas Wana, Mbijana, the late Victor Dlamini, Castro, Mashigo (the ANC Chief Representative to Lusaka), Paul Sithole, Desmond, Wilson Msweli, Shooter Makasi, Eric Nduna, Basil February and James April. Lennox was the most senior in our group. I was the group's commissar.

The unit marching towards the East was to base in Zimbabwe, the aim being to establish an MK presence in Zimbabwe which could be used in future to service

MK combatants passing through Zimbabwe. In other words the whole concept of the Wankie campaign was to build bridges, a Ho Chi Minh train to South Africa. That is why it was important to leave behind some MK combatants working with ZAPU, creating conditions in the north and centre of Zimbabwe for the construction of this bridge. Amongst those who were to remain in Zimbabwe were Andries Motsipe, the commander who fell in battle, James Masimini, Sibanyoni, Charles Sharp and a few others.

They made contact with the enemy quite early, about two weeks after we had parted. One of the battles they were engaged



in that will probably go down in the history of MK military operations as one of the most heroic. Displaying outstanding heroism and sacrifice they fought like lions and actually kept Smith's forces pinned down for the better part of a day. We are told that comrades like Sibanyoni handles an LMG in a unique manner, keeping away the Smith forces. Masimini, although mortally wounded, actually refused to be carried by the comrades and advised them to move away whilst he individually remained as a covering group for the retreat of those comrades who had survived.

This premature engagement with the enemy enabled the enemy to discover that we were in Zimbabwe in bigger numbers. He also knew that it was not only Zimbabweans who were involved in the battle but also MK. This frightened the Pretoria re-

gime. For a long time they dismissed MK's capability of actually coming down to the south to engage them. They thought that because the movement had suffered serious setbacks with the arrest of the ANC leadership and High Command of MK they had incapacitated MK. So this caught them by surprise, and there was so much panic that immediately after this the regime in Pretoria dispatched more troops to Zimbabwe to fight the Luthuli Detachment. A big battle was now looming on Zimbabwean soil, not just between the settler forces of Ian Smith but the combined forces of Smith and the SADF. We noticed after three to four weeks of our presence in Zimbabwe that there was a lot of aerial reconnaissance by the enemy. Virtually the whole day there was a flurry of activities and flights of spotter planes and it was quite clear from the way they were moving South, North, East and West that they were looking for us. They wanted to establish exactly the direction of the other section of the Luthuli Detachment. We were sure that it was only a matter of days before we would have to engage the enemy. But interestingly enough there was a spirit of looking forward to battle with the enemy and I think there was a number of reasons which one could attribute this feeling to. We had undergone very serious training in the Soviet Union and other places and had always looked forward to this historical engagement between ourselves and the forces of the enemy. For a trained soldier it is always important to participate in battle because that is where you prove the merits of your training and at the same time there is nothing scintillating and stimulating to a soldier as to test his whole reactions in actual battle, your responses when you are under fire. I think every soldier looks forward to this and we were no exception. So we marched to the South mostly at night.

There were reasons why we moved mostly at night. We discovered once again that the terrain was very bad. It was empty, with no cover except for shrubs, especially as we moved deeper into Zimbabwe towards Matebeleland. We had expected that there would be bush but there was none. In the light of the furious activity of the spotter planes and heli-

copters, it was hazardous to move during the day. During the day we took cover, dug foxholes and trenches in preparation for any possible engagement with the enemy and used the cover of darkness to cover as much ground as possible in our march towards the south. But again I want to point out that I as a Commissar found the spirit of the men quite magnificent. There were no complaints whatsoever and the comrades were facing serious problems of water and food. We could only survive on game meat and that was also risky. Shooting and killing wild animals was a way of signalling to the enemy and his agents that we were around. Yet there were no alternatives. Back to this question of the terrain, one of the best lessons we drew military speaking is that it is important for the soldiers in any military operation or march to have some data because if we had some data as to the nature of the terrain, whether there was cover or not, it could have helped us to prepare in advance how to react to the fact that the cover was poor or non-existent. But of course that belongs to history and I think those lessons have been learnt. Although we faced these problems of food and water, in all fairness, no comrades complained. The spirit of understanding and of standing up to these difficulties was tremendous. I think the biggest legacy of the Luthuli Detachment at Wankie was the sort of absolute commitment of our fighters to the revolution to an extent where to them things like hunger and thirst were not primary. What was primary was the requirement of our movement to reach our destination, despite all obstacles. This was the spirit, and the spirit was maintained throughout.

Then came the days of our battles. The first battle we fought was in the afternoon. We had done the usual: taking cover, digging ourselves in, deploying and organising all round defence of our temporary base. After some time we noticed that the enemy was not far from us. We had detected the motorised enemy earlier. The vehicles were visible from a distance. Since it was during the day we deliberately refrained from engaging the enemy at that particular point in time. But it was quite clear that the enemy also noticed that we were around. They

probably did not know exactly where we were but they knew we were in the vicinity. In the afternoon the enemy moved into the offensive by firing at random at the sector where we had taken position.

We had decided earlier on that each and everyone ought to be very economic with the ammunition he had due to the fact that we did not have access to enough ammunition except what we were carrying. In other words one was not to shoot until he had a clear view of the target so that we could account for every bullet used. Of course the enemy had advantages. He had communication means and could communicate to his headquarters to organise the dropping of ammunition and whatever weapons they needed. But with us it was different. Our headquarters were far and we had to rely on what we carried on our backs, in our knapsacks. So the usual psychological war of the enemy of firing furiously at our sector continued coupled with shouting and calling on us to surrender. From the very beginning during the course of our preparations we had made it clear amongst ourselves that surrender was out of the question. We were not going to fire back unless we had a clear view of the enemy. The enemy got impatient. They stood up and began to ask "Where are the terrorists?" This was when there was a fuselage of furious fire from us. That fuselage, the furious nature of that reply, drove away the enemy. They simply ran for their dear lives leaving behind food, ammunition and communication equipment. In this first epic battle we lost three comrades: Charles Seshoba, Sparks Moloji and Baloi, one comrade, Mhlonga was wounded. On the side of the enemy we must have killed between 12 to 15, including a lieutenant, a Sergeant-Major, a Warrant Officer and a number of other soldiers. The rest literally ran helter-skelter for their lives. One memorable thing about that encounter was the fact that this was the first time that we had what I can call a civilised meal, cheese, biltong, meat and other usual rations carried by the regular army. For us this represented a feast. So it was a good capture. We also captured a brand new LMG, some machine guns, uniforms and boots.

It was a memorable victory and to every soldier victory is very important. This was a

virgin victory for us since we had never fought with modern weapons against the enemy. For us that day was a day of celebrations because with our own eyes we had seen the enemy run. We had seen the enemy frozen with fear. That lifted our spirits and transformed us into a fighting force. We had also seen and observed each other reacting to the enemy's attacks. A feeling of faith in one another and recognition of the courage of the unit developed.

This was important and we knew from then on there was no going back. What was interesting was that despite all these odds, fighting away with no back-up from HQ actually with no communication from HQ, there was never a feeling that: "Guys we are in trouble now, the enemy has attacked us. Let us run back to Lusaka". On the contrary we were all looking forward. We were moving and nothing was going to stop us. We moved on after having that fantastic feast. We proceeded because it could have been dangerous just to celebrate and wait there. We knew the enemy was going to organise reinforcements. But I think we had imparted to the enemy or conveyed an important message, namely that "we are not just push-overs, you enemy must know that we are a serious fighting force." I think the enemy learned that lesson on that day. I don't want to portray a situation of everything being easy. There were problems. We were running short of food, there was no water and our uniforms were tattered. There was not even rivers where we could have a decent bath. But again this has to be taken in its proper perspective. Despite these difficulties basically our morale was not affected. There were days after that when the enemy was quite fanatic in its aerial reconnaissance. A week after this battle there was another one. One afternoon at about fifteen hours our advanced units noted that the enemy was going to camp for the day. The enemy would start at six very early in the morning but at about 1830hrs they would stop all their activities. They were inactive at night and never bothered to do anything in the evening. But this day the enemy must have discovered that we were somewhere not very far for it decided to camp pending the resumption of activity the follow-

ing day. Three hours earlier the enemy had carried out furious bombardment not far from us using Buccaneers and helicopters. But fortunately for us the bombing and strafing was about two kilometres away. Our own understanding was that the enemy thought they had actually hit the place where we had camped and that the main purpose for camping for the night was for a mopping up operation the following day. So the enemy's commander and the enemy's HQ must have believed that the airforce had struck at us accurately and yet the truth of the matter was that we were not affected by the bombardment at all. The commander of the joint MK-ZAPU Detachment took the decision that this was the time to raid the enemy. We organised units to go and raid the enemy. I was in that together with James April, Douglas Wana, the late Jack Simelane, Victor Dlamini, and others. We crawled towards the enemy's position and first attacked their tents with grenades and then followed with our AKs and LMGs. The enemy fought back furiously and after fifteen minutes we called for reinforcements from the rear, and within ten minutes we overran the enemy's position. In that battle we killed the enemy's colonel who was commanding. His name was Thomas, a huge chunk of a man wearing size 10 boots. We killed a few lieutenants and other soldiers.

The story was the same as in our previous battle. The enemy fled leaving behind supplies, weapons, grenades, uniforms and communication radios. Another victory for our detachment. I want to emphasise the question of victory because the Luthuli Detachment was never defeated in battle.

Our supplies became depleted and we were moving to a barren part of Zimbabwe. We decided that it would be futile to continue fighting because the enemy was bringing in more reinforcement. So we deliberately took a decision to retreat to Botswana. The aim of this decision is important to emphasise. This was no surrender to the paramilitary units of Botswana government. It was important for us to retreat to strategic parts of Botswana, refresh ourselves, heal those who were not well, acquire food supplies and proceed. We

then crossed over to Botswana. But by this time the South African regime had pressurised the Botswana government to prevent us from getting into Botswana. We found a situation where the Rhodesian security forces joined by the South Africans were pursuing us and within Botswana the para-military force had been mobilised to stop us from entering Botswana. We had to discuss seriously what our response was going to be if the Botswana security forces confronted us. It was difficult to reach a decision, it was really dilemma. Botswana is a member of the OAU, and in theory it is committed to the struggle for the liberation of South Africa. So Botswana does not constitute an enemy of the liberation movement, an enemy of ZAPU and the ANC. We came to the correct political decision that we were not going to fight them. When they came to meet us they played very conciliatory and friendly, saying that they had not come to harm us. They said their instructions were not to engage us and that all they wanted was that we surrender and our fate would be discussed amicably. They also promised that we would not be detained. We accepted the bonafides and surrendered, only to discover that they were actually being commanded by white officers from Britain and South Africa. This caused problems for us.

All of a sudden we were manacled, hand-cuffed and abused. Of course all this is history now. We were sentenced to long-terms of imprisonment; 3, 5 to six years and ended up in the maximum security prison in Gaborone. One of the most outstanding fighters of that detachment was the legendary comrade Basil February, who has become part of the legend of MK.

He moved far deep into Zimbabwe reaching Figtree which is about a few kilometres from the border between Botswana and Zimbabwe. There he clashed with the enemy for more than two hours and lost his life. We have reports that he killed a number of enemy soldiers and refused to surrender. He exemplified the spirit of the entire detachment, the readiness to fight whether you are alone or with comrades, refusing to sur-

render. I believe this is the spirit that sustains MK even today. We see those comrades who came after 1976 upholding this remarkable tradition and ignoring in fact what happens to one as a person and upholding the fact that the revolution is the most important. The Wankie campaign has been appraised by historians. But some appraisals have been quite hostile. For instance Karim Essack of the Unity Movement who is based in Dar-Es-Salaam deals with this campaign in a very unobjective manner, and refers to it as an exercise in adventurism and a glaring example of desperation. We disagree with that point of view. We believe that it was correct for our movement to be involved in actual practical steps in making preparations for MK to get back to the theatre of action, and that theatre of action is South Africa. It would have been wrong for us to wait for a favourable situation in terms of some rear bases or some country bordering South Africa getting independence. It was important for us to rough it and to participate in creating favourable conditions for ourselves. This is what a revolutionary is and that is what revolutions are about. Namely a movement participating and creating conditions for itself. You never wait because no favourable conditions can come on their own without the participation of the subjective factor and the subjective factor in this case was our movement and its army, MK. So from that point of view the decision for comrades to participate in Zimbabwe and to open a corridor to S.A. through Zimbabwe was a correct one. The ANC and MK continues along that old path opened by the Wankie Detachment. Today we are making our way to our country through a number of countries. Sometimes these countries are hostile to us and are not receptive to the idea that we should go through their countries. In fact they arrest us when they discover that we are there. But that has never stopped us from proceeding to our country. Wankie was an important initial step. Today we continue to move along the same lines. I think the foundation stone of our present gains was laid at Wankie and Sipolilo.

CHRIS HANI

A drawing by a close political activist

ON being asked by the *Dawn* editor to make a pen portrait of the Second-in-Command of our victorious People's Army Umkhonto we Sizwe, on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary, my immediate reaction and feeling was that of duty, pride and honour to do so. It is an honour to have shared with comrade Chris Hani the most exciting foundation years of his present political frame. We were to see him soon growing faster than the rest of us to what he is today, a single-minded decisive young rhinoserus who turns adversities and dark storms into rainbows on which to ride, a dedicated simple modest cadre of the people with an immense political potential that cannot be ignored by both friend and foe, a subject of enemy intrigues and assassination plots, a comrade with a clarity of vision and purpose for living, a man who strives to practice what he says.

I met the man at the University of Fort Hare in 1958 — a rather too young to be at Fort Hare chap, thin, tallish, rather shabbily dressed with oversized trousers, virtually one brownish sports jacket, tip-toe striding, more than average to brilliant type of student doing "heavy" B.A. courses and majoring in Latin etc.

I had not joined the Movement by then and I was to learn later on that he hated some of us for indulging in frivolity — moving about with girlfriends whilst he and others were busy with their free time doing political work in Lovedale, Alice and elsewhere. He had no girlfriend, at least in the Fort Hare.

PRODUCT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

He was an embittered product of the South African revolution who had very little time to attend to himself and bent solely with his academic work and the destruction of the oppressive system in the country, yet so jovial when free and never apologetic or regretful for the cause he had chosen for the rest of his life.

He was recruited into the ranks of our Movement in his teens at Lovedale High School by Cde Siphon Makana, another serious minded revolutionary and former Head Prefect of Lovedale, now a member of the NEC who has himself lived that type of life unswervingly.

To baptise the new recruit into the spirit of the battles of secret underground work, to check his loyalty and discipline, and to enrich or fortify his understanding of the nature of the enemy who at times can be a black working against blacks, comrade Siphon, together with another comrade, one evening

instructed the thin Chris to secretly pick up and carry a heavy suitcase with clothes of an enemy agent into a nearby bush. They gave him matches to burn it. It had to be done — a political order — without questioning the consequences of his future social relations with the agent.

When I joined the ranks of these fighters in 1959 we naturally blended and up to date. It is as from this stage that I knew better the future commissar of our people's army, in our leadership discussions in that area and especially in the implementation of those decisions first and foremost ourselves in the fore-front of the running political confrontations with the authorities and the system. He was the youngest of all the Fort Hare leadership and perhaps in the whole university or within the Movement.



Chris Hani

there. Yet his ideas were the most sober, full of initiatives and influential. He displayed brilliance in articulating the line of the Movement as though he was an experienced Congressite, ever critical of any vacillations in launching ceaseless attacks against the system in whatever way possible.

Despite the poor parentage from which he came as was reflected by his dressing, he had no fears of victimisation for his ideas which were now widely known from mass meetings platforms we organised. Besides political work among the inmates of the campus, he, together with his underground cell inmates, would regularly go out to meet and address underground political cells of workers in Gqumashe and Ntse-lamanzi village, about 15 Kilometres outside. Other times he went out to paint slogans all over the University, Alice streets, the bridge and distribute hand-written underground leaflets to even non-Movement members.

Then there was an order from the above (the tough Eastern Cape Command) that we should close down Bantu Education Fort Hare by force if persuasion fails. He was part of the leadership core of four on whom this order fell to implement. We were not told how to use force nor given any means to do it. We were not trained in the art of force, but force had to be resorted to if persuasion within the entire leadership and membership failed.

Heated and endless debates ensued in the leadership meetings chaired by comrade Stan Mabizela and we failed to persuade or convince the rationalists of the system within the leadership on the need to do this nor could we open the secret and say it is an from above order.

The core had to decide on other means. We decided to start by sabotaging all nice-timing, starting with the week-end and dancing parties in the main dining hall. We failed in action through being spotted by an armed boarding master when we were on the roof of the hall.

One other interesting episode in our political activity was when we were told to be part of the nationwide anti-republican 3-day stay-away as from 31st May 1961. Having successfully organised our area in readiness for the D-day, Comrade Chris was still doubtful about the conviction of some lawyers who might sabotage the 100% success of the plan. He organised a core called Force Publique which was chosen beyond partisanship lines, probably to introduce the mass nature of our struggle. At midnight, under cover of darkness they attacked the rooms of the vacillators, throwing huge stones through their windows, and for the next three days the campaign went on 100% successfully.

EXCITING CHAPTER

It was indeed the most exciting chapter of our lives where we learnt to know each other politically, our weaknesses, capabilities and loyalty to our people's cause. Our inspiration was always the Eastern Cape political Command under that veteran hero of our revolution, Govan Mbeki (Isithwalandwe). Here we learnt how to place the Movement above all else, beyond personal and parental wishes, despite the poverty of ourselves and our parents.

Then came the order for some ten politically good comrades from the area to secretly leave the country for a six months course whose content we were not told. Chris worked hard for this plan although he personally refused to join the group, saying "the enemy and the struggle is here". The plan was 99% successful and I was to meet Chris already a leading soldier of our people's army ten years later in Lusaka

After Fort Hare he went to join his father in Cape Town. Here he threw his energies into the working class struggles, got introduced to underground structures of such working class veterans as Ray Alexander, Oscar Mpetha, etc. I don't know at what stage he joined MK and what forced him to leave the country at long last. In Lusaka he was already a resourceful member of the ANC's Revolutionary Council structures who had excelled in the grim battles of the ANC/ZAPU Alliance units in Rhodesia (Wankie 1967). Impatient with exile politics, submission to problems and inactivity, he hacked his way through odds homeward and was a leading political cadre of an MK detachment, the Luthuli detachment.

Prospects of reaching home soon via Rhodesia were gloomy and Chris was sent by the leadership to Lesotho to start and establish a political and diplomatic presence of the ANC there. His performance there can only be described as marvelous. The enemy felt it. It made many assassination attempts on his life, leading to the Lesotho authorities advising the Movement that he be withdrawn.

PEOPLE'S INTELLECTUAL

He is impatient with lack of seriousness, indecision, dogmatism and theory that cannot be put into practice. He is a young articulate selfless people's intellectual who easily mixes with every class, group, member and friend of the struggle; a jovial, optimistic jokes-cracker even under tension, yet a lover.

He is an open-minded leader who is fearless of criticism of anybody, including self-criticism, but without vindictiveness, bitterness and grudges against those who differ with him, thus earning himself no enemies amongst genuine fighters for the people's cause. He cherishes the counselling of old age and experience but is strongly biased towards the youth whom he believes can move mountains.

Chris has earned himself great respect for this balance of the articulation and use of old experience and its creative application to new conditions of struggle in more active hands and limbs. Because of this ability and his daring readiness to throw off his overseeing leadership garb, physically sharing the hazards and risks of war in the same trenches with his men, he remains essentially a man of the people's army who is destined to play a more vital role in the tough battles ahead against the enemy. He is easily approachable by any cadre of any rank and is deeply involved in the solution of their problems.

Now in his mid-forties, Chris was born from a politically involved peasant-worker family in the Transkei. Because of political persecution by the racist authorities his father escaped into exile in Lesotho in the early sixties. Perhaps a week

or so once a year he still has the privilege to switch off the routine burdens of duty and be comforted by the presence of his loving family from Lesotho. He is a loving father and a dedicated family man of sober habits and rearing.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of MK, we salute our fighting masses and their glorious army and leading political commissar! **IHLOMILE COMRADE COMMISSAR!**

CROSSING THE ZAMBEZI

COMRADE TT Nkobi, the Treasurer-General of the ANC, witnessed the crossing of the Zambezi river by the Luthuli Detachment that fought in Wankie, Rhodesia, in 1967.

The idea of going home via Rhodesia came from the soldiers themselves, the rank and file of Umkhonto we Sizwe. It was then thrown at the leadership to discuss how feasible it was to send our forces home through enemy territory. The leadership had no quarrels with the principle and the matter was referred back to the combatants. I was particularly interested because at the time I was the ANC Chief Representative to Zambia. Our Headquarters was still in Tanzania.

MK soldiers decided they were determined to go home through Zimbabwe. Preparations began and in July 1967 the reconnaissance team went down to the river Zambezi to locate crossing points. The main group followed in August. The President and myself were there to witness the crossing. On the eve of the crossing we slept at the base we had established. A beast was slaughtered that evening and we had a big feast.

The following day, very early in the morning, we left for the river, east of Livingstone. We marched the whole day and spent that night in the bush. The following morning we proceeded. When we reached the river and were shown the points that had been selected for crossing we could not believe our eyes. The commander explained that those were the best points because they were hazardous and difficult and therefore the last places the enemy could suspect.

Ropes had been tied to trees and to reach the river from the bank one had to get hold of the rope and cling to it. From the height we were you could not even see a person when reaching the river down below. Only the sound of something landing in water would indicate that somebody had reached the water. Proper defence had been organised. Positions were taken to cover the whole crossing operation in case the enemy made an appearance.

FIRST TO CROSS

The first person to go down was

Chris, the Army Commissar. It was really moving. I had never experienced something like that before. I asked two comrades, Nkwane and Nikita how they felt. These two used to ask me when we were going to go home and I used to tell them that one day we would. One of them admitted that his heart was threatening to jump out through the mouth, he was a bit afraid. I told him that we all have fear but the important thing is to be able to suppress it. Pointing to Chris who had already crossed and was busy doing some exercises, I said: "You see that man across there also has fear but he can suppress his and conquer it. That's what he is doing as you see him jumping."

On landing the men had to be rowed across. Two comrades, Boston Gagarin and Guluva, were of great importance in this history-making event. They were experts in rowing. They rowed to and fro, taking one across at a time. It was a long and tiresome operation since about 80 men had to cross. The process began in the morning and lasted till late afternoon. The Zambezi current was very strong at the time but we did not suffer a single casualty. The whole operation was meticulously planned. The President, while looking at Boston at his job, remarked: "Here is a great guy." Both comrades are late now. Guluva died in a car accident a few years ago and Boston of natural causes this year (1986).

The crossing of the Zambezi was terrific and really moving. It is a great pity we had no camera to capture the moment because those men were making history when going down and crossing the river. This history ought to have been preserved in photographs for future generations. As it is now we are forgetting some of the heroes who crossed the Zambezi river and fought the Smith's forces. Some fell in battle, others were arrested and sentenced to many years imprisonment in Rhodesia. Many changed course and went to Botswana after running out of supplies.

BASIL FEBRUARY

COMRADE RODGERS, A VETERAN OF WANKIE, SPEAKS ABOUT PAUL PETERSEN (BASIL FEBRUARY).

When we entered Rhodesia in 1967, it was to be our first combat experience. While we were undergoing training in Africa and overseas, though, we were using live bullets and were acquainted to bullets whizzing over our heads. We had confidence in ourselves, individually and as a group.

Our mission was clear. We were to open a corridor to South Africa for our personnel and supplies, coordinating and co-operating with Zapu.

After several days in Rhodesia we discovered that the enemy was aware of our presence. There were many spotter planes in the sky. The detachment ran out of food and, knowing that we would have contact with the enemy soon, we decided to split the group.

Our group consisted of 21 men. It was led by Madzimba Matho (Zapu), who was deputised by Andries Motsepe. I was the third in command. It was decided that we should go into the interior to divert the enemy from the main detachment. We also had in our group a comrade who had a special mission. He was Paul Petersen.

Of course we did divert the enemy. We had our first contact with the enemy on the banks of Nyatuwe river, between Wankie and Detti. The battle started at half past eight in the morning and the enemy disengaged itself at 18.40 hours. Out of all our battles in Rhodesia, the battle of Nyatuwe was the major one. Before I go into this battle let me relate to you the story of Paul Petersen.

He was born in Somerset West in the Western Cape. I think he was between 24 and 26 years of age, 1.85 metres tall, black hair with a goaty beard. His real name was Basil February. He was a so-called Coloured.

We were very close to each other and I knew about his special mission. I knew where and how to assist him. There are certain things one must point out about this guy, things which make me respect him more than ever before, especially after we had split from the main group.

We were a small group and the languages employed for communication were Ndebele and Shona. As a result there was a tendency of isolating him in most conversations. Besides, being a so-called Coloured, most of the Zapu comrades viewed him with suspicion because of his white skin. But all this did not worry him at all. He thought it was best for the comrades to converse in the language they knew best. He was inspiring in all duties in the field, e.g. guard duties, and was always rendering assistance to all comrades in need along the way. Gradually even those who thought he was white ended up seeing him a better white.

The number of spotter planes in the sky was increasing. It was clear that the enemy was on our trail. We decided to take Paul to the nearest place where he could get transport. For him it was painful to part with the group and he resisted but we convinced him that his mission was equally important. If he had gone through we were to contact him in two months.

We took him to a train siding that was nearest. He was armed with an UZI pistol machinegun and a pistol. He gave us his UZI because it was going to be bulky and cumbersome, and remained with a pistol.

The train did arrive and he ran for it. We were watching him from a distant bush, of course. We saw the train pulling off and left. After boarding the train the conductor became suspicious of this "white" man boarding a train at a siding. The conductor fired some questions at him which he answered to the best of his ability.

The conductor phoned the next station, alerting the police. Paul was also suspicious of this chap and had decided to get off at the next station. So when the train reached the next station he got off to a white detective SB and two Africans.

They came straight to him and demanded his identity card. All three were armed. He drew his pistol and shot at the white policeman twice, killing him instantly. He injured the two Africans, one seriously. While running for cover he also injured the station master. Outside the station he found a bicycle and rode away.

Somewhere in that area there was a cinema, theatre or hall (I'm not sure) with a number of cars parked outside. He got into one of the cars and sped away. As he was coming out of that town he met a roadblock, manned by one soldier. The soldier related well to him, thinking he was white. When he realised his mistake, he ran for his gun but was too late. Paul shot him dead and drove away at a high speed. He drove for quite a distance until he reached Bulawayo, and we wonder how he managed it. When he reached Bulawayo, he abandoned that car and took another one.

He was intending to go to Salisbury (now Harare). As fate could have it he took a wrong turn somewhere and found himself heading for Plumtree. By this time we had already had contact with the enemy and our direction was slightly northwards of Plumtree, while the main group was also moving towards Plumtree.

There were several control posts along the road from Bulawayo to Plumtree. What actually happened is not clear. What came out was that he died with a policeman there. I think if he had a gun more powerful than a pistol, he would have done wonders. Sometime later, months and months later, (I had already been sentenced and I was at the condemned cells) I was called to come and identify his picture. They had taken a photograph of him. I denied knowing him. I gave instructions to the comrades when I returned to the cell to do the same.

The enemy was a bit rough with me for not knowing him. They were sure he was from our group, also a freedom fighter. They thought he was a Cape Coloured. We thought it was a good idea that he fights even when he is dead. They were rough the same way with the other comrades.

There is no doubt that this comrade is a true hero, whose name must never be forgotten in our songs and poems. It is regrettable and a tragedy that we do not know the place where he was buried. His bones were definitely going to be taken to a free and independent South Africa. He was young. If he was alive to this day, he would be one of our greatest leaders.

ZAMBEZI TOOK A SHARE

By R.M.T. Ngqungwana

The Zambezi flowed quietly, meandering towards the Indian Ocean, as we emerged from a gully. Looking straight across, the water was not visible. Only when you turned and looked across at an angle was it seen, a dim sparkle that seemed static. All round prevailed a dignified tranquility.

Far over the river could be seen dimly, the escarpment silhouetted against a dark horizon. A hippo gave out a cry, apparently sensing a presence that he deemed intrusive. Or it could have been a warning that the river had its own ways of unco-operation that we had to beware of; only we could not then know.

We retraced our steps so as to walk covered by a hillock and not be visible from the river or from across it. We walked eastwards, parallel with the river for a short distance.

As we emerged to an opening we were challenged by a muffled voice:

"Lizwe"?

"Lilo", our scout answered.

A shadow rose up from the ground and leaned against a tree and beckoned. We moved forward slowly. We had arrived at "Point LOLO" — the point from which we would cross the river into Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

The first man to approach us was Boston Gagarin. He was recognisable only by his stature and his gait. Otherwise Boston was just indistinguishable from the darkness, being very dark himself and short into the bargain. A jovial little chappie who was a wizard in softball back in Kongwa, I do not remember ever seeing him sulky.

Boston was already in his swimming trunk. He was the leader of the "Frog Men", as it were, of the HQ Reconnaissance Group. Reccy was detailed to cross and lead us to Base One, roughly twenty-five kilometres from the river, from where we would be on our own devices.

For days before this night we had been carting materials from a point where our vehicles stopped. Now everything was ready. We were crossing and we were excited.

After consultation with DD the raft was dragged from under a bush to the river shore. The

raft had been manufactured by the "Frog men." Six drums placed in twos' and planks nailed together and placed on top of the sheets and nails. On top of the planks was placed the load.

I was busy with the men, checking their personal equipment and haversacks, giving last instructions on order of movement and did not pay attention to the loading. It struck me that the loading was taking rather too long so I went to investigate and found, to my consternation, that everything we had was on that raft.

I remonstrated with the men but was informed that it had been DD's order to load everything. I went in search of him and found him together with ZAPU's Chief of Operations, both under a bush. DD remained adamant that all sixty-one boxes of ammunition should be on that first load.

"Comrade I disagree. We can't take everything we have in one load. There are sixty one boxes of ammunition, ten bags with guns (each bag containing eight guns) and a box of explosives. I cannot agree to that. What if the enemy appears when we are in the middle of the river? We won't be able to save the guns."

He was unmoved. "Comrade I have noticed that your problem is that you do not trust in the work of others. This place has been well reconnoitred. No enemy will appear".

I wanted to ask if the man had a working arrangement with the men in Salisbury, now Harare, but I was baulked by those words, "not trust in the work of others". Besides I had had some arguments with the man before, about some silly maps they gave me - they were surveyors maps printed in 1942. Out of the thirty-six of the advanced Group or the Sipolilo Company (which was part of the Luthuli Detachment) only seven of us were older than those maps. There were two of those maps.

The man was so cocksure that he even shouted over me, from where he was: "Right, carry on". Man, I even saw the echo of his words cutting the river into Rhodesia. I saw it, not heard it.

Without saying anything fur-

ther I about turned and went to the shore. "Comrade Chief (the Cuban-trained Zapu men were exasperating about their 'Chief' business) why don't you contact the other man that side and ask him not to start the fray while we are in the drink. It will not be fair, it will not be the fairness that the English are ever boastful of. I mean I can't imagine how I can fight and swim and carry all that load..."

"Vundle, shut up", I said.

A long thick rope was tied to the raft and the other end to a tree behind. It was pushed into the water. A few metres from the bank five men boarded the thing. Boston swam alongside, guiding the raft by muscle power.

We, behind, paid in the rope, slowly. We had to assist in controlling the raft by not allowing it to move fast.

Whhoosh-whoosh-whoosh, the thing moved in, slowly, out of visibility. It reached the middle of the river where now the current was strong and fast.

Then things happened. Boston's voice pierced the tranquility from the middle of the river.

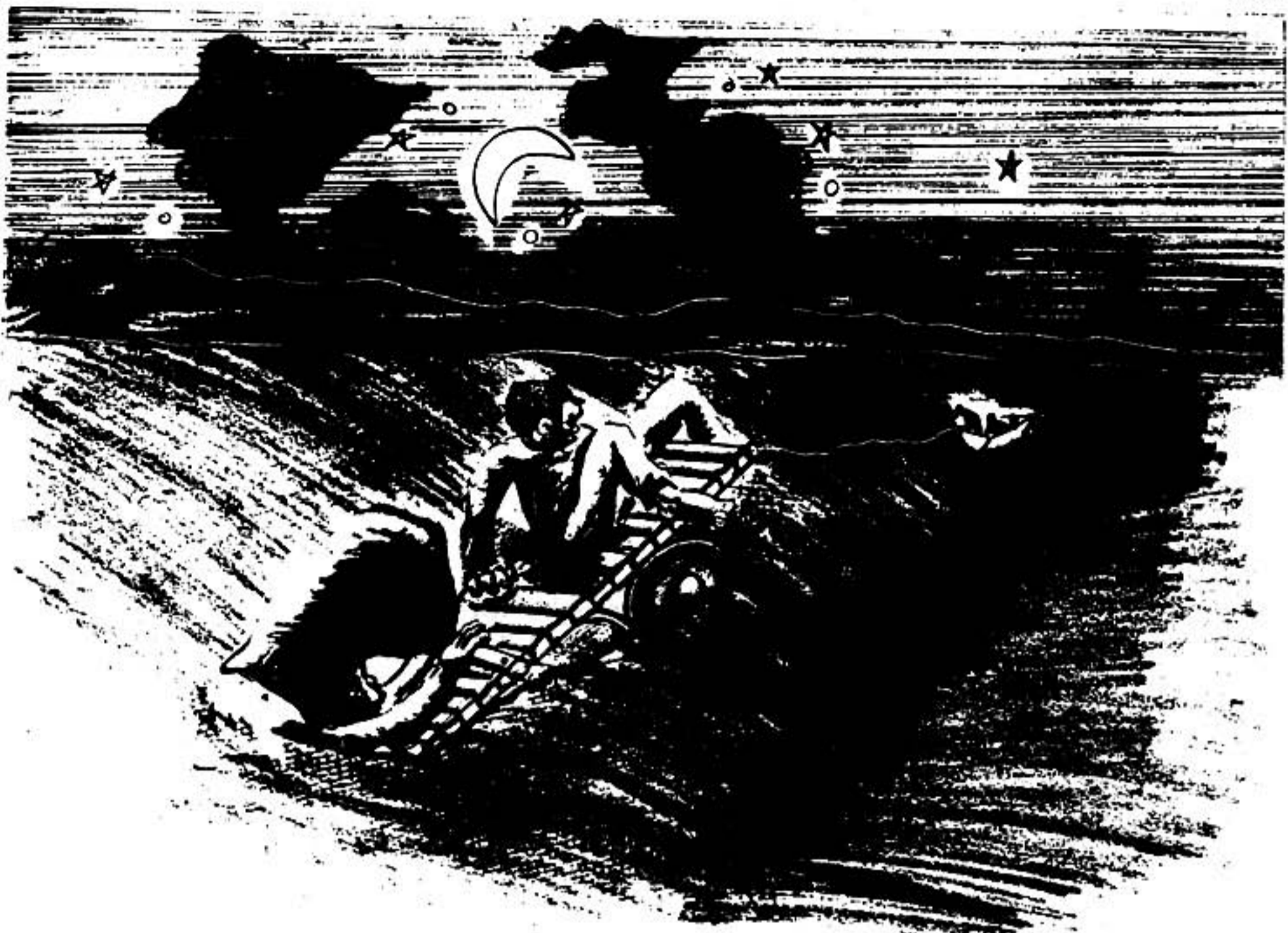
"Hee, Dontsa, Baphel'abantu, dontsa" (Pull, men are doomed, pull).

"Heyi, pull men, pull. Fast, pull", I urged.

With all the power we had we pulled back the raft. It was now heavier, as if the thing had submerged already. We pulled.

Guluva (David Sibiya) one of the frog men, came running from behind, holding a small boat aloft, above his head. When he reached the water he made a swift dive in which the boat landed on the water before his body fell into it. Guluva was nimble, acrobatic and fearless.

The strong rowings he had reached the raft; the third made him pass it. Then he dived out of the boat and swam eastwards, leaving the boat behind. It was only then that I noticed someone struggling in the water. It was Robert Moyo, a mature man from Gwanda, South of Bulawayo. Moyo had tied his boots by his laces and slung them over his shoulder. He was now being pushed by the current to Mozambique and beyond. Moyo had never swam in his life.



BOSTON'S VOICE PIERCED THE TRANQUILITY FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER. "PULL, MEN ARE DOOMED, PULL!"

Guluva dragged him back and reached another one who was rolling in the water. Mlalazi, of our Group's Reconnaissance, had last swam when he was still a toddler. He was now roughly twenty-six. When Guluva reached the boat he had a man in each arm. He headed them both into it and pushed it. I was wondering why he did not board the thing and paddle when I noticed that there was another man in the water, who also had difficulty staying square above the water- he kept on going down head first.

"Pull, men, pull," I urged. I was panicking. We tugged. Boston was busy swimming around the listing raft, pushing and helping the two men who had held on to the thing.

We pulled, breathing hard. It was just my luck to have chosen exactly men who had never made it their business to learn swimming. Like a fool I had not even tried to look for men who could swim, at least for the first crossing.

The small boat could carry only three men and so Guluva remained in the water, pushing the boat to the shore, slantwise against the current. I wondered why he did not cut straight. It was only the following morning when I noticed that there were boulders that he had been avoiding.

Slowly the raft approached; Boston was still busy, pushing the raft encouraging the men not to despair.

We pulled. The thing was heavy. It reached the shore at last. We unloaded what had remained - one bag of guns. Later we discovered that this was the bag in which we had put the only tin we had of detonating capsules.

Guluva and his men reached the shore. The boy looked as if he had just gone for a short swim in a Municipality Swimming Pool, where the deepest point was seven feet.

We carried all into the bushes, boat and raft.

The current had prised loose one of the drums and the raft had capsized after the drum had swum away into the Indian Ocean.

All sixty-one boxes of ammunition (45,750 rounds) seventy-two guns, fifty kilograms of explosives, a few odds and ends like ropes, torches, picks, spades, saws, etc, went into the drink. They are still there for all I know.

The bag that had escaped the ditching was because it had held on a nail. The bag contained the old Italian Beretta rifles you know, the lousy affair that kicks your collar-bone recoiling after every shot. AK's, Papashas, Checkoslovakian She's,

Soviet DP's, Bazookas, SKS's the lot, fell into the river.

This was on the 28th December 1967. We had to move back, away from the river. Fortunately the MK Commander-in-Chief and the ZAPU Chief-Of-Operations were around. We reported the disaster and I put in a word that I would linger no more near the river. We would cross the following night as I feared to be discovered before we had crossed.

We had our personal arms and ammunition. The load we had lost had been destined for new recruits inside the country. So arms could be brought to us in the country later on.

The C-In-C did not voice objections and the Chief of Operations supported my stand. It was the Security Chief, DD, who attempted to raise objections. A red-eyed glare silenced him. Really the man had cheek. His argument was not based from a security point of view but that the whole Sipolilo operation was based on our recruiting, training and arming the new cadres. A few pungent words that were not complimentary silenced him. We crossed on the night of the 29th December, 1967 and were thirty kilometres inside the country - Rhodesia - by 06.00 hrs of the 30th when we camped.

THE ADVENTURER EPISODE

IN 1971 the South African police announced that they had made a big catch. They talked of having foiled the dramatic plans of the ANC to land Umkhonto guerrillas and weapons along the Transkei coast. Six comrades had been caught and tried in what became one of the most sensational trials of that period. Four of the accused were MK combatants. They were Justice Mpanza, Theo Cholo, Petros Mthembu and Gardner Sijake. One was a young Irishman Sean Hosey, and the sixth was Alex Moumbaris.

The MK combatants were part of a group which had left South Africa in the early part of the 1960's for military training. Theo and Justice were senior comrades who had participated in the earlier activities of MK. Justice headed MK in KwaMashu and was part of the Luthuli detachment. He fought in Wankie. Theo was from Pietersburg and served in the movement in Johannesburg. Petros also served in Johannesburg, while Gardner was from the Transkei. Hosey was an Irish internationalist and member of the Young Communists of Great Britain. Moumbaris was one could say, a man from many lands. He is actually Greek, but born in Egypt, grew up in Australia, worked in Britain and married a French woman.

SETBACKS

Before going into the case one should review the proceeding period. Following the Rivonia trial our movement suffered serious setbacks. We had many trained cadres abroad and they were to be infiltrated back into the country to our underground structures. But the blows of that period led to widespread roundups of our activists and leaders. The subsequent arrest of Bram Fischer and Wilton Mkwayi also seriously disrupted our plans. Mass struggle was at a rather low ebb and the spirit of resistance was not high. These factors made it extremely difficult to re-infiltrate our combatants.

But there was no question of surrender. Our leadership continued to work on the infiltration of combatants and weapons. So what transpired from the state allegations which really caught the public imagination, was that the ANC leadership had been constantly

— Ronnie Kasrils



endeavouring to build and infiltrate the people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe.

In Somalia a sea operation was allegedly planned along the coast of Transkei. It was planned, the state alleged, by OR Tambo, Joe Slovo and Moses Mabhida. The plan was to land twenty-five highly trained cadres from a ship called the *Adventurer* which the ANC had purchased. They claimed that Moumbaris had reconnoitred the coast and, with people unknown to the state, organised the landing reception. However the *Adventurer* had run into problems off the East African coast. On the high seas the engines failed resulting in the boat returning to Somalia.

What followed was that the twenty-five guerrillas were infiltrated over-land back to South Africa. Moumbaris was one of those who provided border reconnaissance and transportation. Unfortunately one of the comrades who was infiltrated was caught and informed the enemy of Moumbaris's role and identified some of the others.

As a result Moumbaris and his wife were arrested at a Botswana

border post whilst engaged in an operation. Theophilus was arrested in Pietersburg and Justice in Durban. Hosey was trapped by the enemy as he handed documents and funds to a special branch who he thought was Justice. This resulted in what the enemy called the '*Moumbaris Adventurer Episode*'. They had hoped to expose the ANC as some kind of international terrorist organisation.

Instead the people everywhere were inspired and amazed. The imaginative episode really caught their minds even though the *Adventurer* turned out to be a leaky old tub. What was however significant, was that we had succeeded in infiltrating many trained cadres and that only a few were captured. The man who the boers called James Bond was subsequently to shock the boers and the world once again in 1979 when he succeeded in escaping from Pretoria Central Prison with Lee and Jenkins. Moumbaris was serving a fifteen year prison sentence.

SPECULATION

There are many stories and speculations as to why Moumbaris got involved in our struggle. I would say that his background gave him a strong sense of internationalism, although he did not come from a political family. After he went to Britain he began to associate with communists. From there he learnt a lot about the communist resistance to the Nazi occupation of Greece, and was greatly inspired by the internationalism of the British communists. He began to associate with the ANC exiles and in many ways was an exile himself. The state revealed that since 1967 he had been travelling in and out of South Africa transporting literature and material for our movement. He had also once unfurled an ANC banner from a building in Durban.

Like Moumbaris the other comrades were also sentenced to fifteen years. Hosey served a five year sentence and then returned to Britain. The four MK combatants; Theophilus, Justice, Gardner and Petros will soon be free. They in all senses have proved to be exemplary cadres of our people's army. Today Hosey and Moumbaris are active participants in the international solidarity movement with our struggle.

The military code of Umkhonto we Sizwe

Preamble

Recognising that our army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, must define its aims and objects in clear and precise terms, and that the rights and duties of each member should be likewise defined without ambiguity, the Politico-Military Council, acting on behalf of the African National Congress of South Africa, has adopted and hereby decrees this code for the guidance of members in cell positions.

1. *Umkhonto we Sizwe* — a People's Army

The ANC and its allies created Umkhonto as a new and indispensable weapon in the struggle for people's power. Unlike the armed forces of the racist regime of South Africa, which we have vowed to crush and annihilate, and unlike all other armies of imperialism, Umkhonto we Sizwe is a People's Army organised and dedicated to waging a people's war for the liberation of our country.

Umkhonto is an army of volunteers. It consists of volunteers drawn from the revolutionary sections of our people. By joining Umkhonto, combatants commit themselves to the solemn and noble duty of serving our suffering and dispossessed people in the struggle that will continue for each and all of us until victory or death.

In the words of our founding Manifesto, published on the historic day of 16th December 1961: 'Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the racist government and its policies of racial oppression. It will be the striking force of the people for liberty, for rights and for their final liberation.'

The founding Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe is our definitive declaration of intent, and an essential guide to the reasons for the creation and aims of this, the People's Army. We append the Manifesto to this Code, to be studied and understood by every Umkhonto combatant. It was no coincidence that MK's first operations were launched on December 16th, Dingane's Day. Umkhonto will carry on the warrior tradition of our people under the conditions of modern guerrilla warfare.

Those who join Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army, perform a sacred duty to our people, our nation and the South African Revolution. When we have liberated our country, Umkhonto will constitute the basis of the defence forces of our country and the Revolution, and will serve as an instrument of social progress.

An Umkhonto combatant has

the opportunity to serve in the forefront of the liberation struggle, to meet the enemy and engage him with modern weapons, to become a steeled revolutionary who at all times, is determined to serve and protect the people and his fellow comrades-in-arms.

We look back with great pride to the period of militant non-violent struggle waged by the ANC. During this period our people learnt through their own experience that they could not satisfy their aspirations except by means of armed struggle arising out of our mass political activity and culminating in a revolutionary seizure of power.

When the time was ripe for violent forms of struggle, our people understood and supported the decision to take up arms. They clearly understood as long ago as December 1961, that our Movement had exhausted all peaceful avenues, and that the oppressor had imposed on us a war situation. The alternative to armed struggle was submission. As the Umkhonto Manifesto declared: 'The People's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices — submit or fight. That time has now come in South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.'

Political and Military Struggle

Umkhonto we Sizwe is the fighting arm of the ANC and its allies. Our armed struggle is a continuation of our political struggle by means that include armed force. The political leadership has primacy over the military. Our military line derives from our political line. Every commander, commissar, instructor and combatant must therefore be clearly acquainted with the policy with regard to all combat tasks and missions. All of us must know clearly who the enemy is, and for what we are fighting. Thus MK cadres are not only military units, they are also political leaders and organisers of our people. That is the major distinction between our people's revolutionary army and the army and wholly militarised authoritarian armed forces of the racists, imperialists and reactionary regimes. Umkhonto cadres, with arms in hand, are political activists and leaders, as well as warriors. This combination of political and military functions is characteristic of all popular, revolutionary armies especially in the phase of guerrilla warfare.

People's War

Umkhonto is a people's army fighting a people's war. We fight to liberate our oppressed and exploited

people. We fight for their interests. Umkhonto has no mercenaries, no paid soldiers or conscripted troops. It consists of the sons and daughters of the most oppressed, the most exploited sections of our people. For these reasons we claim with pride and truth: Umkhonto is the Spear of the Nation.

We fight a people's war, not by armed struggle alone, but first and above all by political education, leadership and mobilisation. It is a people's war because the struggle is to win the active support and participation of all who resist oppression, discrimination, poverty and injustice.

The people support their army by providing it with recruits — their sons and daughters — food, shelter, and information about the enemy. The people open the way for our guerrillas and make the enemy's path hard. Everyone can become a freedom fighter. The struggle has many fronts and is not confined to trained soldiers alone.

The ANC mobilises the people in support of the revolution through skilful combination of all forms of struggle: violent and non-violent, legal and illegal, strikes and demonstrations, boycotts and non-cooperation, propaganda, education and sabotage. A people's war is fought by the people with arms and all other forms and methods of struggle. Without the organised support of the people, armed struggle is in danger of being isolated and strangled. The enemy attempts to isolate us by launching campaigns to win the 'hearts and minds' of the people — of our people — the oppressed and suffering workers and peasants. To defeat the enemy, we must involve the entire people in the National Democratic Revolution.

The enemy controls the state, its armed forces, police and courts. But he does not command the hearts and minds of the people. They are with us in a just war for national liberation. Their support is our chief weapon. What gives the guerrilla his advantage is his political superiority and people's support. As pointed out in Operation Mayibuye (1963) the most important guarantee of victory is 'the support of the people who in certain situations are better protection than mountains and forests'.

Our People's Army

a) Umkhonto we Sizwe fights to liberate our people from racial discrimination, national oppression and exploitation.

b) The common enemy is the racist minority which identifies with and gives aid to the National Party regime, the creator and driving force of apartheid.

Umkhonto we Sizwe Manifesto

Leaflet issued by Umkhonto we Sizwe (*Spear of the Nation*) on 16 December 1961

Units of Umkhonto we Sizwe today carried out planned attacks against Government installations, particularly those connected with the policy of apartheid and race discrimination.

Umkhonto we Sizwe is a new, independent body, formed by Africans. It includes in its ranks South Africans of all races. It is not connected in any way with a so-called "Committee for National Liberation" whose existence has been announced in the press. Umkhonto we Sizwe will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by new methods, which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation organizations. Umkhonto we Sizwe fully supports the national liberation movement, and our members jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement.

It is, however, well known that the main national liberation organizations in this country have consistently followed a policy of non-violence. They have conducted themselves peaceably at all times, regardless of Government attacks and persecutions upon them, and despite all Government-inspired attempts to provoke them to violence. They have done so because the people prefer peaceful methods of change to achieve their aspirations without the suffering and bitterness of civil war. But the people's patience is not endless.

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 within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.

The Government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for Government violence. Refusal to resort to force has been interpreted by the Government as an invitation to use armed force against the people without any fear of reprisals. The methods of Umkhonto we Sizwe mark a break with that past.

We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The Government policy of force, repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only! The choice is not ours; it has been

made by the Nationalist Government which has rejected every peaceable demand by the people for rights and freedom and answered every such demand with force and yet more force! Twice in the past 18 months, virtual martial law has been imposed in order to beat down peaceful, non-violent strike action of the people in support of their rights. It is now preparing its forces — enlarging and rearming its armed forces and drawing the white civilian population into commandos and pistol clubs — for full-scale military actions against the people. The Nationalist Government has chosen the course of force and massacre, now, deliberately, as it did at Sharpeville.

Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the Government and its policies of race oppression. It will be the striking force of the people for liberty, for rights and for their final liberation! Let the Government, its supporters who put it into power, and those whose passive toleration of reaction keeps it in power, take note of where the Nationalist Government is leading the country!

We of Umkhonto we Sizwe have always sought — as the liberation movement has sought — to achieve liberation, without bloodshed and civil clash. We do so still. We hope — even at this late hour — that our first actions will awaken every one to a realization of the disastrous situation to which the Nationalist policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the Government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both the Government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war. We believe our actions to be a blow against the Nationalist preparations for civil war and military rule.

In these actions, we are working in the best interests of all the people of this country — black, brown and white — whose future happiness and well-being cannot be attained without the overthrow of the Nationalist Government, the abolition of white supremacy and the winning of liberty, democracy and full national rights and equality for all the people of this country.

We appeal for the support and encouragement of all those South Africans who seek the happiness and freedom of the people of this country.

Afrika Mayibuyel!

Issued by command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

*Africa Return!

c) Our programme is the Freedom Charter; it defines the goals of all democrats regardless of colour, race or creed.

d) The interests of the people and the demands of the revolution are inseparable and the main concern of the people's army.

e) Our MK Manifesto declares that the army includes in its ranks South Africans of all races. But the overwhelming majority are members of the most oppressed and exploited people. By this dedication and commitment and training, they represent the vanguard of our people. In Umkhonto language, the army is the Spear of the Nation.

5. Umkhonto insists on a high standard of selfless devotion to the revolution on the part of all its members. They are required at all times to:

- behave correctly to the people;
- respect their persons and property
- refrain from molesting or interfering with their legitimate activities;
- assist them to solve their problems and where possible give material aid in their labour; and
- demonstrate high moral qualities in word and deed.

Revolutionary Discipline and Consciousness

To defeat the enemy in combat, our soldiers must be disciplined, trained to obey commands promptly, and ready to spring into battle immediately when ordered. Vigilance, alertness and readiness to engage the enemy at a moment's notice are qualities that can develop only out of discipline, proper training and political consciousness.

Bourgeois and reactionary armies like the army forces of the racists, instil a mechanical and robot-like obedience in their units. The people's army has a different conception of discipline and loyalty. Umkhonto soldiers are volunteers, willing and trained to carry out orders in the knowledge that instant obedience is the only way to safeguard life, both of the individual and his comrades-in-arms, and to protect the people whom he serves.

Umkhonto soldiers pledge themselves to safeguard the revolution at all times regardless of personal hardships, suffering and danger. A soldier who breaks discipline, disobeys commands or by improper conduct betrays the high standards of our army will be

punished. Such punishment is necessary to maintain the qualities expected of a people's army. Every attempt is made to correct bad behaviour and rehabilitate members who violate the army's code. But punishment is severe in cases of serious crimes, treachery and criminal neglect endangering the safety of others and the security of the army.

Our procedure and rules are well defined, precise and to the point. Military orders are issued with a definite purpose and must be obeyed. It is the duty and responsibility of every soldier to know and understand the army's code of conduct, to recognise his military commanders, to be clear about his own duties, and to carry out orders immediately and without question. Orders must be obeyed. It is the duty and responsibility of every soldier to know and understand the army's code of conduct, to recognise his military commanders, to be clear about his own duties, and to carry out orders immediately and without question. Orders must be obeyed cheerfully, promptly and exactly. A soldier who does not understand an order has a right to have it explained. He must know

when to raise problems, to whom he must report, and how to obtain clarification. He must not, in any circumstances, refuse to obey a command or argue over the execution of an order.

Outright disobedience and failure to obey an order promptly may have serious consequences. A soldier who thinks that he has been given a wrong order must obey it first and if need be complain afterwards to his commander. Our commanding officers, commissars, instructors and others who are entrusted with responsibility to lead must be above reproach. They are to be a shining example of modesty, sound moral behaviour, correct attitudes towards all members, respectful and helpful to every member of the army, regardless of his position. Commanders and Political Commissars occupy a central role in Umkhonto. Without them disorder can result. They are the principal target of the enemy and must be given maximum protection. Umkhonto is engaged in guerrilla warfare against a powerful and remorseless enemy which resorts to torture, banditry and terrorism.

During the stage of guerrilla warfare, great initiative and resourcefulness are required of every combatant. Under such conditions, formalities such as the courtesy of saluting commanders are reduced to a minimum, while discipline and vigilance are maintained at the highest levels.

In our external training bases, however, we have conditions and facilities similar to those of a regular army. Here we insist on full military procedures, including the practice of saluting commanding personnel; higher ranks; parades; roll calls; and fall-ins. These are necessary for orderly camp life and discipline and co-operation among guerrillas in combat zones.

The inner forms of discipline, arising from political maturity and consciousness of our struggle, are far more important and enduring than a discipline enforced from above. But a proud bearing, alertness and quick response to commands, a smart uniform, and respect of leadership, commanders and commissars are the hallmarks of a good soldier who is proud of his platoon, detachment and army.

With the triumph of our revolution, Umkhonto will be the official army of our country, the true shield of our nation, defending the people against external aggression and internal counter-revolution. To prepare ourselves for these noble tasks, we must live up to the army's code of conduct in all respects and at all times during the present phase of our struggle.

General Regulations

1. All army units shall preserve and safeguard political and military and organisational information relating to the army's security and well being.

The wilful or negligent disclosure of classified information to unauthorised persons, and the unauthorised acquisition and/or retention of secrets and classified documents shall be an offence.

2. All combatants must defend the ANC and be loyal to it, the army and the revolution. The following acts or omissions shall be an offence:
 - a) Disloyalty or deception designed or likely to give assistance to the enemy.
 - b) Rebellion or revolt against the army command or part of it or attempts to commit such an act of rebellion or revolt.
 - c) Conduct which causes despondency, spreads a spirit of defeatism, or undermines morale in any member or section of the army.
 - d) Cowardly conduct in the face of the enemy.
 - e) Wilful disobedience or refusal of orders properly given by a commander.
 - f) Desertion from the army.

3. All combatants shall act in such a manner that the people will put their trust in the army, recognise it as their protector, and accept the liberation movement as their legitimate and authentic representative.

The following acts or omissions shall be an offence:

- a) Conduct that weakens the people's trust, confidence and faith in the ANC and Umkhonto.
- b) Theft from a comrade or the people, looting of property, or other forcible seizure of goods.
- c) Abuse of authority and/or power
- d) Cruelty inflicted on a member of the army or public.
- e) Assaults, rape, disorderly conduct, the use of insulting and/or obscene language, bullying and intimidation, whether against a comrade or member of the public.
- f) Shameful conduct likely to disgrace the ANC, army or the offender, or bring them into disrepute, or provoke indignation and contempt against them, such as violating the rights and dignity of the opposite sex, whether in operational or base areas.
- g) Unjustifiable homicide.
- h) Ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons in custody.

4. All combatants shall protect the leadership and property of the ANC and Umkhonto.

The following acts or omissions shall be an offence:

- a) Failure to protect commanders and commissars against assaults or attacks.
- b) Wilful or negligent destruction, neglect or misuse of the property and/or funds of the ANC and army.
- c) Failure to submit and hand over to the commanding authority property seized or acquired during military operations.
- d) Negligence in handling, using or storing and loss of weapons.

5. All combatants are required to have

the permission of a competent authority to travel, move from one place to another, or leave a camp, base or residence to which they are assigned.

The following acts or omissions shall be an offence:

- a) Absence without permission.
- b) Escaping or attempting to escape from the custody of a competent authority.

6. All combatants and members of the ANC and Umkhonto shall observe high moral standards and show an adequate sense of responsibility.

The following acts or omissions shall be an offence:

- a) Smoking dagga or using other harmful drugs or being in unauthorised possession of the same.
- b) Neglect of duty.
- c) Drunkenness on duty and/or in public.

7. All members of the ANC and combatants are required to promote and preserve the unity of the ANC, the army, the liberation movement and the people.

Any act or speech that provokes tribal or regional animosities or spreads disunity by means of factionalism and/or racism shall be an offence.

8. Punishment.

All members of the ANC and combatants are required to respect the terms of the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War in line with the formal acceptance by the ANC of these terms in 1981. Any violation of these terms shall be an offence.

All members of the ANC and Umkhonto shall tactfully observe the general regulations and shall be liable to the penalties prescribed for offences under the regulations. The purpose of punishment is to deter members from committing an offence, assist offenders to rehabilitate and protect the ANC, Umkhonto, liberation and revolution. In imposing punishment, the competent authorities shall be guided by high political principles to the exclusion of personal animosity or any trace of vendetta. Punishment shall be administered humanely and without undue harshness or cruelty.

The following punishments may be ordered for offences under the regulations according to the gravity of the offence and the circumstances under which it was committed:

1. Reprimand or rebuke administered in private or public.
2. Suspension from duty for a specified period.
3. Fatigue and drills.
4. Restriction with hard labour for a specified period determined by tribunal.
5. Demotion from a position of responsibility.
6. Restriction in a rehabilitation centre.
7. Dishonourable discharge.

8. Solitary confinement for a period determined by tribunal.

9. The maximum penalty.

10. Any other penalty not included herein but appearing in the schedule of penalties for grave or serious crimes and violations.

Rules and Regulations Covering the Handling of Weapons and Explosives of our Movement.

Introduction

Among the most sacred duties of a soldier in MK is to protect and preserve the weaponry and other war material of our army — in certain circumstances even with his life. The loss of a weapon would be regarded in the same light as the loss of a limb and has serious consequences for the body of our army.

Our weaponry and other war materials are there to be used against our enemy and must, at all times, be maintained in a proper state of combat readiness and must only be used to further our revolution. This is the duty of every organ and individual soldier entrusted with the task of handling such material.

In the interest of our revolution the following rules and regulations will be strictly enforced.

1. The Politico-Military Council under the direction of the NEC shall be the organ which decides on the distribution and use of all weapons and explosives in any given area.

2. All members of the ANC who possess a personal weapon or weapons are under obligation to declare it or them to the authorised organs or persons in the Movement for registration and for determining whether the comrade should be authorised to keep the weapon or surrender it.

3. All weapons not supplied by authorised persons in the hands of individuals or groups must be reported and declared immediately. Failing to fulfil this requirement constitutes a serious offence against the Movement and carries with it a heavy punishment.

4. Unauthorised possession and use of weapons is strictly prohibited.

5. It is strictly forbidden to point a weapon, loaded or otherwise, at any person other than our enemy.

6. It is serious offence to abandon without proper cause, lose, misuse, neglect or damage weapons, ammunition and explosives.

7. Unauthorised exchange, barter or transfer of a weapon(s) is strictly forbidden.

8. All weapons, ammunition and explosives must be handled by authorised persons and must be totally concealed in public except during combat marches in our training camps and schools and where permission is granted to have weapons for the defence of ANC personnel and property.

9. All records, inventories of all war materials have to be kept by Ordnance, Security and by any organ entrusted with such material.

10. The use of materials for emergency purposes has to be reported to the appropriate authority.

11. The security and care of weapons shall be the responsibility of those entrusted with them.

12. All transfer and movement of war materials from one area to the

other shall be entrusted to the Ordnance Department

13. Safety measures must be observed when handling weapons and explosives.

14. Authorised persons are not allowed to handle weapons under the influence of liquor.

THE BATTLE OF NYATUWE

(Related by Comrade Rogers, a Wankie veteran).

WE reached Nyatuwe early in the morning before sunrise. After establishing an outpost and detailing some comrades for guard duties, I, Masimini and the overall commander left for reconnaissance around the area. Nyatuwe is a river but it was dry at the time.

On the side we had camped there was a small bush which provided good cover against airplanes, helicopters, and distant people. A hundred metres from this bush, on the north-western side of the river, there was a hillock with huge rocks on top. On the other side there was dry elephant grass.

The hillock was a very strategic position because from it you could observe allround and would be in a position to spot the enemy from afar. The sector of fire also would be 360 degrees. But we couldn't occupy it because of lack of cover from the air. After scouting the area we decided to have only one outpost with all-round defence, everybody sleeping at his position.

The sun was about to rise. We had decided to camp there till 16.30 hours. We would then clear the area of traces for an hour and continue with our march at 17.30 hours. After having meals I went to sleep. Our outpost was near, just at the edge of the forest, and my position was +20m from the outpost.

At about 0.7.00 hrs a spotter plane circled over our position twice. We ignored it. Just when I was beginning to fall asleep, I think at 08.30 hrs, a deafening salvo of automatic rifles fire from all directions broke the silence. From the sound it was clear the weapons were not ours. Then I heard a boer voice bellowing: "SURRENDER"

When I lifted my head a long burst went off and the ZAPU comrade who was manning the outpost 20m from me was hit. The enemy was firing from hip position and the noise made by their weapons overwhelmed ours. Their fire pinned me down. I lay flat as I was on the ground, with bullets hitting the

sand all around me.

This sudden volley from the enemy, coupled with white men voices shouting "surrender" unnerved some of the comrades. There was some little confusion. But fortunately some of the comrades took position and returned fire. Masimini was shouting on top of his voice saying he will shoot any son-of-a-bitch who ran away, ordering them to fire back. Others had merely taken cover and were not firing at the enemy.

I heard Masimini calling my name, coming towards my direction. Besides him there were Kid Marongrong (ZAPU) and Sibanyoni, nicknamed Ntsimbikayigobi. They saw I was pinned down, Masimini and Kid had sub-machine guns and Sibanyoni a light machine-gun. With long burst the three guns spoke, and the enemy was forced to take cover.

In a few seconds I was up, took my bag and gun, told Masimini and Sibanyoni to follow me and ordered Kid to cover me. On the way I met Zami (Bothwell Tamane) who was alone manning another position, firing at the enemy. The fire that side was very heavy. I thought the enemy could be trying to make a breakthrough that side. I instructed Sibanyoni to take position besides Zami with his L.M.G. and ordered Zami to cease fire and wait till the enemy was 50m away. I told him that the day was still young and we had to be careful not to exhaust our supplies of ammunition. "Our survival depends on our accuracy," I said. I also gave them their sectors of fire.

Suddenly the enemy burst out from the trees and there were helicopters hovering over us. We took positions (I and Masimini), joined by Sharp (MK). We were five. None opened fire. The enemy was firing from the hip, rushing towards us. When I estimated they were 50m and their fire was already pinning us down, I replied with my sub-machine guns.

Hell broke loose. We concentrated our fire where the enemy had taken cover and we are certain we injured and killed many. I signalled to Zami and Masimini to cease fire. We waited for about 3 minutes during which the fire from the enemy had subsided. I retreated with both Zami and Masimini. I was going to collect the third L.M.G. which I gave to Zami. My main worry was the hillock. If we could allow the enemy to capture it our position would be very precarious. We came out of the bush and ran towards the hillock. When we were at the foot of the hillock a helicopter appeared. It opened fire at us with its 12.7mm machine gun. We ran back to the bush and took cover.

The enemy sprayed the bush and the foot of hillock with a hail of bullets. This alone indicated their interest in the hillock. The enemy suddenly appeared on top of the hillock. The white officer shouted: "surrender, you're surrounded." This was communicated to us in Shona and Ndebele through an interpreter. The comrades were waiting for me to issue the command to open fire.

I crawled out of the bush into the open space and saw the white officer, his interpreter, his communication officer beside him and another African. Then I asked Ronnie Dube (ZAPU) . . . to translate and shout at them the following "we will never surrender!" Ronnie said it twice and their interpreter translated. I then signalled that we open fire.

We opened a heavy volley, concentrated on the hilltop. An African and the white officer (major) were shot down. The communication officer was pinned down between the rocks. I ordered Sibanyoni and Ronnie to concentrate fire on him and also provide us with cover.

I took Zami, Masimini and Donda and gave them positions where I expected the enemy would appear from. And from that position they would also be able to cover the hillock more effectively. I ordered that under no circumstances were they to leave that position. I knew I was giving this order to true soldiers. I told them that the success of the group's mission depended on that hillock.

Both Zami and Masimini were snipers. Zami was once Chief of Ordnance in Kongwa (the first MK camp in Tanzania) where he used to zero Frelimo's weapons and ours. Masimini was trained as a detachment commander in the Soviet Union. I knew he had courage even before we had contact with the enemy, courage that had been tempered by the commando course he underwent in Egypt. He is the man who saved my life at the beginning of this battle.

It is in the afternoon and the fire from the enemy, both from the air and ground, is so heavy, especially on the hillock, where nothing except dust could be seen. There were two helicopters attacking us from above. To combat them we would all open long burst simultaneously, aiming at the pilot, the door with the 12.7mm machine-gun and the tail where we suspected the fuel tank was.

The first helicopter entered our sector of fire and flew away unscathed. So did the second. But when the first one came back for the second time it did not last long within our sector and we saw smoke escaping from its tail. It never came back. Later on during interrogation (after we'd been captured) we were asked if we had armour-piercing bullets or heavy machine-guns. No explanations were given for those questions but we later gathered from the special branch men that that helicopter was damaged though it managed to limp back to base.

Mhambi came from the hillock to report that Masimini and Bothwell were injured. Masimini's arm had been hit and the bone was piercing through the flesh. After he had been dressed he continued firing with his light machine-gun. Bothwell was hit in the leg. Mhambi also told us that there were many boer corpses strewn all over Masimini's sector.

At that moment the helicopters came back in full force, with heavy reinforcement from the ground. Mhambi could not go back to the hillock to attend Masimini under that helicopter fire. From the hillock only one light machine-gun could be heard constantly. Masimini's could be heard after long intervals. Soon thereafter the other L.M.G. went silent, only Masimini's and Zami's sub-machine gun could be heard.

It was now late in the afternoon towards sunset. We were able to send M.O.'s, and other comrades to go and assist fetch Masimini and Donda from the hillock. They found Donda late. He was hit by a 12.7 mm bullet in the back, taking out a big chunk of flesh. After sunset I went to see Masimini. He was in a bad state, having lost lots of blood. He couldn't move his arm at all. We tried all we could to carry him along, from carrying him on our backs to using make-shift stretchers but to no avail. He told us to leave him behind and proceed, "the corridor must be opened at all cost," he said. We left Masimini there with his weapon and ammunition and took advantage of the night that had fallen to break out of the encirclement and continue our march home. Masimini was murdered by the enemy the following day.

What enabled us to hold out for the whole day against such heavy

odds I think was the fact that the enemy did not know our strength. It was also their first experience to be defied when they commanded: "surrender" and be replied with fire instead. Never before had they lost such a large number of white soldiers, including commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

Those who might think this is just a propaganda exercise should refer to the Rhodesian and South African papers of that period. They could not completely hide their losses. If that does not suffice the court proceedings of our trial can also bear witness. A white captain of the Rhodesia Special Air Service, who claimed to have fought in Malaysia, was on crutches when he came to give evidence in court. He praised our group.

An African Sergeant-major who was also on crutches said the operation against us was the first in which they sustained such heavy losses out of all the operations in which he took part in Rhodesia. It was also mentioned that a senior white officer, whose rank was not stated, was lying in hospital paralysed. Elsewhere a white officer giving evidence in court was interrupted several times by the Attorney General because some of his statements were "damaging to the army". The judge ordered pressmen not to report them. He said he was not ashamed to say he ran away and was proud at least he did not leave his rifle behind like some of his colleagues did.

Back to the main story. During our last battle (some seven or ten days later) Bothwell was shot in the head twice. Fortunately both were flesh wounds. We dug for him a fox-hole, put him in it and covered it with his clothes, branches and sand, leaving a small opening for breathing. We continued fighting but were ultimately overpowered by the enemy. By then only seven of us were remaining, five ZAPU comrades, myself and Bothwell. The six of us were captured and did not expose Bothwell where we had hidden him because we thought he still had a chance of surviving and find his way out.

One of the military helicopters that were transporting us flew back to the spot (probably to fetch the Rhodesian soldiers that were remaining) and landed 20 meters from Bothwell's hiding place. The strong wind from the helicopter's propeller removed the sand on top of him and it was in that way he was discovered and captured.

We were both sentenced to death, a sentence commuted to life eventually, and we were released in 1980 when Zimbabwe became independent.

1976 to the present

Joe Slovo

Then came Soweto 1976 and the events connected to it in Southern Africa, i.e. the liberation of Mozambique, Angola, the intensified struggle in Zimbabwe, etc. Real possibilities opened up not just for getting men and material inside the country but also continuing to service them and maintain some kind of contact which was not possible previously. People who went in were just cut off as it were. They had to rely on their own resources in an atmosphere where people were not in a militant mood and the country was filled with informers.

1976 brought about a change. The mood created by the 1976 uprising provided a political base in a very general way. It then became possible to send men in successfully.

action. There were, of course, periods of ups and downs but in general the scale of actions grew in intensity and sophistication.

This stage of armed propaganda was extremely successful in that it played a seminal role in creating the political mood which led to the ferment and upsurge which we have been witnessing for the last two years in particular but had begun growing long before.

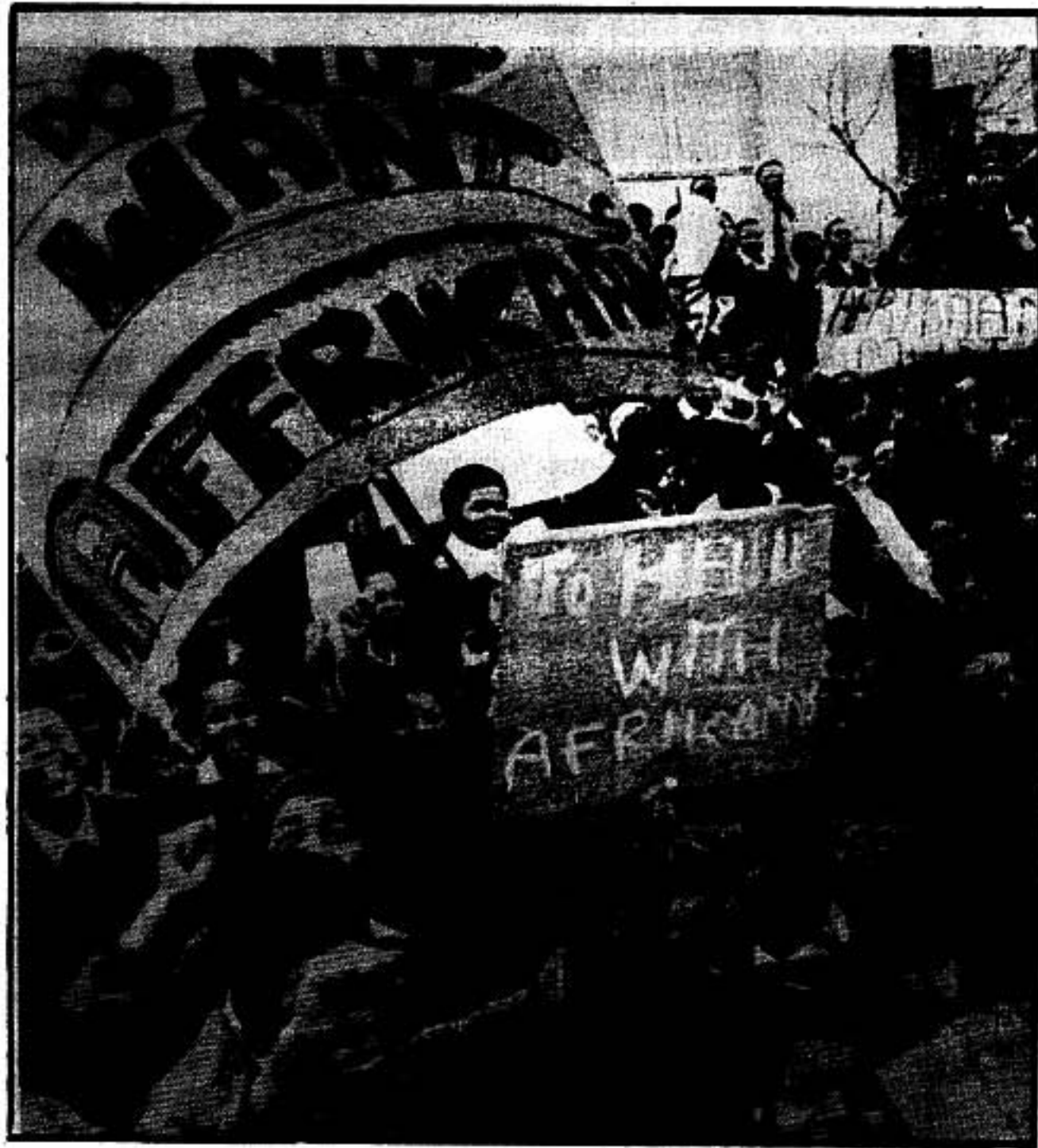
In the early 80's it became necessary to examine the need to change the quality of military activity. That is to move from armed propaganda to military activity which lay some foundation for people's war. In other words to move away from MK activity as being against mute targets, however flamboyant and sophisticated,

Some of the most important units which distinguished themselves in that new phase were the 'G' units which fell under the Transvaal Command. They attacked many police stations like Orlando, Boyseens, Wonderboom, etc. and began to deal with enemy collaborators.

Broadly speaking we are still in this phase of creating an organised army internally in both the urban and rural areas, and tackling not just mute targets but enemy personnel as well. Perhaps within that phase one can add that an additional sub-phase is in a process of being entered, that is to act in such a way that the impact of confrontation is felt not just in the black areas but also within the white electorate, the main constituency of support for the regime.

This sub-phase incorporates the campaign in the countryside on which we are engaging at the moment. This campaign is directed against the white farming community which we regard as part of the enemy's military and para-military apparatus. There are no countryside white civilians in the true sense of the term. They are all part of organised military and para-military groupings, there to prevent MK from entering and surviving in the countryside.

Minewarfare had had an important impact. It has resulted in denuding portions of the countryside, particularly the border areas. It is therefore part of a very important process of cleaning up the countryside to make it an area for freedom fighters. Also, one can say that up to a few years ago we were very anxious to avoid civilian casualties. We still are anxious. But there were moments in our military activity when we could have engaged the enemy effectively but opted out of that possibility because of the danger of civilian casualties. We are no longer completely guided by that consideration. If there is a legitimate target, surrounded by white houses, we can no longer be restricted in engaging the enemy just because there happens to be civilians in the vicinity. So in that sense too we have altered our approach.



That phase from 1976 onwards had armed propaganda as its primary objective, i.e. to announce once again the presence of MK in the only way an army announces its presence:

and begin to deal with enemy personnel because that is what war is about in the end.

As a result of that decision we witnessed the beginnings of organised assaults on the enemy.

LONG LIVE JUNE 16!

OPERATION INGWAVUMA

UNDER normal circumstances, military participants are expected to write their memoirs only when the war is over, to give them the advantage of looking at things more objectively, weighing both successes and failures unemotionally, and taking advantage of the total outcome of the whole war period to appraise the contribution of single battles.

I took up my pen to write about our experiences in the planning and implementation of 'Operation Ingwavuma' for the following reasons:

- 1) I was asked to do so by the Editor of Dawn, who insisted that since a special issue of our army's journal was being prepared to commemorate the 25 years of Umkhonto we Sizwe, telling the story of Ingwavuma would be a proper contribution to illustrate, by this example, how it is possible under South African conditions to build up a people's army from within the country. We therefore reasoned that if this story was told, this article would not only serve as concrete documentary inspiration to the thousands of our combatants whose task at this period is precisely to root our army among the people, but would also, for the first time, provide the members of our Movement in general and of MK in particular, with a generalised strategic context of the circumstances and conditions that led to the writing of 'The Diary of A Guerrilla' by Comrade Mugabe (Robert Dumisa), the first document of its kind in our military history.
 - 2) Although I am confined by security considerations from giving many important details about this Operation, yet certain aspects of the story can and should be told, more so that, as I have said one of the commanders of this area has written a much publicised diary, and also went further to make revelations of our intentions during their public trial in the Natal Division of the South African Supreme Court. Comrade Mugabe's diary was confiscated by the police during the arrest of his unit, but we also managed to get our own copy.
- I find these two reasons compelling enough to justify the

Memoirs of a Political commissar break with the conventional rule requiring the writing of military memoirs only when the war is over.

THE NATAL REGIONAL COMMAND MEETS TO DISCUSS 'OPERATION INGWAVUMA'

I was summoned to the first meeting to discuss the implementation of this plan in the underground Operational Headquarters of the Natal Regional Military Command. Also present at the meeting was the sub-structure of this Command, called the Northern Natal Military Command (NNMC) whose specific task it was to execute this task. I was appointed the Political Commissar and Deputy Commander of this sub-structure of the Regional Command, and apart from its Command, I was to work with a Chief-of-Staff, Chief-of-Intelligence as well as a Chief-of-Logistics.

As a result of the decision that the Northern Natal Commander's task would, for quite a long period (until the plan had gone into a certain advanced stage) be more of a servicing personnel to the rest of the members of our Military Command who were to be stationed geographically elsewhere, the effective task of Commanding, 'Operational Ingwavuma' fell on my shoulders during all its events.

In the room the whole map of Natal was spread over the table, with all the eyes staring at it as though the battles we were planning were already taking place right there on the map.

I must admit that the driving force and one of the most moving personalities in that meeting was our Regional Chief-of-Staff, the late Comrade Zweli Nyanda, who was killed together with Keith McFadden during a South African Defence Force raid in Swaziland. I highlight the name of Zweli not because he happens to be dead and has joined our martyres. No, I am conscious of the queer tendency nowadays of calling everybody who dies a hero. Comrade Zweli was a living hero of our armed struggle. I remember him very clearly in that meeting, sitting opposite me and standing up now and again to pace up and down the room. Then he would come back and quiz me with one hundred and

one questions since I was the only one in that meeting who was thoroughly acquainted with Northern Natal, as I was actually born in Zululand and had already worked as a political operative in the area of Ingwavuma for a period of close to two years under the political structures of the ANC.

After about four hours, our meeting was over. The task of our Military Command was clear. We were expected to begin working immediately to prepare conditions for the creation of guerrilla zones in Northern Natal. The area of Ingwavuma, situated on the most Northern tip of Natal and also bordering on Swaziland and Mozambique, was specially earmarked for this purpose. Right on that first meeting, and basing our analysis on the available intelligence data as well as political information about the area provided by me on the basis of my experience in working in that area, we reached a general agreement in our assessment that this area had the potential to accommodate (either in the terrain or among the people), trained and armed cadres which were to constitute the nuclei for the internal recruiting, training and arming of guerrilla units from among the local population.

Our plan had to consider not just the survival of those combat units, but also the potential of transforming those areas over a period of time into active guerrilla zones, during the course of which the enemy would be wiped out, or forced to retreat or come directly under our political administration, which would be an organ of people's power. We also envisaged the development of mass peasants' political organisations and underground units whose task would be augmented by our military organisation.

Conscious as we were of the strategic line of our organisation, we would not have allowed a situation where the military structures were to be the sole determinants of what went on in Ingwavuma and elsewhere in our zone. The point, however, and this we minced no words about it was that we were supposed to develop a war in Ingwavuma, and war means the physical military elimination of the enemy and the imposition of our political will over him. This war perspective

was to be guarded against reverting back to the strategic period when our priority task inside the country was only to do political mobilisation with armed propaganda serving as a secondary and supportive exercise.

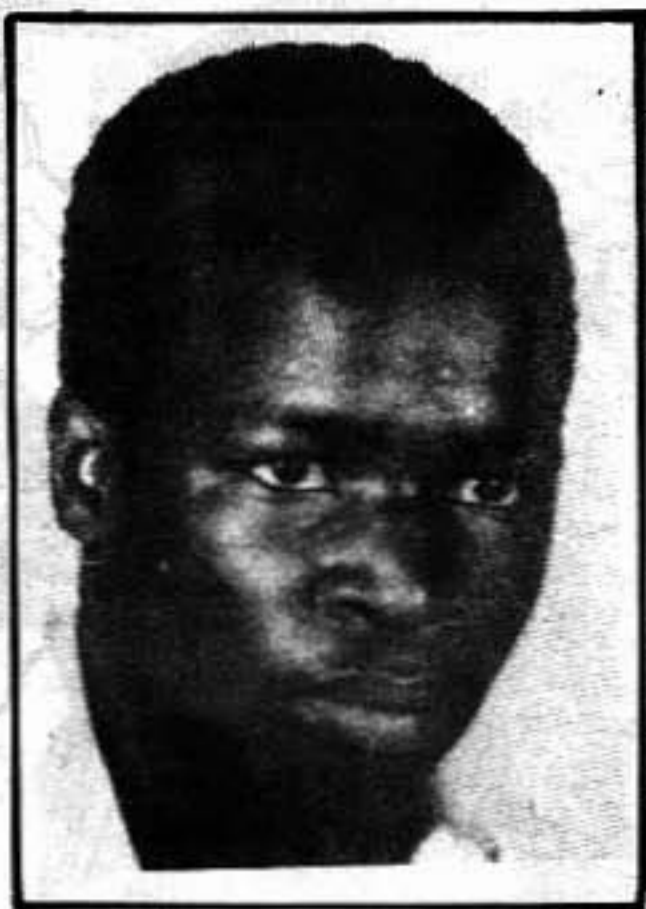
Although the political situation in Ingwavuma was not so promising, in the sense that we had no political mass organisation and other underground political structures involving the peasants as active political fighters for freedom, and neither were there organised units to serve as reception bases, a few contacts, however, served as the initial group to receive our comrades. We also counted on the seething discontent of the people of that area about the apartheid regime's plans to cede Ingwavuma and the KwaNgwane bantustan to Swaziland.

Indeed, when I made contact with a few peasants I had known when I was working in that area, they insisted that they wanted weapons and they would willingly join Umkhonto we Sizwe. If they were to be organised, they used to say, well and good but let this be done simultaneously with their being armed for war against the apartheid regime. For us in the Military Command, these were sufficient sparks under the circumstances to kindle the fire of People's War in that part of the country. I seem to remember Kark Marx advising his friend Kugelmann that "if history was made only under infallibly favourable circumstances, it would indeed be very easy to make". I can add to this statement by Marx that also if it were so, it would know of no heroes!

THE STAGE OF RECONNAISSANCE

Our initial military reconnaissance in Ingwavuma was done by two persons, Comrade Post (who later died like the famous Matrosov of the Second World War when he gave his life to save the members of his unit — I shall come back later to this incident when I demonstrate the state of morale of our combatants in Ingwavuma) and "R" (about whom we shall also hear more at the appropriate time).

Their mission was to conduct reconnaissance in one area of Ingwavuma for a period of two weeks, during which time they were to stay with the families who were the contacts of our Military Command. The unit was supposed to assess the possibilities of staying with the villagers



Comrade Mugabe

as well as the building of safe bases in the terrain in the event of battles with the SADF breaking out and survival of a sizeable guerrilla unit among them becoming difficult. They were also expected to find training bases far from their rear bases, where mobile training camps were to be established to build an army from among the local population. After the period of two weeks, one member of the unit, "R" (who had been appointed the commander) would have to go to report their findings to our Military Command.

At the end of two weeks, indeed "R" came to us and reported that he did not believe that the area provided possibilities for the establishment of guerrilla bases as well as training camps, since, according to him, the area was only favourable in a very small part, the rest being plain and without forestation where guerrillas can hide. We tried to find out if that view was also shared by Post, whom he had left behind. To this "R" said that this was his opinion as the commander of the mission.

Negative start, undeniably! This was the report of a man from the spot, who had spent two weeks, and on whose information all future plans were to be based. As we listened to his report, I remembered reading a book about the guerrilla war of the Yugoslav partisans under the command of Broz Tito. There is an episode where a reconnaissance operative reported that the terrain he had seen was "as plain as the palm of my hand", and therefore drawing the conclusion that the brigade would not be able to press through. I remember actually

repeating to "R", almost word for word, the response that is said to have been made by Broz Tito to that soldier:

"Comrade, are you suggesting that we will never be able to fight guerrilla war in South Africa because there are insufficient forests? If the area you saw has no widespread jungles, then it is precisely the place we need to prove that guerrilla warfare does not depend on jungles!"

The Chief-of-Staff however, thought that I was making a mistake by responding like this (although he did not say it in the meeting in the presence of "R"), and he suddenly said to "R":

"Okay, Comrade "R", thank you very much for the report. We shall discuss your report in detail in a full meeting of the Command, we shall then inform you of the next step after those discussions."

As soon as the word reached the members of the Regional Command as well as some members of the PMC that "R" had some report from Ingwavuma, almost everyone was keen to debrief him in order to ascertain the situation from the man on the spot. "R" 's report thus, subsequently, became the basis for the whole re-examination and re-assessment of the feasibility of our plan. The Chief-of-Staff and myself were directed to rediscuss the plan against the background of "R" 's report and make a written report to the Regional Command.

It was after the meeting in our machinery that a decision was taken that I should go to Ingwavuma personally in the company of the Chief-of-Logistics, spend no less than two weeks, during which we were to be joined by Post in assessing the situation in the same manner in which their unit had been assigned. I therefore left our Headquarters for Ingwavuma together with our Chief-of-Logistics armed with pistols but hidden under the overalls we were wearing as we had to look exactly like the peasants in the area. We also carried sticks in the same way as all men do in the rural areas of Zululand.

During our presence in the area, we were able to meet various peasant families, held extensive discussions with them and prepared those we thought were suitable as receptionists for



our combat units. Everywhere we went, the people received us well and often with enthusiasm, and although we had some with us, I can say it with all the power of truth that we never spent even a cent from our pockets for food or for anything we needed for our survival there. We ate breakfast in one home, and lunch in another; we were fried a chicken in a different home and provided a sleeping place in another home. Such were the conditions that we met during our stay in Ingwavuma.

Given these favourable conditions, we made further preparations in other sectors for the reception of our comrades; we also reconnoitred bases as well as areas that could serve as training camps for small units of people in the localities.

I must not leave the reader with a rosy picture of everything, however! Our movement was not at random, neither were the people who offered us food and places of sleep chosen arbitrarily. There was nothing spontaneous about all this, and as I pointed out earlier, most of our contacts were people who were known to us through previous political work in the area, and who subsequently led us to others who thought and felt like them about the situation. I think that this is important to emphasize because, as a matter of fact, no guerrilla unit, no matter how 'lucky' it is, can successfully stay among a people who have not been prepared politically and also organised for such a task.

On the completion of our mission, we gave our report to other members of our Military Command as well as to the whole Regional Command. On its basis

two basic decisions were taken, 1) to proceed with our plans and to establish combat units inside the country with urgency, and 2) to reassign "R" the task of commanding another combat unit that was to base in another area, one of those we had reconnoitred in our mission.

"R" 's unit was called "Nozishada" (named after an extraordinarily courageous Zulu warrior during the wars of resistance), and the first unit which was then commanded I may mention that neither of these units was Comrade Mugabe's, since he commanded a separate one.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE PLAN

All our units that landed at Ingwavuma did so successfully, and this was despite great security odds against us, most of which were caused by the eminent signing of the Inkomati Accord. And all of them, without exception, were taken care of by the local population in terms of food as well as information.

Perhaps more than anything else, Ingwavuma proved that it is practically possible to develop a People's Army within the borders of South Africa. We may reveal this much that between them, the combat units that were established at Ingwavuma trained a whole guerrilla company from among the local population. The enemy could not find our training camps, and those that he ultimately discovered, had already been existing and operating inside the country for close to twelve months.

Ingwavuma also demonstrated the tremendous potential that lies in the rural areas of our country for the establishment of guerrilla zones, which can prove ten-fold successful only if necessary political preparation and co-ordination is done, as laid down in the strategy documents of the ANC. Many Ingwavuma's can be organised, taking into consideration, obviously, the specific conditions and politics of each area so selected.

THE MORALE OF OUR COMBATANTS

The best method to illustrate the morale of the MK combatants that established their bases at Ingwavuma is not to use long English adjectives, but to tell the story of how Post died, the commander of Maqedindaba. I have selected Post in order to broaden the knowledge people have on their heroism which many only know from the accounts of Mugabe's Diary.

One local young man, "N", who was a trainee of Maqedindaba unit, was taken by the South African police for detention. The comrades in the unit got this report about "N" 's arrest, but decided not to be alarmed about it since it was a frequent thing for "N" to be arrested for petty criminal offences in the villages. The unit, however, had committed a mistake of having shown "N" where their underground base in the terrain was. This was inexcusable. My own reasoning, also confirmed by other subsequent events, is that the comrades had become very lax about their security because they had not only survived a period of close to nine months

by that time, but had also developed tremendous confidence on the members of the local population, who knew of their presence in their midst during all this period.

But war is war and security of the combatants should never be taken for granted. In that village alone, Maqedindaba had already trained more than a platoon of persons from among the local population. But victory has its negative aspects as well, and once a combat unit starts believing that it is invincible or forgets that that very victory is the result of its vigilance on a minute to minute basis, then such a unit is on its way to unnecessary problems.

Three days after "N"'s arrest, the unit again received a report that a blue VW kombi was seen in the village carrying a group of white men, which was a very



James Maropeng

unusual thing in that part of the rural world. This information was communicated to the comrades by their contacts in the village precisely because they considered this event as strange and a possible danger. I am sad to say that once again the comrades ignored this information and did not change their base swiftly.

Third warning: after about a day or two after the Kombi event, the village was suddenly visited by KwaZulu police units who spread the story in the villages that they were hunting for wild pigs. Yet clearly, the "wild pigs" they were looking for were our comrades. Still the comrades did not change their base. This 'pig hunting' event, however, was



Linda Khuzwayo

to be the last warning history provided.

That evening or the following day's evening, Post left the base and went to the village to meet an important contact for the unit. He was only armed with a Makarov pistol. Very early in the morning before people could wake up and see him crossing the fields and getting to his base, and as he approached the base, he discovered that the base was surrounded by an army formation of the SADF, which was steadily encircling the base where four members of Maqedindaba were sleeping. When Post saw this, he took out his pistol and fired shots which were clearly meant to warn the comrades in the base of the eminent danger. Post obviously knew that by doing so, he would attract the fire-power of the SADF to himself and die, but his major concern at that time was not his life but those of the members of his unit.

Indeed the unit heard Post's warning shots from his pistol, and all four of them escaped through a secret exit. All four of them managed to break out of the SADF encirclement, and they are still alive today and telling the story. They all shamelessly admit that they owe their lives to their Commander, Post!

The fascist soldiers killed Post, and according to the information we have been able to gather from the local population, the body of our heroic commander was tied by a rope by the racist soldiers and tied to a helicopter which flew in circles around the village

in a cowardly attempt by the SADF to intimidate the peasants. Villagers came out of their homes, looked up at the sky, and saw the black body of their own commander hanging from a rope. None of them is said to have spoken a word, but some women are said to have sobbed quietly since they knew who it was that was hanging on that SADF helicopter — it was the leader of the men they had daily cooked for and mended their clothing.

The story of Post must be told throughout our movement. His heroism should be the beaconing banner for all our heroic combatants. Songs should be composed about him. Poets should take their pens and not wait for rhythm and rhyme but write a war poem about Post. Where are our novelists? Is their ink dry not to tell the story of Post?

The last time I saw Post was when I had gone to brief them about the recent political situation and also to give them some copies of *Dawn* and *Sechaba* plus a few *Newsbriefings*. I stayed with them (the whole unit) in that very same cave which they had made their underground base. Post made tea and kept on saying to the members of our Military Command that had gone to pay them a visit: "I hope that the same experience is happening in other parts of our country."

We assured him, and I saw a smile of satisfaction on his face. In a way, the whole unit was taken by surprise by our visit and this reminded me as well about the visits that our leadership often makes to us in our various training areas, the difference now being that it was being made by us to the comrades in their guerrilla bases inside

If ever in this account I have painted a picture of glorifying myself, please pardon me, since this was not my intention; without making the story a personal account, I could have run the risk of taking realities out of it and it would have remained hollow and imaginary. Let me conclude by paying tribute to all whom I served with in the Northern Natal Military Command as well as the heroes of that struggle both the dead and the three that were arrested with Mugabe and are presently serving their sentences in Robben Island. Victory is in sight, and all our sacrifices are not in vain!

Richard 'Barney' Molokoane

— Dikgang Nene

RICHARD "Barney" Molokwane like many of us, joined the African National Congress during the June 16 Soweto Students uprisings. In our glorious army Umkhonto we Sizwe he belonged to the June 16 Detachment.

He was a very simple and humble comrade, gifted in many fields. Like all revolutionaries he was eager to learn more, and he did manage to learn more because he was a good listener and a good conversationalist. He was a very good footballer as well as a good guitarist. Besides the above qualities he was above all an able commander, a disciplined soldier, always vigilant and ready to defend the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was very proud of being a member of our people's army and devoted all his life to the ideals of our Movement and our army.

During his life in our army he was given responsibilities. Barney or Buda, as his closest friends affectionately called him, could live in both underground and aboveground conditions with ease. He always made sure that he was in good health and good physical condition. He was once an instructor in tactics. He liked the 'survival' course which he believed prepared him for any condition in the course of our struggle.

Action was his motto. He was involved in a number of heroic exploits undertaken by our combatants inside the country. Immediately after completing his course of training he was selected for a mission. He was one of those comrades who were on



Richard 'Barney' Molokoane

a reconnaissance mission in 1978. This unit came into contact with the enemy forces and a clash ensued. Barney's unit conducted itself exceptionally well and for the first time the boers in Zeerust saw members of the SADF humiliated. Barney was shot in the leg but he managed to outwit and outmanoeuvre the enemy during the 200km retreat to base.

From 1978 till 1985 when he died, Barney was most of the time on missions inside the country and was the commander in almost all of them. Because of his hatred for the enemy and his firm belief in the justness of our cause he led his units successfully. He participated in that daring and sophisticated sabotage of

the SASOL plant in 1980. He also commanded the unit that created history by shelling the racists' headquarters in Voortrekkerhoogte the following year, and the unit that shelled Secunda, in 1985, the latter being his last mission. He also undertook many other missions which are not mentioned here.

He met his death when they were intercepted by the enemy during their retreat after successfully shelling Secunda. Comrades Barney, Victor and Vincent fought gallantly during this encounter. This battle which took the lives of all three comrades lasted about four hours and was described by the enemy press as 'a violent shootout.'

Local residents who saw this clash describe the scene of the fight as another Lebanon. A lot of ambulances came to fetch the dead and wounded enemy soldiers! Failing to corner these three gallant and fearless fighters of MK, the enemy sought the help of helicopters which, added to their mounted machine-guns, dropped napalm on our comrades. It is obvious that many more enemy soldiers would have died if our combatants had more ammunition. So many were these dead and injured soldiers that the local people could not count them easily. November 28 will never be forgotten by the residents of this area.

The lives of Comrades Barney, Victor and Vincent did not end in vain. Their spears will be picked by hundreds of our young lions.



Sabotage at Sasol. Damage was to the tune of R66m

NO SURRENDER

The 'Citizen' of September 9 1986 reported: "Weapons . . . were found in a car in which four suspected ANC terrorists were killed in a shootout with police in Durban on Sunday night. . . The men were shot dead in a firefight with the police after being cornered. . . At the time the police, including members of the reaction unit of the security police, were investigating an incident in which a KwaMashu house was fired upon and attacked with three hand grenades . . ."

True, four MK combatants fell heroically that Sunday. What the "Citizens" deliberately forgets to mention is that they did not die alone. They took many boer soldiers and policemen with them. This is the battle in which Thabane Memela, alias Bridge Thwala, lost his life. Below follows the story as related by one member of the unit.

Mpandla, 20 cents and myself have been co-ordinating MK actions in the Durban area since the beginning of the year. Thabane is one of the comrades who were trained outside the country and sent to Durban. He joined our unit two weeks before this battle.

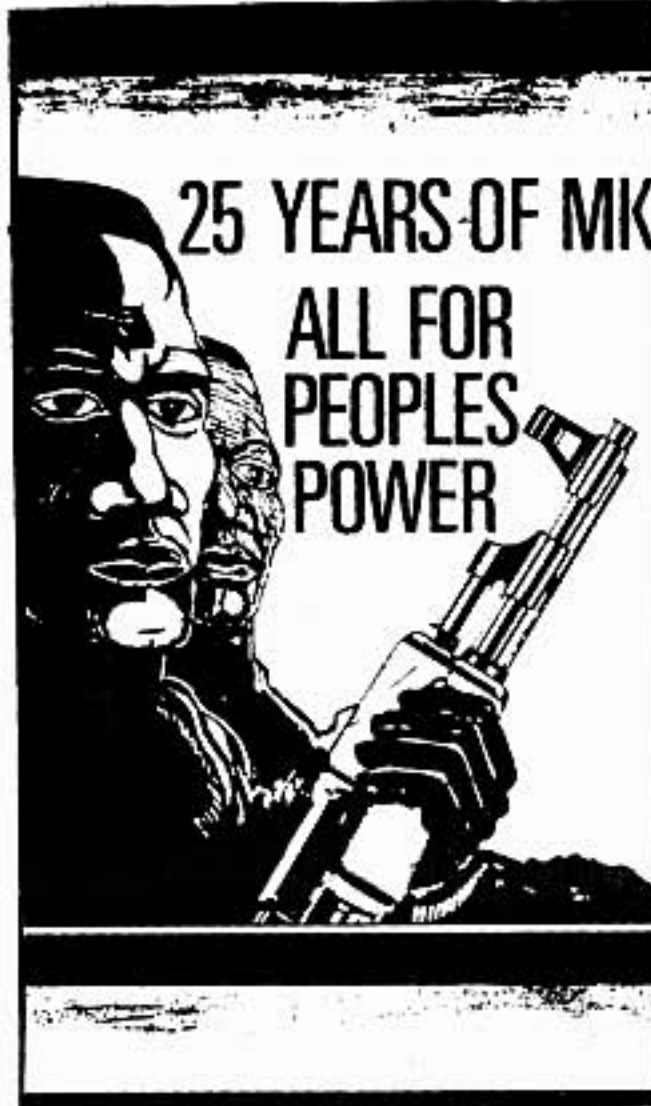
One of the main tasks we gave ourselves was to eliminate the notorious Inkatha leaders, viz. Sabelo, Shabalala, Mlotshwa and Bayethe. This is important so as to show the people that MK is capable of dealing with their tormentors. We then divided reconnaissance tasks among ourselves with the purpose of locating their hiding places.

Mpandla found Shabalala's hiding place and gave me all the details. We then assigned 20 cents to conduct a much more thorough study of the place and establish Shabalala's routine. After collecting enough data we decided to pull the mission out on Saturday, September 6.

I took Thabane and three other comrades from one of our units. We left for Shabalala's place in KwaMashu at 1900hrs and reached the place an hour later. He was not in the house at the time and we decided to wait for him. We were armed with 2 AK's, 2 Makarov pistols and 4 F1 hand grenades.

Shabalala's house was fenced by a high concrete wall and he had a big and vicious dog. In a way the place was security tight. One little disadvantage on our part was that we were not very familiar with the area, although we had already established our route of withdrawal. There is also a police station only a mile from the target. Which meant that we could not spend a long time within the radius after acting.

We waited till 2100hrs when a man drove in in a mercedes-benz. Before we could move into action a number of hippos drove past and we realised that we were not safe at all. Initi-



ally we had agreed that we would knock and force our way into the yard but later decided against it due to the security situation. We decided to hit from a distance and retreat.

We moved closer to the target and hurled the four hand grenades we had, backing them with pistol and sub-machine gun fire. After the attack Thabane told us that it was not wise to retreat with AK's all the way to Umlazi as they are not easy to conceal. They had to be left a place nearby. The problem with that was the place he had in mind was too near the target and could be raided. But due to the time at our disposal we agreed to his proposal on condition that the material would be removed not later than the following day.

We then divided ourselves into two groups of two and three. I and two others retreated to our meeting point, armed with pistols. Thabane and one had to rush to hide the AK's first. Later they safely joined us at the meeting point. Mpandla had organised where we would base till early in the morning when we would leave Kwa-Mashu.

We reached Umlazi at 0600hrs and decided that the material left in KwaMashu would be fetched that afternoon. When Mpandla came to collect me and Thabane to fetch the material I was somehow occupied at home and could not come with them. They then decided to take 20 cents and Mbongeni.

SPOTTED

When leaving KwaMashu the blue cressida they were riding in was spotted by the police. That could have been due to the fact that the area was heavily patrolled by the police following the attack on Shabalala's house or some people could have seen the direction taken by Mpandla and the other comrade when they were going to hide the AK's the previous day. One more possibility is that Thabane could have been spotted by the police since he was known by them and wanted.

After their car had been spotted roadblocks were set up, while other police vehicles gave a chase. The first roadblock was set up between KwaMashu and Newlands. The comrades in the car had decided to fight back, true to the MK tradition of no surrender. Upon reaching the roadblock Mbongeni, armed with two hand grenades, was dropped to challenge the enemy while others continued. He hurled the hand grenades at a city police car with four cops, damaging the car and killing all four cops. Thereafter he was shot dead.

The second roadblock was set up under Umgeni bridge where Thabane, armed with an AK with two full magazines, was dropped. He fought till he ran out of ammunition and was finally hit by bullets fired from a helicopter. That is how he fell.

The third roadblock blocked the highway just after the quarry road turn-off. Even there the MK tigers could not be stopped. Instead they dropped 20 cents, also armed with an AK and two full magazines. He also fought till he ran out of ammunition. That is where he fell. Then the car, driven by Mpandla, was chased. At the Umlazi turn-off he decided to stop. He pulled out his pistol and also fought till he ran out of bullets. When he was trying to drive away a bullet fatally hit him in the forehead.

PICK UP THEIR SPEARS!

how we captured a hippo

Before leaving the country to join Umkhonto we Sizwe we were engaged in many activities. One day in March we discovered that one 'comrade' was collaborating with the boers. He had come to one of our meetings in a boer car. When we confronted him he begged for forgiveness, telling us that he had been forced to inform. Since we consider it our task to educate the misled elements in our society we accepted his apology and he promised to stop informing.

However, the following week he was seen moving around in a hippo, pointing out comrades. As the commander I had to take a decision. One Sunday evening I summoned my unit. A decision that Mathebula had to die was taken. We then took him from his house and took him out of the location where he was eliminated.

EVERY corner of our land is mobilising and organising. Ka Ngwane is no exception. The once quiet bantustans have joined the march to freedom. Robert Kunene, a commander of one people's security unit relates:

told us he was forced to do so by the law. In the end in fact the whole interrogation exercise proved fruitless as he had no information. Although I felt we should let him go so as to set an example for others, the other comrades felt differently. A decision to execute him was taken despite his pleas for mercy and offers of large sums of money. His time was over. By his remains we left a note reading: "We are not fighting you, we are fighting apartheid."

not successful as we had not anticipated that it would be followed by four others. We were not strong enough to face a big force.

Another interesting incident happened during one of my security rounds at Steenbok township. About a thousand people were holding a meeting when the boers arrived. They asked us what we were doing and we told them that we were organising a clean-up campaign. They gave us five minutes to disperse but, as usual, before the five minutes could elapse they started firing. The whole crowd responded by stoning them.

One driver of a hippo jumped out of panic and his head met with a flying rock. I seized the opportunity and jumped into the hippo. We had finally captured a hippo! Off I drove for about



After discovering his body the police came to the area and harassed the people. They were hunting our unit. We then retreated to the mountains. With us we had four hand grenades and one R1 rifle which had no ammunition unfortunately.

One day we decided to ambush the enemy. Four comrades hid themselves in a disused ticket office and I challenged one SADF soldier. He responded well. He chased me right into the ticket office and fell into the trap. We disarmed him of his R1 and held him until the evening when we took him to the mountains, followed by comrades chanting: "Kill him, kill him!"

We first questioned him as to why he was killing our people, especially innocent children. He

The fascist enemy was infuriated. He besieged the township the following day. We had to retreat to other areas as we were outnumbered in all respects. The entire youth deserted the township, leaving behind only the very old and very young. A day after that the fascists withdrew and we returned to the township.

That night we devised a plan of digging a trench across the road at the entrance of the township. The intention was to trap a hippo so as to capture weapons when it fell into the hole. The unit was deployed, armed with two R1's, a pistol, bows and arrows, and wooden AK's to give an impression that we were more heavily armed than we actually were. In fell the first hippo but, unfortunately the mission was

3km, but unfortunately in my excitement I rammed my hippo into a tree. I jumped out and was chased by angry SADF boers shooting madly.

By now our unit was on the run continuously. We were able to fulfill only one more mission before leaving. One policeman by the name of Manyesa was responsible for the murder of a comrade. We attacked his house, fire bombed and destroyed it completely. After this incident many policemen resigned. Those who did not have subsequently moved out of the township.

My house was then firebombed. The time had come for us to leave and join Umkhonto we Sizwe. We needed to develop our skills further and acquire more and sophisticated weapons.

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MOTHER OF VICTORY**

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ADVANCE

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