



CHAPTER FIVE

THE EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE

The aim of this chapter is to trace the history of the External Mission of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto we Sizwe, since the latter's formation in November 1961 to the end of 1988. As pointed out in the foreword to this research, a study of Umkhonto and its activities necessarily involves the study of the ANC and the SACP, because of the close co-operation and overlapping of leadership that existed between the three organisations. Consequently this chapter, while detailing the history of Umkhonto in exile, will also, out of necessity, include the history of the ANC and the SACP.

Chronologically, the history of the ANC's Mission in Exile of which Umkhonto forms an integral part, can be divided into the following historical phases or periods: One, the period 1960 to 1965; two, the period 1965 to 1976; three, the period 1976 to 1985; and four, the period 1985 to 1988. Each of these dates refer more or less to the beginning of a new period or phase in the history and development of the ANC's Mission in Exile. The year 1960, for instance, marks the beginning of the period in which the ANC established its Mission in Exile, while 1965 witnessed the collapse of the combined ANC-SACP-Umkhonto underground movement inside South Africa, and the transfer of control over the armed struggle to the ANC's Mission in Exile.

The third period commenced with the Soweto riots in 1976 when thousands of new recruits, mostly radicalised African youths, entered the ranks of the ANC, but more specifically, Umkhonto. This period also witnessed a number of other significant developments, such as, the establishment of forward bases by Umkhonto in Angola and



Mozambique; the reviving of existing, as well as the re-establishment of new underground structures inside South Africa; the resumption of the armed struggle and its intensification after 1980; the gradual political and economic isolation of South Africa; the signing of the Swazi- and Mozambique accords; the collapse of the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational set-up in Mozambique and Swaziland and the subsequent organisational restructuring of Umkhonto; the destruction of ANC and Umkhonto bases in neighbouring territories by the SADF and the convening of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference in 1985. The latter conference which was held in June and which was the first such conference since the Morogoro event in 1969, was partially a reaction to the growing dissatisfaction among rank and file members in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and elsewhere. The most notable of these latter problems was the mutiny which developed among Umkhonto cadres over the ANC and Umkhonto's leadership in Angola in 1984.

The fourth and last period to be examined in this chapter deals with the period from the Kabwe Consultative Conference to the signing of the New York agreement between South Africa, Cuba and Angola on 22 December 1988. The latter agreement which finally secured a peaceful settlement for South West Africa (Namibia), and which called for the withdrawal of South African and Cuban forces from Angola also facilitated the expulsion of the ANC and Umkhonto from Angola during 1989. This latter phase in the history of the ANC's Mission in Exile also examines the hardline stance of military leaders such as Chris Hani and Ronnie Kasrils on the continuation of the armed struggle as opposed to the views of more "moderate" leaders such as Thabo Mbeki, Lindiwe Mabuza and others in the ANC-SACP alliance as well as the support the latter have for a more peaceful settlement to South Africa's political problems. In an attempt to answer these and other related questions the study also examines the changes that have been taking place in the Soviet Union since 1985 and the effect that this has had on Soviet Third World policy and the ANC-SACP alliance in terms of the latter's revolutionary aims in South Africa.



1. THE FIRST PHASE 1960 - 1965

Faced with the banning of their organisation in April 1960, the leadership of the ANC - i.e., those who were not already in prison at the time - took the dual decision to move what remained of the organisation and leadership underground before the banning order on the ANC came into effect; and at the same time to send specially selected people out of the country to set up a Mission in Exile with offices around the world. Since the first of these commissions, namely to move the ANC underground has already been discussed, we must now turn our attention to the second: the formation of the ANC's Mission in Exile. According to Albert Luthuli who was President-General of the ANC in 1960, the decision to set up a Mission in Exile and to send suitable people out of the country to direct this mission was taken some time before it became clear that the ANC would be banned; but presumably shortly after the Sharpeville shootings. In reference to the country-wide arrests and people fleeing South Africa following the Sharpeville riots, Albert Luthuli stated that he did not,

in general, approve of this latter type of exodus, though it has strengthened our representation abroad. On a larger scale it could be demoralizing at home. Consequently, only the Vice-President of (the) ANC, Mr. Oliver Tambo, left with our prior arrangement and his departure had been intended before this crisis - we wanted a roving ambassador.⁽¹⁾

The impression is that the decision to send a senior member of the ANC to set up an external office was taken shortly after the All African People's Conference held in Accra, Ghana in December 1958. Although the ANC was prevented from sending a delegation to this important meeting, it nevertheless took note of its importance and its strong anti-colonial propaganda.⁽²⁾ Initially, therefore the aim of the Mission in Exile headed by Oliver Tambo in 1960 was to

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1. Luthuli, Let My People Go, p. 199; See also Grobler, A Decisive Clash?, p. 139.
 2. Luthuli, Let My People Go, pp. 187 - 188.



serve as a sort of "embassy" for the ANC through which it could propagate the struggle for liberation in South Africa while at the same time establish direct contact with governments, and leaders of other independence movements in the rest of Africa. It can also be presumed that one of the chief aims of the Mission in Exile was to solicit financial aid for the ANC in South Africa. However with the destruction of the underground in South Africa in the mid-1960's and the decision by the underground leaders to move the centre of their operations outside the country, the Mission in Exile came to assume an entirely new function, namely that of directing and controlling the armed struggle in South Africa - a task for which it was wholly unprepared in 1966.

With the internal operations of the ANC and Umkhonto under the control of Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo, J.B. Marks, Joe Matthews, Govan Mbeki and others in the early 1960's, the direction and control of the Mission in Exile was left almost entirely to the ability of Tambo. This arrangement remained in force until the early part of 1961 when, following the end of the Treason Trial and increasing government action against radical leaders, a steady stream of ANC and SACP leaders began to join the ranks of the Mission in Exile. Among those who joined the Mission in Exile in 1961 were ANC stalwarts Robert Resha and N.B. Nyengwa.⁽³⁾

The initial years in exile were not easy for Tambo and the ANC, which were severely restricted by funds and man-power. With the centre of the liberation struggle still centred inside South Africa, most of the funding that was made available to the Mission in Exile was for utilization of the underground movement inside South Africa. There was simply no money for lavish offices or an executive lifestyle for the members of the Mission in Exile. With Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah being key elements in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism after 1945, and Accra the seat of the 1958 All African People's

3. Karis and Carter (eds), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 120 - 121, 132 - 133, 147, 151 - 153. See also Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 92 - 93; and Keesing's Contemporary Archives, June 1960, p. 17453.



Conference on decolonisation and Pan-African unity, it was the obvious place for the ANC to begin its Mission in Exile in 1960. For the first couple of years it made use of the offices of the South African Political Bureau (SAPB) in Accra and in London. Exactly what the SAPB was could not be established, but it appears to have been established by the Ghanaian government in 1959 in direct support for the liberation struggle in South Africa.

The PAC too made use of the offices of the SAPB.⁽⁴⁾ In May 1960 (some sources indicate June 1961)⁽⁵⁾ at a meeting of the ANC, the PAC and the SAIC (the latter also appear to have made use of the offices of the SAPB) held in London, a new multi-party organisation called the South African United Front (SAUF) was formed. The aim of the SAUF was to bring about unity and co-operation between the three organisations in exile, and to present a united front to the international community in its search for both financial and diplomatic support for the liberation struggle in South Africa. The leaders of the SAUF were Tambo and Tennyson Makiwane of the ANC, Yusuf Dadoo of the SAIC-SACP alliance and Nana Mahomo and Peter Molotsi of the PAC.⁽⁶⁾

Although the history⁽⁷⁾ of the SAUF makes for interesting reading it has little bearing on the subject of Umkhonto we Sizwe and, suffice to say, the precarious co-operation that came to exist

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4. J.D. Nelson, Some External Aspects of Internal Conflict within South Africa: A Study of the Place of International Activities in the Development of the African National Congress, (Unpublished Phd Thesis, George Washington University, 1975), p. 168.
 5. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 297.
 6. Nelson, Some External Aspects of Internal Conflict within South Africa, p. 168.
 7. For a more detailed account of the SAUF see the following sources: Nelson, Some External Aspects of the Internal Conflict within South Africa: p. 161 - 172; Contact 4 (3), February 1961, p. 7; Contact 4 (5), March 1961, p. 3; Contact 4 (7), April 1961, pp. 4, 7; O. Tambo, Unpublished address to the Smith College Faculty Club, U.K., 15 November 1963; J. Coburn, United Front and After, unpublished paper, November 1963, p. 4; New Age 7, February 1961, p. 7; and Legum, Pan Africanism, pp. 144 - 145.



between the PAC, the ANC and the SAIC in the SAUF only lasted until the meeting of PAFMECSA in Addis Ababa in February 1962. At this meeting which was also attended by Nelson Mandela - who had secretly left South Africa in January 1962 (see Chapter Five) to solicit financial and material support among African leaders and governments, for the armed struggle in South Africa - the PAC delegation launched a critical attack on the ANC and its association with the SAIC. After this the SAUF rapidly fell apart and was finally dissolved on 15 March 1962. (*)

With the collapse of the SAUF in March 1962 the ANC finally turned its back on the Africanists. For the next quarter of a century until the beginning of the negotiating process in South Africa in the early 1990's, no official attempt of any significance was made to reach some form of compromise with the PAC for a united front. This development, as insignificant as it may have appeared at the time, eventually contributed, albeit indirectly, to the strength of the South African government to resist the ANC's armed struggle and to reject the organisation's claims that it was the only organisation representative of the Black people of South Africa - a self-proclaimed status that has been perpetuated by the OAU and the UN. The collapse of the SAUF was therefore a setback to the ANC's Mission in Exile. One of the advantages of the SAUF was of course that instead of each of the three political groups that constituted it having to individually canvas for support, the united image presented by the front allowed international communities and governments to give financial and moral support to a single organisation without necessarily having to choose or distinguish between one or more of its components. After March 1962 this was no longer possible.

With the collapse of the SAUF, the ANC proceeded to set up an independent organisational structure to serve its needs both overseas and back home. Some of the existing offices of the old United Front

8. Nelson, Some External Aspects of Internal Conflict in South Africa, pp. 171 - 172. See also Africa Diary 11 (13), March 1962, p. 465; and Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 174.



were turned into permanent ANC offices while others were abandoned, probably for financial reasons.

As was pointed out above, the collapse of the SAUF coincided with Mandela's visit to Africa and Europe in February 1962. Before his departure from South Africa, Mandela was given permission by the ANC and SACP leadership to make use of the ANC's Mission in Exile to arrange meetings for him with prominent African leaders. One can therefore assume that it was with the aid of the Mission in Exile that Mandela attended the PAFMECSA conference in February, where he met a number of African leaders. Most of these leaders and their governments pledged financial support for the ANC and the armed struggle waged by it inside South Africa. Nigeria, for instance, promised financial aid of about R20 000, while Ethiopia, Morocco and Tunisia each promised R4 000 a year. Promises of financial assistance also came from the governments of Senegal and Sudan.⁽⁹⁾ Others again, such as Algeria, offered to provide the ANC and Umkhonto with training facilities. Mandela himself underwent a short course in guerrilla training at Oudja in Algeria in 1962. Oudja was the headquarters of the Algerian Army of National Liberation. He later justified his actions by saying that if there was to be a guerrilla war in South Africa, he wanted to be able to "stand and fight with my people and to share the hazards of war with them".⁽¹⁰⁾ Ethiopia too provided military training and facilities for ANC and Umkhonto cadres at a place called Dabrasseur.⁽¹¹⁾

It is not entirely clear what route funds promised by the African governments followed to South Africa, but apparently all financial aid was sent directly to the ANC's office in London, which was responsible for its distribution to the ANC and Umkhonto inside South Africa. Financial support for the armed struggle in South Africa initially also came from communist sources. At about the time that Mandela made his debut in Africa, Arthur Goldreich was visiting

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9. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, p. 104; Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 161, 174 - 175.
 10. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 174 - 175.
 11. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960-1964, pp. 232, 247.



Eastern Bloc countries to solicit financial and military aid for Umkhonto in South Africa. By the middle of 1962 the ANC's Mission in Exile was also holding talks with Marcelino dos Santos, the General Secretary of the Conferencia das Organizacoes Nacionalistas das Colonias Portuguesas (CONCP). CONCP was an alliance of the MPLA in Angola, FRELIMO in Mozambique and PAIGC in Guinea Bissau. Like the ANC these three Portuguese liberation organisations had close ties with the Soviet Union, who acted as their main source of arms. By 1963 the relationship between the ANC and CONCP had developed into a close association and in 1967 this co-operation with the CONCP was extended to other liberation movements in Southern Africa, notably Josiah Nkomo's Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). ZAPU, like the members of CONCP, operated with the material support of the Soviet Union and it was therefore in a position to provide Umkhonto with direct access to Soviet arms. The ANC also gained the support of pro-Soviet and Soviet-supported organisations such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO).⁽¹²⁾

1.1 The Lobatsi Consultative Conference, October 1962⁽¹³⁾

The collapse of the SAUF in March 1962 and the slow progress that was being made with the armed struggle, particularly in the Natal region where the local ANC was strongly opposed to the sabotage activities of Umkhonto, made it necessary for a consultative conference of ANC leaders to be held as soon as possible. The need for such a conference became even more important after the return of Nelson Mandela from his African tour in July 1962 and his arrest on 5 August near Howick in Natal, which allegedly was engineered by the American

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12. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 298; also Lodge, The ANC in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 161); K. Somerville, The USSR and Southern Africa Since 1976, (Journal of Modern African Studies 22 (1), 1984, p. 91); Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, A South African Case Study, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 283).
 13. For a detailed discussion of the Lobatsi Conference see: Meli, South Africa Belongs To Us, pp. 150 - 154; Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, pp. 268 - 273.



Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁽¹⁴⁾ The problem however was that, due to the illegal position of the ANC and its leaders, such a conference could not be held inside South Africa. Since the objective for such a conference was to examine and discuss events and developments inside South Africa rather than the activities of the ANC's External Mission, it was decided that the conference should be held in one of the High Commission territories. Bechuanaland turned out to be the most popular choice. Until recently it was believed that the idea for the Lobatsi conference came from the Mission in Exile and that it was largely responsible for its planning and eventual execution, but according to Francis Meli, in his recently published history of the ANC, this was not the case.⁽¹⁵⁾ He states that neither Tambo nor the External Mission had anything to do with the conference. They were apparently only informed of it some time in August 1962 at a special meeting of the Mission in Exile held in Dar-es-Salaam. The Lobatsi conference which took place from 28 - 29 October 1962, was conducted in complete secrecy and was attended by members of the ANC and the SACP (and presumably also of Umkhonto), from both inside as well as outside South Africa. The External Mission of the ANC was represented by Tambo, Makiwane, Mziwandile (Mzwai) Piliso and Moses Mabhida.

According to Meli, the Lobatsi conference followed more or less on the same lines as previous ANC conferences in that it was representative of all the main areas of the country. The meeting was attended by about fifty delegates, with more apparently arriving later on. Govan Mbeki presided over the conference while the steering committee consisted of Moses Kotane (SACP), Dan Tloome (SACP) and Tambo. Messages from the President-General, Albert Luthuli as well as Mandela were presented verbally to the conference. The agenda was as follows:⁽¹⁶⁾

(a) Chairman's opening address delivered by Govan Mbeki.

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14. Barrell, MK, p. 13. For a detailed discussion of this issue see Chapter Six pp. 353 - 401.
 15. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 150.
 16. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 151 - 152.



- (b) Report of the National Executive Committee.
 - 1. Report of the External Mission given by Tambo.
 - 2. Report of the National Executive Committee given by Tloome.
 - 3. Report on work in the rural areas given by various heads of area committees in the Transkei, Ciskei, Transvaal and Natal.
- (c) Report on organisation given by Kotane, and
- (d) Report on trade unions given by Mark Shope.

According to Mell, in addition to the above items of discussion there was also a closed session of the conference, but indications are that the entire conference from beginning to end was conducted behind closed doors, and that only the resolutions adopted at the end of the deliberations were publicised.

Since the conference was called by the internal wing of the ANC and the SACP, most of the discussions centred around issues inside South Africa, such as the organisational problems facing the underground; the supply of money to the ANC inside South Africa; the urgent need for the extension of the M-Plan; the need for a house-to-house campaign for funds and recruits; the establishment of better liaison between the internal and external divisions of the ANC; the armed struggle, and the tension between Umkhonto and the ANC in Natal.⁽¹⁷⁾ Most of these issues were reflected in the final resolutions adopted by the conference on 29 October.

These stated that:

Conference fully endorses the organisation report and instructs all organs and units of our organisation as a matter of urgency:

- (a) to inculcate among the people a spirit of sacrifice and loyalty to the cause of freedom;
- (b) to raise the organisation of the freedom volunteers to full strength in all areas;

17. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, p. 270.



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- (c) to enforce strict discipline; ensure observance of the security rules by our members and take steps to discourage loose talk, gossip-mongering and unnecessary curiosity among our people;
- (d) in the organisation of the youth to pay particular attention to their demands for cultural facilities and the special needs of rural youths;
- (e) to make punctuality and efficiency the hallmark of their work;
- (f) to carry out the national programme of political education for our members and people to ensure a high standard of political consciousness and understanding;
- (g) to ensure the full implementation of the 'M'Plan (the 'Mandela' Plan of house to house, street to street cell organisation) and its rapid extension to every area in South Africa; for this purpose to appoint special organisers to guide and supervise its operation.⁽¹⁸⁾

In addition to these resolutions it was also resolved that there was an urgent need for more anti-racist and anti-apartheid propaganda as well as for an intensification of the struggle against the ultra-racist system of Bantu Education. In conclusion it called for a national and international campaign to demand the:

- (a) lifting of the ban on the African National Congress and other outlawed organisations;
- (b) lifting of the State of Emergency in the Transkei;
- (c) release of all political leaders and freedom fighters imprisoned, banned, banished or otherwise subjected to restrictions for political reasons.⁽¹⁹⁾

As far as the armed struggle and Umkhonto in particular were concerned, discussion on these issues was part of the "closed

18. Mell, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 153.
19. Mell, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 153.



session", with the result that virtually nothing is known about what was said or decided. Even Meli makes no reference to these issues. Feit, however, is of the opinion that the armed struggle - particularly the problems between Umkhonto and the ANC in Natal - must have been a dominant theme at the discussion. It seems that the reluctant regional committees were told in no uncertain terms that Umkhonto was very much the business of the ANC and that their quarrels with the organisation and its leaders must immediately come to an end. They were also instructed to help with the recruitment of cadres for Umkhonto and their transportation out of the country. (20)

In a leaflet released sometime after the conference entitled, "The People Accept the Challenge of the Nationalists: Our Political Line of Action" the conference was described as "significant" because it represented all regions of the ANC; because of its militancy; and because youths were represented at it for the first time since 1960. The aim, it stated, was to promote mass political action, "to raise and reinforce the spirit of revolt among the masses," and "to liquidate the whole status quo through seizure of political power. The targets were to be the nationalist government and the instruments of oppression. White supremacy was to be destroyed wherever it was found." The leaflet went on to state that:

In the changed South African conditions we have the mass political wing of the struggle, spearheaded by the ANC on the one hand, and by the specialized military wing, represented by Umkonto we Sizwe, on the other. Our emphasis still remains on political action. The political wing will ever remain the necessary and integral part of the fight. Political agitation is the only way of creating the atmosphere in which military action can most effectively operate. Umkonto cannot survive in a sterile political climate. Our primary objective is the conquest of political power and in doing so African unity is indispensable. (21)

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20. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, pp. 271 - 272.
21. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, p. 272.



The Lobatsi conference, therefore, expressed a clear need for the political and military components of the struggle to be united. According to Feit, the above statement also showed that first of all, "the glowing ghost of the 'mass uprising still stalked'", and secondly that the conference represented something of a victory for the political as opposed to the armed struggle. The need for the political wing to create the climate of victory was indicative of the fact that the basic issue of politics versus armed struggle had not been satisfactorily settled. Feit went on to point out that, despite the superficial victory for the political forces at the Lobatsi conference, the real victors were Umkhonto and its leaders. In terms of the resolutions that were adopted at the Conference, (22) the political wing was subservient to the military and not the other way round. In terms of this it had become little more than an auxiliary; supplying recruits and propagating support for the struggle. Lobatsi therefore, whatever lip-service it gave to the ANC, argues Feit, "freed Umkhonto we Sizwe from the last vestiges of control by anybody other than the National High Command and indirectly by the SACP". (23)

In the meantime the ANC's Mission in Exile was continuing with its propaganda campaign to elevate the ANC to the position of being the only legitimate liberation organisation in South Africa and to isolate the South African government politically and economically. In this they had some effect: Albert Luthuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1961, for which he was given special permission by the South African government to travel to Stockholm to receive the award. This was an important development, since it helped to elevate the ANC and the armed struggle in South Africa to household terms in Europe while at the same time reducing the South African government to the status of a villain. In October 1962, at about the time that the Lobatsi conference was to take place, Luthuli was also honoured by the "International Club" of the University of Glasgow when they nominated and elected him to the position of "Lord Rector" of the university. Chief Luthuli received

22. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, p. 272.
23. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, p. 273.

1 278 votes compared to 73 received by his nearest rival for the post, Mr. Edward Heath, the British Deputy Foreign Secretary. The outcome of the poll led to an unprecedented clash between students and the local police. According to the Lord Provost of Glasgow city, Mrs Jean Roberts, the rioting was the worst ever seen in the history of the university and the city.⁽²⁴⁾

Events such as these gave maximum exposure to the ANC and the liberation struggle in South Africa, allowed the Mission in Exile to keep South Africa firmly in the international spotlight.

Although the Mission in Exile was having a fair amount of success in focusing attention on events in South Africa it was apparently not having the same success in acquiring sufficient funds for the armed struggle back home. The reason for this is not clear, but Joe Slovo and J.B. Marks, two prominent members of the SACP, were sent out of South Africa shortly after April 1963, probably to assist Tambo but also to discuss "Operation Mayibuye" with the External Mission and, as some sources have suggested, with African governments.⁽²⁵⁾

Shortly after Slovo and Marks had left South Africa they were followed by Duma Nokwe, Moses Kotane and Joe Modise - all three were prominent members of the underground. Modise was sent out of the country by the NHC of Umkhonto to take charge of military trainees,⁽²⁶⁾ while Kotane was made Treasurer-General of the ANC's Mission in Exile shortly after his arrival in London. The latter development could be indicative of the fact that the SACP, probably on instruction from Moscow, was taking control of the ANC's external affairs, particularly those that dealt with the armed struggle in South Africa. This suggestion is not far-fetched if one takes into consideration that the first Soviet arms supplies to Umkhonto

24. Africa Diary, November 1962, p. 853.

25. H. Holland, The Struggle. A History of the African National Congress, p. 145; See also Barrell, MK, p. 14; Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 144 and Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.

26. Barrell, MK, p. 14. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1963, pp. 45, 58 - 59.

guerrillas began in 1964 following the formation of the Organisation of African Unity's African Liberation Committee (ALC) in the same year.

The discovery of the underground headquarters of Umkhonto and the ANC in July 1963 and the subsequent action taken by the government to destroy the underground movement dramatically changed the role and position of the Mission in Exile with regards to the armed struggle. With the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational and operational infrastructures destroyed and most of its founder members such as Mandela in prison by the mid-1960's, the task of rebuilding the underground inside South Africa and the conducting of the armed struggle now fell to the Mission in Exile. Thus by the middle of the 1960's the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto entered a new phase in their history.

2. THE SECOND PHASE, 1965 - 1976

Not a great deal is known about the history and activities of the ANC's Mission in Exile during the decade between 1965 and the beginning of the Soweto uprising in June 1976. From the sources available on the subject, it appears that, as a result of its new responsibility after 1965 to direct the armed struggle in South Africa and at the same time take maximum advantage of the aid offered by the Soviet Union and the OAU's Liberation Committee, which had its headquarters in Dar-es-Salaam, it had become a matter of urgency for the Mission in Exile to move its headquarters from London to Tanzania where many of Umkhonto's cadres received their training. In addition to Tanzania and Dar-es-Salaam, which became the home of the ANC and Umkhonto after 1964, Zambia also acquired increasing importance for the ANC and Umkhonto after it gained its independence from Britain in October 1964. According to an article that appeared in the news magazine, To the Point in 1973,⁽²⁷⁾ the ANC and Umkhonto had at least four separate training facilities in Tanzania by the end of the 1960's, while in Zambia it shared the facilities of ZAPU.

27. To the Point, 1973.02.10, pp. 25 - 29.

2.1 The Rhodesian Campaigns, 1967 - 1968

Preparation work for the resumption of the armed struggle inside South Africa was begun in all earnest by the Mission in Exile between 1965 and 1966, when leaders of the ANC-SACP and Umkhonto began to meet with leaders of ZAPU on the possibility of a joint military command. The ANC of South Africa and ZAPU has long shared a common historical bond. With the formation of the SANNC (later ANC) in 1912 it was seen as a national movement not only for the African people of South Africa but also for all Africans residing in the three British High Commission territories, and Rhodesia which at the time was under the control of the British South Africa Company. It was only in 1924 that the need arose for the establishment of a separate African political organisation for the people of Southern Rhodesia. Like its South African counterpart this organisation was also called the African National Congress. The Rhodesian ANC was however later incorporated into the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU).⁽²⁸⁾

The talks initiated in the mid 1960's came to a head in August 1967 when the two organisations (ZAPU and the ANC) jointly announced that they had established a joint command and that their forces were locked in fierce battle with Rhodesian security forces in the Wankie area.⁽²⁹⁾

We wish to declare, the announcement read, that the fighting that is going on in the Wankie area is indeed being carried out by the combined forces of ZAPU and the ANC which marched into the country as Comrades-in-arms on a common route, each bound to its destination ... as Comrades-in-arms, we are facing a common fate - hence a combined force for a common onslaught against the enemy at every point of encounter as we march down the liberation of our respective countries. ... as comrades to procure and secure routes to South Africa.⁽³⁰⁾

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28. ANC(SA), A Short History, pp. 26 - 27; and Nzo, South Africa African National Congress, 1974, p14.
29. The ANC Speaks, September, 1977, pp. 117 - 125.
30. ANC-ZAPU Military Alliance, (ANC, 1970, pp. 3 - 4); See also ANC Speaks, 1961-1971. 10 Years of Armed Struggle, p. 113.



The first incursions into Rhodesia came on 8 August 1967 when a large group consisting of between 80 and 100 men began to cross from southern Zambia into the Wankie Game Reserve in the northern part of Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe). A rather dramatised account of this first incursion in August 1967 is contained in a book entitled From Shantytown to Forest. The Story of Norman Duka. It relates the experiences of the first Umkhonto unit that crossed the Zambian border into Rhodesia in 1967, namely the "Luthuli Detachment", which stood under the overall command of Jackson Moloto. Norman Duka was one of the thirty odd members of this unit and the account that follows is largely based on his recollections of events.⁽³¹⁾

According to Duka he was informed in early 1967 by Umkhonto's chief representative (his name is unknown) in Dar-es-Salaam that preparations had been made for his return to South Africa. Some days later he, together with others, were taken by truck to Zambia where they joined a group of about thirty other Umkhonto guerrillas. Over the next few months they were given intensive training and placed on an improved diet to prepare them for the coming campaign. In mid-August, a few days before they were to leave for the Rhodesian border, they were given their equipment and arms. (It appears that their training up to then was being done without arms.) They were then instructed to clean and check their arms and equipment. The day before they left, they were given a medical check-up. They were also divided into four groups of between 7 to 8 men, each with a different destination inside South Africa. The task of these groups were "to mobilise the masses for the struggle ...(and)... to educate the people to the political significance of our struggle".⁽³²⁾

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31. D. Mercer and G. Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest. The Story of Norman Duka, p. 71. See also South African Studies 1, Guerrilla Warfare, ANC Information Bureau, London, 1970, pp. 1 - 8; The various issues of Mayibuye published between August 1967 and July 1968, Lusaka, Zambia, and Sechaba 1(10), October 1967, Supplement, pp. 1 - 4.
32. Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, p. 71. See also the various issues of Mayibuye between August 1967 and February 1968; Sechaba 1(10), October 1967; Sechaba 1(11), November 1967; and Sechaba 1(12), December 1967.



Duka's group arrived at the Rhodesian border on 7 August. At that stage there were 33 men in the group. At about 2 o'clock on the morning of 8 August, they began to cross the border in four separate groups to minimise detection. The last of the four groups managed to cross the border at about 7 o'clock that morning. Once inside Rhodesia they regrouped to co-ordinate their plans and to orientate themselves. They were also joined at this point by a number of ZAPU guerrillas.

According to Duka his group, which included a few ZAPU men who had joined them inside Rhodesia, was not the only group to cross into Rhodesia on 8 August. They were part of a wider joint military operation between the ANC and ZAPU. Like his own, most of these groups were also made up of both ZAPU and Umkhonto guerrillas. Exactly how many ZAPU guerrillas were attached to each group is not clear. In the case of Duka's group it appears to have been only a handful.

Once inside Rhodesia, Duka's group began its journey south which they estimated would take them ten to twelve days. The plan was that once the group reached the South African border it would split into the prearranged four groups, each with a different destination inside South Africa. To avoid detection, the group rested during the day and travelled only by night. By using this method they managed to travel undetected for five days before they began to encounter village life. By the seventh day however, they had not only ran out of food but they also discovered that they were lost. According to Duka, by that stage he was also beginning to feel the weight of his equipment. Nonetheless, they continued to march for another seven days before they first ran into the Rhodesian security force which apparently had been tracking them for some days. They learned this much from a small radio transmitter that they carried with them. The knowledge that they were being hunted by the security forces had a demoralizing effect on them. They managed to evade contact with the security forces for a few days longer, but once they left the thick bush and dense grassland in southern Wankie they were forced to set up defence positions. They knew that the security forces was close



behind them. Having sent for food at a nearby village they were in the process of eating it when the security forces began their attack. According to Duka the security forces consisted of about 50 men,

many of whom turned and ran away the minute we opened fire, dropping everything - guns, radio sets, knapsacks full of food, supplies, etc. ... We had the Rhodesian forces on the defensive; they retreated from their positions and our flanks advanced. For three hours we held the offensive, killing many Rhodesian soldiers. We lost four comrades at the start of the battle and two others were wounded. (33)

Once the Rhodesian forces had retreated the guerrillas collected the equipment that they had left behind. They then proceeded with their journey south; still hoping to reach the South African border. The radio, food, and other equipment captured during the skirmish helped them to survive another few days. By using the captured radio they kept themselves informed on the movement of the Rhodesian forces. Duka recalled:

We listened carefully to the radio. The Rhodesian army had reported that they killed a large number of us. According to their figures we would all have been dead; some in fact would have had to die twice! We had a good laugh at that. They admitted only that two Rhodesian officers were killed in battle. Later we heard about the night "battle" at the dam. They announced that a unit of ten guerrilla's was ambushed and annihilated. "But what guerrillas?" we asked. This is what we figured must have happened: During our earlier battle many of their troops dispersed, running away. Some must have regrouped and were trying to contact the rest of their troops that night near the dam when they fell into the ambush set for us by the main force. The broken unit probably returned the fire thinking they ran into us. Of course, the Rhodesian government couldn't admit such a blunder, so they claimed the dead were guerrillas. (34)

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33. Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, p. 75.
See also Mayibuye 1968.02.24 - 1968.06.24.
34. Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, p. 76.



According to Duka such obvious incompetence was not limited to the Rhodesian army alone but it also extended to its airforce. He recalled:

Late that afternoon, a bomber passed over, then two jet fighters and four helicopters. The helicopters circled in the air above us, then continued south about five kilometers to a forested area. The planes began bombing the forest. We watched and listened, thankful (that) they had overestimated our walking capacity. (35)

A second major battle between the guerrillas and the security forces then followed. According to Duka here too they managed to push the security forces into a retreat despite the fact that the latter had brought in reinforcements. This battle lasted four hours. The guerrillas lost a further two men and a third was injured. The security forces on the other hand had suffered heavy losses with many of their men killed or wounded.

Among them we found a South African officer named Smith, an expert in counter-guerrilla warfare. He was badly wounded but still alive ... When Smith saw us standing over him he pleaded, "Please, don't kill me!" But we had no choice; alive he would return to help the South African government oppress our people and be a danger to us in the future. (36)

Again, as in the case of the previous contacts, the guerrillas managed to capture a large amount of equipment, part of which they could not carry. Collecting information and food from villagers as they moved along, the guerrillas eventually reached the Botswana border. The initial plan was not to infiltrate South Africa through Botswana, but according to Duka, since they had arrived at the Botswana border, they decided to make use of the route which was considered to be safer.

On the morning of 10 September while they were moving through Botswana they were stopped and arrested by the Botswana mobile police

35. Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, p. 76.
36. Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, p. 76.

and charged with illegal entrance into that country and the illegal importation and possession of dangerous weapons. They were all subsequently sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment ranging from a few months to three years.

The general impression that one gains from Duka's account of the incursions as well as from the accounts of others who were part of Umkhonto's offensive in 1967,⁽³⁷⁾ and which has been endorsed by the ANC, is that the Wankie campaign conducted by ZAPU and Umkhonto was a resounding success and that in most of the battles that took place the guerrillas were not only able to push the security forces onto the defense but that they also inflicted heavy losses on them. The question is, how accurate are Umkhonto and the ANC's accounts of the 1967 incursions? A review of the daily press at the time suggests that Duka and other Umkhonto member's account of the Wankie campaign may be somewhat overinflated in some key areas such as the number of security force troops killed.

According to the 1967 Survey Report of the South African Institute of Race Relations,⁽³⁸⁾ which is primarily based on newspaper reports of the time, the Luthuli Detachment was indeed part of a larger Umkhonto-ZAPU force of between 80 and 100 men who had infiltrated Rhodesia in August 1967. To avoid detection by the Rhodesian security forces and to facilitate their movement in the dense bush the guerrillas made use of game paths to travel south. According to reports that appeared in the press on 28 and 29 August the Rhodesian security forces, assisted by units of the South African police, had been warned in advance of the guerrillas' infiltration into Rhodesia by secret agents in Zambia. Once the guerrillas were inside the country the security forces made use of spotter aircraft and helicopters to trace their movement. As soon as they were spotted, troops were sent into the area to attack and destroy the guerrilla

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37. See also The Wankie Battles by Umkhonto Guerrilla V.M. in Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, pp. 84 - 91; and On the Eastern Front by Umkhonto Guerrilla J.M. in Mercer and Mercer (eds.), From Shantytown to Forest, pp. 92 - 96. See also Sechaba 2(2), February 1968.
38. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1967, p. 66; The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1967.08.28 - 29.



groups. As a result a total of 31 guerrillas was reported to have been killed by the end of August. In addition a large number had also been captured by the security forces, who in contrast to Duka's claim lost only seven men; while 15 others were wounded.⁽³⁹⁾

Many of the guerrillas captured by the security forces appeared to have become lost. Being unfamiliar with the dense Rhodesian bush many had become disorientated and were exhausted and half-starved by the time they were found. Information gained from these captured guerrillas revealed that they were made to believe that they would not meet with strong opposition from the security forces and could expect help from the local African population. This turned out to be a myth. Both the security forces and the local African population turned out to be a real problem to the guerrillas. In fact some guerrillas were captured exactly because their presence was reported to the police by local Africans.⁽⁴⁰⁾

According to the ANC's account of the incursion the Luthuli Detachment decided to use Botswana as a route to South Africa because they happened to arrive at the Botswana border rather than the South African border and they thought it would be a safer alternative. But reports that appeared in the press at the end of August and beginning of September suggest that the Luthuli Detachment went into Botswana mainly to escape the Rhodesian security forces who were in hot-pursuit of them. According to a press statement by Mr W.S. Grant, the head of the Botswana Special Branch, altogether 34 men were captured by the Botswana mobile police while a further one was found dead from natural causes. None of those captured apparently offered any resistance to arrest, probably because they thought that they would be deported. A breakdown of the guerrillas captured revealed that of the 35 persons, six were members of ZAPU, while the remainder consisted of 26 Umkhonto (ANC) and three PAC guerrillas.⁽⁴¹⁾ It

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39. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1967.08.29; The Star (Johannesburg), 1967.08.29; The Daily News (Durban), 1967.08.29. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1967, p. 67.
40. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1967, p. 67.
41. The Sunday Express (Johannesburg), 1967.09.10.

is not clear whether the three PAC guerrillas were part of the main group, but it does not appear to have been the case. Norman Duka made no reference to any PAC members being part of their group.

In terms of their objective, namely to reach and infiltrate South Africa, the incursions in August 1967 was a failure. Most of the combined Umkhonto-ZAPU forces that crossed into Rhodesia in August were either dead or in prison by the end of the year.

The failure of the ZAPU-ANC alliance to successfully infiltrate South Africa and the fate that befell the guerrillas had a number of consequences. In the first place it gave the rival PAC an opportunity to make political propaganda out of the incident. It denounced the ANC's alliance with ZAPU. In a publication entitled "The Wankie Fiasco in Retrospect" the PAC condemned the incursion and strategy of direct confrontation with regular forces as "the worst bluff" and "a criminal act of manslaughter."⁴² In the second instance the failure of the operation also led to tension between the ANC, ZAPU and the rival Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). The latter, while praising the guerrillas, strongly criticised the use of Umkhonto guerrillas by ZAPU as a "gross blunder". ZANU felt that the Zimbabweans were quite capable of doing their own fighting and did not need the help of the ANC and the SACP. The use of what they termed "mercenaries" from South Africa, was seen as just short of an insult to the African people of Rhodesia.⁴³ This criticism was not entirely ill-placed for it was not the Rhodesians who needed the co-operation of the ANC but vice versa. Without the support of the Rhodesian nationalist forces and the local population the ANC-SACP alliance were well aware of the fact that they had little chance of restarting the armed struggle in South Africa during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

In the third instance criticism also came from within the ranks of

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42. M. Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, pp. 36 - 38.
43. Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, pp. 39 - 40. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1968, pp. 65 - 66.



the ANC itself. In a statement released by eight members of the ANC who broke away from the organisation in 1975 it was claimed among others that the failure of the Wankie campaign in 1967 was largely the result of incompetent ANC leadership, and a self-perpetuating bureaucracy that cared little about what became of cadres such as those sent into Rhodesia in August 1967. The statement went on to say that ANC policy was made in the interest of "rank opportunism, military adventurism and political expediency" such as:

- (a) the arbitrary decisions on the 1967 Zimbabwe campaigns without prior discussion in the ANC national executive or authorisation by it;
(and)
- (b) the failure later to explain whether the ANC/ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union), alliance under whose auspices these campaigns were launched was still in force ..."⁽⁴⁴⁾

In reference to Umkhonto in particular it stated that while the organisation attracted some "brilliant" and "dedicated young people" to its ranks these people were demoralised by badly conceived strategy and ill-planned operations.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Having failed in its initial operation most military commanders would have seriously reconsidered their options and strategy before launching a second attempt. But this did not appear to have been the case with the leadership of Umkhonto, who in spite of the failure of the first offensive, did not take long before it made a second attempt to cross guerrillas into Rhodesia. If these second series of incursions were designed to raise the morale of Umkhonto's cadres they certainly had the opposite effect because they were as unsuccessful as those of 1967. According to the Annual Survey of the South African Institute of Race Relations for 1968/69, three further incursions were made by ZAPU and Umkhonto guerrillas into Rhodesia in

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- 44. African National Congress of South Africa (African Nationalists), Statement on the Expulsion from the ANC(SA) of T. Bongq, A.M. Makiwane and others, 1975.12.27, p. 1 - 3, 24.
 - 45. African National Congress of South Africa (African Nationalists), Statement on the Expulsion from the ANC(SA) of T. Bongq, A.M. Makiwane and others, p. 24.



1968. One group apparently entered the country in January of that year but was rounded up by the security forces before they could move far. A second group of guerrillas estimated to be about a hundred men crossed into Rhodesia towards the end of February. According to information released in the South African Parliament in April, this latter group of guerrillas included between 25 and 30 Umkhonto guerrillas.⁽⁴⁶⁾

According to Michael Morris the first group of guerrillas sent into Rhodesia in January 1968 was to act as a decoy for the main body of guerrillas that crossed the Zambezi River in February. The aim of the January group was thus to seek confrontation with the Rhodesian security forces, thereby drawing attention away from the main group. This plan seemed to have worked reasonably well until the main group of guerrillas began to run out food and other essential supplies. Uncertain about the general attitude of the local African population and wishing to remain undetected for as long as possible, the guerrillas began to shoot game to augment their food supplies. This development soon brought the Rhodesian Department of Nature Conservation and subsequently the security forces on the scene. In the months that followed running battles took place between the guerrillas and the security forces.⁽⁴⁷⁾ By the end of April 1968 it was reported that at least 55 guerrillas, including members of Umkhonto, had been killed by the security forces. The remainder of the guerrilla force was reported by then to be in a highly disorganised state with both supplies and morale running low. Some of the guerrillas managed to make their way back to Zambia while others hid out in the dense Rhodesian bush. They too were later rounded up by the security forces. The leader of one such a group, Moffat L. Hadebe, for instance hid out with his second-in-command for more than seven months before he was finally captured.⁽⁴⁸⁾

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46. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 11, 1968.04.25, col. 4118;
Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1968, p. 66.
47. Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, pp. 39 - 40.
48. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1968, p. 66. See also
Mayibuye 2(18) May 1968.



A third (this was the last major wave) of guerrillas crossed into Rhodesia in July 1968 near the border post of Chirundu. They too were almost immediately detected by the Rhodesian security forces and in the running battles that followed most of the members of this latter group were also killed or captured. As a result of the successes scored by the security forces, more than 160 guerrillas had been killed by the security forces by the end of 1968. On 28 August 1968, a year after the first incursions took place, the head of the South African Security Police was reported to have stated that since the beginning of the guerrilla incursions into Rhodesia in 1967, 29 of the guerrillas killed had been positively identified as being South African (but not necessarily Umkhonto) while another 50 from South Africa was believed to have been killed or died in the Rhodesian bush.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Two months later the South African Minister of Police and the Interior, S.L. Muller, stated that up to that date altogether 35 Umkhonto guerrillas (including a few Coloured men) had been killed.⁽⁵⁰⁾

In his assessment of the ZAPU-Umkhonto incursions into Rhodesia between 1967 and 1968, Tom Lodge⁽⁵¹⁾ in his authoritative work on the development of Black politics in South Africa since the Second World War, wrote that although the strategic purpose of the Rhodesian incursions was probably taken quite seriously by the ANC leadership in Tanzania (doctrines of rural-based guerrilla warfare were very influential at the time), there may have been subsidiary motives. The campaigns, he argued, may have been intended to remedy the sagging morale created by inactivity and boredom in the camps as well as boosting the ANC's position with the OAU's Liberation Committee. Lodge however discussed the latter motive on the grounds that between 1967 and 1968 the ANC received only \$3 940 (approximately R13 000 in today's terms), out of a total amount of some \$80 000 (approximately R280 000), promised by the Liberation Committee.⁽⁵²⁾

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49. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1968.08.28.
50. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1968.10.14. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1968, p. 66.
51. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 299 - 300. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, pp. 10 - 11.
52. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 300.



Similarly, as far as improving internal morale and relieving boredom in the training camps was concerned, indications were that the campaigns did not do much to raise the spirit of rank and file members in the ANC and Umkhonto. Dissatisfaction thus remained. In 1968 for instance, it was reported that a group of Umkhonto defectors from the organisation's training camps in Tanzania, had sought refuge in Kenya because there was widespread discontent in the camps. They accused their commanders of extravagant living and ethnic favouritism, wrote Lodge. What is more, it was alleged that the first groups who went into Rhodesia with ZAPU in August 1967 were on a suicide mission designed to eliminate dissenters, particularly those who argued against the role of communism in the movement. Some of the guerrillas who had managed to return from Botswana later stated, on their arrival in Tanzania, that there was no longer any direction in the struggle and that there was general confusion and unwillingness to discuss the issues of the revolution.⁽⁵³⁾

To these reasons one may also add that it is possible that the Rhodesian incursions were ordered by the SACP and the Soviet Union, who were responsible for virtually all military supplies to Umkhonto after 1964. Undoubtedly, the Soviets would have wanted to see some return on their investment. Similarly, the ANC-SACP leadership must have been under tremendous pressure, both from within its own leadership ranks as well as the rank-and-file of the organisation, to resume the armed struggle so as not to lose the support of the Black masses inside the country. This was particularly important if one considers the setback that the liberation movement received at the hands of the South African government at Rivonia. To successfully infiltrate cadres back into South Africa and to show an armed presence inside the country soon after the Rivonia event, would have been a tremendous boost for the ANC and Umkhonto. Unfortunately, for the ANC-SACP alliance the failure of the 1967-1968 incursions only helped to compound the Mission in Exile's problems. In his assessment of the reasons for the failure of the 1967 incursions, Joe Slovo argued that at the time there was not the requisite level of internal

53. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 300.



organisation, mass mobilisation and mass grass roots support among the people of Rhodesia to sustain the guerrilla incursions. "For the liberation movements," he continued, "the Zimbabwe incursions once again underlined the need for careful political preparation of the population and for guerrilla groups to be integrated within the community rather than functioning as an isolated foci."⁽⁵⁴⁾ According to Chris Hani, who was political commissar of one of the groups that crossed into Rhodesia in August 1967, an additional factor that contributed to the failure of their offensive in 1967 was their wholly unfamiliarity with the terrain through which they had to move. For its knowledge of the latter Umkhonto relied heavily on ZAPU whose information and contacts in the end turned out to be weak and often inaccurate.⁽⁵⁵⁾

It has also been argued that the training given to Umkhonto and ZAPU guerrillas in Soviet camps in Odessa was inappropriate in that it was designed for mobile warfare between guerrillas and conventional forces. As it turned out, the Rhodesian and South African governments made use of guerrilla tactics and of troops specially trained in counter-insurgency operations supported by conventional war machinery such as ground and air vehicles and an effective communication system to destroy the ZAPU-Umkhonto guerrilla forces in Rhodesia. This the guerrillas apparently did not expect nor did they have the firepower, communications and mobility to match that of the Rhodesian security forces. Others again have argued that the training given to the guerrillas of ZAPU and Umkhonto by the Soviets was suitable for guerrilla warfare but that instructions regarding the need for political mobilisation of the local population as a prerequisite for successful guerrilla operations were ignored. It became evident, argued Howard Barrell, that the campaigns of 1967 and 1968 suffered the same quasi-militarism as those of the 1961 - 1963 phase. He went on to say that

54. B. Davidson, J. Slovo and R. Wilkinson, Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution, pp. 193 - 194.

55. Barrell, MK, p. 24. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 35 - 42.



Despite occasional pronouncements that political mobilization was primary, the ANC's actual approach was that armed activity was the only significant way to secure political advantage. The hope, implicit in the design of the campaigns (of 1967), was that armed activity by a small MK force was capable of drawing the population into, and eventually detonating, all-round political military revolt against a state. This strategy, he continued, had been suggested, with qualifications by Argentine-Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara in the early 1960's. (56)

But whatever the reasons for the failure of the 1967 - 1968 campaigns, the new responsibility that had been placed on the shoulders of the Mission in Exile after 1965 had become too much for it to handle successfully. Moreover, serious tension and dissatisfaction that had developed within the ANC and Umkhonto over the years also added to the Mission in Exile's problems. As Francis Melli so accurately put it,

Despite the fact that the ANC had gained a lot of experience in Rhodesia, its External Mission still had to cope with the problems of assuming responsibility for the fate of the entire movement both inside and outside the country. This was no longer a theoretical question, but a hard, cold, and at times an unpleasant fact of life. New plans for prosecuting the revolution had to be worked out. (57)

The best way to do this was through the convening of a major national consultative conference, which by 1969 was well overdue.

56. Barrell, MK, pp. 24 - 25. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 35 - 42.

57. Melli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 162.



2.2 The Morogoro National Consultative Conference,
April 1969⁽⁵⁸⁾

Although Lodge⁽⁵⁹⁾ referred to the Morogoro conference as the 'Third Consultative Conference' (the first being the Pietermaritzburg All-in Conference and the second being the Lobatsi Conference), it was in fact the first national consultative conference organised by the ANC's Mission in Exile since 1960. Both the Pietermaritzburg and Lobatsi conferences were organised by the ANC from within South Africa, to deal with the main problems affecting the organisation and the liberation struggle inside South Africa at the time.

The Morogoro Conference was thus a milestone event for the ANC-SACP alliance and its military wing, Umkhonto. Convened on 25 April, the conference lasted seven days and was attended by seventy delegates from the ANC and allied organisations - the majority of which came from the SACP and Umkhonto. The conference, which was chaired by J.B. Marks and Moses Mabhida of the South African Communist Party, was later described by a fellow SACP member, Joe Slovo

as one of the most important conferences in the history of the ANC. It was an extremely critical moment. As chairman, J.B. (Marks) was confronted by a democratically elected but at the same time very angry assembly of men and women who had lost confidence in many members of the National Executive Committee.

He went on to say that, when people think and talk about the Morogoro conference they tend to do it in a loose manner and attached different meanings to it:

Most people who talk about the Morogoro conference tend to concentrate mainly on the integration of non-African revolutionaries into the external mission of the ANC. It is true that

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58. For a detailed discussion of the Morogoro conference see: Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969/1970, pp. C148 - C154; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 300 - 301; and Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 163 - 172; Mayibuye, (Special Conference Issue) 3(10), May 1969, pp. 1 - 13; Sechaba, 1969.12.12, pp. 1 - 4, and S. Johns and R. Hunt Davis (eds), Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress, pp. 183, 185, 197, 292, 313.
59. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 300.

this was one of the key demands of the rank-and-file of MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe) and it was very hotly debated. Quite a few of the then leaders of the NEC who have since shown their true colours were opposed to this move ... But, Morogoro was more than this question alone. In the first place, Morogoro asserted the right of the rank and file to have a say as to who would lead them ... Morogoro also proclaimed that we must devote the bulk of our resources and efforts to work inside the country. At the time the ANC's underground structures were virtually non-existent and MK had not fired a single shot on South African soil ... (60)

With the emphasis on democracy and the democratic process a series of pre-conference discussions and seminars were conducted to determine the agenda for the conference. These pre-conference preparations took the form of expert papers, objective analyses, discussion issues and self-criticism. According to Meli, questions were posed and solutions were suggested. Meli writes:

The formulation of proposals aimed at removing shortcomings and ensuring improvements were a guarantee, not only of fruitful results at the conference, but also of a solid basis for further operations - "that is, (the) total mobilization of the millions of our people and the radical changes in the ANC machinery and style of work to enable it to accomplish the task that lay ahead." (61)

One important aspect that surfaced during the pre-conference discussions was the need for a complete restructuring of the ANC and Umkhonto. But the formulation of a new structure alone was not enough. It had to be accompanied by a human element, which demanded the better political and military training of cadres. In other words, what was needed in addition to a new organisational structure and organisation, was a drastic change in outlook towards the forces of the revolution and the revolution itself. (62)

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60. Joe Slovo as quoted by Francis Meli in South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 167.
60. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 163.
61. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 163 - 167.
62. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 163 - 167; legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, pp. C149 - C153, and Mayibuye (Special Conference Issue), 3(10), May 1969. pp. 1 - 13.



The outcome of the pre-conference discussions resulted in a comprehensive agenda that was presented to the conference on 25 April. It addressed a wide range of problems facing the ANC and the armed struggle; in particular the organisation's inability to return its cadres to South Africa and to establish effective lines of communication between the External Mission and the home front. The most pressing problem central to these issues, was the re-organisation of the ANC and the streamlining of its organs and functions.

These and other problems were highlighted by Oliver Tambo in his presidential address to the conference, in which he pointed out that certain developments had made the meeting very different from those in the past. These were: the death of Albert Luthuli, the President-General of the ANC; the commencement of responsibility for the armed struggle by the Mission in Exile; and the numerous organisational and other problems that had come to trouble the organisation since the mid-1960's.⁽⁶³⁾

There was thus an overwhelming need for the conference to devise a new strategy and a complete structural reorganisation of the ANC and Umkhonto to create a suitable framework to enable the latter to resume the armed struggle in South Africa. To help bring this about two major changes were effected to the organisational structures of the ANC and Umkhonto: Firstly, the ANC's National Executive Committee was reduced from 23 to nine members. The nine re-elected members were Oliver Tambo who was elected President-General following the death of Luthuli; Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General; J.B. Marks; Moses Mabidha; Moses Kotane, Treasury; J. Matthews; T.T. Nkobi; W. Mokgomande and M. Pilliso. Secondly, three new organs, namely a Treasury Department, a Secretariat and a Revolutionary Council (RC) were set up.⁽⁶⁴⁾

63. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, pp. C149 - 150. See also Mayibuye (Special Conference Issue) 3(10), May 1969, pp. 1 - 13.

64. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, p. C153. See also Mayibuye, (Special Conference Issue) 3(10), May 1969, pp. 1 - 13.



The last of these three new organs namely the Revolutionary Council, was created with the sole aim and purpose of controlling Umkhonto and directing the armed struggle in South Africa. In other words the political and diplomatic functions of the Mission in Exile were separated from the purely military function of Umkhonto. Although the names of the members of the RC were never revealed by the ANC-SACP alliance it has been alleged that the RC like the organisation it served (Umkhonto), was heavily staffed with senior members of the SACP. For instance Dr. Y. Dadoo, who had a long association with the SACP and who was a senior member of the SACP's Central Committee, was appointed vice-Chairman of the RC while another marxist, Joe Matthews, became its Secretary. The Chairman of the RC was Joe Slovo to whom we have referred on numerous occasions in the study. This means that the RC stood directly under the leadership of a senior if not the most senior member of the SACP and not under the guidance of Oliver Tambo.

Other members of the SACP who were elected to the RC in either 1969 or thereafter were Reginald September, Moses Kotane and Stephen Dlamini. Like Slovo, September was non-African and was in terms of the ANC's constitution not allowed to serve on the NEC which consisted solely of Africans. The formation of the RC in 1969 was therefore a major step by the SACP to circumvent the NEC and to gain direct control over the armed struggle in South Africa.⁽⁶⁵⁾ As the controlling body of Umkhonto after 1969, the members of the RC were relieved of all external and administrative tasks not pertaining to Umkhonto.

As far as the other two organs created in 1969 were concerned, the Treasury was charged with all aspects dealing with finance and

65. A. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 3 (1/2), 1983 - 1984, p. 193). See also B. Barrett, A Profile of the African National Congress (ANC), Inkatha Institute of South Africa, June 1988 (Unpublished Research Report), pp. 35 - 36; ANC, Nasionale Uitvoerende Komitee, (NUK), 1985, Document obtained from Military Intelligence, Natal Command, Durban; and South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).



logistical support for Umkhonto, while the Secretariat was to be responsible for the mobilisation of international support for the ANC and the armed struggle. The Treasury and the Secretariat were thus organs of the ANC designed to streamline the functions of Umkhonto. In addition to these changes it was also agreed that an Internal Commission would be established to deal with all complaints and grievances from the rank-and-file, of which the majority were in Umkhonto. It was also agreed that a code of conduct for all the members of the ANC and Umkhonto should be introduced to ensure uniform behaviour.⁽⁶⁶⁾

With the formation of the Revolutionary Council, the emphasis had thus finally shifted away from the political and international activities of the Mission in Exile to the resumption of the armed struggle. Tambo emphasised this in his presidential address to the Morogoro conference, when he stated that the immediate task imposed upon the ANC was to set up a truly revolutionary movement, something the Mission in Exile had not been able to do before. He made it clear that times had changed and that in the past too much emphasis had been placed on international solidarity work, which was a carry-over from the former role of the External Mission. He pointed out that although political work was not unimportant it had to be looked at in its proper perspective. He went on to say that one of the main reasons for Umkhonto's poor performance in the past, had been the fact that the notion of Umkhonto cadres as soldiers had suppressed their true position as political leaders, thus the political and military components of the armed struggle in South Africa had to complement each other in order to bring about success. In view of this Tambo called upon all members of the ANC and Umkhonto to prepare themselves to return to South Africa and to take up the responsibility of the armed struggle.⁽⁶⁷⁾

An issue that also received substantial attention and support at the conference and which ties in closely with the changes that were being

66. Nzo, South African National Congress, Interview in Depth, p. 7; Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, p. C151.
67. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, p. C151.



proposed at the meeting, was the call for a "united front" and "fighting alliance", that would effectively bring together all the revolutionary and anti-apartheid forces inside and outside South Africa. It was suggested that in the spirit of the old Congress Alliance, which was dissolved in 1960 when the ANC was banned, National Liberation Fronts similar to the Algerian and Vietnam types should be set up to facilitate the armed struggle and the process of national liberation in South Africa. The suggestion was, however, later turned down on the grounds that while such fronts brought together divergent elements around a minimum programme of liberation, there was no need for such fronts because of the existence of the Freedom Charter, which provided a common programme. In view of this, it was decided that the new organisational structure had to provide for the full participation of members of the oppressed national groups, the working class and the revolutionary organisations which supported the armed struggle.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Over the years people from these groups, many of whom were non-African, have made a substantial contribution to the strength and position of the ANC and the armed struggle, and it was felt that the time had come for them to be made equal partners in the ANC. Consequently the ANC's membership was opened up to people of all races irrespective of colour or creed. Only the National Executive Committee remained exclusively African in its composition. This last symbol of African exclusivity in the ANC was only done away with in 1985.

The SACP apparently played a major role in the ANC's 1969 decision to open its doors to people of all races. This meant that non-African members of the SACP, who for years had played a vital role in the ANC and its activities but who could not become full members of the ANC, could now do so. This latter development was a major step forward for the SACP in its search for more direct control over the decision-making of the ANC.

The opening up of the ANC's membership to non-African revolutionaries, most of whom were members of the SACP, had the added effect of raising morale. Francis Meli writes:

68. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, p. C151.



Here were members of the same movement, faced with the same problems, striving for the same objectives of building an internal organisation in which each revolutionary was a potential organiser in any community with direct benefit to the entire movement, and where he or she ran an equal risk of maximum penalty if captured by the enemy. In such a situation all revolutionaries and activists were of equal worth, and equally entitled to participate in discussions and decisions effecting the prosecution of a cause for which they offered their lives.⁽⁶⁹⁾

According to Lodge,⁽⁷⁰⁾ the issue over whether non-Africans should be allowed into the ranks of the ANC proper was the subject of numerous discussions as early as 1965, when a decision was taken by the Central Committee of the SACP not to proceed with the idea of forming an own cadre group among the members of Umkhonto, but to rather pressurise the ANC to open up its membership to all. At about the same time that this decision was taken, a meeting between the SACP and an ANC delegation of four consisting of Oliver Tambo, Robert Resha, Raymond Kunene and Alfred Kgotong was held at the home of Joe Slovo. The main issue under discussion was the growing dissatisfaction among the non-African members of Umkhonto over their exclusion from full membership of the ANC - particularly its NEC. According to Lodge, two members of the ANC delegation, namely Resha and Kgotong, were not in favour of non-Africans becoming full and equal members of the ANC. Their objection was probably based on the fact that most non-African members of Umkhonto were members of the SACP. As a result the issue could not be resolved and after the meeting Resha was charged with the task of co-ordinating the efforts of the ANC's main allies, namely the SACP and Umkhonto. The aim of the latter exercise was probably to bring home the fact that full membership of the ANC by allied organisation, whether they were African or not was no longer a luxury but an absolute necessity if the armed struggle was to be restarted. This issue was apparently again raised the following year at a joint meeting of the ANC and the SACP, but again no decision could be reached as numerous ANC leaders were opposed to a broadening of the ANC NEC. A compromise suggestion by Joe Matthews of the SACP for the formation of a "War Council"

69. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 166 - 167.

70. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 301.



composed of Whites, Indians and Coloureds also met with little success. The result was that the issue remained unresolved until the Morogoro conference.⁽⁷¹⁾

2.1.1 The Resolutions of the Morogoro Consultative Conference⁽⁷²⁾

At the end of the conference a number of important resolutions were adopted by the ANC. The most significant of these related to changes in the organisational structure of the Mission in Exile and Umkhonto, membership and programme. In terms of the first category the conference unanimously approved the organisational changes that were effected to the structure of the ANC and Umkhonto and the formation of the Revolutionary Council to give leadership and direction to the latter. It also approved that the former Umkhonto command should become a military administration under the Revolutionary Council.

In terms of the second category, namely membership, the conference confirmed that too little attention had been given to the organisation of the youth, students and women in the liberation struggle. To correct this imbalance it was resolved that immediate attention had to be given to ways and means of solving the problem. With regards to Umkhonto in particular, the conference urged the ANC's NEC to design and adopt a code and oath of conduct "by which all revolutionaries in the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe should be governed and bound by." The conference further resolved that an "ombudsman" or a "commission" be appointed to receive, investigate and act upon any complaints and receive grievances in all sectors of the liberation movement. In preparation for the resumption of the armed struggle inside South Africa it was also resolved that provision should be made for the military training of members in all sectors of the liberation movement.⁽⁷³⁾

71. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 301.

72. For a detailed account of the resolutions of the Morogoro Consultative Conference see: Mell, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 167 - 168; and Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1969 - 1970, pp. C153 - C154 and Mayibuye (Special Conference Issue) 3(10), May 1969, pp. 1 - 13.

73. Mell, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 167 - 168.



In terms of the third category, the conference adopted two important documents: one, dealing with strategy and tactics and the other, with the revolutionary programme of the ANC-SACP alliance. The first document was the more important of the two, in that in it for the first time since the beginning of the armed struggle, the ANC in its alliance with the SACP set out its approach to revolution in South Africa, and the manner in which it foresaw how a transfer of power would come about. The second document - The Revolutionary Programme of the ANC, was largely an analysis and confirmation of the main tenets of the 1955 Freedom Charter.

2.1.2. Strategy and Tactics

This document is mainly a watered-down version of the 1962 SACP programme, "The Road to South African Freedom", which viewed the struggle for national liberation in South Africa as an integral part of the world-wide communist struggle against capitalism and imperialism in which the transfer of power to communism could only come about through a "democratic revolution" as defined in the Freedom Charter.⁽⁷⁴⁾ In drafting the document, Joe Slovo and Joe Matthews (they were allegedly jointly responsible for it)⁽⁷⁵⁾ examined the various methods of armed struggle and revolution that were adopted in different parts of the world in an attempt to come to an understanding of revolutionary developments in South Africa. They concluded that revolution in South Africa was unlikely to be the result of a sudden and spontaneous uprising of the oppressed masses. The masses, the document argued, had to be won over by all-round political mobilization brought about by armed activity that would come primarily from outside the country under the leadership and direction of Umkhonto. The hope, implicit in the design of the campaigns, such as those into Rhodesia in 1967, argues Barrell, was that "armed activity by a small Umkhonto force was capable of drawing

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74. The Road to South African Freedom, programme of the SACP adopted at the fifth national conference of the Party held inside the country in 1962, in South African Communists Speak, pp. 284 - 319.
75. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1) 1990.01.12, p. 2).



the population into, and eventually detonating, an all-round political-military revolt against the State". Such a strategy was in keeping with the views of revolutionary leaders such as Che Guevara in the early 1960's and the French intellectual Regis Debray who argued that the above strategy was one applicable almost everywhere.⁽⁷⁶⁾

In other words the ANC-SACP alliance's concept of what would constitute a revolution in South Africa in the early 1970's revolved around the idea of a vanguard party of committed partisans who would bring about revolutionary change through a protracted guerrilla war.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The document made it clear that:

In essence, a revolutionary policy is one which holds out the quickest and most fundamental transformation of power from one class to another. In real life such radical changes are brought about not by imaginary forces but by those whose outlook and readiness to act is very much influenced by historically determined factors. Indeed, what appears to be 'militant' and 'revolutionary' can often be counter-revolutionary ... Untimely, ill-planned or premature manifestations of violence impede and do not advance the prospect for revolutionary change and are clearly counter-revolutionary.... The riot, the street fight, the outburst of unorganised violence, individual terrorism; these are symptoms of the militant spirit but not pointers to revolutionary technique. The winning of our freedom by armed struggle ... demands more than passion.

The document went on to point out that guerrilla war was the only form in which the armed liberation struggle could be launched and that there was a threefold need to be met before this could come about. These were:

... the need to create a military apparatus and, more particularly, to recruit large numbers of professional cadres who were to be trained and who would form the core of future guerrilla bands;

76. Barrell, MK, pp. 24 - 26.

77. J. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 665 - 666). See also Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare. A South African Case Study, (Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 282 - 283).



... the need to demonstrate effectively to all that we were making a sharp and open break with the processes of the previous period; and ... the need to present an effective method for the overthrow of white supremacy through planned rather than spontaneous activity.⁽⁷⁸⁾

In terms of the above, the final transfer of power would come through a guerrilla war that would help to convert the initial weakness of the Black majority, particularly the African peasantry, into an element of strength that would challenge the authority of the State and thus pave the way for final victory. As far as the role and position of the working class, particularly the African working class, was concerned, the document expounded the view that while their role was an important one it was nevertheless subsidiary to the "National liberation of the largest and most oppressed group - the African people".⁽⁷⁹⁾

Among the documents adopted by the ANC at Morogoro, the document on "Strategy and Tactics" became the liberation movement's basic policy on revolutionary development and strategy for South Africa until the events of the mid-1980's when the ANC-SACP alliance was forced to revise its views on what constituted a revolution in a major way.

2.2 The Morogoro Aftermath

Although the ANC's Mission in Exile may have had little success in its attempts to revive the armed struggle inside South Africa in the late 1960's, it had a fair amount of success both in Africa and the wider international community in its propaganda campaign against the South African government and its apartheid policies. Conference after conference adopted resolutions on South Africa that reflected much of the rhetoric that the ANC had been directing against the

78. Forwards to Freedom: Documents on the National Policies of the ANC of SA, Strategy and Tactics of the ANC, pp. 5 - 17, 8. See also Johns and Hunt Davis (eds), Mandela, Tambo and the ANC, pp. 183 - 184, 281 - 287.

79. Forwards to Freedom: Documents on the National Policies of the ANC of SA, Strategy and Tactics of the ANC, pp. 13, 16. See also Mandela, Tambo and the ANC, pp. 183 - 184, 281 - 287.



South African government over the years. Events such as the Khartoum Conference in January 1969, the Lusaka Conference and the Lusaka Manifesto adopted by it, were a tremendous boost for the policies and propaganda campaign of the ANC against apartheid in South Africa. The Lusaka Manifesto, which was adopted at the fifth summit conference of the leaders of Eastern and Central Africa and which slated South Africa's racial policies, was, for instance, adopted by both the OAU and the United Nations' General Assembly in 1969 as part of their moral support for the ANC. In the same year the OAU, at a meeting at its headquarters in Addis Ababa, also resolved to step up its material support for the ANC and other liberation organisations in Southern Africa via its Liberation Committee.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Although the changes effected by the Morogoro Conference were fundamental, they did not bring about an immediate improvement in the situation and position of the Mission in Exile or the armed struggle. Similarly, it also did not immediately solve the growing division between the communists and non-communists in the ANC-SACP alliance that were threatening to rip it apart. On the contrary, the differences between the above factions in the alliance were considerably aggravated by the opening up of the ANC's membership to non-Africans. To what extent the rift that developed between the non-communists (known as the African nationalist faction) and the communists in the ANC-SACP alliance during the early 1970's affected Umkhonto and the armed struggle in South Africa is not clear. What is certain was that the expulsion of the African nationalists from the ANC-SACP alliance in 1975 was indicative of an intolerant attitude in the National Liberation Movement towards any ideology other than that expounded by the SACP.

A second group that was expelled from the ANC-SACP alliance in the 1970's, allegedly because of its anti-communist stance, was the Okhela organisation. The formation of the latter organisation in the early 1970's was seen as an attempt by the anti-communist faction in the ANC, who apparently had the support of ANC President, Oliver

80. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, p. 79; Keesings Contemporary Archives, March - April 1969, pp. 23902 - 23903.

Tambo, to create a movement within the ANC that could act as a counter-weight against the rapidly growing influence of the SACP in the Liberation Movement.⁽⁸¹⁾ Okhela as pointed out in the previous chapter was short-lived. After the arrest of Breyten Breytenbach in South Africa in 1977 the organisation rapidly fell apart. Between 1977 and 1979, when Okhela finally collapsed, attempts were made by the African Nationalists who were expelled from the ANC-SACP alliance in 1975 and remnants of the Okhela group to set up offices in Algeria. These attempts did not amount to much, and in 1979 a key member of the African Nationalist faction, Tennyson Makiwane returned to the Transkei to take up a senior position in the homeland government.⁽⁸²⁾

But it was not only people with strong anti-communist views that were expelled from the ANC and Umkhonto in the 1970's. Even people with strong Marxist-Leninist views who attempted to criticise the ANC-SACP alliance for the manner in which they conducted the armed struggle but more particularly the role of the trade union movement in it, were expelled from the liberation movement. A good example of the latter was a group called "The Marxist Tendency within the ANC".⁽⁸³⁾ This group had its origins in the early 1970's. It developed from the new generation of South African Marxist academics which had emerged at English universities in South Africa at the time. They had close ties with the exile trade union movement as well as trade union leaders inside South Africa. Although the members of this group, which stood under the leadership of Rob Peterson, Paula Ensor, Martin Legassick and David Hemson, were Marxists like many members of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, they were unpopular in the organisation because they were critical of what they considered the "petty-bourgeois orientation of the ANC's

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81. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 341 - 342. See also The Sunday Times (Johannesburg) 1980.08.10.
82. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 171.
83. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia 16 - 23 June 1985, p.51. (Authors Copy). See also Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981, (Reality 4 (2), March 1982, p. 8); Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, p. 62; and Nyawuza, New "Marxist" Tendencies and the Battle of Ideas in South Africa, (The African Communist 103, Fourth Quarter, 1985, pp. 45 - 61).



Exile leadership." Their criticisms were first of all directed at the work of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in which some of them were involved. Secondly, they were critical of what they considered to be the dominant perception of SACTU'S function in the liberation struggle, namely to serve primarily as a signpost to direct workers to Umkhonto. Their continued criticism of the ANC-SACP alliance on these and other issues eventually led to their expulsion from the alliance in 1980, for "their disruptive activities in SACTU".⁽⁸⁴⁾ After their expulsion from the London Region of the ANC the group produced a journal, the Inqaba Yabasebenzi and adopted the name "The Marxist Wing of the ANC". In its new guise the group contacted trade unions and solidarity organisations in several countries using a mailing list which they allegedly stole from SACTU before their expulsion. They also distributed literature inside South Africa in which they, according to the ANC, attacked the Freedom Charter, the armed struggle, and Umkhonto we Sizwe. Their aim apparently was to create an 'alternative workers army', something that the SACP had already decided against at Morogoro. According to Lodge, the group's isolation from the rank and file of the ANC and the SACP severely restricted their attempts to transform the nationalist movement into a truly working class organisation.

Lodge has no doubt that these occurrences of factionalism in the ANC were not considered serious.⁽⁸⁵⁾ One nevertheless wonders why they were not serious, the ANC, and the SACP in particular, felt it necessary to expel these groups from the liberation movement. Surely the ANC as a democratic organisation (which it claimed to be), should have allowed these factions to remain within the organisation. The truth, however, is that the SACP did not tolerate any point of view other than that sanctioned by its Central Committee to hold sway inside the ANC and Umkhonto. With the changes effected at Morogoro

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84. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia 16 - 23 June 1985, p. 51. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, p. 62.
85. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976-1981, (Reality 4 (2), March 1982, p. 8).



the SACP leadership had in a short space of time effectively manoeuvred themselves into control of the ANC and the armed struggle. The expulsion of the African Nationalist faction and the isolation of the Okhela organisation was the direct result of this policy.

A second major development that influenced the armed struggle in the early 1970's was the sudden collapse of the ANC-ZAPU alliance as a result of developments within ZAPU. Like the ANC and other similar organisations, ZAPU also had its share of internal differences and factions. By the early 1970's these differences had hardened into permanent divisions, which prevented the organisation's leadership from playing its proper role in the Rhodesian liberation struggle. The ANC too was powerless to intervene. In the end the rivalry between the various factions in ZAPU led to a break in the organisation's leadership in 1970. The outcome of this was the formation of a splinter group known as 'The Front for the liberation of Zimbabwe' (FROLIZI). The latter organisation consisted mainly of dissenters from ZAPU and the rival Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) organisation.⁽⁸⁶⁾ With ZAPU being increasingly paralysed by its internal problems the ANC withdrew from its co-operation (alliance) with the organisation. An important implication of this development was that, without the active support of ZAPU's infrastructure, its guerrillas and its training facilities in Zambia after 1970, the ANC, but particularly Umkhonto, had to depend increasingly on itself to train and return its cadres to South Africa. One apparent attempt in 1970 to return Umkhonto cadres to South Africa via Rhodesia without the support of ZAPU guerrillas and their local contacts among the Rhodesian peasantry came to nothing when most of the insurgents were either killed or captured by the Rhodesian security forces. Under these circumstances the substantial increase in financial aid to the ANC-SACP alliance from the Swedish government in 1971 had little

86. Johns, *Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare. A South African Case Study*, (*Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11 (2), 1973, p. 390); See also Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 302; Barrell, *MK*, p. 25; R. Gibson, *African Liberation Movements*, p. 66.



effect on the ability of the ANC to return Umkhonto cadres to South Africa to resume the armed struggle.⁽⁸⁷⁾

But why did the ANC, despite the financial aid it received from Sweden and elsewhere seem unable to resume the armed offensive inside South Africa in the early 1970's? As was pointed out earlier, a number of factors are applicable. The most important was the fact that Umkhonto could not establish forward bases and other facilities in South Africa's neighbouring territories from where it could launch attacks on South Africa. The reason for this was that both Angola and Mozambique were still under colonial rule and remained so until the mid-1970's when first Mozambique (25 June 1975) and then Angola (11 November 1975) were granted independence by Portugal.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Both countries subsequently established strong socialist-Marxist forms of government that were sympathetic to the cause of the ANC-SACP alliance. Rhodesia too remained under White minority rule until 18 April 1980 when it was granted independence to become the Republic of Zimbabwe.⁽⁸⁹⁾

Although the ANC-SACP alliance was largely unsuccessful in its attempts to resume the armed struggle in South Africa between 1966 and the middle of the 1970's, it did manage to bring increased international pressure to bear on the South African government to change its racial policies. In 1973, for instance, the ANC - together with other liberation organisations - was given full observer status in the OAU. This meant that it could in future attend and participate in all OAU meetings but could not vote on any of its resolutions. In the same year, the ANC also normalised its relations with the governments of Lesotho and Botswana. Both these latter countries, but particularly Botswana became important links in the ANC and Umkhonto's armed strategy in South Africa.⁽⁹⁰⁾

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87. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, pp. 94 - 95; See also Sweden's Footing the Bill, (Africa Confidential 27 (25), December 1986, p. 4).
88. The Daily News Africa Service, Africa 1988, Single Chart. (The information in the chart was obtained from the Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 1988.)
89. The Daily News Africa Service, Africa 1988.
90. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia, 16 - 23 June 1985, pp. 11, 15.



Although the territories of Angola and Mozambique became accessible to Umkhonto in 1975, this did not produce immediate results for the armed struggle, as bases and the necessary organisational infrastructures had to be established first before any serious operations could start. In the meantime, events in South Africa itself altered the situation dramatically. According to Barrell the ANC-SACP alliance was warned in 1975 by some of its units inside South Africa that it could expect a major popular political uprising emanating from within the emergent Black working-class movement. He unfortunately failed to mention his source for this allegation.⁽⁹¹⁾ It is not clear how serious that prediction was taken by the Mission in Exile. The organisation was still in the process of attempting to establish an underground presence inside South Africa when it was overtaken by the Soweto uprising in June 1976.⁽⁹²⁾

3. THE THIRD PHASE, 1976 - 1985

As with the internal phase of the armed struggle, the external development of the Mission in Exile between 1976 and 1985, known as the "period of consolidation and further advancement", was undoubtedly the most intense if not the most eventful in the history of the liberation movement since the formation of Umkhonto in 1961. Two major developments that affected the history of the armed struggle in the early years of the third phase were the Soweto uprising which started in June 1976 and the restrictions placed on the various organisations that constituted the Black Consciousness Movement in 1977. Both these events helped to strengthen the position of the ANC-SACP alliance and of Umkhonto inside South Africa after 1976: the first sent thousands of new recruits into the ranks of Umkhonto, while the second effectively removed the BCM from the South African political scene, thus allowing the ANC-SACP alliance to re-establish itself inside the country without the challenge of a major internal political competitor. With the crippling of the BCM many Blacks felt themselves drawn to the ANC and Umkhonto despite the ideological differences that existed between the philosophies of Black Consciousness and communism. Most of the Blacks who were thus recruited into

91. Barrell, MK, p. 30.

92. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981, (Reality 4 (2), March 1982, p. 8).



the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto either inside or outside South Africa, were sent directly to Umkhonto's training camps in Zambia and Angola. The latter country became increasingly important as a source for the housing of Umkhonto and the training of its leaders and cadres after 1977. Mozambique also acquired a new importance for Umkhonto and its operations against South Africa but it never became as important to the ANC and Umkhonto as Angola did, despite the fact that the headquarters of the ANC (or part of it) was transferred to Mozambique by the end of 1976.⁽⁹³⁾

In the meantime the increased control that the SACP had managed to gain over the ANC but more specially over Umkhonto and the armed struggle in South Africa at Morogoro in 1969, was consolidated during the latter part of the 1970's when several meetings were held between leaders of the ANC-SACP alliance and senior officials of the Soviet Union. On each of these occasions the ANC delegates were received as if they were the official representatives of a major government. Since no such courtesy was extended to any of the other South African liberation organisations, the message was clear that the Soviet Union considered the ANC-SACP alliance as the only legitimate liberation organisation in South Africa. For instance, on the occasion of the ANC's 65th anniversary on 8 January 1977, Radio Moscow hailed the organisation as "one of the first political parties on the (African) continent to unite the wide masses of people in their struggle against imperialism, racism and colonialism".⁽⁹⁴⁾ Similarly, in an interview broadcast on the same day, Alfred Nzo, the Secretary-General of the ANC, paid a glowing tribute to the aid that the Soviet Union had been giving to the ANC and Umkhonto. "We are deeply grateful," he said, "to the Soviet country for the comprehensive aid which it has always given to all true fighters for freedom."⁽⁹⁵⁾ Most of the "comprehensive aid" Nzo was referring to, was in the form of military equipment and the training of Umkhonto cadres.⁽⁹⁶⁾

93. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1976 - 1977, p. B814; See also ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia 16 - 23 June 1985, p. 14; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1978, pp. 119 - 121.

94. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1976 - 1977, p. B815.

95. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1976 - 1977, p. B815.

96. See Chapter 8.



After 1977, the bulk of the ANC and Umkhonto's recruits were being sent to the organisation's newly-established training camps in Angola and Mozambique, where instruction was given by East Germans, Soviets and Cubans.⁽⁹⁷⁾ By mid-1978 it was estimated that some 2000 Umkhonto cadres were undergoing military training outside South Africa, the bulk of whom were trained in Angola. The first of these recruits began to re-enter South Africa in 1977.

In 1977 the ANC-SACP alliance scored a major diplomatic victory when it contributed in convincing the United Nations' Security Council to introduce a comprehensive arms embargo against South Africa. Although the ANC had been campaigning for such an embargo for many years, the idea of economic and military sanctions against South Africa only became a reality with the arrival of the Democratic Carter Administration in America in the mid-1970's. It also coincided with a greater willingness by Britain and the European Economic Community (EEC) countries to introduce selective sanctions against South Africa should the latter continue to ignore international calls for an end to its apartheid policies and human rights violations. This growing preparedness among Western governments to dissociate themselves from South Africa was also partially brought about by their desire to counter Soviet involvement and politics in Africa. Undoubtedly, developments inside South Africa such as the Soweto uprising, the death of the Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko in September 1977 and the subsequent banning of more than twenty BCM organisations in October of the same year substantially helped to strengthen the ANC's position at the United Nations and contributed to the rapid isolation of South Africa internationally. As a result the South African government was becoming increasingly concerned at the role that Western governments and spokesmen played in two United Nations sponsored conferences held in 1977. The aim of these two conferences - one was held in Mozambique and the other in Nigeria - was to strengthen international support for the ANC-SACP alliance in

97. Lodge, *The ANC in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (*Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 199). See also Johns and Hunt Davis (eds), *Mandela, Tambo and the ANC*, pp. 231 - 232.



its call for increased international economic sanctions against South Africa. The United Nations General Assembly in its support for the cause of the ANC also called on all oil-producing countries in 1977 and 1978 to stop delivering crude oil and other petroleum products to South Africa.⁽⁹⁸⁾ The general consensus at the time was that should a full-scale economic boycott be brought against South Africa by the international community, the country would in all likelihood be able to survive such a boycott but not without a decline in its reserves of foreign capital; growing unemployment; a lower economic growth rate, and eventually, increasing political instability.⁽⁹⁹⁾

Although the ANC's sanctions campaign got off to a shaky start in the 1960's and early 1970's, the Soweto uprising and the general unrest and chaos that followed brought a considerable strengthening of the ANC's sanctions campaign which continued to gain momentum until the mid-1980's when it received the full support of the United States Congress. In October 1986, the US Congress overrode President Ronald Reagan's veto of its Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act to introduce mandatory sanctions against South Africa. The latter development, coming after many years of lobbying and campaigning was a major diplomatic victory for the ANC-SACP alliance and their cause in South Africa. They now had the effective support of perhaps the most powerful nation in the world to step up their pressure on the South African government.

In the wake of the Soweto uprising, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, with whom the ANC had improved its relations in the 1970's, became increasingly important recruiting centres for refugees from South Africa. It was reported in 1978 that recruits arriving in Botswana and Swaziland were given a choice of joining either the ANC or the PAC or being sent back to South Africa. Those who joined the ANC and Umkhonto were mostly sent to Angola for military training. By 1978 - 1979 however an increasing number of new recruits from South Africa were also being sent to the ANC-SACP's educational centre at Mazimbu in Tanzania. The land for the centre was given to the ANC by the Tanzanian government in 1977. Situated on an abandoned sisal

98. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1977 - 1978, p. B873.
99. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1977 - 1978, pp. B874 - 877.



plantation of some 3 400 acres, about three hours' drive from Dar-es-Salaam, Mazimbu became one of the ANC's largest exile bases. The first 150 students from South Africa began their education at Mazimbu in 1978. Designed to house some 900 students, the centre which comprised 5 educational sectors - a secondary, a primary, a nursery, an adult education and an orientation centre - was named the 'Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in 1979 after Solomon Mahlangu, who was the first Umkhonto guerrilla to be hanged in South Africa. The school, which was officially opened in 1985, represented, according to Stephen Davis, the ANC leadership's "most ambitious scheme to ground its young in the political values of the party."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ More accurately, SOMAFCO was created to "provide for the immediate manpower needs of the struggle and at the same time prepare cadres who will be able to contribute meaningfully to the building of a new South African society as envisaged in the ANC policy-document - the Freedom Charter."⁽¹⁰¹⁾

According to Davis, plans were afoot in the mid-1980's to expand the facilities at SOMAFCO to eventually house approximately 2 400 students. Once they had completed their education at Mazimbu, most recruits expected to be transferred to Angola for guerrilla training. It could however take a number of years before this came about as many of the recruits who entered Mazimbu had little or no formal education. The age of some of the recruits in primary school was often as high as nineteen years. It was also not uncommon to find students in high school who were in their mid- and even late twenties. Like everything else the educational process at Mazimbu was hampered by a lack of qualified teachers, and a chronic shortage of resources.⁽¹⁰²⁾

As a result of the close interaction between the ANC, Umkhonto and

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100. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 61 - 62; L. Gordon, Survey of Race Relations, 1980, p. 61.
101. SOMAFCO. Official Opening 21 - 23 August 1985, Progress Report, Special Edition, ANC publication 1985, p. 2.
102. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 62 - 63.



the Cuban support forces in Angola, the ANC felt it necessary in 1978 to send Alex la Guma as its personal representative to Havana, Cuba, to open an ANC-SACP office in that city. The same year also saw the arrival of senior ANC-SACP-Umkhonto leaders in Maputo, Mozambique, to take control of the ANC and Umkhonto's new headquarters. Among those who were transferred to Mozambique were Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Reg September, Albie Sachs, Ben and Mary Turok, Stephanie Kemp, Alan Brooks and Fred Dube. By the end of 1979, the ANC was estimated to have had three training/transit facilities in Mozambique which served as one of Umkhonto's main routes for moving cadres in and out of South Africa. The latter route, which was considered to be much safer than the route from Angola via Botswana to South Africa, was often used to infiltrate guerrillas trained at Umkhonto's main training facilities in Angola to South Africa. According to figures released in 1980 it was estimated that some 10 000 Blacks had left South Africa since the early 1960's and that a fair number of these people had joined the ANC's Mission in Exile over the years. It was further estimated in 1980 that Umkhonto had anything between 2 000 and 4 000 trained guerrillas and that these people were waiting for the right moment to start infiltrating into South Africa. There was also reported to be some 1 000 "refugees" in Botswana, some 4 000 to 5 000 in Swaziland and some 5 000 in Lesotho by the end of 1979. (103)

3.1 The Luanda Meeting of December 1979 and Developments Thereafter

Although the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the wide-spread unrest that followed provided the ANC and Umkhonto with highly favourable conditions to resume and excellerate the armed struggle, they were hardly able to make headway. As indicated earlier, (see Diagram F, p. 213) between June 1976 and the end of 1978 only 57 acts of sabotage (some sources suggest only 37 incidents) had been committed by guerrillas in South Africa. Most of these acts were claimed to be

103. Gordon, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, pp. 60 - 61. See also Gordon, A Survey of Race Relations, 1979, p. 52.



the work of Umkhonto. During the same period more than 35 Umkhonto guerrillas were killed by the South African police.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ These figures did not bode well for the ANC-SACP alliance. According to Howard Barrell, there appeared to have been serious dissatisfaction among the upper echelons of the ANC by mid-1978 with the rate of progress in the armed struggle, and "that the ANC might be making some basic strategic errors."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ In an attempt to examine the situation and to find answers to these problems a meeting of the entire NEC of the ANC and Umkhonto's Revolutionary Council was convened in Luanda, Angola over the Christmas period at the end of 1978. The meeting, according to Barrell, marked a turning point for the ANC and one presume, also for Umkhonto and the armed struggle. "Its far-reaching strategic decisions", he points out, "paved the way for the ANC's rise in coming years to a position of pre-eminence in South African liberation movement politics."⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

According to Barrell, the meeting identified a number of significant problem areas that had effected the rate and progress of the armed struggle in South Africa since 1976. Most of the attacks conducted during this period were directed from Mozambique by a division (or unit) of Umkhonto's Revolutionary Council known as the Planning Department (it was also variedly known as the "Operations Unit" or "Central Headquarters") which stood under the direction of Joe Modise assisted by Joe Slovo (second-in-command) and Jacob Masedo (head of ordinance). The task of the Planning Department (PD) was to resume the armed struggle as quickly and as effectively as possible after June 1976.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ The aim behind this strategy was three fold, namely to raise the morale of people inside South Africa; to repair the damage caused by the expulsion of the Makiwane faction from the inner circles of the ANC's leadership, but more important, to stimulate popular revolutionary organisation and activity inside South Africa and to bring the ANC-SACP alliance into the early stages of a people's war led by Umkhonto.

104. Barrell, MK, p. 37. See also G. Moss, The Wheels Turn. South African Political Trials, 1976 - 1979, pp. 1 - 64.

105. Barrell, MK, p. 37. See also Moss, The Wheels Turn, pp. 1 - 64.

106. Barrell, MK, p. 37. See also Moss, The Wheels Turn, pp. 1 - 64.

107. Barrell, MK, p. 32. See also Moss, The Wheels Turn, pp. 1 - 64.



Yet, inspite of the highly favourable conditions that existed for such a development after June 1976, little had materialised by the middle of 1978. Indications are that the Revolutionary Council had made few serious plans after 1976 to develop the ANC's internal political organisation using distinctly "political" non-violent means. As a result, armed activities remained confined mainly to externally directed cross-border hit-and-run tactics which suggested that the ANC-SACP alliance still believed that revolution in South Africa would come about through armed insurrection from outside the country and that any internal political organisation would accompany or even follow the military phase. Political progress as far as the ANC-SACP alliance was concerned, remained subject to military progress inside South Africa.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

However, the slow progress that was being made with the armed struggle by 1978 and the apparent inability of the Revolutionary Council and its Planning Department to accelerated developments inside South Africa suggested a serious rethink on strategy and the role of Umkhonto in the armed struggle. One problem area identified by the Luanda meeting in December 1978 was the continuing lack of reliable rear bases in neighbouring states. Most of the attacks conducted between June 1976 and the middle of 1978 were planned and executed by the Planning Department from its operational headquarters in Mozambique via Swaziland. Unfortunately for the ANC the latter route was particularly well known to the South African security services which constantly monitored it.

A second area where improvements could be made was in the nature of the armed attacks. To prevent the security force and the government from covering up ANC attacks or downplay their success, it was suggested that attacks should be increased both in scale and severity. In other words, some spectacular armed propaganda actions were needed to raise the level of political support inside South Africa. It was further suggested that to bring this about hit-and-run tactics from outside the country would have to be replaced by an

108. Barrell, MK, p. 32. See also Moss, The Wheels Turn, pp. 1 - 64 and Norval, Inside the ANC, pp. 140 - 141.



enduring Umkhonto presence inside the country, especially since it was argued that Umkhonto would probably never have secure rear bases in any of South Africa's neighbouring territories due to South Africa's ability to strike at such bases. But the root of Umkhonto's difficulties, writes Barrell, was clearly the lack of an organised popular revolutionary political presence inside South Africa which could be utilised by the organisation's guerrillas to stir the people into a full-scale guerrilla and thus a people's war.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Another factor that also seriously effected Umkhonto's performance inside South Africa during the second half of the 1970's was the apparent poor contact that the organisation's cadres had with the emerging anti-apartheid organisations, trade unions and the radical youth movements inside the country during the 1970's. Although these groups demonstrated an eagerness and a keen ability to organise in a legal and semi-legal way, the ANC, but particularly Umkhonto was unable to make full use of their revolutionary potential.

A final but perhaps more important factor effecting the armed struggle in the late 1970's that was raised at the Luanda meeting in December 1978, was the question of strategy and the way in which the ANC-SACP alliance had been applying armed activity. Three months before the Luanda meeting, Oliver Tambo had led an ANC delegation which included a large contingent of Umkhonto leaders to Vietnam to study the revolution in that country. This visit led some members of the delegation to become convinced that there had to be a fundamental change in the way the ANC (Umkhonto) had been conducting the armed struggle. As a result, at the Luanda meeting, a process was set into motion that would in time remedy the situation. The first visible step in this direction was the appointment of a Politico-Military Strategy Commission (PMSC) to review ANC-Umkhonto strategy and tactics as well as all operational structures. The commission was chaired by Tambo. According to Barrell its other members were Joe Gqabi, Moses Mabhida, Thabo Mbeki, Joe Modise and Joe Slovo.

109. Barrell, MK, p. 38.



In an attempt to remedy the problems facing the armed struggle, the PMSC drew heavily on the report of the visit to Vietnam. After months of soul searching investigations, during which time it took evidence from a wide range of ANC and Umkhonto structures, the PMSC tabled its report before the ANC's NEC in March 1979. All its main resolutions were finally endorsed and adopted by the NEC in August of the same year. The more important of these resolutions determined that armed activity should not be the major means to rebuild a popular revolutionary political base inside South Africa. While it was important in helping the process along, the ANC had to get involved in legal and semi-legal anti-apartheid politics inside the country. Only in this way, it was felt, could the ANC

guide its potential supporters to revolutionary political organisation and relate to the creativity and energy with which people on the ground inside South Africa were struggling against apartheid.

Barrell writes:

In short, the ANC now believed that only [when] a real measure of popular revolutionary mobilisation and political organisation had been achieved could it talk sensibly about conducting [a] people's war in South Africa. It accepted the PMSC's recommendation that the major immediate task of the underground must now be to build a broad democratic front of organisations inside South Africa, mainly by legal and semi-legal political means. ... For the foreseeable future [thus], MK armed activity should be used as a secondary means to help this mass mobilisation along. The strategic review also outlined a general path towards achieving state power in South Africa:

People's power in South Africa would [thus] be won by revolutionary violence in a protracted armed struggle which must involve the whole population and in which partial and general mass uprisings would play a vital role.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

This new thinking in ANC-SACP politics and strategy by the end of the 1970's was reflected in two ways: one, the organisation and its

110. Barrell, MK, pp. 39 - 40. For Tambo's visit to Vietnam, see also Norval, Inside the ANC, pp. 140 - 141.



leaders began to step up their relations with the leaders of South Africa's neighbouring states in their search for new bases and greater co-operation for Umkhonto, and two, it began to intensify its armed attacks inside South Africa from the beginning of the 1980's.

In 1980 for instance it was reported that the ANC was unofficially operating in the newly independent state of Zimbabwe and that it was seeking both funds and recruits for Umkhonto. It was further reported that Umkhonto guerrillas had carried out a reconnaissance mission in western Zimbabwe to establish a safe corridor from Zambia to South Africa via Botswana. In July 1980, the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo visited Zimbabwe, allegedly to request permission to open an ANC office in Harare and to appeal for recognition and financial assistance from the new Zimbabwe government. In October it was announced that the ANC would open offices in Harare.⁽¹¹¹⁾ However, some months earlier, at the country's independence celebrations, the newly elected Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, stated that although his party and government had strong historical ties with the ANC and the PAC of South Africa and would support them diplomatically, he would not allow them to operate from Zimbabwean soil.⁽¹¹²⁾

Other neighbouring states such as Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana, although denying that they did so, nevertheless gave active material support to the ANC and Umkhonto. Since 1978, South Africa has repeatedly warned these countries that it would not allow the ANC and Umkhonto to set up bases in them or use them for attacks on South Africa. As a result there was a marked deterioration in South Africa's relations with the neighbouring states of Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia by 1980. In January 1979 for instance, the South African Minister of Police, J.T. Kruger, warned the Botswana government that unless it took firm action to stop its territory being used by the ANC and Umkhonto for attacks on South Africa, the

111. Gordon, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, pp. 61 - 92. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1979, p. 52.

112. Gordon, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, p. 61.



Republic would have no alternative but to undertake "hot-pursuit" operations against ANC and Umkhonto targets in that country. In reply, a spokesman for the Botswana government stated that his government could not guarantee to stop all incursions into South Africa from Botswana as "it was not able to exercise complete control over insurgent groups". Towards the end of January it was however reported that the Botswana paramilitary police had captured sixty armed guerrillas.⁽¹¹³⁾ A few months later, in March, a further four Black South Africans were arrested in Botswana after police raided houses in Gaborone in which they found explosives, automatic weapons and a large quantity of ammunition.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ It is not clear whether the four persons arrested were from the ANC or the PAC.

In February 1980 the South African government again issued a strong warning, this time to Mozambique on the harbouring of guerrillas and stated that South Africa would take the necessary steps to protect itself against subversive attacks.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Eleven months later the South African government added deed to word when on 30 January 1981, it launched a pre-dawn raid on three buildings situated in different parts of Matola, a town about 16 km from the centre of the Mozambican capital of Maputo. The South African government later claimed that the three targets attacked by them housed the local planning and logistics centres of the ANC and Umkhonto. According to the Chief of the South African Defence Force, General Constance Viljoen, South Africa had evidence that attacks made on various targets in the Republic in 1980 had been planned from the buildings that were attacked. He also said that the ANC and Umkhonto had received help from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Cuban and East German advisers in the execution of their plans. General Viljoen further warned neighbouring states that by hiding "anti-South African terrorists" they were endangering their own safety. The attack, he said, had been directed solely at the ANC and every precaution had been taken to avoid contact with the Mozambican

113. Post (Johannesburg), 1979.01.28.

114. The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1979.03.27.

115. Post (Johannesburg), 1980.02.20.



the western residential suburbs of Maseru while two other targets were in a hotel in the centre of Maseru and another in a flat also in the centre of the town. In the attack, the SADF confiscated large quantities of arms, ammunition, explosives, documents and subversive literature. Later reports suggested that a total of 42 people, of whom at least 15 were "refugees", were killed in the Maseru attack. Among those killed were four leading members of the ANC and Umkhonto. They were: Z. Ngini, S. Mavimbela, T. Mngoma and T. Mangema.⁽¹²⁰⁾

As can be expected the ANC strongly condemned the attacks on Maputo and Maseru. In reference to the first attack the organisation stated that in its attack on Maputo, the South African government had violated all rules of international law. It pointed out that:

Botha's arrogant warning that South Africa will attack any country that harbours the ANC, shows again that the South African regime poses a grave threat to neighbouring countries and to peace and security on the African continent.⁽¹²¹⁾

In reference to the second attack, the ANC in its official mouthpiece, Sechaba in February 1983 stated that the South African attack was nothing but:

[A] coldly calculated act of terrorism that will only serve to spur the ANC and the people of South Africa to redouble their efforts to remove once and for all the criminal Pretoria regime, the common enemy of the peoples of Africa.⁽¹²²⁾

Prior to this the ANC also promised to retaliate which it did with an attack on the Koeberg nuclear power station on Saturday 18 December 1982.⁽¹²³⁾ (See Chapter 5.)

120. Randal, A Survey of Race Relations, 1982, pp. 34, 36.

121. Boycott Republic Day, May 1981, (Jana Shakti, Special Issue, 1981, pp.5)

122. The Force of People's Power and Apartheid Terrorism: Photographs of Maseru Massacre, (Sechaba, February 1983, pp. 1 - 4).

123. Koeberg-Power House for War, (Sechaba, February 1983, pp. 20 - 23).



A third major South African Defence Force operation against ANC and Umkhonto bases in exile followed in May 1983. The latter attack which was directed against five ANC bases in the residential suburb of Liberdade near Maputo came a mere week after the ANC exploded a massive car bomb in Pretoria on 20 May. According to the SADF the bases that they attacked in Mozambique were used for the planning and execution of Umkhonto attacks against South Africa. It also served as a supply depot for weapons and explosives for Umkhonto's cadres. Altogether 64 ANC-Umkhonto members were reported to have been killed in the attack. The Mozambican authorities and the ANC were however quick to deny the SADF's claims and stated that only six people, all of whom were civilians, were killed in the attack. Moreover, the Mozambican Minister of Information, Mr. Jose Cabaco, stated that attacks such as those by the SADF would not deter his government from giving ongoing support to the ANC and other "refugees". No ANC members would however be allowed to carry weapons, he concluded. (124)

Although the SADF raid on Maputo and the ANC car bomb attack in Pretoria alike were strongly condemned by the international communities and governments, South Africa continued their attacks on the ANC and Umkhonto and in October of the same year (1983) it was announced that the SADF had again struck at ANC facilities in Maputo. The aim of the attack, which was confirmed by the Mozambican authorities, was two-fold, one, to gather information on ANC training and future targets inside South Africa and two, to retaliate for an Umkhonto attack on a fuel depot and the municipal offices at Warmbaths in October. The ANC, as in the past, denied that the targets hit by the SADF were used by the organisation to plan Umkhonto's operations in South Africa. The ANC's activities in Mozambique, the organisation claimed, were political and not military. (125)

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124. Natal Mercury (Durban), 1983.05.25. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, pp. 43 - 46, 595.
125. Unidentified ANC spokesman in Maputo quoted in Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 596.

3.2. Alleged South African Attacks on and Assassinations of ANC Members in Exile

In addition to its military strikes against ANC bases, offices and personnel in exile, South Africa has also been accused by the ANC of being responsible for the death of more than 19 of its members through assassinations between 1974 and 1984.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Some of the deaths for which the government was blamed during this period related to the following incidents: In 1974 Abraham Tiro, former secretary of the South African Students Organisation (SASO), was killed by a parcel bomb in Botswana. In the same year John Dube, the deputy representative of the ANC in Zambia, was killed by a bomb in Lusaka. Three other members of the ANC and Umkhonto were also injured in the bomb explosion. In 1978 Ablom Duma, a member of the ANC and Umkhonto, was injured when a bomb exploded in a post office box in Swaziland. Two ANC members, John Majola and Willie Nyoni, were ambushed in a truck in Swaziland and abducted. In 1979 an ANC activist, Phylis Naidoo and a friend, Father John Olmers, were seriously injured in Maseru when they opened a parcel bomb containing copies of Sechaba. Three others were injured in the explosion. In 1980 an ANC member, Patrick Makau, was killed when two refugee houses in Manzini, Swaziland, were destroyed by bombs. Tembi (Tembo) Hani of the ANC was seriously injured later in 1980 when a car bomb completely destroyed his house in Swaziland.

During the course of the next year - 1981 - several more ANC and Umkhonto members were assassinated. In June Jabu and Petrus Nzima (also referred to as Nyawose) were killed when a bomb exploded in their car in Manzini, Swaziland. A month later at the end of July, the ANC's chief representative in Zimbabwe, Joe Gqabi, was gunned down outside his home in Harare. In March 1982 the offices of the ANC in London were destroyed by a bomb. Two people were slightly injured in the explosion. In August of the same year Ruth First, the wife of the SACP leader Joe Slovo, died when she opened a letter bomb at her office at the Centre for African Studies at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane

126. The Washington Post 1984.01.02 (G. Frankel, South Africa's Anti-Rebel Attacks Stir Criticism), p. 4.



University. In the same year an exiled ANC member, Z.P. Mballi, was found decapitated in Maseru.⁽¹²⁷⁾ Another incident that received much coverage in the ANC press was the death of Jeanette Schoon and her six year old daughter, Katryn, on 28 June 1984. Mrs. Schoon and her daughter were killed when a parcel bomb delivered to their home-in-exile in the Angolan city of Lubango exploded. Both Mrs. Schoon and her husband Marius were members of the ANC in exile.⁽¹²⁸⁾

According to the ANC the attacks on and assassinations of its members such as that described above was undoubtedly the work of the South African government, accusations that the latter have strongly denied over the years. In an article that appeared in New African in 1982, the accusations of the ANC were supported by a report that there could be little doubt that the assassination of ANC members such as Ruth First and Joe Gqabi, was the work of a "dirty-tricks department concealed within the apparatus of the South African regime".⁽¹²⁹⁾ This claim was further amplified in an article in the American press that appeared shortly after the assassination of Gqabi in Harare in July 1981. In the latter article, Randall Robertson, the Executive Director of Trans-Africa which was a leading anti-apartheid organisation in the United States, claimed that the assassination of ANC members such as Gqabi was engineered by the South African government through the utilisation of specially created "hit squads". According to Robinson, who claimed that his information came from a special intelligence report of the American Department of Defence, the assassination of Gqabi in particular, was part of a secret plan of the South African government to eliminate members of

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127. The above information was obtained from the following sources: The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1982.08.22 (Ruth First's death re-kindles claim of anti-apartheid hit list); The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1982.03.21 (Rivals may have set ANC office bomb); C. Foy, The grim reality behind South Africa's terror team, (New African, October 1982, pp. 42 - 44); Randall, A Survey of Race Relations, 1982, pp. 33 - 34.
128. The Star (Johannesburg), 1984.07.5 (Serious Split in ANC ranks - brigadier). See also Sechaba, August 1984, pp. 29 - 30.
129. See The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1982.08.22, and Foy, The grim reality behind South Africa's ruthless terror team. (New African, October 1982, p. 42).



the ANC in exile. Robinson further claimed that the American Defence Department knew of the South African assassination plan long before the death of Gqabi but that it did nothing about it.⁽¹³⁰⁾

As stated above, the South African government has consistently denied the ANC's claims that it was responsible for the deaths of its members in exile. In reference to the death of Schoon and her daughter, Brigadier Herman Stadler was quoted to have said that "the killing of the woman and child cannot be condoned. As a police force we are not in favour of this type of act. We do not use violence to counter violence." Although Stadler did not say it in so many words, he suggested however that the death of Jeanette and Katryn Schoon could have been the result of a serious split and power struggle in the ANC.⁽¹³¹⁾ Exactly who was responsible for these assassinations as well as those that followed during the latter half of the 1980's is difficult to say. Given the nature of such attacks and the denials from both the ANC and the South African government as well as the limited information available on the subject no definitive judgement is possible at this point. What is known at present is that in February 1990 the existence of a highly clandestine covert SADF body known as the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) with extensive cells and contacts throughout the country was revealed. According to reports, the CCB was alleged to have been involved in the assassinations of numerous political opponents of the government.⁽¹³²⁾ About four months earlier on 20 October 1989, Butana Almond Nofemela, a former member of the South African Security Police, identified himself as a member of a police assassination squad and claimed that he had participated in a number of assassination missions against political opponents of the State. His immediate superiors were Captain Dirk Coetzee and Brigadier Willem Schoon who headed the ANC-PAC desk in the Security Police. A month after Nofemela made his startling revelations his claims were confirmed by Captain Coetzee

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130. Trans-Africa Leader Says U.S. Knew of "Hit Squads", (Jet 60, 1981.09.03, p. 39).
131. The Star (Johannesburg), 1984.07.05 (Serious split in ANC ranks - brigadier).
132. Cooper, Race Relations Survey 1989/1990, p. xlv.



who also revealed further details of covert "death squad" (moordbende) operations against ANC, SACP, Umkhonto and PAC members in neighbouring states such as Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho as well as inside South Africa where an estimated fifty anti-government activists had been killed between August 1977 and November 1989.⁽¹³³⁾ Although there are little information on the subject at present it can be safely assumed that at least some of the deaths were the work of South African agents.

3.3 The Angolan Mutiny of 1984

One aspect of the ANC-SACP's Mission in Exile about which virtually nothing has been written in any of the ANC or the SACP's official literature was the mutiny that broke out in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in 1984. The incident which was extensively reported on by Africa Confidential in December 1988,⁽¹³⁴⁾ apparently had its origins in tensions and dissatisfaction that had built up in the ANC's military training camps in Angola since the early 1980's. It was a result of two developments, namely one, the discovery of an extensive South African spy-ring operating inside Umkhonto's training camps in Angola, and two, over losses sustained in the ANC's military campaigns against the União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), in August 1983.

According to Africa Confidential, the ANC in March 1981 uncovered a major South African spy-ring, which had penetrated the organisation, particularly Umkhonto, so thoroughly that the South African security services were able to track the movements of Umkhonto's cadres from their military camps in Angola to the forward areas inside South Africa. South African agents were found to include the commander of Quibaxi camp in northern Angola and the head of security for Umkhonto

133. P. Laurence, Death Squads. Apartheid's secret weapon, pp. 2 - 12.

134. The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988.12.02, pp. 3 - 4. See also B. Ketelo *et. al.*, A Miscarriage of Democracy: The ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe, (Searchlight South Africa 5, July 1990. See entire source.)



in Angola. These discoveries came as a severe shock to the ANC and the SACP who apparently immediately gave instructions to its security organ, "Mbokodo" ('the boulder that crushes') to investigate the allegations. According to Africa Confidential Mbokodo used instruments such as detentions, torture and even killings to achieve its aims. Any Umkhonto cadre who dared to complain about the smallest thing such as poor food, ran the risk of being arrested and accused of being disloyal to the organisation and the armed struggle. War was apparently also declared on marijuana smokers. The situation was made more critical by the fact that Mbokodo was answerable only to the security directorate in Lusaka who apparently did little to curb its excesses.⁽¹³⁵⁾

At the same time, Umkhonto's activities inside South Africa had decreased. As pointed out in chapter four there were 55 attacks in 1981, 39 in 1982, 56 in 1983 and 44 in 1984. It was only in 1985 that Umkhonto managed to increase its armed attacks to 136 which was about three times more than those for the previous year.⁽¹³⁶⁾

According to Africa Confidential the decline in Umkhonto's activities inside South Africa was the direct result of accurate South African intelligence that came from sources inside the movement. This resulted in the alleged assassination in December 1981 of two Umkhonto commanders of the elite Planning Department or, as it was alternatively known, the "Operations Unit" that was set up in 1976 under the direct command of Joe Modise and Joe Slovo.⁽¹³⁷⁾ This development was followed by the arrest of Joe Modise, Commander of Umkhonto, and Cassius Make, also a senior member of Umkhonto, by the Botswana para-military police shortly afterwards after a tip-off. The situation was further aggravated by the SADF strikes against ANC bases and transit facilities in Botswana, Mozambique and Lesotho

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135. The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988, pp. 3 - 4). See also Ketelo et. al., A Miscarriage of Democracy, (Searchlight South Africa 5, July 1990. See entire source).
136. Lodge, State of Exile: the African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 4).
137. See Chapter Five p. 235. See also Barrell, MK, p. 32.



between 1981 and the end of 1983 referred to above. These latter raids and the documents that were captured by the security forces seriously disrupted the plans and operations of the ANC and Umkhonto with the result that Umkhonto's cadres were unable to leave Angola and infiltrate South Africa without being identified by the security forces.

It was apparently against the background of these conditions that the ANC and Umkhonto's leadership decided to involve its restive and increasingly dissatisfied cadres in Angola against the forces of UNITA in August 1983. The aim of the operation was to divert their attention from their setbacks, and to drive UNITA away from the Malanje region of Angola where it was threatening the ANC's biggest training camp, and finally, to appease their host, the Angolan government. Umkhonto apparently mobilised an entire brigade for the operation. It included in it some of those cadres who had been arrested since March 1981 and held at the Quatro prison camp in the Quibaxi region but who had subsequently been cleared on charges of spying for the South African government. The attack on UNITA stood under the combined leadership of Chris Hani, Timothy Mokoena and the veteran Umkhonto commander, Lennox "Mjojo" Zuma. Zuma had fought in the 1967 - 68 Wankie campaign as well as in Mozambique with the FRELIMO army.

Initially, Umkhonto's offensive against UNITA made good progress but then ran into trouble. According to Africa Confidential, the losses suffered by Umkhonto and the general poor treatment of cadres by the ANC and Umkhonto's leadership since 1981, but more particularly by its security organ, soon led to a mutinous situation on the battlefield, that reportedly had the support of 90 per cent of the cadres/guerrillas. Disillusioned by their losses the Umkhonto guerrillas left the battlefield and headed for Luanda in their hundreds to confront their leaders. Their main demand was apparently to be sent into action in South Africa rather than against the forces of UNITA. They also called for the immediate resignation of the entire leadership of the ANC and Umkhonto with the exception of Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, and Moses Mabhida. The rest of the ANC-SACP-Umkhonto leader-



ship were accused of betraying the revolution and of being so comfortable in exile that they had lost all interest in engaging the South African government in battle. Joe Modise, the Chief of Umkhonto, was singled out for the most criticism. (138)

On their arrival in Luanda in February 1984, the rebellious soldiers formed a body known as the "Committee of Ten" to represent them. They also took over the camp at Viana. The Chairman of the Committee of Ten was Zaba Maledza Nkondo, the brother of United Democratic Front (UDF) leader, Curtis Nkondo. Zaba was the ANC's Chief Propaganda Officer in Angola and was one of those who were detained in Quatro prison camp during the post-1981 witch-hunt of suspected South African agents. Others who served on the Committee of Ten included Moss Mafaji (he was the brother of Aaron Mafaji, the Director of the ANC-Umkhonto farm at Chongela); Sidney Mhlongo (he was Umkhonto's Chief of Staff for the Luanda region and responsible for security in the Committee of Ten); Jabu Vilakazi (he was a highly respected political commissar for the Amandla Cultural Ensemble of the ANC which stood under the direction of Jonas Gwangwa); and Kate Ntlokwana (she was attached to the ANC's Radio Freedom). (139)

According to Africa Confidential the ANC and Umkhonto leaders who attended the meeting with the rebel soldiers in Luanda attempted to defuse the situation by sending Joe Modise to talk to the rebels. But since most of their criticism was directed at Modise they refused to let him into the camp. The ANC leadership then apparently turned to the Angolan government for help. The Angolans sent their Presidential Guard against the rebels. The rebels were given a deadline by which to surrender or face an attack on their position. However, just before the deadline expired, Chris Hani was sent to talk to the rebels who allowed him into the camp. In the end Hani through a

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138. The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988.12.02, p. 4). See also Ketelo et. al., A Miscarriage of Democracy, (Searchlight South Africa, 5, July 1990. See entire source.)
139. The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988.12.02, p. 4). See also Ketelo et. al., A Miscarriage of Democracy, (Searchlight South Africa, 5, July 1990. See entire source.)



mixture of courage, oratory and political skill persuaded the rebels to lay down their arms. The Committee of Ten was imprisoned while die-hard rebels were sent to what the ANC termed rehabilitation or re-education camps at Quibaxa and Pang'i in northern Angola. Zaba Nkondo was later reported to have committed suicide - a verdict his family in South Africa has refused to accept.

In May 1984 those sent for 're-education' mutinied again. They overran their camp (it is not clear which of the two camps mentioned above was overrun) and took over its administration. They held the camp for six days under the command of Ronald Mosmi Hoyi, the son of the Ciskei chief Inky Hoyi. Hoyi was widely respected in Umkhonto and the ANC for his exploits in the UNITA campaign in 1983. The situation had however become such an embarrassment for the ANC that it was finally decided to send Hani and Mokoena with a force to capture the rebels and to put an end to the rebellion once and for all. In the skirmish that followed Hoyi was captured and some others were killed. Some of those captured including Hoyi were later publicly executed, probably to serve as a warning to others in the organisation that the ANC and Umkhonto would not tolerate a mutinous situation in its camps.

In an attempt to show concern the ANC leadership then sent a commission of enquiry under veteran Communist Party leader, James Stuart, to Angola to investigate the conditions that gave rise to the mutiny. Others who served with Stuart on the commission were Dr. Sizakele Sigxashe, Chief Intelligence Analyst; Aziz Pahad; Tony Mongalo, the ANC's Berlin representative; and Ruth Mompoti, a close associate of Oliver Tambo. Although the findings of the Stuart Commission was never made public or ever reported anywhere in the official literature of the ANC, it was however believed that it apportioned blame to the excesses of the ANC's security organ, poor political education, poor recreation and quality of food, the campaign against UNITA and the desire of cadres to be deployed inside South Africa. (140)

140. The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988.12.02, p. 4). See also Ketelo et. al., A Miscarriage of Democracy, (Searchlight South Africa 5, July 1990. See entire source.)



The crisis that has been developing in Umkhonto in training camps in Angola since the beginning of the 1980's had three possible influences on the Mission in Exile and the armed struggle in South Africa. In the first place the ANC's apparent inability to deal with the situation undoubtedly had an effect on the relationship between the ANC and Angola who in 1988 did not hesitate to order the ANC and Umkhonto to close their bases and remove their operations from Angola as part of the Angolan-Cuban-South African agreement on South West Africa (Namibia). In the second place, the events in Angola and the general dissatisfaction that manifested itself over the leadership of the ANC, although not generally recognised as such, hastened the convening of the Second National Consultative Conference in Kabwe in June 1985. In the third place, the Angolan crisis also forced the ANC to take a hard new look both at its leadership structure as well as its organisational setup, especially the structures that served Umkhonto outside as well as inside South Africa. Consequently, as a result of the above, as well as other factors, it was announced in April 1983 that a new organisational structure for Umkhonto was to be established under the control of a Political-Military Council (PMC) that would combine all political and military work inside South Africa. The PMC thus replaced the old Revolutionary Council that was set up in 1969 at Morogoro. According to Barrell, in the course of 1982 some frontline states, notably Zimbabwe, wanted to facilitate military links with the ANC and with Umkhonto in particular. But since the latter did not have a formally constituted headquarters at the time - Maputo served as an informal headquarters for Umkhonto since 1976 - such links were not possible. Consequently, to overcome this problem and to meet the changing conditions that faced Umkhonto it was decided in early 1983 to set up a formal headquarters for Umkhonto from which both the political and military phases of the armed struggle could be controlled.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Where this formal headquarters was set up in 1983 is not clear but indications are that it operated from Mozambique until the signing of the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984. After this the offices of the ANC and Umkhonto in Mozambique were moved to Lusaka in Zambia. Joe Slovo, who served on the newly established PMC for instance, left

141. Barrell, MK, p. 49.

Maputo in July 1984 to escape the implications of the Nkomati Accord. Other members of the ANC and Umkhonto followed in the months thereafter. (142)

3.4 The Swazi and Nkomati Accords of 1982 and 1984

Two major developments that affected the organisation and activities of the Mission in Exile during the first half of the 1980's and which had a direct bearing on the armed struggle, was the signing of two non-aggression pacts, first between South Africa and Swaziland in 1982, and then between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984. Although the first agreement took place in great secrecy and only became known in 1984, the second agreement which became commonly known as the Nkomati Accord was hailed as a major diplomatic coup for South Africa and a setback for the ANC and the armed struggle.

3.4.1 The Swazi Accord

As stated above little is known about the Swazi Accord except that its existence was only made known on 31 March 1984, some two weeks after the signing of the Nkomati Accord that South Africa had signed a "security agreement" with the government of Swaziland on 17 February 1982, in which the two countries among other things agreed to combat insurgency and subversion, to call upon each other whenever possible for assistance, and to take the necessary steps to honour the agreement. South Africa and Swaziland also agreed not to allow foreign military forces to have bases in their countries to attack each other. According to the South African government, the agreement with Swaziland was kept a secret at the time because it was not thought "expedient" to reveal its existence. Since Mozambique's independence in 1975, the Swazi government under King Sobhuza II had

142. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, pp. 833; Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, pp. 7 - 11); Barrell, MK, p. 53; The Political Military Council, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 2).



allowed the ANC to steadily increase its presence in Swaziland, and by 1981 the latter had become a major conduit for ANC-Umkhonto attacks on South Africa. It was also believed that an increasing number of the attacks conducted by Umkhonto in South Africa were planned and directed from Swaziland. At the end of 1981 restrictions on the ANC in Swaziland increased sharply - a development that eventually culminated in the signing of the Swazi Accord early in 1982. As a result of the latter pact and the steps taken by the Swazi authorities against ANC members in the country the ANC was forced underground.⁽¹⁴³⁾ Although Swaziland continued to give assistance to ANC "refugees" it made it very clear that it would not allow any ANC members in the country to possess weapons of war or to use the country for attacks on neighbouring states. As a result of this, and the SADF attack on Lesotho in December 1982, many ANC-Umkhonto members left the country or were asked to leave. It was later reported that 17 ANC-Umkhonto members had left Swaziland by 1983. In September three ANC-Umkhonto members were shot dead in Swaziland and in November a further two ANC-Umkhonto members were killed by unknown gunmen. Although the ANC laid the blame for the deaths at the door of the South African government, others have suggested that the killings could have been the result of factionalism and strife in the ranks of the ANC's Mission in Exile. It was also suggested that those killed might have been South African police agents.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

The year 1983 also witnessed the arrest of several ANC members in Swaziland by the Swazi police for the illegal possession of arms and explosives. Villagers at the northern Swazi town of Mhlagatane, for instance, arrested an ANC member after they discovered that he was in possession of a machine gun and hand grenades.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

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143. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 838; The Daily News (Durban), 31 March 1984.
144. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 44.
145. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 45.



3.4.2. The Nkomati Accord

The Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique was signed on 16 March 1984 and was seen as a major step towards peace and the normalisation of relations in Southern Africa. The signing of the agreement which is essentially a pact of "non-aggression" and "good neighbourliness", was preceded by intense negotiations between South Africa and Mozambique during 1982 and 1983. Although South Africa and Mozambique represented systems of government and political development that were ideologically worlds apart the signing of the Accord in March effectively illustrated that when circumstances were right national priorities such as security and economic stability took precedence over any other considerations. In the case of South Africa it needed the active support and co-operation of the FRELIMO government in Mozambique to stop the ANC from operating bases and guerrillas from that country. Similarly, the Mozambican government needed the South African government to stop giving financial and military aid to the RENAMO rebel organisation in Mozambique. In addition, the normalization of diplomatic relations with South Africa also held considerable economic advantages for Mozambique who since 1975 had been steadily impoverished by a combination of civil war, severe drought, political instability, and a misguided economic policy.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

Thus with the signing of the eleven page Nkomati Accord in March South Africa and Mozambique not only agreed to stop supporting aggression and insurrection against one another but they also by implication agreed to seek a peaceful solution to the problems of Southern Africa. The two countries thus publicly agreed to eliminate from their respective territories all bases, training centres, accommodation and transit facilities for "elements" hostile to the other. They also agreed to eliminate and prohibit radio broadcasts for such hostile elements. To ensure that the provisions of the agreement were fully complied with a special Joint Security

146. G. Erasmus, The Accord of Nkomati: Context and Content, (SAIIA Factual Paper, October 1984, pp. 1 - 3).

Commission (JSC) was also set up by the treaty.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

Both the President of South Africa, P.W. Botha, and the President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, hailed the agreement as a major breakthrough in the normalization of relations in Southern Africa. It was, they claimed, a signal to the world that states of different socio-economic and political systems could live together in peace and harmony. Machel stated that the agreement would lay the foundation for a break in the cycle of violence that had been established in the southern African region.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

In a report that appeared in the Sunday press shortly after the signing of the Nkomati Accord, it was claimed that the ANC was unhappy about the Accord saying that it had been let down by the Mozambican government as well as other frontline states who had reneged on the decisions made at the summit of the frontline states in Maputo in March 1982. At this particular meeting the frontline states (Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland) committed themselves to continued material and diplomatic support for the ANC.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ In an article that appeared in Sechaba in May 1984, the ANC, in reference to the Nkomati Accord stated that "Over the last few weeks, the racist and colonial regime of South Africa has been involved in a frantic diplomatic, political and propaganda counter-offensive in South Africa" ... and that the principle objectives of this offensive were:

To isolate the ANC throughout southern Africa and to compel the independent countries of our region to act as Pretoria's agents in emasculating the ANC ...

To liquidate the armed struggle for the liberation of South Africa.

To gain new bridgeheads for the Pretoria regime in its efforts to undermine the unity of the Frontline States ...

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147. Erasmus, The Accord of Nkomati: Context and Content, (SAIIA Factual Paper, October 1984, pp. 15 - 21).
148. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 832.
149. The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1984.04.25 (Nkomati Discord).



To use the prestige of the Frontline States in the campaign of the white minority regime to reduce the international isolation of apartheid South Africa and to lend legitimacy to itself and its colonial and fascist state. (150)

The ANC went on to state that despite these developments it continued to count on the support of the Frontline States and the correctness of the decisions reached at the summit of Frontline States held in Maputo in March 1982 and that it was

certain that the rest of Africa and the world progressive community will continue to deny the Botha regime the legitimacy it craves so desperately The struggle for the liberation of South Africa, under the leadership of the ANC, it pointed out, will continue and grow in scope and effectiveness. (151)

Lodge, in his assessment of the Nkomati Accord argued that although FRELIMO's support for the agreement with South Africa was tempered by South African support for RENAMO, there was also evidence that the FRELIMO government had become increasingly sceptical of the ANC and Umkhonto's emphasis on armed struggle as the only solution to South Africa's problems. It (FRELIMO) felt that a more flexible approach, which would include among its components the exploitation of any opportunities which might emerge from dialogue with South African government representatives, the playing down of the ANC's relationship with the SACP and European communist ideology and administration as well as the ANC's increased involvement in popular forms of mass action, civil disobedience and strike action, would be far more advantageous to the organisation's liberation struggle. "Effective political action inside South Africa could exploit the contradictions appearing in the apartheid edifice, Mozambican officials apparently informed Joe Slovo", wrote Lodge. Slovo was apparently also informed by FRELIMO that up to 1983 the ANC's sabotage campaign inside South Africa had brought it no nearer to taking power in South Africa. "The

150. A. Nzo, ANC on the Nkomati Accord, (Sechaba, May 1984, pp 3 - 5).

151. Nzo, ANC on the Nkomati Accord, (Sechaba, May 1984, pp 4 - 5).



ANC's military efforts" continued Lodge, "have been perceived with similar scepticism by the Zambians. President Kaunda probably influenced Sam Nujoma to declare in April 1984 (shortly after the signing of the Nkomati Accord) that an independent Namibia would be in no position to provide for the needs of ANC guerrillas".⁽¹⁵²⁾

The signing of the Nkomati Accord left the ANC and Umkhonto in a precarious position. Forced by the terms of the agreement to act against the ANC, the FRELIMO government began with an extensive search of the houses and offices occupied by ANC members the very day after the signing of the Accord. At the same time, senior ANC officials in Maputo were instructed by FRELIMO that in future the ANC would only be allowed the equivalent of a diplomatic mission in the country. All other ANC, SACP and Umkhonto members would have to leave Mozambique or face immediate arrest, and be sent to United Nations controlled refugee camps situated in northern Mozambique.⁽¹⁵³⁾ Although the ANC resolved to intensify the armed struggle inside South Africa despite the setback that it suffered through the loss of its bases and offices in Maputo, the truth of the matter was that the organisation found itself trapped after 16 March, and was thus forced to act quickly if it did not want its members arrested or immobilised in refugee camps.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ According to Barrell, the ANC received only a few weeks warning in 1984 to vacate its personnel and bases from Mozambique. With no other forward areas having been developed to the level of proficiency that was achieved in Mozambique, the ANC found that the only avenue open to it was to rush the more than one hundred Umkhonto cadres it had in Mozambique to neighbouring Swaziland and from there into South Africa before the Swazi authorities could act against them. Ronnie Kasrils, a veteran of Umkhonto in Natal in the early 1960's who had established an underground presence inside Swaziland since 1983 was placed in overall command of the new development. He was supported by a

152. Lodge, *Mayilome! Let Us Go To War: From Nkomati to Kabwe*, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, p. 9).

153. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 833.

154. ANC on the Nkomati Accord, (Sechaba, May 1984, pp. 3 - 5).



resident Umkhonto member in Swaziland, Siphiwe Nyanda. Under the direction of these two, truckloads of arms and explosives were apparently smuggled over the Mozambican-Swazi border and stored in various safe-houses in Manzini, in Mbabane, the Swazi capital, and in surrounding towns.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Not everybody was however moved to Swaziland in 1984. Many of the top leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto in Mozambique, among them Joe Slovo, left the country in July to join the Mission in Exile in Lusaka. Although the names of those who left Mozambique in mid-1984 were not revealed, it probably included most of the 15 members of the PMC that was set up the year before.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

In the meantime the Swazi police, probably with the help of the South African security police had begun taking steps to curb the ANC presence in Swaziland. In the operations that followed 28 ANC-Umkhonto guerrillas were captured by the Swazi police while attempting to cross the border into Swaziland. All these men were heavily armed. On 8 April a group of 15 ANC men however escaped from police custody at Simunye. Two days later the Swazi government at Mbabane ordered 18 ANC members to leave the country immediately and by 12 April, 27 ANC members were reported to have been captured. The figure apparently included seven of those that had escaped at the beginning of the month. The anti-ANC activities of the Swazi police soon led to open gun battles between the two sides. However, by the end of May 1984 it was reported that more than 86 ANC members were in Swazi jails on charges of illegal entry and the possession of weapons of war. On 19 June, 45 ANC activists were deported from Swaziland and at the end of the same month a further 41 were deported to Tanzania. In addition a senior ANC member that had been resident in Swaziland since 1966, Bafana Duma, was also deported from the country.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

These conditions led to a serious deterioration in relations between the Swazi government and the ANC. The situation was aggravated by an intended visit by Oliver Tambo planned for May 1984 but which was

155. Barrell, MK, pp. 52 - 53.

156. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 833.

157. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 839.



cancelled at the last minute due to "visa problems" in Mozambique. Tambo's failure to accept the Swazi invitation was severely criticised by the Swazi Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi Dhlamini, who stated that only two weeks earlier two ANC representatives who were based in Maputo had visited Swaziland without any visa difficulties. The Prime Minister further accused Tambo and the ANC of repaying Swaziland's hospitality "by allowing armed gangs to roam our country and kill and rob our people". The Mozambican government later claimed that no visa applications had been received from Tambo in 1984. The Mozambican claim only added to the already poor relations between the Swazis and the ANC. (158)

In an attempt to shore up relations Tambo met with Swazi officials in Lusaka, Zambia in August 1984. According to a member of the Swazi Supreme Council, Dr. George Msibi, the ANC had assured him that its militants would under no circumstances use Swaziland as a springboard for attacks on South Africa. The understanding and assurances given by the ANC was however shortlived when the Swazi police later discovered that ANC members were responsible for the murder of the Swazi Deputy Police Chief, Superintendent Petros Shiba on 7 December 1984. Shiba was one of those who took part in the raids on ANC members earlier in 1984 and according to the Swazi government, his assassination was planned in Lusaka. The ANC however retaliated by blaming the death of Shiba on the South African government, whom it claimed, wished to alienate Swaziland from the ANC. The Swazi police however rejected the ANC's explanation, stating that the murder of Shiba was clearly an ANC operation. The Swazi police further claimed at the end of 1984 that they were in possession of a detailed list of policemen to be eliminated by the ANC. ANC cadres deported from Swaziland earlier in the year were also reported to be secretly returning to the country to continue their armed operations. (159)

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158. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 839. See also The Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles), 1984.06.21.
159. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, pp. 839 - 840. See also Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, p. 10).

Faced with an increasingly hostile situation in both Mozambique and Swaziland, and cut off from the PMC headquarters in Lusaka the ANC and Umkhonto underground structures in Swaziland were forced to co-operate on a much more limited basis after 1984. As pressure mounted Umkhonto cadres were hurriedly sent into South Africa. Many were poorly equipped and trained for their missions. As a result of this and the fact that virtually no prior political work had been done among the Black masses of South Africa, the survival period of these 1984 guerrillas inside the country was very short.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

Although the Swazi and Nkomati Accords had come as a severe setback to the ANC and Umkhonto in exile, the organisation's activities both outside and inside South Africa were saved from ignominy by the outbreak of renewed township unrest in South Africa in September 1984. According to Barrell,⁽¹⁶¹⁾ the latter development pre-empted a mood of defeatism about the ANC after the Nkomati setback. Although the ANC and Umkhonto were unable to take full advantage of the new mood of popular uprising, it nevertheless helped to divert the State's attention temporarily away from the armed struggle to the rapidly growing unrest situation inside the country, even if it was only for a short time.

With their route and bases in the east severely disrupted the ANC and Umkhonto switched to Botswana as a logical alternative to infiltrate cadres into South Africa after 1984. Although the Botswana government had refused to sign an agreement such as the Nkomati Accord with the South African government,⁽¹⁶²⁾ the Botswana Foreign Minister, Archie Mogwe had assured the South African government that while his government sympathised with the dilemma of South Africa's Black people, Botswana would not allow dissidents to operate from its

160. Barrell, MK, p. 53; See also The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1984.12.16 (ANC get thrashing) and Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 5 and 1985, pp. 541 - 542.

161. Barrell, MK, pp. 53 - 54.

162. See The Sunday Express (Johannesburg), 1984.04.08, The Financial Mail (Johannesburg) 1984.03.23, and The Star (Johannesburg), 1984.05.12.

territory.⁽¹⁶³⁾ In September 1984 however the South African government felt it necessary to warn Botswana again that it had evidence that the ANC and Umkhonto were using that country on an increasing scale to infiltrate armed guerrillas into South Africa and that it would not tolerate such a development.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

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From the discussion above it is clear that the period 1976 to 1985 represented the most significant phase in the Exile history of Umkhonto and the armed struggle. The highly favourable conditions that marked the beginning of the phase in 1976 provided the ANC-SACP's alliance with its first real opportunity since the formation of Umkhonto in 1961 to launch an all out guerrilla war against the South African government. Unlike the past when it had to conduct the armed struggle from distant bases in Zambia, Tanzania and elsewhere, Umkhonto could now recruit, train and arm its cadres immediately across South Africa's borders in the neighbouring territories of Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland. Although South Africa was faced with growing labour and industrial unrest since 1973 it was the large scale student unrest and rioting of mid 1976 that facilitated the ANC to restart the armed struggle. Attempts by the South African government to deal with the situation, particularly the manner in which it did it, only aided the cause of the ANC internationally. Clearly, conditions could not have been more favourable for large scale insurrection and revolution than what it was by the mid-1970's. But as has been so often the case with the history of the ANC's liberation struggle in South Africa, the organisation was caught off-guard by events. Although the Mission in Exile had taken some tentative steps by 1975 to re-establish its presence inside South Africa, it was still caught largely unprepared by the events of June 1976, probably because it had decided that the armed struggle in South Africa would be a protracted event conducted from outside the

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163. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 827. See also The Sunday Express (Johannesburg), 1984.04.08.
164. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, p. 828. See also The Citizen (Johannesburg) 1984.09.13; The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg) 1984.11.05; The Star (Johannesburg) 1984.10.05.

country. Consequently, when the Soweto uprising broke out in June the ANC and Umkhonto were largely still without both a political and organisational basis inside South Africa. Although bases and transit facilities were hurriedly set up outside South Africa after June 1976, and new recruits were sent in their hundreds for training in camps in Angola and elsewhere, it would take some time for these developments to begin to benefit the armed struggle. As a result, the ANC's armed activities remained relatively low-key and mainly propagandistic in nature, until the beginning of the 1980's when, for the first time since 1976, a serious attempt was made to accelerate the armed struggle and to politicise the broad masses in South Africa. But these attempts were not very successful. There were several reasons for this. One, the ANC had still not yet developed the sort of organisational infrastructure needed to support and co-ordinate the revolutionary development inside the country. Two, the Revolutionary Council that was responsible for Umkhonto and the armed struggle had yet to succeed in developing the necessary kind of "revolutionary centre" that could exercise daily hands-on command and control over all aspects of internal work. Three, the resulting lack of co-ordination between political and military sections, writes Barrell, also seriously damaged the potential for taking forward revolutionary activity in the years immediately after 1976.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ The latter problem was only solved in 1983 with the formation of the Political-Military Council to replace the old Revolutionary Council. Unfortunately for the ANC-SACP alliance these changes came too late however. Four, by 1983 the South African government had also taken the first steps both militarily and diplomatically to stop the ANC and Umkhonto from using neighbouring countries as a springboard for attacks on South Africa. It was also becoming more effective in its counter-insurgency operations against Umkhonto. Conditions for the acceleration of the armed struggle had thus changed from being highly favourable in 1976 to being less favourable if not increasingly problematic for the ANC and Umkhonto by the beginning of 1985. A number of other factors also contributed to the dilemma that the ANC and Umkhonto found themselves in in 1985. The first was the growing dissatisfaction among rank and file members of Umkhonto with the

165. Barrell, MK, p. 33.

leadership of Umkhonto and the ANC over the manner in which they conducted the armed struggle. Although the mutiny in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola was resolved by the end of 1984, a great deal of tension and dissatisfaction remained.

The second was the growing reluctance of South Africa's neighbours such as Swaziland and Mozambique to allow their territories to be used for attacks by Umkhonto's guerrillas against South Africa. The reason for this was that since most of South Africa's neighbours were to a large degree dependent on South Africa for their economic survival they could not afford to alienate the South African government too far.

4. THE FOURTH PHASE, 1985 - 1988

The fourth phase like the phase preceding it began with two significant developments that had a dominant influence on the evolution of the armed struggle after 1985. The first development was the new wave of popular unrest that broke out in South Africa's black townships at the end of 1984. These uprisings like those of June 1976 sent waves of highly motivated and radicalised Blacks into the ranks of the Mission in Exile and Umkhonto. Although the arrival of these new recruits also brought with it its fair share of problems, it nevertheless provided the ANC and Umkhonto with new blood at a time when the movement had been losing a fair number of its trained cadres through the South African government's counterinsurgency operations. The second major development that influenced the armed struggle after 1985 was the Second National Consultative Conference held at Kabwe in Zambia in June 1985.

Other important developments that influenced the armed struggle during the fourth phase, and which will be briefly dealt with here, were the growing contacts that took place between officials of the ANC-SACP alliance and groups and individuals from South Africa following a visit to Lusaka by a South African business delegation led by Gavin Relly, the Chairman of the powerful Anglo American Corporation, in September 1985. Although this and similar types of contact with officials of the ANC outside South Africa was criticised if not condemned by the South African government, it nevertheless

played a significant role in establishing a working relationship between sectors of the White community in South Africa and the ANC. These contacts also helped to stimulate and encouraged the possibility of a non-violent solution to South Africa's racial and political problems. (166)

A further major development that had an effect on the armed struggle and the position of the Mission in Exile was the change that took place in the Soviet Union since 1985 and the manner in which it affected Umkhonto's ability to continue with, and possibly accelerate the armed struggle. This latter factor together with the growing contact between ANC officials and mainly White interest groups from South Africa after 1985, substantially contributed to a more moderate mood and approach to South Africa's political problems by the latter part of the 1980's, despite a sharp increase in the number of attacks committed by Umkhonto insurgents between 1985 and 1988.

4.1. The Kabwe National Consultative Conference, June 1985 (167)

The ANC in exile held its second National Consultative Conference at

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166. The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1985.09.01; The Daily News (Durban), 1985.09.13; The Daily News (Durban) 1985.09.14; Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, p. 10. See also Oliver Tambo on ANC's Talks with South African Business Leaders, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1985.10.15 (SWB, 1985.11.09).
167. For a detailed discussion of the Kabwe Consultative Conference see the following sources: ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia, 16 - 23 June, 1985, pp. 1 - 64; African National Congress Consultative Conference, June 1985, Reports of the various Commissions, pp 1 - 20, also ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Conference, pp. 1 - 14; Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, pp. 13 - 20); Lodge, State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, pp. 1 - 27); Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, pp. 8 - 9. Johns and Hunt Davis (eds), Mandela, Tambo and the ANC, pp. 199, 288 - 293; Sechaba, July 1985 - January 1986, Kabwe National Consultative Conference, Parts 1 - 4; Barrell, MK, p. 61; Norval, Inside the ANC, pp. 110, 111, 124, 134, 187, 188, 194, 208. See also The African Communist 103, Fourth Quarter, 1985, pp. 22 - 29.

Kabwe, 160 km north of Lusaka (Zambia), between 16 and 23 June 1985. The conference was attended by 250 democratically elected delegates that represented all sectors of the movement such as the workers, the youth, women and Umkhonto, as well as of all its more than 20 foreign missions. For seven days the delegates at the conference discussed issues affecting the liberation struggle. It looked at strategy and tactics, organisational problems and what could be done to accelerate the armed struggle. The conference which took place on the ninth anniversary of the commemoration of the Soweto uprising, also endorsed the principles of the Freedom Charter and reaffirmed the decisions of the 1969 Morogoro conference which endorsed the anti-imperialist positions of the ANC-SACP alliance. Indeed, the conference was described as a Council of War because it charted the way forward to the intensification of the armed struggle.

Like the Morogoro conference sixteen years earlier, the Kabwe Consultative Conference came at a time when the ANC's Mission in Exile and the armed struggle inside South Africa were faced with serious problems that ranged from organisational issues and difficulties to problems of strategy and tactics, discipline, the nature of targets and the successes of the South African government's diplomatic and military offensive against it. These and other burning issues, not least of them the Swazi and Nkomati Accords, were instrumental in the decision to hold the Kabwe Consultative Conference. Another factor may also have been the internal disunity that had manifested itself in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in 1984 and the suspension of the extreme Left wing Marxist Leninist group known as the "Marxist Tendency Within the ANC" in 1979, but who had persisted in their criticism of the ANC and the SACP. (168)

Lodge in his assessment of the Kabwe Consultative Conference argued that the conference did seem to reflect a pre-occupation with internal discipline and disciplinary matters which could be interpreted as a response to rank and file criticism. He went on to state that:

168. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the ANC, pp. 2 - 3, 50-51.



for the first time in some years there have been reports of divisions within the leadership and serious rank discontent. The ANC's National Executive was reported to be divided over the emphasis which should be devoted to armed struggle and over the subject of negotiations with the principle division allegedly developing between the right and the left sections of the leadership. (169)

As was the case with the Morogoro conference in 1969, preparation work for the Kabwe Consultative Conference was extensive. ANC units were instructed in mid-1984 to start considering what strategies could be developed in response to the Swazi and Nkomati Accords. Similarly, ANC groups from both the internal and external structures of the organisation were asked to submit position papers and reports to the committee responsible for the conference agenda. The conference which stood under the chairmanship of Dan Tloome, the Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC and Central Committee member of the SACP, was divided into two parts. The first part was dedicated to the three main reports of the NEC. These were the Political Statement, presented by Tambo; the Organisational Report, presented by the Secretary-General, Alfred Nzo; and the Financial Statement, presented by the Treasurer-General, T.T. Nkobi.

The second part of the conference was taken up by the Commissions and Plenary Sessions on the reports of the various commissions. The conference was completed with the election of a new National Executive Committee consisting of 30 members. Nineteen of the outgoing 22 member NEC were re-elected to the new executive committee. (170)

Of particular importance to this study are the reports of the Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work; the Internal Commission; and the Commission on Strategy and Tactics.

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169. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984-June 1985, (The South African Review Three, pp. 13-14).
170. ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Second National Consultative Conference, June 1985.

A. Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work⁽¹⁷¹⁾

Since this issue will be dealt with more fully in chapter eight of this study only some brief remarks will be made here as to the decisions taken at the Kabwe conference on the subject. Under the heading "Cadre Policy", the above commission stated that in order for the ANC and Umkhonto to raise the level of armed struggle to that of a people's war and to mobilise the internal community to intensify its support for the liberation struggle, the movement had to strengthen itself through the adoption and implementing of a comprehensive and systematic cadre policy. It was stated that without such a development there was little hope of a successful revolution. In order to build the ANC and Umkhonto into a competent revolutionary organisation it was recommended that the political, ideological, military, moral, academic and cultural education of all cadres should be stepped up to include "boundless hatred for the enemy", loyalty to the ANC, discipline, dedication, devotion and determination. It was also suggested that in future all members of the liberation movement should be sent for military training. Although the latter recommendation was received with great applause by the plenary meeting, it met with strong opposition from several quarters in the ANC and the SACP. Finally it was also suggested that something should be done to improve the literacy level of some of Umkhonto's cadres. Since propaganda work formed an integral part of Umkhonto's task, it was stressed that cadres should at least be able to read and write. Recommendations were also made with regards to the deployment and preservation of cadres.

As far as the second part of the commission's report, which dealt with the ideological and political work of the ANC was concerned, it was recommended that the organisation should step up these activities among the masses of the people in a more systematic and consistent manner. It was stated that since the distortion of the relationship

171. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work, pp. 1 - 7.



between the class and national aspects of the revolution was at the centre of the South African government's anti-ANC propaganda it was important that there should be a correct understanding both in theory and practice of the inter-connection of the national and class question. To help promote the latter understanding it was recommended that a department of political education be set up. The task of the department would be to appoint and monitor the work of political officers; to draft and implement a syllabus of political education and finally, to prepare the necessary material for such a course. A number of recommendations were also made as to what the structure and contents of such a syllabus for political education should look like.

B. Internal Commission Report⁽¹⁷²⁾

The discussion of the Internal Commission's Report stood under the chairmanship of Chris Hani who was assisted by Aziz Pahad and Klaus Maphepha. The commission's report was divided into five main divisions followed by a number of sub-divisions. These were:

1. Overt organisations, which were subdivided into the following aspects:
 - a) working class and trade unions
 - b) mobilisation of women
 - c) mobilisation of the rural masses
 - d) mobilisation of the youth
 - e) religious movements
 - f) civic organisations
 - g) mobilisation of the white community
2. The development of the underground.
3. The armed struggle.
4. Internal propaganda.
5. Internal structures.

172. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, pp. 7 - 14.

With regard to the above a number of important recommendations were made by the seventy four delegates who attended the plenary session. These were:

- a) that victory cannot be won without the active participation of the masses inside South Africa;
- b) that the mass democratic organisations and movements that have emerged in South African politics since the early 1980's should be used by the ANC to extend its support among the masses;
- c) that the working class, which was isolated by the 1969 Strategy and Tactics, should be drawn into the democratic trade union movement from where they could be utilised in the ANC and Umkhonto in particular; and
- d) that the formation of a single federation to unite the democratic trade union movement should be pursued with determination and speed.

It was further suggested that a programme of action should be undertaken to organise the unemployed, the unorganised and the most exploited workers, especially domestic and farm workers in the Bantustans. Determined efforts should also be made to ensure that migrant workers and hostel dwellers should be part and parcel of the trade union movement.

With regards to the armed struggle it was recommended that special attention should be given to drawing increasing numbers of workers into Umkhonto. This latter development was seen as vital for both the overall perspectives of a people's war as well as for the possibility of mobilising for a long-lasting national work stoppage supported by armed activity aimed at bringing the South African government to its knees.

With regards to the role of women and the rural masses in the liberation struggle, the commission recommended that women should unite nationally and that they should form an integral part of the trade union movement and the armed struggle both inside as well as outside South Africa. With an estimated 50 per cent (according to



ANC figures) of the oppressed majority living in the rural areas the mobilisation and incorporation of these regions into the armed struggle was not only much overdue but of the utmost urgency. To bring this about and to strengthen the ANC and Umkhonto's presence in these regions it was recommended that rural machinery had to be reactivated. It was also suggested that all mass democratic, youth, women's and other anti-apartheid organisations should be encouraged to mobilise the masses in the "platteland". At the same time Umkhonto should step up its armed propaganda in these areas particularly in the Bantustans. Perhaps more significant was the recommendation that Umkhonto should distinguish between "traditional leaders" and what it termed "puppet leaders" and then direct its actions mainly against the latter. This also applied to rural organisations, institutions and issues, such as the land question, ethnic discrimination, nonpayment of pensions, the lack of health facilities and unemployment.

With regards to the youth and youth organisations the commission recommended that the ANC should infiltrate all such organisations "so as to guide them" and that special attention had to be given to organising youths in Coloured, Indian and White youth organisations even if they belonged to opposition parties.

An important field the commission felt that needed to be more effectively utilised in the armed struggle was the "Religious Front". The commission argued that since most religious organisations and movements had well defined and well developed organisational structures that reached down to the grass roots level, and since a large portion of the oppressed people in South Africa belonged to one or another of these religious organisations, they formed an important link in the liberation struggle and should be utilised as such. As had been the case with the youth organisations it was recommended that ANC cells and units also be set up in churches and church organisations.

Two aspects of the Internal Commission's report that received a great deal of attention at the Kabwe conference were its recommendations



for the mobilisation of the White community and the ANC's support for, if not the infiltration of, the United Democratic Front (UDF) which was formed in 1983. With regard to the first the commission specifically recommended that democratically-minded Whites should be drawn directly into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto. A valuable source of White recruits for the ANC and Umkhonto, it was suggested, was the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and other support groups for conscientious objectors and war resisters. It was also suggested that Whites should be recruited from the ranks of White democratic organisations such as the youth movement of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). A rich source of potential recruits for the ANC and the armed struggle was also White students and student organisations. These latter organisations had to be "encouraged" to "utilise their skills in the course of the struggle".

With regards to Umkhonto and the development of the armed struggle in particular the Internal Commission made a number of important recommendations. These were:

- a) the intensification and recruitment of Indians, Coloureds and Whites into Umkhonto;
- b) the establishment of urban-based sabotage units in Indian, Coloured and White areas. The aim of this measure was to divide the attention of the SADF both regionally and geographically;
- c) to ensure that the working class formed the majority of the people's army;
- d) to undertake armed propaganda actions against the economic nerve centres of South Africa;
- e) to obtain weapons and other logistics from sources inside the country;
- f) to increase the number of women in Umkhonto; and
- g) to intensify work within the country's armed forces including the independent homelands.

In support of these issues it was also recommended that the ANC should build up its internal propaganda machinery to meet the demands

made on it as a vanguard organisation. It was further recommended that a chain of information personnel be established that extended from inside the country to the points where the information was needed. It was also recommended that the relevant structures of the underground movement should keep in close touch with the Department of Information and Publicity and provide it with up-to-date information.

To promote the propaganda campaign of the ANC and Umkhonto the commission recommended the setting up of an underground printing press as an urgent priority. It also suggested the creation of a possible mobile radio station inside South Africa to supplement the propaganda work of Radio Freedom.

As far as the internal structures of the ANC and Umkhonto were concerned, the Commission made a number of important recommendations. In its evaluation of the structural changes that were introduced in 1983, the Commission stated that as a result of an unhealthy rivalry that had come to exist between the political and military spheres of the armed struggle it had become necessary to create combined political-military structures. This meant that the changes introduced in 1983 had to be altered to allow for greater co-operation between the political and military spheres of the armed struggle. This was particularly relevant to the establishment of Regional Political-Military Committees (RPMCs) in the forward areas (Angola, Mozambique and Botswana) and Area Political-Military Committees (APMCs) within the country to provide some degree of integrated leadership to all ANC political and military work on a regional or area basis. In many ways, argued Barrell, this was a return to the "senior organs" under the old Revolutionary Council of 1969. (173)

With regards to the PMC in particular it was recommended that it should be transformed into a planning and executive body for all home front work and that it should be reduced in number to allow it to function more decisively and promptly as a leadership organ. It was

also recommended that the senior exile leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto should from time to time visit South Africa to meet with the internal leaders of the underground. It was further recommended that the "Christian fronts" should have an internal as well as an external function and that Umkhonto should be organised and established even among churches in South Africa.

C. Commission on Strategy and Tactics⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

Due to a lack of time the Commission on Strategy and Tactics was unable to deal with the draft document on the subject that was placed before it for consideration. The draft document was apparently, handed to the Commission only hours before the start of the conference with the result that it was felt that there was not sufficient time to comment on a subject as important as the Strategy and Tactics. It was therefore suggested that the task of drawing up a new Strategy and Tactics to serve the next phase of the armed struggle should be entrusted to the incoming NEC. At the same time the commission pointed out that while it was in broad agreement with the general approach in the existing draft Strategy and Tactics document, it was however felt that a number of important questions which bore on the strategic approach had been omitted from the draft document, and would thus have to find a place in a revised Strategy and Tactics. Some of the omissions recommended to the NEC for special attention were: the role and place of the working class, and the significance of the emergence of the trade union movement in the liberation struggle; the character of "bantustan" leadership; and the changing nature of the "bantustans".

But more important than these omissions was the admission by the commission that in the drafting of a new document on Strategy and Tactics particularly where it concerned the armed struggle there was one basic reality that could not be ignored. This was that there could be no destruction of the South African government and the capture of people's power without some form of revolutionary

174. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Strategy and Tactics, pp. 15 - 20.



violence. There were however two fundamental factors - the one negative, the other positive - that had a direct bearing on this situation.

In the case of the negative factor, the commission stated that the ANC and Umkhonto never had, and were unlikely to ever have, a rear base in the classical sense. Consequently, it stated:

when we begin to examine the concept of people's war, guerrilla activity, guerrilla zones, problems of arming the people, creating, sustaining and supplying a people's army in the initial stages, etc, we must accept that all these objections have to take off and grow within the limitation of the absence of an effective rear base with a friendly border.

In the case of the positive factor, the commission pointed out that:

We have revolutionary sources and potentials which no other Movement in Africa had. We have people (especially a proletariat and fighting youth) which constitute a revolutionary contingent which is highly politically conscious, experienced in struggle over a period of more than half a century, who stand ready in their tens of thousands to be recruited and organised into contingents of political and armed fighters and who show an unending creativity in finding forms of resistance and of mass legal and semi-legal organisation in the face of the enemy's continuous terror against the people. The key to the future unfolding of our strategy and tactics is, on the one hand, to compensate for and to find ways of overcoming the weakness of the absence of a rear base. On the other hand, we have to exploit to the maximum our strength, which is the people ..."

In this connection we should remember that when we think of revolutionary violence, we must not restrict ourselves only to the organised presence of MK combat units. We must also pay attention to the way in which the people's revolutionary violence (organised or spontaneous or semi-spontaneous) relates to the unfolding of the revolutionary struggle as a whole. In short we must find ways of harnessing the combat potential of the people, whether in (the form) of small combat units (or in) the creation of larger paramilitary formations in the shape of workers and people's self-defence units....



In reference to the relationship between a people's war and an insurrection, the commission stated that there was:

unanimity that the primary perspective continues to be People's War, which will be protracted in character followed by insurrection as the culmination of this. By People's War, we mean a war in which a liberation army becomes rooted amongst the people who progressively participate actively in the armed struggle both politically and militarily, including the possibility of engaging in partial or general insurrection. (175)

The commission also stated that the time had come for the liberation movement to apply the principles of Military Combat Work (MCW) to the question of armed struggle. MCW involved the preparation of combat forces for the revolution according to specific methods and structures derived from the experience of the Bolsheviks in the Russian revolution and the experience of revolutionary movements throughout the world. In essence MCW was composed of three components:

- (a) The advance combat formations (Umkhonto) which are the nucleus of the people's Revolutionary Army and include the guerrilla formations of the countryside, urban combat groups, sabotage units and workers and people's self-defence units in the factories, townships and rural areas.
- (b) The People in Arms - i.e. the advance, active elements of the masses, prepared and trained by the vanguard formations - ready, arms in hand, to swell the ranks of the People's Army.
- (c) Those elements of the enemy forces, ready at the decisive moment, to side with the revolutionary forces.

These elements, the commission stated, constitute the forces and means of a People's War. (176)

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175. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Strategy and Tactics, pp. 15 - 16.
 176. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Strategy and Tactics, p. 18.



In terms of its strategy and tactics for the post 1985 period the ANC-SACP alliance was thus convinced that a transfer of power in South Africa from apartheid to a people's democracy would come through a protracted People's War led by Umkhonto we Sizwe. The possibility of a negotiated settlement in the country clearly occupied a very low priority in the ANC strategy in 1985.

4.1.1 The Resolutions of the Kabwe Consultative Conference

Towards the end of the proceedings a number of major resolutions were adopted by the conference that had an effect on the nature and development of the armed struggle after 1985. These can be roughly divided into three groups or categories: organisational, political and military.

a. Organisational

Altogether five resolutions were adopted at Kabwe that had a bearing on organisation and structure. The first resolved that the ANC should appoint a permanent National Working Committee (NWC) from the ranks of the NEC to be situated in Lusaka, Zambia. The NWC would constitute a permanent core responsible for the activities of the NEC when the latter was not in session. It would consist of at least one quarter of the members of the NEC. The conference also called for the appointment of a Working Secretariat consisting of three Secretaries from the NEC; two Administrative Secretaries from the PMC and the ECC (End Conscription Campaign); an Assistant Secretary-General and a Secretary-General. The total membership of the NWC would thus be seven persons.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Secondly, it was resolved that in future all members of the ANC-SACP alliance were to undergo military training, while thirdly, the NEC was expanded from its former 22 members to thirty with the provision that a further five members could be coopted onto the NEC should the need arise.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Fourthly, a code

177. ANC, Reports, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the National Consultative Conference, p. 9.

178. ANC, Reports, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the National Consultative Conference, pp. 9 - 14. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, p. 9.



of conduct was adopted to govern the social, sexual and professional relationships of all ANC, SACP and Umkhonto personnel. The code also laid down rules and regulations on the use of drugs and alcohol, particularly in Umkhonto's training camps.

A fifth, but perhaps more important resolution adopted at Kabwe, was that pertaining to the membership of the ANC's NEC. At the Morogoro consultative conference in 1969, the rank and file membership of the ANC's External Mission was for the first time opened up to people of all racial groups. Only the NEC retained its racial exclusiveness, i.e. it remained African in membership. This meant that non-Africans, who formed an integral part of the ANC's armed struggle, particularly in Umkhonto, could not be elected to the ANC's Executive Committee. Although the SACP had managed to partially circumvent the problem through the creation of a Revolutionary Council in 1969 and its almost exclusive control over Umkhonto and the armed struggle, the exclusion of White, Indian and Coloured Communists from the ANC's NEC remained an issue that need to be corrected. At Kabwe thus, this last vestige of "racialism" in the liberation movement was finally removed. The implication of this latter development was significant for the SACP's relationship with the ANC. The SACP was now in a position for the first time since the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, to take full control of the ANC and turn it into a fullscale Marxist-Leninist organ. This development will be more fully examined in chapter six of this study.

b. Political

Four political resolutions were adopted by the Kabwe consultative conference that were of specific significance to the post 1985 period. The first rejected any dialogue with the South African government. The conference argued that while it cannot be seen to be rejecting a negotiated settlement in principle, it was however convinced that "this regime is not interested in a just solution of the South African question". The second resolution reaffirmed the ANC's support for international disinvestment and economic sanctions against South Africa. The third called on the ANC to make renewed efforts to find a working relationship with the PAC, while the fourth



underlined the importance of the trade union movement in the armed struggle. A call was made on the latter movement for greater unity as a preliminary to a sustained campaign of industrial action to bring the South African government to its knees.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

In his assessment of the political resolutions adopted at the Kabwe conference, Lodge argued that while the call for closer co-operation with the PAC was a definite departure from previous ANC policy and attitude, the remainder of the resolutions did not mark a significant alteration in the ANC official policy. He went on to state that although a call was made for greater trade union participation, this did not necessarily represent "a workers" advance on policy adopted at Morogoro'.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

As far as the composition of the new Executive Committee was concerned, Lodge argued that it could be seen as a reaffirmation of leadership and a confirmation of the earlier ideological balance in the organisation's hierarchy. The eleven new members elected to the executive included three men and a woman drawn from the 1950's generation of leaders. The latter four were Joe Slovo, Mac Maharaj, Reg September and Ruth Mompati. The rest of the new members elected were of a much younger generation. Most were in their late thirties or early forties. They were evenly balanced between those with a mostly military background and those who had served as diplomats, researchers and administrators. Among the latter group were men such as Francis Meli (editor of Sechaba), Pallo Jordan, Anthony Mongale (ANC representative in East Berlin), and James Stuart.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ The four chief office bearers in the new enlarged NEC were Oliver Tambo (President), Alfred Nzo (Secretary-General), Thomas Nkobi (Treasurer-General) and Dan Tloome (Deputy-Secretary General).⁽¹⁸²⁾

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179. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference, pp. 35 - 36. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, p. 9.
180. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, p. 18).
181. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, p. 18).
182. Who's Who in the ANC, (Africa Confidential 27 (25), 1986.12.10, p. 2).



c. Military

The following resolutions effecting military matters were adopted by the Kabwe conference. One, it was decided that a "War Council" should be formed and two, that in future no distinction should be made between "soft" (civilian) and "hard" (industrial and economic) targets. Although this did not mean that in future Umkhonto attacks would be deliberately directed against civilian targets, it did mean that the organisation would step up its armed attacks on what it termed "legitimate civilian" targets such as government officials, Defence Force personnel, border area farmers, state witnesses, police informers, and security personnel in general. It was further resolved that, as a result of the restrictions placed on the ANC and Umkhonto by the Swazi and Nkomati agreements, the training of Umkhonto personnel should be moved progressively inside the country and the organisation should step up its recruitment campaign among progressive Whites, Indians and Coloureds. Similarly, more political work should be done among the various components of the security services especially the SADF and the SAP. The Conference also for the first time since 1961 adopted a resolution in favour of a "People's War". In essence, this meant that the armed struggle should be based among the people and that the latter should be prepared both politically and militarily to play an increasingly larger role in the internal development of the struggle. In other words, instead of the armed struggle being largely directed and conducted from outside the country by Umkhonto, greater emphasis was to be placed on the training and arming of people inside South Africa. It also meant, according to Lodge, a redirection of efforts away from attacks on major economic and strategic installations and more concentration on forms of military activity which directly undermine the government's administrative capacity and which allow for mass participation.⁽¹⁸³⁾

183. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, p. 15 - 16. See also ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, pp. 10 - 11.

Two other resolutions taken at the Kabwe conference that also directly effected Umkhonto and the armed struggle was the decision to introduce compulsory military training for all members of the ANC-SACP alliance and to adopt a comprehensive cadre policy that would lay down rules and regulations for the recruitment, deployment, promotion, accountability, preservation and training of Umkhonto cadres. (184)

All in all, the decision taken at Kabwe to step up the armed struggle, to move towards a people's war and to authorise Umkhonto cadres to strike at civilian and security personnel, marked a definite and clear break with the past. Consequently, the period ahead was described by the ANC as its "Decade of Liberation". (185)

4.2 Developments in the Post Kabwe Period

There were a number of major developments that effected the Mission in Exile and its conducting of the armed struggle after June 1985. The first was the intensification of the armed struggle and the decision to take the war into the White areas of South Africa. As indicated in the previous chapter (p. 227), 1985 and 1986 saw a sharp increase in guerrilla activity by Umkhonto's cadres. Between 1 July 1985 and the end of 1986 for instance a total of some 360 acts of sabotage had been committed by guerrillas. The majority, if not all these attacks, had been contributed to Umkhonto. These attacks represented a sharpe increase over the 44 attacks of the previous year (1984). (186)

The second major event that took place in 1985 was the visit of a business delegation under the leadership of Gavin Relly, Chairman of the powerful Angola American Corporation to Lusaka in September to

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184. ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, p. 12.
185. ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference, p. 33.
186. Lodge, State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9(1), January, 1987, pp. 3 - 4).



talk to the ANC.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ This visit, which was followed by a visit of senior leaders of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) in October, and a delegation of clergymen from South Africa in December as well as a host of other groups and individuals from South Africa thereafter, effectively helped to pave the way for improved contact between a broad spectrum of political, community, religious and academic leaders and organisations in South Africa and the ANC in Exile. Although these meetings with the ANC were objected to by the South African government who threatened to take steps to prevent them from taking place in the future, it was unable to do so effectively, with the result that the meetings continued throughout the second half of the 1980's. In retrospect, these contacts played a significant role in preparing sectors of both the ANC-SACP alliance and the South African community, if not the government itself, to accept a more moderate approach to South Africa's political problems, despite repeated calls for an intensification of the armed struggle and the government's increased counter-insurgency operations. This search for a political solution and the progress that was made with it between 1985 and the end of the decade, ran like a golden thread through the history of the liberation struggle during the latter half of the 1980's.

A third major development that effected the Mission in Exile but more particularly the position of Umkhonto, was the renewed SADF raids on ANC and Umkhonto targets in Botswana in June 1985 and again on 19 May 1986. In the case of the latter, the SADF also launched strikes at ANC bases and targets in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the raid on ANC targets in June 1985, the SADF claimed that 15 people were killed including three women. Two children were apparently also injured in the attack. One of them later died. According to the SADF the houses attacked in Botswana on 14 June (which was two days before the start of the Kabwe conference) served as "safe houses", logistics and planning centres and areas where Umkhonto

187. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, pp. 9 - 10. See also The Sunday Tribune, (Durban), 1985.09.01; The Daily News (Durban) 1985.09.13.



cadres were given crash courses in guerrilla warfare and sabotage.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ According to reports, guerrillas who were trained in Botswana were responsible for at least 36 acts of sabotage in the months immediately preceding the SADF raid.

The SADF attacks on Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia in May 1986 were equally successful. According to a report released by the SADF shortly after the raids, it was stated that fighter aircraft of the South African Air Force successfully attacked the ANC's operations centre and Department of Information and Publicity (DIP) at Makeni some 15 kilometers from Lusaka, Zambia. The attacks on ANC bases in Zambia and Zimbabwe was the first of its kind by the SADF.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ In Harare, Zimbabwe, the SADF attack was directed against the ANC's operations centre at 16 Angwa Street and a guerrilla transit facility at 19 Eve's Crescent, Harare. In Botswana, the attack was directed at a guerrilla transit facility at Mogadisane, outside Gaborone. At least three people were reported to have died in these simultaneous raids, while more than twenty were injured.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ In its reaction the attacks were described by the ANC as "wholly unprovoked" and "militarily and politically" a failure.⁽¹⁹¹⁾

A fourth development that had an effect on the ANC's Mission in Exile and Umkhonto in the post 1985 period was the Lesotho coup of January 1986. This coup which was to a large degree brought about by South Africa's decision to place restrictions on all border traffic with Lesotho until the Lesotho government took steps to expell the ANC and Umkhonto cadres from the country, subsequently brought to power a pro-South African government under Major General J.M. Lekhanya, who immediately took steps to expel the ANC and the PAC from Lesotho. Acting in accordance with information allegedly supplied by the South

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188. The Daily News (Durban) and The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1985.06.14 - 15. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, p. 7.
 189. The Daily News (Durban), 1986.05.20. See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1986, pp. 813 - 814.
 190. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1986, p. 814. See also The Daily News, (Durban), 1986.05.19 - 20 (various Reports).
 191. ANC, Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.05.19 - 20, (SWB, 1986.05.21 - 22).



African security services, about 50 ANC and PAC personnel were rounded up at the end of January and deported out of the country. There were some questions initially as to whether these people should be handed over to the South African government, but after a flurry of communications between the ANC in Lusaka and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Lesotho and South Africa, it was finally agreed that the ANC members would be airlifted to Lusaka on a specially chartered flight. The expulsion of the ANC members were apparently overseen at the Leabua Jonathan Airport by members of the South African Security Police and the Lesotho Defence Force. Once these ANC members had left Lesotho, the border restrictions were lifted.⁽¹⁹²⁾ The expulsion of the fifty odd members of the ANC (and PAC) in January 1986 was followed by further expulsion in the course of the year with the result that by the end of 1986, the ANC and Umkhonto had also effectively lost Lesotho as a springboard for attacks on South Africa. Although Lesotho was perhaps never as important as for instance Mozambique and Swaziland for the ANC, the fact that it became out of bounds for the ANC and Umkhonto in 1986 was simply another nail in the coffin of the armed struggle and the ANC's determination to wage a people's war led by Umkhonto in South Africa. With Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho being closed to the ANC and Umkhonto by the end of 1986, most of the armed struggle had to be directed and conducted through Botswana which was no longer a safe route. In his assessment of the armed struggle in 1986, Lodge wrote that while 1986 was designated by the ANC as "The Year of Umkhonto we Sizwe" and it called for a "military offensive that [would] put the enemy into a strategic retreat"; [and] the organisation had managed to escalate the number of armed attacks inside South Africa (a total of 229 acts of sabotage were recorded in 1986); Umkhonto's campaigns, however, fell well short of representing a major threat to the physical security of "apartheid's beneficiaries, to the operation of government outside the townships or the day-to-day functioning of the economy". Lodge went on to stress that for every weapon deployed by the ANC and Umkhonto inside South Africa, the police claimed to have discovered another four in

192. R. Edgar, The Lesotho Coup of 1986, (The South African Review 4, 1987, pp. 373 - 382).



arms caches. Similarly, the South African security forces have stepped up their killing rate of insurgents. Altogether 160 guerrillas had either been killed or captured by 1986 which was more than one third of all the ANC's casualties since the beginning of the second phase of the armed struggle in 1976. These and other developments, in particular the states of emergency declared by the South African government in 1985 and 1986 did not bode well for the ANC and the armed struggle. In sharp contrast with the sense of impending triumph in public statements issued early in the year, wrote Lodge, the ANC's assessment of its achievements in a document circulated to national command centres in October 1986 was soberly critical.⁽¹⁹³⁾ In this the ANC made it clear that:

Despite all our efforts we have not come anywhere near the achievements of the objects we [have] set ourselves. ANC underground structures remained weak and unable to supply reliable support for Umkhonto cadres. Umkhonto units still operate largely in isolation from 'mass combat groups'.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

4.2.1 The Mission in Exile and the International Community⁽¹⁹⁵⁾

Although there can be little doubt that, in the light of the above evaluation, the ANC and Umkhonto were finding it increasingly difficult after June 1985 to built the armed struggle into a

people's war ... in which our entire nation is engaged - Umkhonto we Sizwe, the people's army, workers, the rural masses, women students, intellectuals, the religious community ... collectively in groups, and as organised individuals,⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

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193. T. Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review 4, pp. 6 - 10).
 194. Quoted in Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review 4, p. 10).
 195. For a discussion of the ANC's international status see W.P. Esterhuyse, The International Political Status of the African National Congress, (Africa Insight 19(1), 1989, pp. 28 - 36). See also The Daily News (Durban), 1986.06.09 (South Africa Not Winning the Propaganda War).
 196. A. Mashinini, Dual Power and the Creation of People's Committee's, (Sechaba, April 1986, pp. 25 - 27). See also T. Lodge, People's War or Negotiations? African National Congress Strategies in the 1980's, (The South African Review 5, 1989, pp. 42 - 54).



the ANC's Mission in Exile was however, having more success in the international area to have South Africa both politically and economically isolated. The latter development was made particularly easier after the South African President, P.W. Botha's famous Rubicon speech in Durban in 1985 in which he told the international community that South Africa would not be prescribed to by the outside world as to the policies it should follow or the political changes it should make in the country.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ This inflexible attitude of the South African government and its insistence that it will not be forced into negotiations with the ANC, considerably strengthened the ANC's position internationally. The meetings between officials of the ANC's Mission in Exile and the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) during the first half of 1986; between Oliver Tambo and the British Foreign Minister in September 1986; Tambo's visit to Moscow in November during which he was personally met by the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev and senior Soviet officials; his talks with the United States Secretary of State George Schultz in Washington at the end of January 1987; Tambo's visit to Australia for two weeks in March as the official guest of the Australian government; his visit to Japan in the same month during which time Tambo met with the Japanese Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone; and Tambo's visit to Canada in August 1987 to meet with the Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, all indicate to a general tendency among concerned foreign governments and community leaders to recognise the ANC as a legitimate force for change in South Africa, if not an alternative to the South African government as such.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Support for the ANC and its cause also came in other forms. In 1986, for instance, the Swedish government gave a total of R66 million to the ANC and anti-apartheid organisations inside South Africa and the frontline states. According to the Swedish government, the aid was for "humanitarian" purposes and not for the purchase of arms, yet it admitted that it had no real control over how the funds were used. In October of the same year an ANC office was set up in Oslo, Norway

197. The Daily News (Durban), 1985.08.16 (PW's manifesto for South Africa).

198. Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review 4, pp. 10 - 11).

and headed by Raymond Mokoena. The ANC also annually received about R12 million from the Norwegian government in humanitarian aid.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Financial and morale support also came from the People's Republic of China and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1986. The latter organisation, for instance, gave a total of R178 000 to the ANC in October 1986 to help "refugees".

In January 1987, the Swedish government announced that it was going to raise its "humanitarian" support for the ANC by 32 per cent to R18,7 million. In the same month the ANC opened an office in Moscow while in June 1986 an ANC office was also opened in Amsterdam where the Dutch Anti-Apartheid movement was actively campaigning on behalf of the ANC.⁽²⁰⁰⁾

A major victory for the ANC's Mission in Exile in its attempts to isolate South Africa internationally came with the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act by the American Congress in October 1986. The Act which introduced comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa effectively encouraged other European countries with the noticeable exception of perhaps Britain to also introduce stringent economic sanctions against South Africa after 1986.⁽²⁰¹⁾

According to Lodge, the importance of ministerial-level meetings with Western administrations did not so much lie in the actual content of the discussions, as in the impact that it had on White South African opinion, particularly on those anxious to restore South Africa's international respectability and on those inside the country who advocated negotiations with the ANC. What is more, argued Lodge, international support and recognition for the ANC boosted the morale

199. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1987/1988, pp. 702 - 705.

200. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1986, p. 131.

201. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1986, p. 131. See also The Daily News, (Durban), 1986.07.23 and 1986.10.08; ANC Comment Calls for "Sanctions Now", Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.09.17, (SWB, 1986.09.19); ANC Radio Rejects UK Line on Sanctions, Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.09.17, (SWB, 1986.09.20); Reaction to US Senate Decision on Sanctions and ANC Radio says US Senate Vote Another Blow against Apartheid, Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.10.03, (SWB, 1986.10.06).

of Black South Africans, while official contact with the West brought fresh opportunities to raise the question of the South African government's continued legal legitimacy.⁽²⁰²⁾

4.2.2. Negotiations versus Armed Struggle

While it is true that the ANC had considerably improved its international image after 1985 and that this had effectively contributed to South Africa's rapid political and economic isolation, the support that the West gave the ANC was not unqualified nor a one-sided issue. Western economic and moral support for the ANC normally did not extend to the organisation's armed struggle in South Africa. Most of the foreign governments and leaders who sympathised with the cause of the ANC rejected its insistence on armed struggle as a solution to South Africa's problems. One Western government which was particularly opposed to the ANC's armed struggle was Britain. In October 1987 for instance, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, while rejecting apartheid, stated that the ANC was a "typical terrorist organisation, which people should fight rather than embrace". She went on to state that she would have nothing to do with any organisation that practiced violence.⁽²⁰³⁾ A similar approach came from the American government which, while supporting the ANC in its opposition to apartheid, rejected its choice of armed violence as a means to bring about change in South Africa. One aspect that particularly concerned Western governments after 1985 was the ANC's decision to take the armed struggle into the White areas of South Africa and to include soft targets in its armed attacks.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ This concern was however not limited to Western governments and the international community but was apparently also present within the ANC itself. Although the ANC did little officially to prevent Umkhonto's more radical leaders from stepping up attacks on soft targets between 1985 and 1987 (according to figures compiled by the

202. Lodge, The African National Congress after Kabwe, (The South African Review 4, p. 11).

203. Business Day, 1987.10.19.

204. The Daily News (Durban), 1987.01.29 (Tambo Talks end in disagreement).

International Freedom Foundation acts of indiscriminate insurgency which included attacks on civilians, had increased from 19 per cent of all attacks in 1985 to 49 per cent of all attacks in the first half of 1988⁽²⁰⁵⁾, the more conservative leaders in the ANC-SACP alliance were clearly not happy with this new development and in August 1988, the organisation's NEC publicly stated that it was not official ANC policy to attack civilian targets and warned that such attacks would play into the hands of the ANC's enemies.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ This report was apparently made in reaction to claims that hardliners in the ANC-SACP alliance but particularly in Umkhonto had been pressuring the liberation movement to give official permission to Umkhonto to attack soft targets. In the same statement the ANC also made it clear that the attacks on soft targets that had been taking place since 1985 were not ordered by the ANC but were carried out by ANC (Umkhonto) guerrillas "inspired by anger at the government's military actions and its campaign of terror against blacks".⁽²⁰⁷⁾

According to the authoritative newsletter Africa Confidential the decision by some of the more radical leaders in Umkhonto, notably Chris Hani to step up attacks on soft targets in 1987 and 1988, was seen as an open challenge to the more conservative leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance and those who favoured a political approach to South Africa's problems.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ There were thus two clearly different if not distinctly definable points of view present in the ANC-SACP alliance by 1988 with regards to the South African question. On the one hand there were those who argued that since the ANC and Umkhonto appeared to be unable to bring about a transfer of power in South Africa through armed struggle in the near future a political solution appeared to be the best answer to the country's problems. This group stood under the leadership of moderates such as Thabo Mbeki, Lindiwe Mabuza, Oliver Tambo and several others. At the other end of the spectrum were those who openly championed the cause of

205. The Citizen (Johannesburg), 1988.08.03.

206. See The Star (Johannesburg), 1988.08.17 - 18; and The Daily Dispatch (Port Elizabeth), 1988.08.18.

207. The Star (Johannesburg), 1988.08.18.

208. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 1).

violence and a military solution in South Africa, irrespective of how long it might take. The leaders of this latter group were Chris Hani, Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils. Although both the Mbeki and Hani groups in the ANC-SACP alliance were staunch supporters of Marxist Leninism, they distinctly differed from one another in their interpretation of Marxism and how a transfer of power in South Africa should come about. Lodge in his assessment of the internal development of the Mission in Exile since the Kabwe conference argued that one of the problems that the ANC-SACP alliance had to face in the late 1980's was how to maintain an effective balance between the different constituencies it represented. The reluctant and ambivalent response of its spokesmen to the issues of necklacing and soft targets, he pointed out, was symptomatic of the difficulties of doing this. "Whatever their private feelings about such matters (and within the ANC there appear to be differences about both), if ANC leaders had condemned such practices in absolute terms many loyal and committed ANC supporters would have felt betrayed," he claimed. (209)

Although the influence of the hardliners in the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, to judge by the sharp increase in attacks on civilian targets and public places, and the ANC's apparent inability to curb or stop these developments, appeared to have increased since the Kabwe conference, there were also strong indications that the moderates and those supporting a negotiated settlement had also gained considerable ground during this period. In August 1987 for instance, the ANC released a document in which it set out five minimal pre-conditions that had to be met before it would consider negotiations with the South African government. (210) Although these conditions were rejected by the South African government as "far-fetched", contact between the ANC and groups and individuals from South Africa continued to pave the way for a more favourable climate for negotiations. Similarly, the successes of the government's counterinsurgency operations in 1987 and 1988 despite

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209. Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference (The South African Review 4, 1987, p. 14).
210. ANC Statement on Negotiations. October 9th, 1987 (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 3 - 5); Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1987/1988, p. 702; See also The Star (Johannesburg), 1987.08.17.



increased Umkhonto activity must have had an equally demoralising effect on Umkhonto's more militant leaders and cadres. According to figures released by the South African police in August 1988, a total of 419 insurgents had been eliminated in the eighteen months up to June 1988. Of these 86 had been killed and 333 arrested. Not all of those killed and arrested were however members of Umkhonto. A fair number were also reported to have belonged to the PAC.⁽²¹¹⁾

A further important development that took place in 1988 that had a bearing on the negotiations versus armed struggle debate was the release of a document by the ANC entitled "Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa" in which the organisation set out its vision for a future South Africa based on the principles of the Freedom Charter. Whether the formulation of the document was the result of increased contact that had been taking place between moderates in the ANC-SACP alliance and leaders in South Africa since 1985 is not clear, but it was reported that the document was the result of two years of intensive debate within the ANC. Although the document did not make any definite suggestion as to how a transfer of power in South Africa should come about, it did leave the impression that the ANC would be prepared to adopt a more moderate approach to events in South Africa. Lodge in his assessment of the 1988 Constitutional Guidelines wrote that:

The ANC constitutional discussion is notable for its caution, degree of qualification, and eschewal of utopianism. In general, the constitutional restructuring envisaged by the ANC includes strong elements of adaptation. Theorists demonstrate considerable sensitivity to what they understand to be broad legal and politico-administrative traditions in South Africa and employ these to help justify many of their recommendations. They also drew on other models and experiences which range from the Anglo-Saxon and more generally Western bourgeois liberal heritage to Eastern European and Third World models of democratic practices.

This is hardly the political programme suggested by the implication of an insurrectionary conquest

211. Information obtained from: Business Day (Johannesburg), 1988.08.24; The Daily News (Durban), 1988.08.24; The Star (Johannesburg), 1988.08.24; The Citizen (Johannesburg), 1988.06.01.



or seizure of power, and it is significant that the ANC itself linked the discussion of constitutional rights to the subject of a negotiated transfer of administration by including the reference to a bill of rights in its October 1987 statement endorsing negotiations.⁽²¹²⁾

In October 1987, shortly after the release of its five minimal pre-conditions as a requisite for negotiations the ANC's NEC produced a further statement on negotiations in which it reaffirmed "that the ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing to enter into genuine negotiations provided that they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy".⁽²¹³⁾

Two further developments that helped to advance the cause of the moderates in the ANC-SACP alliance and which had a direct bearing on Umkhonto and the armed struggle by the latter part of the 1980's, were the dramatic changes that have been taking place in the Soviet Union in particular, and the communist world in general since the mid-1980's, and the signing of the New York Accord between South Africa, Angola and Cuba on 22 December 1988.

4.2.3. Changes in Soviet Third World Policy since 1985

One factor that had a profound impact on the ANC-SACP alliance and the position of both the "moderates" and military "hardliners" in the liberation movement during the latter half of the 1980's was undoubtedly the dramatic political and ideological changes that had been taking place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev - especially with regard to its Third World policy. With both the ANC and Umkhonto, but particularly the latter under the apparent control of the Marxist-Stalinist orientated SACP, any changes effected by Moscow to its African policy, irrespective of its

212. T. Lodge, People's War or Negotiations? African National Congress Strategies in the 1980's, (The South African Review 5, 1989, p. 51).

213. As quoted in Lodge, People's War or Negotiations? African National Congress Strategies in the 1980's, (The South African Review 5, 1989, p. 48). See also ANC Statement on Negotiations October 9th, 1987 (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 1 - 5).



remoteness, were bound to have a direct effect on the position of the ANC's Mission in Exile and the armed struggle in South Africa. In a recent article on Soviet policy towards South Africa, Daniel Kempton wrote that:

since Gorbachev's ascent to power in 1985, Soviet policy towards South Africa has undergone a gradual, yet none the less profound change. The Soviet Union began the 1980's anxious to promote the violent overthrow of the government in Pretoria and to replace it with a radical, pro-Soviet régime. But by the beginning of the 1990's the Kremlin's support for an armed struggle has dissipated to the point where the negotiated achievement of a post-apartheid policy is now its primary objective. (214)

Similarly, in an article on the same subject Winrich Kühne also argued that since the mid-1980's a gradual shift had taken place in the Soviet Union's attitude and policy towards South Africa in particular, and Southern Africa in general. Although the Soviet Union had not taken an official stance with regards to the ANC's armed struggle by the end of 1988, Kühne argued that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that Moscow had come to prefer a negotiated settlement in South Africa in which the fears of Whites had to be addressed instead of an armed campaign that would see an uncontrolled escalation of violence. (215) While this does not necessarily mean that the Soviet Union would abandon its support for the ANC-SACP alliance and the armed struggle, it does suggest that a real shift in emphasis from armed struggle to a negotiated (political) settlement had taken place and that in time the ANC might be compelled to place a curb on the activities of Umkhonto which

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214. D.R. Kempton, *New Thinking and Soviet Policy Towards South Africa*, (Journal of Modern African Studies 18 (4), 1990, p. 543). See also Kunert, Glasnost, New Thinking and the ANC-SACP Alliance, pp. 35 - 101; W. Kühne, *Is there a new Soviet approach to South Africa?* (Africa Insight 18 (2), 1988, pp. 70 - 72); M. Light, *Soviet policy in the Third World*, (International Affairs 67 (2), 1991, pp. 263 - 280).
215. Kühne, *Is there a new Soviet approach to South Africa?* (Africa Insight 18 (2), 1988, pp. 70 - 72). See also S.N. MacFarlane, *The Soviet Union and Southern African Security*, (Problems of Communism, xxxviii, March - June 1989, pp. 71 - 89).



might bring it into open conflict with the more radical hardliners in the liberation movement. Although the ANC had on several occasions condemned the decision by the radicals in Umkhonto to bomb public places and to attack "White" civilian targets in South Africa it had not sufficiently succeeded in curbing the activities of the radicals and military hardliners in Umkhonto and the SACP by the beginning of 1988; a situation that was born out by the radicals' repeated calls for the intensification of the armed struggle at a time when more and more people both within the ANC and the South African government were moving towards a political solution for South Africa's problems.⁽²¹⁶⁾ To the Stalinist hardliners in the SACP and Umkhonto, Gorbachev's reform policies and the Soviet Union's growing willingness to settle regional conflicts through political means thus came as an unpleasant reality that many refused to deal with. Highly suspicious of any move towards negotiations, the radicals in Umkhonto and the SACP drew up an alternative plan in 1987 to accelerate the armed struggle should a negotiated settlement fail in South Africa. The plan, of which the existence was only revealed in 1990, was code-named "Operation Vula".⁽²¹⁷⁾

The fact that the changes in the Soviet Union particularly with regards to Moscow's Third World policy were never clearly (officially) spelled out strengthened the above development and caused much confusion among both cadres and leaders in the ANC-SACP alliance. This latter confusion was clearly reflected in a report by Brian Bunting on the 19th All Union Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) which took place from 28 June to 1 July 1988; and in the SACP's 7th Party Congress held in Havana, Cuba, in June 1989. In the case of the CPSU conference Bunting while expressing confidence in and support for Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika initiated in April 1985, and confirmed by the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February/March 1986, also reflected

216. Regional Conflicts and Political Solutions, (Umsebenzi 4 (1), First Quarter, 1988, p. 3).

217. See The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1990.07.29 (Operation Vula); The Daily News (Durban), 1990.08.25 (Nyanda: A Master of Disguise); The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1990.11.4 (Hunt for Seven ANC Moles and The Vula Dossier: Sunday Times Special Report); Barrell, MK, p. 63.

a certain amount of "confusion and uncertainty" as to its implications for "regional conflicts".⁽²¹⁸⁾

As far as the 1989 Havana congress of the SACP was concerned, the delegates to the congress, while taking note of developments in the Soviet Union and Central Europe, which witnessed the systematic collapse of communism, still believed in the eventual triumph of international communism and the role of the armed struggle in it. Consequently, the SACP adopted a new Party Programme that committed the organisation and thus by implication also the ANC and Umkhonto to armed struggle and the preparation of the people to seize power. As pointed out earlier the new programme, "The Path to Power", was little more than an updated version of the old 1962 "Road to South African Freedom".⁽²¹⁹⁾ This view which is a clear indication of the inflexibility of the SACP and its predominantly Stalinist views failed to take into consideration the principles and implications of the New York Accord of December 1988 and the role and attitude of the Soviet Union towards it.

4.2.4. The New York Accord

The ANC's Mission in Exile and the armed struggle in particular was dealt a severe blow at the end of 1988 when after months of intense negotiations between South Africa, Angola and Cuba a formal agreement was signed between the three countries in which they accepted the principles ratified by the Brazzaville Protocol for full independence in South West Africa-Namibia. Although the agreement dealt primarily with the independence of South West Africa-Namibia and the position of Cuban and South African forces in Angola, it also contained two paragraphs that prohibited any of the three signatories from using or allowing their territories to be used for "acts of war, aggression or violence against other states." It also called on them to abstentiate from "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity

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218. B. Bunting, Some Thoughts on the Moscow Conference, (The African Communist 115, Fourth Quarter, 1988, pp. 43 - 58).
219. Umsebenzi 5 (2), Second Quarter 1989, (Build the Home Front), pp. 1 - 23. See also South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, pp. 1 - 4.



and independence of states."⁽²²⁰⁾ This meant that while South Africa could no longer give aid to UNITA in Angola and all Cuban forces had to be withdrawn from the latter country by a given date, the ANC-SACP alliance also had to dismantle and remove all its bases and other military facilities from Angola. Although the New York Accord made no mention of the dates by which the ANC and Umkhonto forces had to leave Angola it was understood that this would have to be as soon as the Accord was signed, which meant after 22 December. Although the New York Accord has been referred to as an "Nkomati Accord-type agreement" it differed however from the latter agreement in that whereas the Nkomati Accord limited the ANC's presence in Mozambique to only ten officials and had thus necessitated the removal of all ANC, SACP and Umkhonto facilities, including farms and schools, the New York Accord clearly excluded the latter type of facilities. It also excluded the normal international conventions regarding refugees. Bases accommodating such people were allowed to exist in Angola after the signing of the New York Agreement.⁽²²¹⁾

Although the ANC at the time denied that it would have to dismantle its bases in Angola or that if it had to do so it would not have an adverse effect on Umkhonto and the armed struggle, it was reported in January 1989 that the organisation had begun closing its bases and other facilities in Angola at the request of the Angolan government. According to the same reports a number of African countries to the north such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania had offered accommodation to the ANC and Umkhonto. This meant that in future Umkhonto had to operate from bases at least a thousand kilometres further away from South Africa's borders. Although the ANC denied reports that the closing down of their bases in Angola and their move to the north represented a major military setback, there were clear indications by the end of the 1980's, that the ANC and Umkhonto were

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220. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.12.16 (ANC dealt heavy blow). See also New York Agreement, July 1988, (Sechaba, November 1988, p. 6).
221. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.12.16 (ANC dealt heavy blow); The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1989.01.09; The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 1989.01.13.



having difficulty in pursuing the armed struggle, let alone accelerating it into a people's war as the organisation had promised in 1986. At a meeting of the ANC's NEC in January 1990, the organisation's Secretary-General, Alfred Nzo, had stated that developments in South Africa indicated that the organisation might have to reconsider its strategy in general.⁽²²²⁾

Perhaps more significant was the fact that the New York Accord and the principles it enshrined was fully supported by the Soviet Union and the United States which in itself signalled the end of Soviet support for the ANC's armed struggle although the former continued to express its support for the ANC-SACP alliance. In view of the latter Kempton wrote:

Prior to Gorbachev's statements, talk of a negotiated settlement in South Africa had been largely limited to the Soviet academic community. But as the final details of the Angola-Namibia accords were being hammered out in late 1988, other diplomats began to argue in favour of the changed strategy, and by 1989 there had been an extraordinary turnover in the staff of the African Department of the Foreign Ministry. By the end of 1989, it was abundantly clear that a significant divergence of views existed between the Soviet Union and the ANC. Unlike its client, Moscow was quite optimistic about the prospects for a negotiated transition to a completely new era in South Africa.⁽²²³⁾

CONCLUSION

In the 27 years since the armed struggle began in December 1961 and the signing of the New York Accord on 22 December 1988, the period from 1976 to the middle of the 1980's was the most favourable and thus the most productive in the armed struggle for the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto. The granting of independence to Mozambique and Angola in 1975 and the establishment of Marxist regimes in these regions together with the growing industrial and student unrest inside South Africa since 1973 actively prepared the way for the ANC

222. The Star (Johannesburg), 1990.01.19.

223. Kempton, New Thinking and Soviet Policy Towards South Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 28 (4), 1990, pp. 552, 554).



and the SACP to resume the armed struggle after 1976. Although the ANC and Umkhonto were largely unprepared for the resumption of the armed struggle in 1976, the developments in South Africa but more so the sudden and unexpected influx of hundreds of radicalised Blacks into the ranks of the liberation movement forced the ANC's exile leadership to either act or lose the support of these radical Blacks. Nonetheless, despite these favourable conditions and the influx of large numbers of Blacks into the ranks of Umkhonto, the ANC-SACP alliance was unable to really resume the offensive inside South Africa until the beginning of the 1980's. In the four years between the outbreak of the Soweto riots in June 1976 and the beginning of the new offensive in 1980, the Mission in Exile concentrated its efforts largely on the rebuilding of its destroyed underground structures in South Africa, the setting up of underground arms caches and the recruitment of new cadres to fill its training camps in Tanzania, Zambia and Angola. The latter had housed the organisation's main training bases after 1977. Although Umkhonto had managed to resume its armed activities after 1976 these remained relatively low key until the beginning of the 1980's when the attacks were directed at major industrial and commercial targets as well as against government or semi-government targets that could gain the organisation maximum exposure in the news media. The massive car-bomb that exploded in Pretoria in May 1983 was a good example of this strategy. Unfortunately for the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto their armed campaign was not a static event conducted in a vacuum or against an unsophisticated "enemy". Caught off-guard by the ANC's armed campaign in the early 1960's, the South African government was quick to correct the situation. Consequently, by the middle of the 1960's the government with the aid of a host of new legislation, a much more alert police force, and a fair degree of luck had managed to destroy the internal structures of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto thereby forcing it out of the country and on the defensive.

Although numerous attempts were made by the ANC's Mission in Exile to resume the offensive inside South Africa in the years between 1965 and the middle of the 1970's, most of these were unsuccessful due to a number of reasons, the most important of them being the ability of

the South African government to counter the armed struggle against it both politically and militarily. While it is true that the latter capability was largely facilitated by the absence of friendly territories across the borders of South Africa from which the ANC could launch attacks on the country, the availability of such friendly borders after 1976 turned out to be only partially advantageous to the ANC-SACP alliance. Although the ANC was able to launch hit-and-run attacks against South Africa from Mozambique and Swaziland after 1976, these attacks did not exceed forty or fifty a year as the ANC was unable to establish a commanding presence inside South Africa despite the highly favourable conditions that existed after June 1976. Part of the problem was that the ANC-SACP alliance still believed that political work was subservient to armed activity and that the latter should be directed from outside the country. This belief persisted until the mid-1980's when the new wave of revolutionary unrest that hit the country finally convinced the exile leadership of the ANC and the SACP that there was sufficient revolutionary potential inside South Africa to launch a people's war. But by this stage a number of developments both inside and outside South Africa had taken place that minimised the success of such a development. Internally, the political and military work of the ANC and Umkhonto was restricted by the highly successful counter-insurgency operations of the South African police and the determination of the government to destroy any attempt by the ANC-SACP alliance to establish an underground presence in South Africa. Externally, the South African government had used a combination of military might and clever diplomacy to disrupt the ANC's armed attacks on it. Although these latter factors such as the SADF raids on Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique between 1981 and 1986 and the signing of the Swazi and Nkomati Accords in 1982 and 1984 respectively, not to mention its successful infiltration of the ANC's Mission in Exile in the early 1980's, enabled the government to severely hamper Umkhonto's armed activities, it was however largely unable to counter the ANC's international campaign to politically and economically isolate it. These latter developments which accelerated after the introduction of the American sanctions campaign against the country in 1986 were more difficult to deal with and potentially thus



more damaging to the country than the ANC's military campaign. Although the ANC's campaign in terms of the physical damage it had caused since 1961 had been substantial,⁽²²⁴⁾ it is doubtful whether the armed struggle as such ever really posed a serious threat to the economic and political security of the state, despite the dramatic increase in the acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto after 1985. (There were some 44 attacks in 1984, 136 in 1985, 230 in 1986, between 239 and 249 in 1987, between 281 and 322 in 1988 and some 199 in 1989).⁽²²⁵⁾ In an article published by the New York Times in October 1983, the ANC was described in no uncertain terms as being militarily one of the "least successful liberation movements". The article went on to point out that "after more than two decades of armed struggle it is still restricted to infiltrating across South Africa's borders in tiny bands ... and recruiting on a small scale, to limit the number of police spies it takes into its ranks". The same article however also stated that while the ANC's sabotage campaign may not have posed a serious threat to the security of South Africa by 1983 it was at least costly. According to statistics released by the South African Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, in 1983, and quoted by the New York Times, the acts of sabotage committed between 1977 and the beginning of 1983 had caused about R1 270 million (\$635 million) worth of damage.⁽²²⁶⁾ This figure did not include the car-bomb explosion in Pretoria in May 1983 which caused an estimated R4 million worth of damage. It is significant to note that since the start of the armed struggle in 1961, the ANC has to the best knowledge of this author never released any statistics as to the total estimated damage that its sabotage campaign has cost the South African government, nor has anyone in South Africa ever attempted to calculate the total damage caused by the ANC's armed struggle. According to Professor Mike Hough of the Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria, it is virtually impossible to calculate or even attempt to estimate the

224. Business Day, 1990.08.21.

225. Figures obtained from: Lodge, State of Exile: the African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 4); Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations 1988/1989 and 1989/1990, pp. xxx and xlv.

226. The New York Times (New York), 1983.10.12 (Black Challenge to Pretoria: Rebellion, Still Puny ...).



total damage caused by the ANC's armed activities since 1961.⁽²²⁷⁾ Statistics such as those released by Minister Malan in 1983 are based on armed attacks in general and not of the ANC alone.

Although no figures are available as to the total or even estimated cost of the damage caused by the ANC's armed campaign since 1961 there can be little doubt that some of the acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto such as the Pretoria car-bomb were costly both in terms of material damage and human lives. But whether it was costly enough to force the government to capitulate is an open question. By the end of 1988 the government had clearly dealt the ANC's armed struggle a decisive blow by forcing the organisation's exile leadership to close down all military facilities in Angola and move them further to the north. But even had the government not succeeded in having the ANC and the SACP expelled from Angola in 1988, indications are that the winds of change that have been emanating from Moscow since the mid-1980's would sooner or later have caught up with the ANC's armed struggle and forced its leadership to consider a more moderate and non-violent approach to the South African question.

227. Telephonic conversation with Prof. Mike Hough, Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria, Monday 1991.06.03.