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EACH CITIZEN A SOLDIER

Message to the ANC Youth Conference

Held in Morogoro, Tanzania

??? Date ??? 19

Dawn, Volume 6, No8, 1982

We in Umkhonto we Sizwe do not want to pass unnoticed in history. We are committed to the armed overthrow of the fascist apartheid regime, an ideal for which we are prepared to lay down our lives. At the end of the day we want our people to revisit the battlefield, pick up our bones, and say:

These are the bones of young men and women who loved their country and their people. That alone will be enough for us!

EMThe Umkhonto delegates to the ANC Youth Conference, on behalf of the entire army, commanders, commissars, combat ranks, those inside our country, the incarcerated, those who are facing the gallows and the fallen martyrs, extend special revolutionary greetings to this conference. Fully acknowledging its historic significance and appreciating all efforts that have gone into its preparation, we express the full readiness of the entire People's Army in the implementation of the conference resolutions and decisions, and the orders of the leadership of the ANC at all times, to the best of our ability.

EMWhat is Umkhonto we Sizwe? MK springs from the ranks of the downtrodden masses of our people. It is constituted from the best sons and daughters of our country, whose heroic sacrifices have been an important factor in the elevation of our revolutionary struggle to its present heights. It is a political army engaged in a just war of national liberation. Its military line derives from the political and ideological positions of our revolutionary movement, which it pursues unreservedly, with all devotion.

Chapters in the History of our Struggle

Umkhonto we Sizwe has written glorious chapters in the history of our struggle with the blood of the best patriots of our motherland. It's inspiration is drawn from the fighting traditions of our forefathers who stood firm and unflinching in the face of the brutal colonial onslaught that was bent on pillaging and plundering the material and manpower resources of our country. Today the MK combatant has become the inheritor and perpetuator of these lofty fighting traditions of our people.

EMSince the launching of armed struggle more than 20 years ago, significant strides have been registered, elevating the popular struggle to higher summits. From the sabotage campaign of the early sixties, through the 1967/8 Zimbabwe campaign that repeated itself during the early seventies, Umkhonto combatants wading through the most trying conditions carried the banner of our revolution high, never for a moment succumbing to the heavy odds they had to face.

EMThe upheavals of June 16, 1976 that have gone down in the annals of history as the Soweto Uprisings, ushered in

a new phase in our struggle. The death-defying militants of June 16

have today swelled the combat ranks of our army and they are not only shouldering responsibilities but also continue to make heroic sacrifices. To this generation belong martyred heroes of the calibre of Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, the Silverton Trio, the Lion of Chiawelo, the Matola 13 and many others whose names remain etched in our hearts and minds. We take this opportunity to express fullest appreciation that this school, venue of this historic conference, has been named after Solomon Mahlangu EM- a young fighter who has become a symbol of courage and determination of today's youth, which must continue to kindle the flames of revolution inside South Africa.

VICTORIES SCORED BY OUR PEOPLE'S ARMY

The victories that have been scored by our People's Army this far have been possible, thanks to its popular support as an army thrown up by the people themselves. MK has today not only become a household name inside the country, but also a force feared and recognised by the adversaries of our struggle. Through its skilful exercise of military tactics, high combativeness and daring, it has imbued our people with more confidence. It has emerged in recent battles as the protector and defender of the popular cause, thus successfully liberating our patriotic ranks from the fear of the enemy. The growing mass upsurge currently sweeping the country bears testimony to this fact.

EMAs an army shouldering the revolutionary war of our entire masses, MK acts in accordance with the enormous demands of the present level of our fight. Primary, therefore, on our agenda is to build upon the achievements registered in the politico-military front to root the war inside our country, thereby establishing a firm, solid base from which the revolutionary offensive must grow. In this connection the building of our army in a revolutionary way, its consolidation in terms of strength, discipline, striking capacity, becomes a priority. This calls for the all-round mobilisation of all able-bodied men and women from all sections, classes and forces ranged against the boer-fascist regime.

EMTo further make it worthy of its name and prestige, our army, more than ever before, must go through intensive political education aimed at developing it into an army conscious of its historic mission, the seizure of political power, which no enemyEM-no matter his strengthEM- can deny us.

CHALLENGES

These recitals would be incomplete if we fail to point out the arduous challenges that still confront us. In this regard we acknowledge the fact that our spectacular military actions this far have to a large measure satisfied the aims of armed propaganda only. This, therefore, emphasises the acute necessity of transforming the revolutionary art of people's war into a living reality. The revolutionary war in its broad military sense must begin to rage throughout the length and breadth of South Africa. The enemy must not be given any respite.

EMConsonant with our revolutionary position as regards armed struggle as a superior striking weapon of our people, all efforts and energies of the various flanks of our entire revolutionary movement must be geared towards its unfailing escalation. It is in this light that we feel it is appropriate and quite expedient that our main blows should be directed at the annihilation of enemy personnel. Since it is this very personnel which is not only harassing our people internally but also launching unprovoked acts of aggression against the Front Line States.

EMAs we stand on this platform the fascist hordes are spreading plunder and carnage in the south of the People's Republic of Angola. It is our noble task, which we owe not only to our people but also to the Front Line States and Africa, to deny the apartheid regime further possibilities of such diabolic incursions. Fully aware of the necessity to broaden the revolutionary base of our liberation war, we wish to inform the conference that the Umkhonto combatants are ever-ready to carry out all orders of our leadership, their commanders and

commissars at all levels in our army. We are satisfied that this army, our People's Army, the army of Nelson Mandela, has amply demonstrated its capacity to sacrifice and shoulder responsibility. We are resolved not to allow its prestige to collapse. We shall have betrayed our declaration of commitment to the cause which we made voluntarily, if we do not begin to believe and lead the lives of revolutionary soldiers who have no other petty inhibitions and personal interests outside the movement, outside the people's struggle.

EMWe owe all this to our people, our leaders incarcerated in fascist dungeons, the fallen and the maimed whose blood is a harbinger of bitter battles to come. We owe it to the six comrades presently facing the gallows. The names of Anthony Tsotsobe, Davide Moise, Johannes Shabangu, Thabo Motaung, Jerry Mosololi and Simon Mogoerane are like a stirring battle cry beckoning us to the front trenches to avenge the blood of our people.

EMThe struggle inside the country is evidently developing a new momentum. The broad masses of the people united around local and national issues are engaging the enemy in fierce battles. It is this solid political base that guarantees our inevitable victory. Yet we are aware that this victory can only be ours through hard, unrelenting struggle, supreme sacrifice and unity in action.

EMThe Vietnamese have a wise saying: Each citizen a soldier and when the bandits come even the women fight! I wish to contextualise this slogan to apply to the present conditions of our liberation war.

THE ENEMY IS ATTACKING EM- LET US
RESPOND!

VICTORY IS IN SIGHT EM- LET US RISE UP AND
CLAIM IT!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

(Published in Vow, No.1 of 1984)

Experience has taught us that racist bullets do not discriminate between men and women. This has been proved both inside, and beyond the borders of our country, in the independent countries of Southern Africa. For example, the racists' counter-offensive against the people in Lamontville, claimed women as some of their first victims, just as in the cowardly racist 'Defence Force' attack like the one in Maseru in December 1982. Women and children were butchered alongside men. In this situation, as women we too need to fight in the ranks of the People's Army, Umkhonto We Sizwe.

EMWe too must learn to defend ourselves and our children.

More important, we too must learn how to attack!

EMWith every operation that the trained cadres of Umkhonto We Sizwe, both men and women, carry out, like the attack on the Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria, the enemy is realising that even with all its guns and bombs and jet-fighters, it is no match for a people's army. This is because a people's army is rooted among the people themselves. Relying therefore on superior motivation, on surprise attacks launched all over the country, where and when the enemy least expects to be hit, and above all EM- on the ability to strike and withdraw into the masses of the people, Umkhonto is paving the way forward to the seizure of power. Our blows are directed increasingly at those who prop up the outdated and inhuman apartheid system with guns and bombs.

EMIt is vital that we organise ourselves also into secret units to help in the armed struggle to overthrow the regime and its puppets. Umkhonto is becoming more and more

sophisticated, and devastating, as witnessed by stunning successes like Koeberg, Voortrekkerhoogte, Sasol and Pretoria

EM- but we must remember also that a freedom fighter's most effective weapon can at the same time be his most simple weapon. For example, a simple box of matches can be a powerful weapon in the hands of a dedicated revolutionary, with initiative and courage. We can burn the enemy's property, affect his production and harass him. Certain parts of a factory will burn easily where there is petrol, paint, paper, wood or clothing stores. There are certain times, also in a factory or plant, when a valve or machine must not be switched on. Telephones, radios and computers can all be damaged with bleach, caustic soda, ammonia or simple salt water! The enemy's transport system can be sabotaged just by throwing in sand or grinding powder into the grease boxes of railway trucks.

EMOur people are showing that, not only are these economic targets, but even enemy personnel are within their range. The petrol bombing of homes of puppet councillors and the shooting of traitors carried out by people with very little training but a lot of courage and initiative. The January 8 state-

ment this year makes it clear to us moreover, that it is now time for us to begin to destroy all Botha's organs of government. This includes the organs of central and provincial government, the army and police, the judiciary, the bantustan administrations, the community councils, local management and local affairs committees. Of course, Comrade Tambo says, as strategists, we must select those target which are in our reach. For example, we have boycotted the community council elections. We must now ensure that those puppets who defied us and stood in the elections do not impose their will upon us! If necessary, this means they must suffer the same fate as traitorous puppets in Lamontville and other places have!

EMLet us remember Madinoge, one of the greatest heroines of our struggle, who led the people's resistance in Sekhukhuneland in the '50s. This fearless woman, even before the formation of Umkhonto We Sizwe in 1960, led the people in attacks on puppet chiefs and sell-out headmen who betrayed the people's cause by collaborating with the enemy.

EMActing then with the same spirit as Madinoge, Kate Molale, Thandi Modise and many more women who have, and are waging a bitter struggle in the ranks of Umkhonto We Sizwe, let us take up this call to action. Umkhonto We Sizwe must grow! The armed struggle must grow! It is through a combination of mass political action and organised revolutionary violence that we shall win!

FORWARD MARCH TO PEOPLE'S POWER!

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20th ANNIVERSARY OF MK:

Extract from 'The Road of Struggle That Leads to Freedom'
by MK Mtungwa

AC 1981.

... A decision to adopt revolutionary violence and armed struggle does not come out of the blue. Neither is it a decision that is lightly taken. In the Rivonia trial Nelson Mandela and our other leaders explained that the historic decision was arrived at after great deliberation. Such a decision has far-reaching consequences. 'In the long run we felt certain we could succeed, but at what cost to ourselves and the country?' These were the issues that had to be weighed.

EM Armed struggle is the highest form of political struggle, requiring as it does greater demands and sacrifice from the vanguard organisation and the people. Any miscalculation can result in untold tragedy and disaster and can set a revolutionary movement decades back, if not cause it total collapse.

EM Serious revolutionaries therefore carefully weigh up all conditions before embarking on armed struggle. They particularly bear in mind their responsibility to the people. Our leaders do not regard the people as mere pawns in a game, who are simply to be used as a staircase to personal power. The people bear the brunt of ruling class violence and leaders cannot gamble with their lives. Of course revolution entails suffering and loss of life, but the leadership must soberly assess what course of action best serves the interests of the people. The masses do not easily forgive so-called leaders who have misled them, and extracted sacrifices from them in the service of some half-baked adventure (eg PACEM-POZO violence of the early sixties).

Repression and Armed Struggle

What, then, are the conditions that must influence a decision to adopt armed struggle? What factors did our leaders have to take into account? The MK Manifesto declares:

EM 'We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The government's 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'.

EM What MK's manifesto so eloquently expresses is a universal statement of all revolutionary movements: that in every case of revolutionary struggle the resort to armed struggle is a response to the use of violence by imperialism and its allies. This process confirms once of Marxism's profound propositions that 'revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counter-revolution, i.e. it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defence and in this way devises even more powerful means of attack'. (Lenin: Lessons of the Moscow Uprising).

EM In South Africa, for example, we see how the mass militancy of the 1950s was met by the extreme repression of the apartheid state climaxing in the Sharpeville massacre and the outlawing

of the ANC. This act of counter-revolution gave rise to the formation of Umkhonto, as an 'even more powerful means of attack' when compared to our methods in the previous period. EMWe can see from events in Africa how the extreme violence resorted to by the racists and colonialists in order to ward off the challenge to their rule by the oppressed masses compelled those masses to take up arms:

PLENIn Guinea-Bissau the shooting of fifty striking dock workers in August 1959 signalled the new phase in the struggle;

PLENIn Mozambique it was the 16th June, 1960 Mueda massacre of 600 at a peaceful meeting;

PLENIn Angola it was the 1961 killing of thirty and wounding of 200 at a meeting protesting at the arrest of Dr Neto;

PLENSimilar repression in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Algeria prompted the change from peaceful to armed struggle.

It is clearly as a result of such brutal outrages that the liberation forces declare, as MK did: 'The government's policy of force will no longer be met with non-violent resistance only'.

EMAn expert on revolutionary armed struggle, William Pomeroy, has written:

EM'Popular armed struggle has had its origin in the outlawing of trade unions and peasant unions that have sought to gain for workers and peasants a greater share of the super-profits that imperialists extract from their labour. It has resulted from the suppression of nationalist political parties that have advocated full independence and control over the natural resources of their own countries, including the arrest, the torture or the killing of those who have protested peacefully against such denials and the use of force against the people and their legally constituted organisations'. (Guerrilla Warfare pl4).

EMAll the countries we have referred to, including our own, fit into this pattern. But armed struggle is not born of repression alone. There are other factors and conditions to consider.

Violence and Non-Violence

Prior to the creation of MK the forms of struggle used by the ANC and its allies were non-violent. After December 1961 we employed violent forms of struggle; namely sabotage and armed struggle. A question which is often raised is that since violence is often linked with revolution (in some people's minds at any rate) the ANC must have been a 'moderate' organisation prior to 1961. Nothing could be more erroneous.

EMIt is the oppressor who seeks to implant in people's minds the image of 'revolution and bloodshed'. Many revolutions have, in fact, been carried out with a minimum loss of life (e.g. the overthrow of fascism in Portugal). The eruption of violence and slaughter is generally caused by the attempts of counter-revolution to regain power. The ruling class seek to project the image of 'revolution and bloodshed' in order to make the masses frightened of change.

EMIn South Africa this takes two forms, both aimed at maintaining the present set-up. On the one hand 'Africans will be cannon fodder in an armed struggle to overthrow white supremacy'; and on the other hand 'the whites will be driven into the sea'. The effect of the oppressed of the first is to disarm them; the

effect on the whites of the second is to frighten them into supporting the system.

EM Furthermore, it is a grotesque distortion to equate revolution with armed struggle the way the Maoists, Red Brigades of Italy, Japan etc do. This plays into the hands of the ruling class. 'Violence' is a particular form of struggle and so is 'non-violence'. There are times when 'violence' can advance a struggle or retard it. The same applies to 'non-violence'. Genuine revolutionaries are never wedded to a particular form of struggle. They use their revolutionary judgment to assess the most appropriate time for the use of a particular form of struggle.

EM Forms of struggle are tactical methods and techniques which help us to advance our struggle and attain our goals, in our case a liberated South Africa based on the Freedom Charter. Therefore they are means to an end. If a particular method is useful in advancing the struggle, we employ it as part of our arsenal; if not, we discard it.

EM Marxism-Leninism is categorically opposed to a mechanical and inflexible approach to this question. In a celebrated article on Guerrilla Warfare, Lenin asked: 'What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle?' In his answer Lenin gave two theoretical propositions by which revolutionaries must be guided:

EM 'In the first place Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle ... In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism ...'

EM ... Whilst we have shown that 'non-violent' forms of struggle are a necessary part of the revolutionary arsenal of methods of struggle, we must make an important point in this regard. In revolutionary struggles it is imperative to exhaust all peaceful means of struggle before embarking on armed struggle. This was the case with Algeria, Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Vietnam, Zimbabwe etc. The reason for this is the plain and simple fact that the people are not inclined to support or resort to violence unless they see that there is no other way out.

EM The people must see the justification and necessity for violence. They must see that it is in their interests. This is particularly important because the masses must bear the brunt of the enemy's counter-violence EM- placing the blame on so-called agitators. The people must be able to see through this falsehood. They must see that the revolutionary movement has attempted to advance the struggle through all peaceful avenues, but has been forced to resort to arms because the oppressor has imposed a war situation.

EM Thus the selection of the form of struggle EM- peaceful or violent EM- is not dependent on the people, but rather on the oppressor. This is what gives revolutionary violence its moral justification. The people do not embark on violence because they wish to see

people injured. They do so when they come to learn that the only possible way to overcome the violence of oppression is through revolutionary violence. Furthermore, because every liberation movement must base itself on the people's support, peaceful and legal means are preferred as the way of winning that support and building organisation, unity and strength.

EM This shows the tactical necessity of using non-violent means in order to build up organisation and develop consciousness, where the situation allows. The non-violent path can lead to a serious challenge for power by the people. It can lead to a revolutionary situation. Lenin consistently held that revolution could come about through armed uprising or the peaceful way. But the revolutionary movement must always be ready to seize power by arms.

Evolution of our Armed Struggle

For almost fifty years the ANC followed a policy of non-violent struggle to achieve its aims. We have posed the question 'why had the time come in December 1961? In order to fully answer this question we must understand the concrete historical situation that faced our people and our leaders at the time. We must examine this situation in two parts:

(i) The historical background which will show how peaceful forms of struggle were exhausted and how our methods of struggle had to change; and

(ii) The subjective and objective factors, which will weigh up the internal and external balance of forces, the mood of the people and the possibility of resorting to armed struggle in 1961.

Since 'forms of struggle' are related to our strategy and tactics, we should make clear what we mean by these terms. Strategy is a term derived from warfare and signifies an overall plan of battle; the art of directing the campaign. Tactics are the manoeuvres within that battle plan; devices for gaining the end. In politics strategy is also an art of planning and is linked to our goals. Strategy means to define those principal goals in such a way as to distinguish the main class or national enemy against whom revolutionary effort must be directed. The Freedom Charter defines the goal of a liberated South Africa in such a way as to isolate the main reactionary forces against whom our blows must be directed and creates the broadest possible unity of progressive forces. Tactics in the political sense is the totality of forms, methods and means of attaining the main goal in concrete circumstances, eg strike, demonstration, ambush, raid, sabotage etc.

EM The strategic goals of a movement will depend on this historical period; the nature of the oppressor regime; which class leads the struggle; whether the struggle is for national or class aims etc. The choice of methods of struggle will depend on the existing conditions, on the methods of rule of the oppressor classes, and on the readiness and organisation of the people.

The strategy and tactics of our resistance struggle have changed over the centuries, growing more scientific and revolutionary.

Historical Background

Our history of resistance falls into three periods:

1. ENThe wars of resistance 1652 EM- 1906

2. ENNon-violent struggle 1912 EM- 1960

3. ENViolent struggle 1961 EM-

The Wars of Resistance 1652 EM- 1906

In the first period the strategy of our people was to defend the ancestral lands and hold white invasion at bay. The struggle was over control of the land and the colonisers aimed to seize as much territory as possible by robbery and plunder. Our people used diplomatic means where possible and where these failed they were always ready to resort to armed resistance. So brave and tenacious was the resistance that it lasted for 250 years. Regular as well as guerrilla methods of warfare were made us of.

EMIn the end it was Great Britain, the world's leading power at the time, that finally crushed resistance in a series of bloody wars in the 1870s and 1880s. This aggressive policy was spurred on by the discovery of diamonds and gold and the imperialist 'scramble for Africa'. The Boers had been defeated by our people on many occasions and could not have conquered the country on their own. Names such as Makanda, Moshoeshoe, Dingane, Sekhukhuni, Mzilikazi and Cetshwayo stand out as landmarks in this period, as do epic battles such as Isandlwana.

EMThe Bambata Rebellion of 1906 represents the last brave attempt at armed resistance, and marks the close of an era.

Apart from the fact that it was clear that the spear and shield were no match for the rifle and cannon the military institutions of the African chieftains no longer existed. Our people had no alternative but to search for new forms of struggle.

In passing we should note that the spirit of resistance of the past is of great importance to us and serves as a powerful rallying cry to mobilise our people behind the warriors of Umkhonto.

Non-Violent Struggle

In this period of resistance the strategic aim of the ANC was the building of a national body as the means of mobilising and unifying the African people. The ANC realised from the outset that the problem of forging unity was the key to freedom. Whilst the struggle to control the land had determined state policy in the previous period, with the mining and industrial revolution the struggle for cheap African labour became the main determinant of state policy. In order to keep us disorganised and weak, the successive white capitalist governments applied vicious laws backed by coercion and force. It was no small achievement for the early pioneers of the ANC to build the first steps of national unity. If the early tactics they employed seem moderate to us, we must bear in mind the conditions of the time. Uprooted from the land, in a stage of transition from peasants to workers, our people were initially in a state of disorganisation.

It is with the development of a stable African working class and the emergence of young revolutionary intellectuals during the Second

World War, when national consciousness was fanned throughout Africa and Asia, that our methods of struggle became more militant and mass based, our general strategy was broadened to include both national and class dimensions, and the ANC and Communist Party grew much stronger.

EMWith the advent to power of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party in 1948 the scene was set for the mass struggle of the Fifties. These struggles, making use of such methods as strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience and militant demonstrations, turned the ANC into a mass movement; steeled and disciplined our people; raised their national consciousness to new heights; and forged powerful class and national alliances.

EMIn all these campaigns the emphasis was on non-violence; a policy which proved extremely successful in advancing the struggle. It was essential to make full use of all legal channels as long as these re-

mained. This was a tactical necessity in order to build organisational

strength and raise the fighting mood of the people. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, the masses always prefer to make use of peaceful forms of struggle where these exist. As the challenge to white rule became more powerful so the government resorted to more violent repression. Bannings and restrictions, the imposition of severer penalties for defying unjust laws, baton charges and shootings

became the order of the day. Rebellion and unrest amongst our people flared up in town and country; in New Brighton, Cato Manor, Alexandra, Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Pondoland, Northern Natal.

EMThe Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC illustrated that the government had declared total war on our people and was preparing to crush our liberation movement by all means. This finally closed all channels to non-violent prospects for change. The violent crushing of the national protest strike against the declaration of the

racist republic in May 1961 was the final proof that armed forms of struggle were becoming necessary.

The Turn to Violence

'How many more Sharpevilles would there be in the history of our country?' Nelson Mandela asked at the Rivonia trial, indicating the question our leaders faced when they decided to break with the policy of non-violence. 'And how many more Sharpevilles could the country stand without violence and terror becoming the order of the day?'

EMIt had become clear to our leaders that where no democratic liberties

existed, where all forms of protest were met by violence, the only way of going forward was by armed struggle. This was a decision the people would support for they had experienced the exhausting of peaceful means; had seen the government close down all legal and peaceful channels of resistance. What had happened elsewhere in the world (Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria) was happening in South Africa: namely that the people's movements are compelled to use violent means in order to overcome the use of repressive violence by the state. 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices EM- submit or fight. That time has now come

to South Africa' was the way this point was expressed in Umkhonto's manifesto. That the mood of the masses was in keeping with the thinking of our leaders (and strongly influencing the leadership's carefully considered judgment, too) is illustrated by the fact that there

were increasing numbers of violent clashes between our people and the police in numerous township incidents, as well as open rebellion in Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Natal and Pondoland. If there already existed a tendency towards armed struggle, then the outlawing of the ANC was the final necessary condition; for operating in an underground situation meant it was now free from legal constraints and could issue any call it saw fit.

EMThe outlawing of an organisation, however, does not automatically lead to a decision to embark on armed struggle. Neither do massacres, eg Bulhoek or Bondelswarts. It must be possible to satisfy other necessary conditions, especially the possibility of arming and training the people. Just as leaders must take into account the historic situation, so they must carefully weigh up the objective and subjective conditions before judging that the situation is ripe. What are these conditions.

EMObjective conditions exist independently of our will. They are conditions which are beyond our immediate control and can be favourable or unfavourable. For example, prior to the Great October Revolution when imperialism dominated the world it was difficult for the oppressed nations to struggle against colonialism. In the period after

October 1917, when the Soviet Union emerged to aid the oppressed peoples of all lands, conditions for struggle became much more favourable. Objective conditions relate to the internal and external situation; balance of forces between rulers and oppressed; and the material, economic conditions in a country. These determine the people's mood, level of crisis and contradiction, whether the rulers are in control of the situation, whether a particular period is 'stormy' or 'peaceful'.

EMSubjective conditions relate to our will: to preparedness and readiness to embark on a certain course of action. To fulfil the subjective conditions means that there must be in existence a party or movement with a political programme and clearly defined strategy and tactics. This vanguard movement must be closely linked to the masses; capable of mobilising and leading them; able to put its will into practice.

EMIn 1906 Bambata and his followers had the will to take up arms, but the objective conditions were unfavourable. By 1961 the objective and subjective conditions were maturing. This realistically raised the possibility of armed struggle. What precisely were these conditions in the concrete South African situation?

Objective Factors

1.ENThe international situation and world balance of forces was becoming more favourable to the national liberation struggle. EG: defeat of Nazism; growth of socialist countries; collapse of colonialism. Imperialism was faced by the general crisis of capitalism and grow-

ing challenge to its rule (Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria etc).

2.ENAfrica's 'wind of change' was strengthening the forces of freedom and independence; threatening the racists in the south; raising the hopes of the people.

3.ENSouth Africa was becoming isolated whilst world support was swinging behind our struggle.

4.ENAs a result of its growing isolation, and increasing socio-economic contradictions aggravated by the racist system, the crisis of the regime

was mounting. This was expressed in the growing clashes between the rulers and oppressed, eg. the Sharpeville massacre.

5. Relying more and more on brutal force, the regime left us with 'no choice but to hit back by all means within our power'. All peaceful

means had been exhausted and the masses were showing their disillusionment with non-violent methods alone.

6.ENWith the changing situation in Africa the possibility of receiving arms and training abroad was becoming real.

Subjective Factors

1.ENOur movement and cadres had become steeled and disciplined in the struggle. We had the necessary organisation, experience, links with the masses and programme of aims to enable us to meet the challenge of the new historic situation and embark on the rigorous road of armed struggle.

2.ENDespite the fact that our people had been totally deprived of the knowledge of guns and military training we had the ability and will to master all techniques as long as these became available to us.

EMGiven these conditions our leaders decided that the time had come to embark on new forms of struggle in which popular armed force would become the key element. The 1962 Programme of the SACP summed up the situation:

EM'The Communist Party considers that the slogan of 'non-violence' is harmful to the cause of the democratic and national revolution in the new phase of the struggle, disarming the people in the face of the savage assaults of the oppressor, dampening their militancy, undermining their confidence in their leaders ... Today they (the people) are left with no alternative but to defend themselves and hit back, to meet violence with violence. The Nationalists are forcing a solution upon South Africa in which patriots and democrats will take up arms to defend themselves, organise guerrilla armies and undertake various acts of resistance, culminating in mass insurrection against white domination'.

EMFrom the outset the Party collaborated with the ANC in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Party members have played a role at all levels in conducting operations of Umkhonto.

Victory or Death!

It was recognised that the new path would not be an easy one and would require exceptional demands and sacrifices. The twenty years that have passed since those historic initial blows of Umkhonto have seen the struggle becoming more intense and violent. Those twenty years have witnessed 'calm' and 'stormy' phases; periods of mass activity and violent bloodshed such as during the Soweto uprising

which in a flash illuminated for an entire younger generation the necessity to resort to arms.

EMThose years have seen the militarisation of the apartheid state and its unbridled aggression and war against our own people and our brothers and sisters in the neighbouring independent states. Those years have seen the dramatic swing in the balance of forces and the changing of the map of Southern Africa as a result of the victorious armed struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and the advances in Namibia.

EMThose years have inevitably seen setbacks and problems too, which at times have seriously slowed down the pace of our advance. For almost 18 of those years many of our key leaders, responsible for adopting this historic path, have been incarcerated on Robben Island. For a period we had to grapple with the problem of leading the revolution from exile.

EMAAfter that momentous decision twenty years ago, however, nothing could ever be the same again in our embattled country, or, for that matter, in the entire Southern African region. Thanks to that decision Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army is today, at a time when our situation so urgently requires armed force to reinforce and stimulate the mass actions of our people, a fighting force of experience-

ed freedom fighters with a proud combat record. The actions of those first brave units, self-trained and making use of simple home-made devices, are linked by a glorious road that runs through the Zimbabwe battles of 1967-8 to the audacious and spectacular blows of today such as Sasol, Booysens, Fort Jackson etc which have inspired our people and shaken the enemy to his bootstraps. In this twentieth birthday year the struggles of MK are showing greater levels of success and potentiality

EMAAt a time like this we pay tribute to the glorious combatants of Umkhonto and homage to our eternal heroes who have fallen in battle. We have in mind our unforgettable martyrs such as Vuyisile Mini and Solomon Mahlangu, Looksmart Ngudle and Babla Saloojee, the men of Zimbabwe such as Patrick Malao, Basil February and Johannes Sibanyoni; and the young MK fighters of today such as the Silverton heroes Thami Makhuba, Wilfred Madela and Fanie Mafoko, those who fell at Matola and those who have fought it out to the last bullet or hand grenade such as Linda Jabane, the lion of Chiawelo,

and Khuduga Molokwane, the Dobsonville schoolteacher. Eternal glory to them! In the words of President Tambo which ring like a clarion call to all MK combatants: 'Our battle cry is and shall continue to be: Victory or Death! We Shall Win!'