



**UMKHONTO WE SIZWE.
ITS ROLE IN THE ANC'S ONSLAUGHT
AGAINST WHITE DOMINATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1961 - 1988.**

by

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While every effort has been made to be as complete and as objective as possible, the thesis, like the material it is based upon, has its shortcomings and weaknesses. As such this study should not be seen as a definitive view but rather as an introduction or an opening chapter in the history of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the armed struggle between 1961 and the end of 1988.

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FOREWORD

Although a great deal has been written over the past two decades on the armed struggle in South Africa and the role that the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) have played in it, virtually nothing of academic value has been written on the main vehicle of the struggle, namely Umkhonto we Sizwe or 'MK' as it is more commonly known. Besides the research undertaken by Edward Felt in the 1960's and the account left to us by Bruno Mtolo on the formation and activities of Umkhonto in Natal prior to the Rivonia events, most of the material that has been written on the subject of Umkhonto makes no meaningful contribution to the history and activities of the organisation. As a result a serious vacuum has been left in the history of the liberation movement but particularly the armed struggle in South Africa. There was therefore an urgent need for a systematic and detailed study of Umkhonto and the specific role it played in the liberation struggle since 1961.

Identifying the need for this study was however the easy part. Writing it on the other hand presented numerous complex problems, part of which was brought about by the lack of suitable source material, and the fact that the organisation was proscribed by law. The problem was further compounded by the fact that although Umkhonto was created to be independent (initially at least) of the ANC and to fulfill a function that the ANC could not do in the 1960's, the two organisations became so closely associated with one another and with the SACP that most of the time it is very difficult if not nearly impossible, to always draw a clear distinction between the three of them. Of course the problem has not been made easier by the Press which, for the sake of simplicity and expediency, have chosen to equate the ANC and Umkhonto with one another. Virtually none of the newspapers which have reported on the armed struggle over the years have taken the trouble to draw any meaningful distinction between the organisation and activities of the ANC on the one hand and Umkhonto on the other. While it is true that the two organisations have very close ties and there is a strong degree of overlapping between both



members and leaders, this research will show that the two organisations are nonetheless different from one another and have organisational structures and functions that support this.

The main difference between the two organisations has always been the fact that while Umkhonto was specifically created as the military component of the ANC-SACP alliance, the ANC on the other hand has remained the main political instrument of the liberation movement. As such, members of the ANC were not supposed to undertake any direct military missions against apartheid targets in South Africa. At best they fulfilled a supportive role such as the distribution of propaganda, the provision of transport, the supply of weapons and the creation of weapons caches etc., to support Umkhonto's cadres in the field. The members of the ANC thus concerned themselves primarily with political and diplomatic work in the armed struggle.

By the middle of the 1980's however, the relationship between the ANC and Umkhonto began to change when the political and military functions of the two organisations were brought together under the control of the newly created Political-Military-Council (PMC) following the collapse of the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational structures in the frontline states of Mozambique and Swaziland, as a result of the South African government's persistent counter-insurgency operations. The new organisational structure that was set up by the beginning of 1983 to replace the defunct Regional Command was sanctioned by the ANC and the SACP and accepted at the former's National Consultative Conference at Kabwe, Zambia, in 1985. This new direction in the armed struggle was further reflected in the decision to introduce compulsory military training for all members of the combined liberation movement. In theory thus, after 1985, all members of the ANC and the SACP were subjected to military training in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and elsewhere. This move further helped to blur the lines between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto. Much of this will become clear in the course of this thesis. Where possible, interpretations will be attached to the facts to highlight certain developments in the armed struggle. Unfortunately, the facts pertaining to Umkhonto is not always



volumous or conclusive enough to make statements that will withstand the test of time.

The aim of this study is to examine the history of Umkhonto from its origins in 1961 to the end of 1988 when as a result of the New York Accord between South Africa, Cuba and Angola the ANC and Umkhonto were forced to remove all their military bases and personnel from Angola with immediate effect. Although this particular move severely crippled the ability of Umkhonto to continue with its armed struggle it was not the only factor influencing its performance and status by the end of 1988. A host of other factors such as poor organisation, weak leadership, dissention, dissatisfaction with the role of the SACP in the liberation movement, and lack of sufficient funds among others also contributed to its weakened position by the end of the 1980's. These and other factors effecting the position and performance of Umkhonto are extensively dealt with in the second half of this study.

Although increased cooperation between the military and political segments of the liberation movement became an important element in the armed struggle after 1985, the leadership of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto were not always in agreement on important issues. This became increasingly apparent towards the end of the 1980's when the combined effect of the South African government's counter-insurgency operations and the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were beginning to have a direct affect on the position and future of the liberation alliance led by the ANC and the SACP. Although the ANC, like most political organisations, always had a fair share of dissention in its ranks the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, the destruction of the organisation's underground structures inside South Africa by the mid-1960's and the growing hegemony of the SACP over both the ANC and Umkhonto's leadership since, have produced some serious dissention in the ranks of the liberation movement. The first came in 1975 with the expulsion of the African National Congress African nationalist faction from the ranks of the ANC. The second came with the isolation of the Okhela organisation which was reported to have been a predominantly white anti-communist organisa-



tion inside the ANC. The third attack on the leadership of the liberation movement was averted with the expulsion of the dissident Marxist group known as the "Marxist Tendency within the ANC" in the early 1980's.

Although the ANC and the SACP have always denied that the influence of these attacks on its combined leadership were in anyway serious, this study has shown that these developments in association with other developments had indeed a deep effect on the effectiveness of Umkhonto and the outcome of the armed struggle. The latter is particularly evident in the decision by Chris Hani, who was Chief of Staff of Umkhonto and his protegee, Steve Tshwete, to challenge the ANC's National Executive Committee in 1987 to allow them to execute the decision taken at the Kabwe conference to extend Umkhonto's attacks to include White civilian targets inside South Africa. Although the ANC had accepted such action in principle at its Kabwe conference in 1985, it remained reluctant to fully implement it out of fear that such action could tarnish its image internationally and lose its much needed international support, particularly among the nations and people of Western Europe. Such considerations seemingly did not carry much support with Marxist radicals and militants such as Hani and others who preferred a military to a political or negotiated settlement in South Africa. With the support of the Central Committee of the SACP (or rather, key elements of it) behind them, Hani and Tshwete issued a directive to all Umkhonto commanders in 1987 to extend their attacks to White civilian targets. The fact that the ANC did nothing to stop the directive or to counter Hani's actions is clear indication of the position that the military hardliners had come to occupy in the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto by the latter part of the 1980's.

Unfortunately for Hani and his followers, the signing of the New York Accord at the end of 1988 came as a severe setback to their plans and left them with a cause that was becoming increasingly difficult to execute successfully. This research will show that as a result of these developments and the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union particularly with regards to Soviet Third World policy,



the military hardliners in the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto were increasingly forced to take a backseat to the views and activities of more moderate leaders such as Thabo Mbeki, who was the ANC's Chief of Foreign Affairs. In view of the above this study will show that the SACP since the early 1970's has taken steadily control of the ANC and the liberation struggle in South Africa and that by the end of the 1980's Umkhonto was more a fief of the SACP and its Central Committee than of the ANC and its National Executive Committee, which had a clear majority of communist members by 1988.

Although some major developments have taken place since the signing of the New York Accord in December 1988, such as the unbanning of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto and the release of many political prisoners, these events and developments falls outside the scope of this study and are dealt with in the postscript.

SOURCES

Anyone doing research on Umkhonto and the armed struggle in South Africa will soon find himself confronted by several major problems. The first is a general lack of information or sources pertaining to Umkhonto in particular. Since the armed struggle began in 1961 only a handful of literature have appeared on Umkhonto as such. The first was Bruno Mtolo's book Umkonto we Sizwe. The Road to the Left which was published in 1966. The second was the research done by Edward Felt into the beginning years of the armed struggle. Felt's research which was published in bookform in 1971 and which made extensive use of court records during the 1960's contains a fair amount of information on the early history of Umkhonto as well as the organisations relationship to the ANC and the SACP. Unfortunately the book is difficult to read in that it does not draw a clear distinction between the Umkhonto and its parent organisations, the ANC and the SACP during these early years. One of the main reasons for this confusing situation is the already mentioned extensive overlapping of membership that existed between the three organisations and which Felt has pointed out in his findings.



A further factor that has limited research on Umkhonto has been the absence of a single depository where documents on the three organisations can be consulted. Since the banning of the ANC in 1961 virtually all documents pertaining to the armed struggle and the organisations involved in it have left the country. The few original documents pertaining to the armed struggle that have remained inside the country are mostly those documents that the state have presented to the courts as part of its evidence in the various trials against the members of the underground movement during the 1960's. These latter documents form an integral part of most trial records and as such are open to the public for consultation. One of the weaknesses of Felt's research however is that while he consulted most of the major court cases that took place during the 1960's (these cases include the trials of Nelson Mandela and the National High Command (NHC) of Umkhonto as well as that of the leader of the underground Communist Party in the mid-1960's, Abram Fischer) he did not make use of the documentary evidence that were filed with these records. The reason for this is probably due to the fact that he made use of micro film copies of the various trial records which excludes all documentation.

Beyond these "primary sources" of information on the armed struggle and Umkhonto there are virtually none other that can be consulted on the early period of the struggle. Recently some new information (mostly of a secondary nature) has become available on the early period of the armed struggle and most of this has been made possible only by the political and other changes that has been taking place inside South Africa since 2nd February 1990. Still the period remains poorly documented and any extensive research into this vital phase of the armed struggle will have to await the opening of the ANC's archives one day.

The middle period, that is the period in exile up to the outbreak of the Soweto riots in the mid 1970's, is equally poorly documented if not more so than the period 1961 to the mid 1960's. Very little is known about the activities, organisation and leadership of Umkhonto during this period. Most of the sources that deals with this phase



of the liberation struggle, even those that have been published most recently such as Francis Meli's South Africa Belongs to Us. A History of the ANC (1988), Heidi Holland's The Struggle. A History of the African National Congress (1989), and Howard Barrell's MK. The ANC's armed struggle (1990), shed very little light on this period. Of the three sources mentioned above Barrell's book is perhaps the most complete on the period 1965 to 1976. Barrell, who has specialised in the affairs of the ANC as a journalist between 1981 and 1988 provides some valuable new insights into what transpired in the liberation movement after it was destroyed inside the country by the mid-1960's. But even so the period still remains under-documented.

The period 1976 to the end of 1988 is slightly better documented. Two books that contains a fair amount of information on Umkhonto in this latter period are Stephen Davis's Apartheid's Rebels. Inside South Africa's Hidden War and Howard Barrell's MK mentioned above. Barrell's book which was published in 1990 also contains information on developments since the signing of the New York Accord.

Although the above books are the only sources in that format known to the author on the subject of Umkhonto or which contains information specifically related to the organisation and its activities, there are also other secondary sources that contains information or reference to Umkhonto. These include journal articles, government publications, and reports contained in reputable information sheets such as Africa Confidential. In addition to these materials, there are also the publications of Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP itself. These latter sources, although until recently not readily available inside South Africa, also contains information on the armed struggle and the role of the ANC and the SACP in it as well as their attitude towards it. A major weakness of most of this material is that it is by nature propagandistic and not as trustworthy as primary sources normally are. In addition, there are also the published findings and views of researchers such as Tom Lodge, Andrew Prior, Michael Radu, Micheal Morris and many others who have made Umkhonto and the armed



struggle the subject of their research over the last decade or more. This latter category of materials are far too numerous to be discussed here. They will be dealt with in the text where necessary.

As far as personal interviews with the leaders of the underground are concerned, none were conducted or included in this study. Although the matter was given some serious consideration, it was finally decided that for this author to have gained access to the underground leadership of Umkhonto, the ANC or the SACP or to have extracted from them the sort of specific and detailed information needed for this research, at the time would have been highly unlikely if not impossible. It is also doubtful whether the information gained would have warranted the expense incurred to obtain it. It is doubtful whether Umkhonto's leadership, most of whom were also members of the SACP and the ANC, would have offered information that could harm the organisation or be of benefit to the South African police via this research. Moreover, since February 1990 transcripts of a great many interviews with the leaders of the combined liberation movement including Umkhonto have been published in the daily press and it is thus unlikely that additional interviews would have revealed the sort of information that could substantially effect the course of this research. As a result it was decided not to seek interviews with members of the ANC-SACP alliance or Umkhonto. Whilst this decision undoubtedly distracts from the status of this research it does not in any way effect the accuracy of its findings. Compared to the latest available information on the subject and contrasted against the information contained in published sources such as Barrell's book on Umkhonto, the history of Umkhonto that follows represents an accurate account of what transpired between 1961 and the end of 1988. While history is a science, and every effort had been made to be accurate and as complete as possible, it is also so that the last word on a subject, especially a contemporary and controversial subject such as Umkhonto and the armed struggle, is never spoken. New information will necessarily bring new approaches to the subject, which will demand new questions and new answers. In their search for these answers, future historians will hopefully find the facts provided



here and the interpretations attached to them a useful guide to a more complete understanding of the history of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

THE DIVISION OF THE WORK

One of the more difficult aspects of this research has been the question of approach and the division of the work. A pure chronological approach without some in depth thematical discussion of the subject matter would have lacked the type of synthesis that was required of a study of this nature. On the other hand, a pure thematical approach without some chronological division of the facts and the major development phases would have been an equally unbalanced synthesis. It was therefore decided to make use of both methods. In terms of this decision the first five chapters of the study deals with the history and development of Umkhonto and the armed struggle in a mainly chronological fashion while the second half of the study i.e. chapters six to nine deals with the subject of Umkhonto in both a chronological and thematical manner. As is almost always the case with the study of an organisation during a particular period, a brief overview of events prior to its formation is necessary for a full understanding of events. Umkhonto is no exception to this rule and in order to explain its formation in 1961 an introductory chapter recording the history of the Black liberation struggle in South Africa since 1912 has been provided. Although this early history of the liberation struggle is well documented and has been extensively written on, it is impossible to examine the origins of Umkhonto and the decisions that led to its formation at the end of 1961 without it.

In terms of sources both chapters make use of primary and secondary materials. Chapter three deals with the formation of Umkhonto in 1961 and here the latest sources on the subject such as Howard Barrell have been consulted. Chapters four and five deals with the internal and external developments of the armed struggle and the position that Umkhonto and the ANC-SACP alliance found themselves in after the collapse of their underground structures inside South Africa by the mid 1960's. Both these latter chapters makes use of a



wide range of sources, most of which are secondary yet specifically related to the subject under discussion.

In the second half of the study (chapters six to nine) chapter six deals with the specific relationship between Umkhonto and its parent organisations, the ANC and the SACP. Chapter seven on the other hand deals with the organisational set-up, leadership, and funding of Umkhonto, while chapter eight deals with the recruitment, training and arming of Umkhonto's cadres between 1961 and 1988. The last chapter in this study (chapter nine) deals primarily with the outcome of the armed struggle and the general position of Umkhonto by December 1988, and the various conditions and factors that have given rise to it.

Chapter nine is followed by a brief conclusion in which South Africa and the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto's position in the late 1980's is specifically touched upon. The study finally concludes with a brief postscript in which some of the major developments that have taken place since the signing of the New York Accord in December 1988 is recorded up to and including the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and Umkhonto in February 1990 and the release of Nelson Mandela shortly afterwards.

THE USE OF TERMINOLOGY

In keeping with accepted academic practice, this study has as far as possible, avoided the use of language and terminology that might be politically or racially offensive, or create the impression of a biased interpretation of the facts. Terms such as African, Coloured, Indian or White have been reserved for reference to these specific racial or population groups. The term Black has been used to refer collectively to the various non-White racial groups in South Africa which in the main are the Africans, the Coloureds and the Indians. When reference is made to the total population of South Africa, that is all the different racial and ethnic groups including the Whites, the term South African will be used. In the past the term has been used to refer mainly to the White peoples of South Africa, but this



is no longer the case. In keeping with the above decision, the study also avoids using terminology that might reflect a biased interpretation of the facts or might give preference to a particular point of view or ideology. So, for instance, it was decided to give preference to the use of more neutral meaning terms such as guerrilla, guerrilla fighter, guerrilla warfare, saboteur, sabotage, cadre, insurgent, insurgency, government and security forces instead of emotionally loaded terms such as terrorist, freedom fighter, comrade, liberation fighter, colonist, settler, murderer, racist or fascist forces, apartheid regime and Pretoria regime. Where terminology such as the latter have been included in the text it was done purposely to convey a particular thought or fact as accurately as possible, and not because of the author's preference for a particular political or ideological point of view.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A comprehensive list of abbreviations has been included below to guide the reader through the text of this study. There are such an array of acronyms in use today that the inclusion of such a list has become an absolute necessity if one wishes to find one's way through any contemporary political literature. As is the common use today, the name or title of an organisation, party or association, is fully accounted for the first time reference is made to it. Thereafter the abbreviation or acronym commonly applied to it is used. For instance, the African National Congress will be referred to as the ANC, while the South African Communist Party will be referred to as the SACP or the Party. Umkhonto we Sizwe too is more commonly known as Umkhonto or MK and will be referred to as such.

AAC	All African Convention
AAPSA	Afro Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation
AEC	Arusha Air Charters
ANC	African National Congress
APC	Area Political Committees
APMC's	Area Political Military Committees
ARM	African Resistance Movement
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BAWU	Black Allied Workers Union
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BCP	Black Community Programme
BPC	Black People's Convention
CC	Central Committee (Communist Party)
CF	Citizen Force
CDF	Conference for a Democratic Future
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COD	Congress of Democrats
CONCP	Conference das Organizacoes Nacionalistas das Colonias Portuguesas
COSAS	Congress of South African Students



COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSAWR	Committee of South African War Resisters
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (ANC front)
CYL	Congress Youth League
CP	Conservative Party
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CUSA	Confederation of Unions of South Africa
DBA	Department of Bantu Affairs
DMI	Department of Military Intelligence
DNA	Department of Native Affairs
DONS	Department of National Security
EAA	East African Airways
EC	Emergency Committee (ANC's National Executive Committee after April 1960)
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FRAC	Franchise Action Committee
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
HC	High Command (Umkhonto we Sizwe)
HQ	Head Quarters
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IDAF	International Defence and Aid Fund
IDAMASA	Inter-denominational African Ministers Association of South Africa
IDAMF	Inter-denominational African Ministers Federation (see IDAMASA)
IUEF	International University Exchange Fund
IRD	International Reconstruction and Development Department
LM	Liberation Movement
MCW	Military Combat Work
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola
NAC	National Action Council
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement



NCFL	National Committee for Liberation
NEC	National Executive Committee
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NHC	National High Command
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NP	National Party
NRC	Natives Representative Council
NWC	National Working Committee (ANC)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OU	Operations Unit (Umkhonto we Sizwe)
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress (of South Africa)
PAFMECSA	Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central, and Southern Africa
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PANA	Pan African New Agency
PMC	Political Military Council
PMSC	Political Military Strategy Commission
RC	Regional Commands (Umkhonto)
RC	Regional Committee (ANC)
RC	Revolutionary Council (also sometimes referred to as Committee)
RPMC's	Regional Political Military Councils (Committees)
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACPO	South African Coloured People's Organisation
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAG	South African Government
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAN	South African Navy
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SAP	South African Police
SAPB	South African Political Bureau
SASM	South African Students Movement
SASO	South African Students Organisation



SASOL	South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation
SAUF	South African United Front
SOMAFCO	Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College
SSC	State Security Council
SSRC	Soweto Students Representative Council
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UDF	United Democratic Front
UF	United Front
UNITA	Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
UP	United Party
UWUSA	United Workers Union of South Africa
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union



LIST OF DIAGRAMS

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Organisational structure of the ANC according to its 1943 constitution p. 10

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Distribution of acts of sabotage committed according to region or area during the course of 1962. p. 142

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CHAPTER ONE

THE DRIFT TOWARDS ARMED STRUGGLE 1912 - 1960

Although the South African Liberation Movement under the leadership of the ANC in partnership with the South African Communist Party (SACP) only resorted to revolutionary armed struggle in 1961, following the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in April of the previous year, the drift towards the radical left in Black political thinking that eventually gave rise to the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the armed struggle became increasingly noticeable from the mid 1940's on. The aim of this chapter is to trace the broad circumstances and factors that led Black leaders, both in and outside the ANC in the two decades preceding the banning of the ANC in 1960, to apply increasing pressure on the established leadership of the ANC and Black political thinking in general to structurally turn the ANC into an underground organisation and sanction a policy that would permit the ANC to move away from its more than 40 year-old policy of non-violent protest to one that would actively support revolutionary violence against the state.

To fully understand the political changes that took place in Black politics and the philosophy surrounding it after 1960, a brief examination of the history of Black political protest between the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the banning of the two major Black (African) political organisations, the ANC and the PAC in April 1960 is essential. This chapter will pay particular attention to the period 1945 to 1960, since these years witnessed a major shift in Black political thinking and development.



1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE NATIONAL CONGRESS (SANNC) AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS TO 1940

The first clear signs of a national political awakening among South Africa's African people came in the years immediately following the end of the South African War in 1902 and the formation of the Union in 1910. Faced with the prospect of a new constitution that was more European than African in origin and in which they faced total or partial exclusion from any effective role in the Country's political future, many of South Africa's leading African leaders, with the active support of a number of Whites, the most notable among them being W.P. Schreiner, began to campaign for an alternative draft South Africa Bill that would be more representative of Black political aspirations. During the early months of 1909 a number of meetings were held in various parts of South Africa to elect African delegates to a "Native" Convention in Bloemfontein to discuss the South Africa Bill drafted by the all-White National Convention, and its implications for Blacks, but more in particular for the country's African population. In the end, some thirty-eight delegates from various parts of South Africa attended the Native Convention at the Waalhoek Location near Bloemfontein between 24 and 26 March, 1909. At this particular meeting the exclusion of most Blacks from the franchise in terms of the draft provisions of the South Africa Bill were severely criticised while those clauses which contained reference to the colour bar were outright rejected by the delegates. In an attempt to sustain the protest generated by the convening of the Native Convention a resolution was adopted by the meeting which turned the Convention into a permanent body known as the South African Native Convention (SANC) under the presidency of Dr. W.B. Rubusana. Over the next two years the Convention, in keeping with the resolutions adopted in March 1909, regularly met but by 1911 it was becoming increasingly apparent that it was not the right forum to bring about the necessary national unity among South Africa's awakening African leaders and regional organisations. This development had to await the arrival of Pixley Ka I. Seme, a Zulu lawyer, trained at Colombia, Oxford, and Middle Temple, in South



Africa in 1911.⁽¹⁾ According to Andre Odendaal⁽²⁾ it appears that the first real initiative for a truly national representative conference was made by Seme shortly after he had joined the ranks of the SANC. By the middle of 1911, writes Odendaal, ambitious new plans inspired by Seme, were afoot to strengthen the national movement so that it could function more effectively than before. An important part of these plans was that the organisation should incorporate not only the educated elite, but also the traditional leaders with their mass following, their symbolic importance - and their financial sufficiency.

The immediate result of this new development and thinking was the convening of a "Native" Congress at Bloemfontein from 8 to 12 January 1912, and the subsequent establishment of the South African Native National Convention (SANNC) of which the name was later shortened to African National Congress or ANC in 1923. The formation of the SANNC (hereafter referred to as ANC or 'Congress') in 1912 was by all standards a momentous event in the political history of South Africa, if not in the broader political history of the African continent. It marked the first time in the history of South Africa that African leaders of various political persuasions had managed to set aside their differences and come together for the common purpose of establishing a single national forum through which they could, as one unified nation, address the South African government on their common grievances and problems.⁽³⁾

From its founding in 1912 until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the new organisation and its leadership were faced with a series of ever increasing problems that would adversely effect its overall performance as well as the support it would eventually receive from the country's African leaders and the growing African labour force after 1918. The first serious problems to face Congress after 1912, was the 1913 Land Act which proposed to limit African land ownership to a mere 7,3 percent of the entire country.⁽⁴⁾ From

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1. A. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, pp. 258; T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History, pp. 260-261.
 2. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, p. 259.
 3. Odendaal, Vukani Bantu, p. 273.
 4. P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 44 - 52.



1913 to the end of the First World War the ANC actively campaigned for the withdrawal of the Land Act or at least, to have it altered to allow for greater land allocation to Africans, but without any success. With the Land Act at the basis of its new segregation policies, the Union government was not prepared to withdraw or alter the Act. The British government too, proved reluctant to intervene in South Africa's internal affairs. Even an offer by the ANC leadership to ignore the land issue for the duration of the war, and to give its full support to the South African war effort, by raising 5 000 Black troops to do active service in South West Africa as a sign of their willingness to co-operate with the South African government, met with no positive response.⁽⁵⁾

The second major problem that faced Congress and its leaders in the inter-war years and, to a very large extent also in the post-1945 period, was the chronic shortage of money to administer its affairs. This started shortly after the end of the First World War when the chiefs, which formed the financial backbone of the ANC, began to leave the organisation in direct response to its failure to effectively oppose the 1913 Land Act. In the years that followed, as more and more chiefs left Congress, the organisation found it increasingly difficult to meet its financial commitments. This, in turn, had a direct effect on the ANC's membership and organisational structure.⁽⁶⁾

A third important factor that compounded the ANC's problems in the inter-war years was the rise of two rival organisations shortly after 1918. The first was Clement Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) formed in 1918, and the second was the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which was formed three years later. As a result of the rapid industrial development that followed the end of the First World War in 1918 there was a desperate need for some form

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5. M. Benson, The African Patriots, pp. 32 - 33; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 1, p. 64; Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 52 - 53.
 6. For an in depth discussion of the ANC's financial problems in the inter-war years as well as after 1945, see Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 209 - 218 and Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 40 - 45.



of labour movement/organisation that could see to the needs of the rapidly growing Black labour market. The ANC, beset by internal problems, a virtually bankrupt treasury and a shrinking membership was simply too weak to meet the new demands that were being made on it by the rapidly growing Black labour market. In step Clement Kadalie and the ICU and, for the next decade or so, it effectively challenged the leadership position of the ANC among South Africa's African people. The formation of the CPSA in 1921 further weakened the position of the ANC by reducing its already weakening membership.⁷

Although the CPSA was a much smaller organisation than the ICU it was also far more radical and militant than the ICU which became its main target in the inter-war years. Due to the weakened position of the ANC and the fact that it had no effective labour contingent, the CPSA initially paid very little attention to it. It was only after it had successfully helped to destroy the power of the ICU in the late 1920's that the CPSA began to pay increased attention to the ANC and its activities. But although Josiah Gumede's election to the ANC presidency in 1927 gave the CPSA a foothold in the organisation, this was only a temporary victory, for in 1930 Gumede was replaced by the more conservative and anti-communist P.K.I. Seme.

Unfortunately for the ANC Seme turned out to be a poor choice, at least in 1930. He was by that stage too old to really provide the ANC with the sort of dynamic and flexible leadership that it needed to pull it out of its almost two decades of decline. "Just as in 1910", writes Mary Benson, "so now all over the country, Africans who were aware of what was happening were looking for a dynamic leader(ship)".^(*) But even the timely collapse of the ICU by the beginning of the 1930's and the reintroduction of the Hertzog Bills in their modified form by the mid 1930's could not shock the ANC back into life.

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7. E. Roux, Time Longer Than Rope, pp. 175 - 178, 210 - 211; Benson, The African Patriots, pp. 60 - 61; Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 178. See also H. Bradford, Mass Movements and the Petty Bourgeoisie: The Social Origins of ICU leadership, 1924-1929, (Journal of African History 25, 1984, pp 295-310).
 8. Benson, The African Patriots, p. 79.



As a result Congress remained politically weak until at least the beginning of the 1940's when Dr A.B. Xuma took over the presidency. From here onwards the ANC began to show signs of a gradual revival and a new militancy.

Disillusioned with Seme's poor leadership and the ANC's weak position politically conscious Blacks around the country began to campaign for a more dynamic and militant leadership to direct their protest against the exclusively White government. In their search for a solution they turned their attention to Prof. D.D.T. Jabavu of Port Hare University College. Perhaps the most senior Black academic in South Africa at the time, Jabavu suggested and convened an All African Convention (AAC) in Bloemfontein on 16 December 1935. The aim of the AAC was to unite opposition to the reintroduction of the Hertzog Bills which, among others, had called for the effective removal of Africans from the Common Voters Roll in the Cape Province to bring them in line with the status of Blacks in the rest of the Union, as well as the creation of a Native Representative Council (NRC) with advisory but no legislative powers. (9)

Although the AAC represented an impressive gathering with some 500 delegates in attendance (some sources place the number of delegates at 400⁽¹⁰⁾) who were in general agreement that immediate action was needed to stop the Hertzog Bills, it nonetheless failed in its original purpose. The AAC not only proved to be totally ineffective in the face of White political unity - the Hertzog Bills eventually received overwhelming parliamentary support - but the delegates to the meeting were in complete disagreement as to the form that their action should take. As far as the younger and more radical delegates at the Convention were concerned, strong and sustained militant action was needed to stop the Bills from implementation. These 'radical' views were not, however, shared by the majority of older delegates who, despite the Bills' grave implications for Blacks, remained strongly in favour of the more moderate policies of the ANC that called for the representation of grievances to the authorities. "The 'big guns' of the Convention", Edward Roux later wrote, "were

9. Roux, Time Longer Than Rope, p. 289.

10. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 119.



all for continued negotiation and moderation".⁽¹¹⁾ The outcome of this policy of moderation was that the Hertzog Bills were passed into Law the following year, thereby furthering the government's policy of racial segregation and at the same time, laying the basis for the 'apartheid' policies of the Malan government after 1948.

2. BLACK POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1940: A MILITANT ANC

Most important among the events that marked the development of Black political thinking and action in the first years after 1940 were the adoption of a new revised constitution for the ANC in 1943 and the formation of a Youth League movement for young African men in 1943 - 1944. After its formation the Youth League brought increasing pressure to bear on the more conservative leadership of the ANC to move towards a more militant solution of South Africa's racial problems. This new mood in the ANC was clearly reflected in the various documents adopted by the Youth League dealing with aspects such as policy and programme, aims and objectives and what it understood under the term 'African Nationalism'.⁽¹²⁾ These documents were also significant in that for the first time since the formation of the ANC in 1912, a positive attempt was being made by the organisation's younger leadership to clarify and define the ANC's position and role in Black politics.

The first important document adopted by the ANC in 1941 was The Basic Policy and Platform of the African National Congress.⁽¹³⁾ This was followed by a second and even more important document on aims and

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11. Roux, Time Longer Than Rope, p. 289.
 12. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 87 - 88, 168 - 171; Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 278-279.
 13. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 168 - 171. (Document 24, "The Policy and Platform of the African National Congress", Statements by Dr. A.B. Xuma in Inkululeko (Freedom), August, 1941.)



objectives entitled Africans' Claims.⁽¹⁴⁾ Considered to be the most significant document adopted by the ANC since the constitution of 1919, Africans' Claims in its call for the repeal of all discriminatory legislation directed at Blacks, became the basis for most ANC documents on policy after 1943.⁽¹⁵⁾

But of more significance for the ANC's political development in the post 1940 period was not so much the adoption of a much revised constitution in 1943, but the establishment of a Youth League movement in the same year.

Led by a new breed of young and militant Africans who demanded immediate and definite action against racial discrimination in South Africa, the Congress Youth League (CYL) became a very, if not the most important, pressure group effecting policy and programme within the ANC leadership.

Many of the ANC's most prominent leaders after 1945 (and PAC leaders after 1959) entered the organisation's leadership core through their membership of the CYL. Some prominent names that come to mind here are Nelson R. Mandela, Walter M. Sisulu, Jordan Ngubane, Anton M. Lembede, A.P. Mda, V.V.T. Mboobo, Oliver Tambo, D.W. Bopape, W.Z. Conco, Joseph (Joe) Matthews, P.P.D. Nokwe, A.E. Letele, R.M. Sobukwe, M.B. Yengwa and Dr. James L. Zwelinzima Njongwe.

(a) The 1943 Constitutional Reorganisation of the ANC

The 1919 constitution and the organisational structure it has prescribed for the ANC had become largely outdated by the beginning of the 1940's due to the various changes and adjustments that had taken place in the ANC since its inception in 1912 and the demands

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14. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 209 - 223 (Document 29, "African Claims and South Africa", including "The Atlantic Charter from the Standpoint of Africans within the Union of South Africa" and "Bill of Rights" adopted by the ANC Annual Conference).
 15. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 278 - 279.



made on it by the new breed of young and better educated African leaders. The declining interest of the chiefs and the need among Africans for more dynamic and militant action against White minority rule in South Africa, together with the need for an organisation with a mass basis, prompted Dr. Xuma to appoint a special committee to revise the old ANC constitution shortly after he became president in 1940.⁽¹⁶⁾

One of those who served on the committee revising the 1919 constitution was a young White advocate, Abram Fischer. Besides being a brilliant academic, Fischer was also an Afrikaner and a communist. In the years that followed the adoption of the revised constitution by the ANC in 1943, Fischer became increasingly involved in the development of Black political thinking in South Africa through his membership of the Communist Party.

The constitution of 1943 (see diagram on following page) offered several important administrative improvements on the old one. In the first place it was much shorter and more simplified than the 1919 document. In contrast to the old document which covered some twenty three typed pages, the new document consisted of only three pages. It was specifically designed to streamline the organisation and administration of the ANC. It was hoped that the revised version would provide for a structure that would make the ANC more effective in its dealings with the South African government.⁽¹⁷⁾ Structurally, the ANC however retained basically the same organisational hierarchy that was established by the 1919 constitution. In terms of this the National Conference remained the most senior and most important organ of the ANC. This was followed by the other well known organs such as the Provincial Conferences, Provincial Committees, Branches and individual members.

The changes that were introduced were largely aimed at removing obsolete organs and at improving the relationship between the various

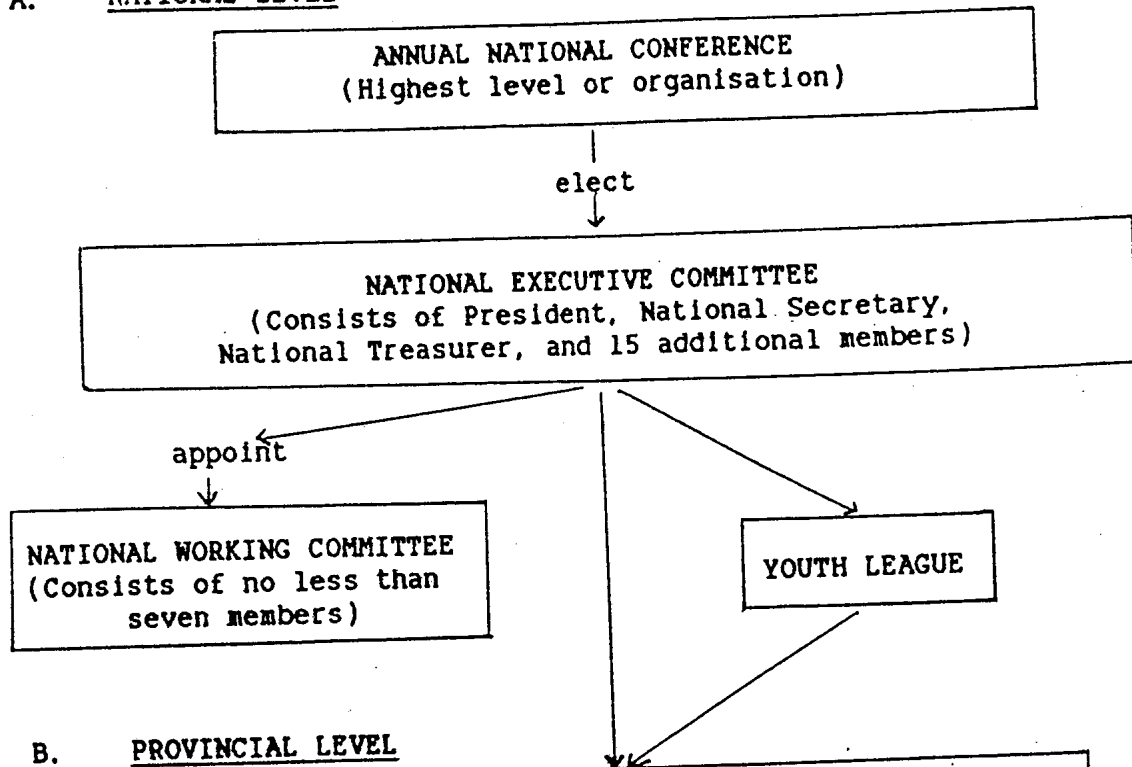
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16. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 84 - 85; Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 379.
17. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 209 - 210.



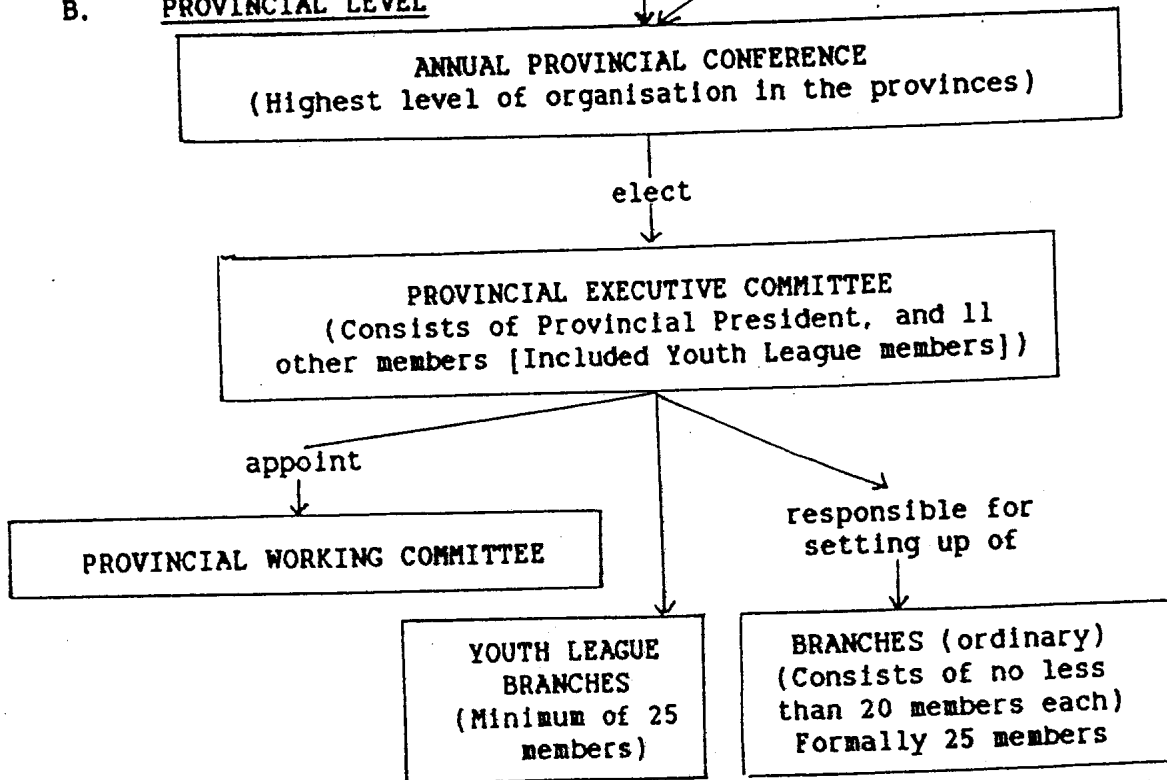
DIAGRAM A

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ANC
ACCORDING TO ITS 1943-CONSTITUTION

A. NATIONAL LEVEL



B. PROVINCIAL LEVEL





levels of the organisation, as well as providing greater central control over the lower levels of the ANC. One important change made to the structure of the ANC was the removal of the Upper House or the House of Chiefs. With the withdrawal of the chiefs from the ANC following the organisations failure to remove or reform the 1913 Land Act, the Council had become obsolete. Attempts to revive it had proved to be largely unsuccessful with the result that in the end it was decided to abolish it.⁽¹⁸⁾

The disappearance of the chiefs from the ANC not only demanded a change to the organisational structure, but also to the structure of the organisation's income. "Financial assistance from the chiefs", writes Peter Walshe, "was an important factor in Congress' ability to survive its initial organisational hazards".⁽¹⁹⁾ With the gradual withdrawal of their support from the ANC during the inter-war years the chiefs placed the ANC in a precarious financial position, a situation that was partially responsible for its poor performance in the years following the First World War. The initial hope that the chiefs would become the true link between the ANC and the rural African masses in South Africa had long faded by 1940. As a result, other means and methods had to be found to link the organisation and its aims to the African rural masses in the country and at the same time improve its ailing financial position.⁽²⁰⁾ All this, it was hoped would change with the revised constitution.

In sharp contrast to the lengthy statement on aims and objectives included in the 1919 constitution, the 1943 document broadly described the ANC's aims as "the unity of the African people" and "the advancement of their interests", through the eventual full participation of Africans in the government of South Africa.⁽²¹⁾ No mention was made of a struggle against colonial rule or of national

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18. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 204 - 208 (Document 29(a), "Constitution of the ANC").
 19. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 210.
 20. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 210 - 211.
 21. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 204 - 208 (Document 29(a), "Constitution of the ANC").



liberation for independence. The emphasis was rather on selfdetermination and participation in the political process making in the country.

In addition to the abolishing of the Council of Chiefs, important changes were also made to the organisation's membership. Having lost the active involvement and financial support of the chiefs, the new constitution, in an attempt to provide the ANC with a more secured financial basis, opened the organisation's membership to "any person" over the age of seventeen who is willing to subscribe to the aims of Congress and would abide by its constitution and rules.⁽²²⁾ The 1919-requirement, that members must be of "the indigenous" or "aboriginal races of Africa"⁽²³⁾ was thus omitted from the new constitution. This effectively opened the ANC theoretically to people of all races. But in spite of this "broadening" of the ANC's membership structure, the organisation remained largely an African organisation with Africans as its leaders. As far as membership of other organisations were concerned, the new constitution retained the provisions of the 1919 document which allowed any organisation whose aims are in harmony with that of the ANC to become an affiliated member of the ANC upon application to either the Provincial Committee or the newly introduced National Working Committee (NWC).⁽²⁴⁾

At the branch level of organisation, membership was reduced from the existing level of twenty five members for a single branch to twenty members. This did not, however, affect the provisions which determined the number of branch delegates to both the provincial and national congresses which was retained at one out of every twenty members. The practice of encouraging individual members to attend the Annual Conferences at both the Provincial and National level as

22. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 206.

23. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 1, pp. 76 - 82 (Document 23, "Constitution of the South African Native Congress, September 1919", extracts typewritten, 29 pages).

24. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 206 (Document 29(a), "Constitution of the ANC").



observers was perpetuated while all affiliated bodies were allowed to send one delegate out of every one hundred members to the above conferences.

Since the Youth League had not been established by the time that the new constitution was adopted in December 1943, no provisions regarding its position within the national structure of the ANC were included in the constitution. The little that is known, however, indicates that the Youth League did not duplicate the organisational structure of the ANC but that it consisted primarily of separate branches, served by branch committees, and that some of its leaders served on the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the National Congress. Representation on the provincial and national levels were allowed on a basis that was comparable with that of the ordinary ANC branches. Beyond this very little is known about the actual structure of the Youth League. The impression is, however, that the League and its leaders acted as a think-tank or a sort of brain-trust within the ANC's National Executive Committee, where they effected decisions with regard to matters on policy and programme. At the provincial level supervision of the Youth League branches appeared to have been under the control of the Provincial Committee and in particular, its Executive Committee. (25)

Of more significance were the changes introduced to the actual administration of the ANC. It was done to increase the effective authority of the National and Provincial Executive Committees over the various organisational divisions under their control. To excellerate and streamline the functions of the ANC, a new organ, the National Working Committee (NWC) was introduced. The task of the NWC was to take control of the day to day affairs of the ANC between sessions of the NEC. (26)

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25. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 380.
26. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 206 - 207 (Document 29(a), "Constitution of the ANC"); See also Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 381.



A further important change introduced by the new constitution was that effecting the election procedures of both provincial and national executives. Unlike the old procedure, whereby executives were elected from candidates nominated by the presidents of the provincial and national conferences, the new procedure made provision for the direct election of executives at the full discretion of the annual conference.

In this way the powers of the provincial presidents, as well as that of the President-General over the choice and election of executive officers, were effectively curtailed. The powers of the President-General was further curtailed by a general proviso which stipulated that all decisions, except those amending the constitution, should be decided upon by a majority vote.⁽²⁷⁾ For the rest, the hierarchy of authority in the ANC was retained without change.

Theoretically thus, the revised constitution of 1943 represented a major improvement on the old constitution of 1919. But as is so often the case with a new idea, its implementation and execution is dependent on the ability of humans to bring it about, with the result that in practice many of the old and deep-seated problems often remains unsolved. According to Peter Walshe⁽²⁸⁾ the ANC's chronic shortage of money, even after the introduction of the 1943 constitution, remained and was to a large degree responsible for the organisation's constant ills and persistently poor performance between the mid 1940's and the time of its banning in 1960.

Moreover, the exercise of overall authority in the organisation still depended, to a great extent, on the specific ability and the degree of personal authority that a specific national president and the organisation's Secretary-General could exert; as well as their status and standing in the organisation and the National Congress, and the former's ability to personify or symbolise the liberation struggle.⁽²⁹⁾ In short, therefore, the success of the ANC depended

27. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 381 - 382.

28. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 382.

29. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, pp. 208 - 258, 382 - 385, 398.



not so much on its organisational structure and how well it functioned, but rather on the amount of support that its leaders could command among the masses upon whom the organisation depended for its very existence. A strong and wise leadership would help to strengthen the ANC while a weak and indecisive leadership would lose its adherents and thus weaken the position of the organisation.

(b) The Role and Influence of Pan-Africanism and the Move Towards Greater Militancy in Black Politics

The revival in African political thinking that came with the election of Dr. Xuma to the presidency of the ANC in 1940, and the formation of the Youth League with its strong emphasis on African nationalism as the predominant power in African politics, closely coincided with similar political developments elsewhere on the African continent.

The increased awareness of international affairs, writes Peter Walshe, re-awakened a general interest of the movement of colonial peoples towards independence and a particular concern with the African continent.³⁰ Although primarily an Afro-American development up to the outbreak of the Second World War, Pan-Africanism and its slogans of "Africa for the Africans" and its "Back to Africa Movements" firmly arrived on the African continent via the Manchester Congress of 1945. Perhaps the most significant event in the history of Pan-African development since the beginning of the twentieth century, the fifth Pan-African Congress held at Manchester in October saw for the very first time a large contingent of Black leaders from Africa gathering outside the continent. Among those who attended the Congress were several of Africa's most promising young African leaders. From the Gold Coast (later the independent state of Ghana) came Kwame Nkrumah, J. Annan, E.A. Ayikumi and others, all destined to play an important role in that country's struggle for independence. From Nigeria came S.L. Akintola, and from Kenya Jomo Kenyatta who played a major role in the Mau Mau revolt and later

30. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 332.



became Kenya's first Prime Minister. Sierra Leone was represented by the later famous trade union leader, Wallace Johnson, while from South Africa came the Coloured poet and novelist Peter Abrahams, who, like George Padmore, had come to turn his back on communism. The ANC was represented by Mark Hlubi.⁽³¹⁾

The Manchester Congress offers many clues to the development of the struggle for national liberation in both Africa and South Africa after 1945.

Its expression of 'We demand for Black Africa autonomy and independence, so far, and no further, than it is possible in this One World for groups and people to rule themselves subject to inevitable world unity and federation',⁽³²⁾ is characteristic of the attitude of post war African political thinking and demands in South Africa. 'We find', writes Colin Legum, 'the new spirit awakened by Pan-Africanism - a farewell to patience and to the acceptance of suffering: We are not ashamed to have been an age-long patient people. We continue willingly to sacrifice and strive. But we are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world's drudgery, in order to support by our poverty and ignorance a false aristocracy and a discarded imperialism.'⁽³³⁾

The Manchester Congress also for the first time introduced the concept of political violence into African political thinking. Determined to be free from colonial domination, the African leaders made it clear that if the Western world was still determined to rule mankind by force, then Africans, as a last resort, may have to appeal to force in their efforts to achieve freedom "even if force destroys them and the world". "But pending the 'last resort' Congress opted for POSITIVE ACTION based on Ghandi's teachings" of passive resistance.⁽³⁴⁾

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31. C. Legum, Pan-Africanism. A Short Political Guide, pp. 31 -32; see also J.H. Clarke (ed.), Pan-Africanism and the liberation of Southern Africa. A Tribute to W.E.B. du Bois, Introduction, pp. 41 - 50.
 32. Legum, Pan-Africanism, p. 32.
 33. Legum, Pan-Africanism, p. 32.
 34. Legum, Pan-Africanism, p. 32.



These views were clearly echoed by the policies and programme adopted by the ANC and the Youth League after 1945. This inclination to look to the north for support, argues Peter Walshe,⁽³⁵⁾ was the result of a realisation that Africans could not longer hope to achieve fundamental reforms through consultation with the South African authorities. The majority, it was felt, would have to liberate themselves from the pattern of racial repression by mass organisation and probably extensive passive resistance. Pan-Africanism, as it developed in South Africa, was therefore closely linked to the new radicalism within the ANC, that was highlighted by the emergence of the Congress Youth League.

The introduction of the new constitution in 1943 and the formation of the Youth League the following year did not bring about an immediate or drastic rise in ANC membership. In 1945 the organisation (and this included the Youth League) had a total membership of some 4 176 spread over approximately 69 branches. The majority (about three fourths) of these branches were in the Transvaal.⁽³⁶⁾ Two years later in 1947 the ANC's membership had risen to some 7 000 members.⁽³⁷⁾

Exactly how accurate these figures are is difficult to say, since they only reflect those members who paid their subscriptions regularly and who were officially registered with the organisation. Many never paid their subscriptions but still considered themselves members of the ANC. Others again left the organisation without informing the local branches.

Although a figure of 7 000 paid up members out of a total of several million Blacks in South Africa tends to reflect on limited popular or mass support for the ANC and its policies, it does not necessarily mean that Blacks in general were opposed to its views and policies, nor that it did not have the support of other Black political

35. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 332.

36. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, pp. 85 - 86.

37. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 86.



organisations in South Africa. Ever since Dr. Xuma came to power in 1940, but more so after the Youth League was formed in 1944, meetings and regular contact with other anti-government organisations such as the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Communist Party were encouraged to strengthen the position of the ANC and to create a united front for action against White minority rule. Perhaps the most tangible example of this development towards multi-racial co-operation came with the signing of the so-called "Doctors Pact" between Drs. A.B. Xuma (ANC), Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo of the Transvaal Indian Congress, and G.M. Naicker of the Natal Indian Congress, on 9 March 1947.⁽³⁸⁾ This historic agreement became the forerunner of the later Congress Alliance which was a general agreement of co-operation between the ANC and most of the anti-government organisations in South Africa. After the bannings of the ANC in 1960 the Congress Alliance became known as the National Liberatory (or Liberation) Movement.⁽³⁹⁾

3. AFRICAN NATIONALISM VERSUS AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

The second major and, in retrospect, perhaps the most important event influencing the development of Black political thinking in South Africa after 1945, was the rise to power of Afrikaner nationalism under the leadership of Dr. D.F. Malan, who firmly believed that South Africa's political future lay in the development of a strict policy of racial segregation. It is generally conceded today that the racial policies of Dr. Malan and his government, which came at a time when increasing demands were being made for greater racial co-operation, represented the turning point in South Africa's political history for many Black leaders in the country.

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38. Roux, Time Longer Than Rope, pp. 265 - 366; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 92.
39. Information obtained from document entitled "Some facts on the situation confronting the National Liberatory Movement in the final challenge of the power of the White supremacist South African Republic state", p. 1 - 5. (The document is a product of the underground Communist Party. It has no date but from its content it appears to have been issued sometime between 1962 and 1963.)



Having been committed for almost four decades to a policy of non-violence and moderation in their political thinking, the introduction and intensification of a policy of strict racial segregation that promised increasing control over the everyday lives of Blacks in South Africa led many of the younger leaders in the ANC's Youth League, to begin to despair of a peaceful solution for the country's racial problems and political differences. This change in mood was particularly evident in more radical minded political circles after the banning of the CPSA in 1950. To many of these elements which included amongst them the later prominent leaders of the underground movement and the armed struggle such as Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Joe Matthews and others, the banning of the CPSA was symptomatic of the government's unflexible attitude towards African nationalism and the Black man's demands for greater political rights. To them it was merely a matter of time before the ANC too was banned by the authorities. Although no direct link has been established between the banning of the CPSA in 1950 and the decision to form Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961, there can be little doubt that the events of 1950, had a strong bearing on the thinking of many Black as well as White radical leaders in the country during the 1950's and early 1960's.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The banning of the CPSA was instrumental in the decision taken by the radicals in the Congress Youth League and the Communist Party leadership in the early 1950 to provide the ANC with an alternative organisational structure or plan to take it underground should it get banned.

The first direct reaction from the ANC to the banning of the CPSA came from the ANC Youth League in the early 1950's. In terms of the aims and objectives of its 1949-Programme of Action, a special committee consisting of J.S. Moroka, G. Radebe (Secretary), G.M. Pitje, G.S. Ramohano and Oliver Tambo was appointed in February 1950 to prepare for a campaign of civil disobedience aimed at discriminatory legislation.⁽⁴¹⁾ Preparation work for the disobedience

40. Benson, The African Patriots, p. 171; M. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 22; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 411; Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 389; Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 402.

41. Benson, The African Patriots, p. 171; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 411.



campaign received an unexpected boost in February 1951 with the introduction of the Separate Representation of Voters Bill. This Bill, which proposed to place all Coloured voters in the Cape onto a separate voters role, brought strong and immediate reaction from the ANC and the South African Indian Congress. Although the Bill had nothing to do with these two organisations, it nevertheless represented to them a further deterioration of Black political rights, and representatives from the two organisations and a number of other leaders met shortly after the introduction of the Bill to discuss means and methods of combating it. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of the Franchise Action Committee (FRAC) to co-ordinate all efforts against the proposed Bill.⁽⁴²⁾

In July of the same year the ANC extended an invitation to the executives of the FRAC and SAIC to attend a joint conference to discuss the rising tide of "national oppression".⁽⁴³⁾ At the end of this meeting a joint resolution was adopted which called for a campaign of passive resistance against all apartheid laws. Amongst the laws that were singled out for special attention was the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Pass Laws, and the Stock Limitation Regulations of 1950. To make the necessary preparation for the proposed campaign of civil disobedience, a five man joint Planning Council (PC) was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. J.S. Moroka. At least two of the five members of the Council were members of the banned CPSA. They were Dadoo and J.B. Marks.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In December 1951, the National Conference of the ANC and the SAIC officially approved the proposed campaign and shortly afterwards a letter was sent to the South African Prime Minister, D.F. Malan, informing him and his Cabinet of the conference's decision. The government was given until February 1952 to repeal all discriminatory legislation. Should it however fail to heed to these demands a

42. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 411; Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 22.

43. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 402.

44. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 402; Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 389.



campaign of mass demonstrations and protest meetings would be called by the ANC and the SAIC. (45)

When the government showed no intention of adhering to the demands of the organisers, the campaign was officially launched on 26 June 1952. The actual history of the Defiance Campaign is of little importance here. What is important is the fact that it failed and had to be called off by the organisers some five months after it was launched. (46)

Although the campaign was well supported it largely failed because of opposition from both the government as well as African pressure groups such as the Africanists in the Youth League who were strongly opposed to the League's co-operation with other racial groups. (47) Although the opposition of the Africanists probably influenced others not to support the campaign, their role in its failure should not be over emphasised as they only had a small following in 1952. Of greater importance, however, was the extent to which the government stepped in to stop the campaign, and protect its apartheid policies. This led many radical leaders in the ANC and the Youth League to believe that the government had no intention of ever giving in to Black political demands, even if these were propagated from a platform of non-violence and moderation.

This feeling of despair and helplessness that manifested itself among many African leaders following the failure of the Defiance Campaign, was substantially strengthened in 1953 by the introduction of the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Both these Acts empowered the authorities to deal with unrest situations more effectively in future. The first Act empowered the government to declare a state of emergency in the country as a whole or in any specific area, while the second Act created two new categories of

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45. M.P. Naicker, The Defiance Campaign Recalled, (United Nations Unit on Apartheid, UN, Notes and Documents, 10, 1972, p. 2); Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 413.
46. Luthuli, Let my People Go, p. 117.
47. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 2, p. 424.



offences, namely, inciting anyone to commit an offence by way of protest against any law, and accepting financial or other assistance for organising protest or resistance against the laws of the country.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In addition to these new laws more than a hundred people suspected of activities that could endanger the safety of the State were arrested or served with banning orders by the security police towards the end of 1953. Among those served with such orders were several prominent Black leaders such as Albert Luthuli (elected to the Presidency of the ANC in 1952), Moses Kotane (a listed Communist), Oliver Tambo, Florence Masomela, James Calata, R. Desai, A.M. Kathrada, I.A. Cachalia and numerous others.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Through the arrest and banning of these top leaders of the ANC and Congress Alliance the government unwittingly paved the way for the more radically minded to both strengthen their position and increase their influence over the decisions if not the policy directions in the ANC and the Congress Alliance. The fact that the radicals were actively at work were borne out by the formation of the multi-racial South African Peace Council in Johannesburg on 21 August 1953; the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) in Cape Town on 12 September, and the predominantly White, pro-communist Congress of Democrats (COD) on 10 October 1953. The latter was nothing else but a front for the banned Communist Party. A number of well-known communists and former members of the banned CPSA such as Brian Bunting, Ben Turok, M. Harnel, Jack Hodgson and others served on the leadership structure of the newly formed COD.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Several of these names later became closely associated with the development of the active underground movement and the activities of Umkhonto we Sizwe after 1961.

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48. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 23 - 24; Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p. 394.
49. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 25.
50. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 12 - 13; Benson, The African Patriots, p. 197; Debates of Parliament, 1963.04.24, col. 4642. For a more detailed discussion of the COD see P.J. Coetzee, Die Geskiedenis van die South African Congress of Democrats, MA, RAU, 1977.



(a) The Mandela or M-Plan⁽⁵¹⁾

A further important and often neglected factor reflecting Black political thinking in the 1950's and which undoubtedly also had an influence on developments in the early 1960's was the Mandela or M-Plan. This Plan called for the total restructuring of the ANC to enable it to operate from the underground should it get banned.

Factually, very little is known about the M-Plan, its origins and its structure. Although several authors such as Edward Felt, Karis and Carter, Nelson Mandela and Bruno Mtolo and a number of court records provide information on the M-Plan, it is largely sketchy and incomplete.⁽⁵²⁾ Even Mandela's speech to the Provincial Congress of the Transvaal ANC in 1953, in which the Plan was revealed for the first time, contains very little information on how the Plan was to function.⁽⁵³⁾ Reference was also made to the Plan in the 1959 Treason Trial and a number of court cases dealing with ANC affairs since then. Although these latter sources contain useful information, they all underline one peculiar fact, namely, that although the M-Plan was to have been an emergency measure to prepare the ANC for an underground existence, very few in the ANC, including its top leadership structure, really understood what it was all about.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Consequently, the discussion that follows is at best a sketchy and incomplete account of the M-Plan.

Apparently the idea to re-organise the ANC into a closely knit

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51. See also Chapter seven.
52. E. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa 1960 - 1964, pp. 67, 98 - 102, 105, 107 - 8, 112 - 113, 118 - 120, 123, 124, 138, 160, 258, 323; E. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa. A Case Study, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1970, pp. 57 - 63); Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 35 - 40, 106 - 115; N. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 21 - 31, 142 - 189; M. Benson, Nelson Mandela, pp. 58 - 59, 92, 109; Nelson Mandela, The Struggle is my Life, pp. 4, 40; B. Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe. The Road to the Left, pp. 15 - 18, 23 - 29.
53. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 21 - 31.
54. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 35 - 38.



organisation with a highly centralised leadership and command structure, did not have its origins with Mandela after whom the Plan was named but with A.P. Mda, who was a president of the Youth League. It seems that Mda, who was closely associated with the Africanist faction in the League, was in strong support of a cell based centralised structure for the ANC to help the organisation overcome its many structural and leadership problems.⁽⁵⁵⁾ To what extent Mda's idea had the support of the Youth League as a whole is not known but it appears that a number of the more radically minded leaders in the movement showed a considerable interest in the idea. In a letter written by Joe Matthews to his father, Prof. Z.K. Matthews, then a visiting lecturer at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, in January 1953, he informed his father that he had attended a secret meeting of the top leaders of the ANC and the SAIC, half of whom were banned, at which the future of South Africa was discussed and planned with "cold-blooded realism". Matthews did not explain what he meant by "cold-blooded realism", but having promised his father a more informative letter at a later date, he went on to say that:

Broadly speaking the idea is to strengthen the organisation (presumably the ANC) tremendously, [and to] prepare for the continuation of the organisation under conditions of illegality by organising on the basis of the cell system.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Matthews also expressed the wish for a continuation of the Defiance Campaign and its widening into a mass campaign of industrial action. Although the ANC witnessed a phenomenal increase in membership during the Defiance Campaign (its membership rose from about 7 000 to about 100 000⁽⁵⁷⁾ between 1952 and 1953) the campaign never developed into a mass campaign of industrial unrest because the government prevented it from happening.

55. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 36 - 37.

56. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 36.

57. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 36; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 61; Benson, The African Patriots, p. 186.



Thus, although the campaign turned out to be a failure in terms of the aims and objectives it set out to achieve, it was nonetheless a success in that it effectively helped to boost African support for the ANC and increased the organisation's membership almost twelve-fold. The Defiance Campaign was also successful in that it served as a sort of barometer of Black grievances in general and African dissatisfaction in particular. It also came to represent a turning point in the relationship between Blacks, but again, particularly between Africans and the government on the issue of racial segregation and Black political rights.

Encouraged by the failure of the Defiance Campaign and the phenomenal increase in ANC membership, Nelson Mandela, with the support of others in the ANC, presented the Transvaal ANC at its annual provincial congress in September 1953 with a document in which he called for the immediate reorganisation of the ANC. The document entitled "NO EASY WALK TO FREEDOM" was however read on behalf of Mandela since he could not attend the conference due to the fact that he was serving a banning order. (**)

The document, which started with the history of the South African liberation struggle in 1912, emphasised that ever since then, year after year,

The African people have discussed the shameful misdeeds of those who rule the country Year after year they have raised their voices to condemn the grinding poverty of the people, the low wages, the acute shortage of land, the inhuman exploitation, and the whole policy of White domination. But instead of more freedom, repression began to grow in volume and intensity ... Today the whole country knows that their labours were not in vain Today the people speak the language of action The year 1952 stands out as the year of this upsurge of national consciousness. In June of that year (the) African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress ... took the plunge and launched the campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws

58. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 20; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 106 - 115.



It was an effective way of getting the masses to function politically, a powerful method of voicing our indignation against the reactionary policies of the Government The entire country was transformed into battle zones where the forces of liberation were locked in immortal conflict against those of reaction and evil It was against this background ... that we held our annual provincial conference in Pretoria in October last year Today we meet under totally different conditions Between July last year and August this year, [1953] fortyseven leading members from both Congresses in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley were arrested, tried; and convicted for launching the Defiance Campaign A proclamation was passed which prohibited meetings of more than ten Africans and made it an offence for any person to call upon an African to defy The Government [also] passed the so-called Public Safety Act which empowered it to declare a state of emergency and to create conditions which permit of the most ruthless and pitiless methods of suppressing our movement. Consequently, the document went on to state, the 'old methods of bringing about mass action through public mass meetings, press statements, and leaflets calling upon the people to go into action have become extremely dangerous and difficult to use effectively. (59)

As a result of these conditions the struggle of the oppressed people ... is gravitating towards one central command. Our immediate task is to consolidate these victories to preserve our organisations [presumably Mandela was referring to the ANC and SAIC], and to muster our forces for the resumption of the offensive. To achieve this important task the national executive of the African National Congress in consultation with the National Action Committee of the ANC ... formulated a plan of action popularly known as the "M" Plan. The highest importance is attached to it by the national executive Instructions were given to all provinces to implement the "M" Plan without delay. The underlying principle of this plan is the understanding that it is no longer possible to wage our struggle mainly by the old methods of public meetings and printed circulars. The aim is:

To consolidate the Congress machinery.



To enable the transmission of important decisions taken on a national level to every member of the organisation without calling public meetings, issuing Press statements and printing circulars;

To build up in the local branches themselves local congresses which will effectively represent the strength and will of the people.

To extend and strengthen the ties between the Congress and the people and consolidate Congress leadership. (60)

Although it does not actually say so, there can be little doubt that the aims of the M-Plan was to restructure the ANC into a cell-based organisation with a centralised leadership and structure that would be in full control of the organisation's various divisions down to the lowest level. To Mandela and others in the ANC the problems and dangers facing the ANC necessitated the immediate implementation of the Plan and the need for this was impressed on everyone in the ANC.

"I appeal to all members of the Congress", Mandela told the Transvaal Provincial Conference in September 1953, "to redouble their efforts and play their part truly and well in its implementation. The hard and strenuous task of recruiting members and strengthening our organisation through a house-to-house campaign in every locality must be done by you all." (61)

According to Karis and Carter (62) the M-Plan acquired some false notoriety both within, as well as outside the ANC which stamped it as a secret plan designed to enable the organisation to operate underground, when, in fact, there was no effort to keep the plan and its objectives a secret. Nevertheless, the plan's long term aim was undoubtedly to restructure the ANC into a close-knit underground organisation through mass membership under the direct control of a hierarchy of leaders who could effectively transmit policy and decisions from the national to the grass roots level. (63)

60. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 28.

61. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 28 - 29.

62. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 36.

63. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 36 - 37.



Theoretically, these changes, if they were successfully implemented, would have meant a more streamlined, but also probably a more radically minded ANC leadership who would have been prepared to challenge the authorities in open and violent confrontation should there ever be a need for such action. In practice, however, in only two branches, one in the Port Elizabeth area and the other in Cato Manor near Durban, where support for the ANC was particularly strong, some progress had been made with the implementation of the M-Plan.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Most ANC branches and regional leaders were either not prepared or were unable to support the plan and its proposed changes. In fact, the failure of the radical leaders to successfully promote and implement the M-Plan featured regularly in the ANC's annual and provincial reports between 1953 and 1959.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Among the reasons given for the ANC's failure to have the M-Plan implemented were: that the plan had been inadequately explained; that there was no money to appoint full-time organisers to see to its implementation, and that morale was often very low. A poor understanding of the M-Plan and its implications was particularly evident in Natal where apparently very few of the ANC's top leadership knew exactly what it was. At a meeting held some time in 1963 to set up a new regional committee to oversee the organisation's activities in the province, members of the new leadership were asked what they knew about the M-Plan and to explain it. Many admitted to having heard of it but knew too little about it to explain it.⁽⁶⁶⁾

In 1954, a mere year after the M-Plan was first officially presented to the ANC in the Transvaal, the National Executive Committee of the ANC reported that despite the urgency of the matter little progress had been made with the implementation of the M-Plan. The report stated:

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64. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of Zizi Njikelane, 1964, pp. 4 - 21, 24 - 30 (court case on Microfilm from Microfile); Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 111.
 65. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 156 - 157 (Document 7(b), "Report of the National Executive Committee").
 66. Durban Regional Court, Case R:C 139/1964, The State against Pascal Ngakane and 24 others, Evidence of Elias Kunene (in camera). 1964, pp. 33 - 34.



Year after year, we have complained about the inefficiency of our machinery; the lack of proper co-ordination between branches and the provincial committees on the one hand and the provincial committees and the National Executive Committee on the other hand. Instructions are not properly carried out; most of the correspondence is not attended to and as a result people are not properly informed about Congress Affairs We have shamefully failed to implement the "M" Plan. (67)

Some five years later the situation with regard to the implementation of the M-Plan was still very much the same. With the exception of the already mentioned areas of Port Elizabeth and Cato Manor in Natal, virtually no significant effort had been made to have the M-Plan implemented. In its report to the Annual National Congress of the ANC in Durban in December 1959, the ANC's NEC again informed the delegates present, that little or no progress had been made with the implementation of the plan and that there was an urgent need for the situation to be rectified. (68)

What is significant about this entire development is the fact that even in the Transvaal where the M-Plan was first introduced and Mandela was the leader of the local provincial division of the ANC, virtually no progress had been recorded with the implementation of the plan. Surely, as Provincial President of the ANC, Mandela should have had no problem in convincing the local leadership to implement the plan. Yet, there is every indication that he found it impossible. Felt gave a number of reasons for this state of affairs. (69) In the first instance the plan, he argued, was more applicable to large urban areas than rural areas. Its divisions of cells, and cell-committees based on streets and blocks made it thus largely unsuitable for a rural area where the population was sparse and thinly spread around the country-side.

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67. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Progress to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 156 - 157 (Document 7(b), "Report of the National Executive Committee").
 68. ANC document (Author's collection), Executive Report submitted to the ANC's Annual National Conference, Durban, December 1959, pp. 11 - 12.
 69. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 101 - 102.



In the second place, the Plan's call for a streamlining of the existing ANC structure was resisted by some of the leaders in the organisation who, having built up a power base for themselves in the organisation over the years, were reluctant to relinquish their positions. The M-Plan, if it was to be diligently applied, would have meant the dissolution of the old system of branches and branch committees and their replacement with much smaller and more streamlined organisations that would have less authority and serve directly under the central command in Johannesburg. This reluctance by provincial and regional leaders to relinquish their positions in favour of a reorganisation in accordance with the M-Plan was also evident in the Youth League. In some instances, such as Port Elizabeth, local ANC and Youth League branches only dissolved themselves after numerous visits from national leaders such as Vuysile Mini and Nelson Mandela himself in 1961. In other areas such as Natal the local ANC branches and committees flatly refused to reorganise themselves in accordance with the M-Plan.⁽⁷⁰⁾

A third possible factor singled out by Feit was the very rigid view that the ANC's NEC had of the M-Plan. The Plan had to be uniformly applied everywhere. If there was any difficulty in applying it in a particular region or area the matter had to be referred back to the NEC who would then have sent an NEC member to investigate and report on the situation. In practice, however, this was very seldom done. What happened was that in most instances the provincial and branch organisations of the ANC either rejected the M-Plan outright or they adopted from it only those aspects that suited them. Natal was probably the only area in the country where the two structures remained relatively separate from one another. It appears that Albert Luthuli, and those who still supported him, were not in favour of the M-Plan and the changes it envisaged for the ANC. Luthuli neither openly discredited the Plan, nor did he ever openly attach his approval to it. There is not a single document to show that he ever gave his personal support to the Plan or called for its implementation. This is rather strange considering that the NEC,

70. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 102 - 103.



according to Mandela, gave its full support to the Plan.⁽⁷¹⁾

According to Karis and Carter,⁽⁷²⁾ who remain the most informative commentators on the issue, there were apparently serious doubts among many of the older generation of leaders, such as Albert Luthuli and Prof. Z.K. Matthews to name but two, about the proposed changes and aims of the Plan. Both Luthuli and Matthews, in spite of their opposition to the South African government, were committed to a policy of non-violent action. This was in sharp contrast to the views and ideals of Mandela and the "M" Plan.

"Mandela's rhetoric, on the other hand", states Karis and Carter, "was open to inferences that violence was ultimately unavoidable; ..."⁽⁷³⁾

4. THE CONSTITUTION OF 1957

One aspect that held close association with the aims and objectives of the M-Plan and the question of its implementation after 1957 was the new ANC constitution that was adopted in the same year. In terms of the M-Plan a complete revision of the 1943 "Xuma-Constitution" was necessary for the ANC to survive into the future. It needed a sound organisational foundation and a strengthening of its ties with the African masses. A draft constitution to facilitate these changes was presented to the NEC in December 1952, almost a full year before Mandela introduced the M-Plan in 1953. The new draft constitution, which became known as the "Tambo-Constitution"⁽⁷⁴⁾ was initially unacceptable to the NEC and referred back to Oliver Tambo and the constitutional committee for a rethink. Over the next few years the draft constitution circulated in many versions among the provincial and branch organisations of the ANC. In the process it was extensively altered before it was finally accepted by the NEC in 1957. An

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71. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 103.
72. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 37 - 38.
73. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 37 - 38.
74. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 35, 37.



interesting aspect of the various drafts was that they were not so much concerned with central ANC policy, aims and objectives, as with particular points of view. So, for instance, could one draft be identified with the Cape Province and in particular the points of view of ANC leaders in the Eastern Cape, while another for its provision for a shift in power from the provinces to the national headquarters of the ANC in Johannesburg, was more directly identified with the Transvaal and the M-Plan.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Most of the younger Youth League leaders in the Transvaal, as well as a fair number in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Port Elizabeth region, believed that the new constitution, in the words of Joe Matthews, would "tighten up the organisation and give the national executive the power to enforce the policies of the organisation throughout the country".⁽⁷⁶⁾

The latter views were, however, not shared by the older leaders in the ANC who quietly resisted any changes that would eliminate provincial authority and unduly centralise control in Johannesburg. Just as tension between the Cape and the Transvaal often marked white Afrikaner politics, so did African leaders from outside the Transvaal often harbour a mistrust of what was seen to be the more extreme approach of Transvaal leaders. In a "confidential" letter to T.E. Tshunugwa, the ANC's national organiser, on 6 February 1956, Prof. Matthews had the following reservations about one of the drafts of the new constitution that was circulating at the time. He wrote:

The danger in this new constitution proposed by the Eastern Cape is the abolition of Provincial conferences. There will be too much centralisation and I am sure it will kill the whole organisation in a few months [not years] time This is another Transvaal move intended to hide their deficiencies. They think that in this way they will be able to hold off the Cape Branches with their better financial organisation. They are supported in this by some of our Cape leaders who do not see what is behind this move.⁽⁷⁷⁾

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75. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 37, 279.
76. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 37.
77. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 38.



As leader of the ANC, Luthuli had strong doubts about the real aims and objectives of the proposed new constitution. Shortly before an ANC special conference held at the end of March 1956, Luthuli privately warned that he may have to seriously consider whether he can honourably continue to act as President-General of the ANC. He later elaborated on these views in a letter to Dr. Arthur Letele, the organisation's Treasurer-General on 22 March (1956). In this Luthuli made it clear that he felt strongly about "abolishing in any new Constitution the Provincial level in our organisational structure. I do not like overcentralisation", he wrote. "Power must be shared or else you create dictators."⁽⁷⁸⁾

Clearly, therefore, the proposed constitution and the envisaged changes to the organisational structure of the ANC did not carry the anticipated support of the older generation of Congress leaders. By 1957 a clear division had developed between the radical and relatively younger leaders of the ANC and Youth League and the older, more traditional, leaders as to the future direction that the ANC's policy and structure should take.

As a result of these conditions and the fact that many in the ANC were in disagreement with the views of the radicals that the ANC was in mortal danger of being outlawed by the government, the draft that was eventually accepted by the ANC in 1957 turned out to be more of a victory for the moderates and the cause of moderate thinking in the ANC than for the radicals and those in support of the M-Plan. Thus, although the constitution reflected a minor shift towards the sort of centralisation called for by Mandela and his M-Plan, the document remained conservative in nature by retaining much of the cumbersome structure of the 1943 constitution. Although the new constitution served the needs of the conservative, relatively older generation of leaders in the ANC by the end of the 1950's, it certainly did not do the same for the younger and more radical minded leaders of the Youth League, who considered it an out of date, if not reactionary

78. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 38.



document.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Instead of taking a backseat to the older leadership in 1957, the adoption of the constitution only made the radicals more determined than ever to impose their more militant and radical thinking on the ANC and Black political thinking in general. As such the 1957-constitution undoubtedly served as an important milestone on the road to the formation of Umkhonto in 1961.

5. THE ANC CAMPAIGNS OF THE MID- AND LATE 1950'S AND THE FAILURE OF NON-VIOLENT PROTEST

A further factor that undoubtedly also had an influence on the thinking of the radicals both in and out of the ANC, and which probably had a bearing on their shift towards political violence in 1961, was the general failure of the ANC directed campaigns of the 1950's to bring about meaningful political changes based on the policy of non-violence and moderation. Following the failure of the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the ANC's National Executive in keeping with the principles of the 1949-Programme of Action, together with the remaining members of the Congress Alliance, drew up plans in 1953 for three major campaigns of protest. These campaigns were designed to start in 1954 and reach their climax in 1955.

The first and most militant of these campaigns was aimed against the forced removal of some 58 000 African people from the western areas of the city of Johannesburg for resettlement elsewhere.⁽⁸⁰⁾

The second campaign was aimed against the newly introduced Bantu Education Act of 1953, a measure which potentially had a more profound and far-reaching influence on Black thinking than any other measure passed by the government of Dr. Malan since it came to power some five years earlier.

79. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 279.

80. E. Feit, Conflict and Communication. An Analysis of the Western Areas and Bantu Education Campaigns of the African National Congress of South Africa, pp. 109 - 112; See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 19 - 20.



The third important development that influenced Black political thinking and development in the mid 1950's was the campaign aimed at the convening of a truly national representative Congress of the People, to adopt a freedom charter for all the people of South Africa. Of the three campaigns, the last one had the most profound and lasting influence on the direction and future of Black politics in South Africa.

The Western Areas Campaign had its origins in the decision by the government to resettle the people of the Black townships of Sophiatown and Martindale. The idea of doing so was not new nor popular with the Johannesburg City Council. The issue had been simmering in the Council ever since the idea was first raised by the government in the late 1940's, early 1950's. As a result of the reluctance of the Johannesburg City Council to do anything about it, the entire issue regarding the future of the people of Sophiatown and Martindale was eventually taken out of its hands by the government in 1952. Prompted by this development and the determination of the State to proceed with the removal of the people of Sophiatown and Martindale, the ANC in 1954 hurriedly set into motion plans for a campaign to oppose the removal. A number of mass meetings were convened around the Witwatersrand. These meetings were well attended but they eventually became bogged down by secondary issues such as low wages, poor living conditions, high transport costs, the pass laws and police raids. These issues, while important to Blacks in the Western Areas, had nothing to do with the original purpose of the campaign, with the result that in the end it failed to achieve its objectives. (81)

The second campaign which was aimed against the Bantu Education Act of 1953 fared no better. (82) Here too, as in the case of the Western Areas Campaign, the question of Bantu Education had been receiving the attention of the ANC for a number of years. Yet in spite of its objection to the proposed Act, no specific steps were

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81. Feit, Conflict and Communication, pp. 109 - 112.
82. Feit, Conflict and Communication, pp. 153 - 154. For a more detailed discussion of the ANC's campaign against the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the local response to it see Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 121 - 134.



mooted or adopted by the ANC leadership to counter the Bantu Education Bill when it became law. Consequently, when the Bantu Education Bill did become law in 1953, the ANC lacked the necessary strategy and unity to oppose it. Individual Congress leaders used every opportunity to speak out against the new Law, but beyond this very little was done to effectively oppose it. This remained more or less the case until December 1954, when the idea of a school boycott was raised for the first time. According to Edward Feit,⁽⁸³⁾ the reason for the ANC's slow reaction to the 1953 Act was probably the fact that:

Africans were apprehensive, fearing on the one hand, a reduction in the standards of African education, but eager on the other to have their children in school. Congress followers were, by and large, a minority and would have to induce the majority to follow their behests.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Perhaps a more accurate explanation of the situation facing the African parent and the ANC was that given by Albert Luthuli, who wrote that:

The choice before parents is almost an impossible one - they do not want Bantu Education and they do not want their children on the streets. They have to choose between two evils, and no rule of thumb indicates which is the greater.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Consequently, the ANC leadership was faced with a situation which saw some accepting the new legislation on the basis of "a rotten education may be better than none", while others rejected it outrightly as "unacceptable and inferior". "As it turned out", Luthuli wrote in 1962, "some places were fully prepared and others utterly unprepared for boycotts. That was our dilemma".⁽⁸⁶⁾

Of the three major campaigns called for by the mid 1950's the third,

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83. Feit, Conflict and Communication, p. 157. See also Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 121 - 134.
84. Feit, Conflict and Communication, p. 157. See also Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 121 - 134.
85. Luthuli, Let my People Go, p. 132.
86. Luthuli, Let my People Go, p. 132.



namely the Congress of the People convened at Kliptown in June 1955, turned out to be the most successful. The aim of the Congress of the People, as Z.K. Matthews had pointed out in his presidential speech to the Cape Provincial Congress of the ANC in 1954, was to consider the entire question of convening a "National Congress" that would be truly representative of "all the people of South Africa", "irrespective of colour, creed or race", to draw up a "Freedom Charter" for a "democratic" South Africa of the future.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Matthews' idea of a national congress was enthusiastically adopted by the ANC at its Annual National Congress later in the same year and in June 1955, after invitations were sent out to more than two hundred organisations, including the ruling National Party, a total of 2 884 delegates representing the widest possible spectrum of political opinion in the country gathered at Kliptown just outside Johannesburg to adopt a truly representative "Freedom Charter" for all the people of South Africa. Allegedly drawn up by Joe Slovo and Abram Fischer (the latter later became the leader of the underground South African Communist Party after Slovo had left the country in early 1963), the Freedom Charter with its strong socialistic (some say Marxist⁽⁸⁸⁾) character not only became the very foundation upon which the ANC leadership based their organisation's political aims and objectives after 1956, but it also effectively came to reflect the growing mood of radical thinking within the organisation and its allies.⁽⁸⁹⁾

Although the adoption of the Freedom Charter represented a clear victory for the radicals both in the ANC as well as those outside it, particularly those in the banned SACP, the document was not appreciated everywhere. The South African government, for instance,

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87. New Age, 1954.12.16; See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 56 - 63.
88. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.02.14 (Concern over outdated policies), p. 10; For a more detailed analysis and discussion of the Freedom Charter and Umkhonto's relationship to it, see Chapter nine of this study.
89. Bureau of Information, Talking with the ANC, Pretoria, 1986, p. 5; See also G. Ludi and B. Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 10; The Daily News (Durban), 1990.02.14 (Concern over outdated policies), p. 10.



labelled it a revolutionary document which has at its aim the political, social and economic transformation of South Africa through forces of violence.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The Africanists faction in the ANC and the Youth League objected to the Charter's multi-racial basis as a watering down of African nationalism.⁽⁹¹⁾ The Africanists believed that the Charter in its call for a "multi-racial" government of South Africa that would be both "democratic" and "socialistic" was in direct conflict with the Pan-African ideal of "Africa for Africans" and the 1949 Programme of Action. The Africanists claimed:

The preamble to the Programme speaks the language of the Africanists. It speaks of 'national freedom', 'independence' and 'White domination' The fundamental principles of the Programme of Action are inspired by the desire to achieve national freedom. By national freedom we mean freedom from White domination and the attainment of political independence ...⁽⁹²⁾

An equally strong attack was made on the Freedom Charter by the African journalist, Jordan Ngubane. Influential in Black political circles, Ngubane claimed that the ultimate aim of the charter was to condition the African people for the purpose of accepting communism via the back door.⁽⁹³⁾

Both Ngubane and the Africanists' opposition to the Freedom Charter was shared by the South African government who, on the second day of the Congress, raided the proceedings and confiscated all documents pertaining to it. They made a detailed list of all the delegates who were present at the Congress and the first arrests in connection with the raid were made on 5 December 1956. A total of 156 people were eventually detained by the police on a charge of high treason.⁽⁹⁴⁾

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90. See Chapter nine The Aims and Objectives of Umkhonto we Sizwe and its Relationship to the Freedom Charter.
91. P.N. Raboroko, Congress and the Africanists: The Africanists Case, (Africa South 4 (3), April - June 1960, pp. 24 - 27, 28 - 32).
92. Raboroko, Congress and the Africanists (Africa South 4 (3), April - June 1960, p. 28).
93. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, pp. 99 - 100.
94. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 19 - 21, 72 - 75, 80; See also Luthuli, Let My People Go, pp. 145 - 154 and Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 31.



The preparatory examination of the accused began on 19 December 1956. Charges against sixty-one persons, including Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, as well as a number of former card-carrying members of the SACP were soon withdrawn. A revised indictment against the remaining 91 in the trial which by now had become known as the Treason Trial was introduced in January 1959. Despite this new indictment, the trial continued for another two years until all the remaining accused were eventually also found not-guilty and discharged by the court on 29 March 1961.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Although the trial was a clear and resounding victory for the ANC in general it was an even bigger success for its more radical leadership who effectively used the opportunity brought about by the absence of many of the older and more conservative leaders, due to their involvement in the trial, to strengthen their own positions and to establish closer ties with their radical compatriots in the SACP, the SAIC, the COD and other radical left-wing organisations.

Thus as a result of the trial a new generation of younger and more radically minded leaders rose to prominence in Black politics between 1957 and 1961. In addition, the trial also helped to foster closer relations between the Congress Alliance and the White liberal movement in South Africa. Karis and Carter writes:

Sympathetic Whites accepted the heavy burden of obligation to provide for the defence and the care of the accused and, to some extent, the care of their families. But while liberals sought closer relations with Africans, left-wing Whites and Indians sat day after day in the unsegregated dock of a segregated court-room, closely identified as fellow accused with the African opposition.⁽⁹⁶⁾

These developments brought new ties that would serve as an important basis for developments in the early 1960's.

Moreover, as the trial dragged on year after year, argues Nathaniel

95. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 31.

96. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 274.



Weyl, "it gave South African Communist leaders the world-wide publicity they needed and, moreover, enabled them to appear to be the victims of fascist injustice." (97)

The Treason Trial therefore played an important part in the shift towards violence after 1960, by giving those who championed such a course of events a sense of belonging; in other words, a sense of unity in the struggle against the racially oppressive policies of the South African government.

This drift towards closer co-operation between the radicals in the ANC and the political left was borne out by what Nelson Mandela, one of the founding members of Umkhonto we Sizwe, had to say about the relationship between the aims and objectives of the ANC and the SACP at his trial in 1964. In his controversial but much quoted statement to the court, Mandela acknowledged the fact that there has often been close co-operation between the ANC and the Party and that both organisations support the Freedom Charter. He further explained that communists have always played an active role in the struggle against colonialism because the short-term objects of communism would always correspond with the long-term aims of freedom movements. This pattern of co-operation between communists and non-communists, he said, had been repeated in the National Liberation Movement of South Africa. (**)

It is ironic therefore that the South African government in its attempt to stamp out communism between 1950 and the beginning of the 1960's did more to cement the cause of the radical left and to consolidate their position through its heavy-handed efforts than destroying it. The court's verdict in March 1961, that, while there was evidence of a strong left-wing tendency in the ANC, the communists were not in control of it and that the state had failed to prove that the ANC intended to achieve its aims through violent means, (**) was thus an important victory for the radical left.

97. Weyl, Traitor's End, p. 102.

98. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 179 - 180.

99. The Daily News (Durban), 1961.03.29; See also Benson, The African Patriots, pp. 283 - 284.



6. THE AFRICANIST BREAK WITH THE ANC

Attempts to gain control of the ANC leadership following the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955 not only came from the radical left but also from the radical right of the African political spectrum. Encouraged by the incapacitation of the established ANC leadership, Potlako Leballo and Josias Madzunjja made an open bid for the leadership of the ANC in the Transvaal in early 1958. Their attempt however failed, and they were consequently kicked out of the ANC in the Transvaal in May 1958. The final clash between the ANC's Transvaal leadership and the Africanists followed a few months later in September at the ANC's Provincial Congress held in Orlando township. Determined not to let the Africanists disrupt the meeting, the congress organisers barred Leballo and Madzunjja, together with about a hundred of their followers, from the conference hall on the second day of the proceedings. (100)

Confronted by a large group of ANC youths armed with an array of crude weapons, Leballo and his followers assembled some distance away from the conference hall where they then proceeded to hold their own meeting. At this "meeting" the following resolution was adopted:

We have consistently advocated African Nationalism, and whenever we have stepped onto a political platform we have expounded that doctrine. In 1949, we got the African people to accept the national building programme of that year. We have stuck honestly and consistently to that programme. In 1955, the Kliptown Charter was adopted by the ANC. We thought it was in irreconcilable conflict with the 1949 programme, and for that reason opposed it. ... We are launching out on our own as the custodians of ANC policy as formulated in 1912 and pursued up to the time of the Congress Alliance. (101)

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100. C. Motsisi, Madzunjja. What makes him tick so loud, (Drum, April to May 1959, pp. 26 - 28). See also C.J.B. le Roux, Die Pan-Africanist Congress in Suid-Afrika, 1958 - 1964 (Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, R.A.U., 1977), p. 68; C. Temba, Africanists cut loose at Transvaal ANC meeting, (Drum, December 1958, p. 31); Umlabeni, Group of 100 Africanists breaks away, (Contact 1 (21), November 1958, p. 4).
101. Umlabeni, Group of 100 Africanists breaks away, (Contact 1 (21), November 1958, p. 4).



Following their break with the Transvaal ANC, the Africanists under Leballo and Madzunja held their first National Conference at Orlando East on 4 April 1959 to discuss the formation of a new Blacks only organisation based upon the principle of undiluted African nationalism as defined by the slogan "Africa for the Africans". Out of this meeting the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) of South Africa was born in April 1959. Robert Sobukwe was its first President and Leballo its Secretary-General. The PAC's first annual conference was held in December 1959 and four months later it was banned with the ANC for its role in the Sharpeville incident of 21 March 1960.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Although the Africanists in the ANC represented only a small pressure group within the organisation, their expulsion, coupled with the removal of many of the organisations top but more conservative leaders through the Treason Trial, as well as the numerous restrictions placed on them by the government, effectively paved the way for the take over of the ANC leadership and the national liberation movement by the radicals under Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Joe Matthews, and others after April 1960.

7. CONCLUSION

Although the period between 1912 and the outbreak of the Second World War were formative years in the history of the ANC and Black political awakening, the ANC remained largely an elitist organisation with a relatively small membership. It was politically so weak during these years that even the Communist Party had little interest in it. It was only after the collapse of Kadalie's ICU in the early 1930's and the introduction of the Hertzog legislation in 1935/6 that the Communist Party began to show more than just a passing interest in the ANC. But with the conservative Seme being president of the ANC, a position he retained until 1937, the CPSA had to await the election of a more liberal leader to improve their position in the ANC. This came in 1940 with the election of Dr. A.B. Xuma and

102. Le Roux, Die Pan-Africanist Congress in Suid-Afrika, 1958 - 1964 (Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, R.A.U., 1977), p. 125.



the formation of the Youth League in 1943. Although Xuma was not pro-communist as such, he nonetheless, through his more dynamic leadership and emphasis on mass as well as youth organisation, paved the way for closer co-operation between the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations such as the SAIC and the CPSA.

A major if not the major factor in this new direction was the Youth League movement. Guided by young, dynamic but above all, militant African leaders, the Youth League was responsible for much of the new direction that the ANC took in the years following the end of the Second World War. Besides the numerous new policy documents that flowed from it, the Youth League was instrumental in the ANC broadening its base from an elitist African organisation to a broad mass-based Black organisation. The first major step in this direction came in 1946 with the signing of the "Doctor's Pact" between the leadership of the ANC and that of the SAIC. Although the "pact" was basically an agreement of co-operation and friendship between the ANC and the SAIC, the impact and influence that the SAIC's radical membership (many if not most of its leaders were members of the CPSA) had on the leadership of the ANC, but more particularly the Youth League, was tremendous. It effectively paved the way for Marxist ideology and radical politics to enter the ANC; a development that was accelerated by two major events after 1947. The first was the election of the National Party of Dr. D.F. Malan to power in 1948, and the second was the banning of the CPSA. As a result of these two developments many African leaders in the ANC, but more predominantly in the Youth League began to alter their views from an anti-communist to a pro-communist stance.

Mandela was one of those who underwent this transformation. By 1951 he, like many others in the Youth League, had become an active supporter of communism. He gave an explanation of how this transformation came about at his trial in 1963/1964. In his by now famous statement to the court, he made it clear that prior to the banning of the CPSA in 1950, joint campaigns between the ANC and the Party were



accepted practice and that African communists could and did become members of the ANC. Senior African communist leaders such as Albert Nzula, Moses Kotane and J.B. Marks, he said, were all members of the ANC prior to the banning of the Party in 1950. He went on to say that, when he joined the ANC via the Youth League in 1944, the accepted policy in the CYL was not to admit communists because it would lead to a watering down of the principles of African nationalism. In terms of this view which was predominant in the League during the 1940's, Mandela was one of those who had called for the expulsion of communist from the ANC's leadership, particularly its National Executive Committee in these years. But by the beginning of the 1950's Mandela had come to accept the views of those who had argued that the ANC was not a political party with only one school of thought, but that it was rather a "Parliament of the African people, accommodating people of various political convictions, all united by the common goal of national liberation." (103)

He went on to point out that, besides the fact that the ANC could no longer afford the luxury of theoretical differences between itself and other groups in their struggle against racial discrimination, communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings, and as their equals, and, who were prepared to work with them for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. As a result of this, there were many Africans, he said, who equated freedom with communism. Thus, with the banning of the CPSA in 1950 many of these African leaders came to feel that the government was depriving them of the only true ally they had in their struggle for political, social and economic freedom. (104)

Of course with the banning of the CPSA, and the decision by its Central Committee to continue with the organisation from the underground, the ANC and its leadership became of the utmost

103. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 180 - 181.

104. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 181.



significance to the survival of the Party. Part of this survival strategy and the closing of ranks after 1950 was the need for the structural reorganisation of the ANC to enable it to operate, like the Party, from the underground should it too get banned. The outcome of this thinking was the Mandela or M-Plan which was presented to the Transvaal division of the ANC in 1953. Unfortunately for the radical leaders in the Youth League, their plans for the reorganisation of the ANC and the centralisation of authority were not shared by the majority of the ANC's conservative leadership both at the national as well as the provincial level of organisation. As a result, attempts by the radicals to have the M-Plan implemented between 1953 and the end of the decade were, with the exception of the Port Elizabeth region in the Eastern Cape and Cato Manor in Durban, largely a failure. This particular development would eventually have a major influence on the thinking of the radicals in the early 1960's not to reform the ANC as they initially planned to do, but to rather form a new organisation along the lines of the M-Plan.

Although the failure of the radicals to have the M-Plan implemented played a major role in developments after 1960, it was not the only factor in the 1950's that had a bearing on the later decision to adopt a policy of armed struggle in 1961. There were other developments prior to the Sharpeville incident and the banning of the ANC that helped to influence the shift to violence and armed resistance. The most important of these developments was undoubtedly the failure of the 1952 Defiance Campaign, as well as the other non-violent protest campaigns led by the ANC between 1952 and 1959. None of these campaigns, which were conducted on the basis of non-violence, achieved any meaningful change to the African's political and economic situation. What is more, the Congress of the People at Kliptown and its adoption of the Freedom Charter, failed to convince the government to have a rethink on its racial policies and to start accommodating Black political aspirations. Instead it stimulated the government to unleash the full force of its legal machinery on the Congress Movement and the leaders of the Congress of the People (and the Congress Alliance as a whole). In its attempt to decapitate the



ANC and to destroy the underground Communist Party, the government not only dismally failed to achieve its aims, but it unwittingly strengthened the position of the radical left wing inside the ANC and the Youth League to the point where they had become the real power by 1961. By this stage, whatever opposition to violence there was in the ANC had been long dealt with. The Africanist, who strongly objected to the ANC's co-operation with the non-African and communist left, were expelled from the ANC in 1957; and with most of the top leaders of the ANC, such as Luthuli, being tied up by the Treason Trial or under banning orders, the stage was set for a complete takeover of the existing leadership of the ANC by the radicals by the beginning of the 1960's.



CHAPTER TWO

THE DECISION TO COMMENCE WITH THE ARMED STRUGGLE

So far the origins and broad development of African political thought between the formation of the ANC in 1912 and the organisation's banning in 1960 have been examined. Next, those factors and circumstances during the 1950's and early 1960's that, according to Nelson Mandela, had a particular bearing on the decision in 1961 to finally break with the established non-violent policies of the ANC, in favour of a policy supporting armed struggle and revolutionary violence against the state must be focused on. In this chapter the factors and circumstances specifically referred to by Mandela in his famous but controversial statement during the Rivonia Trial in 1964 will be analysed. As controversial as Mandela's statement may be, it is the only 'primary' source available on the subject and as such it is almost indispensable to anyone wishing to study the origins of Umkhonto. There is simply no other source available that has a better explanation as to why Umkhonto was formed in November 1961. But having said that, it should be pointed out that not everything Mandela told the court in 1963 was accepted as the truth. On the contrary, his statement could not be subjected to cross-examination by the prosecution, with the result that he never had to prove any of the claims he made. In the limited space of this chapter each of the factors referred to by Mandela in his 1963 statement will be critically examined in order to determine to what extent they contributed to the decision to move to revolutionary armed violence in 1961.

1. NELSON MANDELA ON THE REMOTE AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE

At his second trial in 1964, which is commonly referred to as the



Rivonia Trial, Nelson Mandela gave the following reasons as to why he and his followers thought it necessary in 1961 to adopt a policy of revolutionary armed violence in direct defiance of the existing non-violent policies of the ANC:

In 1960 the Government held a Referendum which led to the establishment of a Republic. Africans who constituted approximately 70 per cent of the population of South Africa, were not entitled to vote, and were not even consulted about the proposed constitutional change. All of us were apprehensive about our future under the proposed White Republic, and a resolution was taken to hold an All-in-African Conference to call for a National Convention, and to organise mass demonstrations on the eve of the unwanted Republic, if the Government failed to call the Convention.

... The Government's answer was to introduce new and harsher laws, to mobilise its armed forces, and to send saracens, armed vehicles and soldiers into the townships in a massive show of force designed to intimidate the people. This was an indication that the Government had decided to rule by force alone, and this decision was a milestone on the road to Umkhonto.

... the hard facts were that fifty years of non-violence had brought the African People nothing but more and more repressive legislation and fewer and fewer rights. It may not be easy for this Court to understand, but it is a fact that for a long time the people had been talking of violence - of the day when they would fight the White man and win back their country ...

When some of us discussed this in May and June of 1961, it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial State by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism.

... by this time violence had, in fact, become a feature of the South African political scene. There had been violence in 1957 when the women of Zeerust were ordered to carry passes; there was violence in 1958 with the enforcement of the Bantu authorities and cattle culling in Sekhukuniland; there was violence in 1959 when the people of Cato Manor protested against pass raids; there was violence in 1960 when the Government attempted to impose Bantu Authorities in Pondoland. Thirty-



nine Africans died in these Pondoland disturbances. In 1961 there had been riots in Warmbaths, and all this time ... the Transkei had been seething mass of unrest. Each disturbance pointed clearly to the inevitable growth amongst Africans of the belief that violence was the only way out - it showed that a Government which used force to maintain its rule teaches the oppressed to use force to oppose it. Already small groups had arisen in the urban areas and were spontaneously making plans for violent forms of political struggle. There now arose a danger that these groups would adopt terrorism against Africans; as well as Whites, if not properly directed.⁽¹⁾

To what extent Mandela's statement, which was widely published during the Rivonia Trial, had an influence on the thinking and views of other African leaders in the underground in the early 1960's is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty. Yet much of what he had to say was subsequently repeated by others in the liberation movement, such as Joe Matthews and Oliver Tambo. In an article that appeared in 1969, entitled "Armed Struggle in South Africa"⁽²⁾, Joe Matthews, who was one of the leaders of the Youth League in the 1940's and 1950's and one of the chief supporters of the Mandela Plan, made it clear that long before the ANC was banned in 1960, there was already a steady belief among many in the ANC that the South African government had no intention of ever adhering to the peaceful demands of the ANC and Blacks in general.

The massacre of Sharpeville in 1960, which was far from being the worst in South African history, highlighted the determination of the white privileged minority to resist any change in the status quo. As a result of these conditions, the question of whether armed struggle should be adopted, came to a head in 1961. This followed the crushing of the strike movement [at the end of May] the same year against the establishment of a White Republic. The conditions which made armed

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1. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 167 - 168. See also Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Statement from the dock. pp. 11 - 14.
 2. J. Matthews, Armed Struggle in South Africa, (Marxism Today 13 (9), 1969, p. 271).



struggle the correct choice at that stage were many. But the major conditions [that contributed to this decision] were that:

- a. there were no prospects of achieving liberation by the methods of the previous fifty years;
- b. the struggle of the previous period had created big mass organisations and a leadership capable of gaining the allegiance of the people for armed struggle and with the ability to carry out the planning, preparation and overall conduct of the struggle;
- c. the independence movements in Africa had, particularly in 1960, swept across the continent and by 1961 stood close to the borders of the unliberated White controlled countries in the South. This was a vital factor for it meant that the opportunity now arose which had not existed before - of bases at which our people could obtain the training and facilities for conducting armed struggle.

Oliver Tambo too agreed with these views. In an article published in 1974 entitled "The Black Reaction [to Apartheid]", Tambo⁽³⁾ set out his views on the conditions and circumstances that gave rise to the ANC's decision to adopt a policy supporting armed resistance. In an overview of developments in South Africa since the end of the Second World War, Tambo placed a great deal of emphasis on the election of the Nationalist government under Dr. Malan to power in 1948. From this point hence, he stated, "the policy of segregation and white dominance identified as apartheid, became characterised by the increasingly violent enforcement of this foul policy". He went on to say that opposition to the policies of the nationalist government were not confined to Blacks only but were shared by Whites who felt that apartheid was a recipe for violence and the sort of provocation that might enbroil the country in bloodshed. Tambo went on to say that these developments, together with the government's reaction to the rural unrest in Sekhukhuneland, Zeerust and Pondoland, as well as the failure of the end of May strike action planned by the ANC which followed the Pietermaritzburg All-in-Conference of March 1961, all contributed to the

3. O. Tambo, The Black Reaction, (Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion 4 (3). 1974. pp. 4 - 5).



decision to introduce a higher level of struggle. Shortly after Sharpeville, it was announced that the struggle had entered a violent phase. This announcement was accompanied by acts of organised violence, sabotage, and the training outside South Africa of hundreds of activists in preparation for the armed phase of the struggle.⁽⁴⁾

Presumably Tambo was referring here to the period after the formation of Umkhonto in November 1961, because no combat training of ANC members apparently took place prior to 1962.

1.1 The Rural Unrest of the 1950's and the Early 1960's

According to Mandela, the incidents of rural unrest and violence that broke out in the mid-1950's and which, as in the case of the Pondoland and Cato Manor revolts, lasted until the early 1960's, had a deep effect on the thinking and decisions of ANC leaders. As far as they were concerned the unrest was the direct result of the government's racial policies.⁽⁵⁾ The government, on the other hand, blamed the unrest on the ANC's anti-government policies.

(a) The Zeerust Riots

One of the first areas where rioting broke out in 1957, was in the Bafurutse (also spelled Bahurutshe or Lehurutshe) reserve in the Zeerust district of the Western Transvaal. Most sources⁽⁶⁾ on the

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4. Tambo, The Black Reaction, (Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion 4 (3), 1974, p. 5). See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, 1986, pp. 1 - 6.
 5. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 168. See also H. Barrell, MK, p. 8.
 6. For detailed discussions of the Zeerust riots see: H. Balk, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the recent unrest and disturbances in the Linokana and other native areas in the district of Marico and in the native areas in the adjoining districts, Pretoria, 1957.12.4, (Unpublished Report); Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 275 - 279; M. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 66; The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg, 1958.03.10); C. Hooper, Brief Authority, pp. 78 - 277; J. Fairburn, Zeerust: A Profile of Resistance, (Africa South, December 1958, p. 38); Z. Sonkosi, African Opposition in South Africa from 1948 - 1969 (Unpublished Phd Thesis, Free University, West-Berlin, Sept. 1975), pp. 220 - 223.



Zeerust riots, as the unrest in the Bafurutse reserve became known, argue that the situation was brought about by the government's persistent desire to extend the pass or reference book system for Africans to women in the Bafurutse reserve and adjacent areas. Although the Bafurutse reserve was relatively close to the rich labour markets of the Pretoria-Witwatersrand area, the reserve and its people had been left largely unaffected by the political and economic development of this area. This remained largely the case until 1957 when the Department of Native Affairs (DNA) decided to inform the people of the reserve that they were going to extend the pass system to African women in the area. An unpopular measure at best, the announcement by the DNA became a hotly debated issue with the result that by the time that the first mobile pass units began to arrive in the reserve, feelings were running high in opposition to the pass issue. The reserve's opposition to passes for women was fully shared by the leader of the reserve, Chief Abraham Moilola, who formally disassociated himself from the entire pass issue in March 1957.⁽⁷⁾

As a result of these developments, most women in the reserve stayed away from the mobile pass units, with the result that the DNA called a public meeting of all the adults in the reserve on 4 April to clear up whatever misunderstanding there may have been about the issuing of passes. At this meeting Chief Moilola was publicly stripped of his office and expelled from the reserve.⁽⁸⁾ Needless to say, this action by the Chief Native Affairs Commissioner did not solve the problem but only aggravated it. The news of the Chief's dismissal quickly spread to the surrounding areas and the nearby Reef where many of the reserve's men were employed as migrant workers. Within a week of Chief Moilola's dismissal more than a hundred and fifty men had arrived back in the reserve to add their opposition to the pass issue. A special meeting of all the inhabitants of the reserve was subsequently convened at which the pass system for women was rejected.

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7. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 274 - 275; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 66.
 8. Balk, Commission of Enquiry, pp. 13 - 14; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 66.



At the same meeting it was also decided to place eight tribesmen, whom it was believed were responsible for Chief Moiloo's dismissal, on trial. They apparently complained to the local Native Affairs authority about the way in which the Chief executed his duties. Their anger was primarily directed at Chief Moiloo's uncle and three of his supporters. At the "trial" that followed, the eight men were first severely beaten and then sentenced to death. When the police heard of the planned execution, they intervened. In the ensuing investigation 25 tribesmen were arrested and later brought to trial on charges of attempted murder.

Shortly after these events wide-spread violence broke out in the reserve. Buildings and institutions associated with the authorities and the State, such as schools, churches and Bantu Affairs offices, as well as the people who worked there were attacked. Schools were boycotted and in the end all schools had to be closed as a result of it.⁽⁹⁾

From Bafurutse the unrest and violence rapidly spread to the adjacent areas. Local chiefs and headsmen such as Chief Alfred Gopane, who tried to co-operate with the local Department of Native Affairs out of fear for his position, was soon brought to heel by the rioters who arrived in busloads from Johannesburg to protest against the pass system for women. According to the findings of the commission of enquiry that was subsequently appointed to examine the causes of the unrest, a number of the men who arrived from Johannesburg in the reserve in April wore the colours of the ANC and gave the ANC-salute at meetings.⁽¹⁰⁾ Many of the women apparently responded with similar salutes and ANC-slogans.

The unrest continued over the next four months with men and women constantly arriving in the reserve from the Reef to attend meetings and to give their support. By October most of the public services such as the postal service, the Railway bus service and the telephone

9. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, pp. 66;
Balk, Commission of Enquiry, p. 14.

10. Balk, Commission of Enquiry, pp. 14 - 16.



service to and from the area had broken down.⁽¹¹⁾ In an attempt to restore order and to prevent any further damage from taking place, the police were instructed to seek out the agitators who were causing the unrest and arrest them. Unfortunately, the manner in which this was done only aggravated the situation. According to Tom Lodge,⁽¹²⁾ the police's intervention into the unrest in the reserve was done in such a heavy-handed manner that it only increased the resistance instead of alleviating it. He points out that these actions, together with night raids on villages and the homes of tribesmen, created a climate of terror throughout the area.⁽¹³⁾ While it may be difficult to prove or disprove both Lodge or Hooper's claims of heavy-handed police action, the government's determination to extend the pass system to African women and the presence of police units in the Bafurutse reserve undoubtedly added to the heightened tension among the local people. If one adds to this acts such as night raids on villages and an intimidating attitude, both for which the South African police has been repeatedly criticized over the years, it is not difficult to understand the Africans' mood in the reserve. On the other hand, the police were called in to assist the DNA with the implementation of the pass system and as such had a duty to perform which they probably knew from past experience was not a popular one with the local African people.

Nonetheless, as a result of the above conditions and the inability of the police and the DNA to find a solution to the unrest, the reserve was in a virtual state of war by the beginning of 1958. This eventually prompted the government to prohibit by means of a proclamation (Proclamation no. 52 of 1958) Africans not living in the Bafurutse reserve from entering the area without special permission. The proclamation also made it illegal for anyone in such a prohibited area to make any statement or to do anything that could be construed

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11. Balk, Commission of Enquiry, pp. 21 - 22.
 12. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 276.
 13. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 276. See also C. Hooper, Brief Authority, pp. 100 - 277.



as an act of subversion or interference with the authority of the State, which included the authority of chiefs and local headmen.⁽¹⁴⁾

Proclamation 52 of 1958 was subsequently followed by Proclamation 67 of 1958.⁽¹⁵⁾ In terms of the latter proclamation, the ANC and all its associated members were banned from the Marico district. Also banned from the region were Chief Boaz Moilola, who had refused the chieftainship following Chief Abraham Moilola's dismissal and expulsion from the area. The Reverend Hooper and his family were also removed from the reserve by the State who claimed that Hooper, who was an outspoken opponent of the pass-system and the government, had played an active role in persuading the women of the reserve not to accept the reference book system.⁽¹⁶⁾ As a result of these and other measures introduced in 1958, order was restored to the region by the end of the year. By that stage, however, hundreds of tribesmen and women had fled the reserve in search of a more secure environment. Some had sought temporary refuge on the farms of nearby European farmers, while others had crossed the nearby border into Bechuanaland. Exactly how many left the reserve between 1957 and 1958 is not clear and will probably never be known for certain. Figures quoted, ranged from as few as 250 to several hundred. The official point of view was that the exact figure of those who had left the reserve could not be determined but that it was doubtful whether more than 700 people out of a reserve population of 34 000 were away at any given time. This estimation included the fact that a fair portion of the population in the reserve was almost permanently away from home due to contract work or for other purposes.⁽¹⁷⁾

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14. Government Gazette (Extraordinary), no. 6026, Proclamation 52 of 1958, February 1958, pp. 1 - 2. See also Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 32 - 33; and Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, pp. 68 - 69.
 15. Government Gazette (Extraordinary), no. 6032, Proclamation 67 of 1958, 1958.03.17, p. 1. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 70; and Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 33.
 16. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 70.
 17. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 71.



These migrant workers, although away from the Bafurutse reserve for long periods of time, nonetheless retained their contact with the local people and as such they formed a vital link between the people in the reserve and the ANC and its various organs in the urban areas such as those in the cities and urban areas of the Transvaal. The exact role that the ANC played in the Zeerust riots will be discussed later in this chapter.⁽¹⁸⁾

(b) The Sekhukhuneland Riots

The second major incident of rural unrest that broke out in the 1950's and which was referred to by Mandela as having had an influence on the thinking of the ANC leadership in the early 1960's was the Sekhukhuneland unrest of 1958. Like the Zeerust, the Sekhukhuneland disturbances also developed out of the government's determination to implement its policies in the region; in this case the system of Bantu authorities. Although the Sekhukhuneland riots were as disruptive as those in the Zeerust area they were, however, less well documented or researched into. No official commission of enquiry such as that appointed to investigate the Zeerust riots was ever introduced into the Sekhukhuneland unrest. Nonetheless, sufficient information is available both in the form of newspaper reports and the reports of the Institute of Race Relations from which to trace the general causes and impact of the unrest.⁽¹⁹⁾

The Sekhukhuneland reserve is situated more or less midway between Pietersburg and Middelburg in the Eastern Transvaal and is the home of the Bapedi and the Bakone tribes. Like the people of the Bafurutse reserve, the Bapedi and the Bakone lived in scattered villages throughout the reserve under the control of their respective

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18. Although researchers such as Tom Lodge and others have attributed little of the unrest in the Zeerust area to the influence and activities of the ANC it was recently claimed in an article published by Peter Delius entitled Sebatakgomo: Migrant Organisation, the ANC and the Sekhukhuneland Revolt, that the ANC indeed played a major role in the Zeerust unrest situation. For a discussion of the role of the ANC see pp. 68 - 76 of this chapter.
 19. House of Assembly Debates, 1958.07.18, col. 514; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 73.



chiefs and headsmen. Of the two tribes the de facto suzerainty of the Bapedi people had for many years been accepted in the region and at the time of the unrest the Paramount Chief of the Bapedi, who acted on behalf of the reserve, was Chief Moroamoche Sekhukhune.⁽²⁰⁾

With a view to the establishment of the Bantu Authorities system in the Sekhukhuneland reserve, the South African government had since the early 1950's been attempting to resettle the Bakone tribe in the south of Sekhukhuneland. These attempts had not been very successful. As a result, by 1954 the DNA was still trying to complete the resettlement of the Bakone people. By that stage, however, a considerable body of ill-feeling towards the DNA had developed among the people of the Sekhukhuneland reserve. Although the DNA had tried to attribute the tension in the reserve to the Bapedi's reluctance to give up their "domination" over the Bakone people, there was a great deal more to the tension than being the result of a feud between two tribes. As was the case in Zeerust, much of the resentment that manifested itself in Sekhukhuneland in the mid-1950's came as a result of the government's renewed attempts to establish its policies in the region. Although the measures introduced by the government such as the reduction of livestock was meant to stop the over utilization of the existing grazing lands, it was not seen as such by the people of the reserve. They saw it as just another way of interfering in their lives and to control their activities.⁽²¹⁾

Although the DNA attempted to explain the need for the system of Bantu Authorities to the people of the reserve on a number of occasions, the entire concept was rejected at a tribal meeting in 1957. Thus, with the tribesmen refusing to accept the system of Bantu Authorities and the government determined to proceed with its implementation, the stage was set for confrontation. By the middle of 1957 relations between the local chiefs and the DNA had reached

20. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 73.
21. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 73.



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an all time low with both sides refusing to give an inch. In an attempt to remove some of the obstacles to the implementation of the Bantu Authorities system, Arthur Phetedi Tulare, the tribal secretary of the Bapedi and Godfrey Sekhukhune, a relative of Paramount Chief Moroamoche Sekhukhune, were deported from the reserve because of their opposition to the Bantu Authorities system.⁽²²⁾

With Godfrey Sekhukhune and Arthur Phetedi out of the way, a renewed attempt was made by the DNA to convince the other chiefs to accept the Bantu Authorities system. This time they had more success but still not everyone supported it, and by August 1957 widespread unrest had broken out in the reserve. On 30 November Paramount Chief Moroamoche Sekhukhune was suspended from office for a month. This suspension was later extended to three months on the grounds that his conduct was unacceptable to the DNA. During this time the South African police arrested several tribesmen on charges related to the unrest. Yet these measures produced no real success, with the result that the unrest continued until March 1957, when Proclamations 52 and 67 of 1958 were applied to this region as well.⁽²³⁾

The application of Proclamations 52 and 67 did not, however, bring about an immediate end to the rioting which now had centered on the deposition and deportation of Chief Moroamoche to Cala in the Transkei. His replacement, Chief Kgobalela Sekhukhune, was unacceptable to the Bapedi and the Bakone who flatly refused to co-operate with the new Paramount Chief. In the weeks and months that followed, the government tried to defuse the situation by arresting recalcitrant tribal leaders and replacing them with their own choice of leaders. Instead of improving the situation, these developments only led to more riots and violence in the region. As a result, a reign of terror existed in the Sekhukhuneland reserve by the end of 1958 and beginning of 1959. The homes of "collaborators" were sacked and burned by tribesmen, while trading stores and vehicles were

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22. The Star (Johannesburg), 1957.04.11; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 73.
23. The Star (Johannesburg), 1958.07.29; Cape Times (Cape Town), 1958.03.12; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 75.



destroyed. As was the case in the Bafurutse reserve, many Africans left the reserve in search of safety.⁽²⁴⁾

Although some semblance of order was eventually restored to the region, the Sekhukhuneland reserve remained tense well into the 1960's. Although no official commission of enquiry was appointed to investigate the causes of the unrest in the reserve, the introduction of Proclamations 52 and 67 of 1958 indicate that the government was of the opinion that the causes which led to the Zeerust riots earlier in the year were also responsible for the Sekhukhuneland unrest. As for the role of the ANC in particular there is clear proof that it was behind the unrest and that it took advantage of the situation that existed in the reserve (See pp. 69-70).

(c) The Cato Manor (Natal) and Eastern Pondoland
Disturbances

Two further areas of unrest referred to by both Mandela in 1963/4 and Tambo in 1974, that contributed, albeit indirectly, to the decision to move towards armed struggle in 1961 were Cato Manor in Durban, and Eastern Pondoland in what is today the Republic of Transkei. As was the case with the Zeerust and Sekhukhuneland riots, the Cato Manor riots and the unrest in Eastern Pondoland were widely reported in the daily press. In addition scholars such as Tom Lodge, Thomas Karis and Gwendolyn M. Carter have also dealt with the events in their research on the subject of Black political development in South Africa. The Pondoland riots were also the subject of a Department of Bantu Affairs (DBA) investigation. A book written by a prominent member of the ANC, Govan Mbeki, namely South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt also provides a useful and important insight into the Pondo unrest.

(1) The Cato Manor Disturbances, 1959 - 1960⁽²⁵⁾

In June 1959 serious rioting broke out in the African township of

24. The Star, (Johannesburg), 1958.07.30; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958, p. 75.

25. There was also serious rioting in Cato Manor in 1954 during which time 142 people lost their lives and some 1 087 were injured. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1957 - 1958,



Cato Manor in Durban. The immediate spark that set off the rioting was a "clean-up" campaign conducted by the Durban municipal police in the township to root out and destroy illegal shebeens and backyard breweries. These illegal shebeens and breweries not only produced concoctions that were at times lethal in content, but they also presented unfair competition to the municipality-owned beer halls in the townships around Durban. In reaction to police raids, the African women in the township of Cato Manor, many of whom made a living out of the illegal trade in liquor, invaded the municipal beer halls - first in Booth Road and then elsewhere in Cato Manor - smashing virtually everything inside these halls. As a result the halls had to be closed and guarded by members of the municipal police force. These events took place on 17 June 1959. In the days immediately following the outbreak of the unrest, numerous other beer halls were attacked and forced to close, thus rendering them inoperative as sources of revenue for the Durban Municipality. An attempt by the Director of the Department of Bantu Administration to address a crowd of some 2 000 African women on 18 June produced no solution to the problem. On the contrary when the women refused to disperse when ordered by the police to do so, a baton charge was executed that not only failed but which was followed by wide-spread unrest and violence in Cato Manor. From Cato Manor the rioting, burning of buildings and stonethrowing rapidly spread to the other African townships around Durban. A great deal of property, mostly municipal and government, were destroyed in the unrest, with criminal elements having a field day.⁽²⁶⁾

These incidents of unrest and rioting continued over the next few weeks with the result that many buildings had to be placed under almost permanent police guard to prevent them from being burned down or damaged. All beer halls were temporarily closed, while transport and other services to and from the townships were suspended. Services to Cato Manor in particular, such as public health, sewerage and water were suspended for seven weeks because the safety of municipal

26. The Daily News (Durban), 1959.06.17 - 19; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1958 - 1959, p. 132.



workers could not be guaranteed. During this time numerous arrests were made and thousands of liters of illegal liquor and beer were destroyed by the police. After these developments an uncertain quiet settled over the area, but by the time that things were beginning to quiet down in Durban, rioting was developing in other parts of Natal. (27)

In August 1959 a large crowd of African women demonstrated at various beer halls in an around Pietermaritzburg. During the course of that month schools and other public buildings were burned down. At the same time unrest also broke out in other Natal centres such as Harding, Ixopo, Inanda, Umtwalumi, Wartburg, Camperdown, Estcourt and Port Shepstone. In most of these latter areas, the unrest centered around African opposition to government policy in the region.

By early January 1960, unrest and rioting had again flared up in Cato Manor outside Durban. The general causes were the same but this time the police's liquor raids on the township led to wide-spread unrest and eventually the death of nine policemen when they were cornered in a hut in Cato Manor and hacked to death by an enraged mob. The resentment that the women of Cato Manor had for the South African and municipal police directly contributed to the renewed unrest and the death of the nine policemen. It apparently started when a policeman accidentally stepped on the foot of an African woman. Although he apologised to the woman, the tension and resentment in the area was so intense that it was enough to set off the violence. (28)

In the subsequent clampdown by the South African police on the township, several hundred Africans were arrested. Of these 65 were eventually committed for trial on charges of murder. At the same time a four-week ban was placed on all public meetings or gatherings

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27. The Daily News, (Durban), 1959.06.09; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1958 - 1959, p. 132.
28. Horrell, Days of Crisis in South Africa, Factual Paper, no. 5, SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1960, p. 3; House of Assembly Debates, 1960.01.25, cols. 300 - 301; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, pp. 50 - 51; The Daily News, (Durban), 1960.01.25 - 30.



in the area. A call for an immediate Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances by the official opposition was turned down by the government as "unnecessary". Instead, the Minister of Justice was instructed to appoint a "committee" to enquire into the causes of the unrest, and to make suggestions as to how a similar event could be avoided in future.⁽²⁹⁾ Although attempts were made to trace this particular report, it could not be located nor is it certain if the committee was ever appointed. As for the role of the ANC in the unrest, the government believed that it played a major role in the events, a conviction that was born out by the promulgation of Proclamations 52 and 67 of 1958.

(11) The Pondoland Disturbances

The areas in Pondoland where serious rioting and unrest broke out in early 1960 were the eastern districts of Bizana, Flagstaff and Lusikisiki which borders on the province of Natal in the north and Transkei in the south. Unlike the incidents of unrest and rioting discussed so far, the Pondoland unrest was unique in that it was well organised right from the beginning, which suggest that some form of organisation or organisations were behind the unrest.⁽³⁰⁾

As has been the case in the areas discussed so far, the Pondo revolt of 1960 had both its remote and immediate origins in the opposition among sections of the Pondo people to the South African government's determination to apply its racial policies to the region. In terms of its origins, the causes of the 1960 unrest can be traced back to the introduction of the Rehabilitation Scheme in the 1940's and the system of Bantu Authorities in 1956. In both these cases strong resentment from the local Pondo people were registered. In an attempt to overcome some of the opposition to its policies, the new government of Dr. Malan in 1948 began to forcibly remove local African leaders from the region and replace them with Africans who were more

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29. House of Assembly Debates, 25 January 1960, col. 381; Horrell, Days of Crisis in South Africa, p. 4.
30. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 279. See also Z. Sonkosi, African Opposition in South Africa from 1948 - 1969 (Unpublished Phd, Free University, West-Berlin, Sept. 1975), pp. 223 - 224.



prepared to co-operate with the government.⁽³¹⁾ But these measures, as was the case in Zeerust and Sekhukhuneland, presented no long-term solution and in the end they were largely responsible for the violence that followed.

Since its adoption of the Bantu Authorities System in 1965 the DNA had been trying, as it was doing elsewhere, to have the system adopted by the people of Pondoland. Although it had success in some regions, others such as the Lusikisiki and Bizana regions flatly refused to support the system. They also refused to co-operate with tribal chiefs and local leaders who supported the system or who co-operated with the government authorities in having the system implemented. Their dissatisfaction was particularly directed at their Paramount Chief, Chief Botha Sigcau whom they felt were more interested in serving the hand of the government than the needs of his people. His appointment to the position of Chief Magistrate for Umtata in 1958 and his favouritism to those who supported him, soon led to open resentment and a decline in law and order as people began to oppose his decisions and authority in the region.⁽³²⁾ (Botha Sigcau was appointed Paramount Chief of the Pondo tribe in 1939 following the death of his father in 1937. According to Pondo custom Botha Sigcau was not eligible to succeed his father although he was the eldest recognised son. Although Botha Sigcau's second brother, Mandlonke, was previously appointed to the Paramountcy, he had committed suicide in 1937. Tribesmen then expected the third brother, Nelson, to be selected for the Paramountcy, but instead Botha Sigcau was appointed by the government to the position.⁽³³⁾)

In his analysis of the Pondo revolt and its causes, Govan Mbeki later

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31. G.M. Carter, T. Karis and N.M. Stultz, South Africa's Transkei, The Politics of Domestic Colonialism, p. 12; G. Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt, pp. 118 - 120.
 32. Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasant's Revolt, pp. 119 - 120; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, pp. 39 - 47.
 33. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, pp. 43 - 44.



wrote that

this concern in the heart of tribal justice was one of the main reasons for the breakdown of the whole tribal structure, and for the subsequent development of a new system (of authority) during the Pondo revolt. Many chiefs and headmen found that once they had committed themselves to supporting Bantu Authorities, an immense chasm developed between them and the people ... (34)

In the months that followed the appointment of the Chief Botha Sigcau to the Chief Magistracy of Umtata, attempts to discuss and explain the system of Bantu Authorities to the people came to nothing as most Pondos refused to co-operate, and in the end some of the tribesmen began to resort to violence to express their dissatisfaction with local chiefs and headmen who supported the system of Bantu Authorities. As a result, units of the South African police were sent to Pondoland to protect the property and the lives of those tribal leaders who co-operated with the DNA. Although the arrival of the police in Pondoland was an inevitable consequence of the unrest and attacks on pro-government tribal officials, it only aggravated an already tense situation. Alienated by some of their leaders' pro-government stance and support for its policies, many Pondos began to turn their attention to secret meetings and a secret organisation known as "Intaba" (the Mountain) or "Ikongo" (Congress). The Intaba or Ikongo apparently obtained its name from the fact that its meetings were held mostly on top of hills or mountains to detect the arrival of unwanted guests such as the police in time.

As a result of this breakdown in communications between the Pondo people and many of their tribal leaders in areas such as Bizana and Lusikisiki, more and more tribesmen began to turn their attention to the authority of the Intaba. Consequently by May 1960, Intaba was in the process of establishing itself as an alternative political authority in these areas of Pondoland. Needless to say, it was vehemently opposed to any form of government policy, especially the

34. Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasant's Revolt, pp. 119 - 120.

system of Bantu Authorities. It exerted whatever pressure it could on local chiefs and headmen to reject the system. Neither the DNA nor Intaba consented to compromise on their respective positions. As far as the authorities were concerned, Intaba was not the official authority in the region and they therefore refused to debate any of the issues raised by the latter organisation. Intaba's reaction to this was to attack those chiefs and tribal leaders who opposed it. In the violence that followed some seventeen chiefs, headmen or their bodyguards were killed by Intaba or by Intaba supporters. As a result, by the middle of 1960 virtually the entire tribal authority had broken down in the Bizana and Lusikisiki areas.⁽³⁵⁾

Police reinforcements were sent to Eastern Pondoland from Durban and surrounding areas to deal with the unrest. At the same time a series of meetings were convened in the area to allow people to air their grievances. It was also announced that a departmental committee of enquiry would be appointed by the DNA to investigate the causes of the unrest and grievances. The findings of this committee of enquiry was made public in October 1960. All this, however, did little to stop the rioting and hut-burning in the area. In fact, the apex of the revolt came shortly after the findings of the departmental committee of enquiry were made known. The DNA did its utmost to inform the inhabitants of Eastern Pondoland about the findings of the commission. This was inter alia done through the holding of public meetings. The first of those was held on 11 October. According to Press reports⁽³⁶⁾ the Chairman of the committee reported that while many of the people's complaints were found to be justified, these were not brought to the attention of the authorities through the local magistrates or the Chief Magistrate at Umtata. Instead the report criticized the people for wasting time and money in employing attorneys and by holding secret meetings. The report also condemned the intimidation of law-abiding Pondos by those in opposition to the Bantu Authorities system and the damage caused to their property.

35. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 280 - 281.

36. The Star, (Johannesburg), 1960.10.11; The Rand Daily Mail, (Johannesburg), 1960.10.12; For a detailed discussion of these reports and the findings of the departmental committee of enquiry into the causes of the Pondo unrest see Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, pp. 45 - 47.

The report further stated that the local people in Pondoland had been seriously misled in that they were told that the government was against them. This was not so, it claimed. The government was anxious to govern the various tribes according to their own laws and through their own chiefs and councillors.

In dealing with the various complaints of the local people, the departmental committee found that the people were not properly consulted about the Bantu Authorities System and that it had been forced on them. It also found that when tribal authorities were formed, the old customs of the tribes who resided at Bizana were not observed in all respects and that the people of Bizana had every right to resent this.

With regards to the complaint that the Paramount Chief of Eastern Pondoland did not consult the people when nominating members of tribal authorities it was found that there was consultation, but that mistakes were made in the nomination of members of tribal authorities. These mistakes, it was pointed out, were not deliberate. The membership of tribal authorities was often too small when it came to the appointment of people. Some locations had no representation while others again had insufficient. More important, the committee found that the laws and customs of the tribes concerned should have been observed, and they should have been given an opportunity to say whom they wanted on the Bantu Authorities. It was also agreed that headmen who were not heads of tribal authorities should not be allowed to try cases.

There were however a number of other grievances, the committee found, that could not be attributed to the Bantu Authorities System. One of these was the rehabilitation scheme, the fear of which was unfounded. The government, it pointed out, never undertook rehabilitation, stock reduction, fencing or control of ploughing, unless "the people asked for these measures".⁽³⁷⁾

37. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, p. 46.



As far as increases in taxation, stock rates, health rates and in the general, levy were concerned, these were found to be necessary because of increased expenses. With regards to reference books and labour bureau complaints, the committee found that hardships were sometimes experienced, but that these were due to non-compliance with the law, and that the many advantages of the reference book system had not been fully explained to the people. On Bantu education, the committee found that the syllabuses were better than they had been before and that the education offered by it was in no way inferior.

A second meeting of tribesmen where the findings of the departmental committee was made known was called at Flagstaff on 12 October 1960 and a third meeting was held at Lusikisiki on the following day. During the latter meeting a spokesman for the local Pondo, having listened to the findings of the committee, stated that they did not want the system of Bantu Authorities, nor did they want their chiefs and headmen because they had not been appointed according to tribal custom. (38)

Shortly afterwards, on 25 October 1960, a mass meeting of about 6 000 was held at Inzizi Hill near Bizana to discuss the findings of the committee. At the end of the meeting a resolution was adopted in which the committee's findings were rejected. At the same time it was decided that no taxes would be paid as a sign of opposition to the Bantu Authorities system. (39)

Unable to restore order and stability to the area through normal police activity and fearful that the unrest might spill over into neighbouring Tembuland and even Natal, the government declared a state of emergency in the area in November 1960. This was done in terms of Proclamation 400 of 1960 which was amended by Proclamation

38. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, p. 46.
39. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1959 - 1960, p. 47.



413 on 14 December 1960.⁽⁴⁰⁾

At the same time, the powers of the four Paramount Chiefs in the region, namely Chiefs Botha Sigcau, Victor Poto, Sabata Dalindyebo and Kaiser Matanzima, were increased to deal with the unrest situation and the local Pondo's opposition to the Bantu Authorities System. By this stage however, hundreds of locals had been arrested by the police for numerous offenses ranging from refusing to pay taxes, to murder and arson. By the end of January 1961, more than 4 769 people had been arrested in Eastern Pondoland in connection with the unrest and violence in the region.⁽⁴¹⁾

(d) An evaluation of the causes of the unrest and the role of the ANC in it

There are two basic points of view as to the causes of the unrest and rioting that broke out in the 1950's in the areas mentioned above and referred to by Mandela at the Rivonia trial in 1963. On the one hand are the views and opinions of the ANC and those organisations and individuals who support its aims and objectives. They, in their opposition to the government and its racial policies argues that the ANC as an organisation had little or nothing to do with the unrest and that the blame must be laid at the door of the government which was determined to implement its racial policies and was prepared to use force if necessary to do it. On the other hand and diametrically opposed to the above are the views of the government and its supporters who claim that the unrest was the direct result of the activities of the ANC which local grievances to ferment unrest and rioting in the rural areas. Unfortunately for both the ANC and the South African government, history has shown that the causes for

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40. Government Gazette (Extraordinary), no. 6582, Proclamation R400 of 1960, 1960.11.30, pp 1 - 8; Government Gazette (Extraordinary), no. 6594, Proclamation R413 of 1960, 1960.12.14, pp. 1 - 2; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1961, pp. 43 - 44; and Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasant's Revolt, pp. 123 - 124.
41. See The Rand Daily Mail, 1960.11.23; The Star, (Johannesburg), 1961.02.24; House of Assembly Debates, 1961.01.27, cols. 224 - 225.



political unrest and rioting are never as simplistic or one-sided as the two sides try to make out. On the contrary, political unrest often has complex and controversial origins in which both sides normally have a responsibility. From the facts available on the unrest it is clear that both the ANC and the government had a fair share in the outbreak of the rural unrest of the 1950's. There can be little doubt that in each of the regions discussed above, the government's policies and its determination, not to mention its heavy-handedness to implement them, led to great resentment among the local population. These factors together with local grievances over a wide range of subjects such as taxes, dipping regulations, cattle culling and an unsympathetic DNA created a fertile atmosphere for the ANC and its leaders to further their aims and objectives against the government.

Although the unrest in Sekhukhuneland was never dealt with in the same detail as the unrest in Bafurutshe in 1958, the state has maintained that the ANC and its supporters were behind the unrest. The ANC on the other hand has denied any official involvement in the rural unrest of the 1950's. However, recent research by Peter Delius into the Sekhukhuneland reserve has proved that the people of the reserve had both direct and constant contact with the ANC and its alliance organisations such as the SACP both before and during the unrest.⁽⁴²⁾ Delius found that many of the migrant workers from Sekhukhuneland were members of the ANC and the SACP in the urban areas where they worked. Although these migrants who joined the ANC and the SACP were always a small minority, they played a crucial role as brokers between their own fellow migrant workers and wider movements. They were in constant contact with and accepted by these two worlds. As such they were able to communicate the concerns of migrants to the ANC and to translate the sometimes abstract language of ANC (and SACP) politics into terms which had an immediate and powerful resonance for their compatriots.⁽⁴³⁾

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42. P. Delius, Sebatakomo; Migrant Organisation, the ANC and the Sekhukhuneland Revolt, (Journal of Southern African Studies 15 (4), October 1989, p. 601).
43. Delius, Sebatakomo, (Journal of Southern African Studies 15 (4), October 1989, p. 601).



Delius further claims that a number of figures in the ANC acted as particular magnets for men from Sekhukhuneland in the late 1940's. Probably the most important among these men were Elias Moretsele who was provincial secretary of the ANC in the Transvaal (he succeeded Nelson Mandela to the Presidency of the ANC in the Transvaal in 1953), David Bopape, Godfrey Nkadmeng and Elias Motsoaledi. Godfrey Sekhukhune, according to Delius, played a vital role in the events that lead up to the Sekhukhuneland revolt. Similarly, Motsoaledi and Nkadmeng played a crucial role organizing migrant resistance to rent increases and their support for ANC stay-aways in Johannesburg townships. (44)

The question is: if this was the level of ANC-SACP involvement in the Sekhukhuneland revolt to what extent did these two organisations and its leaders influence the revolt in the Bafurutshe reserve? The commission of enquiry appointed to investigate the latter unrest found that not only could the nature of the unrest in the Bafurutshe reserve be associated with the policy and aims of the ANC, but that unrest broke out shortly after people from the larger urban areas on the reef visited the reserve. In view of these and other factors the commission subsequently found that "there can be no doubt that the African National Congress is primarily responsible for the unrest and disturbances". (45)

The commission further found that the ANC had a vested interest in what was happening in the Bafurutshe reserve and that the organisation gave its full support to the women in the reserve in their opposition against the pass system for women. This was made abundantly clear by the organisation in its literature. (46) At its 46th Annual National Congress held in Durban in December 1958 the ANC's NEC openly applauded the role played by the women in the reserves in their struggle against the pass system. In its review of the ANC's anti-pass campaign since its launch in 1955, the NEC in its annual

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44. Delius, Sebatakomo (Journal of Southern African Studies 15 (4), October 1989, pp. 601 - 602).
45. Balk, Commission of Enquiry, p. 46.
46. Balk, Commission of Enquiry, p. 46.



report stated that

"we (the ANC) find that the role played by the African women is most inspiring The resistance of the people to this notorious ... system is mounting. Its development takes place in accordance with our statement of policy, namely that it is a prolonged struggle, now taking one form and then another The campaign must systematically widen taking different forms at different times in different places.

It went on to say

We need not (necessarily) have the people in the reserves joining the ANC. In view of many difficulties we should (rather) create a core in every reserve which will be useful in whatever action we may decide on. (47)

The same report also saluted the "women freedom volunteers from ... Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland ..., Durban, Pietermaritzburg", in their struggle against the pass system. (48)

Similarly as far as the unrest in Durban and Eastern Pondoland were concerned, the State claimed that while some of the grievances of the people were legitimate reasons for dissatisfaction, it nonetheless kept the ANC or elements of the organisation responsible for the unrest and violence in these two regions. Both the South African police and the Secretary of the Department for Bantu Administration and Development, Dr. W.W.M. Eiselen, blamed the unrest on the ANC. In a statement to the press on 21 August 1959, Eiselen made it clear that the unrest should be viewed against the background of

the sustained and exaggerated criticism of everything the State does for the benefit of the Bantu and the feeling of uncertainty and confusion caused by it among the broad masses. Subversive organisations made dexterous use of that uncertainty and confusion. They struck in places where control was necessary for the welfare of the

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47. Report of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, 46th Annual National Conference, Durban, December 1958, pp. 15 - 17 (Authors Collection).
48. Report of the ANC's NEC, 46th Annual National Conference, p. 7 (Authors Collection).



community, such as slum clearance, influx control, distribution of labour, etc. They [the subversive organisations] represented these factors as oppressive measures.⁽⁴⁹⁾

In support of his argument and as proof that the unrest was not spontaneous but planned, Eiselen pointed out that in presenting their grievances to the authorities, the women of Cato Manor and those in Pondoland always raised the same complaints and the same slogans in the same order.⁽⁵⁰⁾

In the case of the Pondoland unrest, the departmental committee of enquiry into the unrest found that while many of the complaints of the Pondo people were justified, the fact that these complaints were not sufficiently attended to by the local tribal leaders, were skillfully exploited by elements of the ANC who arrived in the reserve shortly before the unrest started. Additionally, according to a report that was made to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner at Bizana on 11 July 1960, one of the leaders of the Intaba, Mtetunzima Ganyile, was a self-confessed leader of the ANC.⁽⁵¹⁾

Allegation of ANC involvement in Eastern Pondoland also came from Chief Makosanke Sigcau, a half brother Chief Botha Sigcau. According to him the ANC was actively involved in the unrest and its causes.⁽⁵²⁾ Although Makosanke Sigcau's claims of ANC involvement were primarily based on circumstantial evidence as was the case with most of the "evidence" of ANC involvement contained in other reports on the unrest, the ANC leader Govan Mbeki later, in his book on the Pondoland riots, confirmed much of what the authorities had been claiming about the role of the ANC in the riots. He wrote:

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49. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1958 - 1959, pp. 145 - 146. See also The Star, (Johannesburg), 1959.10.21.
 50. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1958-1959, pp. 144.
 51. Transvaal Archives Depot, Pretoria: Departmental Committee of Enquiry. Pondoland Disturbances: Statement by Chairman, Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner of the Ciskei, J.A.C. van Heerden, 1960.10.11, pp. 1 - 4, 39 - 41.
 52. Transvaal Archives Depot, Pretoria, Departmental Committee of Enquiry, Pondoland Disturbances, 1960.10.11, p. 58.



The Pondoland struggle had its origins in local grievances, and in the initial protest the Pondo people limited their demands to issues of immediate concern. At first their methods of struggle were traditional ... the holding of meetings, deputations ... and written petitions. Very early on, new features made their appearances, and the aim of the resistance became the attainment of basic political ends. Towards this end the movement adopted the full programme of the African National Congress and its allies as embodied in the Freedom Charter. Consequently, the struggle in Pondoland became linked with the national struggle for liberation, and brought alive ... the vital need for linking up the struggles of the peasants with those of the workers in the urban areas (53)

Mbeki's interpretation of the causes of the unrest, at least as far as it concerned events in Eastern Pondoland, were not however officially shared by the ANC or by researchers sympathetic to the aims of the organisation. As far as the ANC was concerned, the unrest in Zeerust, Sekhukhuneland, Cato Manor, and Pondoland were primarily the result of the government's determination to proceed with the implementation of policies that were unacceptable to the African people. In a statement released on 24 August 1959 in reaction to Eiselen's report on the unrest in Cato Manor and elsewhere in Natal, the ANC President, Albert Luthuli, made it clear that the unrest was not an organised event, as Eiselen had claimed, but had been spontaneous and local in nature. He pointed out that the ANC had many members in various communities throughout the country and that it was natural for these members to take part in demonstrations concerning their everyday lives and activities. He then listed what he considered to have been the main causes of unrest, namely influx control, passes, increases in rent, higher taxes and new regulations regarding the filling of dipping tanks in rural areas by women without payment. (54)

The ANC's account of the unrest and its causes were shared by the Liberal Party of South Africa which, in an article in its mouthpiece

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53. Mbeki, South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt, pp. 128 - 129.
54. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1958 - 1959, p. 144.



Contact, stated that while it had become government and municipal policy to blame everything on the ANC, it has yet to find a member of the ANC who knew how the unrest started. The new militancy, it claimed, had taken everyone by surprise, not least the Africans themselves. The unrest in Natal, the organisation pointed out, was merely the outcome of the government's policy of apartheid. According to the article the Liberal Party had warned the authorities for years that its policies would eventually lead to large scale violence.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Similarly, the government's claims of ANC involvement in the rural unrest was rejected by Tom Lodge, a researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand. In his book Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945, Lodge argued that the unrest was not the result of ANC activity but that it was brought about by the African women in the reserves' opposition to the limitations imposed upon them by the pass system. With regard to the Bafurutshe Reserve, their prime concern, he argued, was for the effect that the pass system had had on the integrity of the African household, a concern that was shared by the menfolk of the reserve. He went on to say that while the constant accusations of ANC affiliation might have helped to promote identification with and sympathy for the ANC among the Bafurutse, the ANC's leadership in Johannesburg was not only slow to react to the unrest in the reserve but was largely ignorant of it. He claimed that an "ANC branch had existed in Zeerust location since 1947 but it appears to have been inactive during the rebellion and Congress officials sent down from Johannesburg were unaware of the existence of any local ANC members." Lodge does however admit that in general "external contributions to the struggle were important in determining its course: the experience of urban protest brought home by migrants influenced the form of resistance ...".⁽⁵⁶⁾ He further admitted that while on the whole the influence of the ANC in the countryside was limited, the ANC leaders of the 1950's were nonetheless conscious

55. P. Brown, The ANC is not behind the disturbances, (Contact 2 (19), September 1959, p. 7).

56. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 279.



of the extent of the popular unrest in the countryside and from 1955 "there were references to an organisation called Sebata Kgomo (a traditional Sesotho call to arms) Nevertheless", he pointed out, "by 1959 the ANC's Transvaal rural membership was reported to be in decline following the sealing-off of Sekhukhuneland ... and Marico reserve by the police".⁽⁵⁷⁾

Lodge more or less holds the same view with regards to the role of the ANC in the Pondoland and Natal revolts. In reference to the first, Lodge argued that while it cannot be denied that the Pondo leaders had contact with the ANC during the unrest in the region, "these external influences should not be exaggerated", since much of the Pondo revolt "stemmed from the lack of local familiarity with bureaucratic forms of political mobilisation".⁽⁵⁸⁾

In reference to the unrest in rural Natal, Lodge argued that while ANC influences had once been unusually widespread in the region and local ANC leaders were swift to perceive the opportunities for channeling the rural unrest into organisational activity much of this was however prevented from developing by the prohibition of the movement in March 1960.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Thus, according to Lodge, although the ANC in the urban centres had contact with the people in the reserves and were aware of the underlying dissatisfaction in these areas, it did not play a major role in events and was therefore not responsible, as the government claimed, for the unrest and rioting that broke out.

Perhaps a more objective assesement of the role of the ANC in the unrest is that held by Karis and Carter. According to them it can be argued that while some of the rural opposition to the introduction of passes for African women in 1957 were fanned on by leaders of the ANC, this was not the only cause of the unrest and that it is

57. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 290.
58. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 283.
59. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 290.



extremely difficult to determine the exact extent of the ANC's involvement in it.⁽⁶⁰⁾

What remains important of course is the fact that Mandela saw the rural unrest of the 1950's early 1960's as a milestone on the path towards the adoption of violence and the formation of Umkhonto in 1961. These developments which, according to Mandela, were the result of government policy, convinced many in the ANC Alliance that non-violence and the politics of passive resistance had no further purpose to serve.⁽⁶¹⁾ Yet even at this late stage there was still a large number of conservative leaders in the ANC who were not yet sufficiently convinced that the time had come for the ANC to abandon its policies of non-violent protest in favour of a course of armed resistance and a clandestine existence.

2. THE "WINDS OF CHANGE", SHARPEVILLE AND THE BANNING OF THE ANC

If the rural unrest of the 1950's was a determining factor in the planning of the radicals to force the ANC into a more militant direction, then the events of early 1960 provided them with the proof needed to put into operation the necessary machinery to bring this about. Two events that had a lasting effect on the thinking and actions of many African and Black leaders in South Africa in these years and which seemed to have changed the course of South African history in an almost permanent fashion, was the one-day anti-pass campaign launched by the Pan-Africanist Congress on 21 March 1960, and the subsequent banning of both the PAC and the ANC as a direct result of it. Both these events had a profound influence on the development of Black/White relations after 1960. It also marked the beginning of South Africa's economic and political isolation by the international community. Although the ANC had nothing to do with the Sharpeville riots as such and in fact turned down an invitation from the PAC to join it in its anti-pass campaign, the banning of the organisation in April 1960 has since been held out in virtually each and every ANC publication and statement on the armed struggle

60. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 281.

61. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 168 - 169.



and the history of the organisation, as one of the main reasons why it adopted a policy of violence in 1961. As Francis Meli so aptly put it in his recently released history of the ANC, the events of 1960 and 1961 represented a "turning point" in the history of the ANC.⁽⁶²⁾

2.1 Harold MacMillan's "Wind of Change" Speech to the South African Parliament, February 1960

A factor not mentioned by Nelson Mandela or any of the other African leaders, but which must have had a considerable impact on their thinking in early 1960, was the widely publicised speech made by Harold MacMillan, the British Prime Minister, when he addressed the combined houses of the South African Parliament on 3 February.⁽⁶³⁾ Having just completed an extensive tour of the African continent, MacMillan, to the applause of the official opposition but the indignation of the South African government, told Parliament, and in effect the people of South Africa as a whole, that in view of the major "wind of change" that was blowing throughout Africa, its policy of apartheid and racial discrimination was outdated. It was, he said, morally unacceptable to the British government and the British people as a whole. In view of this he warned the South African government that Britain was no longer prepared to sacrifice her friendship with Africa in favour of South Africa's racial policies.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Such open and severe criticism of the South African government's policies by a country that has always had close ties with South Africa and its people and who in the past have largely turned a blind eye to the government's policies of apartheid, undoubtedly had a strong influence on the thinking of Black leaders in South Africa.⁽⁶⁵⁾ To many of them in MacMillan's criticism of the South African government's racial policies and treatment of Blacks in general must have seemed like tentative recognition by the international community of the legitimacy of their struggle against racial

62. F. Meli, South Africa Belongs to us, pp. 140 - 144.

63. The Cape Times (Cape Town), 1960.02.04.

64. The Cape Times (Cape Town), 1960.02.04.

65. D.W. Kruger, The Making of a Nation, 1910 - 1961, p. 324.



discrimination and their exclusion from the political process in the country.

2.2 The Sharpeville Incident, 21 March 1960

The unrest of March 1960 had its origins in the anti-pass campaign of the newly established Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), which was designed to force the South African police and the government to either take appropriate action to stop the campaign or capitulate give in to its demands. In either case, violence would almost certainly have broken out, something the PAC's leadership must have been fully aware of considering the outcome of similar campaigns in the past. Whatever the merits of the case, the PAC's "status campaign" against passes led to widespread rioting and chaos shortly after it started, partly because the organisation's leadership had no control over the crowds that supported the campaign. In the end the police, in fear of their lives, opened fire on a large crowd at Sharpeville, estimated at between 10 000 and 20 000, killing 67 Africans and wounding almost 200 others.⁽⁶⁶⁾

The Sharpeville shooting sparked off some of the worst rioting and violence South Africa had ever seen. In the days and weeks that followed, the unrest spread to most parts of the country as supporters of the ANC and the PAC, as well as criminal elements took advantage of the situation.

Gail Gerhart, in her study of the organisation and the events of 21 March, writes:

PAC leaders optimistically hoped that the campaign would unfold into widespread disciplined acts of civil disobedience. Realistically, however, they had scant grounds for supposing that the campaign would actually develop in this way. The number of people who felt bound by PAC instructions was

66. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1960.03.22. See also C. J. B. le Roux, Die Pan Africanist Congress in Suid-Afrika, 1958 - 1964, pp. 162 - 177, For a further assessment of the impact of the Sharpeville incident on Black political thinking, see African National Congress of South Africa, A Short History, 1971, pp. 16, 18, 22, 23.



small, as the thin popular response on March 21 showed In contrast to the small number of Africans prepared to respond in a disciplined way to the PAC's initial call, there stood a much larger number of unruly action-orientated youths yearning to strike out at symbols of White authority in any possible way and on any pretext. Predictably, once a tense crisis situation had developed, this violence prone element became uncontrollable, eventually providing the police with all the necessary justification for massive counter-violence. (67)

This pattern was later to recur in the Soweto riots of June 1976.

2.3 The State of Emergency and the Banning of the ANC

In an attempt to deal with the unrest situation effectively, the government banned all public meetings in 24 magisterial districts on 24 March. This was followed by a general state of emergency being declared in 122 of the country's 265 magisterial districts on 30 March. Between the latter date and 2 April, the government also placed the entire Citizen Force, the Permanent Force Reserve, the Citizen Force Reserve, the Reserve of Officers and the whole of the Commando forces on standby. (68)

In addition to these measures, the government temporarily suspended the pass system to prevent innocent Africans from having their documents confiscated and burned and also introduced legislation into Parliament to have the PAC and the ANC banned. The banning came into effect on 8 April and has been renewed year after year ever since - a period of thirty years - until the organisations' recent unbanning by the government on 2 February 1990.

As pointed out above, the banning of the ANC and the PAC, despite the fact that the ANC had little or nothing to do with the outbreak of the unrest on 21 March, was a turning point for many in the

67. G.M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa, p. 239.

68. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 41.



organisation. It effectively brought to an end a number of moral and political issues that had been pending since the early 1950's. With the banning of the ANC the position of the radicals in the organisation became much more secure. Similarly it also gave them the moral justification to finally abandon the old non-violent principles of the ANC. In a way, therefore, by banning the ANC with the PAC, the government was to a large degree responsible for the deterioration in relations that took place between itself and South Africa's African leaders after April 1960. It can also be argued that through its indiscriminate actions it was also partially responsible for the decision by the radicals in the underground to resort to a policy of armed struggle, in that it left them with no other alternative to voice their grievances. The recent unbanning of the ANC together with all other anti-apartheid organisations that had been proscribed by law over the years, is clear proof of the fact that previous governments had made a mistake in banning radical organisations as a means of destroying or controlling them.

The banning of the ANC in April in 1960 led to two major decisions. One was to set up a Mission in Exile to solicit financial and moral support for the ANC in South Africa; while the other was to move what remained of the organisation and its leadership underground. The National Executive Committee was temporarily turned into an Emergency Committee to guide the organisation through these difficult times. The leader of the latter Committee was Nelson Mandela and it was under his leadership that the ANC decided in 1960 to ignore the ban placed on it and to move the liberation struggle underground. In a statement released by the newly formed Emergency Committee on 1 May, the ANC's underground leadership made it clear that:

The attempt to ban the African National Congress, which for half a century has been the voice of the voteless African majority ... is a desperate act of folly, committed by a Parliament that does not contain a single African. We do not recognise the validity of this law, and we shall not submit to it. The African National Congress will carry on in its own name, to give leadership and organisation to our people until freedom has been won and every trace of the scourge of racial discrimina-



tion has been banished from our country. (69)

Similarly, Mandela told the court in 1963 that:

My colleagues and I, after careful consideration, decided that we would not obey this decree. The African people were not part of the Government and did not make the laws by which they were governed. ... for us to accept the banning was equivalent to accepting the silencing of the Africans for all time. The ANC refused to dissolve, but instead went underground. We believe it was our duty to preserve this organisation which had been built up with almost fifty years of remitting toll. (70)

2.4 The Republican Referendum of October 1960 and the Orlando Consultative Conference

An aspect specifically singled out by Mandela as having had a significant influence on their thinking and decision to form Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961, was the all-White referendum for a Republican government held in October 1960. A basic event, no different from similar developments in White politics in the past, the October referendum would probably have passed without much Black attention was it not for the government's poor timing. Coming, as it did, shortly after the riots and unrest of March 1960 and against the background of MacMillan's "Wind of Change" speech in Parliament, the idea of a Republican constitution for South Africa in which Africans and Blacks in general will have no better political future, was seen as an insult to Blacks and their demands for political rights. It also portrayed the government as being indifferent to the grievances of the Black majority in the country. Consequently, the decision to hold the referendum in October and its subsequent outcome which registered White support for a Republican form of government, convinced many in the underground movement that there was little hope of the government ever listening to their complaints and demands in a peaceful manner. (71)

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69. Statement by the Emergency Committee of the ANC, (Document), 1960.04.01, p. 1 (author collection).
70. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 166.
71. S. Uys, The Referendum and After, (Africa South in Exile, January - March 1961, pp. 6 - 12); I.J. Blom-Cooper, Referendum for a Republic, (Africa South in Exile, October - December 1960, pp. 42 - 45).



In stating the case of the ANC at his trial in 1963, Mandela told the court that although Africans constituted approximately seventy percent of all people in South Africa, they were not consulted in the October referendum about the political future of the country. He said:

All of us were apprehensive about our future under a proposed White Republic, and a resolution was taken to hold an All-in-African Conference [in 1961] to call for a National Convention [to adopt a democratic constitution representing all the peoples of South Africa].⁽⁷²⁾

Thus, as far as the leaders of the ANC were concerned, the African people's position in 1960 had not only deteriorated but there was little hope of any improvement in their situation under the proposed Republican form of government that was to come into power on 31 May 1961. These developments called for a major meeting of all affected parties in order to debate the situation and to devise new strategies. Such a meeting was held in Orlando, Johannesburg, in December 1960.

2.5 The Orlando All African Consultative Conference

The idea for a general consultative conference of African leaders to discuss the crisis in African politics, appears to have come from Congress Mbata, who was a staff member of the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1960. Shortly after the state of emergency was lifted at the end of August, an urgent appeal was made to the Inter-denominational African Minister's Federation (IDAMF) to convene a meeting of all African leaders in South Africa to discuss the crisis in African politics. The IDAMF was however too busy with important church matters at the time to immediately adhere to the call and in the end it was left to Albert Luthuli, Z.K. Matthews, Duma Nokwe, W.B. Ngakane and the Reverend N.B. Tantsi, to organise the meeting. Under their patronage invitations were sent out to a wide spectrum of

72. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 167.



African leaders and organisations, including the PAC and the Liberal Party of South Africa. Several sportsmen, businessmen and Church leaders were also invited to the conference to make it as representative as possible. (73)

In response to the invitations that were sent out, some thirty-six African leaders attended the first day of the Conference which was held in the Donaldson Orlando Community Centre, Orlando, on 16 December. A number of prominent leaders who were invited to the conference could not attend the proceedings due to previous engagements or because they were serving banning orders. Among the latter were three of the sponsors of the conference - Albert Luthuli, Duma Nokwe and Z.K. Matthews. Matthews could not attend due to "business reasons". (74)

The main theme at the meeting, which stood under the chairmanship of the Reverend Tantsi (W.B. Ngakane was the recording secretary), was the need for co-operation and unity among the various African leaders and organisations in South Africa to face the new restrictions placed on Black politics by the government. Paul Mosaka summed up the mood of the conference when he told the delegates that "Unity must be achieved at all costs. We should no longer cry for equality, ... we must say, we want to rule". (75)

Although the conference was disrupted by the police who raided the event on the first day, it nevertheless proceeded to adopt a number of important resolutions that, among others, called for African unity to bring about:

- a. the removal of the scourge of apartheid;
- b. the immediate establishment of a non-racial democracy, and;
- c. the effective use of non-violent pressure against apartheid. (76)

73. Karis and Carter (eds.) From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 353; Contact, 1960.12.31. For a list of the leaders who attended the conference see The Rand Daily, (Johannesburg), 1960.12.18, as well as Contact, 1960.12.31, p. 4.

74. Contact, 1960.12.31, p. 4; New Age, 1960.12.22.

75. Contact, 1960.12.31, p. 4; New Age, 1960.12.22.

76. Contact, 1960.12.31, p. 4; New Age, 1960.12.22.



The above resolutions were significant in that, in their call for a non-racial democracy through non-violent protest, it clearly reflected the more conservative views of the older generation of African leaders, rather than the radical views of the up and coming younger generation of African leaders. Although their views were not represented in the resolutions of the conference, they were determined that it would be by the time of the All-in-African Conference planned for early 1961. In order to make the necessary arrangements for the latter conference, a thirteen-man Continuation Committee was appointed by the consultative conference. The chairman of the committee was Jordan Ngubane, a well-known African journalist and member of the Liberal Party of South Africa.⁽⁷⁷⁾

2.6 The Continuation Committee and the Planning of the All-in-African Conference

The series of events that finally convinced Mandela and his fellow radicals in the underground to abandon almost fifty years of non-violent struggle in favour of an underground armed struggle and to form Umkhonto, began with the planning of the All-in-African Conference in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, in March 1961 and ended with the failure of the end of May strike action to disrupt the Republican celebrations.

Although the Orlando consultative conference went out of its way to restore unity in African politics - a development that was reflected in the composition of the Continuation Committee - the major difference between the Africanists and the Charterists which led to the establishment of the Pan-Africanist Congress in 1958, was too deep to be breached in such a superficial manner. Moreover, the determination of the radicals in the ANC to make their views felt at the proposed All-in-African conference that was to be held at Pietermaritzburg in March would eventually help to split the Continuation Committee apart.

77. Contact, 1960.12.31, p. 4.



Almost from the very minute that the Continuation Committee was formed, the diverse political views of its various members presented problems. The thirteen members of the Continuation Committee were: J. Ngubane (Chairman and Liberal Party delegate), Julius Malie (Liberal Party), H.J. Bengu (Liberal Party), Joe Molefe (PAC), D. Nokwe (ANC), G. Mbeki (ANC) and Alfred Nzo (ANC). The remaining six members of the committee, namely Paul Mosaka, J.C. Mbata, B. Rajulli, W.B. Ngubane, the Reverend Tanzil and Mark Shope (SACP, SACTU) were independents representing a broad spectrum of African political views.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The PAC who had only one representative on the committee quickly felt itself outnumbered by the other representatives, particularly by the ANC representatives, and their Communist Party allies, whom it later claimed, were in control of the committee. Like the PAC, the Liberal Party's representatives on the committee also complained about what they considered to be the dominant influence of the ANC and the Communist Party in the activities and decisions of the Continuation Committee. The apprehension among the PAC and Liberal Party delegates grew increasingly stronger as the committee proceeded with its planning of the All-in-Conference. They complained that important decisions were taken without the knowledge or the consent of all the members of the committee. During the course of February 1961, for instance, an important pamphlet announcing the Pietermaritzburg conference was distributed without the prior knowledge of the non-ANC and non-communist members of the committee. Although not a major offence in itself, it did help to make the non-ANC members of the Continuation Committee wonder about their true function in the committee. Many, but in particular the PAC and the Liberal Party delegates, felt that the committee was nothing more than a facade for the ANC and the Communist Party to promote their ideals and plans.⁽⁷⁹⁾ They were strengthened in their fears by the sudden availability of large sums of money of which the origins could not be

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78. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 355. See also Contact, 1961.02.11, p. 3.
79. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 355. See also Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, pp. 168 - 170. See also Contact, 1961.02.11, p. 3.



determined. Lavish parties were organised for members of the Continuation Committee. According to Ngubane, "never in the history of African nationalism had so much money been available to the ANC". (80)

Ngubane, like the Africanists, came to believe that the money that were made available to the Continuation Committee to plan the All-in-Conference, came from sources outside the ANC. He later wrote:

There was, however, something very peculiar about this money. First, it did not come through the hands of the treasurer elected by the committee. Second, no proper statements of accounts were given. When the committee pressed for these, shoddy, unprofessional documents that meant absolutely nothing were handed in. Third, no receipts were requested in return for money paid out to delegates. Finally, the real source of the money was never revealed Naturally, the mystery surrounding the funds started tensions in the Continuation Committee. (81)

As a result of these and other conditions, the Africanists were the first to leave the Continuation Committee. They argued that the committee was committed to actions that were not part of the mandate granted to the committee by the Orlando conference in December. Once the PAC members had left the committee, the "invisible hand", later rumoured to be the SACP who received part of its funds from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), became even more noticeable in the actions of the Continuation Committee. According to Ngubane, it was widely rumoured at the time that the funds for the Continuation Committee came directly from the Soviet Union via the British High Commission territories of Basutoland and Bechuanaland and that it was handled by Joe Matthews on behalf of the ANC and the SACP in Maseru, Lesotho. (82) Matthews apparently controlled all ANC-SACP funds from Basutoland until 1965, when with the collapse of the underground movement inside South Africa, he moved to London to join the External Mission of the ANC-SACP alliance. He subsequently

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80. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 170.
81. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 170.
82. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 170.



became editor of Sechaba, the official mouthpiece of the ANC.⁽⁸³⁾

This "invisible hand", claimed Ngubane, was not interested in genuine African unity; its main aim was to advance its own ideological ends. This became increasingly apparent in the kind of literature that was sent out by the committee on the proposed conference. In these documents, the emphasis was no longer on African nationalism, but rather on the role of labour. This sparked off some stormy debates between the Liberals and independents on the one side, and the ANC-SACP delegates on the other. During these debates the entire issue regarding the funding of the Continuation Committee featured prominently on the agenda. Allegations that the Communist Party was behind the funding of the committee and thus the real power behind it, was denied by the ANC and SACP delegates.⁽⁸⁴⁾

The final clash between the various factions in the Continuation Committee came in March when the Liberals, supported by the independents, called for the postponement of the Pietermaritzburg conference in order to solve the problem left by the PAC's rejection of the committee. When their request was turned down, the same group called for negotiations because they believed that the walkout by the PAC members had altered the basis on which the Continuation Committee had been established and that the United Front expressed and set up by the Orlando conference was no longer represented by the Continuation Committee. But this request too was turned down. Hereafter, writes Ngubane, events rapidly developed towards a crisis point that eventually led to the resignation of the Liberals and most of the independents from the Continuation Committee.⁽⁸⁵⁾

After the walkout by the Liberals and the independents, the ANC and the SACP radicals had a free hand to proceed with the planning of the

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83. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, p. 79.
84. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 170 - 171.
85. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 171.



All-in-Conference. Although there is very little documentary evidence to substantiate Ngubane's claims of communist influences and control over the Continuation Committee, these allegations are probably not far-fetched when viewed against the broader canvas of Black political development since the banning of the ANC in 1960, and the failure of the radicals to have the organisation converted into an effective underground organisation for armed struggle. What is more, the banning of the ANC in 1960 not only left the organisation and its leaders without an underground structure to use, but it actually forced them to make use of the existing underground cell system of the SACP which was extensively overhauled in 1960-1961 to accommodate the new responsibility placed on its shoulders, namely, to guide the liberation struggle and to accommodate the radical leadership of the ANC both in terms of organisation and funding. In July 1960 a roneod leaflet was distributed to select addresses in Cape Town in which it was stated that a new communist movement had been established inside South Africa called "The South African Communist Party" (SACP), to replace the old Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) which was banned in 1950.⁽⁸⁶⁾

Ngubane's interpretation of events in 1961 and his allegations of Communist influences in the Continuation Committee as being the major reason for the collapse of African unity at a time when it was desperately needed to sustain the liberation struggle, is not fully shared by Tom Lodge and Karis and Carter. According to Lodge, Ngubane's allegations were somewhat exaggerated and it was likely that neither the PAC nor the ANC had any sincere desire for African unity, especially where this meant making concessions to one another.⁽⁸⁷⁾ There may be truth in Lodge's argument, since it is no secret that the ANC and the PAC - ever since the split in 1958 - had refused to accommodate one another's interpretations of African Nationalism and the role of non-Africans in the liberation struggle. The Africanists have been particularly inflexible on the role and position of non-African communists and communists in general in the

86. Contact, 1960.07.30, p. 2.

87. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 232.



liberation movement. Unfortunately, Tom Lodge failed to elaborate on his claim that Ngubane's allegation of communist influence in the Continuation Committee was an exaggeration of the situation.

Karis and Carter also failed to provide empirical evidence that could help to solve the problem. In reaction to what Ngubane had said about communist influences in the Continuation Committee, they thought it "ironic" that he should attribute the funding of the committee to the Communist Party as they had it on good authority that the money that was made available to the committee came not from the Soviet Union or any other communist sources, but from non-communist sources such as African governments and the Liberal Party in South Africa.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Unfortunately, they failed to reveal the identity of their source.

As far as the PAC's criticism of the Continuation Committee was concerned, Karis and Carter argued that the PAC was upset because it suspected that plans were afoot "to build up Mandela" as a hero of the African people in opposition to its own leader, Robert Sobukwe, who was in prison at the time.⁽⁸⁹⁾ This explanation fits in with that given by the ANC in March 1961 as to why the PAC delegates left the Continuation Committee. According to the ANC, the PAC had been searching for an excuse to leave the Continuation Committee from the moment it was established in December 1960. The reason for this was that the Cape leadership of the organisation was not in favour of the proposed All-in-Conference. Although no mention was made as to who the Cape leaders were who objected to the All-in-Conference, it was later suggested by the African newspaper, The World, that the instructions to Joe Molefe to withdraw from the Continuation Committee came directly from Robert Sobukwe in prison.⁽⁹⁰⁾

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88. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 355.
89. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 355.
90. The World, (Johannesburg), 1961.03.11. See also Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 54; B. Bunting, Towards a Climax, (Africa South in Exile 5(4), July - September 1961, p. 60).



2.7 The Pietermaritzburg All-in-African Conference,
25 - 26 March 1961

Although the departure of the PAC, the Liberal Party and the independents from the Continuation Committee left it virtually without members, the powers behind the committee nevertheless proceeded with the planning of the All-in-Conference. Even the arrest of the remaining members of the committee shortly before the conference, did little to side-track the preparations for 25 March. As a result, the conference was able to take place as scheduled.⁽⁹¹⁾

The All-in-Conference opened on Saturday 25 March in the Edendale Health Committee Hall outside Pietermaritzburg and was attended by 1 398 delegates representing 145 different organisations. Although the conference started in the Edendale Health Committee Hall, it was shortly afterwards transferred to the Plessislaer Indian Hall when it became rumoured that the original venue was bugged by the police.⁽⁹²⁾

Although the number of delegates who attended the conference was impressive, they turned out to be less representative of the spectrum of Black political thinking than what was initially hoped for. Nonetheless, given the difficult circumstances under which the planning of the conference took place as well as the differences amongst members of the Continuation Committee, the simple fact that the organisers could muster almost 1 400 delegates was no small achievement - even if most of those present were members or supporters of the ANC and the SACP. Only three members of the PAC and seven members of the Liberal Party were present at the conference. Why they were at the conference is not clear; it can only be assumed that they were there as observers in a non-official capacity.⁽⁹³⁾

91. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.

92. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.

93. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.



A breakdown of the delegates attending the conference reveals that the majority of them were representing anti-pass committees, residents' associations, workers' unions and cultural clubs. Most of these came from the Reef. Some fifty delegates came from Cape Town, while a fair amount (the number is not known) came from Natal where the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) had a strong following.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The highlight of the conference was undoubtedly the unexpected appearance of Nelson Mandela. Although he was under banning orders from the government, he was able to attend the conference due to the fact that his banning order had expired a few days before the conference and had not yet been renewed by the authorities.

The excitement surrounding Mandela's appearance at the conference clearly reflected the significant role that he had come to play in the underground by that time. This was later confirmed by the fact that most of what he had to say was subsequently adopted by the meeting as part of its main resolutions. Like many revolutionaries of the time, Mandela sported a full beard in "the new nationalist fashion".⁽⁹⁵⁾ Exactly what was meant by the "new nationalist fashion" Contact magazine did not explain, but it probably referred to the habit among members of the underground ANC to grow beards as part of their disguise and newly founded status as revolutionary underground leaders. The sporting of full beards was a common feature of guerrilla leaders such as Fidel Castro in Cuba, and the South American revolutionary leader, Che Guevara. Revolutionary leaders such as Castro and Guevara not to mention those in African countries such as Algeria, had a deep-seated influence on the thinking of African leaders in South Africa by the beginning of the 1960's. Jackie Grobler in his book A Decisive Clash? A short history on Black protest politics in South Africa 1875 - 1976 writes that an American commentator noticed that "Che Guevara's analysis of the Cuban revolution was like a bible to the leaders of Umkhonto".⁽⁹⁶⁾

94. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.

95. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.

96. J. Grobler, A Decisive Clash? A short history of Black politics in South Africa 1875 - 1979, p. 130.



As the first delegate to speak at the conference, Mandela's speech contained two important issues, namely the need for unity among African leaders and people in South Africa, and the convening of a national convention elected on an equal basis irrespective of race, class or creed to draw up a democratic constitution for a multi-racial South Africa of the future. He outrightly rejected the newly adopted Republican constitution as a fraudulent document based on the will of the minority. He further made it clear that a Republican form of government would not bring any improvement to the African's position in the country but instead, would help to intensify the government's policies of racial segregation and discrimination. It was therefore important for the conference to adopt a course of action against the new Republican constitution. The fundamental rights of democracy, Mandela told the delegates, were being kept from the majority of the people in South Africa and those who dare to demand it were either "shot down, deported or persecuted" as has happened at Sharpeville, Zeerust and Pondoland. He said:

The government refuse to meet the grievances but think only in terms of brute force. ... If we do not act, we will betray the people of Pondoland, Zeerust, and Sekukhuniland. Our course is to fight shoulder to shoulder for the great ideal - the liberation of all the oppressed people in South Africa. ... If we are united, the government is powerless; and if we put forward a militant plan of action, we can prevent the nationalist government from doing anything unless the people give their consent.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Mandela then warned that should the government

refuse to call the convention, we call upon the African people to refuse to co-operate with such a republic or with any form of government which rests on force and repression. The government, although it is determined to use force, is weak both internally and internationally. We know that our victory will be won by militant campaigns launched in this country by us and guided by us. You must be inspired by the knowledge that our cause is strong and invincible and that your struggle is supported in all parts of the world where freedom is invincible.⁽⁹⁸⁾

97. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.

98. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5.



Subsequently, a resolution rejecting the Republican constitution and calling for a national convention was adopted by the conference. The resolution which was undoubtedly the most important adopted by the conference read in part as follows:

We demand a National Convention of elected representatives of adult men and women on an equal basis, irrespective of race, colour or creed, or other limitations, to be called by the Union Government not later than May 31st.

We demand that the Convention shall have sovereign powers to determine, in any way the majority of delegates [who] shall decide [on] a new non-racial democratic constitution for South Africa.

We resolve that should the minority Government refuse the demands of representatives of the united will of the African people:

- (a) We will stage country-wide demonstrations on the eve of the Republic. We shall call upon Africans not to co-operate or collaborate in any way with the proposed Republic or any form of government which rests on force to perpetuate the tyranny of the minority;
- (b) We also call on all Indians, Coloureds and democratic Europeans to join forces with the Africans in opposition to a regime which is bringing disaster to South Africa. We further decided that in order to further the objects of this conference, the conference (A) elects a national action committee; (B) instructs all delegates to return to their areas and form local action committees.⁽⁹⁹⁾

2.8 The National Action Council (NAC) and the End-of-May Stay-Away Action

Following its appointment by the All-in-Conference, the National Action Council (NAC) did not wait for the government to react to the conference's demands, but started almost immediately with preparations for the end-of-May strike. This latter factor is significant in that it provides some valuable insight into the thinking of the ANC's underground leadership at the time. The fact that preparations for the end-of-May strike action began almost immediately after the

99. Contact, 4(7), 1961.04.06, p. 5. See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 632 - 633.



conference, is clear indication that the leaders of the NAC were convinced that the government would never agree to their demands for a national convention. In fact, as the undisputed leader of the underground ANC, Mandela and his associates in the Communist Party probably knew long before the All-in-Conference that the government would never adhere to their (what appeared at the time to be) radical demands. The question then is, why did Mandela and his followers demand a national convention when they were convinced that their demands would not be adhered to, for the government has a long history of ignoring even the most moderate of Black political demands? There can be several explanations for this. One, to prove to the Black community as a whole and to those moderate African leaders in the ANC who still held the belief that non-violent protest would bring about political change that this was a myth. Two, to prove to the international community at large that irrespective of how moderate the demands of the ANC and Black leaders in general were for political change, the South African government had no intention of ever altering its political philosophy in favour of Blacks. This was made particularly clear by the government's reaction to and criticism of Harold MacMillan's speech in Parliament in early 1960.

A third reason for the ANC's radical demands in 1961 was probably to provide the organisation with a legitimate excuse to abandon its policy of non-violent protest in favour of a radical underground armed struggle and closer association with the SACP. The latter argument is partially born out by the fact that virtually all literature released by the ANC on the history of the liberation struggle and the move towards violence in 1961 stressed the fact that the decision to form Umkhonto was only made after the government had refused to adhere to the demands of the All-in-Conference in May 1961.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Perhaps the best known of these statements was that

100. See African National Congress of South Africa, Issued by the ANC South Africa, Dar-es-Salaam, 1963.11.07, pp. 22 - 23; South Africa on Trial, pp. 11, 14. (Author's Collection), np, nd; State Library, United Nations Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, Document 10 1982, African Group at the United Nations Observes 70th Anniversary of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), pp. 2 - 3; O. Tambo, Plenary Address. Presented at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Syracuse, October 31 - November 3, 1973, p. 11; ANC, African National Congress [of] South Africa. A Short History, ANC Publicity and Information Bureau, London, 1971, pp. 18 - 20.



made by Nelson Mandela at his second trial (Rivonia Trial) in 1963. In sketching the developments that led to the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, Mandela told the court that by the beginning of June (1961), after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, he and some of his colleagues came to the conclusion that as violence in South Africa was inevitable, it would be unrealistic for them to continue preaching non-violence.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ A year earlier, during his first court appearance, after he was arrested for having left South Africa without the necessary exist documents, Mandela also told the court that

"we of the National Action Council, who had been entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of safeguarding the interests of the African people, were faced with this conflict between the law and our consciousness ...

If there was any danger during this period that violence would result from the situation in the country, then the possibility was of the Government's making.

THEY SET THE SCENE FOR VIOLENCE BY RELYING EXCLUSIVELY ON VIOLENCE WITH WHICH TO ANSWER OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR DEMANDS ...

GOVERNMENT VIOLENCE CAN DO ONLY ONE THING AND THAT IS TO BREED COUNTER-VIOLENCE ...⁽¹⁰²⁾

Much of what Mandela said at his trial in 1962 and later again in 1963 was subsequently echoed by researchers on the subject of the ANC and the armed struggle in South Africa. Tom Lodge in his study of Black politics in South Africa made no effort to evaluate the origins of the decision to adopt violence and to form Umkhonto in 1961 beyond the events mentioned by Mandela as having influenced them to move to armed struggle in 1961.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Other authors such as the late Francis Meli, who was the editor of Sechaba, in his recent history of the ANC and the armed struggle maintained that the events of 1961 presented a definite turning point in Black politics.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

101. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 168 - 169.

102. What Mandela Said About Dialogue, (Sechaba, July 1971, p. 6) the above quotation can also be found in Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 154. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 1.

103. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 232 - 235.

104. Meli, South Africa belongs to us, pp. 143 - 144. See also "Preparation for Armed Struggle" in African National Congress of South Africa. A Short History, 1971, pp. 21 - 23.



Although there can be little dispute over the fact that Umkhonto was established only in 1961 and that the first armed action against the state was undertaken towards the end of the same year, indications are that the decision to move towards a policy of violence had been taken a long time before this, but that its implementation was delayed by the fact that a solid core of conservative leaders in the ANC and the liberation movement as a whole were generally opposed to such a development. It was only with the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the government's increasingly unsympathetic attitude towards African political demands that the radicals in the ANC and the underground were provided with sufficient proof to convince their fellow leaders that violence and a change in ANC policy was inevitable. In view of this, Mandela and those who supported him in the underground ANC, must have known well before 1961 that the government would never adhere to any of their demands, however peaceful it may have seemed. Having banned the ANC and committed itself to a policy aimed at the eradication of radical Black demands for political change, the government clearly had no intention of legitimising the ANC or the SACP by agreeing to their demands. To claim thus that it was the Republican Referendum of October 1960 or the government's reaction to the demands of the All-in-Conference in 1961 that finally decided the nature of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa is to put the cart in front of the horses. The truth of the situation is that Mandela and his associates had carefully orchestrated the events that led to the formation of Umkhonto and the beginning of the armed struggle in 1961. In a way this process began in the early 1950's when Mandela presented his Plan for the structural organisation of the ANC to its Transvaal chapter in 1953.

Although the names of the members of the NAC were kept a secret, it soon became known that the Chairman of the council was Nelson Mandela (by this stage the undisputed leader of the underground ANC) assisted by at least two others identified as Walter Sisulu and Moses Kotane. Both Sisulu and Kotane were with Mandela when he visited Basutoland in April 1961 to seek the support of Ntzu Mokhehle and his Basuto Congress Party (BCP). Two further ANC members, namely, Dr. A. Letele and Joe Matthews, were also present at this meeting. Matthews, as we



have indicated above, was the ANC-SACP's official contact in the mountain kingdom.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ It is interesting to note that all four ANC leaders who attended the meeting with Mandela in Basutoland in April were radicals, while at least three - namely Walter Sisulu, Joe Matthews, and Moses Kotane - were members of the banned SACP.

According to Ntsu Mokhehle, the aim of Mandela and the NAC's meeting with him was to establish a working relationship between the BCP and the underground liberation movement inside South Africa, and to solicit its support for the end-of-May strike.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ It further appears that the NAC needed the printing and distribution facilities of the BCP to print instructions for the strike. The NAC also requested the BCP to send letters from Basutoland to South Africa in which support was expressed for the ANC and the end-of-May strike. It appears that the BCP was also requested by the NAC to use its influence and organisational infra-structure to undermine the constitutional process in Basutoland and to call for the country's immediate independence from Britain. Finally, the BCP was requested not to involve the PAC, which had its exile headquarters in Maseru, in any of its activities. It was under no circumstances to allow the organisation access to its printing press. The reason for this is not clear, but it is possible that the NAC was concerned that the PAC could make use of the press to print anti-ANC propaganda calling on Africans not to support the end-of-May strike. A further reason for the NAC's insistence on no PAC involvement was probably the fact that Mandela and his associates knew that the BCP had strong ties with the PAC leadership in Maseru. Ntsu Mokhehle and the BCP's immediate reaction to the NAC's requests (perhaps "demands" is a better description) is not known, but if later reports and the accusations levelled at the ANC and its leaders by Mokhehle is anything to go by, it was probably not very favourable. At a meeting of the BCP's Youth League in August 1961, Mokhehle lashed out at the ANC leadership

105. Contact, 4(17), 1961.09.07, p. 3. See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 50 - 52, 78 - 79, 106. Contact, 4(17), 1961.09.07, p. 3.

106. Contact, 4 (17), 1961.09.07, p. 3.



and the NAC for trying to "dictate" to and attempting to "conquer" the BCP. In a follow-up interview with the Liberal Party paper Contact, Mokhehle in direct reference to Nelson Mandela and the NAC made no secret of his dislike of what he termed "these so-called freedom fighters who are mostly communist inspired and are interested [only] in crippling nationalist movements by their tricks and infiltrations". (107)

As a result of its dislike for the ANC and its communist partners, the BCP subsequently stated that it had severed all ties with Mandela and the ANC, because of the latter organisation's and the SACP's attempts to establish themselves in Basutoland at the expense of the BCP. (108) How true these accusations were is difficult to determine. They do however fit in with the accusations made by Jordan Ngubane against the ANC and the Continuation Committee. It also fits in with the wider shift in African politics from its insistence on non-violent confrontation with the authorities to closer co-operation with the communist left and the adoption of a policy of violent if not revolutionary confrontation with the State, that had been manifesting itself since the banning of the ANC.

Unable to gain the support of the BCP, the NAC was left to its own devices to organise the end-of-May strike action. One of the first things it did was to set up the necessary machinery to publicise the resolution of the All-in-Conference and to alert the African people to the end-of-May strike. A letter sent to the Prime Minister, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, on 20 April informing him of the resolutions of the conference, was followed by a second letter to the office of the Prime Minister when no reply was received to the first. The second letter also met with no reaction. Mandela later, at his first trial in 1962, severely criticised the government, and in particular the

107. Contact, 4(17), 1961.09.07, p. 3.

108. The Rand Daily Mail, (Johannesburg), 1961.10.24; Contact, 4(17), 1961.09.07, p. 3.



Prime Minister, for not having responded to the NAC's letters. By not doing so, the minister and the government, Mandela told the court, had fallen "below the standards which one expects from one in such a position".⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

In addition to the letters sent to the office of the Prime Minister, a letter was also sent to the leader of the official opposition in the House of Assembly, Sir de Villiers Graaff, asking for the United Party's (U.P.) support in convincing the government of the need for a national convention to be called immediately. The letter, which was dated 23 May 1961, read in part as follows:⁽¹¹⁰⁾

In one week's time, the Verwoerd Government intends to inaugurate its Republic. It is unnecessary to state that this intention has never been endorsed by the non-white majority of this country ... it is opposed by every articulate group amongst the African, Coloured and Indian communities who constitute the majority of this country.

The Government's intentions to proceed under these circumstances, has created conditions bordering on a crisis. ... The country is becoming an armed camp, the Government is preparing for civil war with increasingly heavy police and military apparatus ...

We have called on the Government to convene an elected National Convention of representatives of all races without delay, We can see no alternative to this proposal except that the Nationalist Government proceeds to enforce a minority decision on all of us with the certain consequence of still deeper crisis, and a continuing period of strife and disaster ahead.

... A substantial European body of opinion, represented by both the Progressive and Liberal Parties, has endorsed our call. Support for a National Convention has also come from the bulk of the English language press, from several national Church organisations and from many other [sources].

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109. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 136. See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 360 - 361.
110. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 634 - 636.



But where, Sir does the United Party stand? We have to hear from this most important organisation - the main organisation in fact of anti-Nationalist opinion amongst the European Community - or from you its leader. ... It is time for you, Sir, and your Party to speak out. Are you for a democratic and peaceful solution of our problems? Are you for a National Convention? We in South Africa and the world outside, expect an answer. (111)

Like the government, the UP did not officially reply to the NAC's request for support. Having received the NAC's letter less than seven days before the end-of-May strike action, there was probably not enough time for the UP to reply to their request. It is of course also possible that the NAC never really expected any support from the UP. The letter to Sir de Villiers Graaff was clearly written at a time when the planning of the end-of-May strike was already well underway. It is also possible that by this stage Mandela and his fellow radicals in the underground had already decided to form Umkhonto, but that they needed one final example of White inflexibility to convince the world that they were left with no alternative but to adopt a policy of armed struggle.

What is more, the UP, although as critical of the South African government's apartheid policies as the ANC, did not share the same views as the ANC for opposing a Republican form of government. Unlike the ANC, the UP's opposition to a Republic was primarily based on the belief that the adoption of a Republican constitution for South Africa might harm the country's relationship with the British Commonwealth and even lead to greater political and economic isolation of the country. The UP was further concerned that by being insensitive to Black political demands, the government in its adoption of a Republican constitution might only compound an already tense and unpopular political situation, while a majority vote among Whites for a Republic might be viewed by Verwoerd as an endorsement of his apartheid policies for South Africa. (112) Ironically, the

111. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 636.

112. House of Assembly Debates, 1961.01.22, cols. 293 - 294; House of Assembly Debates, 1961.04.10, col. 4153; House of Assembly Debates, 1961.04.12, cols. 4323 - 7.



fears expressed by the UP later proved to be an accurate assessment of Black reaction to South Africa becoming a Republic on 31 May 1961.

In addition to the letters sent to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the official opposition in Parliament, the NAC also distributed large quantities of pamphlets and "flyers" throughout most of the main centres in the country in the weeks preceeding the strike. In one such a pamphlet entitled "All-in-African National Action Council: An Appeal to Students and Scholars" and signed by Mandela himself, a serious appeal was made to all African "students" and "scholars" to support the resolution for the All-in-African Conference in its call for a National Convention, as well as the end-of-May strike should the government fail to adhere to these demands.⁽¹¹³⁾

(1) African Opposition to the End-of-May Strike

Opposition to the end-of-May strike planned by the NAC did not only come from the ranks of the government or Whites only organisations, but also from Africans. The strongest African opposition to the strike came from the Africanist movement. Shortly after the NAC had issued its call to the "African Youth" of the country to support its call for a strike on 31 May, the PAC through its underground wing "Poqo" (meaning "pure" or "alone") released thousands of leaflets in which it urged Africans to boycott the NAC (ANC's) anti-Republican demonstrations. In this the PAC openly associated the ANC and the NAC with the banned Communist Party. It stated:

We, the PAC, say: Do not follow the Congress Alliance. The PAC do not support the Congress Alliance with their present move to a National Convention. We do not want our people to become Russian slaves as the Congress Alliance do.

... All PAC supporters must go to work and not support the Alliance!⁽¹¹⁴⁾

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113. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 633 - 635. See also document entitled "Stay at Home" issued by the NAC, [nd], single page (Author's Collection).
114. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 639 - 640. See also document entitled "Poqo. Poqo. Poqo." Issued by the PAC, [nd], single page (Author's Collection).



In an attempt to counter the damage caused by the PAC's anti-ANC and anti-strike propaganda, the NAC released a flyer in which it denied the allegations levelled at it by the PAC. In return the NAC called the PAC "agents of the South African police and government". It also attacked the South African police for making use of former members of the PAC to discredit the proposed end-of-May demonstrations planned by the ANC and the NAC. In referring to the PAC pamphlet, the NAC pamphlet stated

This pamphlet is the work of traitors and police informers. It is a tragedy that people who until last year took part in the struggle of the African people should be now so disheartened and broken down, so scared of militant action that their only reaction to the historical resolutions of Pietermaritzburg is to panic, to desert their own people and side with the police. (115)

2.9 The End-of-May Strike, 29 - 31 May 1961

With the Sharpeville and Langa riots still fresh in its memory, the South African government was determined to prevent the end-of-May strike from developing into a second major unrest situation. What is more, the occasion of South Africa officially becoming a republic on 31 May was an important and dignified occasion and the government did not want to see it marred by country-wide riots and unrest. In order to ensure that the Republican celebrations take place without any violence and large scale unrest, the government set into motion on 3 May one of the biggest and most systematic raids against Black leaders and radicals in the underground, that the country has ever seen. The aim of the raid was two-fold, namely, to find the underground headquarters of the radical left (i.e. the ANC, the NAC and the SACP); and to remove from circulation as many Black leaders as possible before 29 May. The raid which began in the early hours of 3 May, netted more than 10 000 people over the next few weeks. (116)

115. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, p. 638. See also document entitled "Police Agents at Work" issued by the ANC, [nd] single page (Author's Collection).

116. Contact, 4(10), 1961.05.18, p. 4; The Rand Daily Mail, (Johannesburg), 1961.05.25. See also Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 196.



Simultaneously with these developments, the government also introduced a number of additional measures such as the General Law Amendment Act, which allowed it to refuse bail to any arrested person for up to 12 days if this was considered to be in the safety of the country. Although the particular Act was considered to be a temporary measure to deal with the proposed strike at the end of May, it was retained until the mid-1960's. (117)

In addition to the above Act the Minister of Justice, F.C. Erasmus, also placed a ban on all meetings and gatherings with the exception of statutory meetings such as church and other similar gatherings. The ban was designed to remain in power until 26 June but due to the subsequent failure of the end-of-May strike it was lifted on 6 June. (118) The government also placed eleven units of the Union's Commando forces on standby, while all leave for Defence Force officers was cancelled. At the same time a warrant was issued for the immediate arrest of Nelson Mandela. He managed however to evade the police for almost a year and a half. Mandela's ability to elude the police made him a folk hero in the eyes of many African and Blacks in South Africa, and earned him the nickname of the "Black Pimpernel" in the press. (119)

As a result of the preventative action taken by the authorities, particularly the wide-scale raids on leaders and organisations between 3 May and the end of the month, and the call by the Pan-Africanist Congress - the strike which started on 29 May turned out to be largely a failure. Most of the daily newspapers who reported on the outcome of the strike confirmed this. (120)

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117. House of Assembly Debates, 1961.05.29, col. 7249. See also Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 49 - 50.
 118. House of Assembly Debates, 1961.05.22, col. 6832; Proclamation 762, Extra-ordinary Government-Gazette, no. 6693, 1961.05.19, see also Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 49 - 50.
 119. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 49; Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 177.
 120. Compare the reports on the strike in: The Star, Rand Daily Mail, Cape Times, Die Volksblad, The Diamond Fields Advertiser, The Daily News, The Natal Witness, and The Daily Dispatch for 29, 30 and 31 May 1961. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1961, pp. 37 - 39.



There were those, however, who disagreed with these assessments. Two notable sources here were Tom Lodge and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). Lodge argued that the strike had brought about some considerable disruption in industry and commerce in most of the major centres of the country such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth.⁽¹²¹⁾ Although Lodge did not say on what authority he based his assessment of the strike, it appears to be in line with a report released by SACTU shortly after the strike on 16 June. In this report SACTU claimed that the strike had brought about total disruption of the manufacturing industry in the major industrial centres of South Africa.

Clothing, textiles, canning, engineering, building, leather, laundry and dry cleaning, civil engineering, ... either closed down completely or remained open with a skeleton staff, SACTU stated. Some industries were closed for all three days. Farm workers, municipal workers, office cleaners and others took part in this type of action for the first time. All students of Fort Hare University stayed away. Students at the Universities of Natal, Cape Town, and the Witwatersrand also demonstrated in sympathy with the workers. Yet, the national and international Press headlined the stay-at-home as a total failure.⁽¹²²⁾

The question however is, which of the two views on the outcome of the strike was correct? The government and the press who labelled the strike a failure, or Lodge and SACTU who denied that this was the case? Considering that Lodge's interpretation of the strike is almost identical to the report released by SACTU, which as a labour union had a vested interest in the outcome of the strike action, one is inclined to accept the view of the press and the authorities that the strike was generally a failure. Moreover, the fact that the strike was a failure would help to explain why the radicals in the underground after May 1961 had thought it necessary to abandon all hope of a peaceful settlement in South Africa and adopt a policy of

121. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 197.

122. Carter and Karis Micro-Film Collection, Reel 14.B, SACTU Special Newsletter, Stay-at-home, May 29th, 30th, 31st, 1961, p. 1. See also Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 197.



armed struggle. If the strike action was the success that SACTU and Lodge have claimed it to be, why then was it necessary for the radicals to form Umkhonto in November 1961? Surely, a successful strike would have removed or at least substantially reduced the need for a policy of violence after May 1961. But since this was not the case, it was either one of two things or both - namely that the strike was indeed a failure, or that the decision to form Umkhonto and to move to violence had been taken long before the end of May. Both appear to be the case.

There are sufficient indications that even if the strike had been a success, the ANC and the SACP would still have gone ahead with the formation of Umkhonto. One can therefore assume that the decision to move to armed struggle was a well concluded fact long before May 1961. As such the May strike was thus merely a formality, a convenient excuse for the radicals to put into motion their plans for armed struggle. Although Lodge disagrees with such a view, he has not sufficiently explained the need for Umkhonto and the armed struggle. (123)

A more convincing view is held by Edward Feit. According to him, the decision to form Umkhonto was taken long before 1961 and was part of a wider plan called "Operation Mayibuye", which had a number of phases or stages of which sabotage and guerrilla warfare represented the latter two phases. (124)

3. SOME EXPLANATIONS AS TO WHY THE STRIKE FAILED

Although there is no consensus on the reasons for the failure of the strike, there is however some broad agreement between the various sources on the factors that could have had an influence on the outcome of the event.

The first source to examine the reasons for the failure of the

123. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 197.

124. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1970, p. 62).

strike was Contact magazine.⁽¹²⁵⁾ In its analysis of the strike published almost immediately after the event, the magazine advanced five main reasons as to why it thought the strike had failed. Firstly it believed that the idea or concept itself was too big to be successful. A campaign, it argued, of which the stated aims cannot be reached, does not inspire in the same way as a meaningful objective would. A "general strike", it pointed out, cannot be successful without years of solid trade union work behind it. Equally, if not more important, was the fact that it felt the government held all the cards in a contest which required its opponents to communicate with the masses lawfully, something the NAC could not do.

Secondly, Contact believed that the objective of the strike did not have the right appeal; in other words, the idea of a Republic was too abstract a concept for most Africans to fully appreciate or identify their every-day grievances with. This was also the case with the national convention. While this latter concept was fully understood by the people who demanded it, it is doubtful whether the Black masses who were to support it really understood it beyond the fact that they had to support it for a better future. Exclusion from the republican referendum, argued Contact, was a minor item in the catalogue of African miseries. Nor was the idea of a national convention sufficient reason for a man to risk his job, home or even possible death, by striking for it. Most of them simply could not project the long-term benefits of an anti-Republican strike or what a national convention might hold for them individually.

Thirdly, were the measures introduced by the state to prevent the strike from taking place or at least, from developing into a major unrest situation. According to Contact, the massive steps taken by the police since the beginning of May and the fact that it could detain people for up to twelve days without trial or formal charges, had a major effect on the outcome of the strike. At the same time the underground leadership of the ANC could promise no immediate

125. Contact, 4(11), 1961.06.11, p. 4.

freedom or economic gain to inspire the African masses to defy the police's actions and to stay home on the 29th.

A fourth reason advanced by Contact, was the general lack of leadership that accompanied the planning and eventual execution of the strike. It claimed that

many leaders who disappeared early in May and were expected to rally their followers the weekend before the strike simply did not reappear at all. A common attitude was "Why should I suffer if the people who are telling me what to do are not here".

Although thousands of leaflets or flyers were distributed shortly before the strike, they could not serve as an alternative to the physical presence of the strike leaders themselves. Most Africans were used to their leaders taking the initiative in anti-government action. With the banning of the ANC in 1960 all this had changed, and the strike call for May was the first opportunity that Africans had had of finding out that conditions regarding strikes and protest actions were no longer the same, and that their leaders were no longer able to openly lead them into defiance. Contact criticized the NAC and the ANC's leadership for their lack of insight and argued that, since they knew that open meetings and rallies could no longer be held, they should have devised alternative plans to deal with the situation.

The fifth and last reason given by the magazine as to why the strike failed, was the role played by the Pan-Africanist Congress and its call on Africans not to support the strike. It argued:

The police scarcely needed to leaflet Port Elizabeth from the air with a phoney call from an unheard of African Union telling the people to go to work. The PAC did it for them. The deep divisions [in] African politics were revealed by the PAC's bitter attack through leaflets and whispering. In Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg this had a serious ill-effect on the outcome of the strike.



Some of the points raised by Contact magazine was later also highlighted by Nelson Mandela in his analysis of the strike. In an article published in Africa South in Exile⁽¹²⁶⁾ some months after the strike and which was later incorporated in his book, No Easy Walk to Freedom, Mandela concluded that the failure of the strike was effected by a combination of government action, and the "shameful" role played by the press, the radio and European employers in their "unfair" campaign against the strike. He pointed out that

until ten days before the strike, the press had provided uncharacteristically fair coverages of the campaign, describing it as the most intensive and best campaign ever ... and openly predicting unprecedented success. Then, suddenly and simultaneously, all the newspapers switched their lines. Heavy publicity was given to statements by Government leaders and employers' organisations condemning the strike and threatening reprisals against all who stayed away from work. Statements by the National Action Council were diluted, deliberately distorted or suppressed.

He also accused the government of having encouraged people to declare the strike a failure even before it had started, thereby confusing the people who were to participate in it. In addition, he also criticised the PAC for having added to the confusion by calling on Africans not to support the strike, but instead to go to work. Their actions, he alleged, was one of

shocking contradiction and amazing confusion. Nothing has been more disasterous to themselves than their pathetic attempts to sabotage the demonstrations. ... But there was something even more disasterous and tragic than their mean and cowardly behaviour in stabbing their kith and kin at a time when maximum unity had become a matter of life and death to Africans. What shocked most people was the extent to which they completely identified themselves with the actions of the police in the repression of the demonstrations ... their main function was to ruin African unity and to break the strike.

126. N. Mandela, Out of the Strike, (Africa South in Exile 6(1), October - December 1961, pp. 15 - 23). See also Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 94 - 106. The latter article is dated 26 June 1961).



A further factor raised by Mandela and perhaps the most important influencing the outcome of the strike, was the fact that the strike had to be organised under illegal conditions. Although the Pietermaritzburg All-in-African Conference was also organised under illegal conditions, its aims and objectives were very different from that of the end-of-May strike, which included the possibility of a violent confrontation between the strikers and the police. In the past, i.e. before Sharpeville and the banning of the ANC, the prospects of a violent confrontation with the authorities might have served to encourage Africans, particularly the younger generation, to support a protest call by the ANC leadership. But by the beginning of 1961 an all-out confrontation with the police was no longer such an attractive prospect, especially since Sharpeville had shown that the police would not hesitate to shoot. Moreover, strikes and protest actions had yet to produce any tangible political and economic results for Africans.

As a result of the illegal conditions that the NAC thus found itself in, every inch of the planning for the end-of-May strike had to be conducted in a clandestine manner from the underground. This presented many problems, especially because most of the NAC's leaders were not familiar with underground operations. Mandela pointed out that

key organisations continued right up to the moment of the strike. But, lack of experience in working under illegal conditions ... created dislocation in certain areas, and leaders and organisations were not readily available on the spot to attend to the problems that arose as the anti-strike barrage reached its climax during the fourteen days before the strike. (127)

It was also conceded by Mandela that unlike the Sharpeville demonstrations, the end-of-May strike was not about intense emotional issues such as passes, or about bread and butter issues as has been the case in previous strikes. It was a political strike for fundamental

127. Mandela, Out of the Strike (Africa South in Exile 6(1), October - December 1961, pp. 15 - 23).



rather than peripheral demands. "... A strike for the right, for the power to solve our bread-and-butter, or mealie meal problems ourselves", he stated. Mandela also pointed out that the day-to-day demands of the African masses could have been more closely linked to and more clearly highlighted by the NAC in its propaganda material for the strike.

An important factor that has not been raised by either Contact magazine or Mandela in their assessment of the strike, was the role or non-role of tsotsi and criminal elements in the planning of the stay-away.⁽¹²⁸⁾ The timely removal of these latter elements who had played a significant role in past demonstrations by the police in the weeks before the strike, had significantly deprived the NAC of an important means of forcing Africans to stay at home and thereby turning the strike into a success. Without these tsotsi and criminal elements to threaten them, many Africans felt less compelled to stay at home on the 29th. The tsotsi-element was a typical phenomena of the African township life in the 1950's and 1960's. Usually slightly better educated than the lower class workers, but unable to break into the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, the tsotsis, scornful of their inferior status and their inability to obtain higher paid employment and thus a better social life, often engaged themselves in criminal activities. Those who were unemployed often grouped themselves into gangs of juvenile delinquents and concentrated on acts of a criminal nature. Their value in the underground struggle after 1960 was highlighted by the fact that when Umkhonto in Natal began to experience problems with recruiting people for guerrilla training outside South Africa, it turned to these criminal elements to meet its needs for recruits.⁽¹²⁹⁾

The failure of the end-of-May strike of course also raises another important question, namely the level of real support the ANC had after 1960. Undoubtedly, many Africans must have left the

128. Gerhart, Black Power, pp. 42, 223 - 224. See also L. Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class and Politics in South Africa, p. 425.

129. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 82 - 83.



organisation in the post-April 1960 period. Also, without the ability of the ANC's leadership to openly canvas new members, the number of recruits who entered the organisation, particularly the underground, after April, must have been small. Felt in his study of the ANC during these years, has made it abundantly clear that the ANC had many "fair-weather" friends who were quite willing to be part of the organisation while it was legal and the risks involved were small, but the minute the organisation became banned and adopted a clandestine underground existence, they were no longer prepared to risk their lives. As a result, only a small core of die-hards in the end remained in the organisation after 1960. According to Felt, their numbers were probably between 1 000 and 3 000.⁽¹³⁰⁾ It is also doubtful whether those recruited after 1960 were more than a handful. Felt argues that the underground ANC came to consist mainly of those who had joined the organisation in the first few months of its illegal existence and that those who joined afterwards remained a distinct minority.⁽¹³²⁾

It is of course questionable as to whether the underground leaders of the ANC were really interested in mass support and a mass organisational set-up after April 1960. With the emphasis on underground work and the need for a highly centralised cell-based organisation to conduct the affairs of the ANC after April 1960, the mass-based organisational structure of the ANC was counter-productive to the radicals' decision to form Umkhonto in 1961. Clearly, the figure of 150 000 paid-up members quoted by the ANC's leadership for the period prior to April 1960 could no longer be applied to the ANC after its banning in 1960.⁽¹³²⁾

CONCLUSION

Whether the ANC had any direct or indirect influence on it or not, there can be little doubt that the incidents of African and Black

130. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 100.
131. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 132.
132. Congress Voice, April 1961, p. 8.



defiance which followed the 1948 election of the Nationalist government of Dr. Malan with its strict policies of racial segregation, systematically contributed to the decision among a section of the ANC's younger and more radical leadership, to take up arms against the state in 1961. The banning of the CPSA in 1950 and the government's determination to oppose Black demands for political change such as the Defiance Campaign and the rural unrest of the late 1950's early 1960's, systematically contributed to strengthening the cause of the radicals in the Congress Alliance and the communist underground. Although influential, the radicals were a distinct minority in the liberation movement. As such the moderates were able to keep them at bay at least up to the banning of the ANC in 1960. From this point onwards the moderates in the ANC rapidly lost control over the cause of Black political development in South Africa. An important contributing factor to this development, and which is not always fully appreciated by historians, was the Treason Trial. The Trial which began in 1958 and dragged on until April 1961 effectively aided the cause of radical Black politics in South Africa in that it removed from the African political arena most of the ANC's moderate leadership. This action left the road wide open for the radicals such as Mandela and those who worked from the underground to begin with the implementation of their well laid plans for a change in the policy and tactics of the liberation struggle. This move towards a more radical approach in the liberation struggle has of course long been propagated by the CPSA and was one of the main reasons why the government decided to proscribe it in 1950. By the time that the Treason Trial was over in April 1961, and the leadership of the ANC was released, the latter organisation had long been transformed into a radical underground movement by a new NEC, now called the "Emergency Committee", which stood under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. From here onwards it was only a matter of time before the ANC with its rather clumsy organisational structure (as it existed before April 1960) was abandoned in favour of a new and more revolutionary organisation to spearhead the liberation struggle. This new organisation was Umkhonto we Sizwe.



In speaking from the dock at his trial in 1963, Mandela justified their decision to move to a policy of violence and to form Umkhonto by saying that

we felt that without violence there would be no way to open the African people to succeed in their struggle against the principles of White Supremacy. All lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we had either accepted a permanent state of inferiority or, to defy the Government. We chose to defy the law. ... This was our feeling in June 1961 when we decided to press for a change in the policy of the National Liberation Movement ... As a result of this decision Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed in November 1961.⁽¹³³⁾

133. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 169 - 170.



CHAPTER THREE

THE FORMATION OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE (MK)

Once the decision to establish Umkhonto we Sizwe had been taken by the underground leadership by mid 1961, the next step was to set into motion the necessary machinery to bring this about. Not a great deal is known about the process and exact manner in which this was done or exactly when Umkhonto was established, except that it was done sometime in November, according to Mandela.⁽¹⁾

The reason why so little information is available on the formation of Umkhonto is not difficult to understand if one takes into account that not only was Umkhonto a revolutionary underground organisation designed to conduct a campaign of armed violence against the State, but its very existence after November 1961 depended on its ability to maintain absolute secrecy and not to reveal anything about its leaders or structure that might lead the police to its door. Although some information has been revealed over the years since the beginning of the armed struggle, this does not amount to a great deal, with the result that any account of the organisation's formation in 1961 remains sketchy and incomplete. Perhaps the three most useful and informative sources on the formation of Umkhonto are Bruno Mtolo's Umkhonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left, which covers the origins and development of Umkhonto in Natal up to the beginning of 1963; Edward Feit's Urban Revolt in South Africa, which deals with the history of Umkhonto in more general terms during the same period and which makes extensive use of Mtolo's court evidence in 1963/64; and thirdly, the recently published monograph by Howard

1. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 170. See also Barrell, MK, p. 7 and Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 28.

Barrell, MK, the ANC's armed struggle. The latter source, which is the first up to date account of Umkhonto in years, contains interesting information and points of view on Umkhonto and this has been incorporated as far as possible in this chapter and the rest of the study.

1. THE SETTING UP OF AN UNDERGROUND HEADQUARTERS

The setting up of an underground National High Command (NHC) for Umkhonto was the task of Nelson Mandela. For this he was given the amber light by his colleagues in the ANC's Emergency Committee (of which he was the Chairman) and the SACP's Central Committee. He was assisted by Joe Slovo who had been especially appointed to the task by the SACP. At its birth Umkhonto was thus a joint venture of radical ANC leaders and the SACP.⁽²⁾ According to Howard Barrell

In the SACP there was no equivocation on the issue. After dissolving in 1950 under threat of the Suppression of Communism Act, the Communist Party had secretly regrouped in 1953. At an underground congress held in a private house in Johannesburg shortly after the lifting of the post-Sharpeville state of emergency in August 1960, the SACP leadership had resolved to create an armed force In view of the SACP's overlapping membership with the ANC, and the vital role the Party had played from underground in keeping the Congress Alliance alive during the post-Sharpeville emergency, the SACP's decision strongly reinforced the arguments for armed activity coming from leading ANC nationalists such as Mandela.⁽³⁾

Having decided to form Umkhonto one of the first steps taken by the combined underground was to find a suitable place to set up an underground headquarters from which the formation and eventual operations of Umkhonto could be conducted with relative safety. Since Umkhonto was the brainchild of both the ANC and the SACP, the headquarters (HQ) had to be situated in an area where the presence of

2. Barrell, MK, p. 7. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 28.
3. Barrell, MK, p. 6. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 28.



Whites, Blacks and Indians and the constant movement of these people in and out of the area would not attract undue attention from neighbours. These requirements immediately ruled out any of the Black urban areas (townships) around the country.

Secondly, the proposed headquarters had to be as close as possible to the workplace and homes of most of the underground leaders. With the majority of the underground leaders of the ANC and the SACP either working or living on the Reef, Johannesburg was a logic choice. Moreover, it was thought to be the last place that the police would look for such a set up. The logic behind this thinking was borne out by the fact that when the police began their search for Mandela and the newly created underground headquarters of the ANC (and later the SACP and Umkhonto), they first concentrated on the African townships around the Witwatersrand-Pretoria area.⁽⁴⁾

According to the evidence presented to the court at the trial of the NHC of Umkhonto in 1963, the SACP played a significant if not the leading role, in the establishment of the underground headquarters that facilitated the establishment of Umkhonto some months later. It was for instance instrumental both in the purchasing and running of the various premises at Rivonia, Travellyn and Mountainview that came to comprise the underground headquarters of the ANC and Umkhonto by the end of 1961.⁽⁵⁾

The search for a suitable premise to set up the underground headquarters apparently began shortly after May 1961, when Michael Harmel, a member of the SACP using the alias Jacobson, began visiting various estate agents in the Johannesburg area. According to Jacobson he needed a relatively secluded place to house his brother-in-law who was sick and needed peace and quiet. Some weeks later, after a number of properties were found to be unsuitable for his "sick

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4. The World (Johannesburg), 1961.05.14 (Police still looking for underground).
 5. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address by Dr. Percy Yutar, pp. 4 - 5.



brother-in-law", Jacobson finally settled for a small-holding of some 28 acres in Rivonia just outside Johannesburg. The name of the property was Lilliesleaf Farm. The owner of the property, Mr. Fyffe, wanted R32 000 for it but in the end a purchase price of R25 000 was agreed upon. Of this amount R10 000 had to be paid as deposit while the balance of R15 000 had to be paid in three equal instalments of R5 000 each. (6)

The "sick brother-in-law" on whose behalf the property was being purchased was Vivian Ezra. But Ezra was neither sick nor did he have the money to pay for the property. He acted only as a front for the purchase of the property, which he bought on behalf of a company that was still to be formed called NAVIAN (PTY) LIMITED. The directors of this fictitious company were Vivian Ezra himself and a fellow member of the Communist Party by the name of Harold Wolpe. Wolpe was a junior partner in the legal firm of KANTOR, ZWARENSTEIN AND PARTNERS in Johannesburg. (7)

To meet the deposit requirements for the Lilliesleaf property, a cheque of R2 500 and a bankers guarantee for the remaining R7 500 to make up R10 000 were released to the estate agents handling the sale. Once this part of the transaction was completed the registration of Navian (Pty) Limited and all further dealings with the purchase of Lilliesleaf was handed over to another Johannesburg firm of attorneys. At this point, probably to erase any possible connection between the purchase of the Rivonia property and the SACP, the name of Harold Wolpe as co-director of Navian (Pty) Limited was removed from all further documentation. Yet, inspite of all this clever manoeuvring, the firm of Kantor and Partners remained in control of Lilliesleaf Farm. All payments in respect of the property, including the purchase of furniture, were done by Vivian Ezra through the offices of Kantor and Partners. To minimise the possibility of anyone

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6. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address by Dr. Yutar, p. 4. See also M. Norval, Inside the ANC, p. 63.
 7. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address by Dr. Yutar, p. 4. See also Norval, Inside the ANC, p. 63.



being able to trace any of the purchases made in connection with the Rivonia property to the SACP or its members, most, if not all transactions, were made in cash,^(*) which confirmed the allegations made by Jordan Ngubane that, since the SACP came to control the activities of the ANC after 1960, there were all of a sudden large amounts of money available to the organisation. (See Chapter two, pp. 84 - 89.)

Once Lilliesleaf Farm had been bought, it was rented out to Arthur Joseph Goldreich, whom it later turned out was not only a senior member of the SACP (probably a member of its Central Committee), but one of the founding leaders of Umkhonto. Goldreich, according to Slovo, served Umkhonto in an auxiliary capacity as a member of its Johannesburg Regional Command.^(*) Lilliesleaf Farm was rented to Goldreich and his family for a nominal rent of R100 a month with effect from 1 December 1961. No records, however, were ever found to confirm that he indeed paid the rent. Thus, on the surface, Lilliesleaf Farm was legally occupied by Arthur Goldreich, his wife and two children as from December 1961, but in reality it was the headquarters of Umkhonto's NHC.⁽¹⁰⁾

While Goldreich and his family occupied the main building, the out-buildings were occupied by the African and Indian members of Umkhonto's NHC, which presumably was set up between July and November 1961. The reason why these people stayed in the out-buildings was undoubtedly to create the impression with neighbours that they were servants on the small-holding, a position that was not uncommon for Africans and Indians in South Africa at the time. This allowed them relatively free movement on the property without drawing any undue attention from neighbours. Among the ANC/Umkhonto leaders who stayed at Lilliesleaf in 1961 were Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed

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8. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, pp. 169 - 171.
 9. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Revised indictment, pp. 1 - 9 (See also Annexure A to the revised indictment pp. 1 - 19), and Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.
 10. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Address by Dr. Yutar, pp. 5 - 6.



Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, and Raymond Mhlaba. Whether they stayed at Lilliesleaf on a permanent basis between 1961 and the discovery of the headquarters in mid 1963 is not clear, but the fact that they were all there when the police raided the place in July 1963, indicate that this could indeed have been the case. Such an arrangement would have fitted in with the type of operations conducted by Umkhonto and the fact that quick decisions had to be taken on a day-to-day basis. This would not have been possible if those involved in the decision-making process had to be constantly summoned to Lilliesleaf. Moreover, a constant coming and going of people, particularly Blacks in cars, would definitely have drawn unwanted attention. During their stay at Lilliesleaf, Mandela made use of the assumed name of "David" while Sisulu was known as "Allah" and Ahmed Kathrada as "Pedro". Members of the SACP who frequently visited Lilliesleaf Farm included Wolpe, Slovo, Michael Harmel and Lionel Bernstein.⁽¹¹⁾

Although information becomes available on the subject of Umkhonto all the time, very little is still known about the actual process that was involved in the formation of the organisation in the six months that led up to the beginning of the armed struggle on 16 December 1961 (it began a day earlier in Natal).

Although in his statement at the Rivonia trial, Mandela provide some insight into the reasoning that gave rise to Umkhonto and the date upon which it was formed, it does not adequately explain by what process or processes Umkhonto was actually established in 1961. This vacuum in our knowledge of the history of Umkhonto is however partially filled by Bruno Mtolo and more recently by Howard Barrell. Although Mtolo's description of events pertains mainly to the establishment of Umkhonto in Natal, some deductions can be made about events in the rest of the country. When these are contrasted with other information such as that contained in Barrell's book, a

11. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Address by Dr. Yutar, pp. 6.



reasonable accurate picture can be composed of developments outside Natal prior to 16 December 1961.

Returning to Mandela's testimony at his trial in 1963, he told the court that Umkhonto was officially established in November 1961. The reason why a new organisation was formed instead of the ANC being turned into the type of centralised organisation that was needed for armed resistance and eventual guerrilla warfare, was that the ANC was totally unsuited to such a development. Most of the ANC's members who had joined the organisation before it was banned in April 1960, had done so on an explicit policy of non-violent protest. To many in the organisation, especially its President-General, Albert Luthuli and those who supported his moderate views, the idea of the ANC taking up arms against the State was unacceptable. It was a result of this inherent opposition to armed resistance among a large section of the ANC's old and established leadership and members, Mandela told the court in 1963, that it was decided not to turn the ANC into a full fledged underground organisation for revolutionary armed struggle, but rather to form an entirely new organisation.⁽¹²⁾

But a factor that was perhaps more important in the decision not to convert the ANC was the fact that as the brainchild of the SACP and the radical leadership of the ANC, Umkhonto was to be a fully multi-racial organisation involving people from all races at all levels of organisation. This would have been impossible in the ANC whose National Executive Committee had an exclusively African membership. This means that although the ANC in theory subscribed to the principle of multi-racialism, non Africans were not allowed onto its NEC.

The ANC, Mandela informed the court in 1963,

12. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 169 - 170. See also Barrell, MK, p. 5, and Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.



was a mass political organisation with a political function to fulfil.

... Because of all this, it could not and would not undertake violence One cannot turn such a body into the small, closely knit organisation required for sabotage. Nor would this be politically correct, because it would result in members ceasing to carry out this essential activity; political propaganda and organisation. Nor was it permissible to change the whole nature of the organisation.

On the other hand, in view of this situation, ... the ANC was prepared to depart from its fifty-year-old policy of non-violence to this extent that it would no longer disapprove of properly controlled violence. Hence members who undertook such activity would not be subject to disciplinary action by the ANC.⁽¹³⁾

Having explained their thinking behind the formation of Umkhonto, Mandela went on to explain to the court how they determined the type of violence that was to be used by Umkhonto.

When we took this decision [i.e. to form Umkhonto we Sizwe in November 1961] and subsequently formulated our plans, the ANC heritage of non-violence and racial harmony was very much with us. We felt that the country was drifting towards a civil war in which Blacks and Whites would fight each other.

... The avoidance of civil war had dominated our thinking for many years, but when we decided to adopt violence as part of our policy, we realised that we might one day have to face prospects of such a war. This had to be taken into account in formulating our plans. We required a plan which was flexible and which permitted us to act in accordance with the needs of the times; above all the plan had to be one which recognised civil war as the last resort, We did not want to be committed to civil war, but we wanted to be ready if it became inevitable.⁽¹⁴⁾

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13. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 169 - 170. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.
 14. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 170.



According to Mandela, four forms of violence were open to them, namely sabotage, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and open revolution. He told the court:

We chose to adopt the first method and to exhaust it before taking any other decision. In the light of our political background, the choice was a logical one. Sabotage did not involve loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations. Bitterness would be kept to a minimum and, if the policy bore fruit, democratic government could become a reality.⁽¹⁵⁾

With regards to Umkhonto's choice of sabotage as its first method of armed struggle, Howard Barrell writes that whatever the hope expressed by Umkhonto's leadership in 1961, the National High Command apparently did not seriously expect the State to retreat from its policy of apartheid in the face of the first few explosions.

It anticipated, that the state's response would leave MK no choice but to move towards developing a sustained armed struggle. This had a bearing on MK's choice of sabotage for its initial ventures. Sabotage would show doubters in the Congress Alliance the need for, and benefits of, armed activity. It could also demonstrate to the populace at large that there had been a break with a half century of non-violent politics. Yet the fact that sabotage would avoid loss of human life would make it morally less offensive.

Sabotage could also attract recruits and familiarise them with the procedures of controlled revolutionary violence. Sabotage could, in other words, [argue Barrell] provide a 'useful bridge' to carry people politically from the old to the new phase. It would be the means to begin building a revolutionary armed force.⁽¹⁶⁾

Of course other factors such as the awarding of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize to Albert Luthuli in 1961 could also have influenced the decision of the radicals in the underground not to transform the ANC but to set up Umkhonto apart from the former. Although the announce-

15. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 171.

16. Barrell, MK, p. 7. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.



ment that Luthuli (and thus the ANC) would receive the prestigious award was only made on 23 October 1961, it was known before this date that Luthuli was being considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.⁽¹⁷⁾ There can thus be little doubt that the decision in 1961 to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Luthuli and by implication the ANC must have had an effect on the thinking and planning of the radicals in the ANC and the SACP with regards to the formation of Umkhonto by the end of 1961. The Nobel Prize, which is normally awarded to someone who has done the most to further the course of peace and brotherhood among men and to cut down on standing armies, would certainly not have been awarded to Luthuli if it could be proved that he was the leader of a revolutionary underground organisation that had as its aims the destruction of the South African State through the use of revolutionary armed violence. In view of this, it can thus be argued that once the recipient of the Nobel Prize was announced on 23 October 1961, the radicals in the underground had little choice but to openly sever all ties with the ANC and to establish Umkhonto as a separate organisation from the ANC - something they went to great lengths to stress in the Manifesto of the new organisation (see Appendix A).⁽¹⁸⁾ This might also help to explain why Umkhonto was only formed in November and not earlier in 1961.

As far as the actual formation of Umkhonto itself is concerned, Mandela's testimony reveals little information as to how this was done. Here one has to turn to other sources such as Mtolo and

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17. Contact 4(22), 1961.11.02, p. 3. See also The Daily News (Durban), 1961.10.24.
 18. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 716 - 717 (Document 66 "Umkhonto we Sizwe" (Spear of the Nation). Flyer "issued by the command of Umkhonto we Sizwe" and appearing on December 16, 1961). See also South African Communists Speak. Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party 1915 - 1980, pp. 274 - 275.



Barrell to piece together the puzzle. According to Mtolo, the first recruits in Natal (and one would presume that this was also more or less the case in the rest of the country) were drawn into Umkhonto towards the end of 1961. Most of these first recruits were drawn from the ranks of the banned SACP and its allies in the province. SACTU in particular provided the bulk of the initial leadership of Umkhonto in Natal. Although Mtolo does not provide the exact date on which Umkhonto was first established in Natal, it appeared that he and the rest of the Regional (High) Command were recruited either by the end of October, but more likely by the beginning of November 1961.⁽¹⁹⁾ According to Mtolo, they were drawn into an organisation with no name at the time. Towards the end of 1961, (presumably November) Mtolo was approached by Billy Nair, an Indian and member of the communist led SACTU organisation, who told him that a White man, Rusty Bernstein was being sent down from Johannesburg to Durban with a list of names of people to contact in the city. According to Mtolo, Billy told him

that this man's mission was to introduce us to the sabotage movement, which had been decided on by the ANC National Executive Committee in Johannesburg.⁽²⁰⁾

With the banning of the CPSA in 1950, Bernstein, who was a devoted member of the Party, was one of those who worked towards the establishment of the Congress of Democrats in the mid 1950's, to serve as a front for the now banned Communist Party. Bernstein was also a defendant in both the 1958 Treason Trial as well as the Rivonia Trial in 1963. After the restructuring of the Communist Party in the early 1960's, following the revival of the Party in the early 1950's Bernstein was elected to the Central Committee of the SACP.⁽²¹⁾

According to Mtolo, he was informed by Nair that the decision to adopt sabotage and to form a movement to execute the decision, was forced upon the ANC

19. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 1 - 15.

20. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 15.

21. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 6 - 7.



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... because of the Government's stubbornness. The ANC had changed its policy of non-violence ... [and that he and four others] were to form a Regional Command. There was already a High Command in Johannesburg from where this man [Bernstein] was sent. Our task as a Regional Command was to organise and form sabotage groups in Durban and other centres in Natal. Another man from the High Command would teach us how to commit acts of sabotage. This was a top secret which was never to be discussed by anyone of us out of our movement. (22)

Mtolo went on to say that at the beginning of December (by which time Umkhonto had been formed in Durban) he was notified by Billy Nair of a meeting in Ronnie Kasrils' flat where they were to be taught "about sabotage". Their "teacher" was Harold Strachan who was sent down by the NHC in Johannesburg. According to Mtolo,

This man, Harold Strachan, told us that the ANC had decided to launch this sabotage movement because of Government retaliation with force against [our] non-violent methods. ... we, as a military wing for the ANC, were under no circumstances to take lives.

He went on to say that Strachan told them to direct their attacks at government buildings, properties, and institutions or those institutions that collaborated with the government's policies. They were further instructed to locate places where arms, ammunition and dynamite were kept. This had to be stolen by them for use in their attacks. (23)

The membership of Umkhonto's Regional Command in Durban came to consist of six people, one short of the seven determined by Mandela's M-Plan. The six members of the RC were Curnick Ndlovu, Billy Nair, Ronnie Kasrils, Erick Mtshali, Brain Chaitow and Bruno Mtolo. (24)

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22. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 15. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 13 - 15.
23. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 15. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 13, 17.
24. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 16. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 14.



According to Howard Barrell, the four or five people each who were recruited to the various Regional Command structures around the country, were selected because they were regarded as "resolute members of Congress Alliance organisations" or because they had the necessary technical or military skills. Curnick Ndlovu who led Umkhonto's Regional Command in Durban was a senior regional official of SACTU in Natal. Similarly, Looksmart Ngundle and Fred Carneson who led Umkhonto in the Western Cape were both senior members of the banned Communist Party and SACTU. Washington Bongco who was Umkhonto's Regional Commander in the Eastern Cape's Border Region was also a senior SACTU official. Similarly, Vuyisile Mini who was the leader of Umkhonto in the Eastern Cape was also a senior member of SACTU and the SACP. In the Transvaal, senior members of the Communist Party and SACTU who led the activities of Umkhonto were Elias Motsoaledi and Jack Hodgson. The latter was a veteran of the Second World War. (25)

Although an illegal underground organisation, only a few members of Umkhonto, mainly those of the NHC, operated from hiding. Most of the founder members of the organisation, who totalled less than 250, were well known anti-apartheid activists and as such continued to hold key public posts in still legal Congress Alliance organisations such as SACTU. This meant that unless a member was specifically sought by the police, they often lead normal public lives during the day within view of the police but at night they became part of Umkhonto's underground structure and its subversive activities. (26)

Edward Feit in his book Urban Revolt in South Africa argued that because of the secret nature of Umkhonto and the fact that its members kept their identity as far as possible a secret even to people of the ANC (particularly in Natal where the ANC was strongly opposed to Umkhonto), Umkhonto did not receive its final form in a single action or movement. On the contrary, it appeared to have passed through a series of development phases. He wrote

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25. Barrell, MK, pp. 9 - 10. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 7, 14, 30.
26. Barrell, MK, p. 10. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 7, 14, 30.



Its founding seems to have been empirical. Those who came together at the beginning, in mid-June 1961, joined a nameless organisation. Groups of Africans, Whites and Indians, most of whom were members either of one of the Congress Alliance organisations, or of the Communist Party, were assembled in different centres. The only qualification, at this stage was the willingness to undertake acts of sabotage.⁽²⁷⁾

Felt further claimed that Umkhonto "was shaped slowly and was only made known to the branches some months after its foundation".⁽²⁸⁾ Thus, according to Mtolo and Felt, those who joined Umkhonto prior to its formation in November - December 1961, joined a nameless organisation and were only told some months later that the organisation they belonged to was "Umkhonto we Sizwe". This is a strange state of affairs. While it is possible that Umkhonto was not known by name to some members of the organisation before 16 December 1961, there can be little doubt that after 16 December most members of the newly established organisation must have known fairly well that the organisation to which they belonged was Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC and the SACP. The first acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto in 16 December 1961 was given extensive coverage in the daily press. What is more, on the same day that the first acts of sabotage were committed, leaflets announcing the birth and existence of Umkhonto were distributed throughout the major centres in the country (see Appendix A for the text of this leaflet). In this it was clearly stated that a new organisation had been born and that its name was Umkhonto we Sizwe.⁽²⁹⁾ It is thus not clear why Mtolo (who is supported by Felt) claimed that they were only told some months later that the organisation they belonged to was Umkhonto we Sizwe.⁽³⁰⁾ A possible explanation for the apparent contradiction has been advanced by Felt. According to him the reason for this may be two-fold: first of all, the turn to violence may have sparked opposition from those leaders still committed to political struggle; and secondly, all the leaders may have agreed that some preparation was necessary before the decision was made

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27. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 168.
 28. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 168.
 29. South African Communists Speak, Document 111, "Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe, issued on December 16 1961" pp. 274 - 275.
 30. Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe, p. 23.



known. (31)

These explanations may be applicable to developments in Natal where Umkhonto was established without the prior knowledge of the local ANC leadership but it is doubtful whether it holds true for the rest of the country where much closer co-operation existed between the local ANC, the SACP, SACTU and the leaders of Umkhonto at the latter's formation in 1961. According to Mtolo's description of developments in Natal they were initially told that Umkhonto was the military wing of the ANC and as such its formation was sanctioned by the ANC's NEC. They were therefore very surprised when they subsequently discovered that their instructions did not come from the NEC but from Umkhonto's NHC in Johannesburg and that the local ANC leadership in Natal were never consulted on nor ever informed about the decision to form Umkhonto in 1961.⁽³²⁾ As a result trouble broke out between the leaders of Umkhonto and the local ANC in Natal almost immediately after the first acts of sabotage were committed on 16 December 1961. Mtolo claimed:

The ANC in Durban wanted to know who these anarchists were who were causing all the trouble. I think this was sparked off by an article in the press about leaflets which had been distributed in Johannesburg, introducing the sabotage movement to the people as [the] military wing of the ANC. There were fireworks about this in Durban. We were just as surprised as anyone else because we had been told that this [the move towards violence] was a decision of the ANC executive in Johannesburg ...

After the sabotage attempts it became clear that the local officials of the ANC in our province were never consulted.⁽³³⁾

In terms of the above account it appears thus that Umkhonto was established in Natal without the knowledge nor the support of the local leadership of the ANC, including Albert Luthuli, the then President-General of the organisation. The immediate implication of

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31. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 168. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.
32. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 15, 23.
33. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 15, 23.



this was that Umkhonto could not recruit its initial leaders and members from the ranks of the ANC in Natal. The only member of the Durban Regional Command who was a member of the ANC was Curdnick Ndlovu and according to Mtolo, he was more a communist than a member of the ANC.⁽³⁴⁾ Although the hostility between the leadership of the ANC and Umkhonto in Natal would explain the reason why most of Umkhonto's initial leaders were drawn from the ranks of the underground trade union and communist movement, it should also be remembered that Umkhonto was first and foremost a creation of the SACP and it would thus be logic to assume that the Communist Party would have given preference to members who were both members of the ANC and the underground communist movement. On the other hand, there are other sources such as Howard Barrell, who claim that senior leaders of the ANC in Natal, among them Albert Luthuli, were not only consulted on the formation of Umkhonto early in 1961, but that they actually gave their permission for its formation. Barrell, who quotes Umkhonto leader Joe Modise (to whom Mtolo also frequently refers in his book), writes that a number of clandestine meetings were held in early 1961 to discuss the need for a change in strategy. According to Barrell, Modise recalled a meeting at the home of Luthuli in Stanger, Natal in early 1961 to discuss the armed struggle. Present at this meeting were representatives of the ANC, the SACP, the CPC, SAIC and COD. According to Modise

After two days of consultations it was agreed that the ANC and SACP were going to undertake this new form of struggle [sabotage] whilst the other movements that were still legal should continue working legally. It was then decided that MK was going to be launched.⁽³⁵⁾

If this meeting with Luthuli and other members of the ANC in Natal took place the way Modise described it and the ANC in the province knew about the formation of Umkhonto, then why the denial that they knew about it? The answer to this can be one of two things, namely,

34. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 15, 23.

35. Joe Modise as quoted in Barrell, MK, pp. 5 - 6. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 10.

that the ANC leadership wished to create the impression that the organisation was and remained committed to a policy of non-violence and that on the whole it had not as yet committed itself to violence. The awarding of the Nobel Prize in 1961 to Albert Luthuli is confirmation of this thinking. Secondly, the possibility exists that only Luthuli and a handful of his closest aids in Natal knew about the decision to form Umkhonto and that the majority of the organisation's leadership in Natal were genuinely unaware of what was happening. The latter argument is particularly significant if one take into account what Mandela said at the Rivonia Trial in 1963. He said

... the ANC was prepared to depart from its fifty year old policy of non-violence to this extent that it would no longer disapprove of properly controlled violence. Hence members who undertook such activity would not be subject to disciplinary action by the ANC. (36)

The picture is unclear and this will remain to be the case until more information has been unearthed on the subject of Umkhonto's formation in 1961. According to Barrell,

The political disagreements within the ANC and the Congress Alliance over armed activity were a potentially serious problem. It would, in time, become one factor which warped the way ANC strategy expressed the relationship between violent and non-violent political struggle. ... it remains a fundamental tenet of revolutionary armed activity that its success depends upon political mobilization of the populace at large. It depends not merely on popular support but on popular involvement. And the disagreements were to undermine the ANC's ability to do the necessary political work. (37)

In the rest of the country, the formation of Umkhonto followed a somewhat similar pattern to what happened in Natal. The only difference was that unlike in Natal where Umkhonto and the local ANC leadership were at loggerheads, in the rest of the country the formation of

36. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 170.

37. Barrell, MK, p. 7.



Umkhonto and the activities of the local ANC became closely associated with each other. As a result of the latter situation, the ANC-Umkhonto-SACP leadership in Johannesburg could make effective use of the various Congress Alliance organisations to recruit members for Umkhonto. It could also make extensive use of the local organisation structures of the ANC and the underground communist movement to quickly establish Umkhonto. This was particularly the case in the Border region of the Eastern Cape where the ANC and the SACP always had a strong and loyal following. Moreover, the Eastern Cape region with its predominantly Xhosa population was also the heartland of the ANC which was largely a Xhosa organisation.

Exactly how Umkhonto was established in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere in the country and what processes were involved is not entirely clear and can thus only be speculated upon. Indications are however, that most of the leaders who came to serve on the Regional Command structures around the country were drawn into Umkhonto at more or less the same time as those in Natal, but not necessarily in the same manner. It appears that many of Umkhonto's initial leaders outside Natal were drawn from the ANC or the labour movement. As was the case in Natal, once a Regional Command had been set up, the same people who were sent to instruct the Regional Command leadership in Natal, also visited the other Regional Commands to explain what was happening and to train them in the art of bomb making and sabotage. Harold Strachan was for instance first sent to Durban and then to Port Elizabeth to instruct the local leadership of Umkhonto.⁽³⁸⁾ Strachan was arrested shortly afterwards. Nelson Mandela as Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto apparently also visited Port Elizabeth in late 1961. The exact date of this visit is not known but it probably was shortly before the formation of Umkhonto.⁽³⁹⁾

38. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 22. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 7, 10.

39. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of B. Mashinyana, pp. 10 - 11.

During these visits Mandela apparently informed the local leadership of Umkhonto of the ANC's decision to adopt a policy of armed resistance against the State. In more or less the same way that Strachan informed the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Natal, Mandela informed the ANC's chief contact person in Port Elizabeth, Govan Mbeki, that the new organisation to which they belonged was the military wing of the ANC and that it would launch the first phase of the ANC's sabotage campaign against the government on 16 December 1961.⁽⁴⁰⁾

In view of this one can thus assume that once Umkhonto had been established in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere, the regional leaders were instructed to select suitable targets for the opening phase of the attack on 16 December.⁽⁴¹⁾ Beyond these rather superficial comparisons, little else is known about the formation of Umkhonto prior to 16 December 1961. Equally little is known about the formation of the organisation in, for instance, the Transvaal or the Orange Free State. None of the numerous trials involving members of either the ANC or the SACP have so far shed any real light on the subject. With Johannesburg being the centre of command and in the absence of any reference to a Transvaal Regional Command, one is left with the impression that Umkhonto had, besides the NHC, no clear regional organisational structure in the Transvaal, nor that it actively recruited people for local and overseas work from the province. There also appears to be no information on, or reference to, an Umkhonto Regional Command in the Orange Free State nor is there any indication that recruits were also drawn from the latter province. All the available information on the subject points to the fact that Umkhonto was mainly concentrated in Natal, particularly the Durban region; the Eastern Cape region with specific reference to the Border (Port Elizabeth) region; the Western Cape and the Transvaal. The latter province it appears, served mainly as a headquarter and an assembly point for recruits who were earmarked for guerrilla training

40. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of B. Mashinyana, pp. 10 - 11.

41. See Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 7 - 12, 24 - 25; Barrell, MK, pp. 9 - 10.



outside South Africa. If a Regional Command did exist in the Transvaal, it was probably closely tied up with the NHC. It is, however, not clear who were responsible for the acts of sabotage that were committed in the Transvaal after 16 December. Barrell is of the opinion that it was done by Umkhonto leaders such as Elias Motsoaledi and Jack Hodgson.⁽⁴²⁾ Motsoaledi was one of those brought to trial with Mandela in 1963 for allegedly being a member of Umkhonto's NHC. According to Motsoaledi's testimony at the trial he joined Umkhonto in 1962.⁽⁴³⁾ However, according to Heidi Holland in her book The Struggle. A History of the African National Congress, Motsoaledi together with Jack Hodgson (mentioned above) as well as others such as Arthur Goldreich, Dennis Goldberg, and Mac Maharaj were involved as "auxiliaries in the Johannesburg Regional Command ..."⁽⁴⁴⁾ The fact that these people were present at Lilliesleaf Farm when the police raided the underground headquarters of the ANC, SACP and Umkhonto in mid 1963, indicate to the fact that they probably operated from the same premises as the NHC of Umkhonto. The picture is simply not sufficiently clear to make a sound analysis of events. When the police raided the Rivonia headquarters of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto they had little interest in drawing a distinction between those who were members of Umkhonto's NHC and those who belonged to the organisation's regional structures in the Transvaal, nor was such a distinction at any time highlighted by the Rivonia Trial.

One thing is certain, security was a key element in Umkhonto's strategy in the early 1960's and the best manner in which to secure this was to keep the organisation small and flexible and this could only be achieved if its leaders could have close and constant contact with one another. Lilliesleaf Farm with its secluded character and many buildings provided the ideal setting for this development. Unfortunately, it also turned out to be one of the weak links in the ANC and SACP's strategy; for when the police raided the small

42. Barrell, MK, p. 10.

43. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, p. 102.

44. H. Holland, The Struggle. A History of the African National Congress, p. 136. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.



holding, they netted virtually all the key leaders of Umkhonto, if not the underground movement in South Africa as a whole. The evidence found at Lilliesleaf Farm opened the door on the rest of the underground movement, a development that led to its destruction inside South Africa by the mid 1960's. As a result of the latter development the ANC-SACP alliance had to relocate their command and organisational structures outside the country; thus starting what became commonly known as the exile phase of the armed struggle.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE

Having so far examined the history of the liberation struggle led by the ANC in its alliance with the SACP, from the beginning of the Second World War to the decision in 1961 to adopt a campaign of revolutionary armed resistance against the State, we must now turn our attention to the history and development of the armed struggle inside South Africa from December 1961 to December 1988, when it was severely compromised by the signing of the New York Peace Accord.

To facilitate our discussion of this important period in the history of the liberation struggle, the period under discussion has been divided into four basic development phases: phase one deals with the period from December 1961 to about 1965 when, as a result of the government's counter-insurgency action, the combined underground movement comprising of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto had been virtually completely destroyed and forced outside the country. Phase two starts with the beginning of the latter development and the numerous problems it brought for the ANC and SACP's Mission in Exile. With the collapse of the internal underground structures of Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP the responsibility for the revival of this structure and the continuation of the armed offensive became the direct responsibility of the Mission in Exile - a development for which it was wholly unprepared. As a result of the Mission's inability to rebuild and restart the armed struggle inside South Africa after 1965, the years up to the end of the 1960's as well as the first half of the 1970's, until the independence of Mozambique and Angola in 1975 and the Soweto Riots of 1976, remained largely a period of ANC and Umkhonto inactivity. Attempts made by the ANC to launch combined incursions with the Zimbabwe African People's Union



(ZAPU) between 1967 and 1969 came to nothing, as most of the guerrillas who crossed into Rhodesia from Zambia were either caught or killed by the Rhodesian security forces. The lull in the sabotage campaign, however, gave the South African government a chance to clean-up what was left of the underground, sharpen its security legislation and update its counter insurgency measures - part of which was to send units of the South African police to assist the Rhodesian security forces in their operations against ZAPU and Umkhonto.

The third phase deals with the period from the outbreak of the Soweto Riots in June 1976, and covers the development of the armed struggle up to the signing of the Nkomati Accord in 1984 and the unrest of the 1984 - 1985 period. This latter period, which is perhaps the most significant in the armed struggle, has seen some important developments taking place. Among them were the influx of large numbers of new and highly motivated recruits from the township into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto; the banning of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in 1977 which helped to pave the way for the resurgence of the ANC; the escalation of the armed struggle into a war of armed propaganda between 1981 and 1983; South Africa's bombing of ANC and Umkhonto bases in the frontline states and the signing of a bilateral agreement with Swaziland in 1982 and Mozambique in 1984 to limit ANC-Umkhonto operations from these areas. The period to 1985 also witnessed the unrest of 1984 which, due to its sporadic nature, helped to alter the ANC and SACP's longterm approach to what constitutes a revolutionary situation and the role of Umkhonto in it. More important, however, the third phase also witnessed the growing inability of the ANC and the SACP to rebuild their underground structures inside South Africa to a level where it could serve as a springboard for a people's war.

The fourth and last phase to be examined in this chapter represents the period from 1985 to the end of 1988 when, with the signing of the New York Accord, a question mark was placed over the future ability of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto to bring about a transfer of power in South Africa through armed struggle. This period also witnessed



the development of the sanctions campaign against South Africa, the imposition of a major state of emergency, and the beginning of a series of meetings between groups from South Africa and members of the ANC and the SACP in Lusaka, and elsewhere in Africa and the world. By the end of 1988 more than seventy of these contacts had taken place. Although the period witnessed a steady increase in the armed attacks committed by Umkhonto's cadres, it was becoming increasingly clear that the ANC and Umkhonto were unable to turn the struggle into a revolutionary people's war and that questions were being raised in the innermost circles of the liberation movement as to the future of the armed struggle and whether a political settlement was perhaps not the answer. An important influence on this latter development was the changes brought about in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe by the reform policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Since the expulsion of the ANC and Umkhonto from Angola at the beginning of 1989, the acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto have markedly declined. At the same time, the South African government has gone out of its way to sell its reform policies and its willingness to accept a negotiated settlement for South Africa to the Western world but more important to the ANC-SACP alliance.

1. PHASE ONE. THE PERIOD 1961 - 1965

The first phase of Umkhonto's armed campaign opened in Durban on 15 December 1961, a day earlier than planned. The Regional Command in the city, after a crash course in the manufacturing of explosives and explosive devices under the guidance of Harold Strachan, who was specially sent down from Johannesburg to instruct them in the act of sabotage, exploded a home-made bomb in Ordnance Road. The target of the attack was a wooden back door at the Durban Corporation's Bantu Administration office building. A vivid description of this first attack and the preparation work for it has been left to us by Bruno Mtolo, who served on the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Durban.⁽¹⁾

1. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 15 - 22. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 13.



According to Mtolo, Harold Strachan was sent down by the NHC of Umkhonto in Johannesburg to Durban either at the end of November or the beginning of December 1961, to inform the newly established Regional Command structure in that city that the sabotage campaign would start on 16 December. Strachan was specially sent down to help them prepare for this "historical and momentous event".⁽²⁾ Consequently under his guiding eye, the Durban Regional Command experimented with a number of explosive devices and time fuses. Among the bombs they were taught to make were petrol bombs or "Molotov Cocktails", as they were commonly known. They apparently also experimented with some crude electric detonators, and numerous tests were conducted in the early days of December to ensure that the fuses worked and that the methods of bomb construction were correct before Strachan left the city for the Eastern Cape. All this preparation was necessary to ensure that the Regional Command's Technical Committee would be in a position to manufacture its own explosive devices without the help of the NHC in Johannesburg. Once the preparation work was done the first targets were selected for attack. Initially three targets were selected: the Bantu Affairs building in Stanger Street, the Coloured Affairs Department in Masonic Grove and the Durban Corporation's Bantu Administration Offices in Ordnance Road. According to Mtolo it was suggested that when the time came for the attack, they would place the bomb near a place where papers and files were kept, thus facilitating a fire. Having assured themselves - after a careful inspection of the three premises - that they would be able to reach or enter the three targets without any great difficulty on the night of the attack, the saboteurs returned home to get everything ready for the 16th.⁽³⁾

In the morning I went to work, wrote Mtolo. This was the 14th of December, 1961. For some reason or other we had decided that the attack must be made on the 15th. Ronnie [Kasrils], ... whom Billy [Nair] thought would fit into our technical committee, and I formed the group who were to attack the Bantu Administration Department.

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2. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 15 - 17.
 3. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 16 - 17. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 13, 14 - 15.



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Billy and two others were to attack the Coloured Affairs Department and the Native Affairs Department. They would drop us and go to these other places. Each man in our group had to find his own way back after the attack. (4)

During the course of the afternoon of 15 December, Mtolo and the rest of the technical committee prepared the four bombs and detonators that they would use during the attacks later on that evening. "Just after seven the others came by car. I got everything out of my room and we drove off," wrote Mtolo.

Near the municipal market they picked up the young Indian and from there they proceeded to the first target in Ordnance Road.

When we neared the main gate, where we thought we would sneak in, more than five security guards were sitting just in front of it. We decided to go to a small back door which Ronnie and I had seen the previous night. We placed the bomb against the door, packed it up with sand bags and waited for 9 p.m. to strike. Though we had changed the date from the 16th to the 15th, the time remained unchanged. After this we took a walk to kill time. At 8.55 we went back, I took the detonator, examined the sand, placed it in the can, and set it for time and screwed on the lid. Then we left, each one in his own direction. (5)

On his way to the bus stop in Soldier's Way, Mtolo could hear the bomb going off.

The next day Mtolo discovered to his dismay that the other two targets were not attacked the previous night, the reason for this being that the other bombs had no detonators.

The press report that morning described our attempt as a clumsy and amateurish effort, and a lot more. I felt like crying, Mtolo wrote. After all the trouble we had taken. This went on for a

4. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 19.

5. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 21 - 22.



whole week in the press. It was made worse by reports that a death had occurred in Johannesburg, where one of the bombs killed the man who was carrying it, and the other man lost his arm. Arrests were made in some places ... We were not happy at all. With sabotage it does not matter how many times you have succeeded. Once there is an arrest, the whole thing becomes a failure. (6)

The total cost of the damage caused by the Ordnance Road attack was less than R100. A week later Harold Strachan was arrested by the security police in Port Elizabeth.

The day following the abortive attempt to set fire to the Durban Corporation's Bantu Affairs Department Offices, sabotage attacks were carried out in at least ten different places throughout the country to mark the beginning of Umkhonto's sabotage campaign. Two electric sub-stations, one at Framesley and the other at Brickmakerskloof were attacked by Umkhonto saboteurs in Port Elizabeth. Simultaneously, bombs were also exploded at the Bantu Labour Offices, the Bantu Administration Offices and the Bantu School Board Offices in the New Brighton Township of Port Elizabeth. The total damage caused by these attacks was estimated to be in the region of R375. (7)

In Johannesburg, several attacks were made on government or semi-government buildings during the night of 16th December. The first attack was made on the Municipal Bantu Control Offices in Dube Township. This attack was followed by four others: one on the Central Road Post Office at Fordsburg; one on the offices of the Portuguese Curator in Market Street; one on the Phirima Post Office in Orlando West and one on the Peri-Urban District Office in Kliptown. In the case of the latter attack dynamite was used, which caused an estimated damage of R16. In the rest of the attacks, a mixture of chemical and incendiary bombs were used causing a total

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6. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 22; see also The Daily News (Durban), 1961.12.16 to 1961.12.19 (numerous reports).
 7. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A to the Indictment, pp. 2 - 3.



damage of some R370.⁽⁸⁾ To judge by the nature of these early attacks and the targets involved, the campaign was strictly in keeping with the ANC and Umkhonto's declared policy in 1961 to attack government installations but to avoid at all cost injury or death to people in the planning and execution of their attacks. The few deaths that did occur during the early stages of the sabotage campaign was largely due to negligence and ignorance.⁽⁹⁾

A further six acts of sabotage were committed during the remainder of December 1961. All these attacks were committed in the Johannesburg region and before Christmas. Dynamite was used on two occasions. The total damage caused by these attacks are not known, but they must have been substantially higher than that of the previous attacks. The damage caused to the Bantu Affairs Offices in Carr Street in Fordsburg and to the Bantu Administration Offices in Market Street in Johannesburg alone for instance came to R898.

For the next two to three weeks no attacks took place; but then on 8 January 1962, Umkhonto launched the first of its New Year attacks. (See Diagram B of acts of sabotage committed during 1962.) During the course of 1962 up to 23 December, 105 acts of sabotage were committed in various parts of the country. Of these at least 16 were committed in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) area; 19 in the Durban-Pietermaritzburg area; 22 in the Cape Town-Paarl region and a total of 48 in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage-East London region.⁽¹⁰⁾ These attacks which were set out in "Annexure A" to the Rivonia Indictment were not, however, all committed by Umkhonto. There were other organisations that were also committed to sabotage in the early 1960's. A predominantly Whites only organisation, known as the National Committee for Liberation (NCFL), for instance, committed numerous acts of sabotage before Umkhonto launched its campaign in December 1961.

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8. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A, pp. 3 - 4.
 9. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 22.
 10. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A, pp. 5 - 22.



DIAGRAM B

DISTRIBUTION OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE COMMITTED ACCORDING
TO REGION OR AREA DURING THE COURSE OF 1962⁽¹¹⁾

Region or Area	Number of attacks
Cape Town - Paarl Region	22
Port Elizabeth - East London Region	48
Durban - Pietermaritzburg Region	19
Orange Free State	0
Transvaal (PWV) Region	16
TOTAL	105

(Although Umkhonto we Sizwe was not the only organisation committed to a campaign of sabotage against the State in the early 1960's, it was however responsible for the majority of attacks that took place during 1962.)

11. Statistical information obtained from Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A to the Indictment.)



The stated aims and objectives of the NCFL were very similar to that of Umkhonto, namely to use sabotage to bring about a change of heart among the White electorate in South Africa with regard to the country's racial policies. Like Umkhonto, the NCFL did not direct its attacks against people but against political and economic objectives such as government buildings and powerlines, with the latter being a more favourite object of attack. In fact, the sabotage activities of the two organisations were so similar that Umkhonto felt it necessary to make it clear in a 'flyer' released on the day of its first attack on 16 December, that it was a new and independent organisation and that it was in no way connected with the 'so-called Committee for National Liberation'.⁽¹²⁾

While it may be incorrect to assume that all attacks on power pylons were the work of the NCFL, they certainly were responsible for several of the attacks before as well as after December 1961. One of the "trade marks" of the NCFL was the use of dynamite and sophisticated electrical timing devices. Large quantities of dynamite were found by the police when they raided the premises of members of the organisation in July 1964.⁽¹³⁾ In May 1964, the NCFL changed its name to the African Resistance Movement (ARM), which is the name it became commonly known under.

A breakdown of the various acts of sabotage set out in Annexure A of the Rivonia Indictment indicates that, while Umkhonto saboteurs in the Transvaal and the Cape Province remained relatively active throughout 1962, the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Durban committed no acts of sabotage for nine months. The first act of sabotage they

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12. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit "AD" Umkonto we Sizwe, Flyer issued by Umkonto we Sizwe on 16 December, 1961, p. 1. See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 716 - 717.
 13. Some Stood Up, (New Republic 152, January 1965, p. 7). See also K. van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 5 (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.22, pp. 67, 69). The article is based on a series of interviews between Koos van der Merwe and members of the Security Police who were involved in the investigation of the NCFL as well as the activities of the underground between 1961 and 1965.



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committed in 1962 was on 14 October, when they cut the railway signals cables near Georgedale and unsuccessfully attempted to explode a home-made incendiary bomb at the Security Police offices at Madeline Building in Durban.⁽¹⁴⁾

Exactly what caused this lack of sabotage activity in Natal is not entirely clear, although it appears that it was the result of the hostility that had developed between the leaders of the local ANC and Umkhonto in Natal following Umkhonto's first attack on the 15th December. According to Mtolo, the leaders of the ANC in Durban not only wanted to know who the leaders of Umkhonto in the city were, but they also insisted on being consulted on all Umkhonto's operations in Natal. Mtolo wrote:

We of the Regional Command were scared of exposing ourselves to the ANC leaders, for many reasons. Firstly, we could not trust the people who made up the ANC leadership in Durban. Secondly, all our men were handpicked for their political feelings and understanding, whereas some of these ANC leaders only knew they were fighting for freedom. What kind of freedom they did not know.⁽¹⁵⁾

According to Mtolo, Curnick Ndhlovu, the "Captain" of the Regional Command in Durban, was sent to Johannesburg in early 1962 in an attempt to seek a settlement in the differences between the ANC and Umkhonto in Durban. This attempt was unsuccessful. As a result the first half of 1962 was spent in attempts to bridge the rift between the two organisations in Durban.

The NHC in Johannesburg, in the meantime, was becoming increasingly impatient with the ANC's attitude towards Umkhonto in Durban and the latter organisation's inactivity. Mtolo wrote:

We are far behind the other provinces. We only did one attack on 15 December, 1961, and we did not keep it up. The High Command was very hot about this, as they knew we had everything, including an allowance of R100 per month.⁽¹⁶⁾

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14. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A, p. 12.
 15. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 25 - 26.
 16. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 25 - 26.



Despite increasing pressure from the NHC in Johannesburg, the Regional Command in Durban remained inactive until Mandela, recently returned from an extensive tour of Africa and Europe, visited Durban in August 1962. Mtolo recalled that the Regional Command in Durban was somewhat nervous about Mandela's visit due to the fact that they had done virtually nothing since their first attack in December. Mtolo wrote:

We met Mandela in the dining room. He was very impressed that we were so young, the eldest among us being thirty-five. He congratulated us on having had no casualties up to then. I thought he was mocking us because we had done nothing since our first attack.⁽¹⁷⁾

It was not however Mandela's visit, nor his input that provided the necessary impetus for a resurgence of sabotage activities in Durban, but the fact that he was arrested shortly afterwards near Howick while he was on his way back to Johannesburg disguised as a chauffeur for Cyril Williams. This act, if nothing else, according to Mtolo, shocked the Regional Command back into action. Several emergency meetings were held to decide how to best revenge Mandela's arrest. Mtolo wrote:

When Mandela was convicted in November, the Regional Command decided to show the Government that they had touched the wrong button. We decided that all the groups (presumably in Durban only) should select suitable targets to be attacked on the Friday. Later the date was changed to Sunday because of police activities.⁽¹⁸⁾

If Mtolo's evidence is correct and these attacks were the first to be committed by Umkhonto in Natal in 1962, then it means that those attacks committed before 7 November were not the work of Umkhonto. The question then is, who committed the nine acts of sabotage in the Durban-Pinetown region between 14 October and 19 November 1962? It appears that Mtolo could have made a mistake with the occasion on which the first attacks were committed in Natal in 1962, the number

17. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 38.
18. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 42.



of attacks (five altogether) committed on the nights of 14 and 15 October,⁽¹⁹⁾ and their proximity to the date of the arrest of Mandela in August, and not after his conviction on 7 November.

A rough estimate of the total damage caused by the various acts of sabotage committed between 1961 and June 1963 came to an estimated amount of about R93 837. Although a great deal of money to the ordinary man in 1963, it was hardly the sort of economic damage that in the long run would place a heavy burden on the State's financial position or compel white voters in the country to reconsider their political position. Edward Felt in his detailed study of Umkhonto and its activities between 1961 and 1964, wrote that while the aim of Umkhonto, namely to bring about maximum disorder, was fully understood by its leaders, they overlooked the fact that the need of the South African government was not so much to prevent all disorder, but to prevent "serious" disorder, something it was quite capable of doing.⁽²⁰⁾

On 12 May 1962, for instance, the government introduced the General Law Amendment Bill into Parliament. It was passed into law on 27 June. In terms of section 21 (1) of the new Act anyone will be guilty of the offence of sabotage if he commits any wrongful and wilful act whereby he obstructs, injures, tampers with or destroys:

- a. the health or safety of the public and the maintenance of law and order;
- b. the supply of water, light, power or food stuffs, sanitary, medical or fire extinguishing services, postal, telephone, telegraph or radio services, or of the free movement of traffic, and
- c. any property.⁽²¹⁾

In addition to the passing of the new Act, which popularly became known as the "Sabotage Act", the government also placed numerous people under banning orders during 1962. Among those served with

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19. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A, pp. 12 - 18. See also Mandela's statement from the dock, pp. 32 - 34.
 20. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 322.
 21. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1962, pp. 26 - 29.



five year banning orders were M.W. Shope of SACTU, Vera Poonen of the Federation of South African Women, as well as three lecturers - Miss G.E. Jewell of the University of Cape Town, and Messrs E.L. Maurice and R.O. Dudley of the Cape Technical College. Others were confined to specific areas. Among these were Joe Slovo and his wife Ruth of the South African Congress of Democrats, Mrs F. Mtombela and Mrs L. Ngoyi. By the end of October 1962 some 105 persons had been prohibited by one means or another from attending gatherings. Among those arrested were Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Blacks. The pro-communist and Whites-only COD was also banned by the government in September. In addition to these developments, numerous people suspected of furthering the aims of one of the banned organisations in the country, were arrested and held under the General Law Amendment Act of the previous year, which provided for periods of detention of up to twelve days.⁽²²⁾ The authorities also introduced strict security on sensitive installations such as power stations, fuel storage depots and dams, which made it very difficult for Umkhonto to attack these places. Furthermore, anyone caught on or near these protected installations could face sentences of up to fifteen years.

Steps such as these, combined with the difficulty in obtaining proper and sophisticated explosive devices and the general inexperience of Umkhonto's saboteurs, seriously limited the effectiveness of the sabotage campaign. Not only were they unable to make the government seem incapable of maintaining order argued Feit, but they actually proved the opposite, namely that the government was in full control of the situation and that it had the power and authority to maintain control in the country. Consequently, the campaign never had the anticipated effect. The campaign was never fully reported in the press. This was partially due to censorship, often self-imposed, and partly because the attacks themselves were often not important enough to be newsworthy.⁽²³⁾

The absence of media coverage, combined with the government's obvious

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22. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1962, pp. 23 - 24;
Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 49 - 50.
23. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 322.

control, meant that most Whites in South Africa were scarcely aware that a sabotage campaign was being waged against White rule in the country. Even if allowance is made for the more spectacular of their actions, concluded Feit, in no sense can Umkhonto be described as an unparalleled success. Its actions did little to hearten Blacks, to dishearten Whites, or to sway the government from its course.

Although the sabotage campaign was in full swing by 1962 and the police were no nearer to destroying the underground, plans were already in the making to take the armed struggle from the plain of sabotage to fullscale guerrilla warfare as soon as conditions allowed for it. When the police raided the underground's headquarters at Rivonia in July 1963 they found a document called "Operation Mayibuye". This document, if freely translated into the Zulu language means "Operation for the return of South Africa to the Black man", consisted of six pages in which plans were set out for guerrilla warfare and the invasion of South Africa by communist or pro-communist forces during the second half of 1963.⁽²⁴⁾ Allegedly drafted by Joe Slovo and Arthur Goldreich (the latter had visited Communist China in 1962) the latter document contained detailed plans for guerrilla warfare in South Africa. Based on the guerrilla strategies of Mao-Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party, the aim of the operation was to destroy White rule in South Africa and replace it with a Black revolutionary system of government that would be fully Marxist-socialist in nature.⁽²⁵⁾

According to Edward Feit, "Operation Mayibuye" had its origins before the formation of Umkhonto in 1961 and Umkhonto was a part of it. He writes:

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24. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, pp. 1 - 6.
 25. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B. Hlapane, pp. 162 - 163; See also Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, pp. 213-223; also Weyl, Traitor's End, p. 124; and Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af. pp. 60 - 61.



Operation Mayibuye was intended to have three stages: first of all the building up of the underground; then a sabotage campaign to be carried out concurrently with the sending of men abroad for guerrilla training; and finally, full-scale guerrilla war, of the sort envisaged by Che Guevara. (26)

Feit went on to explain that given these facts, the ANC leaders of course hoped that it would not be necessary to resort to guerrilla warfare. Only if the sabotage campaign failed to achieve its aims, was the guerrilla phase of Operation Mayibuye to be launched and unlimited violence to be introduced. In such a case, outside aid, in the form of both arms and funds, was to be actively solicited. Once Operation Mayibuye was fully launched, an invasion of foreign troops procured from sympathetic countries, particularly the Soviet Union and other Eastern block countries, would be launched against South Africa. (27)

Although there is little evidence to either substantiate or refute Feit's point of view it does fit in with some of the facts, such as Mandela's tour of Africa in January 1962 and what he said at the Rivonia trial in 1964.

As far as the contents of Operation Mayibuye is concerned, the document consists of six major divisions. Part One explained why it had become necessary for the ANC (and the SACP) to begin an armed struggle against the State in South Africa. It read:

It can now be truly said that very little, if any, scope exists for the smashing of White supremacy other than by means of mass revolutionary action, the main content of which is armed resistance leading to victory by military means. (28)

It went on to point out that the two ingredients necessary for an

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26. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1971, p. 62).
 27. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1971, pp. 62 - 63).
 28. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, p. 1.



armed struggle were present in South Africa - namely disillusionment with constitutional and semi-constitutional forms of struggle and a conviction that the road to victory was through force and a military readiness to respond to a leadership that holds out the best possibility or successful struggle.⁽²⁹⁾ It further pointed out that the objective military conditions in which the movement found itself made the possibility of a general uprising, leading to direct military struggle, an unlikely one. Rather, as was the case in Cuba, the general uprising had to be sparked off by organised and well-prepared guerrilla operations during the course of which the masses of the people would be drawn into the struggle, and be armed. Part 1 concludes:

We are convinced that this plan is capable of fulfillment. But only if the whole apparatus of the movement, both here and abroad, is mobilised for its implementation and if every member now prepares to make unlimited sacrifices for the achievement of our goal. The time for small thinking is over because history leaves us with no choice.⁽³⁰⁾

Part 2 set out four geographical areas (presumably) to be used as bases for guerrilla warfare namely, the area Port Elizabeth to Mzimkulu, Port Shepstone to Swaziland, North Western Transvaal bordering on Bechuanaland and the Limpopo River; and the North Western Cape to South West Africa (Namibia). The coastal areas from Port Elizabeth to Mzimkulu and from Port Shepstone to Swaziland were probably specially selected for the landing of guerrilla troops by submarine once the military phases of the struggle had started.

Part 3 detailed the "Plan" for landing four groups of 30 guerrilla fighters either by sea or by air who were to be "armed and properly equipped in such a way as to be self-sufficient in every respect for at least a month". At the initial stages of the attack, the plan

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29. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, pp. 1 - 2.
 30. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, pp. 2 - 3.



proposed that the four groups should split up into platoons of ten men each, and that they link up with pre-arranged, locally trained groups of guerrilla fighters. The plan also made provision for the setting up of a political authority "in a friendly territory" to supervise the struggle both internally and externally. It was envisaged that, in due course, the political authority would develop into a sort of Provisional Revolutionary government.⁽³¹⁾

Part 4 dealt with the internal organisation of Operation Mayibuye. It stated that:

Our target is that on arrival, the external force should find at least 7 000 men in the four main areas ready to join the guerrilla army in the initial onslaught. These will be allocated as follows: Eastern Cape to Transkei 2 000; Natal to Zululand 2 000; North Western Transvaal 2 000; and North Western Cape 1 000.⁽³²⁾

Preparation work for equipping the initial forces was to take place in three stages, namely, 1) The importation of military supplies and the landing of additional supplies simultaneously with the arrival of the external forces. 2) The acquisition and accumulation internally of firearms, ammunition and explosives at all levels of organisation. And 3) the collection and accumulation of other military supplies such as food, medicines and communication equipment. Part 4 suggested that "auxilliary guerrilla/sabotage units" in the four main areas had to be set up "before and after the commencement of operations". In the areas falling outside the four main guerrilla areas, MK (Umkhonto) units would be set up to support the activities in the guerrilla areas, as well as to harass the enemy. Finally, to draw in the masses of the population, the political wing (presumably the ANC) should arouse the people to participate in the struggle that was designed "to create an upheavel throughout the country".⁽³³⁾

31. Norval, Inside the ANC, pp. 65 - 67.

32. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, p. 3.

33. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, p. 4.



Part 5 was headed: "Detailed Plan of Implementation". It set out the work of the various departments and committees, such as the Intelligence Department, the External Planning Committee, the Political Authority, the Transport Committee and the Logistics Department, with the Technical and Supply Committee falling under the latter department.⁽³⁴⁾

The document concludes with Part 6, which is entitled "Miscellaneous". As the heading indicates, this section dealt with miscellaneous matters such as the immediate duties of the NHC in relation to the guerrilla areas, personnel, special directives to heads of departments, the organisation of areas and the setting up of proper MK machinery. Of particular interest are the duties of the NHC in relation to the guerrilla areas and the special directives to the heads of departments. In the case of the first, the duties of the NHC were set out: to map out regions in each area with a view to organising Regional and District Commands and MK units; to employ ten full time organisers in each guerrilla area; to place these organisers under the direct control of the NHC, and to direct, recruit and arrange for the external training of at least 300 men. In the case of the second, the heads of departments were required to submit, not later than 30 May 1963, plans detailing the structural organisation of their departments, the type and number of personnel, as well as the funds required, a schedule of the time necessary to enable each department to fulfill its target and other matters relating to the efficient execution of the department's plans.⁽³⁵⁾

But master plans very seldom consist of a single document and Operation Mayibuye was no exception to the rule. A large section of the documents discovered by the South African police at Rivonia in July 1963 were either directly or indirectly related to Operation Mayibuye and the revolutionary struggle for freedom in South Africa.

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34. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, pp. 4 - 5.
35. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, p. 5 - 6.



These documents are far too numerous and varied to be fully discussed here. Consequently, only some of the more important ones have been selected for brief discussion here. The first is a three-paged stencilled document entitled "Outlines of a Syllabus for a Brief Course on the Training of Organisers". This document, which was drawn up by Govan Mbeki and Arthur Goldreich in 1963, dealt with the historical background to the Black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa, the causes leading up to the formation of Umkhonto and the sabotage campaign. Section B of the document dealt with the actual birth of Umkhonto, the move to guerrilla warfare, and a study on the feasibility of an armed struggle. It also recommended that all available literature on the subject of guerrilla warfare, with special reference to China, Cuba, Algeria and Vietnam, be examined and used in the training of organisers. The last part of the document, Section C, dealt with the organisational machinery for guerrilla warfare.⁽³⁶⁾

A second important document relating to Operation Mayibuye was "The Speakers Notes. A Brief Course in the Training of Organisers". This document, which closely resembled the first, conveyed the following information on the armed struggle.

... the Organisation MK is born to wage a revolutionary armed struggle to overthrow White supremacy. Sabotage on a national scale should be used principally in disrupting communications, transport, railroads, railroad installations, etc. It is the civil branch and should be carried out only outside the areas dominated by the guerrillas. ... Guerrilla warfare becomes a way of harassing and wearing down the enemy while developing one's own strength. The guerrillas must eventually shift from guerrilla operations to regular warfare in order to achieve victory.⁽³⁷⁾

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36. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R230, Outlines of a Syllabus for a Brief Course on the training of Organisers, pp. 1 - 3.
37. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R54, The Speaker's Notes. A Brief Course on the Training of Organisers, pp. 1 - 16.



In addition to the above documents, numerous others dealing with sabotage, guerrilla warfare and the problems relating to it were also found by the police at Rivonia. Some of these were in the handwriting of Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe while others, such as the "Introduction to Demolition and Theory of Explosives" and "Strategic Problems of Guerrilla Warfare", were apparently the work of Goldreich alone. As pointed out, Goldreich visited Red China during the course of 1963 to discuss various aspects of guerrilla warfare with the Chinese. On his return to South Africa in early 1963, Goldreich prepared a 43-page document entitled "First Discussions - C. Lee [on] Defence of China" in which he set out the information obtained from the Chinese on the communist revolution in China.⁽³⁸⁾ In addition to these documents there were also a number of pamphlets and papers, some prepared by Goldreich and some by Dennis Goldberg, dealing with the manufacturing and acquisition of explosives, landmines and hand grenades. Among the latter documents were some correspondence between Dennis Goldberg and timber merchants in Johannesburg regarding the purchase of wooden boxes for the manufacturing of landmines. Goldberg also obtained a diagram for a cupula-type furnace that would be suitable for melting metals and making castings for the manufacturing of hand grenades.⁽³⁹⁾

Even more revealing and indicative of the extent to which the NHC of Umkhonto and the communist underground in South Africa had intended taking the liberation struggle, was the document entitled "Production Requirements". According to this document, facilities and materials were sought for the production of 15 tons of black powder; 21 tons of aluminium powder; 144 tons of ammonium nitrate; 1 500 timing devices for bombs; 48 000 anti-personnel mines and 210 000 hand grenades. In the opinion of an explosives expert, the quantity of explosives and exploding devices set out above would have been enough to blow up an entire city the size of Johannesburg.⁽⁴⁰⁾

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38. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, pp. 25 - 28.
 39. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, pp. 30, 41.
 40. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit T.1, See also Dr. Yutar's Opening address to the Court in 1963, p. 8.



On the basis of these and other facts, the State, in its case against the NHC of Umkhonto in 1963, contended that there could be no doubt that the plans set out in Operation Mayibuye had been adopted by the leaders of Umkhonto and that they were in the process of implementing it when the police raided Rivonia in July. This was, however, denied by Walter Sisulu, Dennis Goldberg, and Govan Mbeki, who told the Court that the plan was impracticable and as result it was never adopted.⁽⁴¹⁾ The latter point of view was accepted by the Court who argued that it had not been sufficiently proven by the State that Operation Mayibuye had progressed beyond the preparation stage.⁽⁴²⁾ Considering that preparation normally precedes adoption and implementation, it could be conceded that while extensive preparations were being made for a guerrilla struggle, the plans as contained in Operation Mayibuye were never adopted by Umkhonto's NHC prior to the raid on Rivonia on 11 July 1963. Yet, two years later in 1966, Batholomew Hlapane told the court during the trial of Abraham Fischer, that Operation Mayibuye had been accepted by the Central Committee of the SACP prior to July 1963.⁽⁴³⁾ Joe Slovo later confirmed that while Operation Mayibuye had been adopted in principle at a meeting of the ANC and the SACP in early 1963 he, together with J.B. Marks, took the plan to London in May/June of the same year for discussion with Oliver Tambo and the rest of the Mission in Exile.⁴⁴

At his trial in 1964, Mandela told the Court that the leaders of the ANC had hoped that the sabotage campaign would never lead to open warfare between Whites and Blacks in South Africa, since Blacks would have been at a distinct disadvantage, due to their lack of military training. Unlike Whites, Blacks were not called up for compulsory

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41. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of W. Sisulu and G. Mbeki with regards to the feasibility of Operation Mayibuye (See complete evidence).
 42. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, p. 36.
 43. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence and Cross Examination of B.M. Hlapane, pp. 1 - 100.
 44. Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 24.



military training in South Africa. To overcome this weakness it was decided in 1961 to build up "a nucleus of trained men" who would be able to provide the leadership which would be required if guerrilla warfare started. We," he said "had to be prepared for such a situation before it became too late to make proper preparations."⁽⁴⁵⁾ Once this stand was taken, it was decided that Mandela should slip out of the country to attend the conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) in Addis Ababa in early 1962 to solicit support for the ANC in its struggle for freedom and at the same time, to seek training facilities for young Black guerrilla fighters from South Africa.⁽⁴⁶⁾

According to Howard Barrell, whatever the hope expressed by Umkhonto in its manifesto, the organisation's leadership

apparently did not seriously expect the State to retreat from [its] apartheid policy in the face of the first few bangs - although [there] might well have been some others who did. It anticipated that the State's response would leave MK no choice but to move towards developing a sustained armed struggle. This had a bearing on MK's choice of sabotage for its initial ventures. Sabotage would show doubters in the Congress Alliance the need for, and benefit of, armed activity. It could also demonstrate to the populace at large that there had been a break with a half century of non-violent politics."⁽⁴⁷⁾

With Mandela's departure from South Africa in early 1962 the leadership of Umkhonto temporarily fell to Joe Slovo of the SACP. However, the fact that Mandela was sent out of South Africa a mere month after Umkhonto was launched to seek financial and presumably material aid for the armed struggle in South Africa also suggests

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45. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Statement from the dock, pp. 24 - 26; See also Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1970, pp. 62 - 63).
 46. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Statement from the dock, pp. 24 - 26.
 47. Barrell, MK, p. 7.



that the leaders of the underground, particularly those of Umkhonto, did not really seriously believed that sabotage alone could bring revolutionary change in South Africa. The most it could do was to serve as a "bridge" to carry people politically from the old to the new phase of resistance.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Plans to transform the sabotage campaign into a revolutionary guerrilla struggle was therefore vitally important and well underway by the end of 1962, beginning 1963. A circular entitled "Umkonto we Sizwe Greets the People of South Africa: A Message from the High Command" sent to the offices of the Black press at the end of 1962 to mark the first anniversary of the sabotage campaign strongly reflected the revolutionary mood of the underground by the end of 1962. It stated clearly that Umkhonto will not rest until White supremacy had been "wiped of the face of the country".⁽⁴⁹⁾

A second document released by the underground in May 1963 carried an even stronger message to Whites in South Africa. Under the heading "The ANC Spearheads Revolution, Leballo No", the document made it clear that the Black people in South Africa were at war with the government. It wrote:

Twelve million people will be slaves no longer. For three hundred years the Whites have refused to hear our voice. The ways of peace have failed. Now we fight to be free. The Verwoerd Government had made it impossible for us to win our birth-right any other way. The ANC tells the people straight: the struggle that will free us is a long hard job... The White supremacy state is powerful and had tried to prepare itself for revolution. It has money, it is well organised, well armed. ... TO DESTROY VERWOERD WE MUST DESTROY THE INSTRUMENTS OF WHITE POWER. We will not win until we destroy the forces that make the White state powerful. ... WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF WHITE POWER? They are the army, the railways, the docks, the factories, the farms, the police and the whole administration. HOW ARE (WE) TO SMASH THEM? With planned, strategic violence. Already scared, the Whites are on the look-out.

48. Barrell, MK, p. 7.

49. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, pp. 20 - 21.



We must outwit them. We must hit them when they are not looking. ... ORGANISED VIOLENCE WILL SMASH APARTHEID. (50)

The document also made it clear that Umkhonto was the army of the National Liberation Movement; that it was for activists; that it was training the youth as an army of liberation and that it had the necessary leadership to fight a war of liberation. (51)

A few months earlier, in January 1963, the London based magazine Assegai, which closely concerned itself with the ANC's struggle for freedom in South Africa, and which from time to time propagated the advice of revolutionaries such as Mao Tse Tung and Fidel Castro on guerrilla warfare, carried the following lines on the liberation struggle in South Africa:

As true Marxist-Leninists, we believe in the inevitable clash between capitalists and workers and the ultimate and decisive destruction of capitalism. We know that the grounds for this clash must be prepared in a scientific and revolutionary way. We therefore welcome and have closely associated ourselves with the small beginnings that have already been made in our country. We salute UMKONTO WE SIZWE (Spear of the Nation) as a step in the right direction. By their acts of sabotage the necessary spark (for revolution) has been given. (52)

1.1 The Raid on Rivonia July 1963

If there was still any doubt by the beginning of 1963 that the underground in South Africa was making plans for an intensification of the armed struggle, this doubt was finally removed by the discoveries

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50. Regional Court, Pietermaritzburg, Case R/C 508, 1966 - 1967, The State against A. Dhlomo and M.G. Mxenge, Exhibit "P" The ANC Spearheads Revolution, Leballo No. See also H. Soref, The Puppeteers, p. 90.
51. Regional Court, Pietermaritzburg, Case R/C 508, 1966 - 1967, The State against A. Dhlomo and M.G. Mxenge, Exhibit "P".
52. Assegai, 1963.01.01, p. 1. See also Soref, The Puppeteers, p. 91.



that the police made when they raided the combined internal underground headquarters of the banned ANC, SACP and Umkhonto on 11 July 1963. Ever since the first attacks of December 1961 the police had been searching for the underground headquarters of the ANC and the SACP, without any success. The process of uncovering the headquarters of the underground turned out to be a long and arduous one with many frustrations for the security police and the government. One of the reasons why the police were unable to find the headquarters was probably the fact that they concentrated their search on the Black townships around the country while, in the meantime, it was situated in one of Johannesburg's wealthy White suburbs.

Although the police were fully aware of the decisions that was taken in mid-1961 to move to sabotage, they were nevertheless caught off-guard by the intensity and scale of the campaign.⁽⁵³⁾ To complicate matters, Umkhonto was not the only organisation actively involved in acts of terrorism and sabotage in 1961. Two other organisations, namely the PAC's Poqo movement and the previously mentioned National Committee for Liberation (NCFL) which later changed its name to the African Resistance Movement (ARM), were also making attacks on government installations. Consequently some of the acts of sabotage committed before 15 December (some twelve incidents of sabotage were listed in Annexure A⁽⁵⁴⁾ to the Rivonia Indictment prior to this date) were probably committed by either or both these two organisations. Poqo was established early in 1961.⁽⁵⁵⁾

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53. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 5 (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.09.24, p. 18). The contents of the article which is based on a series of interviews between Van der Merwe and Major General P.J. Venter corresponds very closely with an account of the events given by L. Strydom in his book, Rivonia Masker Af, which was published in September 1964 shortly after the end of the Rivonia Trial.
 54. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A to the Indictment, pp. 1 - 2.
 55. Microfile, Johannesburg, Sundry Trial, Reel 7, The State against Miss L. van der Riet, Evidence of L. van der Riet, pp. 1 - 166. See also Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 5, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.22, pp. 67, 69).



The ANC and Umkhonto were quick to capitalise on the confusion that was created by the various campaigns of violence in the country. Shortly after the Bashee River murders the ANC released a pamphlet in which it warned Whites in South Africa that within a year or two the country would be caught in a war which would be more bloody and furious than that which took place in Algeria between 1954 and 1961, and which led to France's withdrawal from that country. The pamphlet begins:

Listen, White Man! Five Whites were murdered in the Transkei, another hacked to death at Langa ... Sabotage erupts every other week throughout the country, now here now there. The Whites are turning vicious and panicky ... At this rate, within a year or two South Africans will be embroiled in a bloody, more furious, Algerian (type of) war.

Sabotage and murder multiplied last year. Sabotage and murder will not cease. You now face an indefinitely long future of terrorism, uncertainty and a steadily eroding power. You will keep a gun at your side, not knowing whom to trust. Perhaps the street cleaner is a saboteur, perhaps the man who makes your tea at the office has a gun... You will never be safe and you will never be sure. You will have launched a war you cannot win.⁽⁵⁶⁾

No wonder then that the police struggled to find the source of the spate of armed attacks that hit the country since 1961. Even the arrest of Nelson Mandela in August 1962 did not bring them any nearer to stopping the acts of sabotage that were taking place all over the country. Although numerous arrests were made during 1962, none of these led the police any nearer to the underground headquarters of either the ANC or Umkhonto.

The first important breakthrough that would eventually lead the police to the headquarters of the underground came in early June 1963 when they arrested a convoy of Umkhonto recruits at Zeerust in the

56. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit VV, Document entitled "Listen White Man". See also N. Weyl, Traitor's End, pp. 111 - 119, Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af., p. 11, and Norval, Inside the ANC, pp. 68 - 69.



Western Transvaal. These recruits were being taken out of the country for military training. That same night the police also arrested the owner of the taxi business that was used to transport the recruits to the Bechuanaland border. This person was Essop Suliman.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Although Suliman was only responsible for the transporting of ANC and Umkhonto recruits to the border, his arrest allowed the police to gain further access to the underground and its activities in early 1963.

The second important breakthrough came on 26 June when a broadcast by a clandestine radio called "Radio Liberation" was picked up by the regular radio service. A transcript of the broadcast was handed to the security police.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The speaker, to the great surprise of the police, was no other than Walter Sisulu. Ever since he jumped his bail of R6 000 while awaiting an appeal against a prison sentence of six years, the police had been searching for him, but without success. They had come to believe that Sisulu had left the country. The broadcast, however, proved them wrong. Sisulu was not only in the country but right under their noses in Johannesburg, which made them believe that the underground's headquarters had to be nearby.

The third and final breakthrough in the search for the underground headquarters of the ANC came a short while after Sisulu made his broadcast from Rivonia in Johannesburg. On Wednesday afternoon 2 July 1963, Lieutenant Willem van Wyk of the security police received a phone call in his office on the sixth floor of "The Grays" in Von Wielligh Street, Johannesburg. The call was from a contact in Johannesburg's northern suburbs informing him that he had someone with him that could lead them to Walter Sisulu and the underground headquarters of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. Lieutenant van Wyk, in an interview with Koos van der Merwe, a journalist, in 1971, recalled that he could hardly believe his ears when he received the

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57. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of Essop Suliman, pp. C 5 - 6.
58. Regional Court, Pietermaritzburg, Case R/C 508, 1966 - 1967, The State against A. Dhlomo and M.G. Mxenge, Exhibit Q Radio Broadcast, 26 June 1963, p. 1.



call.⁽⁵⁹⁾ For someone who had struggled for almost eighteen months to find the one link that would lead him to the leaders of the sabotage campaign, the news of the whereabouts of Sisulu and the ANC's underground headquarters was an overwhelming experience.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Exactly who the informant was, was never revealed. The reason for the person's identity not being revealed is not difficult to understand, since the person would almost certainly have been executed by the underground. According to research that was done recently into the history of the communist movement in South Africa, an amount of R6 000 was offered to the informant by the security police to reveal the headquarters of the underground.⁽⁶¹⁾ Considering that the average salary of a White worker in 1963 was probably not more than R400,00 per month, the amount of R6 000 was staggering and hard to resist. From here onwards it was merely a matter of time before the police discovered the ANC, SACP and Umkhonto's underground headquarters at Rivonia and raided the place on 11 July 1963.

When the police stormed into the neat, thatch-roofed homestead on Lilliesleaf Farm, Rivonia on the afternoon of 11 July, they made a discovery that went beyond their wildest expectations. On entering the building they found not only most of the members of the NHC of Umkhonto on the premises, but also large quantities of highly incriminating documents and other pieces of evidence that made it possible for them to eventually destroy the entire underground operations of the ANC, the SACP and with it the sabotage campaign of Umkhonto by the end of 1965. Among the people arrested at Rivonia were well-known ANC and SACP members such as Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein, Bob Hepple, Raymond Mhlaba, Walter Sisulu and Dennis Goldberg. They later also arrested Arthur Goldreich and

59. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 6, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.29, p. 30). See also Strydom, Rivonia. Masker AF, p. 14.

60. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 6, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.29, p. 30).

61. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 376. See also Holland, The Struggle, p. 138.



Dr. Hilliard Festenstein, as well as the eight Black labourers who worked on the small-holding.⁽⁶²⁾

In addition to the arrests they made, the police discovered large quantities of documents and other incriminating evidence. Over two hundred of these documents were taken away for examination. Among the documents found by the police was "Operation Mayibuye". This particular document - the content of which has already been discussed - was the subject of discussion by some of the members of the NHC of Umkhonto when the police entered the Lilliesleaf house.

1.2 The Rivonia Trial 1963 - 1964

(a) Events preceding the Trial

As a result of the discoveries made at Rivonia and the underground's other properties at Travellyn in the Krugersdorp district, and at Terras Avenue in Mountain View, Johannesburg, the police systematically unravelled the structure and activities of the underground. In addition to the twelve people they were holding for 90-days in terms of the General Law Amendment Act of 1963, following the raid on Rivonia (they were Dennis Goldberg, Arthur Goldreich, James Kantor, Lionel (Rusty) Bernstein, Harold Wolpe, Bob Hepple, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mhlangeni and Ahmed Kathrada) the police also held numerous other persons, including Nelson Mandela, who was already a sentenced prisoner. In reference to the subversive activities of the underground, the Minister of Justice, Mr. B.J. Vorster, told Parliament in April 1963 that it had become necessary for the State to table the General Law Amendment Bill in order to deal with the sabotage campaign and to put an end to the subversive activities of the ANC and the SACP.⁽⁶³⁾

62. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 20 - 32. See also Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 6, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.29, pp. 32 - 34).

63. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 13, 1963.04.24, col. 4648.



Although the new act was unpopular with the opposition, both in and outside Parliament, the State, with the aid of the act and the discoveries made at Rivonia, managed to cripple the sabotage campaign. In sharp contrast to the more than 182 acts of sabotage that were committed in the period preceding the approval of the act in April 1963 and the discovery of Rivonia some three months later, the period following July 1963 witnessed only 21 incidents of terror (see Diagram C). Abraham (Bram) Fischer, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the SACP and the leader of the defence in the Rivonia trial later admitted that the act was to a large degree responsible for the destruction of the underground. "We," he wrote in 1963, "failed completely to understand the power of the 90-day detention weapon when it was applied by cruel, ruthless and often clever men".⁽⁶⁴⁾

Although the events of July 1963 did not put an immediate end to the activities of the underground and the sabotage campaign, it placed growing pressure on Wilton Mkwayi and others, including Bram Fischer and the remaining members of the underground communist movement, to curtail their actions and review their position. Many, who feared that it was only a matter of time before the police arrested them, left the country in a great hurry. On 11 August 1963, some two months before the Rivonia Trial was to begin, two key witnesses in the trial namely Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe, together with two Indian conspirators, escaped from police custody after they had managed to bribe a young and naive prison warden with a promise of R4 000,⁽⁶⁵⁾ R2 000 less than the sum the police paid their informant for information on the headquarters of the underground in June. Johan Arnold Greef, the young prison warden who allowed himself to be bribed, was brought to trial in September 1963 and subsequently sentenced to six years imprisonment.⁽⁶⁶⁾

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64. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fisher and 13 others, Document entitled Time for Re-Assessment, pp. 3 - 4. See also Dawn Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 25.
65. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1963.08.12. See also Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 36 - 40, 43.
66. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 36 - 41, 43.



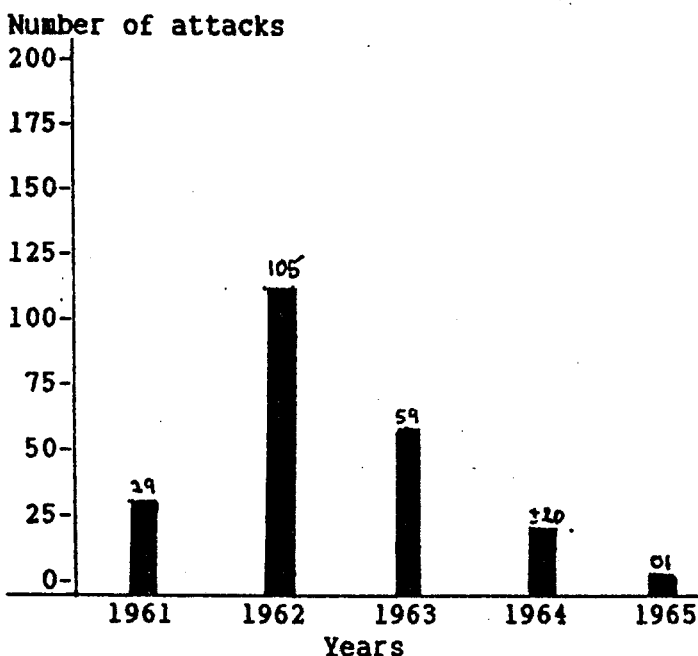
DIAGRAM C

1. ACTS OF SABOTAGE COMMITTED BETWEEN 1961 AND 1965

Although not all the acts of sabotage recorded below were committed by Umkhonto we Sizwe most of them can be attributed to the latter.

Period	Number of Attacks
9 August 1961 - 14 December 1961	12
15 December 1961 - 30 June 1963	182
30 June 1963 - 10 March 1964	21
10 March 1964 - 12 June 1974 (date of Rivonia verdict)	± 5
13 June 1964 - December 1964 (most of the acts of sabotage committed during this period was done by the ARM)	17
1965	1
TOTAL	238

2. ACTS OF SABOTAGE ACCORDING TO YEAR



The above information has been obtained from the following sources: Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Annexure A to the Indictment, pp. 1 - 32; Horrell, Survey of Race Relations, 1964, pp. 30 - 33; L. le Grange, Die Suid-Afrikaanse Staatsveiligheidsituasie (Instituut vir Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek, Aktualiteitsreeks, No. 11, University of Potchefstroom, July 1977, p. 8).



Following their escape from the police cells at Marshall Square, Goldreich and Wolpe used the underground or rather what was still left of it, to make their way to Swaziland. Here they stayed for a while with the Reverend Charles Hooper, the same clergyman who was accused by the government of being partially responsible for the unrest in the Zeerust area in 1957 - 58.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In order to escape across the border Goldreich and Wolpe disguised themselves as two priests. Goldreich went under the alias of the Reverend Shippon while Wolpe was disguised as the Reverend Mitchel. After a short stay in Swaziland, during which time the necessary arrangements were being made for their escape to Dar-es-Salaam, they were transported by light aircraft to Lobatsi in Betchuanaland where they arrived on 28 August.⁽⁶⁸⁾

From Lobatsi they were taken by Landrover to Francistown where they met Ismail Bhana, their contact man in Bechuanaland. Bhana was the ANC and SACP's chief organiser of escape routes out of South Africa and Bechuanaland. Like Goldreich and Wolpe, Bhana was also a communist. With the active support of Bhana and the ANC's Escape Committee, Moola and Jassat, the two Indians who escaped with Goldreich and Wolpe, were also airlifted from Swaziland to Bechuanaland. From there they were later separately accompanied by Bhana to Dar-es-Salaam where they were given a hero's welcome by members of the ANC and the banned SACP.⁽⁶⁹⁾

On the same day that Goldreich and Wolpe arrived in Francistown, a Dakota of the East African Airways (EAA) landed at the Welena airport not far outside the town to airlift the two men to Dar-es-Salaam. Their flight to Dar-es-Salaam was scheduled for the 29th, but during the early hours of the morning the plane was completely destroyed by an explosion. Exactly who was responsible for this explosion is not clear but it was reported in September 1964, that on 1 September a man telephoned the offices of the Rand Daily Mail in Johannesburg

67. See Chapter three.

68. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 40 - 41.

69. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, p. 43. See also De Villiers, Rivonia. Operation Mayibuye, pp. 12 - 13. The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1963.09.16.



claiming to be the leader of the group that had destroyed the Dakota at Welena Airport. The group was apparently 30 men strong, multi-racial in composition and utterly opposed to communism. According to the anonymous caller, the group (its name is not known) was dedicated to "fair-play" and "the punishment of saboteurs who had injured innocent women and children."⁽⁷⁰⁾ Fearing an attack on their person, Goldreich and Wolpe asked for police protection until new arrangements could be made for their safe departure from Francistown. An appeal was made to the East African Airways to send another aircraft, but this they were reluctant to do. However, the EAA later announced that it would be prepared to send a light plane providing the British government could give the necessary assurances that the plane would be placed under strict security at Francistown. This offer was however subsequently withdrawn by the EAA after another plane reportedly chartered by the ANC in Dar-es-Salaam, crashed at Mbeya in Southern Tanganyika (now Tanzania). From London it was reported that two Labour members of Parliament had requested the British government to send a Royal Air Force plane to Francistown to take the two fugitives to safety. The British government was however not prepared to do this. On 5 September the ANC in Dar-es-Salaam managed to arrange for a light plane from Tanganyika to fly the two men from Bechuanaland to the safety of Dar-es-Salaam.⁽⁷¹⁾ Four days later, on 9 September, Goldreich and Wolpe were taken in great secrecy to Palapyo some 165 kilometers south of Francistown. From here they were taken by a single-engined aircraft of the Arusha Air Charters (AAC) from Tanganyika to Elizabethville in Katanga. The next day they were flown from Katanga to Dar-es-Salaam, where they were given a hero's welcome by the ANC.⁽⁷²⁾

During their thirteen-day stay in Dar-es-Salaam, Goldreich and Wolpe held discussions with a number of exiles from South Africa such as

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70. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1964.09.11 - 12. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, p. 82.
71. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 44 - 45; De Villiers, Rivonia. Operation Mayibuye, pp. 14 - 15; Holland, The Struggle, pp. 155 - 156.
72. The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1963.09.10. See also Carter and Karis Collection, Reel 27, B, Document 2: 213/2/120(b), p. 1; Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 44 - 45; Barrel, MK, P. 16.



Jack Hodgson and Vivian Ezra (he was the director of the non-existing company that bought Lilliesleaf Farm in 1961), as well as with some African leaders such as the President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. Tanzania had achieved its independence in December 1961.

From Dar-es-Salaam Goldreich and Wolpe were flown to London where they again arrived to a hero's welcome on 23 September. The next day they attended a press conference that was arranged for them in the House of Commons by Barbara Castle⁽⁷³⁾, a Labour M.P. and senior member of the anti-apartheid movement in the U.K. Among those who attended the press conference were Joe Slovo, who had left South Africa in May 1963 to seek financial and military support for Umkhonto, and Oliver Tambo, the leader and acting President-General of the ANC's Mission in Exile (see Chapter 5). Goldreich eventually settled in Israel while Wolpe went to the Soviet Union.⁽⁷⁴⁾

The position occupied by Goldreich in the underground in South Africa was later pieced together by the police from the evidence found at Rivonia. More than fifteen of the documents found at Lilliesleaf were in the handwriting of Goldreich while numerous others dealing with guerrilla warfare, the manufacturing and use of explosives were found in Goldreich's car.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Wolpe occupied an equally important position in the underground's chain of command. He was co-author with Goldreich of at least one document entitled "Carrying out orders". His real value in the underground, however, lay in the fact that as a partner in a firm of lawyers, he was able to use his position to receive and disburse monies received from abroad to finance the underground activities of the ANC, Umkhonto, and the Communist Party.⁽⁷⁶⁾

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73. The Evening Post (Johannesburg), 1963.09.24; The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1963.09.25.
 74. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 47 - 48.
 75. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, List of Exhibits found at Rivonia and in the car of A. Goldreich, pp. 1 - 10.
 76. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, List of Exhibits found at Rivonia and at the offices of James Kantor and Partners, pp. 1 - 4.

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73. The Evening Post (Johannesburg), 1963.09.24; The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1963.09.25.

74. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, pp. 47 - 48.

75. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, List of Exhibits found at Rivonia and in the car of A. Goldreich, pp. 1 - 10.

76. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, List of Exhibits found at Rivonia and at the offices of James Kantor and Partners, pp. 1 - 4.



(b) The Rivonia Trial

The trial of Nelson Mandela and his fellow accused, which became popularly known as the Rivonia Trial, started on 9 October 1963 when eleven of the original thirteen accused appeared in the Pretoria Supreme Court on charges of sabotage; of being members of the NHC of Umkhonto; of soliciting and receiving funds from local and overseas sources for sabotage and of furthering the aims and objectives of communism in South Africa.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The State was represented by the Deputy Attorney-General for the Transvaal, Dr. Percy Yutar (Senior Council) who was assisted by Advocate A.J. Krog and two senior public prosecutors, Messrs T.B. Vorster and E. Klusman. The accused were represented by Advocate Abram Fischer (Senior Council) who was assisted by Advocates V.C. Berrange, A.C. Chaskalson, G. Bizos and J.F. Coaker. The last person appeared on behalf of James Kantor only. Both Advocates Fischer and Berrange were listed by the government as communists.⁽⁷⁸⁾

After an adjournment of 19 days to study the charges against their clients, the defence applied to the Court to have the indictment rejected on the grounds that it was vague and not properly worded. After studying the indictment the presiding Judge, Mr. Justice Q. de Wet agreed with the defence that the document was not acceptable to the Court and ordered the release of the accused.⁽⁷⁹⁾

Before the accused could leave the court building however, they were all rearrested. One of the accused, Bob Hepple, was released on the morning of 29 October after he had agreed to turn state witness. Of the thirteen originally accused only ten thus remained. These were listed in the second indictment as: Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Dennis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Mohammed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein, Raymond Mahlaba (also spelled Mhlaba), James Kantor, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni.

77. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, First Indictment, pp. 1 - 4.

78. Strydom, Rivonia. Masker Af, p. 51; De Villiers, Rivonia. Operation Mayibuye, pp. 27 - 28.

79. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Application by the Defence, and Judgement, pp. 1 - 6.



The second indictment was presented to the Court on 25 November and was almost twice the length of the first. In terms of the new indictment the accused were charged with having deliberately and maliciously plotted and engineered the commission of acts of violence and destruction throughout the country. The planned purpose was to bring about chaos, disorder and turmoil in South Africa that would be aggravated, according to their plan, by the deployment of thousands of guerrillas throughout the country at various vantage points as set out in Operation Mayibuye.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In addition to the charges of sabotage and the manufacturing of explosives and the provision of other materials to bring about a revolution in South Africa, the accused were also charged with furthering the aims of communism.⁽⁸¹⁾

A conviction under the main counts of sabotage and guerrilla warfare to overthrow the State could carry the death penalty, while a conviction under the Suppression of Communism Act carried heavy prison sentences.

In the weeks and months that followed the beginning of the trial, the prosecution presented the court with a mass of documentary and other evidence derived from the uncovering of the underground's headquarters at Rivonia. The witnesses called by the State alone numbered 173 people. Perhaps the most important witness was Mr. X - he was later identified as Bruno Mtolo, who served on the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Natal.

Arrested in August 1963, Mtolo became the State's chief witness after realising that the police knew all about him and the underground. Since the beginning of 1963 he had become increasingly disillusioned with the way in which some of the leaders of the ANC and the SACP were running Umkhonto. He became convinced that these leaders were running the organisation not for the benefit of the Black masses in South Africa but rather to further the aims of communism, something

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80. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, pp. 1 - 6.
81. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Second Indictment, pp. 7 - 9; De Villiers, Rivonia. Operation Mayibuye, p. 26.

the majority of the members of the ANC were not aware of, he told the Court in 1964.⁽⁸²⁾ In his book, Umkonto we Sizwe. The Road to the Left, he later alleged that by the time the sabotage campaign had started in 1961, the top leadership in the ANC was fully in the hands of the SACP.⁽⁸³⁾

The evidence and cross-examination of Mtolo concluded the case for the State on 4 March 1964. On 20 April the defence began their argument.⁽⁸⁴⁾ In his opening address, Advocate Fischer informed the court that the Defence would present evidence to prove that of the seven accused alleged to be members of the NHC of Umkhonto, namely Mandela, Sisulu, Goldberg, Mbeki, Kathrada, Bernstein and Mhlaba at least three (Goldberg, Bernstein and Mhlaba) were not members of Umkhonto. Fischer further pointed out that the Defence would seek to show that the leaders of both Umkhonto and the ANC, as far as possible, endeavoured to keep the two organisations apart and that they were not one and the same organisation as was claimed by the State. The Defence would further seek to show that although the ANC welcomed the support of the SACP and other anti-government organisations, the two organisations were never controlled nor were they a tool of the SACP. The Court was also informed that in the last instance the Defence would bring evidence to show that while preparations for guerrilla warfare were being made from as early as 1962, no plan for its implementation was ever adopted.⁽⁸⁵⁾ In this way the Defence acknowledged the existence of Operation Mayibuye but denied that it was accepted or implemented.

At the end of his address Fischer handed the court a list of admissions by the accused. In this the Defence informed the court

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82. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence and Cross Examination of Bruno Mtolo, pp. 4 - 5; Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 132 - 133.
 83. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 182 - 183.
 84. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address of Mr. A. Fischer, pp. 1 - 4.
 85. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address of Mr. A. Fischer, pp. 1 - 4.

that Mandela, Motsoaledi and Mlangeni would not take the oath but would give their evidence in the form of an unsworn statement to the court. Their evidence could therefore not be cross-examined by the State. The remaining accused were, however, prepared to present their evidence under oath and could therefore be cross-examined. Some of the latter accused such as Sisulu and Goldberg, although prepared to give evidence under oath, refused to answer many of the questions put to them by the prosecution. Kantor, who was accused number eight, was discharged by the court at the closing of the State's case due to a lack of sufficient evidence against him.⁽⁸⁶⁾

(c) Judgement

The hearing was concluded on 3 June 1964 after both the State and the Defence had concluded their representation. Mr. Justice de Wet handed down his judgement on 11 June, while sentence was passed the following day. In his judgement of some 72 typed pages the judge found Mandela, Sisulu, Goldberg, Mbeki, Mhlaba, Motsoaledi and Mlangeni guilty on all four counts as set out in the indictment against them. Kathrada was found guilty on count one but not on counts two, three and four. Bernstein was found not guilty on all four counts and discharged. He was, however, immediately re-arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 before he could leave the court building. He was later granted bail of R2 000; an opportunity which he subsequently used to escape from the country.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The remaining eight accused were all sentenced to life imprisonment. In passing sentence on 12 June, Mr. Justice de Wet made it clear that the function of the Court in South Africa, as in any country, was to enforce law and order, and to enforce the laws of the State within which it functions. He further pointed out that:

the crime of which the accused have been convicted, that is the main crime, the crime of conspiracy, is in essence one of high treason. The

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86. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, pp. 5 - 7.
87. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Judgement, pp. 1 - 72. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1964, p. 89.

State has decided not to charge the crime in this form. Bearing this in mind, and given the matter very serious consideration, I have decided not to impose the supreme penalty which in a case like this would usually be the proper penalty for the crime (of high treason). (**)

Indemnity was granted to all state witnesses.

1.3 Reaction to the Trial and the Sentence

(a) International Reaction

The international reaction to the trial and the sentence can generally be described as one of outrage and severe criticism. The emotional reaction of the overseas press is perhaps best reflected in the fact that the day after the Court handed down its sentences, the World Peace Council, one of the organisations belonging to the international anti-apartheid movement, announced that it had decided to award the "Julliot Curie Peace Gold Medal" to the Rivonia accused "in recognition of their courageous efforts for peace, democracy, and human equality in South Africa". (**)

Some of the most severe criticism came from the Anglican Church in the United Kingdom. The Reverend Joost de Blank, canon at Westminster Abbey and former Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Cape Town, spent a considerable deal of time in organising a world-wide campaign for the release of the Rivonia accused. He even travelled as far as the United States to present a petition to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation in New York, urging him to use his position and that of his office to secure the release of the accused. (**) Strong criticism of the South African government and support for the Rivonia accused also came from the Reverend John Collins, a well known and influential Anglican priest, devoted

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88. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Sentence, 12 June 1962, pp. 1 - 2.
89. The Daily News (Durban), 1964.06.13.
90. The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1964.06.14; The Daily News (Durban), 1964.06.13; The Transvaler (Johannesburg), 1964.06.13.



communist and president of the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) - which also had a branch in South Africa. The IDAF was established shortly after the Second World War in 1946 at Oxford University. The name of the organisation then was the Christian Action Group. The South African chapter of the IDAF was administered by Doreen Tucker, a listed communist.⁽⁹¹⁾

The stated aims and objectives of the IDAF was

to assist in the development of a non-racial society in Southern Africa based on a democratic way of life, with the object to aid, defend and rehabilitate the victims of unjust legislation and oppressive and arbitrary procedures; to support their families and dependants and to keep the conscience of the world alive to the issues at stake.⁽⁹²⁾

A considerable part of the funds that was sent to the ANC, Umkhonto and the SACP during the 1960 and 1961 was channeled through the offices of the IDAF in Johannesburg.⁽⁹³⁾

In addition to the reaction that was received from the Church and opposition parties in the United Kingdom, criticism also came from other countries such as France and the USA as well as organisations such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity (OAU). From Norway, for instance, a sum of about R2 000 was sent to Mrs. Winnie Mandela by the Norwegian Crisis Fund for South Africa via Christian Action in London to aid

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91. The above account of the history of the International Defence and Aid Fund has been compiled from the following sources: Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, pp. 244, 326 - 237; Vermaak, The Red Trap, p. 67; Soref, The Puppeteers, pp. 31 - 32.
 92. L.J. Collins, Recent Developments in Southern Africa and our Task, (United Nations Unit on Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, Notes and Documents, 26/1975, pp. 1-8.
 93. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter-Reaction, p. 32; See also Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane in general; and Vermaak, The Red Trap, pp. 67 - 69.



the families of the accused.⁽⁹⁴⁾

(b) Local Reaction

In South Africa the outcome of the trial was less emotionally reflected in the daily press. Both the Afrikaans and English language newspapers, which generally reflect the position or point of view of the government on the one hand and that of the opposition parties on the other hand, gave the trial and sentences passed by the Court a fair hearing and generally agreed that the outcome was fair and that there was nothing wrong with the South African judiciary.⁽⁹⁵⁾

As far as the Black press was concerned, the Johannesburg based World simply stated in an editorial on 15 June⁽⁹⁶⁾ that justice had been done in that seven of the accused were found guilty of having plotted to overthrow the State through the use of violence. It did, however, point out that a lesson was to be learnt from the Rivonia Trial in that it would mark the beginning of a new era in which the government should make every possible attempt to eliminate the factors and circumstances that gave rise to the need for violence.

But perhaps more significant was the reaction of ex-Chief Albert Luthuli to the Rivonia sentences. In a statement read to the Security Council of the United Nations on his behalf, Luthuli remarked that:

the African National Congress never abandoned its methods of militant non-violent struggle, and of creating in the process a spirit of militancy in

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94. Die Volksblad (Bloemfontein), 1964.06.15; The Daily News (Durban), 1964.06.13; The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1964.06.13; See also The Rivonia Trial Ten Years Later, (United Nations Unit on Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, Notes and Documents, 8/1974, p. 8).
95. The Daily News (Durban), 1964.06.16; Die Volksblad (Bloemfontein), 1964.06.12 (Editorial); House of Assembly Debates, vol. 12, 1964.06.15, col. 8149.
96. The World (Johannesburg), 1964.06.15 (Editorial).



the people. However, in the face of the uncompromising white refusal to abandon a policy which denies the Africans and other oppressed South Africans their rightful heritage - freedom - no one can blame brave, just men, for seeking justice by the use of violent methods; nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organised force in order to ultimately establish peace and racial harmony. (97)

Thus by 1964 even Luthuli, despite his opposition to violence, had come to accept the position and activities of Umkhonto and the guidance it received from the SACP, both locally and abroad.

The government's reaction to the outcome of the Rivonia Trial and the overseas criticism of its racial policies was reflected in an official statement released by the Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd on 16 June. In this Verwoerd stated that the Rivonia Trial and the judgement passed by the Court was entirely a South African matter. He informed Parliament:

... but in spite of that, we find governments of other nations taking an interest in them, (but) these reactions are not spontaneous reactions. They have been organised for a long time and this emanated from two circles: the one is the group of bodies which are continually opposing South Africa and which have made it their task to attack South Africa, like the Anti-Apartheid League and other groups in Britain; but behind them there is a much (wider organisation), viz, world communism. (98)

He went on to say that the world must take note of the fact, that South Africa was dealing with a communist inspired attempt to create chaos and disorder in the Republic and that for the first, and perhaps the only time, the communist states and governments have openly expressed their support for the insurgents in South Africa. In reference to the Rivonia accused themselves, he made it abundantly clear that the South African government viewed them as

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97. The Rivonia Trial Ten Years Later, (United Nations Unit on Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, Notes and Documents, 8/1974, pp. 6 - 7).
98. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 12, 1964.06.16, cols. 8281 - 8283.



communist criminals on the same basis as any spy who had been caught and sentenced to death in the USA ... in Britain or any other Western country. When there is a revolt in Cuba and people are caught and immediately shot or when there is a revolt in Zanzibar, death follows; or when a Government is overthrown and succeeded by another, the rebels shoot the members of the previous Government without trying them in (open) courts. In spite of that the Western powers continue to have diplomatic relations with them. (**)

1.4 Umkhonto and the ANC-SACP Alliance in the Post Rivonia period,
1964 - 1966

The raid on Rivonia and the arrest of most of the members of Umkhonto's NHC did not immediately bring an end to the underground and its subversive activities in the country. Two important leaders managed to elude the police dragnet. They were Wilton Mkwayi (also known by his nom-de-guerre "Bribri or Bri-Bri") and Abram Fischer.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Almost immediately after the Rivonia raid these two men, but more specifically Fischer, took control of the underground struggle and set in motion plans to rebuild the NHC of Umkhonto, and to resume and intensify the sabotage campaign as soon as the trial was over. In fact, from this point onwards, the activities of the SACP and Umkhonto became so closely intertwined that the one cannot be discussed without referring to the other. The police raid on Rivonia and the widespread arrests that followed made Umkhonto even more dependent on the leadership, support and guidance of the SACP and its Central Committee of which Fischer was a leading member after the departure of Joe Slovo in May 1963.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Within weeks of the Rivonia raids and arrests, Fischer called a number of secret meetings of the Central Committee of the SACP to

99. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 12, 1964.06.16, cols. 8281 - 8283.

100. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Exhibit R71, Operation Mayibuye, p. 6.

101. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, pp. 14 - 15). See also Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 44.



discuss the critical situation that faced them. A large number of the organisation's membership through its association with the ANC and Umkhonto, had been arrested after Rivonia and there was therefore a growing need to reassess the situation and to make changes where necessary. The first meeting was held in August 1963. At this meeting, which was attended by six cell members - Piet Beyleveld, Hilda Bernstein, Ivan Schermbrucker, Eli Weinberg, Ruth First Slovo and Gerhard Ludi (the latter was a police agent) - Fischer informed them that the membership of the Central Committee had been reduced to two members namely himself and Ruth First Slovo and that she was on the point to leave for London to join her husband. Numerous other aspects were discussed at this first meeting such as security and resistance to police interrogation. Although Umkhonto and the underground struggle as such was not discussed at this stage a new Central Committee was elected to provide the basis for the continuation of the liberation struggle.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Fischer was re-elected Chairman of the Central Committee while Hilda Bernstein and Ivan Schermbrucker were elected to the Secretariat. The meeting in August was followed by a number of further meetings in 1963 and the first half of 1964. At one meeting held in May 1964, it was announced that in future individual members of SACP cells would be allowed to commit acts of sabotage at will.⁽¹⁰³⁾

1.5 The Revival of the National High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe

Like the Central Committee of the SACP, the NHC of Umkhonto was almost entirely destroyed by the raids of July and 1963. With Joe Slovo in London to seek financial and other support for the struggle back home a new commander had to be found and the person best suited for this position was Wilton Mkwayi. In the early 1950's he became a union organiser for the African Textile Workers in Port Elizabeth and later served as Treasurer of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. He was one of the leaders of the Defiance Campaign in the

102. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, pp. 399 - 400.

103. Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, pp. 38 - 39.

Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 401.



Eastern Cape during 1952 and was among the 156 people arrested for treason in 1956, following the Congress of the People held at Kliptown in June 1955.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Mkwayi was, however, never brought to trial. Released on bail in 1958 he used his temporary freedom to escape to Basutoland before the trial began. He remained in Basutoland until 1961, when he returned to South Africa to join the newly formed Umkhonto. Shortly after he had become a member of Umkhonto, Mkwayi left South Africa to undergo military training and to enlist foreign support for the liberation struggle in the country. Unlike most recruits who were sent to training camps in North Africa, Mkwayi was sent to communist China for instruction.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ On completion of his training in China, he returned to Dar-es-Salaam. After a brief stay, he was sent to Czechoslovakia where he was given extensive training in trade union work. During this period Mkwayi visited several of the Eastern Block countries before he returned to South Africa via Dar-es-Salaam in early 1963. From this point onwards, he used the code-name "Bri-Bri". Undoubtedly one of the best trained guerrilla fighters and military commanders that Umkhonto had at that time, Mkwayi was returned to South Africa with the sole aim and purpose to take command of the military operations of Umkhonto. The position of military commander had been left vacant by the departure of Joe Slovo from the country in May 1963.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The date on which Mkwayi took control of Umkhonto is not clear. At his trial in December 1964 some of the sabotage attacks committed by Umkhonto in January 1963 were attributed to him and his associates.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Mkwayi, like most other members of Umkhonto, was also a senior member of the SACP. Unlike many recruits before and after him Mkwayi had taken his training as a saboteur and guerrilla fighter seriously. He had learned to understand the value of rigid self-discipline and

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104. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, p. 90.
 105. The Star (Johannesburg), 1964.12.17.
 106. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, pp. 14 - 15); Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 44.
 107. The Daily News (Durban), 1964.12.18 - 19; The Star (Johannesburg), 1964.12.17 - 18; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, pp. 89 - 90.



secrecy. Unlike some of the members of the NHC of Umkhonto and the Communist Party who lived at Rivonia, Mkwayi preferred to stay at Travellyn. The reason for this was that Travellyn appeared to have been a safer hideout than Rivonia (an assumption that was later proven correct when the police discovered the smallholding a full month after they found Rivonia).⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

As commander of Umkhonto, Mkwayi had close contact with Fischer and the Central Committee of the SACP, which provided the financial and other material aid Umkhonto needed to continue its sabotage activities. Mkwayi took his instructions directly from Fischer and the Central Committee. On one occasion shortly after Fischer took control of the Central Committee, and indirectly, the planning of Umkhonto's sabotage campaign in 1964, Mkwayi complained to Fischer that he was running short of explosives. Fischer then told him that until such time that explosives could be obtained he should resort to alternative forms of sabotage such as pulling down telephone lines, loosing railway lines, damaging railway control boxes, and burning down sugar cane and maize fields.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Mkwayi apparently was at Lilliesleaf Farm the day the police raided the smallholding. While everyone else was arrested he managed, by sheer luck, to escape. After having had lunch on that day, Mkwayi decided to have a talk with some of the Black labourers who were working some distance away from the main house. It was while he was conversing with them that the police raided the house. When he saw what was happening, he quickly turned around and quietly walked away. His finger prints were later discovered on a broken window pane at Travellyn.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

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108. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, pp. 14 - 15).
109. Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 44.
110. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of R. Mhlaba, and Judgement, pp. 55 - 56. See also Van der Merwe, Die Slag Om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, p. 15).



Shortly after the Rivonia arrests Mkwazi and other Umkhonto members such as Ian David Kitson, Laloo Chiba, John Edward Matthews and "Mac" Maharaj⁽¹¹¹⁾ with the help of Fischer, as chairman of the Central Committee formed a new NHC to continue with the armed struggle. Mkwazi, as a result of his extensive training in guerrilla warfare and political work was placed in charge of Umkhonto. Although well qualified, Mkwazi was apparently never made a member of the SACP's Central Committee. The reason for this is not clear but it was probably done for security reasons. Instead Kitson, who like Mkwazi was a long standing member of the SACP was co-opted onto the Central Committee to serve as official contact person between Umkhonto's new NHC and the SACP's Central Committee. In this role Kitson was also charged with the raising of funds for Umkhonto and the armed struggle.⁽¹¹²⁾ Chiba on the other hand was the official link between Umkhonto and the Indian community while Maharaj acted as messenger for the organisation. Maharaj allegedly also made his house available to the organisation for meetings and had assisted in the printing and distribution of subversive literature in accordance with Operation Mayibuye. A Technical Committee was set up and Matthews and Kitson, together with Mkwazi formed its members.⁽¹¹³⁾ The function of the committee was to select targets for sabotage, to obtain explosives and to manufacture explosive devices.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Mkwazi, Kitson, Chiba and the others of the new NHC of Umkhonto were all members of the banned SACP. This, together with the fact that Mkwazi received his instructions directly from the Central Committee of the Party, confirms that Umkhonto, if not the entire ANC within South Africa, was by the middle of 1963 under the control of the SACP.

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111. The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1964.12.19; See also The Star (Johannesburg), 1964.12.18; Vermaak, Braam Fischer, pp. 145 - 154.
 112. The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1964.12.19. See also The Star (Johannesburg), 1964.12.18; and Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, p. 46; Vermaak, Braam Fischer, pp. 145 - 154.
 113. The Daily News (Durban), 1964.12.18. See also Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, p. 15); Vermaak, Braam Fischer, pp. 145 - 154.
 114. Vermaak, Braam Fischer, pp. 145 - 154.



Under guidance from the Central Committee of the SACP, Mkwayi convened a number of elandertive meetings with communists at the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand. He apparently also attended underground meetings at the Johannesburg Technical College. The new "junior" NHC under Mkwayi was also responsible for the construction of a new radio transmitter with which a Freedom Radio broadcast was made on 26 June 1964 from the Shangrila Indian Club in Johannesburg. (115)

With the NHC of Umkhonto and the Central Committee of the CPSA being reformed by the end of 1963, the stage was set for the resumption and possible intensification of the sabotage campaign. Under the personal guidance of Mkwayi, combined with the covert financial and advisory assistance of Fischer and the Central Committee, an immediate start was made with the recruitment of new members into Umkhonto. Individuals were recruited into the organisation mainly to commit acts of sabotage and to be sent out of the country for guerrilla training. Several new Umkhonto cells were set up in the Black townships of Moroka, Pinville, Orlando and others on the Reef. As for the rest of the country, it was hoped that once the organisation and the underground was again fully operative in the Transvaal, it could be gradually extended to the other provinces.

As a result of the serious nature of the charges brought against the Rivonia accused (which carried the death penalty) it was decided by the Central Committee to temporarily suspend all sabotage activities until the end of the trial. (116) With Fischer being the leader of the Defence team as well as the Chairman of the Central Committee there can be little doubt that the directive came from him personally. As a result of this decision only four acts of sabotage were reported during the seven months that the trial was in progress. Two of the attacks were on electrical installations in Durban and Germiston, one on a railway powerline near Johannesburg and one on a telephone exchange in Pretoria. (117)

115. Vermaak, Braam Fischer, p. 146.

116. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of P. Beyleveld, p. 38.

117. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, August 1964, p. 20247.



Considering Fischer's instructions to the Central Committee and to the NHC of Umkhonto to cease all sabotage activities, and the fact that Umkhonto was not the only organisation that was conducting a campaign of sabotage in 1963, it is likely that the four acts of sabotage were probably not the work of Umkhonto. These acts can probably be attributed to the African Resistance Movement (ARM) who concentrated their sabotage attempts primarily upon electrical installations and power pylons. (118)

During the period following the revival of the NHC, Fischer and Mkwayi held numerous secret meetings to discuss and to co-ordinate the activities of the underground and to discuss the revival and intensification of the sabotage campaign after the trial. The two men formed a formidable combination. Fischer, with his legal background, was responsible for the planning, co-ordination and financing of all Umkhonto's activities, while Mkwayi, with his extensive guerrilla training, was responsible for the recruitment of new members and for directing the sabotage campaign. Secrecy was of the utmost importance especially after 11 July 1963. Thus, to avoid the attention of the police, Mkwayi went under the disguise of the Reverend Fundizi, and it was in this guise that he regularly met with Fischer. (119)

Towards the end of July 1964, after the Rivonia accused were sentenced, a small group of trained guerrilla fighters under the leadership of Siegfried Benghu, a former prison warden from Bethal, was added to the ranks of Umkhonto. These guerrillas were apparently recalled from outside the country by the new NHC to swell the ranks of the organisation and to take over the leadership should Mkwayi be arrested. The arrival of Benghu and his team apparently served as a great morale booster to the underground and gave Mkwayi a chance to

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118. Microfile, Johannesburg, Sundry Trials, Reel 7, The State against Miss L. van der Riet, Evidence of L. van der Riet, p. 8. See also Some Stood Up, (New Republic 152, January 1965, pp. 7 - 8); and Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 5, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.10.22, pp. 66 - 67).
119. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, pp. 16 - 17). See also Vermaak, Braam Fischer, pp. 147 - 154.



concentrate his efforts on the re-organisation and running of Umkhonto. (120)

While the necessary arrangements were being made by Mkwayi and Fischer for the resumption of the sabotage campaign, the members of the SACP were doing their part to aid these developments. On 18 March 1964 a slogan containing the word "Umkonto" was painted on the wall of a prison warden's house in Johannesburg. A few days later a further slogan containing the word "ANC" accompanied by an arrow pointing upwards was painted on a bridge in Industria, Johannesburg. On 10 June a further slogan "Free ANC" was painted on a wall of the Johannesburg prison. With the aid of police agents such as Gerhard Ludi (Agent Q-018) and Klaus Schröder (Agent Q-043) who had managed to infiltrate the underground, the police soon discovered it was done by members of the banned SACP who had assumed all propaganda work for the ANC and Umkhonto after the raid on Rivonia. (121)

By May 1963, Ludi had successfully infiltrated the SACP and was invited by one of its members, Jean Strachan (née Middleton), a 26 year old teacher and party cell leader, to join the organisation. With the help of Strachan, Ludi not only came into contact with a broad spectrum of what was left of the underground in South Africa, but he also met Abram Fischer, who acted as Chairman of some of the meetings. As a result of Ludi's infiltration of the underground the police managed to learn a great deal about the organisation and activities of Umkhonto. It was through these observations that they learned that the slogans referred to above were painted by White members of the Communist Party. (122)

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120. Van der Merwe, *Die Slag on Suid-Afrika*, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, pp. 16 - 17).
121. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, *The State against A. Fischer and 13 others*, Annexure H, Schedule of Slogans Painted. See also Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, pp. 30 - 31, 47, 68.
122. Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, pp. 30 - 31, 47, 68; Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, *The State against A. Fischer and 13 others*, Annexure H, Schedule of Slogans Painted.



1.6 The Arrest and Trial of Wilton Mkwayi

Within days of the accused in the Rivonia trial being sentenced, a series of sabotage attacks shook the country. Most of these attacks were committed in the Transvaal. Although Umkhonto claimed responsibility for most of it, some of the attacks were also committed by the ARM. Exactly who committed what acts of sabotage is however difficult to say.⁽¹²³⁾ The revival of the NHC of Umkhonto and the resumption of the sabotage campaign after 12 June 1964 was shortlived. Early in August, the police, after numerous unsuccessful attempts, arrested Mkwayi, who until then had always appeared to be one step ahead of them. After Mkwayi's arrest the command structure of Umkhonto was briefly taken over by Siegfried Benghu, but his leadership too was shortlived. Benghu was arrested shortly after Mkwayi, while disguised as a blind man.⁽¹²⁴⁾

Overall, 1964 was a poor year for the underground movement in South Africa. Besides the arrest of Mkwayi and the remaining members of the second NHC of Umkhonto, numerous other members of the underground were also in police custody or in hiding, hoping that the police dragnet will miss them. Mkwayi and the rest of the second NHC were brought to trial on 30 October 1964. They were charged with more than 50 acts of sabotage which they allegedly committed during the course of 1963 and 1964, in various parts of the country. Sentence was passed on 18 December. Mkwayi was sentenced to life imprisonment while the others were given long prison sentences ranging from twelve to eighteen years.⁽¹²⁵⁾

As a result of the numerous arrests that followed the Rivonia Raid and trials such as that of Mkwayi and the rest of the NHC, the State

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123. For a discription of some of the attacks after 12 June 1964, see Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964; The World (Johannesburg), 1964.06.15; Contact 7(8), 1964.07.3; and Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, p. 32). See also Diagram C, p. 165.
 124. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 7, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.5, p. 32).
 125. The Daily News (Durban), 1964.12.18; The Natal Mercury (Durban) 1964.12.18; The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1964.12.18. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, pp. 90 - 91.

was systematically destroying the underground movement. By the end of 1964 some 303 persons alone were under banning orders.⁽¹²⁶⁾

1.7 The Johannesburg Station Bomb

Perhaps the most infamous act of sabotage committed in 1964 following the conclusion of the Rivonia Trial was the Johannesburg station bomb explosion. The act of sabotage which was committed on 24 July 1964 and which left one person dead and fifteen others, among them a young child seriously injured, was first thought to be the work of Umkhonto because of its close proximity to the verdict and sentence of the trial. Police investigations however soon revealed that the explosion was the work of the left-wing ARM which had nothing to do with Umkhonto or the ANC.⁽¹²⁷⁾

1.8 The Arrest and Trial of Abram Fischer

Abram Fischer was first arrested on 9 July 1964 during the country-wide raids on the members of the ARM. The police initially thought that he had something to do with the movement, but no connection could be found between Fischer and the ARM and he was released a few days later. He was however re-arrested on 23 September 1964 under the 90-day detention Act.⁽¹²⁸⁾ By this time the police had already in detention at least thirteen other key leaders of the SACP. These people together with Fischer were formally brought to trial on 16 November 1964 in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court in preparatory examination.

Fischer and his fourteen co-accused were charged on three counts: on the first count they were charged with the offence of having contravened Section 11(c) of the Suppression of Communism Act of

126. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, p. 30.

127. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, Deel 8, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.12, pp. 22 - 29). See also The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1964.07.24; Some Stood Up, (New Republic 152, 1965.01.2, pp. 7 - 8); Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, pp. 30 - 33.

128. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1964.09.24 - 25 and The Star (Johannesburg), 1964.09.24 - 25.

1950. In terms of this charge it was alleged that during the period 12 May 1963 to 2 July 1964, at or near Johannesburg, the accused did wrongfully and unlawfully become or continued to be office-bearers or members of the SACP. On the second count, the accused were charged with acting in concert and having taken part with others in the activities of the SACP during the period 12 May to 2 July 1964. On the third count the accused were charged with furthering the aims and objectives of communism or performing acts which were calculated to further the achievement of the objectives of communism. (129)

Fischer was released on R10 000 bail shortly after he was arrested in September, to appear before the Privy Council in London on behalf of a South African subsidiary of American Sterling Drug Incorporated, against the German concern of Farben Fabriken. Instead of skipping bail, like many thought he would do, Fischer, convinced that he could easily prove his innocence, returned to South Africa after the hearing in London to stand trial with the rest of the accused on 16 September 1964. Fischer thought that the State had little or no case against him. But he was soon disillusioned when the prosecutor called Peter Beyleveld, a key member of the SACP's Central Committee, to the witness stand. During the course of his evidence, which came as a shock to Fischer, Beyleveld revealed to the Court that he had been a member of the Communist Party since 1956; that he and Fischer had been members of the same Party group since 1962; that Fischer had been a member of the Party's Central Committee since August 1963, and that several of the accused had also been members of the Party's Central and area committees. Beyleveld also told the Court that he had received a sum of R16 000 from the London committee of the SACP to further the cause of communism in South Africa. He further told the Court that every member in the underground in South Africa had a special code name. Fischer's code name for instance was "Jan", Scherbrucker's was "Peter", Ester Barsel's was "Sandy", Norman Levy's was "Bently" and Lewis Baker's was "Smithy" to name but a few. (130)

129. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Charge Sheet, pp. 1 - 3.

130. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of P. Beyleveld, pp. 1 - 196.



A second important witness called by the State to give evidence against Fischer and his co-accused was Detective Warrant Officer Ludi. During the course of his evidence he not only substantiated much of what Beyleveld had told the Court, but he also related how he had been gathering information for the security police as an undercover agent since 1960. He described how he had attended multi-racial parties where he was introduced to leading members of the ANC, the COD (the latter organisation was replaced by an organisation called "Club 77"⁽¹³¹⁾ after it was banned in 1964), the SACP and Umkhonto, which he said was the military wing of the ANC-SACP alliance.⁽¹³²⁾

Ludi told the court that he had belonged to an organisation called "The Volunteers" which was a section of the underground SACP responsible primarily for the painting of ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe and communist slogans in public areas.⁽¹³³⁾ He then related that at a meeting held in Strachan's flat on 14 June 1963, they were informed by Fischer that a large scale recruiting campaign was in progress for Umkhonto and that the main attack in South Africa was being planned from outside the country. Fischer emphasised that while this attack would come from across South Africa's border, it was essential that a large "liberation movement" should remain in the country to direct the activities of the main attack once it had started.⁽¹³⁴⁾ This information provided by Ludi closely corresponds with the information on guerrilla warfare contained in Operation Mayibuye.

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131. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and others, Evidence of P. Beyleveld, pp. 125 - 130. See also Evidence of G. Ludi, pp. 246 - 247.
 132. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and others, Evidence of G. Ludi, pp. 197, 202. (In the case of the Fischer trial the Court records are numbered consecutively with the result that Ludi's evidence begins on page 197.)
 133. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of G. Ludi, pp. 245 - 270.
 134. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of G. Ludi, p. 275 - 276.



Ludi also told the court that during the meeting on 14 June Strachan reported that there were several clandestine communist groups who were active in political organisational work and that one of them had been given the task of locating prospective sites for sabotage by Umkhonto. (135)

The body of evidence against Fischer, which included a document entitled "Time for Re-assessment" (136) in which an evaluation was made of the successes and failures of the Congress Movement and the communist underground in the country, was thus overwhelming. Faced with this, Fischer, probably on instructions from the London branch of the SACP and the ANC's Mission in Exile, with whom he had been in close contact ever since he went to London to appear before the Privy Council in September 1964, decided to estreat his bail conditions and to disappear underground to proceed with the restructuring of the underground and the struggle. (137) On 25 January 1965 Fischer's lawyer, Advocate H.J. Hanson, handed a letter to the court in which Fischer had set out his reasons for recusing himself from his trial. The letter was dated 22 January 1965. (138)

A warrant for Fischer's arrest was immediately issued by the police but it took them almost eleven months to recapture him. He was finally rearrested on 11 November 1965 in Johannesburg. The story of his disappearance and the intricacies of his eleven months of underground existence make for very interesting reading but are of little significance here. (139) More significant is the fact that

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135. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence of G. Ludi, p. 277.
 136. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Annexure J, Time for Reassessment, pp. 1 - 15.
 137. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Record of evidence by the State Prosecutor, p. 1.
 138. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Exhibit 54, Letter addressed to "Dear Hanson", dated 22 January 1965, pp. 1 - 3.
 139. For a more detailed discussion of Fischer's underground activities prior to his rearrest on 11 November 1965 see Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Record of Evidence presented to the Court by the State Prosecutor, pp. 1 - 8; and Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, pp. 424, 429 - 444.

with the sentencing of Fischer's co-accused on 13 April 1965, the government not only destroyed what was left of the communist underground movement inside South Africa but with the rearrest of Fischer in November the organised underground movement, had for all practical purposes collapsed. Without the leadership and financial support of the Central Committee of the SACP and with most of its active leaders and members either in jail or having fled the country to avoid arrest, Umkhonto also ceased to function as an organisation inside South Africa.

Brought to trial on 23 March 1966, Fischer was charged on a total of fifteen counts ranging from conspiring to commit sabotage, of being a member of the banned SACP, of having planned to bring about violent revolution, of having distributed subversive literature, to charges of fraud and forgery relating to the false names and documents he used while hiding underground.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

The trial of Abram Fischer lasted until 4 May 1966, when he was found guilty of all the charges brought against him by the State. In his verdict the presiding Judge, Mr Justice Wessel Boshoff, made it clear that the State had established beyond any doubt that Fischer, both by his own accord and as an office-bearer of the banned SACP, had conspired with the banned ANC and its military wing, Umkhonto, to commit sabotage and bring about the violent overthrow of the state in South Africa through a communist inspired revolution. He rejected Fischer's contentions that the SACP was not connected with Umkhonto or that it was not the Party's intention to establish a despotic state under communist domination in South Africa. Fischer was sentenced to life imprisonment on 9 May 1966.

1.9 An Evaluation of Phase One

Although the South African government was caught by surprise by the

140. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 375/66, The State against A. Fischer and 13 others, Evidence presented to the Court by the State Prosecutor, p. 5. See also the Evidence of Mrs. D. Tucker, pp. 171 - 192.



intensity of the spate of acts of sabotage that hit the country from 1961, and initially, had some difficulty in making progress with their investigation into the matter, their determination to find the source of the violence finally paid off in July 1963 when they uncovered the underground headquarters of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto at Rivonia in Johannesburg. From here onwards and with the aid of specially designed legislation to deal with insurrectionary activities, it was only a matter of time before they destroyed the underground movement. By the end of 1966 there was little left of the underground structure that was set up in the early 1960's to challenge the State. Of a total of some 238 acts of sabotage committed between 9 August 1961 and the end of 1965 (see Diagram C, p. 165) the majority namely 182 were committed between 15 December 1961 and the raid on Rivonia in July 1963. Most of the acts of sabotage committed during this period were directed either against government or semi-government buildings such as post offices and police stations, or against economic installations such as powerlines, railway installations and signal boxes. Although attacks on people as such were explicitly forbade by the NHC of Umkhonto in the early 1960's, of the 182 attacks committed between 1961 and the middle of 1963, at least 23 were directed at homes, six of which were the homes of African members of the South African police. If these attacks were successful and the explosions were large enough they could have caused the death of people. Fortunately the type of explosive devices used in the 1960's were primitive and the attacks amateurish with the result that no one was killed in the attacks.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

A breakdown of the attacks committed between August 1961 and the end of 1965 (See Diagram D p. 192) reveals that the most popular object of attack by Umkhonto guerrillas were telephone lines or similar installations (55 attacks), followed by attacks on African dwellings (16 attacks) and Post Office boxes or buildings (16 attacks). The fourth most popular object of attack by saboteurs during the above

141. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and 13 others, Annexure B to the Indictment, pp. 1 - 31.



DIAGRAM D

BREAKDOWN OF TYPES OF TARGETS ATTACKED BY GUERRILLAS BETWEEN
AUGUST 1961 AND 30 JUNE 1963⁽¹⁴²⁾

TYPE OF TARGET	APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ATTACKS
Telephone lines or cables	55
African dwellings (non South African police)	16
Post boxes and Post Office buildings	16
Power lines (pylons)	15
Attacks on African dwellings (members of the South African police)	7
Railway lines	7
Railway installations (general)	6
Railway signal boxes	6
Railway rolling stock	2
Attacks on local government buildings and properties such as:	
a) Bantu Administration offices	9
b) Bantu Affairs and Labour offices	8
c) African schools	6
d) Municipal buildings	4
e) African beer halls	5
Electric sub-stations / transformer stations	4
Private institutions (firms providing services to the State)	3
Government buildings such as prisons, etc.	4
Government / Police vehicles	2
Attack on petrol storage depot	2
Hospital buildings	2
Church buildings	1
Security Police offices	1
African shop	1
City hall Cape Town	1
Private store room	1
Miscellaneous attacks directed at targets such as the offices of the Portuguese curator in Market Street, Johannesburg, a private storeroom at New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, a dynamite storage depot used by a stone crushers company at Bethelsdorp, Port Elizabeth, etc.	16
TOTAL	196

142. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and 13 others, Annexure B to the Indictment, pp. 1 - 13.

period was power pylons, both mainline and secondary. At least 15 attacks were launched against such objects. It should however be stressed, as was done earlier in this study, that not all the attacks referred to above and in Diagram D were committed by Umkhonto guerrillas. It can however be assumed that since Umkhonto was by far the most active of the various underground organisations committed to sabotage in the early 1960's most of the attacks committed between 1961 and 1965 were done by its cadres.

As far as the period 30 June 1963 to the end of 1965 is concerned, of the 43 attacks committed during this time, most were directed at targets similar to those listed above. For instance of the 17 attacks committed between 13 June 1964 to the end of that year following the verdict of the Rivonia Trial, six were directed at Post Office buildings, five at power pylons (probably all the work of the ARM), three at railway lines, one at the Johannesburg prison and one at the Hospital Hill police station. The 17th attack was the Johannesburg station bomb explosion which was the work of the ARM.⁽¹⁴³⁾

Only one attack was recorded in 1965. In this case the target was a Cape Town telephone booth and the explosive devise was a bottle-bomb. No one was injured and damage was minimal.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

The cost of the damage caused by the acts of sabotage committed between August 1961 and 30 June 1963 was estimated to be in the region of R93 837,00. This figure is however a very conservative estimate since it does not reflect all the damage caused during the above period. But even if the figure of R93 837 was doubled to make up for those acts of sabotage not evaluated between 1961 and the middle of 1963, as well as those acts of sabotage committed to the end of 1965 for which no estimation of costs is available, it is still a small amount if one takes into account that South Africa's Defence budget alone for the period 1966 - 1967 came to R255,85 million.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

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143. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1964, p. 32.
144. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1965, p. 62.
145. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1966, p. 49.



2. PHASE TWO. THE PERIOD 1965 - 1975

The period following the arrest of Fischer and other key members of the underground movement inside South Africa was marked by a sharp decline in the activities of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto, until the middle of the 1970's, when the Soweto riots and the circumstances surrounding it introduced an entirely new era in the history of South Africa. Consequently the years between 1965 and 1975 largely saw the arrest of hundreds of people in connection with the activities of the abovementioned organisations and their activities. In addition, the destruction of the combined underground and its leadership between these years, effectively paved the way for the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and its Black power ideology which presented a major challenge to the position and leadership of the ANC inside South Africa during these years. This remained the case until the Soweto riots of the mid-1970's when, as a result of the influx of large numbers of Black youths into the ranks of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, the latter began to challenge the position of the BCM.

The destruction of the underground movement by the mid-1960's left the ANC and particularly Umkhonto without the much needed financial and organisational support of the SACP and its leaders, many of whom were either in prison or had fled the country to avoid arrest. This, together with the setbacks suffered at Rivonia and the ongoing police investigations into the remnants of the underground, made it virtually impossible for the leaders of the underground still inside the country to revive Umkhonto or proceed with the sabotage campaign. Any attempt to rebuild the underground and to recruit new members into it thus seemed an impossible task by the mid-1960's. Consequently, it was decided to shift the centre of command from South Africa to the Mission in Exile which had its headquarters in London at the time (see Chapter 5). The implication of this was that from the mid-1960's onwards the ANC-SACP alliance would conduct their attacks on South Africa from outside the country. To set up the necessary infrastructure to bring this about, however, took time with the result that the period between 1965 and the outbreak of the Soweto riots in 1976 was relatively free from armed attacks by



Umkhonto or insurrectionary activities by the ANC-SACP alliance. The few attempts that were made during the period to infiltrate trained guerrillas into the country were largely unsuccessful. As a result the period 1966 to 1976 remained relatively free of Umkhonto guerrilla activities.

A survey of some of South Africa's major newspapers⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and the annual survey reports of the South African Institute of Race Relations⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ reveals that in sharp contrast to the many acts of sabotage, political violence, and general subversion that marked the first phase of the armed struggle, the second phase was largely one of police action, fleeing radicals, detentions and political trials as the State set into motion its extensive machinery to destroy all radical opposition to its policies. The State was so successful in this that in December 1965 the Minister of Justice, B.J. Vorster, told the country that it could relax, the government had been successful in its campaign against the underground movement in South Africa and that since July of that year there had been no further acts of sabotage in the country.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Part of the government's success in destroying the underground and bringing relative peace to the country between 1965 and 1975 was due to a host of new security legislation that was introduced after 1965 to cover up loopholes in the existing security legislation. The first important section of legislation introduced in 1965 was the Suppression of Communism Act (no. 97) of 1965. In terms of this Act it became an offence to record, publish or disseminate the writings or speeches of persons who had been prohibited from attending gatherings without the special written consent of the Minister of Law and Order. The second important Act was the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (no. 96) of 1965. This Act replaced the 90-day

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146. See The Daily News (Durban); The Star (Johannesburg); The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg); The Daily Dispatch (East London); Die Burger (Cape Town); Die Volksblad (Bloemfontein); The Natal Mercury (Durban) and The Natal Witness (Pietermaritzburg) for the period 1966 - 1976.
147. See A Survey of Race Relations for the period 1966 - 1976.
148. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, August 1966, p. 21553.



detention clause with the 180-day detention clause - the very "weapon" which as Fischer later admitted, destroyed the underground in South Africa. Two further laws passed in 1965 was the Police Amendment Act (no. 74) of 1965 and the Official Secrets Act (no. 65) of 1965. The first extended the power and authority of the police to deal with terrorist infiltration on the country's borders, while the second made it an offence to communicate any information, military or police matters that was officially deemed to be prejudicial to the safety of the State.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

The year 1966 saw the introduction of the Civil Defence Act (no. 39) and the General Law Amendment Act (no. 62). In terms of the first Act the Minister of Justice was given increased powers to declare a state of emergency and to take the necessary action to protect the country from a state of emergency or during such an emergency. The second Act, which was introduced in November, extended all the main security laws of South Africa to South West Africa.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

During the course of the following year the government passed the Terrorism Act (no. 83) of 1967. This Act, which in terms of the General Law Amendment Act (no. 62) of 1966 was also applicable to South West Africa, was made retrospective to June 1962 when the first Umkhonto recruits were beginning to leave South Africa for military training overseas.⁽¹⁵¹⁾

The nature of the security legislation such as the Terrorism Act and the speed with which the government introduced it, aroused strong criticism from both the official opposition and the press, which claimed that the government was putting an end to the rule of law and the right of the courts. The government was aware of the far-reaching nature of its security legislation but argued that it was extraordinary times demanding extraordinary measures, and that, if

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149. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 102.
150. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, pp. 102 - 103;
See also Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, 1965,
p. 1119; 1966, pp. 599, 1118.
151. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 18, June 1967, col. 7023 -
7026. See also Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action,
pp. 103 - 104.

all the legal niceties were observed, there would be nothing left of the rule of law if the underground was to continue its subversive activities. At the second reading of the Terrorism Act in June 1967, Vorster's successor as Minister of Justice, P.C. Pelser, acknowledged the far-reaching nature of the Bill but pointed out that the Bill was necessary in view of the fact that the struggle against subversion was far from over and that the country had only been in contact with the vanguard of the movement. There were still persons inside South Africa and the High Commission Territories of Bechuanaland, Basotoland and Swaziland who were plotting the destruction of South Africa. (152)

During the course of the next seven years the government introduced a wide range of security laws dealing with the police, the Defence Force, the Civil Service, the Railways and Harbours. In 1970, for instance, the government introduced the National Supplies Procurement Act (no. 89) of 1970 which called, among other for the stockpiling of essentially strategic materials. (153) In 1972 the government set up a State Security Council in terms of the Security Intelligence and State Security Council Act (no. 64) of 1972. In addition the Suppression of Communism Act was again amended to cover loopholes in the existing legislation. This was followed by the Gathering and Demonstrations Act (no. 52) of 1973 which prohibited any gathering or demonstration in the open air within the near vicinity of Parliament. (154) Further legislation was introduced during 1974 and 1975 to deal with either general or specific security matters.

With the help of these laws and those introduced before 1965, the State succeeded in arresting, and bringing a large number of people to trial between 1965 and 1975, on offences relating to the security of the country. In the wake of the Rivonia and Fischer trials, a total of 500 people were arrested or detained during 1965. Of these 478 were Africans and 11 were Whites. As far as convictions were concerned, a total of 1 267 people - of whom some 1 176 were

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152. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 18, June 1967, cols. 7023 - 7026.
153. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1970, pp. 32 - 33.
154. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1973, pp. 54 - 57.



Africans - had been convicted under the country's security laws since the beginning of the 1960's. In addition a number of those released from prison during 1964 and 1965 was rearrested and brought to trial in 1966. A total of 1 310 people were still serving prison sentences by the end of June 1966. Most of these sentences were served under four major security laws namely the Suppression of Communism Act, the Unlawful Organisations Act (of 1960), the Public Safety Act and Section 21 of the General Law Amendment Act of 1962, which dealt with the act of sabotage. (155)

Questioned in the House of Assembly on 9 April 1968 on the number of people convicted under the security laws in 1968, the Minister of Justice stated that three Africans were convicted under the Sabotage Act (General Law Amendment Act of 1962); one White, four Asians and 24 Blacks under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950 as amended) and four Coloureds and 38 Africans under the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1960. A total of 74 people were thus convicted in 1967. The Minister also stated that at the end of 1967 a total of 1 335 people were in prison having been convicted under the security laws of the country. Of these, the majority (some 1 275) were Africans. (156)

The figures for 1968 were as follows: The number of persons convicted under the various security laws as set out above were 66. The majority of these (61) were Africans. As far as those still serving sentences under these laws were concerned, the Minister of Prisons stated on 30 May 1969 that a total of 1 019 people were still in prison by the end of 1968. Of these the majority (966) were Africans. (157) A total of 196 persons having served their sentences under the security laws of the country were released in 1968. Of these persons 189 were Africans. (158)

As far as 1970 was concerned, the Minister of Justice stated in the House of Assembly on 18 May 1971 that during the previous year eight persons (of which five were Africans) were convicted under the security legislation. He also revealed that a total of 549 persons

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155. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1966, pp. 74 - 75.
156. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1968, p. 57.
157. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, pp. 62 - 63.
158. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, pp. 62.

were still serving prison sentences under the security laws by the beginning of January 1971. Of these 514 were Africans.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

From 1972 statistical information such as those above was no longer made available by the Minister of Police who considered it "not to be in the public interest" to disclose this type of information. The reason for such security is not entirely clear but it probably had to do with South Africa's deteriorating image abroad. However, to judge by reports it appears that most of the people detained during the period 1972 to 1975 were members of the BCM or its affiliated organisations such as SASO, the BPC, and the Black Allied Workers' Union (BAWU).⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Exactly how many people were detained or convicted under the security laws of the country between 1972 and the end of 1975 is thus not clear nor is there any indication what percentage of these people were members of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto. The general impression is that with the formation of the BCM in the late 1960's the emphasis in Black politics and the actions of the police and the State associated with it, temporarily shifted away from the ANC and Umkhonto to the BCM.⁽¹⁶¹⁾

Several attempts were made by the ANC-SACP alliance in exile between 1967 and 1969 to return trained cadres of Umkhonto to South Africa via Rhodesia (presentday Zimbabwe) in an attempt to restart the armed struggle, but these efforts (which are dealt with in the next chapter) were unsuccessful.

No further attempts of any significance were made after 1968 and it was, in fact, not before the outbreak of the Soweto unrest of the mid-1970's that renewed attempts would be made to infiltrate guerrilla units into South Africa. By this stage the collapse of the Portuguese empires in Southern Africa, the escalation of the Rhodesian bush war and the wide-scale unrest situation in South Africa had created a more favourable climate for the return of Umkhonto guerrillas.

159. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, pp. 72 - 73.

160. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1973, pp. 78. See also C. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey and Documents, 1974-1975, p. B465.

161. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1974 - 1975, p. B465.



In the mean time, faced with the failure of the Wankie and subsequent campaigns, the ANC attempted to step up its propaganda campaign inside the country. Between 1968 and the early 1970's an increasing number of ANC publications were distributed throughout South Africa. Even the organisation's official mouthpiece, Sechaba, was distributed inside South Africa during these years. Distribution of publications was done in a number of ways. Some were delivered by hand. Others were posted while some were also publically distributed by means of explosive devices. (162)

Generally, the period from the end of the 1960's to the outbreak of the Soweto riots in 1976 is poorly documented with the result that not a great deal is known about it. The little that is known about this period have been gathered from the evidence and information that became available through the trials of ANC and Umkhonto cadres who were caught while attempting to infiltrate South Africa during these years. During most of these trials attention was focused on details of movements and activities largely irrelevant for a study of this nature. Moreover, not all the trials that took place between 1966 and 1976 had a direct bearing on the activities of Umkhonto. Most of the cases that took place between 1966 and the beginning of the 1970's had something to do with the demise of the underground communist movement before 1965. Examples here are the trials of Fred Carneson, Michael Dingaka, Isaac Heymand, Violet Weinberg, Leslie Schernbrucker, Roley Arenstein, Victor Finkelstein and David Ernst. (163)

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162. See the following sources: ANC, The Story of Simon and Jane, 1968. (This little booklet which is in the form of a picture book was distributed in 1968 and contained among others information and drawings on how to make petrol and black powder bombs); ANC Flyer entitled "June 1968", one page; Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, p. 284; Africa Diary, August - September 1970, p. 5114, and Dawn, various issues between 1968 - 1971 (Private Collection Dr J. Grobler).
163. See the following sources: Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1966, pp. 77 - 82, 87 - 91; 1967, pp. 53 - 56, 58 - 68; 1968, pp. 64 - 65; 1969, pp. 70 - 71; 1970, pp. 57 - 65; Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1966 - 1971; The Daily News and the Rand Daily Mail, 1966 - 1971; and L.J. Collins, Trial by Torture. The Case of the 22, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1970, pp. 6 - 9.



Two trials that however captured the attention of the local and international media and which formed part of the second phase of the armed struggle were that in 1971 of W.J. Hosey (and Irish national) and Alexander Moubarris (an Australian national) and that in 1975 of the South African born but self-exiled poet and activist, Breyten Breytenbach.

In the case of the first two accused, Hosey and Moubarris, they were charged with having conspired with one another and with members of the ANC-SACP alliance abroad to bring about a violent revolution inside South Africa and to help overthrow the government. According to the State, the conspiracy which belonged to the post 1966 period had its origins in the Soviet Union, Britain and Somaliland. It was also alleged that Moubarris was the main contact between the ANC-SACP alliance in London and the underground in South Africa. He apparently undertook six clandestine trips to South Africa between the mid-1960's and 1971 during which he brought in both weapons and literature for distribution among certain members of the underground in the country. In addition to his task as a courier of the ANC and Umkhonto, Moubarris reconnoitred the coast of Transkei for suitable guerrilla landing sites. The State alleged that Moubarris also surveyed the borders of both Botswana and Swaziland and that he visited these countries to meet with ANC-SACP activists in order to facilitate their infiltration into South Africa to commit acts of sabotage. Hosey on the other hand, was accused of distributing or causing to be distributed pamphlets containing anti-White and anti-government propaganda. Because of its sensational nature the trial received a great deal of publicity in the press. It was also given much publicity in London by the Anglican Church and the anti-apartheid movement. Moubarris was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment but he escaped with two other ANC members, S.B. Lee and Timothy Jenkins, in 1979, having served only half of his sentence. Hosey was sentenced to five years which he completed in 1977.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

164. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1973, pp. 80 - 81. See also Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 475, and Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 43.



As far as the case of Breyten Breytenbach is concerned, he entered South Africa at the beginning of August 1975 under the assumed name of Christian Galeska. His aim and purpose was to set up a White underground cell of the ANC known as "Okhela", which is the Zulu word for "Spark". The Russian word for this is "Iskra" which was the name of Lenin's famous revolutionary paper.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Despite its apparent link with the communist movement, Okhela was set up in 1973 (some sources indicate 1972) with the knowledge and support of Oliver Tambo and 12 other members of the ANC's NEC, but apparently without the knowledge of the SACP to act as a counter-force against the growing influence of the SACP in the ANC and the armed struggle. Indications were that Okhela also had close ties with the African nationalist faction in the ANC and that the latter played a significant role in Okhela's establishment in 1973. Once it was established in South Africa, the aims and objectives of Okhela was to enter and control the trade union movement in the country; engage in urban terrorism; set up cells, and start an underground newspaper to promote these aims.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

Unfortunately for Breytenbach, both Okhela and his proposed visit to South Africa was known to the security police, who allowed him to enter the country and then closely followed him before they arrested him on 19 August 1975, when he tried to leave the country. Breytenbach was brought to trial and sentenced to nine years imprisonment.

With the arrest of Breytenbach, Okhela collapsed in South Africa. The organisation, which by now had become an embarrassment to its creators in the ANC, managed to survive for a few more years outside the country but finally collapsed in 1979 with the departure of one of its leaders, Barend Schuitema to South Africa where it was later revealed that he was a police informer. With the collapse of Okhela in South Africa in 1975 and the banning of the Africanist faction in

165. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 477.

166. J. Smith, Breyten Breytenbach and the ANC, p. 33. See also The Star (Johannesburg), 1975.08.25; Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1975.11.23; The Star (Johannesburg) 1975.11.22.



the ANC in the same year, the SACP and its communist supporters in the ANC had managed to successfully forestall whatever plans there were to set up an alternative ANC movement inside South Africa. The SACP was probably also responsible for the assassination of Tennyson Makiwane, who was one of the original eight members of the nationalist faction, also known as the "Gang of 8", who were expelled from the ANC in 1975. Makiwane returned to the Transkei in 1979 to join its Foreign Affairs Department but was killed by unknown assailants in 1980.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

3. THE THIRD PHASE, THE PERIOD 1976 - 1984

This phase began with the Soweto riots in June 1976 and ended more or less with the renewed outbreak of the unrest at the end of 1984. It is a significant period in that it witnessed a number of major developments both inside and outside South Africa that enabled the ANC-SACP alliance to begin rebuilding its shattered underground structures inside South Africa and restart the armed struggle. The first major factor that helped to facilitate this development was the granting of independence to the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola in 1975. Although the history of this development belongs largely to the exile-politics of the ANC, the implications for the ANC and the armed struggle of two Marxist governments so close to South Africa were of integral importance to the development of the armed struggle in South Africa after 1975. With the support of the pro-marxist FRELIMO government in Mozambique and the MPLA government in Angola, the ANC was, for the first time since the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, in a position to set up forward bases just across the borders of South Africa. With the aid of these bases the ANC was able to channel Blacks fleeing from South Africa after 1976 into the ranks of Umkhonto for guerrilla training and their redeployment inside the country to commit acts of sabotage or to facilitate the recruitment and training of new cadres.

167. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1977 - 1978, p. B904. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980, pp. 62 - 63; and T. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence 1976 - 1981, (Reality 14 (2), March 1982, p. 8).



The second development that aided the revival of the armed struggle inside South Africa after 1975, was the Soweto riots which began on 16 June 1976 and continued spasmodically until the beginning of the 1980's. Unrest then briefly died down, only to return more violently and more wide-spread at the end of 1984.

Although the ANC and Umkhonto had little to do with the outbreak of the Soweto riots in June 1976, it was quick to capitalise on the rapidly developing unrest situation which followed the events of 16 June.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Presented with a growing revolutionary situation inside the country it was in the interest of the ANC and the SACP to keep the unrest alive for as long as possible. Due to the fact that the Soweto riots were largely a student inspired revolt with only limited roots in either the Black urban community or the rapidly developing workers class, the ANC could initially do very little to influence events. Again events developed to the ANC's advantage when the government banned the major BCM organisations in 1977. The ANC was quick to step into the void thus created and gradually regained its former position as primary actor in internal Black politics. A third positive development for the ANC in general, and specifically for Umkhonto, was the mass exodus of Blacks following the banning of the BCM. It immediately provided the ANC and Umkhonto with a fresh intake of new recruits. Although no accurate figures are available for the numbers of Blacks who had left South Africa after June 1976, it has been conservatively estimated that by the end of 1979, anything between 5 000 and 6 000 people could have fled the country.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

Despite the ideological differences between the BCM and the ANC-SACP alliance, the bulk of the people who had fled South Africa after June 1976 appeared to have joined the ranks of Umkhonto rather than the PAC. If this was indeed the case then it places a serious question mark over the level of influence that the philosophy of Black

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168. Kane-Berman, Soweto, p. 228. See also Barrell, MK, pp. 32 -33; Mell, South Africa belongs to us, pp. 185 - 194; Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 49, and Sechaba, January 1978, p. 6.
169. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Security Legislation, R/P 90, 1981, p. 58.

Consciousness had on Blacks, particularly African youths in the 1970's. By mid-1978 it was estimated by the South African Security Police that approximately 4 000 refugees from South Africa had joined the ranks of Umkhonto and were in the process of undergoing military training in ANC-SACP camps in Angola, Tanzania, Libya and elsewhere.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Once these recruits had completed their training, which in most cases was very brief, they were returned to South Africa via one of the many underground infiltration routes that served the armed struggle by the end of the 1970's. With Angola being the home of Umkhonto's major training camps by 1977, the route through Botswana was one of the more popular and the most frequently used by the ANC-SACP alliance by the end of the 1970's. Routes from Angola, Tanzania and Zambia via Mozambique and Swaziland were also frequently used by the ANC and Umkhonto during this period.

Although the South African security forces were relative successful in their counter-insurgency operation against the ANC and Umkhonto in the 1970's, they were however, as a result of the changed conditions in Southern Africa not able to put an entire stop to the subversive activities of the underground. As a result the period 1976 to the mid-1980's was seen by observers as perhaps one of the most sustained and violent phases in the history of the liberation struggle. At that time there was every indication that things could develop into a full-scale revolutionary war.⁽¹⁷¹⁾

A breakdown of the armed struggle and acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto between 1976 and the beginning of 1983, when the organisational structure of Umkhonto underwent some major changes, has revealed that between October 1976 and May 1981 some 112 acts of sabotage had been committed. In March 1978 for instance it was reported that one explosion a week had taken place since November

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170. Lodge, *The ANC Resurgence 1976 - 1981*, (Reality 14 (2), March 1982, p. 7). See also Barrell, MK, p. 33.
171. T. Lodge, *The African National Congress in South Africa, 1976-1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, pp. 153 - 180).

1977.⁽¹⁷²⁾ In an analysis conducted by Tom Lodge in 1983, it was found that between January 1977 (when only four acts of sabotage were committed by Umkhonto) and December 1982, more than 180 acts of sabotage had taken place inside South Africa that can be attributed to Umkhonto. A breakdown of these acts of sabotage and the targets involved revealed that nine different categories of targets were attacked by guerrillas (see Diagram E p. 207) and that the two types or categories of targets most frequently attacked during this period were individuals (37 incidents) and railway communication installations (35 incidents). Three further categories of targets that were frequently attacked by guerrillas during this period were industrial objects, which included power stations and oil refineries (27 incidents); shopping centres and places of public entertainment (15 incidents), and administrative buildings (15 incidents). In sharp contrast to the 1961 - 1965 phase of the armed struggle, police stations and military targets were more frequently attacked by Umkhonto's guerrillas. In the case of the first a total of 13 attacks were recorded while in the case of the latter, which included attacks on military personnel, 4 attacks were recorded. During the above period there were also 18 incidents where ANC documents were distributed via pamphlet-bombs as well as 21 incidents of shoot-outs between insurgents and members of the security forces.⁽¹⁷³⁾

An interesting aspect of the attacks between 1976 and the mid-1980's is that a distinction can be made between the type of attacks that took place before and after 1980. Before this date most of the attacks committed by Umkhonto were more or less similar to the type of attacks and targets singled out by the ANC during the first phase of the armed struggle. They mainly involved attacks on government buildings such as police stations, Bantu Administration Board buildings as well as on African policemen, former members of the ANC

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172. Lodge, *The ANC Resurgence 1976 - 1981*, (Reality 14 (2), March 1982, p. 7). See also The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg, 1978.03.10; Sechaba, January 1978, p. 6.
173. Lodge, *The African National Congress in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 154).



DIAGRAM E

BREAKDOWN OF TYPES OF TARGETS ATTACKED BY GUERRILLAS BETWEEN
JANUARY 1977 AND DECEMBER 1982⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

TYPE (CATEGORY) OF ATTACKS	NUMBER OF ATTACKS
1. Assassinations and attacks on individuals	37
2. Railway communication installations	35
3. Industrial targets including power stations and oil refineries	27
4. Skirmishes and shoot-outs between guerrillas and members of the security forces inside the country	21
5. The release of documents and pamphlets via pamphlet-bombs	18
6. Public buildings and places of public entertainment	15
7. Administrative buildings	15
8. Police stations	13
9. Military targets	14
TOTAL	185

174. Lodge, *The African National Congress in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, pp. 153 - 154).



and the SACP who had turned against the organisations and railway installations. Although there were also increased incidents of contact between guerrillas and the security forces inside the country, this really only became a prominent feature of the armed struggle after 1980. Events such as the Goch Street shoot-out between Umkhonto guerrillas and members of the police in June 1977 was thus more the exception than the rule before 1980. According to Lodge the latter incident which left two people dead was largely the result of circumstances forced on the guerrillas rather than a change in policy or a pre-planned operation by the ANC and Umkhonto. From the nature and low frequency of attacks during the latter half of the 1970's as well as the type of targets selected by the guerrillas the impression is that the period 1976 to the beginning of the 1980's was largely one of armed propaganda and the attempted establishment of a sizable underground presence inside South Africa. An essential part of this phase was the establishment of arms caches and the rebuilding of the underground's internal structures destroyed in the early 1960's.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ According to Howard Barrell this was no easy task as the police were uncovering underground cells and arresting key underground members of the ANC-SACP alliance almost as fast as the ANC was able to establish them. As a result of the general unrest brought about by the Soweto unrest and the political activities of radical Black youths there was some potential to build an internal armed capacity around political structures. But the re-arrest of Joe Gqabi, Harry Gwala and Martin Ramokgadi who had been actively involved in the rebuilding of ANC underground command units in Natal and the Transvaal following their release from prison during the first half of the 1970's, seriously weakened Umkhonto's organisational base, especially when they needed it the most.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

As a result of these circumstances Umkhonto guerrillas who entered the country during the latter part of the 1970's found it difficult

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175. Lodge, *The African National Congress in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 154); Barrell, MK, p. 36; Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1976 - 1977, p. B 814, and Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1977, p. 170.
176. Barrell, MK, pp. 29, 34 - 35.



if not often impossible to link-up with an organised ANC political presence. This was made even more difficult by the fact that they were often instructed not to establish contact with any local groupings out of fear that they might betray them. Moreover, writes Barrell,

MK combatants found themselves under continued pressure to mount 'potboiling' attacks - designed to maintain the political temperature or, later, to reinforce particular political campaigns - very often before they had sufficient time to situate themselves reasonably securely inside the country.

According to Barrell, such pressures were to harm Umkhonto's attempts to build an enduring presence both in the immediate post-1976 period as well as later. The result was that combatants' survival rates and tours of duty inside the country were short-lived.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

Initially, argued Barrell, returning combatants were sent both into urban and rural areas which suggest that the ANC was remaining with its old policy in which the rural areas were preferable because, among other reasons, guerrillas could be seen to be challenging the State for control over actual territory. But the Soweto unrest and the scale of it soon convinced the ANC-SACP alliance of the potential of armed combat and sabotage in the urban areas. From 1976 onwards the urban areas of South Africa, in particular its Black townships, provided suitable conditions for urban guerrilla warfare and insurrection. According to Barrell, urban combatants, Umkhonto believed, should aim to turn the Black townships into no-go areas for government security forces, especially because the government relied on these townships for industrial labour.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

As a result of the changing conditions inside South Africa favouring urban guerrilla warfare after 1976, Umkhonto's High Command gave increasing priority to the development of what it termed "auxiliary" units. These units would consist of recruits that were given quick military training in the forward areas before being returned to South

177. Barrell, MK, p. 35.

178. Barrell, MK, p. 35.



Africa. These guerrillas were instructed to direct attacks against the ruling class, its property and personnel. Instructions were also given that attacks should as far as possible avoid endangering the lives of civilians. However, attacks on military and semi-military installations and personnel such as the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the South African police were excluded from this. In addition, where possible, attacks should be linked to political issues and popular struggles. In other words, attacks should be planned to co-incide with local unrest situations and mass demonstration. A good example of this policy was for instance the attack on the Soekmeaar police station in the north-eastern Transvaal in 1980. According to Lodge, the latter attack was designed to co-incide and identified the armed struggle with the resistance of the local Batlokwa people in their fight against forced removals and enforced settlement.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

By the beginning of the 1980's conditions both inside and outside South Africa had become even more favourable for the ANC and Umkhonto to step up its armed activities. Although the unrest situation inside the country had markedly declined by the end of the 1970's as a result of increased police action and the various measures taken by the government, the banning of the BCM and its affiliated organisations, and the arrest and imprisonment of their leaders after 1977 had effectively helped the ANC and Umkhonto to establish a noticeable presence inside the country by the beginning of 1981.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Outside South Africa this development was also aided by the granting of independence to Zimbabwe in April 1980. The immediate implication of this was that while it provided Umkhonto with an additional theatre of operations it also added hundreds of kilometers of additional border for the South African security forces to control.

As a result of these more favourable conditions, Umkhonto was able to step up its armed campaign from the end of 1980. According to the

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179. Lodge, *The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981*, (Reality 14(2), March 1982, p. 7). See also Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 191; Dawn Souvenir Issue, p. 49; Sechaba, January 1981, pp. 2 - 13.
180. Barrell, MK, pp. 30 - 42.



Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg, between July 1979 and June 1980 only 17 acts of sabotage were committed by Umkhonto guerrillas whereas between January and October 1981 something like 40 acts of sabotage had been committed.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Unlike the earlier phase of the armed struggle, the phase after 1980 witnessed increasingly the use of sophisticated weapons and explosive devices as well as more daring attacks on a variety of major industrial targets such as oil refineries and nuclear power stations. The damage caused by these new waves of attacks was far more extensive than that caused during the 1961 - 1965 phase. For instance, in 1980 Umkhonto guerrillas launched an attack on the South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation's (SASOL) synthetic petrol and diesel refinery at Sasolburg and Secunda. The total damage caused by this attack alone amounted to R58 million. In May 1981 several million rands worth of damage was also caused when two Eastern Transvaal power stations were damaged by Umkhonto guerrillas using limpet mines.⁽¹⁸²⁾ Perhaps the most daring attack by Umkhonto guerrillas was that launched on the Voortrekkerhoogte military base near Pretoria in August 1981. Although no serious damage was caused by the latter, the attack, like those referred to above was marked by the use of sophisticated weapons such as the Soviet-made RPG-7 and DKZ-B 122 mm rocket attack systems. The attack on Voortrekkerhoogte was apparently done in retaliation for the assassination - allegedly by agents of the South African government - of the Umkhonto leader Joe Gqabi in Harare in July of that year.⁽¹⁸³⁾

These attacks in 1980 and 1981 were followed by equally daring and sometimes highly successful attacks between 1982 and 1984. Examples

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181. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1981, p. 78. See also Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 191 - 192.
 182. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1980 and 1981, pp. 279 - 290 and 78. See also Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 191 - 192; African National Congress (SA) in Combat, January 1980 - August 1981, September 1981, pp. 36 - 48.
 183. M. Morris and W. Steenkamp, Special Report. The S.A. National Congress Rocket Attack on Voortrekkerhoogte, 1981, pp. 3 - 4; African National Congress (SA) Condemns the Assassination of Comrade Joe Gqabi, 1981, single page.



of the latter were the attacks on a oil storage tank at Paulpietersburg causing damage of "hundreds of thousands of rands", and that on the Koeberg nuclear power station in December 1982.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ The latter attack which was more daring than economically damaging, was said to have been in retaliation to "salute" the raid by the South African Defence force on Maseru earlier in the month, and to show that the ANC was operating inside South Africa rather than from neighbouring countries.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ According to figures quoted by the Institute of Race Relations in its annual survey for 1982, there were at least 26 Umkhonto attacks between December 1981 and November 1982. These excluded the attack on the Koeberg power station mentioned above and the assassination of B.M. Hlapane at his Soweto home in December 1982. Figures quoted by the above institute also revealed that in contrast to only five Umkhonto guerrillas being killed by security forces in 1981, at least 17 were killed in shoot-outs with police in 1982. It was also claimed that half of the sabotage attacks and shoot-outs with the police and other security personnel took place in the Eastern Transvaal and Natal which were two of the main routes used by guerrillas to enter and leave the country. Although no exact figures are available, total damage caused by Umkhonto's sabotage activities in 1982 was estimated to amount to "millions of rands".⁽¹⁸⁶⁾

The periods 1983 and 1984 (see DIAGRAM F p. 213) saw a slight increase in the number of acts of sabotage committed by insurgents. Although the ANC and Umkhonto accepted responsibility for most of these acts of sabotage not all were committed by the latter organisations. In 1983 between 55 and 56 acts of sabotage were committed. This was 17 more than for the period 1982. The period 1984 however saw a slight decline in the number of attacks committed with only 44 being recorded for that year. The next year, 1985, which represents the start of the fourth and last phase in the armed struggle saw a sharp increase in the number of armed attacks

184. Sechaba, February 1983, p. 20; Sechaba, July 1983, pp. 3 - 8, 14 - 15.

185. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1982, pp. 230 - 231.

186. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1982, p. 230.



DIAGRAM F

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE COMMITTED BETWEEN 1976 AND 1985⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ (Although Umkhonto was not responsible for all the attacks listed below it committed most of them.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF ATTACKS
1976	4
1977	23
1978	30
1979	12 - 13
1980	19
1981	55
1982	39
1983	55 - 56
1984	44
1985	136
TOTAL	417 - 419

committed by insurgents, namely 136.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ The total number of armed attacks for the entire third phase of the armed struggle, ie. 1976 to 1985 was estimated at 419 which was slightly more than the figure of 398 supplied by the Minister of Law and Order.

187. The above information has been obtained from Lodge, State of exile: the African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 4; M. Hough, Involvement in Indiscriminate Terror, (SA Forum, Position Paper 7 (9/10), 1984, p. 55; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 567.

188. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 567; T. Lodge, State of exile: the African National Congress of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 4).



L. le Grange, in February 1986. According to the Minister, in the same period a total of 85 people had been killed by insurgents while 79 guerrillas had lost their lives and a further 201 had been captured. (189)

Some of the more noticable attacks launched by Umkhonto guerrillas during 1983 and 1984 were as follows: On 20 May 1983 a sophisticated car bomb reminiscent of similar acts of terror committed by terrorist groups in Europe and the Middle East, exploded in a busy street in Pretoria outside the South African Air Force (SAAF) headquarters and opposite a building which housed military intelligence personnel. The explosion, which stunned most South Africans left 19 people dead and some 217 injured. Eight of the dead were African while 11 were White of whom four were military personnel. Total damage was estimated at R4 million. At the time it was the largest act of sabotage committed by Umkhonto and one which caused the most casualties. After the attack the government warned that it would not hesitate to launch pre-emptive strikes against ANC and Umkhonto targets in neighbouring territories in retaliation. (190)

The Pretoria car-bomb explosion was followed by two further car-bomb explosions in 1983. The first was at a factory in Bloemfontein and came only a few days after the Pretoria explosion. On 12 July of the same year five people were killed when a second car bomb exploded in the industrial area of Jacobs in Durban. Two truck-loads of soldiers narrowly escaped injury when the bomb exploded only seconds after they had passed and shortly before the rush hour traffic started. Prior to this attack seven people died in an Umkhonto attack in which rockets were used on a Durban oil refinery. Three of those killed were civilians who burned to death after a paint store ignited as a result of the attack. (191)

189. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1985, p. 541.

190. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 570. See also S. Riley, South Africa. A deadly new phase of warfare, (Maclean's, June, 1983, p. 29).

191. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 570; D.A.S. Herbst, Political Climate in Southern Africa Corners ANC, (SA Forum, Position Paper 7 (9/10), 1984, p. 2).



In December of the same year there were at least a further six acts of sabotage as well as two attempted attacks. In Bloemfontein for instance a locomotive and two trucks were derailed by a powerful explosion presumably caused by a limpet mine, while in Durban three limpet mines were exploded on the beachfront near the SADF's Natal command headquarters. In the latter attack little damage was caused, however.

The spate of attacks continued in 1984 with 32 of the approximately 44 acts of sabotage committed during that year having taken place after the signing of the Nkomati Accord on 16 March of that year. According to Lodge most of the guerrilla activity in 1984 took place between April and the end of August and was located primarily in Durban where 12 attacks were recorded, and in Johannesburg where 12 attacks were recorded. Between September and the close of 1984 however only nine acts of sabotage were recorded.⁽¹⁹²⁾ These latter attacks were mostly of a minor nature and did not cause any serious damage.

According to the South African police,⁽¹⁹³⁾ most of the attacks in 1984 were apparently the work of a group of 50 guerrillas that was sent into the country shortly after the signing of the Nkomati Accord, and that the decreasing acts of insurgency towards the end of that year was the direct result of the stipulations of the Nkomati Accord coming into operation.

Although the attacks committed between 1976 and 1984 were not all as daring as those directed for instance against Voortrekkerhoogte in 1981 or against Koeberg in 1982 or as devastating as the car-bomb explosion in Pretoria in May 1983, they nonetheless had enormous propaganda value for the ANC and the SACP. Africans were reported to be proud of these Umkhonto attacks. "People are jubilant", one Black told a reporter. Others too felt "It will make the boers realise

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192. T. Lodge, *Mayilome! - Let Us Go To War!:* From Nkomati to Kabwe, The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, 1985, p. 3).
193. Police sources as quoted in The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1984.12.15.

that these boys (Umkhonto guerrillas) mean business too and have the guts to fight".⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ Oliver Tambo is reported to have said after the Pretoria bombing of May 1983, that "Never again, never again, are our people going to be doing all the bleeding, never again".⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ According to Lodge Tambo also announced in August 1981, that the ANC would in future attack "officials of apartheid" and that "moreover there might arise combat situations in which civilians could lose their lives".⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ The attack on the SAAF Headquarters in Pretoria in 1983 was a clear example of this change in policy.

In addition to the acts of sabotage and armed violence committed by Umkhonto since 1976, the ANC's influence on popular political perceptions inside the country had also been consolidated and strengthened by the emergence of open political discussion within the African community.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

A major contributing factor to this latter development had been the local press, which was instrumental in the promotion of the "Release Mandela Campaign" in 1980 and the popularisation of the Freedom Charter, which was adopted by a number of new organisations such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) formed in 1979, and the United Democratic Front (UDF) which was formed in August 1983.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ The creation of the UDF was a direct reaction to the government's new constitutional proposals which called for a tri-cameral parliament of Whites, Coloureds and Indians, but which

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194. E. Harsch, ANC Challenges Apartheid Regime, (Intercontinental Press, 1983.07.25, p. 418). See also Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, pp. 191 - 192.
195. Harsch, ANC Challenges Apartheid Regime, (Intercontinental Press, 1983.07.25, p. 418).
196. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981, (Reality 14 (2), March 1982, p. 7). For similar statements by Tambo in 1981 and 1982 see: "Will you fight for apartheid", two page document released by the ANC in 1982, and "Appeal of the African National Congress on the 70th Anniversary of its foundation", three page letter released by the ANC in Lusaka in 1981.
197. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945, p. 341.
198. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 192. See also South Africa: The UDF, (Africa Confidential 28 (2) January-February 1987, pp. 4 - 6); Sechaba, October 1983, p. 1; Sechaba, October 1984, pp. 2 - 10.



excluded Africans. With the formation of the UDF the ANC's armed struggle and propaganda campaign entered an entirely new era inside South Africa. Composed of more than 700 affiliated organisations and associations opposed to apartheid, and with aims and objectives that only differed from that of the ANC and the SACP on the use of violence, the UDF became, for all intents and purposes, the internal wing of the ANC, despite repeated denials that this was the case. In short the UDF was doing inside South Africa what the ANC could not do, due to its insistence on the necessity for armed struggle. In fact, Thabo Mbeki, a senior member of the ANC's NEC made it clear in 1983, following the Pretoria car-bomb explosion, that while people working in student organisations and trade unions had not been trained for guerrilla warfare, they nevertheless actively promoted the cause of the ANC and the armed struggle inside South Africa by talking to fellow workers about it, and by organising for it. This, he pointed out, was more important than a bomb going off. (199)

A further significant development in the armed struggle during these years was the increasingly important role played by women. According to an article that appeared in the Natal Mercury on 19 February 1981, "More and more Black women are being recruited and trained to back urban terrorists". They were used to ferry weapons, ammunition and propaganda material into the country - often concealed under their clothes to give the appearance of pregnancy. Like men, these women were increasingly being trained for combat situations and sabotage. (200)

With the shift towards the mass politicisation of the Black masses following the formation of the UDF in 1983, recruitment for the ANC and Umkhonto was not only made substantially easier, but many recruits were increasingly being trained inside South Africa.

199. Harsch, ANC Challenges Apartheid Regime, (Intercontinental Press, 1983.07.25, p. 419). For a more comprehensive view of the role of the UDF in the liberation struggle see: Sechaba, October, 1984, pp. 2 - 10.

200. The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1981.02.19.



Although the formation of the UDF in 1983 provided the ANC and Umkhonto with an important propaganda and organisational base inside South Africa, Umkhonto had to wait for the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985 to gain broad access to the labour class.⁽²⁰¹⁾

The period following the Soweto riots also witnessed a substantial rise in Black support for the ANC and its armed struggle. A survey conducted in 1981 by the Johannesburg-based newspaper, The Star, found that to Blacks the ANC was the most popular organisation in the country, and that forty per cent of those taking part in the survey indicated that they would vote for the organisation in a democratic election. Nelson Mandela, who had been in prison since 1962, emerged in the same survey as the most popular Black leader with 76 per cent of those surveyed indicating that they would vote for him.⁽²⁰²⁾

3.1 Government Reaction

Faced with hostile neighbours that were sympathetic to the ANC and Umkhonto and who were willing to provide them with bases, as well as a rapidly escalating unrest situation inside the country after 1976, the South African government devised a series of counter-measures to meet the new onslaught against it. These measures were collectively referred to as its "national" or "total strategy". In terms of this new strategy the government under the leadership of Prime Minister P.W. Botha and the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, called for the complete integration of the military and the political sectors of the State to meet the ANC-SACP's diplomatic, political, economic and military onslaught against it. In short, this meant that in future the defence of South Africa would no longer be the sole responsibility of the Department of Defence but the combined responsibility of the government and all its relevant departments. As such the role of the South African Defence Force was redefined to an 'executive body' which would be responsible for the achievement of certain national goals, as directed by the government.

201. South Africa: Trade Unions, (Africa Confidential 28 (5), 1987.03.4, pp. 5 - 6).

202. The Star (Johannesburg), 1981.09.23.



The outcome of this new approach was a systematic militarisation of government policies and some of its key departments. The main vehicle of the government's total strategy was the State Security Council (SSC), set up in 1972, and the National Security Management System (NSMS). The latter organ consisted of a hierarchy of inter-connecting regional, sub- and mini-joint management centres staffed by both military and civilian personnel, but with the latter being to a large degree subject to the will of the former. The State Security Council, which was given a powerful position in the co-ordination of government policy from 1978 onwards, met fortnightly under the chairmanship of the head of the government and allowed for the representation of a whole range of important ministries, ranging from Defence and Foreign Affairs to Law and Order, and Trade and Industry. It also included representatives from the various security and intelligence agencies in the country such as the National Intelligence Service (NIS), the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) as well as the South African police's special intelligence department. (203)

With the NSMS firmly in place by the end of 1979 and with the information it obtained from the various security agencies, the government between 1980 and 1985 launched a series of military and diplomatic initiatives against the ANC and Umkhonto in neighbouring territories. In view of the escalation in ANC-Umkonto attacks towards the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980, the South African government, having warned the ANC and neighbouring territories that it would not hesitate to take military action against them, sent the SADF on a pre-dawn commando raid against ANC and Umkhonto installa-

203. For a more detailed discussion of the government's Total Strategy see: South Africa: A Total Strategy, (Africa Confidential 27 (24), 1986.11.26, pp. 1 - 4); S.M. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 159 - 202; P. Frankel, Race and Counter-Revolution: South Africa's Total Strategy, (Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics xviii (3) November 1980, pp. 272 - 289); C. Maritz, Pretoria's Reaction to the Role of Moscow and Peking in Southern Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 25 (2) 1987, pp. 332 - 333); J. Selfe, The Total Onslaught and the Total Strategy, (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1987).



tions and buildings in Matola, Mozambique on 30 January 1981.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ In December 1982, the SADF again launched a strike against ANC bases in a neighbouring territory, this time on the homes of ANC representatives in Lesotho. At the end of May 1983, shortly after the car-bomb blast in Pretoria, the SADF again attacked ANC-Umkhonto bases in Mozambique; this time in the heart of Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. These attacks were followed by further SADF strikes into neighbouring territories in 1985 and 1986. Buildings in Gaborone, alleged to have housed ANC and Umkhonto members and which were used for the planning of raids on South Africa, were attacked and destroyed in June 1985. This was followed by a commando-type raid on Maseru in Lesotho in December of the same year. On 14 May 1986, it launched a series of similar attacks on alleged ANC bases in the three neighbouring territories of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. This was the first time that the SADF had attacked ANC facilities in Zambia and Zimbabwe.⁽²⁰⁵⁾

The attacks created some serious problems for the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. Not only was the organisation losing valuable manpower (according to statistics compiled by Lodge in 1983 the liberation movement lost more than 100 people since 1977 as a result of police action inside South Africa, and SADF attacks on ANC bases and personnel outside the country,⁽²⁰⁶⁾ but it was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain its operations from the "frontline" territories. As a result of these developments and the South African government's diplomatic initiatives which led to the signing of a bilateral agreement with Swaziland in 1982 and with Mozambique at Nkomati in March 1984, the ANC-SACP alliance was forced to seriously rethink its position in South Africa. Lodge, who at the end of 1979 had predicted that the armed struggle had all the potential of developing into a full-scale revolutionary guerrilla war now had to

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204. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1981, pp. 457 - 458.
205. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1986, pp. 813 - 815. For the reaction of the ANC to the SADF raid on ANC (Umkhonto) facilities and offices in Maseru, Lesotho see Sechaba, February 1983, pp. 1 - 5, 20 - 23.
206. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1983, p. 45; Sechaba, February 1983, pp. 1 - 5, 20 - 23.



admit that as a result of the above developments the ANC and Umkhonto had suffered a severe setback with regard to the armed struggle. Consequently it had yet to advance the armed struggle in South Africa from a war of "armed propaganda" to a revolutionary people's war. (207)

The South African government's policy of total strategy was clearly having the desired effect. It left the ANC with two basic choices. It could either remain in the neighbouring states of Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland and run the risk of further SADF attacks and arrests by the local authorities, or it could withdraw from these regions and work out a new strategy to facilitate the rebuilding of its underground organisation inside South Africa. As it turned out, it chose the latter course. It began to withdraw its bases and personnel from Mozambique and Swaziland in 1983. At the same time it abolished the old 1969 Revolutionary Council and replaced it with a more sophisticated and more elaborate clandestine organisational structure, that could link the political functions of the ANC and the military activities of Umkhonto more effectively. The new structure, devised by Joe Slovo and others in the SACP, provided for a hierarchy of organs consisting of a Political Military Council (PMC) at the top of the structure, followed by clandestine Regional Political Military Councils (RPMC) in the neighbouring territories, and Provincial Political Military Councils (PPMC) inside South Africa based on the four provinces and their various regions. Below this the ANC and Umkhonto operated through area or alternative structures such as people's courts, student committees and boycott committees. These latter divisions of organisation were followed by zone or branch committees and street or shaft committees at the grass roots level. In addition to these committees, the structure also provided for Area Military Political Commands (AMPC). (See Diagrams "I" and "J" pp. 424 - 425.) This

207. Lodge, *Mayilome! - Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe*, (The South African Review Three, 1985, pp. 1 - 8). See also Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, 1983, pp. 44 - 47; and Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations*, 1984, pp. 2 - 3.

latter division operated directly under the authority of the PPMC. (208)

4. THE FOURTH PHASE. THE PERIOD 1984/5 - 1988

This phase, which stretched from the escalation in unrest in 1984/85 to the signing of the New York Accord on 22 December 1988, witnessed the continuation of the government's political, diplomatic, and counter-insurgency operations against the ANC and Umkhonto and increasing attempts by the latter organisations to extend their underground structures inside South Africa. The period also witnessed the effects of the Angolan mutiny among Umkhonto cadres on the ANC and the armed struggle; increased contact between groups of people and individuals from South Africa and the ANC's exile leadership; as well as renewed attempts by the ANC and Umkhonto to accelerate the armed struggle amidst growing indications that it was unable to do so as a result of problems such as logistics, discipline, strategy and the imposition of the 1985/86 states of emergency. The period further saw a growing division between those in the ANC-SACP alliance who showed an increasing willingness to seek a political solution to apartheid in South Africa, and those who insisted on a transfer of power via military means. This latter development, although denied by the liberation movement, was closely associated with the political and strategic changes that had been taking place in the Soviet Union since Mikhail Gorbachev took power in 1985. Under the influence of Gorbachev's policies of "glasnost" and "perestroika" which called for greater "openness" and the restructuring of the Soviet Union's socio-economic and political system, Moscow came to adopt a more moderate stance on regional conflict such as that waged by the ANC-SACP alliance in South Africa. In sharp contrast to the past, when military action appeared to have been the only means of settling a regional problem, the period after 1985 witnessed a gradual change in this attitude; a development that had a definite effect on ANC and SACP policy by the end of the decade.

208. M. Morris, African National Congress of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, 1988/1989, Organogram, (single page). See also Barrell, MK, pp. 49 - 60.



4.1 The unrest of 1984/85, and the National State of Emergency

Perhaps the most important development in South Africa in the mid-1980's that had a significant effect on the position and future strategy of the ANC and Umkhonto, was the wave of political unrest that hit the country from September 1984 and which lasted intermittently until 1988. The unrest, which had its origins in the growing dissatisfaction that manifested itself in the country's Black townships over issues ranging from opposition to apartheid and government policies in general, to rent increases and education, rapidly came to a head after the introduction of the government's new tricameral parliamentary system in September 1984. On the day that P.W. Botha was sworn in as the country's first Executive President under the new constitution, violence broke out in the Transvaal Black townships of Sharpeville, Bophelong, Biopatong, Sebokeng and Evaton, as their inhabitants registered their opposition to a constitution that ignored their political aspirations yet lumped them with a system of unpopular local authorities and equally unpopular rent increases.⁽²⁰⁹⁾

From the Vaal Triangle the unrest and mood of dissatisfaction and defiance, fanned on by organisations such as the newly established UDF, quickly spread to the rest of the country. As the unrest developed and intensified the government was forced to announce a partial state of emergency (affecting 36 magisterial districts) in July 1985. This was followed by a national state of emergency a year later on 12 June 1986. Faced with what was generally described as a revolutionary situation, the government in terms of the two states of emergency moved against organisations and leaders throughout the country, arresting and detaining thousands. By June 1987, a year after the national emergency was introduced, an estimated 26 000 or more people of all races had been detained.⁽²¹⁰⁾ Some sources placed the figure closer to 30 000.⁽²¹¹⁾

209. F. Meer (ed), Resistance in the Townships, pp. 3 - 5.

210. D. Webster, Repression and the State of Emergency, (The South African Review Four, pp. 141 - 143).

211. C. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, p. xii.



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As was the case in 1976, the ANC and Umkhonto were caught by surprise by the 1984/85 unrest, particularly by its rapid development. Yet, as in the case of the Soweto uprising, the ANC was quick to capitalise on the unrest and present it to the world as an ANC-inspired event. More important, however, was the fact that the exodus of a new wave of young Africans from the country between 1984 and 1986, provided the ANC and Umkhonto in particular with a much needed influx of new recruits. Some recruits were, as was the case in the post-1976 period, sent to the ANC's education complex at Mazimbu in Tanzania. The bulk of them were however sent to Umkhonto's training camps in Angola. Although the influx of new recruits was a boon to the ANC and Umkhonto, it also brought a whole range of new problems for the organisation and its ageing leadership. Much younger and more radical than the youths of 1976, the new recruits soon came to criticise the ANC and Umkhonto for its slow progress with the armed struggle in South Africa. But the influx of new recruits also brought a second more serious problem with them, namely South African police agents. General Johan Coetzee, the Commissioner of the South African police, said in 1983 that one of the problems facing the ANC and Umkhonto was that they could not absorb large numbers of people from South Africa without including security agents, a situation that was highlighted by the discovery of a well-developed South African police spy-ring in the ANC and Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in 1981. As a result of these and other problems that had been steadily forced on the external leadership since the beginning of the 1980's, but which became particularly critical by the mid-1980's following the signing of the Nkomati Accord and the SADF's continued raids against ANC and Umkhonto facilities in neighbouring states, the Mission in Exile was eventually compelled to call a major National Consultative Conference in June 1985, the first since 1969.⁽²¹²⁾

This conference was significant for the future of the armed struggle in South Africa. Faced with the South African government's increasingly successful counter-insurgency operations against it and

212. Lodge, Mayilome! - Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, (The South African Review Three, 1985, pp. 1 - 2).



the spontaneous nature of the 1984/85 unrest, the ANC and SACP was forced to have a serious rethink on strategy and the future role of Umkhonto in the armed struggle in South Africa. In view of this the Conference adopted a number of resolutions which among others, called for an intensification of the armed struggle in South Africa; attacks on "soft" or civilian targets; increased political activities among the masses, particularly the workers; greater recognition of the labour movement and its role in the armed struggle; the recruitment of Umkhonto cadres from it; and the urgent need to build up the ANC and Umkhonto's underground political and military structure inside South Africa to serve as the basis for "a people's war".

The Conference also called for the consolidation and extension of the organisational changes introduced in 1983/4 to both urban and rural areas, including the homelands, as well as the election of a War Council to give more effective direction to the struggle.⁽²¹³⁾

Although numerous other resolutions were also adopted by the Kabwe conference dealing with a broad spectrum of issues such as cadre policy, discipline and security in the organisation, the two most significant with regard to the development of the armed struggle in South Africa after 1985, were the decisions to allow attacks on soft or civilian targets, and for the ANC and Umkhonto to expand their social and political base inside the country. The latter decision was particularly significant since it was the direct result of the 1984/85 uprising. The spontaneous nature of the unrest caused the ANC and the SACP to realise that their 1969 notions of what

213. ANC. National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work, Internal Commission Report, Commission on Strategy and Tactics, pp. 1 - 20. See also Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations which forms part of the same source, pp. 1 - 14; also ANC, Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the ANC, Zambia 16 - 23 June 1985, pp. 2 - 63; and Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, (The South African Review Three, 1985, pp. 1 - 2). See also "ANC Call to Extend the War into White Residential Areas", Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1985.10.07, (Summary of World Broadcasts. (SWB) 1985.10.12).



constituted a revolutionary situation and how it would eventually come about was out-dated. Up to the events of 1984/85, the ANC and the SACP firmly believed that revolution in South Africa would eventually come about through a protracted guerrilla war led by a vanguard party of committed partisans from outside the country. This party was to be the SACP in alliance with the ANC and Umkhonto, who was to lead the insurrection from outside the country. In terms of this thinking the ANC and the SACP rejected any form of popular uprising as a viable route to revolution and the transfer of power. (214)

But this notion was, however, radically changed by the unrest of 1984/85 and the South African government's diplomatic initiatives and military successes by 1986. In an article that appeared in the ANC's official mouthpiece, Sechaba, in 1987, Mzala (a pseudonym), made it clear that while "In 1969, the realistic military perspective was to wage only a protracted guerrilla struggle, ... The person who now speaks only of protracted guerrilla war is behind the times". (215)

Thus the emphasis after 1985 was on the political and military mobilisation of the masses inside South Africa and the intensification of the armed struggle, via the extension of the internal organisational structures of the ANC. In this Umkhonto was to play the key role. It was to lead the "mass combat units" that were being formed in the "mass insurrectionary zones" in the townships. (216)

Unfortunately for the ANC it soon discovered that the formulation of new strategies and their successful implementation represented two different sides of the same coin and that the declaration of 1987 as the "Year of Advance to People's Power" did not necessarily correspond with the reality of its armed struggle inside South Africa. This

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214. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War!: From Nkomati to Kabwe, (The South African Review Three, 1985, pp. 14 - 16); J. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 665 - 672).
215. Mzala, Towards People's War and Insurrection, (Sechaba, April 1987, p. 5).
216. O. Tambo, Attack, Advance, Give the Enemy no Quarter, (Sechaba, March 1986, p. 6).



meant that while Umkhonto was able to dramatically step up its acts of sabotage and destruction inside South Africa after 1985 (see DIAGRAM G below) the ANC remained largely unable to rebuild its underground structure inside South Africa to the extent where it could seriously threaten the security of the State or galvanise the Black population in the country to the point where it could unite them in a full-scale people's war.⁽²¹⁷⁾

DIAGRAM G

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE COMMITTED BETWEEN 1985 AND DECEMBER 1988⁽²¹⁸⁾

YEAR	NUMBER OF ATTACKS
1985	136
1986	230
1987	239 - 249
1988	281 - 322
1989	199
TOTAL	1 085 - 1 136

Although Umkhonto was the main organisation engaged in acts of sabotage during the period 1985 - 1989 not all the acts of sabotage committed can be contributed to its cadres. Other organisations such as the PAC also committed acts of sabotage during this period. In August 1990 the commanding officer (public relations) of the South African police, Major-General Herman Stadler said that between 1 January 1976 and 30 April 1990 a total of 1 412 (as compared to the figures of 419 and 1 136 mentioned in Diagrams F and G. Please note

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217. R. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle: The Revolutionary Army, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 1 - 22).
218. The statistics in DIAGRAM G were compiled from the following sources:
The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 26 January - 1 February 1989;
 Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, pp. xxxviii - xxxix;
 Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, pp. xxx - xxxi;
 T. Lodge, The ANC After the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review Four, 1987, p. 7).



the latter Diagram exclude figure for 1990) acts of terrorism had been committed in South Africa. Of these attacks 433 were directed against the South African police, 60 against the SADF, 36 against legal institutions, 244 against State institutions, 315 against economic targets, 336 against civilian targets and eight against unspecified targets. During this same period there were 240 fatalities while 1 350 people had been injured in these attacks. According to Stadler, the ANC had accepted responsibility for most of these acts of sabotage⁽²¹⁹⁾. The total cost of these attacks is not known.

There were a number of reasons as to why the ANC-SACP alliance despite the successes and increased acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto since 1976 could not advance the armed struggle in South Africa from a basic war of propaganda to a people's war by the end of 1988. In the first instance the government, despite its deteriorating political and economic position internationally, had nevertheless managed to maintain its position of power and authority in the country while at the same time met every new phase of the ANC's armed campaign and every new manoeuvre with sophisticated if not ruthless counter-measures. Among these measures were the already mentioned attacks launched by the SADF on ANC and Umkhonto targets in neighbouring countries between 1983 and 1986, the signing of anti-ANC pacts with neighbouring states such as Swaziland and Mozambique and the installation (albeit indirectly) of a pro-South African government in Lesotho in 1986.⁽²²⁰⁾ In addition to these measures the government was quick to ban any newly formed leftwing organisations or fronts and detain their leaders if it thought they contributed to the unrest situation in the country or might aid the ANC's armed campaign.⁽²²¹⁾ During the period 1985 to the end of 1988, the security forces were particularly successful in their counter-insurgency operations against the ANC and Umkhonto inside the

219. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, p. xlvii.

220. For the ANC's reaction to developments in Lesotho see "ANC attack South African Pressure on Lesotho", Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1986.01.16, (SWB, 1986.01.20); "The ANC and Lesotho", Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1986.02.10, (SWB, 1986.02.14).

221. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, p. xxxii.



country. The number of guerrillas captured or killed during this period was almost five times higher than the figure for the period June 1976 to the end of 1984. According to figures released by the security police in 1988 a total of 489 guerrillas belonging mostly to the ANC-SACP alliance had been captured or killed between July 1985 and June 1986. A further 419 insurgents were arrested or killed between January 1987 and June 1988.⁽²²²⁾ It was further reported in June 1989 that 487 guerrillas had been killed or captured between June 1987 and June 1989. The total number of guerrillas killed (excluding those captured) between 1984 and mid-1989 was estimated to be in the region of 163 as compared to the 64 killed and 185 captured during the entire period from October 1976 to December 1984.⁽²²³⁾

Although the above figures do not relate to attacks by Umkhonto guerrillas alone they nevertheless give a good indication of the level of success that the government had in its counter-insurgency operations in the 1980's. These successes led the authorities to claim in February 1988 that there were growing signs that Umkhonto was having difficulty in escalating the armed struggle and that the ANC was increasingly forced into the diplomatic field to show any progress in South Africa.⁽²²⁴⁾ This latter development was reflected in a number of developments, the most important among them being the growing contact between the ANC and groups and individuals from South Africa after June 1985; visible pressure from within the ranks of the ANC's leadership to consider a possible political settlement for South Africa should the armed struggle fail; the release of a statement in Lusaka in August 1987 containing five minimum conditions to be met by the South African government to create a climate for talks; growing support from international agencies and governments for a peaceful settlement in South Africa, and the release of a set of constitutional guidelines by the ANC in early 1988 to clarify the organisation's stance on the principles contained in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

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222. The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 1987.09.17, p.; Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly, 103 (4), 1988, p. 682).
223. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, pp. xxxviii - xxxix and 1988/1989, pp. xxx - xxxi.
224. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, pp. xxxix, 696 - 708.



Although Umkhonto, under the direction of military hardliners such as Chris Hani, Ronnie Kasrils and others managed to increase the number of sabotage attacks inside South Africa during 1988, particularly during the latter part of the year to co-incide with the municipal elections held in October, the decision by the military hardliners in Umkhonto and the ANC to take the armed struggle to the White areas in the country and to begin concentrating their attacks on soft or civilian targets was seen as the act of a desperate organisation. It was argued by Africa Confidential in its March 1988 issue that while the decision to attack civilian, particularly White civilian targets, would no doubt be popular with angry Black youths inside South Africa (and presumably also inside the ranks of Umkhonto), it would certainly alienate international support for the ANC as well as lose the organisation some of its liberal White support inside South Africa.⁽²²⁵⁾ With Sweden being the largest single financial supporter of the ANC the decision to attack White civilian targets undoubtably came as an embarrassment to it. According to a later edition of the same publication,⁽²²⁶⁾ sources close to the ANC-SACP alliance - but not official spokesmen - believed that Hani's decision to attack soft targets in South Africa after 1987 was brought on by a power struggle in the ANC and that it was Hani's aim not only to challenge the leadership of both the ANC and the SACP to bring a change in policy but also to stake a claim for the eventual presidency of the ANC. According to statistics compiled by Michael Morris (of Terrorism and Research Associates in London) on acts of sabotage committed between 15 June 1985 and 17 November 1988 involving public places and civilian targets, 125 such incidents took place during this period.⁽²²⁷⁾ Statistics compiled by other sources such as the Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria revealed that 70 per cent of all armed attacks in 1987 were directed at soft or civilian targets. Similarly, the Interna-

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225. South Africa: What next for the ANC, (Africa Confidential, 29 (5), 1988.03.4, p. 1).
226. South Africa: Hani's rise, (Africa Confidential, 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 1).
227. M. Morris, Bomb Incidents At Public Places, Terrorism and Research Associates, London, 1988/1989, single chart.



tional Freedom Foundation calculated that acts of indiscriminate insurgency - such as on civilians - had increased from 19 per cent in 1985 to 49 per cent in the first half of 1988. In June 1989 it was stated by the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, that while acts of insurgency by Umkhonto had decreased in 1989, attacks by the organisation on civilian targets had increased by some 200 per cent. (228)

Clearly, the government's counter-insurgency and diplomatic measures such as the signing of the New York Agreement (Accord) on 22 December 1988 were increasingly forcing the ANC-SACP alliance to take drastic measures to make its presence felt inside the country. In terms of the New York Accord the ANC-SACP alliance was forced to close down its bases and other facilities in Angola after 1988. These developments and those taking place in Central Europe, particularly in the Eastern Bloc countries were forcing changes on both the ANC-SACP alliance and the South African government by the middle of 1989 that no one could have foreseen. Both the ANC and the South African government found themselves increasingly being pushed towards a peaceful settlement and a political solution to South Africa's racial problems.

CONCLUSION

In the thirty odd years of armed struggle conducted by the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto we Sizwe since 1961 two periods or phases stand out above the rest. The first is the period 1961 to 1965 and the second is the period 1976 to the mid-1980's. The first period reflects the profile of an organisation that had just embarked on a campaign of sabotage and was still struggling to find its feet. The acts of sabotage committed during this period were mainly crude and ineffective. Admittedly, the aim of these early attacks, as the ANC has stated, were not designed to bring the government to a fall but to show dissatisfaction and to generate both local and international support for the cause of the ANC which the latter hoped could be

228. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, pp. xxx, 636 - 644.



brought to bear on the government to change its policies. The question, however, is whether the ANC and the SACP's sabotage campaign in the early 1960's was designed to bring about revolutionary or evolutionary change? While there can be little doubt that the shift towards armed violence and the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, especially the role that the SACP played, constituted a definite move towards a revolutionary strategy it is nevertheless doubtful whether the underground leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance were convinced in the early 1960's that their limited acts of sabotage - at least in the early stages - could bring the government to a fall. Indications are that they held out strong hopes that the White voters in the country might place sufficient pressure on the government to change its unpopular racial policies and grant greater political freedom to Blacks, particularly Africans in the country. They further hoped that should this take place and Blacks be granted full citizenship with Whites the ANC in association with the SACP would be in a position to set up a predominantly Black government based on a socialist democracy which in time could be replaced by a fully-fledged communist government. In this manner the aims of the ANC and the SACP were undoubtably revolutionary in the 1960's.

All this had become academic by 1965 as a result of the government's reaction to the sabotage campaign and the measures it took to destroy the underground. Having moved the centre of its operations outside South Africa after 1965, the ANC-SACP alliance began to campaign vigorously for international recognition and support for its armed struggle in South Africa. At the same time it also set into motion plans to rebuild its shattered underground structures inside South Africa to enable Umkhonto to resume the offensive and when necessary to develop the struggle into a full-scale people's war. Unfortunately for the ANC-SACP alliance conditions remained unfavourable for them to do so until the mid-1970's when with the granting of independence to Angola and Mozambique, and the growing unrest situation inside South Africa after 1976, Umkhonto was able to resume its activities inside the country. This latter development heralded the second major phase in the armed struggle. Being absent from the

country for more than ten years the first few years of the 1976-1985 period was spent setting up underground structures, bringing in arms, establishing underground routes and recruiting new members for Umkhonto. The few attacks that were conducted during the period 1976 to 1979 were largely done for political and propaganda reasons. Although the damage caused by these attacks was more substantial than that of the period 1961 to 1965, they were however limited in comparison to the damage caused by Umkhonto's guerrillas during the period 1980 to about 1985. By this stage the aims and objects of the armed struggle had become revolutionary, namely the violent destruction of white minority rule in South Africa through a guerrilla war and its immediate replacement with a multi-racial socialist (if not communist) democracy.

In pursuit of this aim the period 1976 to 1985 saw a steady increase in attacks by guerrillas of Umkhonto directed against a variety of targets similar to those attacked during the first phase of the armed struggle. One particular category of target that received more attention from guerrillas during the post 1976 period were members of the South African police and the Defence Force, and people who were suspected of being informers, or former ANC, SACP or Umkhonto members who had turned against the organisation. A good example of the latter was the assassination of Bartholomew Hlapane at his Soweto home in 1982. Hlapane was a key witness for the State in numerous trials involving ANC and SACP members during the 1960's.

Although the third period, 1985 - 1988 saw a dramatic increase in the acts of sabotage committed inside South Africa these attacks were not as spectacular as those committed by the organisation during the previous period nor were they as damaging. A particular feature of the armed struggle after 1985 was however the growing incidence of attacks directed against public places and civilian people. The reason for this new development, as we have indicated, may have been the result of a power struggle between "moderates" and "radicals" within the National Liberation Movement following the Kabwe Conference of June 1985. Whatever the case may have been there were forces at work by the mid-1980's that would eventually bring a change



in attitude both in the ANC-SACP alliance and the South African government by the latter part of the decade. These changes in attitude which were resisted by hardliners in the liberation movement as well as in the South African government had a momentum of their own that was hard to stop. Although the ANC continued with its sabotage campaign in the months immediately following the signing of the New York Accord, the expulsion of the ANC and Umkhonto from Angola and the policy changes that were taking place in Central and Eastern Europe were beginning to have their effect on the armed struggle. As a result, by the end of 1989 it was becoming increasingly clear that although the ANC was still able to mount acts of sabotage inside South Africa, it was unable to escalate its armed activities let alone bring about a people's war in South Africa that would involve mass insurrection. History had caught up with both the ANC and the South African government. Communism and its emphasis on the settlement of political disputes through revolutionary means was rapidly on the wane. In its place had come a new and growing desire for a peaceful (political) settlement of all regional and national disputes. With the ANC-SACP alliance being a major recipient of Soviet military and ideological aid Umkhonto and its leaders were forced by the beginning of the 1990's to take serious note of this new direction in Soviet political thinking.



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: Melli, 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 Umkhonto 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. Umkhonto 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⁾

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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

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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⁾

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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

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)

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 Front-line 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.



CHAPTER SIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UMKHONTO WE SIZWE AND THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE

Perhaps one of the most contentious aspects of the national liberation struggle in South Africa over the years, has been the relationship that has come to exist between the ANC and the SACP since the beginning of the 1940's but particularly between these two organisations and Umkhonto we Sizwe since 1961. Although a great deal has been written and said on the subject since the beginning of the armed struggle, the issue has remained largely unresolved, with those in opposition to the ANC accusing it of being under the control of the SACP and those sympathetic to the organisation's ideals denying these allegations. But why these diametrically opposed views on the subject and what have caused these differences? In the course of this chapter an attempt will be made to find an answer to these and other questions relating to the relationship between the SACP, the ANC and Umkhonto, since the start of the armed struggle in 1961.

In an article on the subject published in 1984, Andrew Prior⁽¹⁾ argued that in an attempt to answer some of the questions posed above, one must turn to the different views held by people and governments inside and outside South Africa on South African political movements in exile. Prior stated that while Western governments are largely apprehensive of any exile political movement in alliance with communism, Eastern Bloc countries are generally reassured when such movements ally themselves with communist parties.

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1. Prior, South African Exile Politics: A Case Study of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, p. 181).



Similarly, the South African government, he argues, has been using the presence of the Communist Party in South Africa, and that organisation's relationship with the ANC over the years as a device to generate internal support and international understanding for its policies and actions against Black political demands. As a result of these differences in approach academics and other observers have found themselves either in support of or in opposition to these points of view. The problem is further complicated by the fact that while some of the leaders of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto admit that they hold membership to all three organisations, others - especially those in the SACP - often deny their membership of either the ANC or Umkhonto. In view of this, it is therefore not entirely surprising that academics and politicians often make conflicting statements about the SACP's relationship to the ANC and Umkhonto.

The American scholar, Thomas Karis, for instance, argued that the ANC is "basically" an "African nationalist organisation" and definitely not a surrogate of the Soviet Union. He further pointed out that the ANC has functioned since the beginning as an omnibus national movement and has always embraced a wide range of ideological points of view. As a result it could - and did - form an alliance with the SACP without the danger of having to necessarily compromise on its integrity. In view of this, Karis stated that the communist and radical Whites who joined the ANC did so because the non-racialism of the ANC allowed them to do so. Moreover, the non-racial stress on Africans as workers also appealed to radical Whites. As a result, the issue of reconciling African nationalism and class struggle, which produced ideological tensions historically within the SACP had not seriously troubled the ANC, argued Karis. On the question of the interlocking membership between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto, Karis argued that while there are indeed "a few" interlocking memberships between the ANC and the SACP, the question as to whether or not an ANC member is also a clandestine member of the Communist Party or Umkhonto, "appears to be of no great interest to nationalist leaders who are occupied with immediate tasks."⁽²⁾

2. Karis, *Revolution in the Making: Black Politics in South Africa*, (Foreign Affairs 62, 1983, pp. 379, 382, 395-6.



A more or less similar view is held by Robin Hallet. He acknowledged the fact that the ANC and the SACP enjoyed intimate links with the Soviet Union, but dismissed the view that either the SACP or the ANC were pawns of Moscow, on the grounds that "a slender knowledge of the history of Black nationalism in South Africa shows this is a non-sensical notion".⁽³⁾

This favourable view of the relationship between the ANC and the SACP was also shared by Sheridan Johns. In a research paper published in 1973 on the possibility of guerrilla warfare in South Africa, Johns argued that while the SACP has always played an important role in the ANC and its activities, even before the Party was banned in 1950 its role and position in the ANC and the South African liberation movement, however, was largely similar to that occupied by the Portuguese Communist Party in its relationship to the MPLA in Angola. He went on to say that there was little evidence to prove that Communist parties - either in Angola or South Africa - have perceived for themselves per se an autonomous and different role within the National Liberation Movement.⁽⁴⁾

The nature of the relationship between the SACP, the ANC and Umkhonto has also been minimised by Tom Lodge in his 1983 study of Black political development in South Africa since 1945.⁽⁵⁾ According to Lodge, despite the strong and loyal support that the ANC gave to the SACP and the Soviet Union in, for instance, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 (and Afganistan in 1979), the ANC has not only avoided the dangers of local political entanglements but has been able to be selective and fairly principled in its choice of partners, alliances and donors. He argues:

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3. Quoted in Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, p. 1).
 4. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare. A South African Case Study, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 289).
 5. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 304-305.



Soviet support does not appear to have had a marked influence on the ANC's strategy which has on the whole been pragmatic and flexible.⁽⁶⁾

Similarly, according to Oliver Tambo, the ANC President-General since 1969, the SACP actively supports and fights for the realisation of the demands contained in the Freedom Charter and accepts the leadership of the ANC. As such the SACP cannot be but an ally of the ANC as would be any other organisation that adopts the same position.⁽⁷⁾

The SACP itself naturally supports such a favourable interpretation of its relationship to the ANC. In a speech to the Central Committee of the Party on 30 July 1986, Joe Slovo, the newly elected General-Secretary of the Party, reiterated much of what Tambo had said when he stated that:

Today the SACP is a vital part of the liberation forces headed by the African National Congress. The alliance aims to unite all sections and classes amongst the oppressed and other truly democratic forces for a revolution to destroy White domination. ... In this struggle the key force has always been and will always be the Black working class in alliance with the masses of the landless rural people. It is this class which finds its most staunch champion in our South African Communist Party.⁽⁸⁾

He went on to say that since its banning some 26 years before in 1960, the ANC had emerged not only as the undisputed vanguard of the liberation movement but as the only force which could bring stability to South Africa and provide the focus for a genuine people's government.

More significantly, in reaction to the South African government's claim that the ANC was dominated by the SACP, and that the majority

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6. Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, p. 305.
 7. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, pp. 181-182).
 8. J. Slovo, Editorial Notes: 65th Anniversary of the SACP, (The African Communist 106, Third Quarter 1986, pp. 5-6).



of the members of the ANC's National Executive Committee were registered members and senior leaders of the SACP, Slovo denied that this was the case and retaliated that the South African government was resorting to the "old imperialistic tactic" of divide and rule and that President P.W. Botha was trying to tempt "genuine" nationalists to break their links with the "Communists".⁽⁹⁾

A somewhat different view of the ANC-SACP relationship is however held by Prior.⁽¹⁰⁾ In an article published in 1984, Prior argued that the ANC, as the Senior Partner in the SACP-ANC alliance, had decided on a course of "pragmatic toleration"; that the SACP was far more dependent on the ANC than the latter was on the SACP and that the former would eventually either outmanoeuvre or dominate the SACP. He went on to argue that the importance of the SACP in the Alliance was likely to decline if the ANC was to be successful in obtaining increased diplomatic, financial and military support from the West, thus lessening its dependence on Eastern Bloc countries. But even so the benefits of a coalition with the SACP were many, argued Prior. Both organisations were committed to the "national democratic revolution" while for the SACP co-operation with the ANC meant access to the largest Black political constituency in the country, namely the African. For the ANC on the other hand, it meant the establishment of its bona fides among Eastern Block countries, especially the revolutionary skills of an experienced group of South Africans. Prior further pointed out that in view of the interlocking membership that existed between the ANC and the SACP, and the degree to which this was in favour of the SACP, any anti-communist move within the national liberation movement in the immediate future would necessarily be a traumatic event.⁽¹¹⁾

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9. Slovo, Editorial Notes: 65th Anniversary of the SACP, (The African Communist 106, Third Quarter 1986, p. 8).
 10. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, pp. 181-196). See also C. Maritz, Pretoria's Reaction to the Role of Moscow and Peking in Southern Africa, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 25 (2), 1987, p. 330).
 11. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, pp. 194-195).



A completely opposite view on the relationship between the ANC and the SACP, and the role of the latter in the former during the time-span covered in this thesis, was however held by the South African government and those who were generally not in agreement with the aims and objectives of the ANC or the SACP. As far as the government and these people were concerned, the ANC was little more than a front or a fief of the SACP. Chris Maritz wrote in 1987:

The official South African [government] view is that the ANC is not an independent party but rather a liberation movement that has been embraced in a common front by the "vanguard" SACP ... South Africa believes that Communists (by virtue of their numerical strength in the ANC's NEC) controls not only the Executive of the ANC, but the organisation itself.⁽¹²⁾

In an address to the conference of "Concerned Christians" in Pretoria in April 1979, the South African Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, in quoting from a 1977 ANC trial that took place in the Pretoria Supreme Court, stated that the ANC was little more than a front or a "tool" for the SACP to achieve its objectives. These objectives, he pointed out, were the subjugation of the Black masses in a nationalist revolution to the principles of Marxist-Leninism, in which the net effect of a successful revolution would be the replacement of the existing White dominated State in South Africa by a white dominated communist system of government.⁽¹³⁾

These interpretations of the relationship between the SACP and the ANC were shared by others sympathetic to the status quo in South Africa. In a report published in 1976 entitled "Soviet Strategy towards South Africa", the well-known political commentator and academic, Dr Jan du Plessis, remarked that with regard to the relationship between the ANC and the SACP, and the role of the Soviet Union in it, the latter had developed

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12. Maritz, Pretoria's Reaction to the Role of Moscow (The Journal of Modern African Studies 25 (2), 1987, p. 330).
 13. J. Kruger as quoted in ANC Front for SA Communist Party, (Encounter 4 (6), May 1979).



a double barrel strategy of attack towards South Africa in which the SACP will act as an outside controller of the situation, under the guidance of Moscow, but will rely upon its liberation front, the African National Congress, for the situation within South Africa.⁽¹⁴⁾

A more or less similar view of the relationship between the ANC and the SACP was held by the Commission of Inquiry (Rabie Commission) which was appointed by the South African government in the 1970's to examine the position of security legislation in South Africa. According to the report of the commission which was released in 1981, there was sufficient evidence in the statements and materials of the ANC, the SACP and the dissident movements that were expelled from the ANC-SACP alliance in 1975 and 1979/1980, to suggest that the SACP had a strong influence on the ANC and all its activities and that the ties between the two organisations were generally so close and interwoven that as far as their activities within South Africa were concerned, no clear distinction could be made between the two organisations.⁽¹⁵⁾

The views of the Rabie Commission were echoed by the South African Defence Force in the March 1982 edition of its official journal Paratus. In this it claimed that:

the ANC is the main instrument used by Moscow to bring about a Marxist revolution in South Africa [and] ... with the backing of political and psychological warfare experts in the Kremlin and aided by many misguided friends elsewhere, the ANC has been painstakingly building an image of itself as the 'sole representative of the oppressed masses' of South Africa.⁽¹⁶⁾

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14. J.A. du Plessis, Soviet Strategy Towards Southern Africa, (FAA Study Report, 1 April 1976). See also Du Plessis, Soviet Blueprint for Southern Africa, (Southern African Forum, Position Paper 6 (4), 1983).
 15. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Security Legislation, R/P, 90/1981, pp. 54, 57-58.
 16. Paratus 33 (3), March 1982, p. 16.



These views on the relationship between the ANC and the SACP were also shared by a number of non-government researchers and observers outside South Africa. Foremost among them were Michael Radu, a specialist in African and Latin American revolutionary movements and governments; and Ms. J. Becker, an acclaimed British expert on international terrorism, to name but two. Radu in an article published in 1987, argued that:

In the post war period, several sharp setbacks drove the CPSA to seek closer involvement in the ANC.... With the formation of the Congress Alliance and the tactics used for the drafting, adoption and ratification of the Freedom Charter, the ANC permanently lost its political innocence. It in effect adopted the idea and tactics of its members from the former CPSA. This process, which was consummated in the period 1953 - 1956 and clearly - at least in retrospect - was part of a carefully planned strategy on the part of the CPSA remnants, alienated many of the young Black nationalists in the ANC ranks,...

The banning of the ANC itself in 1960 only helped to consolidate the transformation of the organisation. While retaining its venerable name, the ANC had for all practical purposes become, and remains to this day, a Leninist organisation in its internal structure, a Marxist one in its political goals, and an ally of the USSR in its geopolitical aims.⁽¹⁷⁾

Ms. Becker too, in a paper delivered at a conference on revolution and revolutionaries in Pretoria in 1986, made it abundantly clear that as far as she was concerned the SACP was not being "used" by the National Liberation Movement and the ANC, as was claimed by Tambo during an interview with him in London, but that the ANC and the Liberation Movement was in fact being used by the SACP.⁽¹⁸⁾ The aid and support which the socialist countries gave so generously to the ANC and Umkhonto in South Africa and to other liberation movements elsewhere, she pointed out, could only be reciprocated by

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17. M. Radu, The African National Congress: Cadres and Credo, (Problems of Communism July - August 1987, pp. 62, 64).
 18. J. Becker, International Terrorism: A Global Offensive, (Institute for Strategic Studies of the University of Pretoria (ISSUP), Strategic Review, July 1986, p. 8).



unswerving identification with the socialist community in the common struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Becker also disagreed with Prior's argument that it was the SACP which needed the ANC and not vice versa. She said:

What is misunderstood or misrepresented in this statement, is the nature of the SACP. Its relationship to the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) is not that of an autonomous ally co-operating with another distinct organisation but that of a finger to a body, organically attached and used by the same head. (19)

In a survey of Black and White opinion conducted in 1983 it was found that while only 6 percent of Whites consulted felt that the South African government exaggerated the communist threat to South Africa, 70,3 percent of all Blacks consulted supported this view. (20)

In an attempt to find a more amicable and objective explanation for the relationship between the ANC and the SACP, it has been suggested that the co-operation between the ANC and the SACP is not necessarily one of choice, but one of necessity. In other words, it has been suggested that in view of their illegal status, as well as other factors, the ANC needs the support of the SACP just as much as the SACP needs the support of the ANC. The ANC, for instance, needs the material and to a lesser extent the financial support of the SACP and the Soviet Union to survive underground and to continue with its armed struggle while the SACP, on the other hand, needs the mass support of the ANC with its large African constituency to pursue its Marxist-Leninist ideals in South Africa. Moreover, the SACP also needs the international legitimacy that has been given to the ANC in its struggle for a "democratic" South Africa based on the principles of African nationalism. (21)

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19. Becker, International Terrorism: A Global Offensive, (Institute for Strategic Studies of the University of Pretoria (ISSUP), Strategic Review, July 1986, p. 8).
 20. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1985/1984, p. 182).
 21. K. Somerville, The USSR and Southern Africa Since 1976, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 22(1), 1984, p. 100).



1. THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND SINCE 1940

Since its formation in 1921, the SACP (then known as the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)), has had close ties with the history of the ANC and the national liberation movement in South Africa. Although the ANC was predominantly an anti-communist (or non-communist) organisation in the years between the two world wars due to a mainly conservative African leadership, a number of prominent African members of the Communist Party were nevertheless part of the ANC's leadership structure in these years. Names that readily spring to mind are those of Josiah Gumede (President-General of the ANC from 1927 to 1930); E.L. Khaile (Secretary-General of the ANC from 1927 to 1930); and J.B. Marks, who became Secretary-General of the ANC in 1936. The latter two persons were both members of the Central Committee of the CPSA. Khaile was one of the first Africans to be elected to the Central Committee while Marks served as Chairman of the SACP from 1962 to 1972. A fourth prominent member of the Communist Party who served on the NEC of the ANC in the inter war years was Moses Kotane. Kotane joined the ANC in 1928 and the CPSA in 1929. By the end of the 1930's he had rose to prominence in both the ANC and the CPSA. In 1938 he was made General-Secretary of the CPSA, a position he held until 1978, and in 1943 he was invited by A.B. Xuma to serve on the ANC's Atlantic Charter Committee that drew up "African Claims".⁽²²⁾

Although the election to the ANC presidency of the more radically minded Dr Xuma in 1940 and the formation of the Youth League in 1943 brought some dramatic changes to the policy and direction of the ANC, and the role and position of African members of the CPSA had become more acceptable in the organisation, the role and influence of the CPSA in the ANC however did not accelerate until the end of the

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22. Information compiled from: Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 50 - 53, 75 - 76; Toussaint, A Man of Our Time. Joe Slovo Elected Chairman of the SACP, (The African Communist 106, Third Quarter 1986, pp. 20 - 23); Radu, The African National Congress (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 60 footnote 7).



1940's. The reason for this was two-fold. One, although Xuma was more radical than his predecessors, his leadership of the ANC was primarily conservative and two, the Youth League stood under the leadership of a strong African nationalist faction led by Anton Lembede and A.P. Mda who were its first two presidents.

By the end of the 1940's however, the leadership of Xuma and the influence of the Africanist under Lembede and Mda had begun to wane as the new leadership of the Youth League "began to appreciate the benefits of an alliance with South African Communists," wrote Stephen Davis. (23)

The first sign of this new direction in the ANC's thinking came with the signing of the so-called "Doctors Pact" between the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) in 1947, in which the leaderships of the two organisations decided to join forces in the struggle for Black political rights in South Africa. Although a great many interpretations had been attached to this agreement, the fact that the majority of the SAIC's leadership were staunch supporters of the SACP set the trend for a similar development in the ANC. Consequently, after 1947 the ANC began to work on an increasingly closer scale with the communist leadership of the SAIC and the CPSA.

The second major development that influenced the relationship between the ANC and the Communist Party was the election victory of the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Dr D.F. Malan in 1948, and the banning of the CPSA in 1950. This latter development more than anything else helped to consolidate the relationship between the ANC and the CPSA. According to Radu:

The banning of the CPSA had the consequence, certainly unintended by the government, of driving party cadres into the ranks of still legal organisations, first and foremost the ANC. What until

23. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 9.



1950 had been a mildly successful effort by the party to influence the ANC, became a classic case of 'entryism' - the start of the communist party's efforts to infiltrate and dominate all anti-apartheid groups, but principally the ANC. (24)

A further development that helped to accelerate closer co-operation between the ANC and the SACP after 1950 was the decline of the Africanist movement and the rise of a left-wing faction under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Duma Nokwe, Oliver Tambo and others in the ANCYL. (25) The latter faction increasingly came to dominate the thinking and decisions of the ANC in the 1950's. Radu wrote:

With the weak Dr Moroka as its leader the ANC was influenced by the ANCYL, ... to engage in a massive campaign of civil disobedience - the Defiance Campaign - to protest the first apartheid laws promulgated in 1951.

The latter campaign was organised by a Joint Planning Committee which stood under the leadership of prominent members of the SAIC and the CPSA such as Yusuf Dadoo, J.B. Marks, Y.A. Cachalia and others. The above committee met in Johannesburg which was the seat of the Transvaal ANC and the Youth League. The latter organisation then stood under the leadership of Nelson Mandela who was elected to its presidency in late 1950. In 1952 Mandela succeeded Marks, who was placed under banning orders, to the presidency of the powerful Transvaal chapter of the ANC. A former Communist Party member, David Bopape was made Secretary-General of the Transvaal ANC in 1944. (26)

Although the Defiance Campaign was a dismal failure in terms of its projected aims and objectives, it did have the effect of pushing some Youth League leaders further to the left. In 1953, with financial support from the underground Communist Party, an ANC delegation under

24. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 62).

25. See Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, pp. 182 - 183.

26. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 62); See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 10 - 11. See also Mzala, How the ANC was Revived by the Youth League, (The African Communist 111, Fourth Quarter, 1987, pp. 50 - 62).



the leadership of Nokwe and Sisulu visited Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, presumably to seek financial and political support for the liberation struggle in South Africa.⁽²⁷⁾ Secondly, by the end of the same year Mandela presented a blueprint to the Transvaal ANC for the urgent structural reorganisation of the entire ANC to enable it to operate from the underground under a highly centralised command structure. The document which Mandela presented to the Transvaal ANC became known as the Mandela or M-Plan and was in many ways similar to the type of centralised organisational set-up normally associated with communist organisations and underground movements.

Unable to have its non-African members elected to the ANC's NEC in the 1950's, the underground SACP was also actively involved in the establishment or manipulation of "legal" front organisations to carry on its activities. In the same year that Mandela presented the M-Plan to the Transvaal ANC, the SACP leadership set up the Coloured People's Organisation (CPO).⁽²⁸⁾ The CPO, which was later renamed the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), stood under the direct leadership of senior communists such as Reginald September. In October of the same year, the SACP was instrumental in the establishment of the Congress of Democrats (COD).⁽²⁹⁾ The latter organisation stood under the leadership of known communists such as Abram Fischer, Ruth First (Slovo) and Joe Slovo to name but three of its more prominent members. Two years later in March 1955, a further "front" the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), was established. Shortly after its formation in 1955, SACTU was affiliated to the Moscow dominated World Conference of Trade Unions. Like the CPC and the COD, SACTU also stood under the control of well known communist leaders such as Stephen Dlamini, Vuyisile Mini, Moses Mabhida, Wilton Mkwayi and Leon and Norman Levy. With the formation of Umkhonto in 1961 SACTU in particular became an important source of recruitment

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27. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, pp. 62 - 63).
 28. E. Roux, Time longer than Rope, p. 398; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 3, pp. 12, 19.
 29. For an indepth discussion of the relationship between the COD and the SACP see P.J. Coetzee, Die Geskiedenis van die South African Congress of Democrats (Unpublished MA Dissertation, RAU, 1977), pp. 71 - 89, 90 - 150.



for the organisation. This was particularly the case in Natal, where most of the leaders of Umkhonto in the province were recruited from the ranks of SACTU or its affiliated organisations.⁽³⁰⁾

According to Jordan Ngubane, an African journalist and member of the Liberal Party of South Africa, SACTU came to play a predominant role in the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto after 1961 because of its multi-racial character and the fact that it had a predominantly African membership. As such it provided an ideal recruiting ground for Umkhonto. From its inception in 1955 SACTU members had been encouraged to become members of the ANC and vice versa. Consequently, most SACTU members by the beginning of the 1960's were thus also members of both the SACP and the ANC. This meant that leaders of SACTU such as Moses Mahbida and Stephen Dlamini who were also leading members of the SACP, would also be members of the ANC and as such would have a direct influence on the decisions taken by the latter organisation's NEC. Ngubane claimed:

Under this arrangement, the African members were deliberately given a dual loyalty and leadership as a precaution against Luthuli's defecting one day. If he were to do that, Mahbida would assert himself as SACTU leader against Luthuli. Since Mahbida was always with the workers, he stood a better chance of pulling a substantial section of them (the African workers) in any showdown with Luthuli. And in any crisis not involving Luthuli, he could easily be upheld as the leader of the Africans.⁽³¹⁾

Although the SACP has always denied that the SAIC, the COD or SACTU were front organisations for communism, its control over these and other organisations was implicitly revealed in a statement by the

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30. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 11 - 15. See also Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 63, 89 - 90; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 188 - 189; Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 221 - 225; Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, pp. 303 - 304.
31. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 165.



Central Committee and quoted in The African Communist in 1975. In this it was stated that following the formation of Umkhonto in December 1961, it was decided by the Central Committee of the SACP that "the SAIC, CPC and SACTU should not do anything to jeopardize their legality by an open commitment to armed struggle".⁽³²⁾

Thus by the middle of the 1950's the national liberation movement in South Africa consisted mainly of pro-communist or communist front organisations such as the ANC, the SAIC, the COD, SACTU and the underground Communist Party which was in control or at least attempted to control these organisations. Of these five organisations that formed part of the so-called "Congress Alliance" by the end of the 1950's, at least three, namely the SAIC, the COD and SACTU were fronts for the underground SACP. According to Ngubane, the Congress Alliance (or Congress Movement as it was alternatively known) was set up not by the ANC as such, but by the Central Committee of the SACP to serve the needs of the banned Party after 1950. Ngubane further stated that while it might be difficult to prove that the Alliance or its various member organisations were communistic (this point was borne out by the failure of the State in the famous Treason Trial of 1956 - 1961 to prove that the Congress of the People and its leaders were under the influence of the banned Communist Party and that the Freedom Charter was a blueprint for the violent destruction of the South African state and its replacement with a communist society), they were nevertheless being manipulated by a communist inner core that stood under the control of the SACP, who in turn received its instructions directly from the Soviet Union. Ngubane claimed that:

If Moscow wanted a particular course of action taken in South Africa, the ANC was not approached directly. Word [first] went to the central core [which had its headquarters in Johannesburg and which was in communication with the Soviet Union

32. The Enemy Hidden under the Same Colour. (The African Communist 65, Second Quarter, 1975). See also Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 63).



via SACP agents in Mozambique, Dar-es-Salaam and London] and from there it was passed on to the Joint Consultative Committee of the Congress Movement, in which the Communist occupied a strong position. There they met as the 'representatives' of the 'national' organisations, and through the committee they forwarded the instructions to the national organisations as a directive. If there were differences too serious to be ironed out in the inner echelons of the apparatus, an 'all-in' conference was called. Here the opposition was swamped by the sheer volume of numbers, and ... as a result the conference took the prescribed action ... This, Ngubane claimed, is the tortuous course through which the Freedom Charter was taken in order to become the policy of the Congress Movement ... (33) [Authors brackets]

As far as the latter was concerned, Ngubane further claimed that the Congress of the People and the drafting of the Freedom Charter was the work of the "bosses of the underground Communist Party" and that leading ANC members such as Albert Luthuli were not consulted on the drafting of the Freedom Charter, nor did he know who was responsible for it. Apparently, Luthuli and other non-Communist leaders in the ANC were only approached with major decisions once these had already been decided. For instance, Luthuli was only informed by Moses Kotane that he was to attend the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian nations in 1955, shortly before Kotane left for Indonesia. A senior member of the SACP and the ANC' NEC, Kotane clearly did not seek the approval or support of Luthuli, but merely went to inform him that he was leaving. This view is supported by Radu who stated that by the mid-1950's Luthuli had become little more than

a figure head for the ANC, poorly or never informed of decisions taken in his name and out of touch with the developments within the organisation. (34)

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33. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, pp. 183 - 184.
34. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 63). See also Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 162 - 164.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE IN THE POST
SHARPEVILLE PERIOD

Whatever doubts there were about the role of the Communist Party and its underground leadership in Black politics in particular, and the national liberation struggle in general before 1960, were finally removed by the events that followed the Sharpeville incident in March 1960 and which culminated in the discovery of the combined underground headquarters of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto at Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, Johannesburg in July 1963. With the aid of the documentary and other material evidence that the police discovered at Lilliesleaf Farm, the State was able to prove what it was unable to do at the Treason Trial in 1956 - 1961. According to the evidence that the State presented in its case against the leaders of the NHC of Umkhonto, the SACP was solely responsible for the establishment and financing of Umkhonto in 1961. In Natal where Luthuli and his supporters remained influential in the local ANC, Umkhonto was established entirely with the aid and support of the local underground communist movement which found expression through SACTU and its affiliated organisations in the province.⁽³⁵⁾ Moreover the close relationship that came to develop between the SACP and Umkhonto in Natal was not limited to the region but was also found in other parts of the country. In the Eastern Cape, especially the Port Elizabeth region for instance, the local Umkhonto leadership was to such an extent controlled by members of the SACP and SACTU that Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP became almost "indistinguishable".⁽³⁶⁾

Similarly, the instructions for and the funding of Mandela's African tour, which started in January 1962, also came directly from the Central Committee of the SACP, which never once consulted Luthuli, who was still President of the ANC at the time, on the matter. Until

35. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 11.

36. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 257. See also the evidence of B.H. Hlapane in the trial of M. Naidoo, The Natal Witness (Pietermaritzburg), 1966.09.09.



he left South Africa in January Mandela stayed at Lilliesleaf Farm as the guest of the SACP.⁽³⁷⁾

On his return to South Africa some six months later, in July 1962, Mandela reported directly to the Central Committee of the SACP. According to Hlapane, who was a member of the Central Committee at the time, at this report-back meeting Mandela, to the surprise of everyone present, made it clear that in future the relationship between the ANC and the SACP had to be kept a secret especially where it concerned people outside South Africa. He told the Central Committee that this was necessary because communism was not a popular subject with Africa's newly independent states and their leaders. He said that while African governments were generally prepared to give financial support to the ANC and the armed struggle in South Africa, they were uneasy about the role of White communists in it. The feeling was, Mandela said, that they were not trustworthy. Consequently, Mandela was informed by the African leaders that unless the ANC severed ties with the communist movement it could not count on Africa's support for the armed struggle. Mandela further told the meeting that it was his firm intention to convey this message to the leaders of Umkhonto so that they could warn their cadres not to mention their communist affiliations when they were outside South Africa.⁽³⁸⁾

Much of Hlapane's evidence was later independently confirmed by Bruno Mtolo both in his evidence at the Rivonia Trial and later in his book, Umkonto we Sizwe, The Road to the Left. In the latter sources, Mtolo claimed that during a visit to Durban after his return from Africa in July 1962, Mandela warned the leadership of Umkhonto in the province that in future they were:

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37. See Mandela's own admission in Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 177.
38. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, pp. 154, 449 - 451. See also the Report of the Denton Committee on Security and Terrorism in Southern Africa, p. 21.



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not to let the other African states know that we were Communists, and told us that Eric Mtshali, who was a member of one of the first groups to be sent out of the country for military training, was stranded in Dar-es-Salaam because he showed off his Marxist ideas. Eric, who had left Dar-es-Salaam a few weeks previously, was without shelter or food until Mandela found him.... (39)

After Mandela had made his report to the Central Committee and informed them of his determination to convey his findings to the regional leadership of Umkhonto in the provinces, starting with Natal, it was felt that, since he had not defended communism abroad as was expected of him, he had betrayed the SACP and what it stood for. This, according to Hlapane, was an unforgivable sin that could not go unpunished. Hlapane claimed:

It was felt that Mandela was becoming a Pan-Africanist along the lines of Robert Sobukwe. As such he was told now to be disciplined; to sit down, but Mandela went further to say: 'I now feel that we've come to a breaking point: Even if we work together it will be behind the scenes. I now feel that I must go and report [to] my ... people ...' (40)

Mandela's alleged rebellious attitude had, according to Hlapane, suddenly become an embarrassment and a threat to the SACP. Consequently, it was decided that he should not be allowed to report back to the leadership of Umkhonto in the provinces. The result was that "he forced his way out," Hlapane said, meaning that he went against the instructions of the Central Committee. According to Hlapane, Rusty Bernstein, who was a member of the Central Committee, later said that Mandela was "an ambitious, undisciplined, reckless young man who thought he could go far, [but] this will show him [Bernstein was referring to Mandela being in jail] what we are going to do to anybody who is undisciplined. He is now in jail and he can

39. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 38 - 39.

40. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 276.



rot in jail because he feels heroes are made in jail." (41)

Hlapane went on to say:

I say this because, when Mandela came into the country he was given full protection by the Communist Party through Umkonto we Sizwe [from] Johannesburg right up to Lobatsi. ... But after he gave his report to the Central Committee, when Mandela proceeded to Durban, he was denied the same protection, and the Central Committee said, we can only give you the car and the driver [but] no protection. (42)

According to Hlapane, it was in fact known in SACP circles - and there were apparently people who were prepared to testify to the fact - that:

a certain woman gave information about the visit of Mandela to Durban. That being so, they felt that a commission of inquiry must be instituted, but that was not done, it was suppressed by the Communist Party, who, in fact, was dominated by the Whites. The handful of Whites that had the full control of the Communist Party and the ANC did what they wanted to do without anyone of us. (43)

Hlapane's willingness to turn on the SACP and to testify against his former comrades eventually cost him his life. His allegations, particularly on the role that the Communist Party had played in the Congress Alliance since the 1950's, severely embarrassed the SACP and its leaders, with the result that he was assassinated, allegedly by members of the ANC-SACP alliance at his home in Soweto in December 1983, exactly twenty-two years after the start of the armed struggle. (44)

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41. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 276.
 42. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 276.
 43. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 276.
 44. SA Bureau for Information, Talking with the ANC, 1986, p. 5.

In her recently published book on the ANC, Heidi Holland⁽⁴⁵⁾ however claimed that Mandela was not betrayed by the SACP to the South African police but by an agent of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Although Holland provides no further information on the subject, especially on the source of her information, an article that has since appeared in the Johannesburg-based Sunday Times⁽⁴⁶⁾ has revealed that the CIA agent was probably Millard Shirley, who was the head of the CIA's covert operations section in Southern Africa at the time. According to the article, Shirley had direct access to the Central Committee of the SACP through an Indian member of the organisation who lived at Reservoir Hills in Durban. Shirley, who has been described by former South African police agent, Gerhard Ludi, as a super agent with a remarkable memory apparently passed the information he obtained from his Indian informer on to the South African police, who used it to arrest Mandela outside Howick on 5 August 1962. Mandela was disguised as a chauffeur for Cecil (Cyril) Williams who was a member of the SACP.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The ANC has since indicated that while it is plausible that Mandela's whereabouts in August could have been betrayed by a member of the CIA and that such rumours were in circulation at the time, this has never been proven. However, in an interview with the Sunday Times in June 1990, Ahmed Kathrada, the ANC's publicity secretary in South Africa, stated that:

There were all kinds of rumours at the time of Mr. Mandela's arrest, including that he had been given away by the CIA. I was very surprised that he was captured. I am not going to claim that we [the ANC] know who gave Mr. Mandela away in 1962, but we do have our own theories. We [however] cannot discount the possibility that forces hostile to us are attempting to sour relations between ourselves and the US for obvious reasons.⁽⁴⁸⁾

With the arrest of Mandela the position of Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto immediately shifted to Raymond Mhlaba who, unlike Mandela,

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45. H. Holland, The Struggle. A History of the African National Congress, p. 138.
 46. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1990.06.17.
 47. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 40. See also Holland, The Struggle, p. 138.
 48. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1990.06.17.



was a veteran member of the SACP. With Mandela in prison, the NHC of Umkhonto and the NEC of the ANC came directly under the control of communist leaders such as Joe Slovo, Wilton Mkwayi, Raymond Mhlaba and others. Abram Fischer also began to play a key role in the development of the armed struggle during these years. Like Slovo, Fischer was a veteran of the Communist Party and a member of its inner circle.⁽⁴⁹⁾ After the destruction of the NHC following the raid on its Rivonia headquarters in July 1963, Fischer and Mkwayi were instrumental in setting up a replacement NHC to guide Umkhonto. Unfortunately for them, by this stage the police were repeatedly making breakthroughs with their investigations into the sabotage campaign and both Fischer and Mkwayi were arrested in 1964.

3. THE POST-RIVONIA PERIOD. THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE IN EXILE

With the collapse of the communist underground movement inside South Africa by the mid-1960's, the underground structures of the ANC and Umkhonto rapidly collapsed with it. Without the financial and organisational leadership of the SACP, neither the ANC nor Umkhonto could continue with their underground activities in South Africa after 1965. Although attempts were made between 1967 and the end of 1968 to send Umkhonto guerrillas through Rhodesia to South Africa, these came to nothing with the result that for almost a decade between the mid-1960's and the outbreak of the Soweto uprising in June 1976, South Africa was relatively free from acts of sabotage by the ANC and Umkhonto.

Although relatively little is known about what really transpired between the ANC and the SACP in exile, following the demise of the

49. For a more detailed discussion of this history see: Weyl, Traitor's End, Chapters 9 and 10; Vermaak, The Red Trap, pp. 67 - 124; Vermaak, Braam Fischer. The Man with two faces, Chapters 3 - 17; Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, Chapters 4 - 13.



combined underground inside South Africa in 1965, indications are that several meetings were held between 1965 and the beginning of 1969 in which the relationship between the SACP, the ANC and Umkhonto, as well as the exact role of the SACP and Marxism in the armed struggle was discussed. According to Lodge⁵⁰ the SACP leadership initially wanted to set up an own cadre group among the members of the liberation movement, particularly Umkhonto, to serve its specific needs. But in the end, after lengthy discussions with leaders of the ANC's NEC, it was decided that the idea was impractical and that the SACP should rather throw its full if not inconsiderable weight behind the ANC and Umkhonto. Of course for this to come about the ANC had to open its membership to non-Africans and people of all political persuasions. Moreover, to accommodate the racially mixed leadership of the SACP, the ANC also had to agree to the establishment of a separate organ to guide the activities of Umkhonto, and which would allow White communists such as Slovo to serve on it, as had been the case with the old NHC of Umkhonto inside South Africa. But the idea of opening the leadership of the ANC to non-Africans, particularly communists, did not appeal to everyone in the ANC's NEC. ANC leaders such as Alfred Kgogong, Robert Resha, Tennyson Makiwane, and several others (many of them were later expelled from the ANC), were alarmed at the creeping influence of the SACP on the affairs of the ANC's Mission in Exile. By 1969 however, their opposition had been sufficiently eroded in the ANC to allow the SACP to convince the ANC's NEC to open up its membership to non-Africans, even if this was to be on only a limited basis. This latter development was facilitated by two specific factors. One, since 1964 the Soviet Union and its supporters had become the chief supplier of arms and related equipment to the ANC-SACP alliance and thus Umkhonto; and two, the combined operations between the ANC (Umkhonto) and ZAPU had produced virtually no positive results by the end of 1968. By this stage too the problems associated with the conducting of an armed struggle from exile over long distances, had become more than the ANC-SACP alliance could cope with. Conditions

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



in general were thus favourable by the beginning of 1969 for increased SACP involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the ANC and Umkhonto whom it aimed to bring under its direct control. The first step in this direction came with the formation of a "Revolutionary Council" staffed by members of the SACP to direct the affairs of Umkhonto in 1969. Although the full membership of the Revolutionary Council was never publically revealed, at least three of the SACP members who were appointed to the Council in 1969 were senior Politbureau members of the Communist Party. They were Slovo, Yusuf Dadoo and Stephen Dlamini.⁽⁵¹⁾ Other senior communists who served on the Revolutionary Council in later years were Moses Mabhida, Joe Matthews, Moses Kotane and Reginald September.

In addition to the formation of the Revolutionary Council, the ANC-SACP alliance also adopted a document on "Strategy and Tactics" that was allegedly drawn up by the SACP. This document which has been referred to earlier in this study, was largely a watered-down version of the SACP's 1962 programme "The Road to South African Freedom" which too was authored by Slovo and Matthews.⁽⁵²⁾

Further indications of growing SACP control over the affairs and decisions of the ANC and Umkhonto after 1969 can be found in the fact that although the Morogoro Consultative Conference was an ANC event, two senior leaders of the SACP were in control of the proceedings. While it is true that both Marks, who acted as chairman, and Mabhida were also members of the ANC's NEC, these two persons were more senior in the SACP than the ANC. Marks for instance was elected

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51. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, p. 300); Karis, Revolution in the Making, (Foreign Affairs 62, 1983, pp. 383, 395); South Africa: The ANC, (Africa Confidential 27 (25), 1986.12.10, p. 2).
 52. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2). See also Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 665 - 667).



Chairman of the SACP upon its reconstruction in 1953 and held the position until his death in 1972. Mabhida too was more active in the SACP and SACTU than the ANC although he held senior positions in all these organisations. In 1963, while attached to the World Federation of Trade Unions, Mabhida was instructed by Oliver Tambo to devote himself full-time to Umkhonto and the armed struggle. In 1978, following the death of Moses Kotane, Mabhida was elected to the powerful position of General-Secretary of the SACP.⁽⁵³⁾ Perhaps less well-known was the fact that a formal declaration of alliance between the SACP and the ANC was apparently agreed to at Morogoro. According to Radu, in terms of this agreement, which was kept a secret, no ideological views other than those expounded by the SACP would be allowed. In other words, it became a heresy for anyone within the liberation alliance after 1969 to assume an anti-communist stance. The effect of this was that it effectively closed the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto to ideological influences other than Marxist-Leninism and Marxist-Stalinism. Radu wrote:

An SACP account of the Morogoro gathering sheds particularly clear light on the authoritarian nature of the ANC decision-making. At that conference, the non-African members admitted to the ANC at the time were appointed by the ANC executive and were 'neither singly nor collectively consulted on the composition of the new executive'. Indeed, the NEC had previously mandated acting-President-General Tambo 'assisted' by SACP stalwarts Kotane and Marks, to reconstitute the executive (selections that were ratified pro-forma by the conference).⁽⁵⁴⁾

In view of these and other factors it can thus be argued that by 1969 the ANC and Umkhonto had been brought firmly under the control of the SACP and that the latter continued to consolidate its control over the National Liberation Movement. In a report in which it traced

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53. The African Communist 106, Third Quarter, 1986, pp. 20 -30.
54. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 65).



the history of the ANC-SACP alliance and the role of the SACP in it, Africa Confidential⁽⁵⁵⁾ claimed that since the Morogoro Consultative Conference, the ANC's president, Oliver Tambo, who was not a member of the SACP, had become little more than "a pawn manipulated by the SACP". It stated:

The Party quarantined ... Oliver Tambo, bestowed upon him an aura of adulation as a successful tactic to manoeuvre him out of the day-to-day political life of the ANC by keeping him on an exhaustive round of diplomatic visits. He is hardly ever at his headquarters and is ill-informed about events within the movement. The principle of accountability, which is sacred within the Party, has not been respected when it concerns Tambo. The presidential staff headed by the Administrative Secretary of the President-General's Office, Anthony Mongalo, is, with the possible exception of Mrs. Masondo, an SACP fief. ... there was in fact confusion within the party over the role of their pointman, Mongalo. Some felt that since he was in such a highly visible post, it would not be wise for him to participate in inner Party life, which centres upon the basic Party units which meet fortnightly.... So pervasive is Party influences that it is hard to distinguish Party from non-Party in the ANC and all and sundry speak one language, Marxism.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Africa Confidential's account of the SACP influence in the ANC after 1969 is confirmed by other sources. In an article entitled, 'The African National Congress: Cadres and Credo' published in 1987, Michael Radu claimed that while the ANC is emphatically not anti-communistic, "it is ironical how the ANC's attempt to provide a multi-racial image of itself has turned to the advantage of the SACP members in its ranks, most of whom are non-Black; - to object to the Communist influence is to automatically make oneself vulnerable to accusations of racialism." Radu further pointed out that by the time

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55. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).
56. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).



of the Morogoro Conference, the differences between the ANC and the SACP within the alliance had virtually disappeared and the ANC had come to show a much clearer Marxist-Leninist approach by stating that the armed struggle, while still national, was taking place in:

a new kind of world - a world that is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful - economic emancipation. In the last resort it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which - by destroying the existing social and economic relationships - that will bring with it a correction of the historic injustices perpetuated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new - and deeper internationalist - approach. (57)

Radu went on to say that not only was Mandela's declared belief in Western democracy gone by the beginning of the 1970's, but it had clearly been replaced by the traditional Soviet-style strategy of a two-stage revolution, namely a national democratic stage followed by a socialist stage. In reference to Mabhida, Radu pointed out that in 1981 he had quoted Lenin to the effect that "the national liberation movement is a necessary ally of the proletariat revolution". (58) Some four years later in 1985, the ANC in its official publication Sechaba elaborated on the close relationship that existed between the two stages of the revolution by stating that:

the national revolution ... is the special province of the oppressed nationalities; the socialist revolution takes the form of a class struggle led by the working class of all national groups. The two stages of the revolution therefore co-exist.... They interact They are as

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57. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, pp. 71 - 73).
58. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 73).



closely knit as Siamese twins. To separate them would need a surgical operation which might kill or cripple both. (59)

Given these views and interpretations of the ANC-SACP alliance it is fruitless, argues Radu, to even be concerned about whether the ANC was dominated by the SACP or not. Since 1969, the ANC and the SACP have come to speak one and the same language, namely the liberation of South Africa from White domination, which had come to mean only one thing, the total destruction of capitalism and its replacement with a system of Marxist-Leninist communism. (60)

This line of argument was supported by Andrew Prior, who wrote that there can be little doubt that the ANC and the SACP enjoyed close links, and that the latter was anxious to establish its credentials as part of the liberation movement in South Africa. (61) In order to do so, argued Prior, the SACP identified itself totally with the aims and objectives of the ANC to establish a democratic state. In view of the latter aim the SACP was willing to subordinate parts of its organisation to direct ANC control. But, argued Prior, the SACP's short term goals should not be confused with its long term goals in which it saw the ANC and its emphasis on a national democratic revolution as only the beginning and not the end of the liberation struggle in South Africa. This point was made abundantly clear by the SACP in its 1962 programme "The Road to South African Freedom" as well as in subsequent publications. For instance in a joint publication with Basil Davidson and Anthony Wilkinson in 1976, Slovo made it clear that while there can be little doubt that the implementation of the Freedom Charter will in itself be a giant step towards social and national emancipation, there were clearly a number of further phases that could be envisaged. He went on to say that, should the liberation struggle bring to power a revolutionary democratic alliance dominated by the proletariat and the peasantry

59. Sechaba, June 1985, p. 8.

60. Radu, The African National Congress, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987, p. 73).

61. Prior, South African Exile Politics, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983/1984, pp. 189 - 190).



which he stated was on the agenda in South Africa), the post-revolutionary phase could surely become:

the first stage in a continued process along the road to socialism ... A state dominated by the working class and the peasantry ... will from its inception, begin to lay the basis for taking the country along the road to socialism. Without this there can be no real solution to the national or social problems of the majority of the South African people. (62)

Slovo also stressed the fact that the continuing role of an "independent class orientated movement" as part of the revolutionary front is historically vital, despite the absence of any basic policy divergence between the ANC and the SACP on the main aims, strategy and thrust of the liberation struggle. (63)

4. THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE AND THE POSITION OF UMKHONTO IN THE POST 1976 PERIOD

The control and influence that the SACP had managed to gain over the ANC and particularly over Umkhonto and the armed struggle in 1969, was further consolidated and extended in the 1970's and 1980's. Two major events that facilitated this development in the mid-1970's, were the establishment in 1975 of Marxist governments in the two former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, and the influx of thousands of new and Black recruits into the ranks of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto following the Soweto unrest of June 1976. The first development came at a time when Umkhonto was in desperate need of forward bases and other facilities close to South Africa's borders, in order to resume the armed struggle. With the granting of independence to Angola and Mozambique, but more important with the establishment of Marxist regimes in these regions, the SACP and Umkhonto - which it controlled through its leadership of the Revolutionary Council - was placed in a position to rapidly move its

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62. B. Davidson, J. Slovo and A. Wilkinson, Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution, p. 149.
63. Davidson et al, Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution, p. 149.



trained cadres in and out of the country as well as to recruit those leaving the country for military training. The importance of Angola and Mozambique was borne out by the fact that by 1977 the ANC and Umkhonto, under the leadership of the SACP, had already established a number of facilities in these two countries for the training of recruits and the control of the armed struggle in South Africa. With the headquarters of the Revolutionary Council established in Maputo, Mozambique, by 1977, Slovo and other communist leaders who served on it, were in full control of both the ANC and Umkhonto's activities in South Africa.

Although the mass influx of new recruits into the ranks of the alliance and Umkhonto provided the SACP with the manpower it needed to resume the armed struggle in the mid-1970's, as well as to re-introduce its Marxist teachings into South Africa via these new recruits, the latter's Black Consciousness orientation initially presented a serious problem for the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Council leadership. According to Africa Confidential⁽⁶⁴⁾ the SACP was apparently so alarmed by the influx of so many Black Consciousness African youths into the ranks of the ANC-SACP alliance after 1976, that it immediately initiated a programme to turn these BC youths into loyal Marxists. For this purpose, Francis Meli, the later editor of Sechaba was sent to the Nova Katenga training camp in Angola to serve as its first political commissar. In addition, Andrew Masondo, the later Head of the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Tanzania and a member of the Central Committee of the SACP, was appointed National Commissar of the ANC to ensure that "even those outside the army were within the Party's ideological ambit".⁽⁶⁵⁾

Although Meli was a devoted member of the SACP and a strong protagonist of Marxism, his appointment as political commissar for Umkhonto

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64. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).
65. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).

in Angola proved to be a poor choice. He was apparently too impatient and too critical of the new Soweto generation of recruits to be functional, with the result that in the end he was replaced by the more "fatherly" Marxist and Communist Party leader, Mark Shope. It was under the latter, a former Secretary-General of SACTU, and Jack Simons, a fellow communist who assisted him, that the Soweto youths were eventually "converted" from Black Consciousness to Marxism and communism.

Under the combined leadership of Shope and Simons, the cream of the Sowetan youths were later also recruited into the SACP. They included among them figures such as Thami Zulu, 'Che' Ogara, Peter Mayibuye, Lensoe 'Captain' Moekoetsi (he was however expelled from the SACP in 1984), Motso Mokgabudi and Khumalo Migwe.⁽⁶⁶⁾ According to Africa Confidential once the ANC had taken these converted Sowetans on board, it was even more rapidly transformed from within. Those who resisted this transformation or who objected to it, were either expelled from the organisation; dropped from the inner circle of the SACP or, in worse cases, sent for "re-education" in one of the several ANC-SACP penal/rehabilitation facilities that were set up after 1976. Some of these facilities were in Angola, while others were in Tanzania and Zambia. Conditions and treatment in those camps were so severe that most ANC and Umkhonto cadres feared them. The result was that the cadres who did not agree with ANC-SACP policy normally kept quiet about their feelings for fear of being sent to one of those camps.

It can thus be argued that the SACP leadership both in the ANC and Umkhonto had not only gained full control over these organisations and the armed struggle by the mid-1980's, but was determined to maintain it with an iron fist. In this, argued Africa Confidential, White communists such as Slovo, Ronnie Kasrils, Simons, Brian Bunting, Albie Sachs and others have played a major role.⁽⁶⁷⁾

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66. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, pp. 2 - 3).
67. South Africa: The party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 3).



5. THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE AND THE SOVIET POLITICS OF GLASNOST
SINCE 1985

Although the SACP has been a loyal follower of the Soviet Union and the ideologies of Marxist-Leninism since the 1920's, the changes and reforms effected to these ideologies and to Soviet politics by President Mikhail Gorbachev since he assumed power in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980's has presented the organisation with a serious problem. While the SACP has given verbal support to Gorbachev's reform initiatives in the Soviet Union, it has nevertheless persistently refused to alter its own views and policies in accordance with what has been transpiring in the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe since 1985. In view of their close alliance with the SACP and the apparent control that the latter had over them, the ANC and Umkhonto have equally resisted these changes and have on numerous occasions indicated their support for the SACP, which as recently as its 7th Congress at Havana, Cuba, in June 1989, has renewed its undying support for the orthodox principles of Marxist-Leninism. The direct result of this has been the persistent suppression of the more moderate views of ANC and SACP leaders such as Thabo Mbeki, Lindiwe Mabuza, Mzala and others until the beginning of the 1990's when the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe eventually forced the hardliners in the liberation alliance to change their stance.

Consequently, in January 1990 the SACP unexpectedly released a new policy paper entitled "Has Socialism Failed",⁽⁶⁸⁾ in which the Party took a hard new look at the developments that had been taking place in the Soviet Union since the mid-1980's. It came to the conclusion that the SACP (and thus the ANC) had little choice but to adjust to these changes in order to keep pace with the developments and changes that have been taking place both outside and inside South Africa.⁽⁶⁹⁾

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68. For a critical review of the SACP policy paper "Has Socialism Failed" see D. Kunert, Glasnost, New Thinking and the ANC-SACP Alliance, pp. 1 -15.
69. The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 1990.01.19 - 25.

In view of these and other facts, there can be no doubt that, although the ANC and the SACP have persistently claimed over the years that they were separate organisations and that neither had a dominant claim over the other, the truth is that besides superficial differences such as the fact that they have retained separate names, there was virtually no real difference between the ANC and the SACP and that both organisations and their military wing, Umkhonto, spoke the same language, Marxism. Similarly, given the nature of the ANC and SACP's dependence on the Soviet Union for both its arms and ideological support, the ANC has had little choice but to subject itself to the leadership and ideological domination of the SACP and the Soviet Union. Anyone who opposed this view or refused to accept the hegemony of the SACP, were summarily expelled from the ANC or demoted to the rank and file. As a result, by the mid-1980's the existing differences within the ANC-SACP alliance were no longer between non-communists and communists or between class and nationalism, but rather between shades of communism.⁽⁷⁰⁾

6. THE INTERLOCKING MEMBERSHIP BETWEEN THE ANC, THE SACP AND UMKHONTO

One aspect of the SACP relationship and control over the ANC and Umkhonto that can be gauged with reasonable accuracy, is the degree of overlapping in membership that had come to exist between the three organisations. Although the SACP membership of the ANC was not predominant in the 1950's due to the fact that it preferred to spread its members through the different front organisations of the Congress Alliance, the situation rapidly changed after the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the remainder of the Congress Alliance members shortly thereafter. After 1960, the ANC and the SACP became mutually dependent on one another.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that most of those who became part of the underground ANC in 1960, automatically became part also

70. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 3).



of the broader underground communist movement. Many were unaware of this latter development, while others again were told that their membership of the ANC also required them to be a member of the underground SACP, or its fronts such as the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). SACTU was the only component of the Congress Alliance that was never banned by the government. Similarly members of the SACP and SACTU were instructed to join the ANC. This insistence on dual membership was extended to Umkhonto in 1961. According to Bruno Mtolo, who served on the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Durban, when Stephen Dlamini, who was a member of both the ANC and the SACTU discovered in 1960 that he, Mtolo, was a member of the ANC but not of the SACP or SACTU, he was immediately instructed to join the latter organisations since it had become the policy of the ANC (and the SACP) that its members should also be members of SACTU and vice versa. "Dlamini", Mtolo said, "pointed out to me that because of the banning of the ANC it now became very important that I should be a member of SACTU." In order to comply with this Mtolo joined the "Hospital Workers Union" in Durban, which was an affiliate of SACTU in Natal.⁽⁷¹⁾

This dual or interlocking membership was not a phenomenon of the relationship between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto in the provinces and regions only, but it was also present at the national level in Johannesburg and elsewhere. A break-down of the leadership of the NHC in Johannesburg and the Regional Command structure of Umkhonto in Natal, reveals the extent to which the leaders of the SACP had become the leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto by 1963. Of the ten people brought to trial in 1963 for their alleged membership of the NHC of Umkhonto - namely Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Dennis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel Bernstein, Raymond Mahlaba, James Kantor, Elias Motsoaledi, and Andrew Mlangeni - only two, namely Mandela and Sisulu, can be singled out as non-members of the SACP.⁽⁷²⁾ Although Sisulu had been listed by some sources as not

71. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 11.

72. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/1964, The State against N. Mandela and others, Revised Indictment, p. 1.



being a member of the SACP, others again have listed him as a member, probably due to the fact that he attended several SACP meetings in the 1960's.⁽⁷³⁾

Similarly, of the remaining 26 or more people listed by the State in the Rivonia Trial as being alleged members of the NHC of Umkhonto or as having associated with it, namely, Arthur Goldreich, Harold Wolpe, Vivian Ezra, Julius First, Ruth First, Michael Harmel, Bob Hepple, Percy John Hodgson, Ronnie Kasrils, Moses Kotane, Arthur Letele, Tennyson Makiwane, John B. Marks, Johannes Modise, George Naicker, Billy Nair, Looksmart Ngundle, Duma Nokwe, James Radebe, Robert Resha, Joe Slovo, Harold Strachan, Oliver Tambo, Benjamin Turok and Cecil George Williams, only four, namely Letele, Makiwane, Resha and Tambo could be considered to be non-communist. The rest were either members of the Communist Party or active sympathisers of it. The latter category probably also included Resha, but there is no certainty about him.⁽⁷⁴⁾

This similarity prevails when one examines the leadership of Umkhonto in Durban. According to Mtolo, virtually the entire leadership of Umkhonto in Durban if not the rest of the province, were drawn from the underground Communist Party. The leading figures in the Regional Command in Durban who were members of the SACP or SACTU were Curdnick Ndlovu (Captain), Ronnie Kasrils (Lieutenant), Eric Mtshali (Sergeant), Billy Nair, Brian Chaitow (Chief Technician) and Mtolo (assistant to Chaitow). Of these six people apparently only Ndlovu was a member of the ANC, but even so, according to Mtolo, his sentiments were more with the SACP and SACTU than with the ANC.⁽⁷⁵⁾

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73. Supreme Court, Cape Division, CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 154.
74. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/1964, The State against N. Mandela and others, Revised Indictment, p. 4. See also Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 154.
75. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 16, 23.



According to a further informant, namely Hlapane, meetings of the SACP held in Johannesburg were regularly attended by members of the ANC. After December 1961 these meetings often also included leaders of Umkhonto from both its national and regional structures. Several of Umkhonto's national leaders such as Sisulu, Mbeki and others were for instance at the SACP National Congress that was held in Johannesburg in November 1962 at which the Party adopted "The Road to South African Freedom". According to Hlapane, the same Congress also elected a new Central Committee consisting of Bernstein, Harnel, Kotane, Marks, Mbeki, Sisulu and Slovo, all of whom were also leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Later several other ANC-Umkhonto leaders were co-opted onto the Central Committee of the SACP. They included Mhlaba (sometimes spelled Mahlaba), Shope and Hlapane. (76)

When Hlapane was asked in 1966 to comment on the degree of overlapping between the ANC and the SACP, he said:

I will put it this way ... the Central Committee had amongst its members some members in the National Executive of the ANC as members of the Central Committee The position is that members of Congress did not know exactly what was going on, on the higher level insofar as the leaders are concerned. ... There was no difference between the African National Congress and the Communist Party in the higher body. But there was a difference in the lower organs of ANC and ... the Communist Party. They did not meet in common. They met in separate cells Matters of ANC, regarding policy ... were first discussed by the Central Committee before they go to even the National Executive of the ANC. (77)

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76. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, pp. 154 - 158. See also Ludi and Grobbelaar, The Amazing Mr. Fischer, pp. 38 - 39.
77. Supreme Court, Cape Division, Case CC 67/1966, The State Against Fred Carneson, Evidence of B.M. Hlapane, p. 158.



With the destruction of the underground in South Africa by the mid-1960's and the transfer of the control of the liberation struggle to the External Mission of the ANC and the SACP after 1969, the interlocking membership between the two organisations and Umkhonto became complete. This state of affairs was confirmed by three developments namely, one, the transfer of control over Umkhonto from the ANC's NEC to the SACP created and controlled Revolutionary Council; two, the opening up of the ANC's membership to people of all races, and three, the reduction of the ANC's NEC from 23 to nine members to ensure a communist majority on it. Of the nine members who were elected to the NEC in 1969, at least four, namely Marks, Mabhida, Kotane and Joe Matthews were senior members of the SACP.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In addition to them a possible further three NEC members namely Alfred Nzo, Mzwai Piliso and Thomas Nkobi were also members of the Communist Party. According to the report of the Denton Sub-Committee on Security and Terrorism in Southern Africa published in the United States in 1982, both Nzo and Piliso were members of the SACP. In 1986 Africa Confidential however excluded Nzo from its list of communist members despite the fact that Nzo was a recipient of the Lenin Peace Prize.⁽⁷⁹⁾ A further member of the NEC that has been identified by some sources as a member of the SACP but denied by others is Nkobi. In an article that appeared in the Sunday Times in May 1986, for instance, Lodge claimed that Nkobi (Treasurer-General of the ANC) was a member of the SACP.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Yet in an article published in Africa Confidential in May 1990, Nkobi was singled out as one of eight NEC members who were not members of the SACP. The latter list also included the name of Joe Modise, the Chief of Umkhonto, whom Lodge had listed in 1986 as being a member of the SACP.⁽⁸¹⁾ The issue is further complicated by the fact that Piliso, listed by the Denton Sub-Committee in 1981 as being a member of the SACP, was listed by both Lodge in 1986 and

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78. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1968 - 1969, p. C153.
79. South Africa: The ANC, (Africa Confidential 27(25), 1986.12.10, p. 2). See however Nzo's support for the SACP in A. Nzo, Message of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, London, July 30th, 1986, pp. 1 - 5.
80. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1986.05.11 (A "Who's Left of Whom" Guide to ANC Leaders).
81. South Africa: The Party's Dilemma, (Africa Confidential 31(9), 1990.05.04, p. 1).



Africa Confidential in 1990 as being a non-SACP member.⁽⁸²⁾ Clearly the picture on who in the ANC's NEC are members of the SACP and who are not is a confusing one, as a result of the secrecy attached to the membership of the SACP.

However, assuming that Nzo and possibly either Nkobi or Piliso were members of the SACP, then it means that out of the nine people elected to the ANC's NEC in 1969 between six and seven were members of the SACP which meant they were in the majority. Such a majority of SACP members in the NEC would have given the Communist Party a veto over all major decisions taken by the ANC after 1969. Moreover, what the SACP could not control through its majority on the ANC's NEC, it could easily do through its control of the Revolutionary Council that directed the affairs and decisions of Umkhonto. The latter council became firmly under the control of the SACP rather than the ANC in 1969 and remained so until it was dissolved in 1983 and replaced with a Political Military Council (PMC).

The latter organ was at the centre of the new organisational structure designed by Slovo to serve the armed struggle in South Africa after 1983. Before it was dissolved in 1983, the Revolutionary Council consisted of the following ANC-SACP leaders: Tambo (Chairman), Dadoo (Deputy-Chairman, who died in 1983), Nzo, Modise (Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe), Slovo (Deputy Chief of Umkhonto, who was for many years Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto), Sizakele Sigxhashe, Mabhida (he was also General-Secretary of the SACP), Henry Makgothi (he was also the ANC's Secretary of Education), Jacob Zuma (he was a senior member of the SACP's Central Committee) and Leonard Dilinga, of whom little is known.⁽⁸³⁾

Hlapane earlier stated to the Denton Committee that at least seven out of the above ten members of the Revolutionary Council were

82. South Africa: The Party's Dilemma, (Africa Confidential 31(9), 1990.05.04, p. 1).

83. J. Denton, Report of the United States Sub-Committee on Security and Terrorism in Southern Africa, 1982, p. 23.



members of the SACP. The majority of them, with the exception of Slovo, were also members of the ANC's National Executive Committee which had steadily grown from its nine members in 1969 to more than 22 members by the early 1980's.

Most of those who served on the Revolutionary Council of Umkhonto in 1983 automatically transferred to the new Politico Military Council (PMC). Charged with the responsibility to co-ordinate both the political and military aspects of the armed struggle inside South Africa after 1984, the PMC became one of the most important - if not the most important - organ of the ANC-SACP alliance in the mid-1980's. With its emphasis on the political and military co-ordination of the armed struggle, the PMC included representatives from the Army (Umkhonto); the Intelligence and Security Department; as well as the political, educational and labour wings of the liberation alliance. The 15 members of the PMC and the various divisions they represented were as follows in 1988.

7. THE POLITICAL MILITARY COUNCIL (PMC) OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE⁽⁸⁴⁾

1	Oliver Tambo	Chairman
2	Alfred Nzo	Vice-Chairman (ANC Secretary-General)
3	Thomas Nkobi	Vice-Chairman (ANC Treasurer-General)
4	Joe Slovo	Vice-Chairman (SACP General-Secretary since 1987)
5	John Nkadimeng	Vice-Chairman (SACTU General-Secretary)
6	Josiah Jele	Executive Secretary (the most important member of the PMC)
7	Chris Hani	Army (Chief of Staff since 1987)
8	Joe Modise	Army (Chief of the Army)
9	Steve Tshwete	Army (Political Commissar until fired in 1988 for violating the policies of the ANC)
10	Ronnie Kasrils	Army (Chief of Military Intelligence)
11	Jacob Zuma	Intelligence and Security Department ANC/Umkhonto
12	Sizakele Sigxhashe	Intelligence and Security Department ANC/Umkhonto
13	Joe Nhlanhla	Intelligence and Security Department ANC/Umkhonto
14	Mac Maharaj	Political Department
15	Thabo Mbeki	Ex Officio Member

84. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29(16), 1988.08.12, pp. 1 - 3).



An analysis of the members of the PMC reveals that at least nine of them, namely Slovo, Nkadineng, Jele, Hani, Modise, Kasrils, Sigxhashe, Maharaj and Zuma were members of the SACP's Polit Bureau and Central Committee. Of the remaining six members, at least a further four, namely Nzo, Nkobi, Tshwete and Nhlanha were possible members of the SACP.⁽⁸⁵⁾ That left only Tambo and Mgwayi as non-communist in the PMC.

8. THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ANC (1985)⁽⁸⁶⁾

By the time of the Kabwe Consultative Conference in 1985, the NEC of the ANC had undergone a substantial transformation to the point where virtually all its members, with the exception of a small handful, among them Tambo, were members of the SACP. At the same time the NEC had increased in size from 22 to 30 members by the mid 1980's with the proviso that five more members could be co-opted onto the Executive, should there be a need for it.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The reason for the extension of the NEC by the mid-1980's was undoubtedly two-fold, namely to accommodate the changes that had been effected to the membership of the NEC at the Kabwe Conference (after 1985 non-Africans were allowed for the first time to become full members of the NEC) and to make room for the new generation of up-and-coming post-Soweto leaders who were making increasing demands for a greater say in the affairs and direction of the ANC and the armed struggle in South Africa.

Lodge,⁽⁸⁸⁾ in his analysis of the 1985 Kabwe Conference, argued that the extension and election of new members to the NEC can be seen as a re-affirmation of leadership and an affirmation of the earlier

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85. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29(16), 1988.08.12, pp. 1-3). See also South Africa: Inside the Communist Party, (Africa Confidential 29(17), 1988.08.26, pp. 2-5). SABI, Talking with the ANC, 1986, p. 14.
86. ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, p. 10.
87. ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, p. 10.
88. 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. 18 - 19).



Ideological balance in the organisation's hierarchy of power. The ANC-SACP-Umkhonto members who were elected or re-elected onto the National Executive Committee of the ANC in 1985 were as follows: (**)

The National Executive Committee (NEC) 1985

1	Oliver Tambo	President
2	Alfred Nzo	Secretary-General
3	Thomas Nkobi	Treasurer-General
4	Thabo Mbeki	Director of Information and Publicity
5	Dan Tloome	Deputy Secretary-General
6	Moses Mabhida	Member
7	Johnny Makatini	Chief of International Department
8	Henry Makgothi	Secretary of the Education Department
9	Dr Simon Makana	Administrative Secretary
10	Gertrude Shope	Chief of Women's Secretariat (league)
11	Stephen Dlamini	(President of SACTU since 1967)
12	John Nkadimeng	Chairman ANC Political Committee
13	Joe Modise	Commander of Umkhonto
14	Joe Slovo	Chief of Staff of Umkhonto to 1987
15	Mzwai Piliso	Chief of Intelligence and Personnel
16	Dr Pallo Jordan	Head of the ANC's Research Department
17	Dr Francis Meli	Editor of <u>Sechaba</u>
18	Dr S. Sigxashe	Former Director of Information and Publicity. Also a member of ANC, NWC and of the PMC.
19	Mac Maharaj	Senior officer of Umkhonto
20	Reginald September	Member
21	Robert Conco	Member
22	Jacob Zuma	ANC Representative in Mozambique and Swaziland
23	Florence Mophosho	Member
24	Chris Hani	Political Commissar of Umkhonto 1982-1987
25	Joe Nhlanhla	Chairman of the ANC Youth League
26	Aziz Pahad	Member
27	James Stuart	Member
28	Ruth Mompati	Member
29	Anthony Mongalo	Member
30	Cassius Make	Member

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89. For more information on the subject see: ANC, Report, Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, pp. 7 - 8; 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. 18 - 19); SABI, Talking with the ANC, p. 14; The African Communist 106, Third Quarter, 1986, pp. 20 - 41; South Africa: The ANC, (Africa Confidential 27(25), 1986.12.10, pp. 1 - 4).



Based on information obtained from various intelligence sources, the South African government alleged in 1986 that at least twenty-three of the thirty people that were elected to the NEC at Kabwe in 1985, were members of the SACP.⁹⁰ Those on the NEC whom the government did not suspect to be members of the SACP were Tambo, Makatini, Makana, Conco, Zuma (who has since been identified as a member of the SACP⁹¹), Mompoti and Make. Major Craig Williamson of the South African police, who had successfully infiltrated the ANC in Exile in the 1970's supported this allegation. He believed that at least twenty-five of the thirty members elected to the ANC's NEC in 1985 were members of the SACP.⁹²

These claims were however disputed by both Lodge and the ANC. According to Lodge, only six members of the ANC's NEC were members of the SACP while a further thirteen were possibly members of the SACP. Those listed by Lodge in 1986 to be members of the SACP were Slovo, Maharaj, John Gaetsewe (it is not clear why Lodge listed him, since he was not elected to the NEC in 1985), Nkobi and Tloome. It is not clear who the sixth person was. The thirteen identified by Lodge as being possible members of the SACP were Pahad, Stuart, Meli, Mongale, Make, Nzo, Modise Dlamini, Nkadimeng, Shope, Makgoti and Zuma. The remaining eleven members of the ANC's NEC were either not communist or too little was known about them to classify them as being members of the SACP, argued Lodge. They were: Tambo, Jordan, Sigxashe, Makatini, Hani (he too has since been identified as a senior member of the SACP), Piliso, Mbeki (junior), Thozamile Botha (he was coopted in 1986), Makana and Nhlanhla.⁹³ Botha, like Gaetsewe was not

90. SABI, Talking with the ANC, pp. 13-14.

91. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31(1), 1990.01.12, p. 3).

92. SABI, Talking with the ANC, p. 14.

93. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1986.05.11 (A "Who's Left of Whom" Guide to ANC Leaders). For a list of the members elected to the ANC's NEC at Kabwe in 1985, see ANC, Report Main Decisions and Recommendations of the Kabwe National Consultative Conference, pp. 7 - 8; and Documents of the Second National Consultative Conference of the ANC, Zambia, 16 - 23 June 1985, p. 41.

elected to the NEC in 1985. He was co-opted onto the NEC only later on.

As far as the ANC itself was concerned, the figures quoted by the South African government, Williamson and Lodge were far too high. According to Meli of the ANC, only five members of the ANC's NEC were also members of the SACP. He did not say who these members were however. (**)

An interesting aspect of Lodge's interpretation of the relationship between the SACP and the ANC, is that although his figures differ from that of the South African government and Williamson, they do suggest that the SACP most probably had a majority in the ANC's National Executive Committee by 1985.

Since 1985, however, the ANC's National Executive has undergone a number of changes in membership due to deaths and assassinations. Mabhida for instance died in 1986. The same year also saw the death of Florence Mophosho, while Make was assassinated in Swaziland in 1987. To compensate for the death of these people, new members were co-opted onto the NEC between 1987 and 1988. The first was Thozamile Botha to whom we have referred above. (***) As one of the post-Soweto generation of Black leaders, his appointment was seen as a victory for the younger generation of Soweto leaders. In July 1988 further changes were made to the NEC. According to Africa Confidential (****) at least seven new members were co-opted onto the NEC. This was done partially to increase the membership of the NEC in accordance with the resolutions adopted at Kabwe, and partially to counter the growing influence of Hani and his militant faction in the executive. Those who were coopted onto the NEC in mid-1988 were: Steve Tshwete (his appointment to the NEC was apparently

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94. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1986.05.11 (A "Who's Left of Whom" Guide to ANC Leaders).
 95. The Daily News (Durban), 1987.07.15; The Daily News, 1990.02.28; See also B. Barrett, A Profile of the ANC, Inkatha Institute Publication (Unpublished) 1988.06.8, p. 52.
 96. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29(16), 1988.08.12, pp. 1 - 2); The Citizen (Johannesburg), 1988.03.02; The Daily News (Durban), 1990.02.28.

compensation for his dismissal from the post of Political Commissar of Umkhonto in Angola), Ronnie Kasrils (Chief of Military Intelligence for Umkhonto and a senior member of the SACP), Jacqueline Molefe (Chief of Communications for Umkhonto and presumably also a member of the SACP), Sindiso Mfeyane, Stanley Mabizela (ANC representative in Zimbabwe), Timothy Mokwena and Jacky Selebi. The latter was Secretary-General of the ANC's Youth and Students' Section and a spokesman for the ANC in Lusaka. Of the seven newcomers to the NEC at least three, namely Tshwete, Kasrils and Selebi, were members of the SACP. A fourth, namely Molefe is probably also a member of the SACP but there is no certainty. She held the position of Head of Communications in Umkhonto.⁽⁹⁷⁾

In addition to the role played by the SACP in the ANC's executive committee, and Umkhonto Political Military Council and its Exile National High Command, it also had access to approximately 44 countries around the world via the External Mission of the ANC.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Exactly how many of the ANC's official representatives were card-carrying members of the SACP is not possible to say but one can assume that those selected for service in communist countries such as East Germany, Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Algeria and Libya would almost certainly have been members of the SACP. Even in non-Communist countries such as France and Italy, members of the SACP appear to have been in charge of the official missions of the ANC. Tony Mongale, identified by Lodge as a possible member of the SACP, was the ANC's representative in Italy from 1972 - 1978, before he was transferred to Berlin. Similarly, the ANC's chief representative in Paris, France, Mrs. Dulcie September, was also a member of the SACP. Although Mrs September's membership of the SACP had been denied by the ANC and the SACP, the fact that the French Communist Party was responsible for her funeral arrangements after she was assassinated

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97. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29(16), 1988.08.12, p. 1); South Africa: Inside the Communist Party, (Africa Confidential, 29(17), 1988.08.26, pp. 2 - 5).
98. The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Security Legislation, R/P, 90/1981, p. 57. See also The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.11 (A New Privileged Elite).



in 1988, has led many to believe that she was a senior member of the SACP, despite the denials. According to press reports at the time, several ANC members privately expressed their concern at the role that the French Communist Party played in Mrs September's funeral arrangements as well as by their presence at her funeral.

A member of the French Liberal Party apparently later remarked that, if there was still any doubt as to the role of the SACP in the ANC, the funeral of Mrs September had finally dispelled this. The South African government, he pointed out, was right in its claims that the ANC was communist controlled. (**)

9. SOVIET MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE

A further area of strong communist support for, if not domination over the ANC since the mid-1960's, has been in the field of Soviet material, in particular military support for the armed struggle. After Moscow and its satellite states first began to supply arms to the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto in the mid-1960's, the Soviet Bloc quickly became the largest if not the only supplier of military hardware to the ANC and Umkhonto. Indeed, the ANC's Mission in Exile had made virtually no progress in obtaining military support for Umkhonto before 1963/64 when Slovo and Marks took control of all aspects of Soviet arms supplies to Umkhonto. Western governments such as Sweden, Denmark and Holland were prepared to give financial and "humanitarian" aid to the ANC, but refused to provide the armed movement with any military hardware. While the ANC had repeatedly stressed the fact that its reliance on Soviet military equipment did not in any way influence its ideological beliefs, there can be little doubt that Soviet weapon supplies and communist ideological support went hand in hand as far as the armed struggle in South Africa was concerned.

99. The Daily News, 1988.03.30; The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1988.04.10; The Daily News, 1988.04.11 (Reds harm ANC image at funeral).



Without the arms from the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc allies, the ANC and Umkhonto would not have been able to pursue the armed struggle in South Africa, irrespective of how big an effort it made.

Thus, for the ANC to claim that by accepting Soviet arms, it did not necessarily accept the ideology that went with it, was wishful thinking. Even if the ANC had a genuine desire to follow such a non-aligned policy, the Soviet Union would simply not have allowed it. The recent changes in Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev and the effect it had on the ANC-SACP alliance, particularly on the SACP, provided clear proof of this. Up to the beginning of 1990, when the SACP finally altered its stance on the reform initiatives of the Gorbachev administration in the Soviet Union, the ANC, like the SACP, maintained an orthodox Marxist point of view on aspects such as the armed struggle and negotiations with the South African government. It was only with the collapse of orthodox communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and after the SACP's leadership became convinced that Gorbachev had sufficient support in the Soviet Union to continue with his political and economic reforms, that the ANC began to change its stance on negotiations and a possible negotiated settlement in South Africa. (100)

CONCLUSION

Although the SACP has never in its long history of association and co-operation with the ANC, especially since the banning of the ANC in 1960 and the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, admitted to the fact that it was in full or even partial control of the liberation movement in South Africa by virtue of its control of the ANC and Umkhonto, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this was indeed the case: that the SACP was not only the senior of the two partners in the ANC-SACP alliance, but that it was in fact in financial control of the ANC and the armed struggle since 1961. By 1969 it had also secured both organisational and ideological control over the ANC.

100. See following copies of South African Update: vol. 1, no's. 1, 2, 3 and 4, 15 July - 31 August 1989.

It is interesting to note that those who were in disagreement with this interpretation of the relationship between the SACP and the ANC, were normally those who either have close ties with the liberation alliance, or who were in broad support of the aims and objectives of the Alliance. In their assessment of the relationship between the SACP, the ANC and Umkhonto, these people appeared to ignore or minimise important factors such as the degree of interlocking membership between the members of the liberation alliance or the type of stereotype Marxist language they all spoke.

They further seemed to ignore the fact that in each of the major liberatory wars fought in Africa since the end of the Second World War, such as in Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, material support for the guerrillas and Marxist ideology went hand in hand. In each of the above countries where communist arms and other forms of communist support formed the backbone of the guerrillas' struggle for national liberation, Marxist forms of government were set up after independence. In view of this development, it is not unrealistic to argue that the so-called "struggle for national liberation" led by the ANC-SACP alliance, was not so much a struggle for the liberation of the country's Black masses from oppression, but the desire to set up a Marxist "democracy" in which the SACP - and not the ANC - would ultimately be in control.

Further evidence of the role that the SACP played in the ANC-SACP alliance and the liberation struggle in South Africa, can be gained from the changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since Gorbachev came to power in 1985, and the effect that this has had on the SACP and the ANC. Although both the SACP and the ANC steadfastly resisted the reforms initiated by Gorbachev since the mid-1980's, these reforms had such a dramatic effect on the course of orthodox communism and the unity of the entire communist world, that by the end of the 1980's even the SACP and the ANC could no longer ignore it. As a result, by the beginning of 1990 the SACP - to the surprise of many observers - released a policy document entitled "Has Socialism Failed" in which it questioned its past



approach to Marxist-Leninism and the reforms brought about by Gorbachev. The reason for this was clear. Since the middle of the second half of the 1980's, the SACP and ANC leadership, particularly the military and Stalinist hardliners, had experienced increasing criticism and pressure from within their own ranks because of their inability to adjust to the changes that were taking place around them. The most criticism came from the "moderates" who were concerned that if the alliance did not take cognisance of the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it would become isolated by the speed with which things were developing, particularly inside South Africa.

The simple fact of the matter was that the ANC and the SACP were faced with a situation by the end of 1989 over which they had little or no control. Caught between the collapse of orthodox communism in Europe and the growing desire, both in the Soviet Union and South Africa, for a negotiated settlement to the latter's racial and political problems, the communist hardliners in the SACP and the ANC had little choice but to review their stance on orthodox Marxism. The fact that the latter decision was seen to be made by the SACP alone and that the new policy directions being pursued in the Soviet Union then also became the policy of the ANC, is clear indication of the fact that the SACP was the senior partner in the ANC, and that it controlled virtually every aspect of the latter. (101)

Perhaps what Mandela told the Rivonia Court in 1963 still held true for the relationship between the ANC and the SACP at the end of the 1980's. He said:

It is perhaps difficult for White South Africans with an ingrained prejudice against Communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept Communists as their friends. But

101. The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 1990.01.19 - 25; South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential, 31(1), 1990.01.12, pp. 1 - 4). See also Kunert, Glasnost, New Thinking and the ANC-SACP Alliance, p. 5).



to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences among those fighting against oppression are a luxury which cannot be afforded. What is more, for many decades Communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and as their equals; who were prepared to talk with us, eat with us, live with us, and work with us. They were the only political group which was prepared to work with the African for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with Communism ... (102)

This explanation undoubtedly still held true for the ANC's relationship with the SACP by the end of 1988.

102. Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom, p. 181.



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ORGANISATION, LEADERSHIP AND FINANCING OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

One particular aspect of Umkhonto we Sizwe about which little has been written since the beginning of the armed struggle in 1961, has been the organisation's structure, the nature of its leadership and its funding. This is not surprising, since revelations about how the organisation operated, who its leaders were, and who financed it, could be harmful if not destructive to its security. This is particularly true of the period between 1961 and the middle of the 1960's when the armed struggle was being conducted from within South Africa. During these early years no information was ever officially released by the ANC on any of its underground structures; their interrelations and functions or who was responsible for what in the organisation. What is known about the organisation and leadership of Umkhonto and the underground during these early years, is largely based on information revealed during the numerous court cases that involved the members or alleged members of the underground ANC and the SACP and the research that has been undertaken by various scholars on the subject. Edward Felt was the first scholar to make extensive use of the abovementioned court material for research into the history of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto between 1960 and 1964. As a result of the work done by him and the information contained in other sources such as Bruno Mtolo's book on Umkhonto a reasonably clear picture can be formed of the organisational structure of Umkhonto and its leadership during this period. As far as the funding of Umkhonto is concerned virtually nothing is known besides the fact that the organisation was set up largely with SACP funds.

Since the 1970's a number of new sources have appeared on the subject



of both the ANC and Umkhonto, which contain specks of information on the organisation, leadership and funding of the two organisations. While this additional information has added to our knowledge of the ANC and Umkhonto, the overall picture of the organisation and leadership of Umkhonto between 1961 and the present, remains to be a sketchy one at best. Although the account that follows necessarily reflects this lack of illuminating information, it does provide some insight into how Umkhonto was structured, what changes took place over the years, whom its leaders were and who funded it, particularly during the 1980's.

I THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

1.1 The Period 1960 - 1964

According to Feit⁽¹⁾, Umkhonto's organisational set-up followed the broad outlines of Nelson Mandela's M-Plan. Although Umkhonto started off in what seemed to have been an unplanned fashion, attempts were soon made to transform the new organisation into a modified format of the M-Plan. According to Feit, Umkhonto, like the ANC, was organised into a web of commands that linked the various structures of the underground organisation together through a system of contact persons that operated clandestinely and vertically. This was similar to underground communist structures elsewhere and any deviation from the M-Plan was done purely for functional reasons.

Although Umkhonto followed the broad outlines of the M-Plan, the picture of the organisation's structure is complicated by the fact that the M-Plan itself - with the exception of the Port Elizabeth and Cator Manor regions - was never fully implemented in the country, but was often adapted by the local ANC leadership to serve their own needs rather than that of the broader organisation. As a result, in some regions the leaders of the ANC and the SACP were able to make effective use of the local structures of the ANC, modified by the M-Plan to introduce Umkhonto, while in others it had to set up

1. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, (Journal of Modern African Studies 8(1), 1970, p. 66).



entirely different and independent structures for Umkhonto. In Port Elizabeth, for instance, where the M-Plan had been successfully implemented, the local leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto could and did make effective use of the local organisational structures and leadership of the ANC and the SACP to set up Umkhonto in 1961.

In Durban and the rest of Natal, on the other hand, where the local ANC had resisted the implementation of the M-Plan (with perhaps the exception of the Cato Manor township just outside Durban, where the M-Plan had been partially implemented) the leadership of Umkhonto could not make use of the organisational structure or the membership of the local ANC to set up Umkhonto in 1961. Since Umkhonto's leaders could not make use of the structure of the leadership of the ANC in Natal, it made use of the underground structures of the Communist Party and SACTU in the province to set up Umkhonto during that years. With most of Umkhonto's national leadership also being members of the underground SACP, it was logical that Umkhonto should recruit its leadership in Durban from the ranks of the Communist Party and its affiliated organisations, such as the Hospital Worker's Union in Durban. Thus, as a result of the hostility between the local ANC and the radical leadership of the underground ANC in Johannesburg, Umkhonto obtained an organisational structure in Natal that was somewhat different from Umkhonto structures elsewhere in the country.

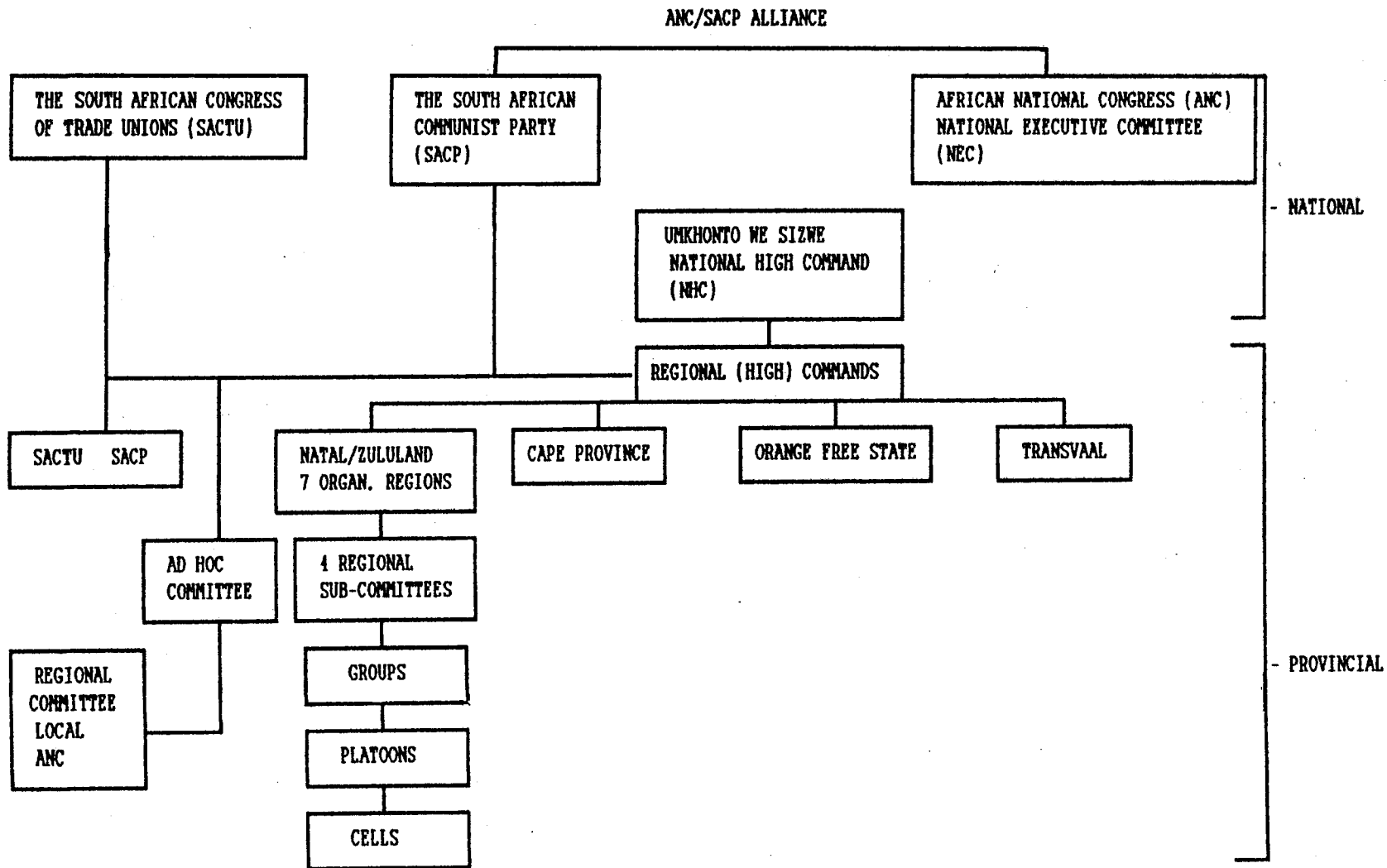
1.1.1 Umkhonto's Organisation and Leadership in Natal⁽²⁾

Theoretically, Umkhonto in Natal was designed to consist of a single Regional (High) Command situated in Durban, and four sub-Regional Commands representative of the rest of Natal and Zululand. With the Regional Command in Durban being the most senior and thus the co-ordinating organ in the province, the sub-Regional Commands were its direct link to the lowest level of organisation, namely, the groups, sections and cells which were mainly responsible for the physical execution of the sabotage campaign.

2. See Diagram H, p. 405.

DIAGRAM H

BASIC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE IN NATAL 1961 - 1963





In addition to these divisions, Natal was to have been divided into seven organisational areas, each under the control of an area organiser who was directly responsible to a regional organiser attached to the Regional Command in Durban. To ensure that the seven area organisers did their work properly - which was the recruitment of volunteers for Umkhonto - an overseer was to have been appointed by the Regional Command in Durban with the approval of the ANC (presumably the NEC in Johannesburg because the ANC and Umkhonto in Natal were not in agreement on the armed struggle). According to Mtolo,⁽³⁾ who is a major source of information on Umkhonto in Natal, the NHC in Johannesburg had the final say on the appointment of both the seven area organisers, and their overseer. The seven organisers were to be paid R20,00 a month plus a travelling allowance of R14,00 per month. Since the provinces had no funds of their own, all salaries and allowances needed to conduct the armed struggle came directly from the NHC in Johannesburg, which in turn obtained its funds from the SACP. According to Mtolo, the NHC in Johannesburg also in this respect had the final say in the organisational set-up of Umkhonto in Natal. Thus, the seven organisational areas were not devised by the Regional Command in Durban but by the NHC. Mtolo wrote:

Mbeki showed me a list of the seven organisational areas. When I look at it as a man who knows Natal I guessed that it had been taken from a map. In some places organisers would be crossing one another's areas. When I pointed this out I was told that we could zone the areas to suit ourselves.⁽⁴⁾

It is not known how many of the seven proposed organisational areas were eventually set up by the Regional Command in Durban. According to Mtolo, whose evidence is very sketchy on the subject, Solomon (Solly) Mbanjwa was charged with the task of setting up these areas. Mbanjwa allegedly visited Pietermaritzburg, Hammersdale and Bergville

3. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 73 - 74.
4. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 74 - 75.



during the first half of 1963 to arrange for the establishment of sub-Regional Commands in these areas.⁽⁵⁾

Shortly after Mbanjwa returned to Durban, Mtolo was instructed to proceed to Bergville to instruct the members of the newly established sub-Regional Command in the art of bomb making and sabotage. Mtolo's contact person in Bergville was known by the name Zondo. Zondo, like Mtolo (and virtually everyone else in Umkhonto in Natal) was a member of the SACP in the province. Zondo had been recruited into Umkhonto by David Ndawonde, who was one of Umkhonto's group or section leaders in Durban.

According to Mtolo, the Bergville sub-Regional Command consisted of four people, namely Zondo, Rabbit, and two others whose names he failed to mention.⁽⁶⁾ Beyond this, nothing else is known about the structure and the activities of the Bergville sub-Regional Command, or whether any other sub-Regional Commands were ever set up.

Further divisions were mentioned by Mtolo both in his testimony at the Rivonia Trial in 1963 and later in his book on Umkhonto in Natal. These were groups, platoons, sections and cells. Unfortunately Mtolo did not elaborate on these divisions, or on their functions. As a result it is difficult to determine whether these divisions were ever set up by the Regional Command in Durban or how they were to have functioned. There is also uncertainty as to whether they were different organs or whether these were in fact all one and the same organ, referred to by different names. Given the relatively small leadership structure of Umkhonto in Natal and the difficulty that it had in recruiting sufficient volunteers for the organisation between 1962 and 1963, not to mention the fact that most of the acts of sabotage committed by Umkhonto in the province were done by members of the Regional Command assisted by a handful of others, one is inclined to believe that Umkhonto's structure below the division of sub-Regional Command consisted primarily of cells and that in some areas, such as in the Durban area, where Umkhonto had a larger

5. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 89 - 90.

6. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 103 - 109.

following, cells could be grouped together to form a group, platoon or section. What can be gathered from Mtolo's evidence was that a cell normally consisted of four members of whom one was designated as the cell leader.⁽⁷⁾ The latter person was the only member of the unit that had direct contact with the next level of organisation which could be either the sub-Regional Command or a group or platoon, when sufficient cells could be grouped together to form such a sub-division. In the case of the latter, three cells normally formed a group or platoon. This meant that a group or platoon could have up to twelve members, of whom one was elected or appointed to act as a group or platoon leader. This further meant that where a group or platoon had been formed, the various cell leaders would be responsible to the group or platoon leader who in turn would be responsible to the next level of organisation. No horizontal contact between the various organs of Umkhonto was allowed. In other words, theoretically the members of one cell or group did not know the members of another cell or group. In practice, however, this did not always work well and the members of one cell sometimes became known to the members of another cell. There is also the possibility that Mtolo could have confused groups with cells and that the groups such as those in Durban and Hammersdale which he refers to in his evidence were in actual fact cells, since they consisted of only four to five members. The situation remains unclear. Mtolo for instance alleged that the acts of sabotage that were committed by the Regional Command of Umkhonto in Durban towards the end of 1962 to revenge the arrest of Nelson Mandela were executed by three "groups" consisting of four members each. The members of these groups were not ordinary Umkhonto cadres but were either group or sub-group leaders themselves. The group that for instance stood under the leadership of Mtolo himself consisted of three group leaders, namely Solomon Mbanjwa, who was himself an Umkhonto group leader in Hammersdale; Ablon Duna, who was the deputy-leader of the Durban group, and Jerry Kumalo who was the group leader of the Claremont township group. The other groups were composed in a similar manner, namely three group, or sub-group

7. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 29.



leaders under the direct command of a member of the Regional Command in Durban. Billy Nair of the Regional Command in Durban for instance commanded the second group. He was assisted by Cootzee Naicker, Kirsten Moonsammy and Ebrahim Ismail. Ebrahim and Moonsammy were themselves the leaders of the Durban Central and Clairwood groups respectively. Ronnie Kasrils, who was the only White member of Umkhonto in Durban commanded the third group and was assisted by Justice Mpanza and two others whose names are unknown.⁽⁸⁾

The task of these three attack groups which operated directly under the command of the Regional Command in Durban was two-fold, namely to select and reconnoitre targets for attack and, once these targets had been identified, to report them to the Regional Command who in turn had to report it to the NHC in Johannesburg for approval.

According to Mtolo, once an attack had been executed and the outcome was known, a report had to be submitted to the Regional Command as well as to M.P. Naicker in Durban who was the local news agent for the leftwing paper New Age in Natal.⁽⁹⁾ Propagation of the armed struggle was thus an important element of the ANC and the SACP's armed struggle from the beginning. Undoubtedly the government was well aware of this with the result that New Age was banned in 1962.⁽¹⁰⁾

In addition to the various structures mentioned so far, a further structure known as the Secretariat was set up in Natal. This organ was formed sometime in 1962 by the ANC-SACP leadership in Johannesburg to try and improve relations between the ANC and Umkhonto in Natal. Not a great deal is known about the activities of the Secretariat, but it appears to have substituted some of the functions of the local Regional Committee of the ANC, such as the implementation of the M-Plan which the Regional Committee was having little success with. The Secretariat existed until about February 1963

8. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 26, 27, 48, 49, 51.

9. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 51.

10. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, p. 274.



when it was replaced by an Ad Hoc Committee. At the same time a new Regional Committee was set up in Natal, because the old one was not co-operating with the Regional Command of Umkhonto in the province. It is interesting to note that the members of the Ad Hoc Committee were not appointed by the ANC in Natal but by a member of the ANC's NEC and Umkhonto's NHC in Johannesburg, namely Govan Mbeki. Although the task of the new Ad Hoc Committee was similar to that of the Secretariat it replaced, its members were more carefully selected.⁽¹¹⁾ According to Mtolo, Curdnick Ndlovu, who was the leader of Umkhonto in Natal, was instructed by Walter Sisulu of the NHC to resist giving in to the demands of the ANC in Natal and to act only on instructions coming directly from the NHC in Johannesburg. He was further instructed to make sure that any contact between Umkhonto and the ANC in the province was conducted through the office of Solly Mbanjwa who was in charge of the Ad Hoc Committee.⁽¹²⁾

Both the new Regional Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee were therefore creations of the ANC and the SACP in Johannesburg. As far as their composition and functions were concerned, the Regional Committee consisted of a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and a number of sub-committees such as a finance sub-committee, a trade union sub-committee, a rural areas sub-committee and a sub-committee for propaganda. Two of these sub-committees, namely that on finances and that on propaganda, were headed by members of Umkhonto's Regional Command in Durban - Jerry Kumalo was in charge of the propaganda sub-committee while Curdnick Ndlovu was in charge of the sub-committee on finances.⁽¹³⁾

The Ad Hoc Committee, unlike the Regional Committee, was under the full control of the NHC of Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP in Johannesburg. It for instance received all its instructions directly

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11. Durban Regional Court, Natal, Case RC. 139/1964, The State against Pascal Ngakane and 24 others, Evidence of E. Kunene, pp. 5 - 6.
 12. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 28 - 29.
 13. Durban Regional Court, Natal, Case RC. 139/1964, The State against P. Ngakane and 24 others, Evidence of E. Kunene, pp. 25 - 32.



from these three organs and also reported back to them directly by means of a courier. In contrast to the Secretariat it replaced, the new Ad Hoc Committee was given increased powers and authority. It was allowed to take decisions independent from the NHC in Johannesburg as long as they remained within the broad framework of the organisation's policy and programme. This was probably done to reduce the province's dependence on the NHC in Johannesburg and to expedite decisions at the lower levels of organisation. As a result of increased police action against the ANC and Umkhonto by the beginning of 1963, the leaders in Natal sometimes found it impossible to keep regular contact with Johannesburg.⁽¹⁴⁾

As far as the sub-committees are concerned, very little is known about their functions beyond what can be inferred from their names. According to Elias Kunene⁽¹⁵⁾ who briefly described the functions of these committees while giving evidence in court, the task of the sub-committee on finances was to collect funds and donations from people who were sympathetic to the struggle. It also handled all funds received from the NHC in Johannesburg. The sub-committee on trade unions, on the other hand, dealt with matters relating to trade union activities such as the organisation of workers in industry and the recruitment of new members, presumably for Umkhonto. SACTU, as had been indicated, served as a major source of recruitment for Umkhonto in Natal. The sub-committee on rural areas did exactly what its name implied, namely to organise and promote the armed struggle outside the urban areas and to solicit support for the ANC and Umkhonto in the rural areas of Natal.⁽¹⁶⁾

The fourth and last sub-committee, namely the propaganda sub-committee, was responsible mainly for the preparation and distribution of lectures and propaganda material in the townships. It also had close

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14. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, p. 109.
 15. Durban Regional Court, Natal, Case RC. 139/1964, The State against P. Ngakane and 24 others, Evidence of E. Kunene, pp. 30 - 34.
 16. Durban Regional Court, Natal, Case RC. 139/1964, The State against P. Ngakane and 24 others, Evidence of E. Kunene, pp. 30 - 34.



ties with the sub-committee on rural areas (which it assisted in a propagandist capacity).

Originally thus, Umkhonto in Natal was largely an urban based organisation with most of its members living and operating in the various Black townships around the province. By 1963, however, there were indications that the organisation was planning to extend its structures and recruitment campaigns to the rural areas. According to Mtolo:

In our Regional Command meetings we decided that we should use our position as SACTU secretaries to convene a joint meeting of the ANC Regional and SACTU officials. The idea was that we should organise a meeting of all the people - mainly workers and peasants, chiefs and indunas - so that we could select certain people to be our contacts in the rural areas.⁽¹⁷⁾

1.1.2 The Organisation of Umkhonto outside Natal

Very little is known factually about the organisation of Umkhonto outside Natal. In the Port Elizabeth region in the Eastern Cape the local ANC had been successfully reorganised along the organisational lines of the M-Plan. Umkhonto - in terms of its organisational structure and leadership - immediately identified itself with the ANC and the underground SACP-SACTU structures. Although not a great deal is known about Umkhonto's structure in the Eastern Cape, indications are that it was basically similar to the organisational set-up of Umkhonto in Natal, and that it only differed from it in that it also made use of the local organisational structure of the ANC in the region.

As was the case in Natal, the various organisational divisions of Umkhonto in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere were vertically linked together by means of couriers, who ensured the upwards and downwards flow of information between the provinces and Umkhonto's underground

17. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 27.



headquarters in Johannesburg. The lowest organisational division was the cell. In the Port Elizabeth region, unlike Natal, the various divisions of Umkhonto consisted of units of seven - whether it be houses, cells or zones. For instance, seven houses or a street block would form a cell while seven cells would form a zone branch or group which would resort directly under the Regional Command or Regional Committee in the province. The latter two organs were directly responsible to the ANC and Umkhonto's NHC in Johannesburg.⁽¹⁸⁾ In Port Elizabeth, where Umkhonto made use of the organisational structure of the ANC, the Regional Committee and the Regional Command were probably the one and same organ thus making it unnecessary for the ANC-SACP alliance in Johannesburg to set up an Ad Hoc Committee, as it did in Natal, to liaise between the ANC and Umkhonto.

Due to the close relationship between the ANC and Umkhonto in the Eastern Cape, it is not clear whether all underground cells in the region were unified cells, that is whether they contained both ANC and Umkhonto cadres or whether a division was kept between them. Indications are that most Umkhonto cells were representative of both the ANC and Umkhonto. According to Feit, many of the Umkhonto recruits who were captured by the police for having left the country illegally during the 1960's to be trained as guerrillas often did not know whether they belonged to the ANC or Umkhonto and considered the two organisations to be one and the same. Similarly, many of those who were recruited specifically for Umkhonto made reference to their membership of the ANC rather than Umkhonto when questioned on their activities in the latter organisation. Feit ascribed this partially to the fact that

the ANC and Umkhonto were not neatly structured bodies following prescribed lines. Lines, he pointed out, were blurred even for members; often they were not really certain which organisation they had joined or been transferred to. This vagueness, together with the tendency for members of Umkhonto to say that they were ANC, was often used by the police in nailing ANC leaders.⁽¹⁹⁾

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18. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, pp. 98 - 101.
 19. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 - 1964, pp. 188 - 189.



1.1.3 The National High Command (NHC) of Umkhonto we Sizwe

The size of the NHC as it existed in the early 1960's up to the time of the Rivonia raid in July 1963 has never been determined. At the trial of the NHC in 1963, the State listed ten names in its indictment as being definite leaders of the NHC and some 22 others as possible leaders or people who had been closely associated with the NHC.⁽²⁰⁾ Francis Meli, in his recently published book on the ANC does not shed much light on the subject either. He merely stated that those who formed Umkhonto in 1961 were all members of the ANC and the SACP and that Mandela had been the organisation's first Commander-in-Chief.⁽²¹⁾

It is possible, given the interlocking membership between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto, that the NHC could indeed have been as large as the state suggested in 1963. However, this is highly unlikely as such a large body would have severely hampered the decision-making process - something that a clandestine underground organisation cannot afford. Normally, underground command structures like the NHC are small and highly mobile. This is of the utmost importance if quick decisions and flexibility of actions are required. In view of this it is thus doubtful whether the inner core that controlled Umkhonto was much larger than a handful of people, all of whom were members of both the ANC and the SACP. It is also not clear what position the National Executive of the ANC occupied during these years. Although reference is made to its existence after 1960, its membership and size was never revealed until the Morogoro Consultative Conference, by which stage it existed and operated exclusively outside South Africa. By then it contained approximately 20 members. It is of course possible that the underground National Executive of the ANC and the NHC of Umkhonto were one and the same organ for the period 1961 to 1963 and that the members of the NEC were also the members of the NHC. The fact that almost no reference is made to the

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20. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Revised Indictment, pp. 1 - 2, and Opening Address Dr. P. Yutar, pp. 1 - 19.
21. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 148.



NEC during this time and that most of its alleged members also appeared to have been members of the NHC of Umkhonto, suggests that this was more than likely the case, at least until the collapse of the underground by the mid-1960's.

As the most senior organ in the organisational structure of Umkhonto, the NHC was charged with the task of controlling the day-to-day running of the armed struggle. As a creation of the ANC-SACP alliance, the NHC had representation on both the NEC of the ANC and the Central Committee of the SACP, from where it received its instructions and funding. According to Mell⁽²²⁾ the NHC had the powers to co-opt new members, to appoint Regional Commands, to determine tactics and targets and was in overall command of the training of cadres and the financing of the armed struggle.

All contact between the NHC and the provinces were maintained by means of specially assigned couriers. Occasionally instructions were also sent by post, but since this was not a secure method of communication it was only used in extreme cases. On some occasions provincial leaders of Umkhonto were instructed to report to the NHC in Johannesburg, either to receive instructions or to be given special training in some or other aspect of sabotage or underground work. On other occasions the provinces were visited by members of the NHC to make assessments of developments in the provinces and to deal with problems. Both Joe Modise and Nelson Mandela, for instance, visited Natal in 1962, while Bruno Mtolo paid at least two visits to the NHC in Johannesburg. He also escorted recruits from Natal to Johannesburg between 1962 and 1963.⁽²³⁾

Although the NHC, as the most senior organ in Umkhonto's organisational set-up, had the final say in virtually all matters with regard to the development of the armed struggle in the provinces, the need for the Regional Commands to sometimes act without the prior consent

22. Mell, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 147.

23. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 69 - 88.



of the NHC, meant that in practice the underground headquarters in Johannesburg was not always consulted on all matters relating to the armed struggle in the provinces.

1.2 THE POST RIVONIA PERIOD: UMKHONTO WE SIZWE IN EXILE,
1964 - 1983

As is the case with the internal history of Umkhonto, not a great deal is known about the organisation's external history and structure due to the extensive secrecy attached to its activities and leadership.

With the destruction of the underground movement by the middle of the 1960's following the discovery of the combined underground headquarters of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto at Rivonia in July 1963, the control and day-to-day running of the armed struggle in South Africa fell to the ANC's Mission in Exile. Exactly what became of Umkhonto and how it was structured in those years is not clear.

The little available evidence suggest that for the first few years after 1965, Umkhonto did not exist as a separate organisation under the control of an exile NHC but that all activities related to the armed struggle in South Africa, such as the recruitment, training and return of cadres to South Africa were directly controlled by the ANC-SACP alliance in exile. This remained to be the case until the Morogoro Conference in 1969 when the functions of the ANC and Umkhonto were separated and the latter was placed under the direct and day to day control of a Revolutionary Council.

According to James Stuart, a member of the SACP and later member of the ANC's NEC, who had left South Africa in 1964, there was little by 1965 that could be structurally recognised as either the ANC or Umkhonto. Although the ANC and Umkhonto by that date had between 500 and 600 people in exile, the ANC's Mission in Exile in Dar-Es-Salaam existed of little more than two "residences", one known as the "Luthuli residence" and the other the "Mandela residence", as well as two battered vehicles, a Landrover and a Morris Oxford station wagon. By that stage Umkhonto also appeared to have had its first military

training camp at Kongwa in Tanzania. This camp was apparently set up sometime between 1964 and 1965 and was the home of the second batch of recruits who were sent to the Soviet Union and Red China in 1964 for political and military training. One of the first commanders of Kongwa camp was Stuart himself. He was also part of the first group selected to infiltrate South Africa in 1967 and to organise mass insurrection. (24)

To judge by what has recently been published on this early period in the history of the ANC's Mission in Exile, the NHC which conducted the affairs of Umkhonto inside the country up to 1964, was not immediately duplicated by the External Mission after that date. Indications are that the ANC and the SACP were jointly responsible for the running of Umkhonto and the armed struggle in South Africa. According to Meli, a meeting of the NEC of the ANC in Exile was held in Dar-es-Salaam in 1965 at which the entire armed struggle and the future of the ANC was assessed. The meeting, which was an enlarged gathering of the NEC, followed the pattern of External Mission consultative meetings held since 1960 whereby representatives from various offices and organs of the ANC-SACP alliance that were in existence at the time, were summoned to Dar-es-Salaam to discuss and decide on important issues. The 1965 meeting was attended by the leaders of Umkhonto, the SACP and SACTU. According to Meli, the purpose of this crucial meeting was to review the political situation, set new tasks, and improve

our machinery for vigorously pursuing the objectives of our armed struggle, including in particular, the movement of Umkhonto we Sizwe units to the home front. It was around this time that the working alliance between the ANC and the CP became a more open alliance and began to be officially acknowledged. (25)

In 1966 a further consultative meeting of the NEC of the ANC was held in Dar-es-Salaam. It was attended by the same people who attended

24. The Daily News, (Durban), 1990.04.9 - 10.

25. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 160.



the 1965 meeting. This time the main item on the agenda was the role and status of members and organisations such as the SACP and the SACTU in the ANC's External Mission, especially with regard to their role in the dual responsibility of the Mission to mobilize the masses in South Africa in preparation for the resumption of the armed struggle and to build up international solidarity and support for the cause of the ANC. Meli went on to state that by 1966 the ANC's Mission in Exile, as a result of the destruction of the underground inside South Africa, had taken over, "in short, the whole process of preparation for armed struggle" in South Africa.⁽²⁶⁾ Although Meli went on to say that the new responsibilities placed on the shoulders of the Mission in Exile called for a drastic reorganisation, he does not say how this was done, with the result that we are still in the dark as to the organisational structure of the ANC and Umkhonto between 1966 and the Morogoro conference of 1969 when some major changes were forced onto the ANC and the SACP by changing conditions both inside and outside the movement.

Two major changes which were introduced to the organisation and structure of the Mission in Exile at Morogoro in 1969, was the reduction of the NEC of the ANC from twenty-three to nine members, to which there has been referred to in Chapter Five, and the creation of a separate organ: the Revolutionary Council, jointly staffed by the ANC and the SACP to conduct the affairs of Umkhonto. Stephen Davis⁽²⁷⁾ writes:

The 1969 conference mandated the restructuring of the Party's underground, with new attention being paid to South Africa's black youths. The international solidarity work that had been the external mission's chief occupation would now, on paper at least, be assigned second priority after the work of internal political mobilization.

Another major decision taken at Morogoro that affected the organisation of the Mission-in-Exile, was the division of the ANC into three

26. Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, p. 161.

27. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 23 - 24.



major sections and the decision to move the organisation's headquarters from Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania to Lusaka in Zambia. In terms of the first decision, three new departments namely that of the President, the Secretary-General and Treasurer-General, were set up to oversee the entire liberation struggle, to control the various non-military departments and to control the finances of the organisation respectively. In addition to these offices departments of education, health, legal and religious affairs as well as women's and youth branches were set up.⁽²⁸⁾

Thus after 1969 the political and military aspects of the armed struggle were again divided between the ANC-SACP on the one hand and Umkhonto on the other. Much of the history of Umkhonto between 1969 and the mid-1970's, when a change in the status of the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique made it possible for the ANC-SACP alliance to resume the armed struggle in South Africa, appear to have been taken up with the training of cadres and the infiltration of guerrillas into South Africa to set up underground structures inside the country in preparation for the resumption of the armed struggle.⁽²⁹⁾ The more specific means by which this goal was to be achieved and the relationship between the internal centres, the External Mission, and the Revolutionary Council is however not clear and were never revealed from inside Umkhonto.⁽³⁰⁾

It is also not clear how many underground cells, if any, the ANC and Umkhonto had managed to establish inside South Africa or in neighbouring states between 1969 and the mid-1970's. Indications are - and this is partially borne out by the general absence of ANC-Umkhonto guerrilla activity during this time - that the organisation probably had not more than a handful operative inside the country during these years but that the activity of the latter was largely inhibited

28. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10.

29. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2) 1973, pp. 286 - 287); Mayibuye, 1969.05.10, p. 8.

30. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 287).



by the vigilance of the South African police and the absence of friendly borders which could be used to infiltrate arms into the country. It also appears that the ANC and Umkhonto had little or no organisational presence in any of the rural and homeland areas of South Africa up to the middle of the 1970's. This will help to explain why the Mission in Exile was largely unable to resume the armed struggle inside South Africa before the second half of the 1970's.

As a result of its organisational weaknesses inside South Africa during the first half of the 1970's, the ANC and Umkhonto were largely caught unaware by the Soweto uprising when it broke out in June 1976.⁽³¹⁾ The sudden mass influx of recruits into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto, while highly welcomed by these organisations, presented them with serious logistical, ideological and organisational problems. Although the ANC and Umkhonto managed as best as they could with the sudden organisational and other demands made on them, it was not until the end of the 1970's that Umkhonto was in a position to relaunch and escalate the armed struggle in South Africa.

Thus, although the ANC had managed to overcome most of its internal leadership problems by the middle of the 1970's and had succeeded in setting up a handful of underground cells inside South Africa, it still lacked the necessary organisational infrastructure to take advantage of the revolutionary developments that followed the Soweto unrest in 1976. In fact, the growth of the Black Consciousness philosophy, coupled with the sudden influx of thousands of its adherents into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto, while advantageous for Umkhonto, presented a serious problem to the SACP and Umkhonto. Schooled in Black Consciousness philosophy most of the new recruits had first to be converted to Marxist-Leninism before they could be successfully absorbed into Umkhonto and the SACP.⁽³²⁾ Thus, instead of being in a position organisationally to capitalise on and

31. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 27 - 28.

32. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 28.

expand upon the revolutionary atmosphere created by the Soweto unrest in 1976, the ANC and Umkhonto found themselves mainly occupied with the task of absorbing and re-educating the new recruits. According to Stephen Davis,

this task, of absorbing the mounting exodus of students into a substantial Umkonto army became the major preoccupation of Tambo's exile executive.⁽³³⁾

Although the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational structure remained largely cell-based and underdeveloped inside South Africa for most part of the period 1976 to 1980, the development of bases and training facilities in both Angola and Mozambique was accelerated during this time. Mozambique, for instance, became the new seat of the Revolutionary Council in 1976, while Angola began to house most of the training camps established by the ANC for the political and military training of Umkhonto's cadres. Exactly when these camps were set up, how they functioned and what their organisational structure looked like is not clear, but, one can assume that since they were centres for the political and military training of Umkhonto cadres they were probably run along normal military lines under the direct and overall command of the Revolutionary Council, which was theoretically responsible to both the NEC of the ANC and the Central Committee of the SACP. This remained the situation approximately up to the end of the first quarter of the 1980's.

1.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FROM 1983 TO 1988

In 1983 the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto came under increasing pressure as a result of three major developments. Firstly, the South African government achieved considerable success in its efforts to isolate the ANC in the frontline states, especially in Mozambique and in Swaziland. The signing of the Swazi-Accord in 1982, the Mozambique accord in 1984 and the across border attacks on ANC-Umkhonto bases and facilities by the SADF since 1981 had resulted inter alia in the

33. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 28.



Revolutionary Council's position in Mozambique becoming unacceptably vulnerable. Secondly, since the resumption of the armed struggle during the latter half of the 1970's and the constant influx of new recruits into the ranks of both the ANC and Umkhonto from South Africa it had become increasingly important for the ANC to provide an organisational structure that could speed up both the political education and military preparedness of the Black masses in South Africa. In other words, it had by the early 1980's become increasingly necessary for the armed cadres of Umkhonto to also fulfil a more propagandist and political function. And thirdly, an unhealthy rivalry had developed over the years between the political and military structures of the ANC both at the upper and lower levels of organisation. In the light of these developments it was decided in 1983 that the time had come for a major overhaul of the existing organisational structure serving Umkhonto, to provide the organisation with a new structure that could combine both the political and military aspects of the armed struggle.⁽³⁴⁾ The outcome of this development was the creation of the Political Military Council (PMC) (See Diagrams "I" and "J" on pp. 424, 425).⁽³⁵⁾ The PMC together with a revived NHC, stood at the head of a vast organisational hierarchy which by the mid-1980's consisted of Regional Political Military Councils (RPMC) also known as Regional Political Military Commands based in the frontline states; Provincial Political Military Councils (PPMC) also known as Implementation Machinery based in the four provinces of South Africa, Area Alternative Structures (AAS), and Refusal and Organisational Committees for politico-economic or alternative authority structures in the provinces. The latter divisions included structures such as people's courts, stay-away committees, funeral committees, transport, rent and election boycott organisations as well as Youth Congresses such as the Soweto Youth Congress (SOYCO). These latter divisions were followed by zone, branch, street or cell committees which represented the lowest level

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34. African National Congress National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, p. 14. See also M. Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, 1988/1989 (Single chart with comments); and South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 2).
35. Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, 1988/1989, (single chart with comments).

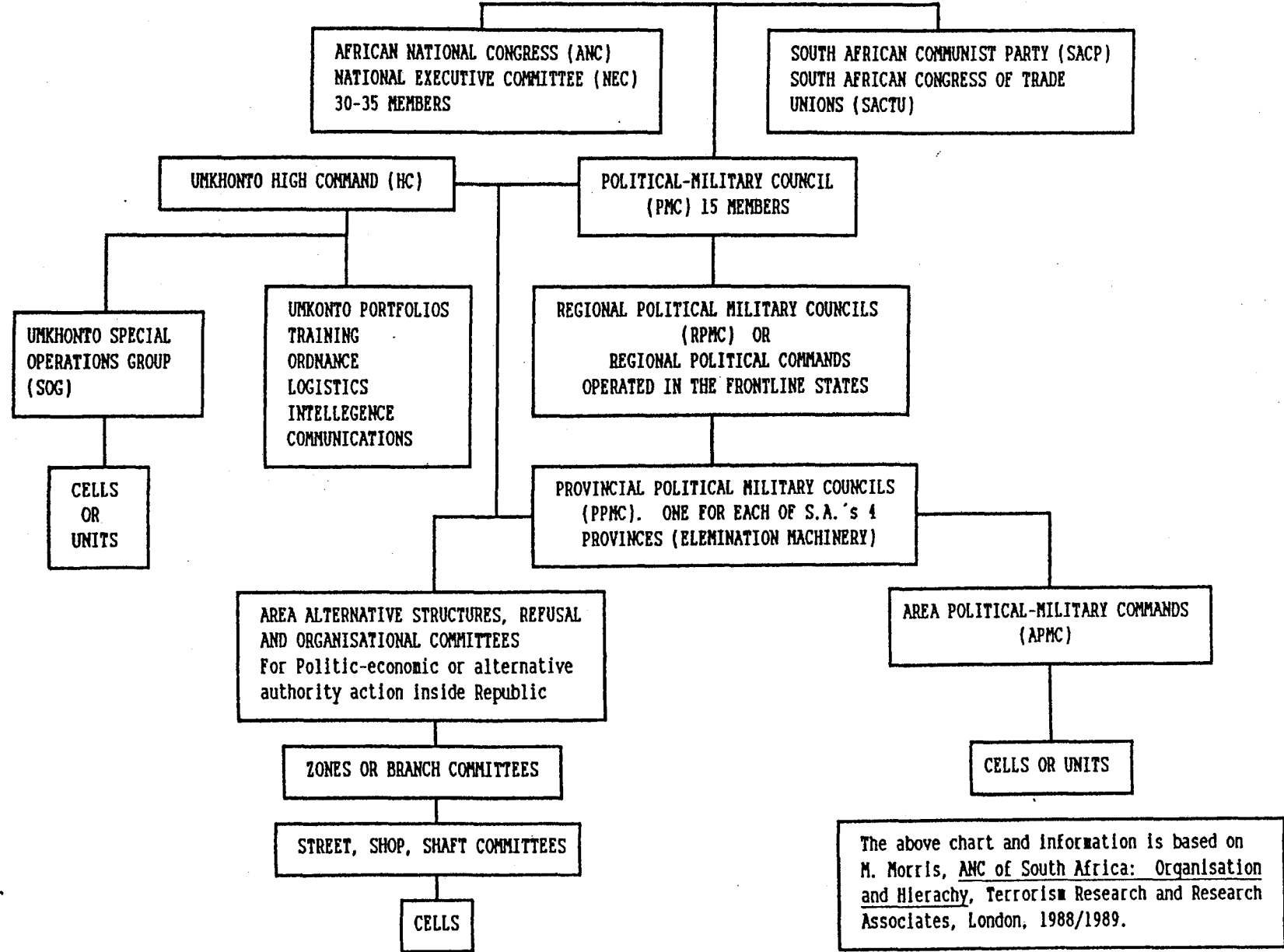


of organisation in Umkhonto's organisational structure inside South Africa in the mid-1980's. In addition to these divisions the new structure also made provision for the establishment of Area Political-Military Commands (APMC). This latter division which was responsible for political and military operations inside South Africa, resorted directly under the command of the PPMC (or Implementation Machinery).⁽³⁶⁾

A further division or group that resorted directly under the control of the NHC of Umkhonto was the Special Operations Group (SOG). The latter organ appeared to have had no direct connection with any of the above mentioned divisions but apparently operated as an elite force within Umkhonto. According to Morris,⁽³⁷⁾ who has done extensive research on the organisational structures of the ANC and Umkhonto in the 1980's, the SOG was perhaps the most elite of all the ANC-Umkhonto organs. Its members were better trained and better equipped than the average Umkhonto cell. The SOG operated in groups of between three and four and was called in when a particularly difficult target had to be attacked or when special skills were required. The total members of the SOG was about fifty men. They were mainly from elite units such as the Luthuli Detachment as well as other units who saw service against the Rhodesian and South African security forces in Rhodesia during the late 1960's, and against the Unita forces in Angola in the early 1980's.⁽³⁸⁾

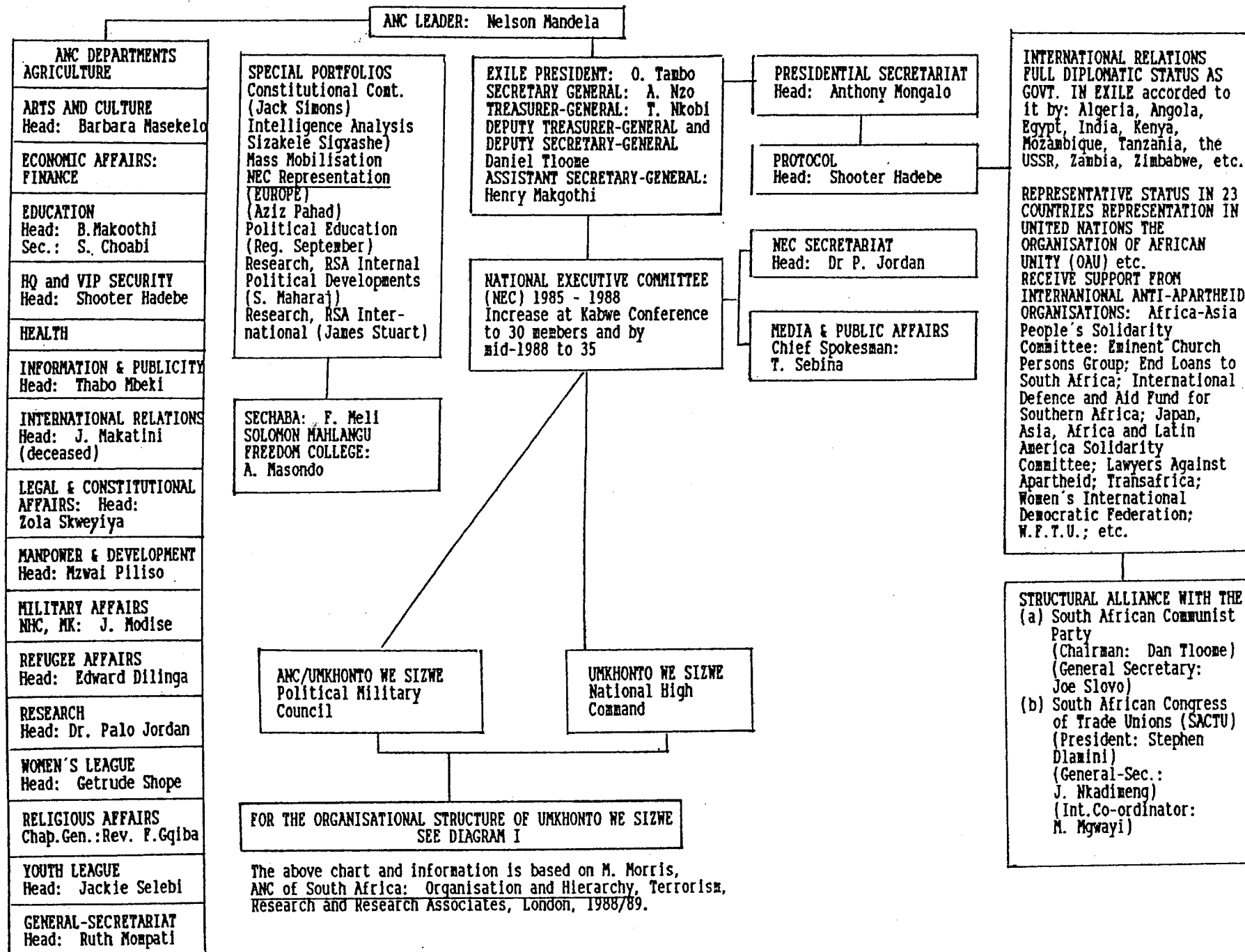
As the most senior organ in the organisational set-up of Umkhonto after 1984, the PMC, like the old Revolutionary Council it replaced, reported directly to the National Executive Committee of the ANC and the Central Committee of the SACP, which both had representation on the PMC. Since the SACP had a majority in the ANC's NEC, it was thus

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36. Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, Single Chart with Comments.
 37. Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, Single Chart with Comments.
 38. C. Hani, The Wankie Campaign, (Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 34).



The above chart and information is based on M. Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierarchy, Terrorism Research and Research Associates, London, 1988/1989.

DIAGRAM J
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ANC/UMKHONTO WE SIZWE IN EXILE 1985 - 1988





in control of the political and military functions of the PMC. As such the SACP via the PMC became directly responsible for all political and military aspects of the armed struggle in South Africa. Politically the PMC controlled the recruitment, transportation and training of all recruits, while militarily it supervised the establishment of underground cells inside South Africa for the performing of specific tasks such as the smuggling of arms into the country and the establishment of arms caches; the infiltration of trained guerrillas; the identification of targets for attack, and the execution of attacks where and when possible. The PMC also concerned itself with the extension of underground structures inside South Africa to the rural areas, particularly the Black homeland areas.

Exactly how many of the above organisational structures had been established by the time of the Kabwe Consultative Conference in mid-1985 is difficult to say. Indications are that the ANC and the SACP were still in the process of implementing the new structures by the time that the Kabwe conference took place. One aspect that complicates the assessment of Umkhonto's organisational structure in the period after 1984 is the fact that it was constantly being altered by the ANC and the SACP to counter the South African government's diplomatic and political initiatives as well as its counter-insurgency actions both inside and outside the country. For instance in 1984, following the signing of the Nkomati Accord the ANC-SACP alliance had to scale down its organisational structure inside Mozambique and remove most of its key personnel from the country. As a result, by the end of that year the ANC and Umkhonto had only a skeleton staff operating in Mozambique. Unable to set up fully operative Regional Political-Military Councils (Commands) in Mozambique and restricted by the Swazi-government from using Swaziland as a transit route between Mozambique and South Africa, Umkhonto was forced to reduce some of its regional structures and to combine others in order to survive. For instance, as far as its Implementation Machinery in the Transvaal and Natal was concerned,



the ANC-SACP alliance was forced to create a special Co-ordinating Committee to co-ordinate the political machinery of the ANC and the military machinery of Umkhonto after 1984.

Indications are that the RPMC's referred to above were only set up in November 1985 when the structure was extended to incorporate these divisions. Exactly how many RPMC's were set up during or after 1985 is not clear but, given the importance of Angola, Botswana and to a lesser extent Swaziland (Umkhonto continued to use Swaziland despite the restrictions that had been placed on its officials and activities by the Swazi-government) in the overall strategy of the armed struggle, the first RPMC's were probably set up in these three countries in 1985. It was also claimed that Ismail Ebrahim, who was a founding member of Umkhonto in Natal in the 1960's, was made Chairman of the Swaziland RPMC in 1985. Prior to this Ibrahim was Treasurer and later Chairman of the aforementioned Co-ordinating Committee. He succeeded Ronnie Kasrils to that position in December 1984. As the Chairman of the Swaziland RPMC, Ismail Ebrahim reported directly to the PMC leadership in Lusaka.⁽³⁹⁾

The need for a highly flexible organisational structure that could combine both the political aspects of the armed struggle and could react to the constantly changing political and military environment in Southern Africa, had thus become of the utmost importance to the ANC and the SACP by the mid-1980's. This point was clearly emphasised by the ANC's NEC at its Second National Consultative Conference at Kabwe in June 1985. In its report to the conference, the Internal Commission of the NEC made it clear that if the organisation was to survive, its operational machinery and its organisation

39. G. Moss, MK and the Armed Struggle, (Work in Progress 52, March 1988, p. 4). See also Morris, ANC of South Africa: Organisation and Hierachy, Single Chart with Comments; and South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 2); Barrel, MK, pp. 63 - 65, and Swaziland kidnappings. The Case of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 14 - 15).

had to be structured to meet a given situation and should not be frozen for all times ... it is envisaged, that the structures currently being established by the PMC, to meet these criticisms and difficulties, should be subject to alterations as the struggle develops.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The ANC and SACP's ability to alter their organisational structures according to developments in Southern Africa was severely put to the test in 1986 and again two years later in 1988. At the end of January 1986 the ANC and Umkhonto found themselves expelled from their offices and homes in Lesotho, when the pro-ANC-SACP government of Chief Leabua Jonathan was overthrown by a pro-South African government under the leadership of Major-General Metsing Lekhanya. Although Lesotho was never a key element in the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational set-up in Southern Africa, the demise of the Jonathan government nonetheless represented both a material and moral, if not a diplomatic setback for the ANC-SACP alliance. A total of more than 300 ANC-Umkhonto officials and operators were expelled from Lesotho between 1986 and 1987. With the destruction of its offices and whatever transit facilities it operated in Maseru, the ANC-SACP alliance was after 1986 increasingly forced to shift the centre of its organisation and operations to Botswana.⁽⁴¹⁾

A second major setback for the ANC and Umkhonto in 1986 came at the end of the year when the South African security police arrested and interrogated Ismail Ebrahim. As the Chairman of Umkhonto's RPMC in Swaziland, Ebrahim was a key operative in Umkhonto and the underground. At the same time, with the information obtained from captured ANC-Umkhonto leaders such as Ebrahim, as well as from other sources, the Mozambican government was forced to expel six senior ANC-SACP-Umkhonto leaders from Maputo. They were Jacob Zuma, Sue

40. African National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, p. 14.

41. R. Edgar, The Lesotho Coup of 1986, (The South African Review 4, pp. 373 - 382). For additional information on the "Lesotho Coup" see also The Daily News (Durban) 1986.01.16 - 22; ANC Attacks S. African Pressure on Lesotho, Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.01.16, (SWB, 1986.01.20); The ANC and Lesotho, Radio Freedom, Lusaka, 1986.02.10; (SWB, 1986.02.14); and Mozambican Radio's Broadcasts of ANC official's Views on P.W. Botha and Lesotho, Maputo, 1986.02.13 - 14, (SWB, 1986.02.18).

Rabkin, Farouk Salooje, Bobby Pillay, Idris Naidoo and Peter Gumede. (42)

These setbacks did not go uncommented by the ANC-SACP alliance which was clearly upset by it. In a statement released in October 1986, the Alliance expressed its deep concern at the setbacks it had suffered with regards to its organisational structures and operational capabilities in both Mozambique and Lesotho since 1984. It pointed out:

Despite all our efforts we have not come any nearer to the achievements of the objectives we set for ourselves, ANC underground structures remained weak and unable to supply reliable support for Umkhonto cadres. Umkhonto units still operate largely in isolation ... (43)

Despite the fact that Umkhonto was able to steadily increase its attacks on targets inside South Africa after 1985, a third fact that undermined the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational development in the country after 1986 was undoubtedly the general State of Emergency declared by the South African government in June 1986 and its annual renewal. As a result of the extended powers granted to the State and the police under the Emergency, the ANC-SACP alliance found it almost impossible to set up new structures and to maintain these structures inside the country. By the mid-1980's the South African police was able to uncover and destroy the underground presence of the ANC and Umkhonto inside South Africa almost as fast as the organisation was able to establish it.

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42. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 2). See also Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1987/1988, pp. 697 - 698.
43. PMC document entitled "What to be done", October 1986, as quoted in T. Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review 4, 1987, p. 10). For a different ANC view on the subject see ANC comment stresses internal struggle (SWB, 1986.10.14); ANC's Comment on RSA "Threat" to Mozambique, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1986.10.11, (SWB, 1986.10.14); ANC Radio's Discussion Programme with Oliver Tambo, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1986.10.16, (SWB, 1986.10.20). See also ANC's Slovo on Achievements of Umkhonto we Sizwe, PANA, 1987.01.08, (SWB, 1987.01.08).

As a result of these developments, Umkhonto's leaders had to admit by 1988 that the organisation was unable to establish a major organisational presence inside South Africa which was considered a pre-requisite for a people's war. In an article that appeared in Sechaba, in September 1988, Ronnie Kasrils, Umkhonto's Chief of Intelligence, made it clear that

despite the tremendous upsurge of mass resistance (in South Africa) over the past three years, we were not able to take full advantage of the favourable conditions that materialised. We were unable to deploy sufficient forces at home; our cadre still found big problems in basing themselves amongst our people; our underground failed to grow sufficiently and our people were left to face the enemy and his vigilantes with sticks and stones; the incredible mass resistance and strikes were consequently not sufficiently reinforced by armed struggle.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The final setback to the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational network in Southern Africa came on 22 December 1988 with the signing of the New York Accord. In terms of the Accord, the ANC-SACP alliance had to remove all ANC and Umkhonto bases and personnel from Angola by the beginning of 1989. Although the ANC and the SACP have tried to play down the effect that this dramatic development has had on the organisation of Umkhonto in the region and in particular its ability to escalate the armed struggle into a people's war, the reality of the situation was that the signing of the New York Accord had but virtually destroyed its organisational infrastructure in Angola. This in turn had effected the organisation's structures and operational ability inside South Africa which has always depended on the ANC and Umkhonto's external structures to keep it operative. Thus, through a combination of diplomatic and military initiatives which began with the signing of the Swaziland Accord in 1982 and which was followed by the Nkomati and New York Accords, the South African government had managed by the end of 1988 to isolate the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto in Southern Africa if not paralysed the armed struggle.

44. R. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle: The Revolutionary Army, (Sechaba, September 1988, p. 3).

2. A GENERAL PROFILE OF THE LEADERSHIP AND CADRES OF UMKHONTO

Although the term "cadre" is commonly used to refer to the total membership of an underground organisation, for the purpose of this study, a definite distinction will be made between those members of Umkhonto who belong to the leadership echelon of the organisation and those who represent its rank-and-file.

2.1 The Leadership of Umkhonto, 1961 - 1965

At the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, most of the people who made up its leadership corps at the national and the provincial levels of the organisation, were drawn from the leadership ranks of the ANC, the SACP, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the various organisations that were affiliated to them. Unlike the ANC but true to the principles of the SACP and SACTU, Umkhonto was a fully multi-racial organisation which drew its members and cadres from all the main population groups in South Africa.

This was also true for the organisation's leadership at the provincial level, although Whites appeared to have been more predominant at the national level of the organisation where most of the forward planning for the sabotage campaign was done. In Natal for instance, only one White person had a position on the Regional Command structure of Umkhonto in the province. He was Ronnie Kasrils, who later became the organisation's Chief of Military Intelligence. Other Whites in Umkhonto, such as Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein, Joe Slovo, Percy Hodgson, Harold Strachan and Albie Sachs, were either members of Umkhonto's NHC in Johannesburg or were associated with it through their membership of SACTU and the SACP. With the exception of Kasrils, who as a member of Umkhonto in Durban participated in a number of sabotage acts in the 1960's, most Whites in Umkhonto or who associated with it, appeared to have served in a training or advisory capacity. Both Sachs and Hodgson as well as Strachan occupied such positions in the organisation, while Slovo was in command of most of the planning behind the sabotage campaign. He was made commander of



Umkhonto after the arrest of Nelson Mandela in August 1962. He probably also occupied the same position during Mandela's absence from the country during the first half of the same year.

At the provincial level of organisation, the leadership of Umkhonto in Natal, for instance with the exception of Kasrils and Brian Chaitow (the latter was Chinese), consisted mainly of Africans and Indians. In the rest of the country the leadership of Umkhonto consisted mostly of Africans. In the Western Cape members of the Coloured community also formed part of Umkhonto's underground structure. Two names that spring to mind here are that of Ben Turok⁽⁴⁵⁾ and Reginald September.

As far as educational qualifications are concerned, it is interesting to note that at the national level of organisation, most of the White leaders of Umkhonto or those who were identified as having associated with it, had some or other post-matric qualifications. Slovo, James Kantor, Harold Wolpe and Vivian Ezra were all members of the legal profession, while others, such as Dennis Goldberg, Bernstein and Arthur Goldreich were equally well qualified. For instance, Goldberg was an engineer, Bernstein an architect and Goldreich, who was closely associated with the purchase of Lilliesleaf Farm and the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, was an industrial designer.⁽⁴⁶⁾

In terms of formal and post-matric education, the Black leaders of Umkhonto were by contrast generally not as well educated as their White counterparts. With the exception of Nelson Mandela and Govan Mbeki who held post-matric qualifications, most of the remaining African members of Umkhonto's NHC and regional command structure were poorly educated. Walter Sisulu had a matric qualification, while Wilton Mkwayi, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi and

45. B. Turok, Strategic Problems in South Africa's Liberation Struggle, pp. 1 - 10. See also Vermaak, Braam Fischer. The Man with Two Faces, pp. 8 - 22.

46. See Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe, pp. 15 - 16, 110; Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4.



Joe Modise had educational qualifications that ranged from standard five to the junior certificate (standard eight).⁽⁴⁷⁾ Despite their limited formal educational qualifications these African leaders nevertheless all played a significant role in the formation and day-to-day running of Umkhonto after 1961. They all appeared to have possessed the determination and qualities that made them highly suitable for the type of leadership that was needed to guide Umkhonto. Mkwayi, for instance, who had only completed the sixth grade, played an important role in the trade union movement both before and after the formation of SACTU in the mid-1950's. Having displayed exceptional leadership skills and an understanding of trade union work, Mkwayi was sent out of South Africa between 1960/61 to undergo extensive guerrilla training. As a result of the senior position he held in SACTU (he was the Treasurer) and the close ties he had with the SACP (of which he was also a member), Mkwayi was sent to the Soviet Union and Communist China for political and military training. This was to prepare him for the eventual military leadership of Umkhonto.

With Slovo's departure from South Africa in April/May 1963, Mkwayi was made Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto. Despite his apparent limited formal education, Mkwayi turned out to be a master at guerrilla tactics, underground work and on the use of explosives. Up to the time of his arrest in 1964, Mkwayi was a key member of Umkhonto's new (second) NHC that was set up following the raid on Rivonia.⁽⁴⁸⁾

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47. Duma Nokwe: Honourable Son of Africa, (Sechaba 12, Second Quarter 1978, pp. 31 - 37). See also J. Modise, The happiest moment in my life, (Dawn Souvenir Issue, nd, pp. 10 - 12).
48. Van der Merwe, Die Slag om Suid-Afrika, no. 7, Bri-Bri: Die Swart Pimpernel, (Die Huisgenoot, 1971.11.05, pp. 14 - 18); Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, p. 90. For more information on Wilton Mkwayi and the Second NHC of Umkhonto see also Vermaak, Braam Fischer. The Man with Two Faces, pp. 145 - 154; Sechaba, March 1987, p. 10; Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 19; and Meli, South Africa belongs to Us, pp. 159, 168.



Due to the close relationship between the ANC, the SACP and SACTU, many Africans were encouraged to attend part-time classes in Marxist-Leninist theory which appeared to have served as a sort of alternative to Black education. Many blacks missed out on a formal education, not necessarily because they rejected it, but because a variety of circumstances, ranging from a lack of money to no facilities often made it impossible for them to attend a formal school. As a result, the extra classes in Marxist political and economic theory were a means of increasing their education, even if it was an education tailor made for membership to the ANC and the SACP. (49)

The only Indian on the NHC in the early 1960's was Ahmed Kathrada. He left school at the age of 17 years to join the world of resistance politics. It is not clear what level of high school education he had achieved, but after he had left school, Kathrada joined the offices of the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council as a full-time worker. (50)

In terms of age the leaders of Umkhonto's NHC can be roughly divided into two broad categories, namely those who were born before the end of the First World War (i.e. 1918) and those who were born in the period thereafter. Among those who belonged to the first category were Mandela, Mbeki, Sisulu and Strachan. The remaining members of the NHC of Umkhonto belonged to the second age category, which means they were born after 1918. Among those who belonged to this latter category were Slovo, Bernstein, Hodgson, Mhlaba, Mlangeni, Motsoaledi and Goldberg. Goldberg was probably the youngest member of the NHC of Umkhonto in 1961.

Most of the leaders of Umkhonto's NHC were thus between the ages of 35 and 49 years at the time that Umkhonto was formed in 1961. Mandela, for instance, who was the first Commander of Umkhonto was 43

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49. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 120 - 121, 151 - 153; Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 1 - 15.
50. Karis and Carter (eds.), From Protest to Challenge, vol. 4, pp. 48 - 49. See also Melli, South Africa belongs to Us, pp. 98, 154, 156 - 157, 168.



years old, while Oliver Tambo, who commanded the ANC Mission in Exile and Umkhonto was 44 years old in 1961.

At the regional or provincial level of organisation, the leadership of Umkhonto was somewhat different. For one, it contained very few Whites, and with the exception of a few individuals, most leaders had only limited formal education. In the case of Durban for instance, only Kasrils, Billy Nair and Chaitow had a matric or post-matric qualification. Of the remaining members of the Regional (High) Command of Umkhonto in the province, very few had even a high school qualification. Mtolo, for instance, who was Umkhonto's expert on explosives in Natal, only had a standard four education.⁽⁵¹⁾ Curdnick Ndlovo and Eric Mtshali, who both held senior positions in the Regional Command in Durban, were equally poorly educated.

2.2 Cadres

Although no specific minimum educational qualifications were apparently required by the NHC of Umkhonto for membership to it and the Regional Command structures in the provinces, some basic educational qualifications were apparently laid down by the national leadership for the recruitment of cadres into the organisation. According to Mtolo,⁽⁵²⁾ at the onset of Umkhonto's recruitment campaign in Natal in the 1960's, only people with a junior or a senior certificate qualification were sought by Umkhonto. This was a tall order, considering the generally low educational level of most Africans in South Africa in the 1960's and the generally poor level of education held by most of the African leaders of Umkhonto themselves. An African with a matric qualification, let alone a university degree in 1960, was not a common phenomenon. In most cases an 'educated' African in 1961 was someone who had successfully

51. See Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 1 - 3.

52. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 10 - 14; Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 220 - 224.



completed primary school or the first or second year of high school.⁽⁵³⁾ To find Africans with a standard eight or matric qualification that would be prepared to serve in Umkhonto or be willing to leave South Africa for military training, was thus easier ordered than complied with. This was borne out by the fact that the Regional Command in Durban was unable to meet its quota of recruits between 1962 and 1963. In the end, in order to meet their quota of recruits, the Durban Regional Command was quite happy to settle for anyone who was remotely willing to join Umkhonto. Pressurised by the NHC in Johannesburg to send more recruits, the Regional Command in Durban eventually settled for a group of young African pickpockets who practiced their skills at Durban's Municipal Market. These youngsters, according to Mtolo, had virtually no formal education but were suitable for Umkhonto because of their particular lifestyle. He wrote:

We know that most of these boys had a hard life and they would form a tough core of guerrilla fighters, even though they would need a lot of discipline. As for Marxism, they would grasp it quickly, because they had a personal knowledge of starvation.⁽⁵⁴⁾

While not everybody recruited into Umkhonto in the early 1960's were of the same caliber as the above pickpockets, there is however evidence that suggest that by the mid-1960's Umkhonto's leaders were no longer too concerned about educational qualifications, and that anyone who was prepared to join Umkhonto and be sent out of the country for military training, was accepted.

3. LEADERSHIP AND CADRES, 1965 - 1988

As is the case with the overall history of the ANC and Umkhonto in the post-1965 period, very little is known about the leadership and cadres of Umkhonto for most of the period up to the beginning of the

53. Duma Nokwe: Honourable Son of Africa, (Sechaba 12, Second Quarter, 1978, pp. 31 - 37).

54. Mtolo; Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 58, 83.

1980's, when slightly more information became available on the subject. Indications are that in the years between the collapse of the internal underground structures of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto in the mid-1960's and the advent of the Morogoro National Consultative Conference in 1969, the leaders of the ANC's Mission in Exile were forced to take control of both the former diplomatic and political activities of the ANC as well as the military work of Umkhonto. The general impression that one gains from this period is that no separate leadership structure was set up by the Mission in Exile prior to the formation of the Revolutionary Council in 1969 to guide Umkhonto. It is thus also not clear exactly who the exile leaders of Umkhonto were between 1965 and 1969. Indications however are that people such as Joe Slovo, Joe Modise, James Stuart and others, played an important role in the activities of Umkhonto during these years. (55)

Umkhonto thus remained without a specific leadership structure guiding it until the Morogoro Conference in 1969. As far as the Wankie incursions were concerned it appears that these were guided by the combined exile leadership of the ANC and the SACP. It was only at the Morogoro Conference in 1969 that the first major changes to the leadership of Umkhonto were effected following the collapse of the liberation alliance's internal leadership structures in South Africa in the mid-1960's. According to ANC/Umkhonto sources recently quoted in the South African press, approximately 1 000 people had left South Africa between 1960 and 1966 to join the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto. By the end of 1965 however the number of people leaving South Africa had slowed down to a mere trickle. This remained to be the case for most part of the period 1966 to 1976 when the Soweto uprising sent thousands of new recruits into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto in exile. According to Stuart, who was among the second group of recruits who left South Africa in the early 1960's,

55. For a more detailed discussion on the subject see Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 10 - 35. Also The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.9 - 11 (Series of articles based on interviews between Ken Vernon and members of the ANC's Mission in Exile in 1990).



there was very little that one could call a liberation army outside South Africa by the mid-1960's. Umkhonto had very few training facilities at its disposal in these years and as a result it more often than not could not accommodate all those who wished to join its ranks. Many, especially those with professional and other qualifications that could not be utilised by Umkhonto in the mid-1960's, had to be turned away and was thus permanently lost to the leadership in exile. One such example was a group of 21 Black nurses, who had fled South Africa during these years. Since the ANC could not employ them or utilise them in its camps, they were eventually accommodated in Tanzanian (Tanganyika) hospitals and as such were lost to the organisation.⁽⁵⁶⁾

According to Stuart, many of those who had left South Africa in the early 1960's ended up in the Soviet Union, while others were sent to Algeria, Egypt, Cuba, China and the Scandinavian countries. Stuart himself was sent to the Soviet Union for military training. After approximately 15 months of military and political training at Odessa, Stuart was made Commanding Officer at one of Umkhonto's first training camps at Kongwa near Dodoma in Tanzania. Others, such as Sam Maseomela, who were also trained in the Soviet Union as well as in Communist China, were posted to similar positions at other Umkhonto training camps elsewhere. Those who were unsuited for a role in Umkhonto's training camps were allowed to study overseas or were sent as ANC representatives to countries around the world.

Although many ended up studying economics or engineering, in reality the ANC and Umkhonto had little need for either economists or engineers in the 1960's. As a result, graduates who wished to remain with the ANC found themselves pressed into different types of employment. For instance, engineers often found themselves assigned to political and diplomatic positions, while soldiers found themselves administering almost non-existent ANC offices.⁽⁵⁷⁾

56. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC Builds from Within).

57. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC Builds from Within).

The pressing leadership problems that the Mission in Exile had to face since the mid-1960's were thoroughly discussed at the consultative conference in 1969 where a new leadership structure for Umkhonto was devised. The most significant change was the formation of a Revolutionary Council to take direct control of the affairs of Umkhonto. Although the exact membership of the RC was never revealed, most of those who appeared to have served on it were senior members of the SACP and SACTU. Among the latter who served on the Council were Slovo, Yusuf Dadoo, Reginald September, Alfred Nzo, Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhida, Jacob Zuma, Henry Makgothi and others (See Chapter five, pp. 279 - 291). This meant that those who controlled the underground SACP and its affiliated organisations in South Africa during the 1950's and 1960's were still in charge of the ANC-SACP alliance by the beginning of the 1970's. This remained to be the case at least until the middle of the 1970's, when the Soweto uprising and the massive influx of recruits from South Africa infused new blood and with it a spirit of renewed radicalism into the ranks of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto.

Although the influx of these new recruits did not have an immediate effect on the leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, the liberation movement was eventually forced to begin absorbing some of the more capable of these new generation leaders into the leadership of the Alliance and Umkhonto to allow for the representation of their generation in the training camps in Angola and elsewhere. Although the first wave of new recruits did not immediately bring about a dilution of the old guard leadership of the ANC, the SACP, and Umkhonto, the second wave of Blacks that left the country in the mid-1980's, most of whom were absorbed by Umkhonto, did place increased pressure on the exile leadership to give greater recognition to the rising of young militant leaders in the liberation movement. The unrest and mutiny in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in 1984 highlighted exactly this problem. After the appointment of Marks Shope and Jack Simons to Umkhonto's camps in Angola in the early 1980's to take control of the political education of the new recruits, many of the former Black Consciousness-inclined Soweto youths, who had been successfully converted to Marxism, had been



incorporated into the leadership of the SACP and the ANC. According to Africa Confidential, a number of those who had left South Africa during the disturbances of 1976 in all probability stood a good chance to be elected to the ANC's NEC in the future.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Amongst those singled out by Africa Confidential for possible promotion were Klaus Maphepha, the SACP's regional chief in Swaziland, Peter Mayibuye, "Che" Ogara, Dan Cindi, Khumalo Migwe, Raymond Nkuku and Kingsley Xuma. According to the same source, most of these new breed of exile leaders had been trained in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and elsewhere and seemed to be devoted members of the SACP.⁽⁵⁹⁾ (Although they were singled out by Africa Confidential for possible promotion to the ANC's NEC after 1985, none of the above leaders of Umkhonto were however elected to the ANC's NEC at its National Congress held in Durban in early July 1991.)⁽⁶⁰⁾

Africa Confidential went on to point out that once the ANC had taken the post 1976 generation on board the Mission in Exile was completely transformed from within. Among the rich array of Stalinist methods that gained currency in the organisation was the practice of discrediting dissenters by sending them into exile. In other words, those recruits who did not agree with the manner in which the SACP leadership controlled or dominated the ANC or conducted the affairs of Umkhonto were summarily kicked out of the organisation or sent to rehabilitation camp, of which there were reported to be several in Angola and Tanzania (See Chapter 8). Even the smallest sign of discontent, especially with the way in which the White leadership of the SACP and Umkhonto had come to dominate the intellectual life and direction of the ANC, was severely dealt with.⁽⁶¹⁾

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58. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential, 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).
 59. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential, 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2).
 60. The Daily News (Durban), 1991.06.08 (ANC unity forged from many strands).
 61. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential, 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 2). See also Chapter 6.



In contrast, those who supported the SACP and who successfully completed the transition from Black Consciousness to Marxism, were often rewarded with important positions inside the movement or as representatives of the ANC in countries around the world where the ANC-SACP alliance had official missions. Although the NEC of the ANC was reduced to nine members in 1969, by 1985 it had again grown to 30 with the proviso that a further five members could be co-opted by the NEC should the need arise. While none of the post 1976 generation of leaders and cadres were elected onto the NEC or Umkhonto's Political Military Council in 1985, a number of the younger leaders in the ANC and Umkhonto were appointed to the NEC, notably Thabo Mbeki, Palo Jordan, Chris Hani, Siphosiso Makana and Francis Meki. These latter leaders had left South Africa in the 1960's and were in their early or mid-forties by 1985. As such they represented the second generation of exile leaders in the ANC-SACP alliance that had come to prominence since the beginning of the armed struggle. The third and fourth generation of leaders are those who had left South Africa in the mid-1970's and the mid-1980's respectively.

Since the mid 1980's there appeared to have been a growing division between those in the organisation who supported a violent transfer of power in South Africa and those who campaigned for a more moderate possibly negotiated solution to South Africa's problems. Although both sides included devoted Marxists, they differed from one another in their interpretation of the principles of Marxism. The die-hards in the liberation movement such as Hani, who became Chief-of-Staff of Umkhonto in 1987, and others such as Kasrils and Mac Maharaj who supported him, openly rejected the relatively moderate, social democratic views of their colleagues who stood under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, Lindiwe Mabasa and others. From 1985 onwards Hani and his supporters have attempted to build a power base for themselves in the ANC-SACP alliance through their control of Umkhonto and their influence in the SACP. Consequently, although the more moderate minded Joe Modise was the Commander of Umkhonto, it was Hani and his supporters who dominated the organisation by the latter half of the 1980's. It was reportedly through Hani's efforts that for instance Steve Tshwete, the first of the 1976 generation of ANC

leaders, was appointed to Umkhonto's NHC as Political Commissar - a position that Hani himself occupied in the organisation between 1982 and 1987. With Tshwete in the number three position and the support of other key leaders in Umkhonto such as Kasrils who was Chief of Military Intelligence, Hani was in a position to openly challenge the more conservative leadership of the ANC in exile in 1987. Consequently and, contrary to the opinion and wishes of the more moderate leadership in the ANC, Hani and Tshwete in 1987 openly called for the armed struggle to be directed against White soft (civilian) targets in South Africa.⁽⁶²⁾

The fact that the ANC did not immediately step in to curtail Hani's ambitions was interpreted by some sources as a clear indication of the powerful position that Hani and his supporters had come to occupy in the liberation movement by the beginning of 1988. If this was indeed the case then it can also be argued that the predominant view in the liberation alliance by the beginning of 1988 was one that favoured a military solution led by Umkhonto in South Africa.

Although the ANC's NEC was slow to react to the Hani challenge, Tshwete was suddenly removed from his position as Political Commissar in early 1988 and reassigned to the rank of Head of Mass Mobilisation. He was also given a seat on the ANC's NEC. His vacant position in Umkhonto was filled by Timothy Mokoena, who was a former senior commander of Umkhonto in Angola. With Tshwete and not Hani's dismissal from Umkhonto in 1988 it was argued that Hani was too powerful to be touched and that he and fellow hardliners rather than Modise and the moderate were in control of the armed struggle. Since then however, three major developments had taken place that have effectively curbed the position and influence of Hani and his hardliners in the liberation alliance. The first was the relative failure of the ANC and Umkhonto's anti-election campaign in October

62. See South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, pp. 1 - 3); Barrett, A Profile of the ANC, May 1989, pp. 21 - 24, 61 - 62; The Daily News (Durban), 1988.08.24.

1988. The second was the unfavourable reaction of the Swedish government (who is the ANC's main financier) to Hani and Tshwete's publicly declared policy to concentrate future ANC attacks on White civilian targets. The third but more important factor that influenced the position of Hani and his supporters was the New York Accord signed in December 1988. This latter agreement effectively destroyed Hani's power base and left him with an organisation in shambles if not a cause for which there appeared to be increasingly less justification after 1988.⁽⁶³⁾

All this had a dramatic effect on the relationship between the so-called "doves" and "hawks" in the liberation alliance. Since the signing of the New York Accord, Hani and his followers seemed to have lost part of their influence in the ANC's NEC and the SACP. Faced with the closure of its bases and other facilities in Angola and a changing international environment that was rapidly moving away from settling regional conflicts through military means, there were clear signs by the middle of 1989 that power in the ANC had shifted from the hawks to the doves. Although the latter faction which stood under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki were no less Marxist than the Hani faction they were nevertheless less militant and more in support of a moderate, peaceful solution in South Africa. The latter faction with its strong social democratic views, together with the recently released internal leaders of the ANC, were increasingly setting the pace with regards to leadership developments inside the ANC's NEC and the SACP by the end of the 1980's.

3. THE FINANCING OF UMKHONTO

Although the subject of funding has been referred to earlier in this study it will be more fully discussed here. While a fair amount is known about the funds that the ANC have received during the late

63. South Africa: Umkhonto Packs its Bags, (Africa Confidential 30 (2), 1989.01.20, p. 6). See also South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, p. 1); The Daily News (Durban), 1989.06.15, 21.

1970's and the 1980's, very little if anything is however known about the funding of Umkhonto other than that it was set up with money that mainly came from the SACP who again appeared to have received its funds from a variety of sources most of which were overseas. Although Scandinavian countries such as Sweden have been giving financial assistance to the ANC and other liberation organisations in Southern Africa since the late 1960's (Sweden began to give aid in 1968/69) little is known about the actual amounts received by the ANC-SACP alliance in exile, or how much was allocated to Umkhonto. In view of this it is virtually impossible to draw an even remotely accurate picture of the financing of Umkhonto during these early or even the later years. As pointed out above, Umkhonto was almost exclusively set up and run with money provided by the SACP in the early 1960's. The SACP was apparently also responsible for arranging the first weapon supplies by the Soviet Union after 1964. How these weapons were arranged, supplied and how many were delivered to Umkhonto is not clear but they were probably delivered to the ANC-SACP alliance free of charge through Dar-es-Salaam and the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Liberation Committee which was established in that same year.

According to Modise, the later Commander of Umkhonto, the early years of the armed struggle were difficult years due to a serious lack of funds. The transportation of recruits in and out of South Africa between 1961 and the mid-1960's cost a great deal of money. Most of the money that was used for transport during these early years, he claimed, came from within the liberation movement. Outside the country the ANC and Umkhonto's cadres, according to Modise, received assistance from some of the African governments that have indicated support for the ANC and the armed struggle. Modise wrote:

We got assistance from the Ethiopian, Egyptian and later the Algerian governments. The Algerians sponsored our initial training and later the Chinese. I think we sent one group to China and from then onwards we acquired most of our training from the Soviet Union.⁽⁶⁴⁾

64. J. Modise, The happiest moment of my life. (Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 10 - 12).



Thus in terms of its aid to Umkhonto the Soviet Union not only provided funds through the SACP but it also provided Umkhonto with military and political training during the early phase of the armed struggle.

After the control of the armed struggle had been shifted outside South Africa after 1965, the ANC also appeared to have received funds from a variety of other sources. The most important of these was the Swedish government who in 1968 passed an act whereby it was obliged to grant foreign aid totalling at least one per cent of its gross domestic product to liberation organisations. Most of this aid went to liberation movements in Southern Africa which included the ANC and Umkhonto. (65)

In addition to Sweden the ANC also received financial and "humanitarian" aid from other sources such as some African governments, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in the UK and the Netherlands, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Although the SACP and the Soviet Union was no longer the chief financiers of the ANC's Mission in Exile and the armed struggle after 1965, they nonetheless had a major say in the ANC and Umkhonto's financial affairs through their representation on the ANC'S Treasury Department. In 1963 for instance Moses Kotane, who was also General-Secretary of the SACP since 1938 was made Treasurer-General of the ANC's Mission in Exile. This position he held until 1973 when he was replaced by T.T. Nkobi, who has been described as a communist by some and a non-communist by others. An executive member of the ANC's NEC and PMC, Nkobi was reelected to the position of Treasurer-General in 1985. He still holds this powerful position to-day. (66)

Exactly what sort of funding the ANC received in the late 1960's and the early 1970's, and what percentage went to Umkhonto is not known.

65. Sweden: Footing the Bill, (Africa Confidential 27 (24), 1986.11.26, 4).

66. The African Communist 106, Third Quarter 1986, p. 23; South Africa: The ANC, (Africa Confidential 27 (25), 1986.12.10, p. 2). See also Chapter Six footnote 93.



Indications are that although the organisation was receiving more money as reflected in the purchase of a boat, the Adventurer, in 1971, to infiltrate 25 Umkhonto combatants by sea (see Chapter four footnote 212), sufficient funds were still in short supply. In 1971 the Swedish government made some R1,19 million available to "refugees" and liberation organisations in Africa, the bulk of which went to organisations such as the ANC, ZANU, SWAPO and other liberation organisations in Southern Africa.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Despite these increased funds the ANC however seemed to have operated on a shoe string budget. According to Sindiso Mfenyana, a member of the ANC's NEC, when he was transferred to the ANC's headquarters in Lusaka in 1974, the ANC had apart from an office it shared with other liberation organisations such as Frelimo, ZAPU, and SWAPO, only one car and two rented houses that accommodated about a hundred people. The car was an old 1932 Fiat and it apparently served the entire ANC-SACP Alliance in Lusaka up to the mid-1970's when the ANC moved out of its shared office into its own office which it shared with a Zambian businessman. (The latter was apparently done in an attempt to avoid attacks against Lusaka by the Rhodesian security forces.) According to the same source, while ample food, clothing and other necessities were available for the relatively few ANC members in Lusaka in the mid-1970's, they proved to be totally inadequate especially after June 1976 when the ANC was hit by the "huge flood of youths fleeing South Africa in the wake of the Soweto uprising".⁽⁶⁸⁾

On the subject of the ANC's financial position in the 1980's, Stephen Davis in his recent study on the armed struggle in South Africa wrote that the ANC Treasury Department administered all funds that kept the organisation and Umkhonto financially afloat.⁽⁶⁹⁾ In order to see that the organisation's limited resources were not wasted, Nkobi and the Treasury Department were vested with wide powers to ensure strict control over all non-military supplies and equipment. In addition,

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67. See Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, pp. 94-95; as well as Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 33, 43; See also Chapter 5 footnote 70.
68. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10, (ANC Builds from Within).
69. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 72-74.



Nkobi and his department was also given the responsibility of developing innovative money-making projects to strengthen the liberation alliance's financial position. According to Davis the ANC's annual non-military budget had been estimated at about \$50 million or approximately R150 million by the mid-1980's. Umkhonto needed a further \$50 million (R150m) to conduct its affairs. Most of this latter budget however was controlled secretly by Umkhonto budget officials in Angola which is probably the reason why so little if anything was known about the financing of the latter organisation. Of the \$50m (R150m) allocated to the ANC for "non-military" purposes as much as \$30 m (R90m) was apparently received by the organisation in the form of in-service and in-kind aid such as teachers, tractors, seeds, training, clothing, food, medicines and numerous other types of goods needed by the organisation to conduct its affairs. The remaining \$20m (R60m) constituted a cash amount used by the ANC for the day-to-day running of its affairs. The ANC also received funds that had been privately raised by organisations and individuals such as Bishop Desmond Tutu's Refugee Fund; politically orientated rock music concerts and by actors including the cast of television series such as "Cagney and Lacy" in the United States who had voted in 1988 to donate their entire South African royalties to the ANC. Thus, every time the series was shown in South Africa, the ANC and thus Umkhonto benefitted financially by it.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Cash donations to the ANC from western countries, particularly the Scandinavian countries as well as Third World nations had also grown significantly during the 1980's. One Scandinavian country that substantially increased its financial aid and support to the ANC in the mid-1980's was Sweden. Since it first gave aid to the ANC-SACP in the late 1960's the Swedish government has steadily increased its annual contributions to the liberation alliance. Although all Swedish aid has been earmarked for 'humanitarian' purposes, there has never been any control over it with the result that it can be expected that a fair share of this aid ended up with Umkhonto. According to Africa Confidential⁽⁷¹⁾ Swedish government aid to the ANC and Swapo in

70. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 74.

71. Sweden: Footing the bill, (Africa Confidential 27 (24), 26 November 1986, p. 4).



1986 alone amounted to something like \$29 million (R87m) and there was every indication that this amount would be increased in the future. In the same year the Swedish government also granted an additional amount of \$100 million (R300m) in financial aid to the Frontline states and liberation organisations, most visibly among them the ANC and SWAPO. It is not clear how much of this latter amount was received by the ANC and Umkhonto, but considering that by 1986 besides SWAPO and the PAC, the ANC was the only other liberation organisation actively engaged in armed struggle in Southern Africa, it can be safely assumed that a fair amount of the additional \$100 million was received by the ANC and Umkhonto. In 1990 it was also reported that the ANC had received an amount of R24 million from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). This claim was later denied by the SACBC.⁽⁷²⁾

According to Davis the ANC in Exile acted as a type of borderless welfare state. It supplied food, clothing, transportation, education, housing and health-care for its 13 000 (some sources indicate 20 000) constituents or refugees living outside South Africa.⁽⁷³⁾ Each of these persons apparently received a minimum allowance of about \$8,33 (R24,99) per month for a student, or a token salary of up to \$26 (R78) per month for administrators and soldiers. These direct cash payments alone, according to Davis, must have amounted to approximately \$3,6 million (R10,8m) per year.⁽⁷⁴⁾

In an article that appeared in the South African press in April 1990⁽⁷⁵⁾ it was reported that the ANC had an annual budget "of hundreds of millions of rands" and that members of the organisation (and presumably also Umkhonto) received a monthly allowance of some 2 000 Zambian Kwacha (approximately R90). Compared to the monthly salary of 3 500 Kwacha (approximately R157) paid to a university

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72. See The Daily News (Durban), 1990.09.24 (Shock disclosure of aid to ANC) and The Daily News (Durban), 1990.10.24 (Bishop's denial of church assistance to ANC supported).
 73. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 72; The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.11 (A New Privileged Elite).
 74. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 72.
 75. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.11 (A New Privileged Elite).



lecturer in Zambia, the amount of 2 000 Kwacha represented a reasonable allowance in a country as poor as Zambia. However, when compared to the cost of a meal for two at one of Lusaka's better hotels which could run up to 2 000 Kwacha, the allowance paid to ANC members was small. The financial position of an ANC member in exile was perhaps best summed up by Don Ngubane, who was the organisation's Administrative Secretary for the Department of Information and Publicity, and lived in Lusaka. Ngubane (a nom de guerre) lived with his wife and two small children in a small but comfortable suburban bungalow.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Within this bungalow the family had two television sets, a video recorder, a hi-fi set, an electric stove and a fridge. They also employed a maid to help with the housework and to look after the two children. As a reasonably senior member in the ANC's organisational hierarchy, he had the use of an ANC vehicle for personal purposes provided that it was not needed elsewhere. According to Ngubane:

... life is OK. But there is no doubt we could not have survived outside the wider community of the ANC. We don't really need money because in the organisation we live largely in a moneyless society. I have managed to buy some luxuries, like a video, from money saved on overseas assignments. As for the rest, we managed. Sometimes I do not know how, but we do.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Although international aid to the ANC in exile had substantially grown since the mid-1970's, part of the reason why it was constantly short of funds was that it had established a vast hierarchy in exile that made increasingly heavy demands on whatever funds it had. For instance, although its 44 external missions (by 1988) provided important linkages with the international community and foreign governments these missions had to be financed almost entirely by the ANC itself. In addition transportation costs involving travel to and from these offices also took a large slice out of the ANC's annual budget. Add to this the 200-odd vehicles - sedans, bakkies, kombi's and trucks - owned by the ANC by 1988, that had to be maintained

76. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.11 (A New Privileged Elite).

77. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.11 (A New Privileged Elite).



annually by the organisation and one begins to understand why it was always in need of more funds.

In an attempt to meet its needs and to improvise for the shortfall in hard currency to finance the work of Umkhonto, the ANC has undertaken a number of projects over the years - the most noticeable of these being the farms it operated in Zambia and Angola. Davis wrote:

Farms and small factories have been started to promote self-sufficiency in food, clothes, furniture and construction. In most cases the ANC deliberately employs host-state nationals, at union wage to foster local goodwill. (78)

The 3 300 hectares ANC Farm at Chongella in Zambia, for instance, was worked by Zambian labourers to produce vegetables, corn, poultry and cattle for consumption by the ANC and where possible surpluses were sold at the Zambian market to generate income. Similarly, the ANC's furniture shop at Mazimbu was run by Tanzanians and ANC students and its products were built both for community needs as well as for market sales. (79)

But these projects and others like them have only been partially successful and very few if any could be considered self-sufficient. The farm at Chongella for instance has been heavily dependent on grants (some \$500 000 or R1 500 000) and equipment from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The same applied to the furniture factory at Mazimbu. Here training was provided by donor countries such as East Germany, Denmark, Zambia and Tanzania. Similarly, other enterprises such as the clothing factory also at Mazimbu operated on extensive Dutch grants and equipment that had been donated to the ANC.

In addition to these enterprises and the funds they generated for the ANC, it has also been claimed by the ANC that substantial sums of money raised inside South Africa were received by the organisation

78. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 72-73.

79. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 3.



over the years. With regards to Umkhonto as such, Davis wrote that:

Officials sponsor a 'fighting Fund' appeal that encourages compatriots in exile to support Umkhonto ... In reality, however, the Congress has not undertaken major professional grass-roots fund-raising campaigns.⁽⁸⁰⁾

All this of course had a direct effect on the ability of Umkhonto and the armed struggle. Although the organisation had managed to step up its armed attacks inside South Africa it is also true that its equipment which was mostly donated by the Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc countries was mostly out of date. "In short," argued Davis, "Umkhonto's arsenal has consisted largely of surplus supplies of outdated Soviet and East European munitions."⁽⁸¹⁾

Thus, the overall picture of the ANC's Mission in Exile and Umkhonto's armed campaign in the 1980's showed an organisation struggling to make financial ends meet. Although large sums of money and in-kind aid was received from a wide array of sources this money had to be thinly spread to meet all the demands of the Mission in Exile which had to provide a home to an ever-growing exile population, estimated to be more than 20 000 by the end of the 1980's.⁽⁸²⁾

4. CONCLUSION

Organisationally speaking, Umkhonto went through three major adjustments between its formation in 1961 and the end of 1988. The first came with the destruction of the internal underground structures of the ANC-SACP alliance in the mid-1960's while the second came at the Morogoro Consultative Conference which saw the formation of a Revolutionary Council to guide the day-to-day running of Umkhonto and the armed struggle. The third major change or

80. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 71, 73.

81. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 71, 74.

82. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1991.07.30 (The ANC's most worried man. 20 000 exiles champing at the bit to come home but there's no cash in the kitty).



adjustment came in 1983 when the Revolutionary Council was replaced with an entirely new and more elaborate structure, the Political Military Council (PMC) and its various sub-structures. Consequently, for the first time since 1961, the political and military phases of the armed struggle were co-ordinated to the best possible advantage of the liberation movement.

Although these changes were introduced in the name of the ANC and the struggle for Black political rights in South Africa, the organisational structure was drafted by the SACP which was the real force behind Umkhonto. For all practical and ideological purposes, Umkhonto had become the military wing of the SACP rather than the ANC by the mid-1980's.

According to Michael Morris of Terrorism Research Associates in London,⁽⁸³⁾ who has attempted an analysis of the organisational structure of Umkhonto and the ANC and the interrelationship between the two, it is almost impossible to draw an accurate diagram of the organisational structure of either the ANC or Umkhonto. He gave two reasons for this. One, the structure and leadership of the two organisations were constantly changing due to developments in South Africa and the successes of the South African government's counter-insurgency operations and diplomatic initiatives. The second was the overlapping in membership between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto. Since the members of one organisation were also the members of another, it was often difficult to draw a clear distinction between the different divisions of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto.

A further factor that complicates the issue was the fact that the names of personnel were often kept secret, particularly in the SACP and Umkhonto, to protect them from assassination attempts but probably also to hide internal differences and to remove from public scrutiny any changes that might be effected in the organisation as a

83. Morris, African National Congress of South Africa, Organisation and Hierarchy, Chart and Comments, single page.

result of differences of opinion and ideology. The use of pseudonyms by many if not most members of the ANC, Umkhonto and the SACP, also presents a problem to anyone attempting to make sense out of the structures and leadership of these organisations.

In terms of its leadership, the ANC, the SACP and to an extent Umkhonto, remained under the control of the members of the 'old guard' who were responsible for the formation of Umkhonto in 1961. Although the influx of two major groups of radical-minded recruits into the ranks of the ANC-SACP-Umkhonto liberation alliance diluted the numerical strength of the old guard leadership, they nevertheless managed to hold on to power, despite an up and coming and better educated younger leadership corps. This trend was confirmed at the ANC's first National Conference held inside South Africa at the beginning of July 1991 since its unbanning in February 1990. Although the position of the younger and often more radical leaders in the organisation was substantially strengthened through the election of several of them such as Thabo Mbeki, Palo Jordan, Steve Tshwete and Ronnie Kasrils to the ANC's NEC, the top positions in the organisation remained firmly in the hands of the older guard and in particular the "internal" leaders who were released from South African prisons in the late 1980's.⁽⁸⁴⁾

In sharp contrast to the older generation of ANC and Umkhonto leaders of whom only a handful had any post-matric qualifications, the younger generation of leaders in the liberation alliance such as Mbeki, Jordan, Meli, Lindiwe Mabuza and others were academically well qualified with several of them holding Masters or Doctors degrees. Mbeki, for instance, gained a Masters degree in Economics from Sussex in the United Kingdom, while Meli, a former editor of Sechaba, held a Doctors degree in History from the University of Leipzig in East Germany. Similarly, Miss Mabuza and Jordan both obtained Doctors

84. The Daily News (Durban), 1991.07.8 (ANC unity forged from many strands).

degrees from American universities.⁽⁸⁵⁾ In addition to their formal (academic) education many, if not most, of the younger generation of leaders in the ANC and Umkhonto also had years of experience in international politics, diplomacy and intrigue, something they shared with the old guard leadership outside South Africa but which their counterparts inside South Africa did not have.

In terms of the organisation's financial position, the position is less clear with regards to the amounts of money allocated to Umkhonto annually. Although an amount of some \$50 million (R150 m) had been suggested there can be little doubt that the organisation received a great deal more to conduct its affairs. This being the position in the 1980's the picture for the 1960's and 1970's is less clear. The little that is known indicates the fact that up to the mid-1970's the organisation had an extremely limited budget and that it battled to make ends meet. If this was indeed the case it will partially help to explain why the ANC and Umkhonto were largely unable to restart the armed struggle inside South Africa in the mid-1970's. Things changed dramatically after the Soweto uprising of mid-1976 when thousands of recruits began to stream into the offices of the ANC in exile. This latter development together with the establishment of Marxist regimes in Angola and Mozambique not only affected the liberation alliance in terms of organisation and logistics but also financially. After 1976 increasing material and financial aid appeared to have been channelled to the ANC in exile by sympathetic governments, institutions, individuals and organisations both in the West as well as in the Eastern Bloc. Again figures and amounts for this period are not available. What is clear however is that both financial and material aid whether in the form of cash, in-kind or in-service aid steadily increased over the years since the late 1970's. Equally important is the fact that as one liberation organisation after another in Southern Africa achieved their aims

85. Information compiled from: The Daily News (Durban) 1989.12.3; 1990.02.28; 1990.03.03; Barrett, A Profile of the ANC, May 1989, pp. 1-72; Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us, Information on cover page. See also Lodge, State of Exile, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 17, footnote 61).



between 1975 and 1980, increased money and other forms of aid became available to the ANC and SWAPO who remained the only two liberation organisations recognised in the region by the middle of the 1980's. Consequently, money previously made available to other liberation organisations could then be channelled to the ANC and SWAPO. Again, how this development exactly influenced the ANC and Umkhonto's financial positions is not clear. Reports on the movement's financial position that appeared in the daily press by the end of the 1980's indicated that while large sums of money was annually given to the ANC, the organisation remained financially embarrassed.⁽⁸⁶⁾

86. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1991.07.30 (The ANC's most worried man).



CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND ARMING OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE'S CADRES

As has been the case with much of the history of Umkhonto and the ANC so far, the process whereby people were drawn into the armed struggle after 1961 and the training given to these people went through a number of development phases. The first major change to Umkhonto's recruitment and training of cadres came with the collapse of the underground in the mid-1960's and the assumption of control over the armed struggle by the ANC's Mission in Exile. With the destruction of Umkhonto and the ANC's underground structures inside South Africa by 1965, recruitment and training of cadres had to be done mostly from outside the country. This made matters difficult for the ANC, with the result that there was a corresponding decline in recruitment and the activities of Umkhonto inside the country. It is however doubtful as to whether the ANC and Umkhonto would have been able to deal with any large influx of recruits during these years. Indications are that its organisational infrastructure for the training of recruits from South Africa was almost non-existent in the mid-1960's, which means that at best it could only have accommodated a small number of recruits in these years. What is more, recruits too well qualified for Umkhonto's needs often had to be turned away and as such became permanently lost to both the ANC and Umkhonto, which could neither employ them or pay for their services.⁽¹⁾

The second major change came in the mid-1970's. Although some important changes were effected to the organisational structure and

1. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10.



leadership of the ANC and Umkhonto at the Morogoro Conference in 1969, the indications are that the pattern of recruitment, although accelerated during the first half of the 1970's, remained more or less the same. The training of cadres for Umkhonto, however, had undergone some significant changes during these years. In 1964 the Soviet Union began to supply arms to the ANC. In the years that immediately followed Umkhonto made use of a variety of external training facilities, some in Africa and others outside the African continent, for the training of its cadres. Initially a large percentage of Umkhonto's cadres were also trained in training camps of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) between 1966 and the beginning of the 1970's, when it was discontinued as a result of internal problems in ZAPU. By this stage however the ANC-SACP alliance had also successfully established its own training camps in Tanzania and Zambia for the training of Umkhonto's cadres.

Although the recruitment of cadres continued inside South Africa after 1965 and trained guerrillas were infiltrated into the country from time to time, this was only on a limited scale. The growth and popularity of the Black Consciousness Movement inside South Africa since the late 1960's effectively helped to slow down the flow of recruits into the ranks of the ANC during these years, and it was only with the collapse of Portugal's colonial empire in Southern Africa in 1975 and the outbreak of the Soweto uprising in June 1976, that things dramatically changed in favour of the ANC and Umkhonto. The first development provided Umkhonto with much needed bases immediately across the borders of South Africa, while the second ensured it of a steady influx of new and highly motivated recruits. These developments also altered the pattern by which the ANC and Umkhonto had been recruiting as well as training people; whereas in the past it had to make use of deception, lies and often coercion to get people to leave South Africa and join the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe, it could now take its pick from the hundreds of African youths who were almost daily leaving South Africa for the bordering states of Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.



Although the influx of recruits from South Africa into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto began to slow down towards the end of the 1970's, Umkhonto had by this stage sufficient trained cadres and several well established training camps in Angola and Zambia to restart and intensify the armed struggle in South Africa, which it in fact did by the beginning of the 1980's.

Although the influx of recruits from South Africa had substantially slowed down by the beginning of the 1980's the unrest that broke out in the mid-1980's and the manner in which the government dealt with the situation however soon led to a second major influx of new recruits into the liberation alliance.

This second influx of new recruits as well as the problems that the ANC-SACP alliance had been experiencing with regard to organisation and leadership, and the growing dissatisfaction that had been manifesting itself among the rank and file in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola since the latter part of the 1970's, eventually forced the ANC to convene a second National Consultative Conference at Kabwe in 1985. At this venue a detailed "Cadre Policy" dealing with virtually all aspects of ANC membership was adopted in an attempt to solve some of the organisation's pressing problems in this regard. At the same time, it was resolved that in future all members of the ANC-SACP alliance had to undergo both military and political training. It also called for the acceleration of Umkhonto's underground presence inside South Africa and the political education (training) of the masses to prepare them for a people's war.

During the second half of the 1980's however the ANC's campaign to recruit new members and to accelerate the training of cadres inside South Africa suffered a number of setbacks. The first was in January 1986 when the pro-ANC-SACP government of Leabua Jonathan in Lesotho was overthrown and replaced with a pro-South African military government under Major-General Lekhanya. By the end of February virtually



the entire complement of ANC and Umkhonto personnel in Maseru had been expelled from Lesotho. Although Lesotho was never a major factor in the recruitment of ANC Umkhonto personnel, the little recruitment that took place through the mountain kingdom almost completely ceased by the end of 1986.

The second major setback retarding the recruitment of cadres for Umkhonto was the State of Emergency announced by the South African government in 1985, which was renewed annually until 1990. The latter measure so inhibited the ability of the ANC and Umkhonto to strengthen their positions inside South Africa that Ronnie Kasrils, who was one of the senior leaders of Umkhonto, had to admit by the end of 1988 that the ANC could not escalate the armed struggle into a people's war because it was unable to rebuild its underground structure inside South Africa, or recruit sufficient numbers for Umkhonto.

The third factor which slowed down the rate at which the ANC and Umkhonto were able to recruit and organise inside South Africa was the signing of the New York Peace Accord in December 1988. The latter agreement virtually destroyed Umkhonto's ability to escalate the armed struggle inside South Africa. Umkhonto nevertheless attempted to continue with the armed struggle and to step-up its recruitment campaign inside the country, but this was not successful, partially because it could no longer utilise its bases in Angola. Although most of its cadres were transferred from Angola to camps in Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, indications were that the general atmosphere in Southern Africa was gradually changing in favour of a negotiated settlement in South Africa, which ultimately had a negative affect on both the recruitment and training of Umkhonto's cadres.

The unbanning of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto in February 1990, the release from prison of Mandela and others since then, and the return of virtually the entire Umkhonto leadership corps has since enabled the organisation to begin with the restructuring of its underground



presence inside South Africa and the recruitment of new cadres.⁽²⁾ However, the suspension by the ANC of the armed struggle early in 1991 meant that whatever organisational work Umkhonto was doing inside the country had to be done in such a way that it did not become a threat to the negotiating process that was underway at the time.

1. THE INTERNAL PHASE; 1961 - 1965

1.1 Recruitment

The banning of the ANC in 1960 brought fundamental changes to the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. These changes not only involved the altering of the organisational structure and leadership of the ANC but it also forced the ANC, in its alliance with the SACP, to adopt a whole new approach to the recruitment of members. Unable to operate above ground as it had done before April 1960, the ANC and the SACP were now forced to recruit people clandestinely through their underground structures. This, and the fact that membership of the ANC and the SACP was illegal and punishable by the law, led many sympathisers to question their continued membership of the ANC.

To many ANC members the lifestyle of an underground revolutionary was unacceptable, with the result that they left the organisation in the months that followed its banning in April 1960. According to Feit,⁽³⁾ many of the ANC's proclaimed 12 000 strong membership in 1960 were little more than fair-weather friends who were quite willing to remain part of the organisation while it was legal, but once the ANC became an illegal organisation they were not prepared to risk their lives or face the difficulties of an underground existence.⁽⁴⁾

2. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.05.02.

3. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 100.

4. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 100. See also Barrell, MK, pp. 9 - 10; Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 1 - 21.

Consequently, the banning of the ANC in April 1960 subsequently left it with a much reduced membership and the difficulty to find suitable recruits to replace its lost members. The problem was however partially solved with the formation of Umkhonto in November 1961. Because of Umkhonto's multi-racial composition, recruits could be drawn from any of the country's racial groups, including Whites. Moreover, because of Umkhonto's special function, namely to commit sabotage, far fewer recruits were needed to make it functional than would have been the case with the ANC proper after 1960.

Because of its multi-racial character and its close ties with the underground SACP, most of Umkhonto's first recruits and leaders were initially drawn from the ranks of the underground SACP and SACTU, and the ANC. The only exception here was Natal, where hostility between the local leadership of the ANC in Natal and the NEC in Johannesburg over the use of violence, prevented the Regional Command of Umkhonto in the province to draw recruits from the ANC. As a result virtually no members of the ANC in Natal were members of Umkhonto. Attempts to correct the imbalance in 1963 and to involve the ANC in the affairs of Umkhonto came to nothing. Suggestions that Umkhonto should fill its quota of recruits from the ranks of the ANC's old volunteer corps or Amadelakufe also came to nothing when it was discovered that the latter corps had been disbanded in Natal shortly after the banning of the ANC.⁽⁵⁾

Several methods were used during the early 1960's to recruit people into Umkhonto and the armed struggle. While some potential recruits were openly told that they were being recruited for military training outside the country, the majority, it appears, were recruited into Umkhonto under false pretences. Some were told that they were being

5. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 178. See also Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe, p. 73; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa, pp. 70, 41 - 43. See also Barrell, MK, pp. 1 - 21.



recruited by the ANC to be sent out of the country for educational purposes. Others again were read passages from the scriptures to show that resistance to an oppressive government was justified in terms of the Bible. One example is the case of David Mataung. Having turned down an invitation to join Umkhonto and be sent out of the country for military training, Mataung was quoted a passage from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, to prove to him that violence against the State was justified under certain circumstances. Faced with such a convincing argument, Mataung decided to join Umkhonto. For this purpose he attended a meeting at Eastwood near Pretoria, where he was inducted into the organisation.⁽⁶⁾

Outside Natal, recruitment into the ranks of Umkhonto was done through a number of organisations including the ANC. In the Eastern Cape region, for instance, where the relationship between the local ANC and Umkhonto was cordial, the leaders of the local ANC and the SACP-SACTU alliance were more often than not also the leaders of Umkhonto. Thus recruitment into Umkhonto was often no more than the re-allocation of members of the ANC.⁽⁷⁾

The following examples of actual people drawn into Umkhonto during the early 1960's will help to illustrate the various methods that were used by the ANC and the underground to recruit people. The first example involves the case of M. Magwayi⁽⁸⁾ and two others who were recruited into Umkhonto some time in 1964/65. According to "Oceanic" Ngoza, who gave evidence in the above trial, the ANC cell to which he belonged in Port Elizabeth was told by their zone leader that two of its members would soon be transferred to what he termed a "new branch" of the ANC. On this occasion the names of Ngoza and Magwayi were put forward as possible candidates for Umkhonto. The fact that Ngoza was not a member of the ANC's volunteer corps and that most recruits for Umkhonto were normally recruited from the

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6. The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1964.08.25.
 7. Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 178.
 8. Cape Regional Court, Port Elizabeth, Case RC 28/1965, The State against M. Magwayi and 2 others, p. 54. See also Felt, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 178.



volunteer corps in the Eastern Cape region, came as a surprise to Ngoza. As a result he accepted the nomination because of the prestige attached to it. To be a member of the ANC's volunteer corps was considered a special honour, particularly in the Eastern Cape where the corps had its origin in the 1950's. On the one hand only the best were recruited for membership of the corps while on the other hand membership of the corps was associated with a lengthy and sometimes emotional ceremony of allegiance and loyalty to the ANC. The ceremony which was normally held in an open space, such as a clearing in the bush or on a soccer or rugby field, was held in awe by most volunteers. At one such ceremony that was held in East London during 1963 and which took place on a golf course, a group of new recruits (the number is not known) were brought together to take an oath of allegiance to the ANC and sign an undertaking in which they made a solemn promise to obey the rules and aims of the ANC at all times and do whatever was required of them by the organisation, even murder. The oath normally took the form of a recruit raising his right fist in the air, saying "Amandle-Nga-Wethu", meaning, "The strength is ours". The ceremony was concluded with the singing of the ANC song, "Mayibuye i Afrika".

Not only did the volunteer corps' members participate in a distinctive ceremony upon induction, but they also had to fill in a lengthy questionnaire prior to taking the oath of loyalty. The questionnaire was a fairly detailed document designed to gain control over the recruit's life. Besides details such as name, age, educational qualifications, training and employment, details of a more intimate and personal nature were also requested. Once the questionnaires were completed they were carefully checked with the recruit who had to sign it in the presence of the recruiting officer once the latter was happy that it was properly completed. The oath of loyalty was so strong that once a man had become a volunteer he could no longer refuse an assignment. To do so could be considered treason and could result in a volunteer being executed by a fellow



volunteer.⁽⁹⁾

In a second case involving the recruitment of cadres for Umkhonto, two Africans were walking home in Duncan Village, near East London, in 1962, when they passed a house where singing was coming from. The house was that of Malcomess Kondoti, who was Chief Steward for the ANC in the area, and the songs were ANC songs.⁽¹⁰⁾

Interested in what was happening inside the house the two paid a small donation at the door and were allowed inside. Here they actively participated in the singing, which went on until dusk. At this point the women were asked to leave, and the men who remained behind were then informed that the gathering was in fact an ANC meeting and that the organisation was looking for recruits willing to fight for the liberation of Africans from the yoke of White domination. Both visitors were so inspired by Kondoti's speech that they signed up as members of the ANC. Over the next few weeks several meetings were held at Kondoti's house during which the aims and objectives of the ANC, particularly the need for armed struggle, were carefully spelled out. Those in attendance were told to begin arming themselves when they attended future meetings. They were told to be loyal to the ANC and its causes, and to pay their fees since money was desperately needed to continue with the struggle. After attending several further meetings, the new recruits were eventually told that they had been recruited for Umkhonto and would be sent out of the country for military training.⁽¹¹⁾

As pointed out above, some recruits were drawn into Umkhonto under false pretences. The case of Houghton Soci is a good example. Trained as a teacher at Lovedale Missionary School near Alice in the

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9. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/1964, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of: Reginald Mdube, pp. 4 - 6, Bennet Mashiyana, pp. 10 - 11, and Raymond Mhlaba, pp. 61 - 70. See also Microfile, Johannesburg, Sundry Trials, State against Washington Bongco and 4 others, Evidence of Siduma Tana, pp. 333 - 349. See also Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 180.
 10. The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1964.02.16.
 11. The Daily Dispatch (East London), 1964.02.16.



Ciskei, Soci was a prime candidate for Umkhonto. Towards the end of 1962 he was approached by Frederich Gqola, a member of the ANC in the Eastern Cape, who told him that since he was an educated man he should join a study group to expand his knowledge of "current affairs". Having decided that this was a good idea, Soci joined the group and was given a book entitled History of the March to Freedom to read. He was told that the aims and objectives of the "study group" were "to learn and teach politics in a secret method so that each and every one would be in future, in a position to teach others". He was also told that in time to come it would be necessary to send people out of the country for "training". He was not told what sort of training it would be nor did he ask. He simply accepted that it had something to do with the group he belonged to.⁽¹²⁾

In most cases where minors were recruited under the pretence of overseas scholarships they were told not to tell anyone, not even their parents, that they were leaving the country. They had to leave home without saying a word.⁽¹³⁾ The recruiters probably knew that once the parents found out where their children were going they would put a stop to it. It was also possible that it might come to the ears of the police.

With others again the approach was direct. They were told about South Africa's apartheid laws, the system of influx control, job reservation, low wages, and the influence that these measures were having on the inferior position of Blacks in the country. Once these things were explained, some listeners were eager to join Umkhonto and be sent out of the country for guerrilla training. To many, going overseas, writes Mtolo:

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12. Supreme Court, Witwatersrand Local Division, Case 562/65, The State against Jackson M. Fuzili and 4 others, Statements made to the SAP by Houghton Soci, Exhibit 18, pp. 330 - 331.
 13. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening address Dr. P. Yutar, pp. 10 - 11; See also the Evidence of Isaac Rani, p. D21, and Alfred Jantjies, pp. c17 - 19; Mercer and Mercer, From Shantytown to Forest, p. 58.



was the adventure of a lifetime that might never come their way again. With many of the youngsters, it was not really the political feelings but rather a spirit of adventure that made them so keen to go overseas. The idea that they would come back as someone important encouraged many recruits to avail themselves of this opportunity for overseas training.⁽¹⁴⁾

There is also evidence that in some cases outright coercion was used to "persuade" recruits to join the organisation. This was particularly the case with recruits who were reluctant to leave the country for military training. According to Norman Dondashe, who was a long-standing member of the ANC, he was approached during the latter half of 1962 by a recruiting officer for Umkhonto. He was told to get in touch with William Mtwalo, who was a group leader for the ANC and presumably also one of the local leaders of Umkhonto in Port Elizabeth. On arriving at Mtwalo's house Dondashe was informed that he had been selected to join Umkhonto. Dondashe was not happy with this decision and told Mtwalo that he was not interested. In reaction to this he was told in no uncertain terms that unless he joined Umkhonto he would meet with an "accident"! Faced with such an unpleasant possibility Dondashe reluctantly made himself available for recruitment into Umkhonto.⁽¹⁵⁾

There is also the case of George Mokgoro, who had become so entwined in the complexities of South Africa's racial laws that the only way out of his problems was to join Umkhonto and leave the country. Born on the African reserve of Smithsdrift near Kimberley, Mokgoro, like many other Africans in the region, went to work on the mines near Kuruman in the Northern Cape to support his family. He later returned to the reserve but found it impossible to make a living. He then decided to move to Kimberley. But here he was soon arrested for

14. Mtololo, Umkhonto we Sizwe, p. 52. See also Supreme Court, Witwatersrand Division, Case 562/65, *The State against J.M. Fuzili and 4 others*, Statement made to the SAP by J.F.Z. Tangala, Exhibit 19, pp. 335 - 338, and the Evidence of William Senna, pp. 196 - 197.

15. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, *The State against N. Mandela and others*, Evidence of N. Dondashe, p. G57.



not having the necessary documentation to be in the area. He was given a suspended sentence and ordered to return to Smithsdrift. Knowing that he could not make a living there he moved to Johannesburg where before long, he found himself in the same predicament as in Kimberley. He was arrested by the Johannesburg Municipal Police because he did not have the right documentation and ordered back to the Smithsdrift reserve. Thus, as far as Mokgoro was concerned, he had a limited choice. He could return to the reserve and face starvation or he could go back to Kimberley and be arrested for illegal entry. While there may have been other choices open to Mokgoro such as returning to his former mining job in the Northern Cape, to him the future was bleak and in his distress he turned to the local ANC for help. The latter was eager to help but only if Mokgoro made himself available for military training overseas. Mokgoro was not happy with this solution, but since he could see no other way out of his problem he decided to comply with the request. Like many recruits before him, Mokgoro was arrested at the Bechuanaland border while attempting to leave South Africa in 1965.⁽¹⁶⁾

Exactly how many people were recruited into Umkhonto during the internal phase of the armed struggle is difficult to say. According to Barrell,⁽¹⁷⁾ the ANC (Umkhonto) had about 800 guerrilla trainees in camps in Africa and outside the continent by 1965. A second source estimated that a maximum of 1 000 members of the ANC-SACP alliance had left South Africa between 1960 and 1965. According to the same source "Many of these people, ... especially those with advanced education and training, such as doctors, were however lost to the organisation because they did not fit the mould of young men wanting to enlist for military or other training."⁽¹⁸⁾

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16. Supreme Court, Witwatersrand Local Division, Case 562/65, The State against J.M. Fuzili and 4 others, Evidence of G. Mokgoro and Peter Metshana, pp. 51 - 55, 178 - 186.
 17. Barrell, MK, p. 19.
 18. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC Builds from Within).

According to the evidence of Essop Suliman who operated a mini-bus taxi business from Orlando township, he transported some 360 people between June 1962 and June 1963 from Johannesburg to the Bechuanaland border. Most of these people were being sent out of the country by the ANC for military training.⁽¹⁹⁾ Although Suliman was one of the ANC's chief sources of transportation in Johannesburg and between Johannesburg and the Bechuanaland border it was highly unlikely that he was the organisation's only source of transport. Moreover, not everyone who joined the ANC and Umkhonto between 1961 and 1965 left South Africa via Johannesburg or were taken to the border by Suliman. Many also left the country under their own power via either Basutoland or Swaziland.

Whilst inside South Africa most recruits were transported by rail or by car from the provinces to Johannesburg, which served as the major point of departure for recruits leaving the country. Upon arrival in Johannesburg, if everything went to plan, they were received by a member of the underground and transported by car to S.K. House, which belonged to an African herbalist named English Mashiloana. Once a sufficient number of recruits had been assembled at S.K. House and the necessary travelling arrangements had been made, they were transported by car or by Suliman's taxis from Johannesburg to the Bechuanaland border. According to Suliman's evidence, which in court was sometimes described as unreliable and inaccurate, it appears that he was approached towards the middle of 1962 by a Coloured man named Gerald Lockman, who told him to contact Walter Sisulu at his legal offices in Marcosa House in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg. Suliman duly contacted Sisulu, who told him that the ANC needed his taxi service to transport people to the Bechuanaland border on an irregular basis. Suliman agreed to this and the first group of recruits left S.K. House in his taxis during June 1962. Suliman was also responsible for transporting delegates from South Africa to the ANC's first National Congress held in exile in Bechuanaland towards

19. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of Essop Suliman, pp. 70 - 86.

the end of 1962. According to Suliman he undertook some twelve trips for the ANC to the Bechuanaland border to drop off people. On each of these journeys which began in June 1962, he took twenty or more people. The last trip he made in June 1963 and it involved four mini-busses. On this journey he was arrested by the police.⁽²⁰⁾ It has been estimated that approximately one half of those people recruited and sent out of South Africa between 1962 and 1963 had been arrested either by the South African police while leaving or re-entering the country, or by the Rhodesian authorities while in transit through that country.⁽²¹⁾ In most cases the recruits or trained guerrillas were arrested not due to good police work or surveillance, but because they either acted suspiciously, got themselves lost or became stranded somewhere along the route because someone in the ANC had failed to make the proper arrangements for transportation from one destination to another. Generally, the routes followed by the underground to move recruits in and out of South Africa were from Johannesburg to the Bechuanaland border via Krugersdorp, Koster and Swartruggens or alternatively, via Rustenburg. The crossing of the border into Bechuanaland normally took place in the vicinity of Lobatsi. Once across the border, which in most cases presented no real problems, the recruits were met by officials of the ANC who then escorted them to the Bechuanaland immigration offices in Lobatsi to be registered.⁽²²⁾ As soon as the latter formality was completed they were taken on the next stage of their journey. The route most commonly used to take the recruits from Lobatsi to Dar-es-Salaam was the one that crossed the Bechuanaland-Rhodesian border near Plumtree in Southern Rhodesia. From there the recruits travelled by road or

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20. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of Essop Suliman, p. 85. See also the cross-examination of Suliman, pp. C1 - 6 and D1 - 5.
 21. Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 86.
 22. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of E. Suliman, pp. C1 - 6, D1 - 5 and the Evidence of Harry Bambane, pp. D5 - 8; Microfile, Johannesburg, Case SHJ 241/1963, The State against Joe Gqabi, Evidence of Gladstone Makamba, pp. 3 - 28, and Freddie Tyule, pp. 50 - 65, 67 - 96.



rail to Bulawayo, and then further north to Salisbury (the present day Harare) and from there across land to Northern Rhodesia (the present day Zambia), or alternatively to Livingstone in the southern part of Northern Rhodesia. They then headed for Lusaka, Tundama and the Tanganyika border. Once they had crossed the border into Northern Rhodesia they were aided by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) of Kenneth Kaunda, who provided transport and other facilities. When the route through Plumtree became too dangerous during 1963, a new route was brought into operation, that took the recruits from Lobatsi across Bechuanaland to Kasendela in the north, and from there across the Zambezi River by ferry or boat into Northern Rhodesia. Here they were met by members of UNIP,⁽²³⁾ who provided them with the necessary transport for the rest of their journey to Dar-es-Salaam.

Later on, when the overland route from Bechuanaland became too dangerous because too many recruits were being arrested by the South African and Rhodesian security police, new recruits from South Africa were transported by air from Bechuanaland to Dar-es-Salaam. This was however an expensive method of transport: at about R30 000 a flight⁽²⁴⁾ it is doubtful whether too many batches of recruits were taken out of Bechuanaland in this manner. According to Joe Modise, the ANC was aware that "we would not be able to use charters for a long time, firstly because South Africa and the British would exert pressure on the owners, and, secondly, [because] they were very expensive, we reconnoitred a route to Kazangula." According to Modise

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23. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of Harry Bambane, pp. D5 - 8. Alfred Jantjies, pp. C7 - 9 and Isaac Rani, pp. 23 - 26. See also Microfile, Johannesburg, Case SHJ 241/1963, The State against J. Gqabi, Evidence of Gladstone Makamba, pp. 13 - 18, 23 - 49, and Freddie Tyule, pp. 50 - 65, 67 - 96.
 24. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address by Dr. Percy Yutar, p. 1. See also Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 75.



the latter route later became the main route whereby recruits for Umkhonto were taken out of South Africa. From Kazangula, recruits went to Livingstone where they were helped by members of the Zambian United Independence Party of Kenneth Kaunda.⁽²⁵⁾

As stated above, a fair number of recruits for Umkhonto also left South Africa via the (then) High Commission Territories of Swaziland and Basutoland.⁽²⁶⁾ Many of those who left via Basutoland eventually also ended up in Bechuanaland from where they followed the various routes to Zambia and Dar-es-Salaam. Thus with the exception of Swaziland from where recruits were sent to Mozambique and from there to Dar-es-Salaam, most recruits for Umkhonto in the early 1960's left South Africa via Johannesburg and Bechuanaland for Zambia.

With the discovery of the Rivonia headquarters in mid-1963 and the eventual collapse of the underground inside the country that followed, the recruitment and transportation of recruits from South Africa came to a virtual standstill as cadres and leaders in the underground began to leave the country themselves in order to escape arrest.

1.2 Training

Although Umkhonto was internally-based and the armed struggle was controlled and directed from inside South Africa between 1961 and the end of 1965, most recruits were sent outside the country for military training. Only a handful were trained inside the country due to the obvious dangers involved in doing so. Mandela's departure from South Africa in January 1962 was directly linked to the need for facilities for the training of Umkhonto we Sizwe's recruits outside the country. In the early 1960's, before the ANC had any formal training camps outside South Africa, recruits from South Africa were trained in a

25. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 12.

26. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 251 - 253.



number of countries and facilities ranging from Communist China in the East and the Soviet Union and its East Bloc partners in Europe, to Cuba in the west. Cadres also received training in a number of African countries, the most notable among them being Algeria, Tanzania and Ethiopia. (27)

However, not all cadres were trained outside the country. This was particularly the case with those who were selected in 1961 to form Umkhonto and who came to form its initial leadership core. Most of these first recruits who set up Umkhonto in November 1961 were trained by members of the SACP. We will refer to this training as internal training to distinguish it from the external training given to later recruits.

1.2.1. Internal Training

The internal training of Umkhonto's first cadres was a two-fold exercise, namely informally, whereby instructors were sent down from Johannesburg to train members of Umkhonto in the provinces, or where people from the provinces were sent to Johannesburg to receive basic instruction in some or other aspect of sabotage or underground work; and in a more formal manner which saw special training camps being set up and run by the ANC and the SACP for the basic selection and training of cadres for Umkhonto. The latter type of training, was however, not a common phenomenon as it was far too risky to operate internal training camps on a regular basis. (28)

1.2.1.1. Informal Internal Training

Informal internal training was by far the most common form of training that was given to the leaders and cadres of Umkhonto in the early 1960's. In his evidence before the Rivonia court in 1963/4 and later again in his book on the history of Umkhonto in Natal, Mtolo claimed that with the formation of Umkhonto in November 1961, members

27. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 12.

28. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 16 - 17.



of the NHC in Johannesburg were sent down to instruct them in the manufacturing of explosives and explosive devices. On one occasion he was summoned to Johannesburg by the NHC to be instructed in the latest technique for the manufacturing of explosive devices. On this particular occasion he was instructed by Elias Motsoaledi (who was one of the accused in the Rivonia Trial) on how to make a black powder (gun powder) and termite bomb.⁽²⁹⁾ Motsoaledi instructed him, for instance, to make use of an electric stove rather than a coal-fired stove because a single spark could ignite the mixture. On his return to Durban Mtolo was given permission by the Regional Command to purchase the necessary chemicals to construct the type of bombs that he had been shown in Johannesburg. Mtolo later prepared an explosive device which he successfully exploded in a vacant lot in Bank Road, near Chesterville, just outside Durban.⁽³⁰⁾

Although training sessions such as these took place from time to time they were the exception rather than the rule, as it was generally too dangerous if not impractical for the NHC to conduct training sessions in Johannesburg involving a number of people at a time. It was far safer to send instructors such as Harold Strachan, Percy John Hodgson and others from Johannesburg to the provinces to train people in the manufacture and use of explosives and explosive devices.

The training given to Umkhonto operatives during the early 1960's was rather basic and primitive in comparison with the training given to cadres and the types of equipment used by them in the 1980's. Most of the explosives and explosive devices used by Umkhonto during the first half of the 1960's were largely home-made, crude and not very effective. Although dynamite was used by the underground it was not a common occurrence since it was difficult to obtain.

Generally, very few of the people selected or appointed to serve as Umkhonto's "explosive experts" in the provinces knew anything about

29. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 62 - 63.

30. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 62 - 63.



their subject or the dangers involved in the use of the various types of explosives, particularly dynamite. For instance, when the Regional Command in Durban was instructed some time between 1962 and 1963 to locate dynamite for sabotage, Mtolo together with Nair and Kasrils went on a dynamite-stealing expedition. In the 1960's dynamite used by construction companies, especially for road construction, was stored in brightly-painted wooden pillar boxes in the countryside away from buildings or inhabited areas. Surrounded only by a single fence (not even a security type of fence), these storage "depots" were easily accessible to anyone who wished to break into them. It was one of these storage depots that Mtolo and company decided to raid in their search for dynamite. According to Mtolo, once they had forced the doors on the wooden containers that housed the dynamite, the latter together with some Cordtex cord was loaded into the boot of their car and the rest was placed on the back seat, presumably unprotected. The dynamite was then transported to the house of George Naicker in Malvern. Not knowing much about dynamite or how it should be used in the manufacturing of bombs, Kasrils was sent off to the Durban Municipal Library to find a book on the subject. From this they learned that dynamite was a highly dangerous and volatile substance and had to be handled with extreme care.⁽³¹⁾ Mtolo writes:

When he [Kasrils] mentioned the danger that we had run, from the time that I had forced the doors of the boxes with a crowbar to the car journey and the dumping in the garage, I was horrified.

But what made him even more aware of how lucky they were, was the fact that he, Mtolo, had been sitting on top of the dynamite in the back of the car.⁽³²⁾

Although the latter incident does not really fit the description of "training", it does indicate the haphazard way in which some Umkhonto

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31. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 30 - 33. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 17 - 18.
32. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 30 - 33. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 17 - 18.



cadres and leaders in the early 1960's went about preparing themselves for the sabotage campaign ahead, as well as the way in which they acquired some of their knowledge on explosives and explosive devices. With the information they so dangerously obtained Mtolo and others were, however, able to teach new recruits in the art of bomb-making. Having become quite experienced in the manufacturing of explosives, Mtolo was made the chief training officer for the Durban Regional Command, and probably also for the rest of Natal.⁽³³⁾ On occasion he was sent as far as Bergville in north-eastern Natal to train people specially selected for the task. Thus, while cadres such as Kasrils, Nair, Curdnick Ndhlovu and others were responsible for the political training of recruits, Mtolo's task was to train cadres to become proficient in the manufacturing and use of bombs for sabotage.

1.2.1.2. Formal Internal Training

As indicated above, not all the training of cadres followed an informal pattern and some special training camps were set up inside South Africa for formal guerrilla institutions and selection of cadres for overseas training and presumably, also for internal work. One such training camp was that uncovered by police at Mamre towards the end of December 1962.⁽³⁴⁾ This particular camp, which started the day after Christmas and which was directed by "Comrade Commandant" Dennis Goldberg, and Looksmart Saulwandle Ngundle, his second-in-command, was designed to serve as a preliminary facility for the training and selection of cadres for Umkhonto and for overseas training. Ngundle, who had the rank of "Comrade Sergeant" was the leader of Umkhonto in Cape Town. His position was therefore similar to that of Curdnick Ndhlovu in Natal.

33. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, pp. 26 - 27.

34. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address Dr. P. Yutar, p. 10. See also in the same trial the evidence of Pieter Louw, Superintendent of the Department of Coloured Affairs, Mamre, p. H52. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 16 - 17.



According to one of the recruits, Caswell Nboxele,⁽³⁵⁾ who attended the Mamre camp, he was approached by Teddington Nquaby (probably a recruiting officer for Umkhonto in the Western Cape) sometime in December 1962, and asked whether he wanted to go on a week's "picnic". He was told to bring his own bedding and an extra set of clothing, but not to worry about food as this would be provided by the organisers of the event - he had to pay for transport however. The following day he went to the house of Nquaby. From here, together with others, he was taken to an empty house where they met more recruits. The party of recruits then travelled on foot to the Nyanga East bus terminus where they waited for a further group of recruits to join them. Once those recruits, who were from Nyanga West, arrived they were all taken by car to Mowbray station where they met Ngundle as well as a third group of recruits. At this stage they numbered seventeen. They were later joined by a further group of six recruits as well as Goldberg, who accompanied the truck that came to fetch them from the station. From Mowbray station the group travelled to Landsdowne where they picked up more recruits as well as four tents, which made it five tents with the one already in the truck. They also loaded a car engine.⁽³⁶⁾

To keep the camp secret the tents were set up some distance away from the road behind some large bushes. Once everything was in place, the recruits were paraded by Goldberg who divided them into 6 groups and told them to call one another "comrades". Ngundle acted as interpreter. Each of the six groups consisted of four recruits and they had to appoint a "Comrade Sergeant". They were further told by Goldberg that the camp was arranged by the ANC and that he was acting on instructions from "higher authority". He also told them that there were other "camps" in South Africa, like Mamre.

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35. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of C.Z. Nboxele, pp. D12 - 13.
36. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of C.Z. Nboxele, p. D13.



As Mamre was a military training camp the recruits were told that everything in the camp would be done under strict discipline. Anybody disobeying instructions or breaching discipline would be punished. This, they were told, was necessary if they were to learn the skills needed to fight the White people in South Africa. Guards were posted at night to warn against any possible intruders.

The training programme scheduled for the three weeks was very ambitious. It included, among other things, lectures on politics, economics, the workings of the internal combustion engine, first-aid, the use of field telephones and judo classes. The latter was conducted by a Coloured, Cyril Davids. During lectures on politics and economics the recruits had to listen to political recordings and sing freedom songs such as "Follow, Follow Luthuli" and "Come, Come Mandela". They also had to listen to the radio and make notes on anything to do with "liberation" and "freedom". These notes were later discussed around the campfire. They also received lectures on guerrilla warfare and the teachings of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. (37)

The Cuban revolution and the particular role that Fidel Castro played in it was apparently a popular subject with Goldberg. In addition to the various lectures, they also had to do physical training every morning. This, Nboxele told the court, was to get them fit to fight the Whites in South Africa when "the time comes for it". (38)

On 29 December, Albie Sachs, a lawyer from Cape Town, arrived at the camp to deliver a lecture on economics and politics. On the same day the local superintendent of the Coloured Affairs Department of Mamre was instructed by the secretary of the Department to investigate the camp. Uncertain as to what he might find at the camp, the superin-

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37. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, p. D13.
38. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of C.Z. Nboxele, pp. D15 - 16.



tendent took some policemen with him. On their arrival at the camp they were met by Goldberg and Sachs who initially refused to identify themselves. The police took one look at the set-up and decided to return for reinforcements. As soon as the Coloured Affairs Superintendent and the police had left the camp the recruits were told by Goldberg that their camp was illegal and that they had to make a fire to burn some of the documents and notes in the camp. Some of the equipment used in the camp such as a typewriter and a roneo machine, were put in Sachs' car. They were still busy with this when the police returned to search the camp. Later on more police arrived and these, together with the first group, took Goldberg, Davids and Sachs back with them to Mamre police station. Once everyone had gone Ngundle told the recruits that the "Comrade Commandant" and the others had been "arrested", and that since there was nothing they could do, they should cook some food and play football. Later a large contingent of police arrived, who took down the names and particulars of the recruits.⁽³⁹⁾

The recruits remained at the camp until the Sunday when Goldberg (he had not been arrested as Ngundle told the recruits, but was only questioned by the police) returned with a truck to take them back to Cape Town.

Although the Mamre camp was the only one ever discovered by the police, there is evidence that suggests that it was not the only camp of its type run by the underground in the Cape in the early 1960's. According to Nboxele, after the Mamre incident he was approached on at least two more occasions to attend similar training camps, but declined to do so. On both occasions Ngundle was the contact.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Whether similar camps were also run by the underground in other parts of the country such as the Eastern Cape, is not clear. There is no

39. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of C.Z. Nboxele, pp. D17 - 20, and Superintendent P. Louw, pp. H52 - 55.

40. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of C.Z. Nboxele, pp. D19 - 20.



evidence to suggest that this was indeed the case, yet it does not necessarily mean that such camps did not exist. According to Mtolo the ANC in Natal, for instance, had a group of volunteers who drilled every Sunday.⁽⁴¹⁾ While little else is known about this latter group, it is unlikely that they would have received only drill instruction without some or other form of political education.

With the destruction of the underground by the mid-1960's, however, virtually all internal training, whether formal or informal, ceased due to the increased danger involved and the lack of people to undergo such training.

1.2.2. External Training (See DIAGRAM K)

Although many of the initial leaders and recruits of Umkhonto were trained inside South Africa in the basic skills of underground work and sabotage, the majority of cadres and later leaders of the organisation were sent for training outside the country after early 1962. Most of the acts of sabotage committed immediately before and after 16 December 1961 were thus committed by leaders and cadres trained inside the country and with explosives and explosive devices manufactured locally. The picture as to when the first groups left the country for military training and how many left is not entirely clear. Some sources indicate that the first recruits for Umkhonto left around April/May 1962 while other sources suggest that the first group of recruits left the country in January 1962 after they had a secret meeting with Mandela, the Commander of Umkhonto. According to the latter source although most of the groups who were sent out of the country in early 1962 were under the impression that they were being selected for military training, some apparently were being sent out of the country for specific academic purposes. One particular group that was recruited for Umkhonto was apparently told by Mandela

41. Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 55.



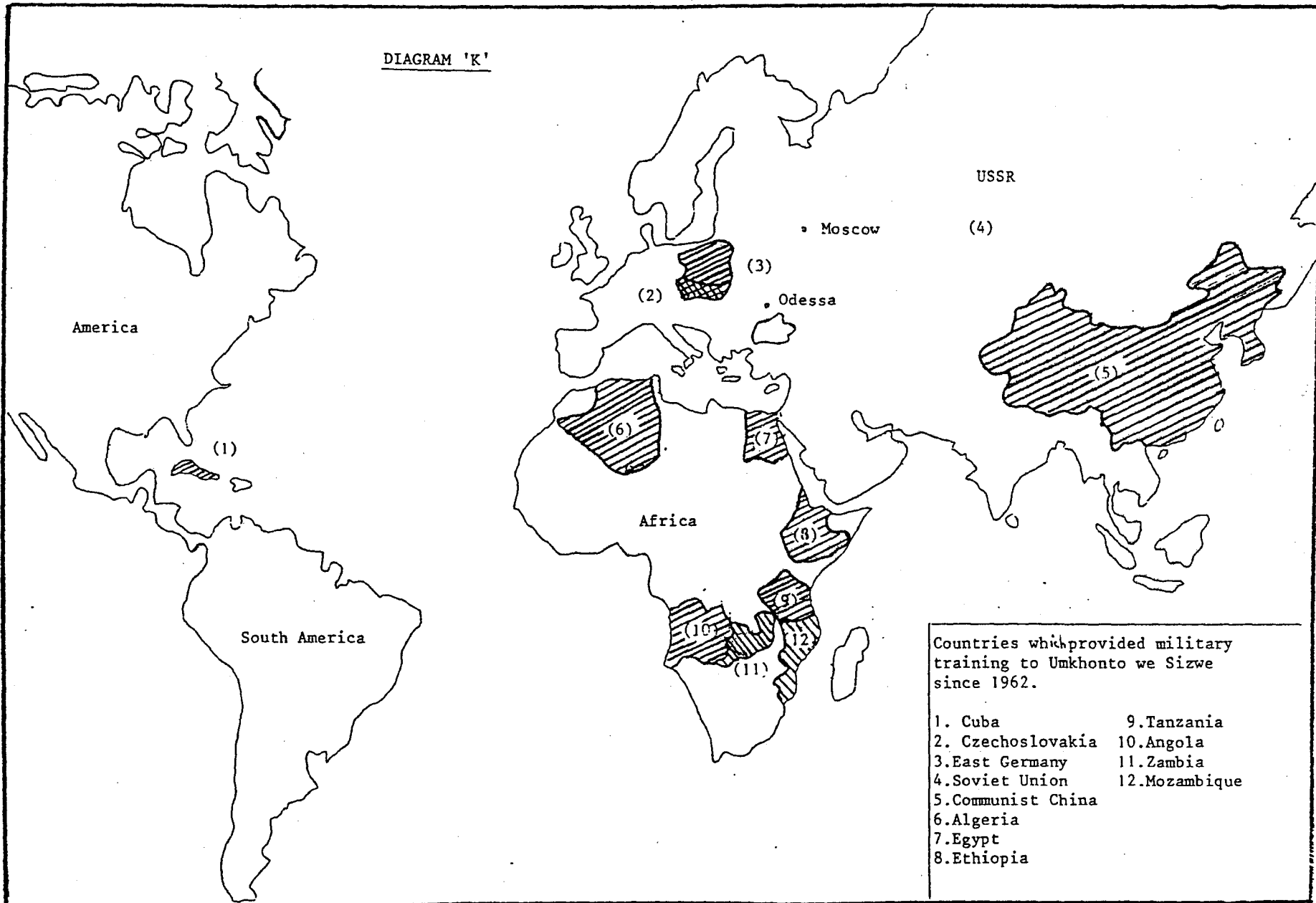
in January 1962 that they had been selected, not for military training but to "study" in the Soviet Union.⁽⁴²⁾ However it can be assumed that although some recruits were sent out of the country for academic reasons, the majority after January 1962 were sent out to undergo guerrilla training in African countries to the north. This was particularly so after Mandela had met with a number of African leaders during his African tour and had made arrangements for the training of Umkhonto's cadres. Mandela himself underwent a crash course in guerrilla training at Aijda in Algeria during the first half of 1962. By mid-1963 more than 300 recruits, according to Barrell, had been sent out of South Africa to receive military training.⁽⁴³⁾ This figure corresponds closely to that mentioned by Essop Suliman at the Rivonia trial in 1963/4 referred to above.

By 1965 the ANC and Umkhonto had about 800 guerrilla trainees outside South Africa, based at camps in Tanzania (where Umkhonto were sharing facilities with ZAPU), or undergoing military training courses in, among other places, the Soviet Union (Odessa), Czechoslovakia and (until the Sino-Soviet split) China. Umkhonto cadres also received training in Algeria, Ethiopia and Egypt. Tanzania however seemed to have been the main source of training for most of Umkhonto's early cadres. Joe Modise was made commander of Umkhonto in 1965 after the arrest of the internal leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto and the collapse of these two organisation's combined underground structures inside South Africa.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The general impression regarding the training of Umkhonto's cadres in the early 1960's is that only the brightest and more able of recruits were sent abroad to Cuba, the Soviet Union, China or elsewhere for military training while the rest were being trained on African soil by Soviet, Cuban or Algerian instructors in the art of guerrilla

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42. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.09 (ANC old guard turns back the clock).
43. Barrell, MK, p. 13.
44. Barrell, MK, pp. 18 - 19. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 12; The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.09 (ANC old guard turns back the clock).

DIAGRAM 'K'



Countries which provided military training to Umkhonto we Sizwe since 1962.

1. Cuba	9. Tanzania
2. Czechoslovakia	10. Angola
3. East Germany	11. Zambia
4. Soviet Union	12. Mozambique
5. Communist China	
6. Algeria	
7. Egypt	
8. Ethiopia	



tails), the cutting of telephone and other types of communications and the burning of sugar cane. Although the explosive devices described above were popular with Umkhonto guerrillas in the early days of the armed struggle, these crude devices were extremely dangerous and unstable. Several of the early guerrillas lost their lives due to these bombs exploding unexpectedly. Johannes Molefe was for instance blown up in December 1961 when the explosive device he was carrying exploded. A second guerrilla who was with him suffered serious burns on his hands and face.⁽⁴⁹⁾

But explosive devices such as those referred to above were not the only type used by Umkhonto during the early 1960's. By 1962 the organisation was also making use of dynamite stolen from storage depots at road working camps, construction sites as well as small quantities that the organisation obtained from sympathetic mine-workers.⁽⁵⁰⁾ But since dynamite was difficult to obtain and not always available plans were drawn up towards the end of 1962 for the clandestine manufacturing of massive quantities of explosives, explosive devices, timers and hand grenades. Goldberg was in charge of this operation. Exactly how far they had progressed with these plans by the middle of 1963 was not clear but according to Slovo they had found a way of doing it successfully, using local materials. One can therefore assume that an attempt would have been made to manufacture these explosives had it not been for the discovery of the Rivonia underground headquarters, and the subsequent destruction of the internal structures of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto by the mid-1960's.⁽⁵¹⁾

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49. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 8; See also Mtolo, Umkonto we Sizwe, p. 22.
50. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 17.
51. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 25.



2. THE EXTERNAL PHASE, 1965 - 1988

2.1 Recruitment

2.1.1. The Period 1965 - 1976

The discovery of the combined underground headquarters of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto at Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia in June 1963 and the action taken by the state and the police, virtually destroyed the ANC and the SACP's recruitment campaign in the country. It also brought all internal training to a standstill. With most members of the underground in deep hiding or having left the country, it is doubtful whether the ANC or Umkhonto were in any position to do any meaningful recruiting between 1963 and 1965. According to information that was recently released on developments in the ANC during these early years, it has been estimated that approximately a thousand people had left South Africa between 1960 and 1965 and that the figure sharply declined thereafter.⁽⁵²⁾

This means that if all the people who had left South Africa between 1960 and 1965 had joined the ANC in exile, the organisation probably had in the region of a thousand people in exile. It is, however, doubtful whether all those who had left South Africa during the first half of the 1960's actually joined the ANC's Mission in Exile. This means that the organisation probably had less than a thousand people living in exile by the mid-1960's. Exactly how many of these people belonged to or were earmarked for Umkhonto is not clear, but if half were sent for military training then Umkhonto probably had between 400 and 600 trained cadres outside the country by the mid-1960's. This figure is supported by the fact that Umkhonto's guerrillas only formed about one third of the combined ANC-ZAPU force that crossed into Rhodesia in August 1967.⁽⁵³⁾

52. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC builds from within).
53. Mercer and Mercer, From Shantytown to Forest, pp. 71 - 72;
Horrell, Action, Reaction and Counter Action, p. 119;
Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1967,
pp. 66 - 67.

While it is difficult to determine with certainty how many people were members of Umkhonto by the end of the 1960's, there were clear indications by the beginning of the 1970's that there was serious dissatisfaction among the rank and file in Umkhonto's training camps over the failure of the combined Umkhonto-ZAPU operations and the ANC's general inability to resume the armed struggle inside South Africa. Many also felt that as a result of weak leadership and poor direction, Umkhonto's cadres ran unnecessary risks during the Rhodesian incursions.

There was also serious dissatisfaction within the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto over a number of other issues which ranged from poor food, lack of equipment, a shortage of money to buy equipment and to pay recruits, the ill-treatment of recruits, as well as growing dissatisfaction with the national leadership of the ANC and the SACP.⁽⁵⁴⁾ According to one report that appeared in the press, recruits who refused to undergo military training on the grounds that they were initially recruited into the ANC on the understanding that they would be sent overseas to further their education, were either tortured, beaten or simply left to rot in Tanzanian gaols. It was also reported that there was growing dissension over the fact that while the leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto were living in apparent luxury in Lusaka and elsewhere, the men in Umkhonto's training camps had to make do with the poorest of conditions. Apparently, some cadres had even attempted to murder some of the ANC's leaders while others who were fed up with conditions in the camps had fled or attempted to flee the camps for the safety of Kenya. According to information released by the South African security police, some 72 Umkhonto guerrillas had escaped in Dar-es-Salaam while en route from training holding camps in Algeria. In an attempt to prevent any

54. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1969.02.26. See also Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, p. 10; Die Vaderland (Pretoria), 1968.07.10 (Groot onmin heers in geledere van ANC en Kie); The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1969.07.06 (Secret paper reveals spreading revolt among ANC "Freedom Fighters"); The Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg), 1969.02.11 (People Killed in Fight for ANC Leadership).



similar incidents, many cadres were kept in holding cells or under strict guard while in transit from one training facility to another or before they were sent out to fight.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Further reports that appeared in the press during May 1969 confirmed much of what was reported earlier, but added that the possibility existed that up to 300 Umkhonto cadres could have fled the organisation's training camps for the safety of Kenya. According to a report that appeared in the Sunday Times of 6 July 1969, four of those stranded in Nairobi sent documents to organisations in Western countries in which they urged them to cease all further support to the ANC since this money was used mainly for the benefit of the organisation's leadership while the men in the training camps had to live under the worst of conditions. It was also claimed that corruption was rife in the ANC and that some of the organisation's leaders were selling clothing and other items that had been donated to the ANC and Umkhonto for their own enrichment. Anyone complaining about this type of corruption was severely dealt with. On at least two occasions there were claims that men who had opposed the ANC's leadership, were sent on ill-planned or suicide missions into Rhodesia or Mozambique.⁽⁵⁶⁾

On the whole, therefore, morale in the ANC and Umkhonto's training camps seems to have been very low by the end of the 1960's. Because much of it had been extensively reported on in the press in South Africa, it is doubtful whether many recruits would have joined the ANC and Umkhonto during these years. The general failure of the combined operation between Umkhonto and ZAPU into Rhodesia despite claims by the ANC to the contrary, undoubtedly also affected the ANC's ability to recruit people inside the country during this period.

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55. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1969.02.26; Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, p. 10.
56. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1969, p. 10. See also The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1969.07.06 (Secret paper reveals spreading revolt among ANC "Freedom Fighters").



A third factor that had a negative influence on the ANC's ability to draw recruits into the ranks of Umkhonto during the early 1970's, was the rapidly expanding Black Consciousness Movement inside South Africa. Situated inside South Africa and preaching a militant form of Black Power which concentrated on the concept of Black unity, the Black Consciousness Movement presented many dissatisfied Black youths with a political and organisational alternative to the ANC inside South Africa.

Although the Morogoro Conference of April 1969 settled many organisational problems and gave new direction to Umkhonto and the armed struggle, it took a number of years for these changes to take effect, with the result that neither the ANC nor Umkhonto saw any immediate increase in new recruits entering their ranks between 1969 and 1975. According to statistics released in 1971, Umkhonto was reported to have had something like 2 000 fully trained guerrillas, of whom several hundred had been in joint operations with ZAPU in Rhodesia since 1967.⁽⁵⁷⁾ How accurate this figure is, is not clear. However, if one takes into consideration that approximately a thousand people had left South Africa to join the ANC's External Mission between 1960 and 1965 then it is not unreasonable to assume that a further thousand could have joined the Mission in Exile between 1965 and the beginning of 1970. One thing is certain, one of the biggest problems affecting the recruitment of new cadres into the ANC and Umkhonto during these years was the organisation's inability to rebuild its underground structure inside South Africa and to infiltrate sufficient numbers of people in order to step up its recruitment campaign inside the country. Sheridan Johns writes:

Although the accelerated implementation of apartheid has brought new misery to thousands of non-Whites (principally Africans) forced into makeshift resettlement camps and rising levels of

57. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, p. 95; The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC builds from within).



resentment - noted by both White and African observers - among the urban African population there is little evidence that any ANC (or Umkonto) underground organisations have been able to capitalize upon these events to organise protests against government actions. (58)

Although the ANC and Umkhonto was showing signs of re-establishing itself inside the country by the middle of the 1970's, its presence inside South Africa remained a limited one and had to await the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975, the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the banning of the BCM in 1977 to begin its revival inside the country.

2.1.2. The Period 1976 - 1985

The collapse of the Portuguese empire in Southern Africa and the wide-spread unrest that manifested itself among Black students in South Africa in 1976, introduced an entirely new era in the history of Black politics and the armed struggle. For the first time since the formation of Umkhonto in 1961, recruits were streaming into the ANC and Umkhonto without the use of coercion or deception to get people to join them. Faced with a government that was determined more than ever before to stifle any sign of radical Black political opposition inside South Africa, many African youths, despite their Black Consciousness background, left South Africa to join the ANC and Umkhonto.

Although neither the ANC nor its partner the SACP had anything to do with the outbreak of the Soweto uprising in June 1976, they were quick to capitalize on the growing unrest and the general uncertainty that followed. Already in the process of establishing some form of internal structure inside South Africa by 1976, the ANC and Umkhonto through their existing underground cells helped to fan the fires of revolt while at the same time, channeling the exodus of thousands of

58. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 292 - 293).



dissatisfied and highly politicised African students into the ranks of Umkhonto. The main exodus of students from South Africa began in October 1976 when thousands of African youths fled to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Although some of those who left the country during and after 1976 did so with the aim of continuing their studies overseas and were probably helped by the ANC to do so, most were channeled into Umkhonto's training camps in Angola, Libya, Tanzania, Algeria and elsewhere. In order to facilitate this new development, Umkhonto transferred its headquarters from Tanzania to Mozambique in 1976, where it established at least three guerrilla training camps during the following year.⁽⁵⁹⁾ One of these camps, which was also used as a staging area for troops based elsewhere, was at Ponta do Ouro, just three miles north of the Natal (SA) border. The other, constructed in 1975, just as Frelimo was taking power in Mozambique, was reported to be situated near the confluence of the Rio dos Elefantes and Limpopo River, again within easy reach of the South African-Mozambique border in the northern Transvaal. In addition to these two camps (it is not clear where the third camp was situated) the ANC and Umkhonto also occupied a fortified compound in the Maputo suburb of Matola, which served among others as a planning office for military and political operations inside South Africa. (See DIAGRAM L, p. 528). This latter facility was virtually destroyed by the SADF in 1981, leaving thirteen ANC-SACP-Umkhonto members/operatives dead and three buildings in ruins.⁽⁶⁰⁾

According to figures released by Brigadier C.F. Zietsman of the Security Police in 1978, it was estimated that some 4 000 Black South Africans (of whom the majority were Africans) were undergoing guerrilla training outside South Africa at the time; most under the direct auspices of the ANC and Umkhonto.⁽⁶¹⁾ It was further pointed out that the increase in guerrilla activity after 1976 was

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59. J. Kane-Berman, Soweto, Black Revolt, White Reaction, pp. 218 - 219; Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981, (Reality 14 (2), 1982, p. 7).
60. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 67. See Chapter 5, pp. 235 - 352.
61. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence, 1976 - 1981, (Reality 14 (2), 1982, p. 7); Kane-Berman, Soweto, p. 219.



the direct result of the mass exodus of Blacks from South Africa after the Soweto uprising and the absorption of these people into the ranks of the ANC-SACP and Umkhonto. Generally, the post-Soweto recruits were better educated, better motivated, but, above all, more radical than those who entered Umkhonto in the early 1960's. Thus, many, if not most of those who were members of Umkhonto after 1976, and who were responsible for the gradual resumption of the armed struggle inside South Africa by the latter part of the 1970's, were former students and veterans of the uprising in Soweto and elsewhere in the country. Perhaps one of the more illuminative examples of a schoolboy turning guerrilla for the ANC after 1976, was the case of Solomon Mahlangu after whom the ANC's school at Mazimbu in Tanzania was named in 1979. The school's aim was to cater for the educational needs of the ever-growing number of young Africans such as Mahlangu who had left South Africa after the Soweto uprising.⁽⁶¹⁾

Mahlangu, like so many before him, left South Africa in 1976 in great secrecy without telling anyone. Not even his parents knew where he went. He left South Africa via Swaziland where he made contact with the local leaders of the ANC, who sent him to Mozambique. From there he was sent directly to one of Umkhonto's training camps in Angola where he remained until June the following year, when he was sent back to South Africa via Mozambique and Swaziland to undertake acts of sabotage. The South African police became aware of Mahlangu's cell as it passed through Johannesburg in June 1977. In the skirmish that followed in Goch Street, two Whites were killed. They were the first to die at the hands of this new breed of students-turned-guerrillas and in a way the death of the two Whites on 13 June 1977 marked the revival of the armed struggle in the post-1976 period.

Although the intention of Mahlangu and his two fellow guerrillas appears to have been only to open fire on the police should they at

61. ANC (SA), Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), Official Opening, 21 - 23 August, 1985, Progress Report, Special Edition, 1985, Introduction, p.1.



any time interfere with their mission - which was to be part of a demonstration in Soweto to celebrate the first anniversary of the 16 June 1976 uprising - the Goch Street shooting at the time raised the question as to whether South Africa was entering a new period of urban guerrilla warfare. The incident also illustrated that the guerrilla of the post-Soweto period was an entirely different breed of recruit from those that had made up the bulk of Umkhonto and the ANC's manpower in the 1960's. Mahlangu was later sentenced to death for his role in the Goch Street shooting. He was executed on 6 April 1979, the same year in which the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College was established. (62)

Although very little has been published or written on the recruiting methods used by the ANC and Umkhonto during the latter half of the 1970's or the course of the 1980's it appears that most recruits after 1976 joined the ANC and Umkhonto on a voluntary basis.

It was with the support of these recruits that the ANC-SACP alliance was able to step up its military presence inside South Africa and increase its political bargaining power in the international arena after 1976. In May 1979, Glen Moss, the editor of Work in Progress, stated that by the end of the 1970's the armed struggle in South Africa had grown into a low-intensity civil war that would not disappear until its roots were removed. It could no longer, he said, be seen as a temporary phenomenon but was a built-in part of the structure of society. He went on to say that the statements made from the dock by people accused under the Terrorism Act showed an acute sense of desperation, in that they saw no constructive avenues of political expression. They displayed a high level of individualism and a strong sense of nonracialism. (63) Of course conditions such as these greatly facilitated the ANC and Umkhonto in their task of recruiting people into the armed struggle after 1976.

62. ANC (SA), The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), Official Opening, p.1.

63. Glen Moss as quoted in Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1979, p. 152.



One particular development in the post-1976 period that effectively aided the ANC and Umkhonto's recruiting campaign inside South Africa and helped to push hundreds of new people into the ranks of the two organisations, was the banning of the BCM by the government in 1977. Kane Berman wrote:

The banning of the Black Consciousness Organisations on 19 October 1977 might well have decided even great numbers of youngsters that there were not many openings left for constitutional politics within the country. The history of the 1960's, when the banning of the ANC and the PAC simply drove them underground and into violent opposition, seemed to be repeating itself.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Kane Berman went on to cite the case of Sexwale who had joined the ANC (Umkhonto) even before the Black Consciousness organisations were banned in 1977. He writes:

After October 1977 it seemed inevitable that many more people would share his [Sexwale's] views: ... less than half of Soweto's high school students were at school in 1978, and it seemed possible that some of the absentees not already in guerrilla training camps would sooner or later find their way there. Demonstrations in Soweto and indeed in other townships had led to arrests and detentions being worse: they had been very costly in Black lives. For students involved in active campaigns against apartheid, many townships were simply unsafe. No doubt many a student decided that if he were to hang for a lamb, he might as well hang for a sheep.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Exile and graduation into military training, therefore, seemed an almost inevitable scenario for many Black South Africans during the latter half of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's.

According to Stephen Davis,⁽⁶⁶⁾ the average age of an ANC-Umkhonto cadre before June 1976 was about 35 years. After that date, as a result of the mass influx of students from the townships the average age had dropped to twenty-eight.

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64. Kane-Berman, Soweto, p. 228.
65. Kane-Berman, Soweto, p. 228.
66. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 28.

Although the ANC and Umkhonto initially had to rely on its ageing contacts and a relatively poor organisational infrastructure inside the country to recruit people into Umkhonto in 1976, the steady influx of students and their rapid training soon enabled the organisation to make use of its newly-trained cadres to do recruiting work in the townships around the country.

Although a definite boon to the ANC and Umkhonto, the sudden influx of new recruits into the External Mission, while swelling the ranks of the Umkhonto also placed a heavy burden on the External Mission's limited facilities and funds. In many instances this resulted in the poor training of cadres, the haphazard planning of vitally important missions, and major security leaks as a result of poor screening methods. In the end this led to the arrest or death of many of Umkhonto's cadres. By relying on amateurish agents inside South Africa to resume the armed struggle and to re-establish Umkhonto, the ANC, argued Stephen Davis, ran the risk of scaring off potential enlistees, just as had happened in 1962 and 1963, when large numbers of people were caught while leaving the country.⁽⁶⁷⁾ However, despite these problems and instances of inept organisation, dissatisfied dissidents continued to fill the ranks of Umkhonto outside the country, using the ANC's underground structure in South Africa that had grown steadily since 1976.

Although it is difficult to determine the exact number of people who had left the country after June 1976, it has been estimated that at the height of the Soweto unrest in 1976, some 450 Blacks were leaving the country each month, either on their own or with ANC support. Of these people only about one-fifth could be classified as adults.

According to Davis, the approximately 450 people that had left South Africa per month during the period October 1976 to mid-1977, gradually decreased to about 250 per month in 1978. This figure further decreased to about forty people per month in 1979. As a result by the beginning of the 1980's Umkhonto was estimated to have

67. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 28 - 29.



had some 8 000 to 9 000 guerrillas under its command - the majority of which had joined the organisation since the Soweto uprising in 1976. It has also been estimated that about 75 per cent of all the people who had left South Africa in the wake of the 1976 unrest were channeled into Umkhonto and the ANC.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Although many of the recruits who joined the ANC since 1976 were sent for military training, by the end of the 1970's a fair number were also being sent to the ANC's educational centre at Mazimbu as well as on overseas scholarships.⁽⁶⁹⁾

By the end of the 1970's and at the beginning of the 1980's, however, the outflow of recruits from South Africa into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto had slowed down considerably. This, surprisingly, came at a time when the ANC was actively engaged in attempts to accelerate the armed struggle inside South Africa. Attacks on industrial installations began in 1980 with attacks on strategic targets such as SASOL in June and on a number of power stations around the country in 1981, including the incompleting Koeberg nuclear power station in the Western Cape in December of that year. Whether the new wave of attacks that hit the country after 1980 was partially designed to give vent to growing pressure inside Umkhonto's overfull training camps or to encourage further recruitment into the organisation, is not clear - it was probably done to achieve both these aims.

With the signing of the secret bilateral agreement between South Africa and Swaziland in 1982⁽⁷⁰⁾ which committed the Swazi government to help combat the ANC, and a similar agreement reached between the South African government and Mozambique's Frelimo government at Nkomati on 16 March 1984, the movement of recruits and trained guerrillas to and from Mozambique via Swaziland suffered a severe setback. As a result the movement of recruits and guerrillas across

68. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 56 - 57.

69. Douglas and Davis, Revolt on the Veldt, (Harpers 267, December 1983, p. 35).

70. Lodge, Mayilome! Let Us Go To War. From Nkomati to Kabwe. The African National Congress, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review 3, 1985, p. 9); Davis, Apartheid's Rebels p. 57.

South Africa's borders substantially decreased by the second half of 1984,⁽⁷¹⁾ despite claims by the ANC to the contrary. Over a hundred ANC and Umkhonto operatives alone were deported from Swaziland in 1984, while scores of ANC and Umkhonto personnel were forced to leave Mozambique during March and April 1984 to escape their possible expulsion by the FRELIMO government. At the same time, it was reported that with the virtual closure of the Mozambique-Swaziland route, the ANC was increasingly turning its attention to Botswana and Lesotho as major routes for recruits from South Africa and the return of trained guerrillas to the country.

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact number of recruits that had left South Africa up to 1984, or how many trained guerrillas entered the country up to then, some indication of the strength of Umkhonto and its presence inside South Africa can be gained from the fact that, according to statistics released by the Minister of Law and Order and published in the South African Institute of Race Relations' Annual Survey in 1984, the ANC and Umkhonto had only between 1 500 and 2 000 trained guerrillas available to them and that no more than 30 Umkhonto guerrillas were deployed on active service inside the country at any given time. The Minister further claimed that it was becoming increasingly obvious that the ANC was having difficulty in recruiting people for military training and active service inside South Africa. He attributed this to the counterinsurgency measures of the security forces and the successes it had had in uncovering ANC cells inside the country. According to the Institute for Strategic Studies of the University of Pretoria, the total strength of the ANC and Umkhonto by the early 1980's stood at between two and four thousand people.⁽⁷²⁾

The decline in recruitment by the end of 1984 was, however, only a temporary development until the ANC and Umkhonto had established new

71. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 57.

72. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1984, pp. 2 - 3; The Sunday Star (Johannesburg), 1986.01.19; For a different perspective on the estimated number of Umkhonto guerrillas available to the ANC, see Lodge, State of Exile, (Third World Quarterly, 9 (1), January 1987, pp. 5 - 6).



routes and found new ways of reversing the effects of the Nkomati and Swaziland accords. Part of this was achieved between 1985 and 1986 when the sudden influx of a second major wave of recruits into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto enabled the organisations to strengthen their ranks and establish new and fresh ties with radical-minded groups inside South Africa. One particular organisation that came to play a major role in promoting the cause of the ANC inside South Africa after 1984, was the newly-established United Democratic Front (UDF).

Faced with new challenges, and with new demands being made on its recruitment infrastructure both inside and outside South Africa, the ANC in its alliance with the SACP used its second major consultative conference held at Kabwe, Zambia from 16 to 23 June 1985, to adopt some major resolutions in this regard.

2.1.3. The Kabwe Consultative Conference and the NEC's Commission on Cadre Policy⁽⁷³⁾

The adoption of a comprehensive cadre policy by the ANC at its Kabwe Consultative Conference in 1985 included the first major effort by the organisation and the SACP to deal with the issue of recruitment for Umkhonto. In setting out the need for a comprehensive cadre policy the NEC stated that a fundamental pre-requisite for the success of a revolution is the existence of a strong revolutionary organisation which, in turn, was determined by both the quantity and quality of its members or cadres. Hence, in the development and consistent strengthening of a revolutionary organisation, the "formulation and adoption of a specific cadre policy occupies a central role."⁽⁷⁴⁾

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73. A "cadre" was defined by the Kabwe Conference as "all members of the Movement involved in the formulation and practical implementation of policy and willing to carry out all tasks assigned [to them]." Source: African National Congress Consultative Conference, June 1985. Commission on Cadre Policy, Political and Ideological Work, p. 1.
74. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, p. 1.



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In terms of recruitment the commission recommended that in future the ANC and Umkhonto's recruitment drive should address itself to the question of enlisting more and more members from the working class inside South Africa, particularly the Black working class which was identified as the main basis of recruitment for the liberation movement. The Black worker, therefore, was allowed a leading role in the ANC-SACP's revolutionary organisation and struggle in South Africa. However, it was not only the urban masses that had to be drawn into the struggle, but also the rural masses. To bring the latter into the struggle more effectively, special campaigns had to be launched in the rural areas to recruit members into the struggle and so mobilise the masses.

It was pointed out that in future all recruitment should be based on the acceptance of the basic policy and programme of the ANC, and potential recruits should be made aware of the fact that the armed struggle was basically a sacrifice. It was further suggested that recruitment should be an ongoing process, both inside and outside South Africa, and that special attention should be given to the recruitment of cadres, especially from the ranks of the government and the security forces, including the SADF.

In terms of the multi-racial nature and structure of the ANC and Umkhonto, it was suggested that in future greater care should be taken in the recruitment of people from all national and racial groups and from all over the country, and not only from certain areas. The reason for this was probably to counter any further criticism that the ANC and Umkhonto were little more than ethnic organisations in which Africans of Xhosa origin held a leading position.

Finally it was also suggested that cadres should be specially trained in the art of recruiting and that these cadres should be used to set up underground units inside South Africa - a development with which the ANC and Umkhonto had little success up to 1985. The recruitment of new recruits and the swelling of the ranks of Umkhonto, the

delegates to the conference were told, was "the vital cutting edge of our struggle".⁽⁷⁵⁾

2.1.4. The Post-Kabwe Period 1985 - 1988

To what extent the cadre policy on recruitment adopted at Kabwe contributed to the influx of Black youths into the ranks of the liberation movement, but more particularly into Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and elsewhere after 1985, is impossible to say. Other factors, such as the upsurge of violence and revolutionary activity in the country, and the heightened international prestige of the ANC by the mid-1980's certainly also contributed to this development. As far as Umkhonto is concerned, estimates as to the size of the army in 1986, following the influx of recruits into the organisation after 1984, differs substantially from observer to observer. According to Howard Barrell, a Harare-based journalist who had direct access to ANC sources, Umkhonto's total force in 1986 numbered something in the region of 10 000 men, of which only some 400 were operative inside South Africa at any given time. American intelligence sources were more or less in agreement with this figure, except that they felt the number operative inside South Africa was probably larger than the 400 suggested above. These figures, however, were disputed by the University of Pretoria's Institute of Strategic Studies, which argued that a more accurate assessment of the numerical strength of Umkhonto was between 2 000 and 4 000.⁽⁷⁶⁾ A third observer, Stephen Davis, who also had direct access to ANC sources outside South Africa, was of the opinion that an estimated 5 000 to 6 000 Blacks had left South Africa during the 1985 - 1986 unrest situation to join the ranks of the ANC or the PAC. As a result of this influx of new recruits the ANC's total expatriate community (including Umkhonto) stood at between 13 000 and 14 000 persons by the end of 1986. Of this figure Umkhonto controlled

75. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, p. 1.

76. Lodge, State of Exile: The ANC of South Africa, 1976 - 1986, (Third World Quarterly 9 (1), January 1987, p. 5.).

controlled about sixty percent while the rest, some 5 000, served the exile movement in a civilian capacity in fields such as education. Thus, by the beginning of 1987 the ANC and Umkhonto, according to Davis, had something like 8 000 men and women under arms. Of those anything between 300 and 400 were operative inside South Africa at the time.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The latter figures and estimates were supported by Tom Lodge, who was a regular observer of the ANC and Umkhonto.⁽⁷⁸⁾

However, from 1986 to 1988 a number of developments negatively influenced the inflow of recruits into the ANC and Umkhonto, which in turn affected the total size of the exile movement. The first was the coup d'état in Lesotho in January 1986. This effectively put an end to this country's role as an access route for Umkhonto and its cadres in and out of South Africa. The second was the political and diplomatic actions taken by the South African government to counter the ANC activities internationally as well as its position in Angola. These latter efforts culminated in the signing of the New York peace accord on 22 December 1988, which called for the immediate withdrawal of all ANC camps and personnel from Angola. This latter development, together with the restoration of some semblance of order and stability to the Black townships around the country with the help of the State of Emergency, undoubtedly had a strong effect on both the recruitment and inflow of new cadres into the ranks of Umkhonto after 1987. By May 1989, it was reported that the ANC (Umkhonto) had moved nearly 1 500 members out of Angola and that only about 800 were still left in the country.⁽⁷⁹⁾ This meant that prior to its expulsion in 1988 Umkhonto had less than 2 500 cadres in camps in Angola. This was a great deal less than the estimated 14 000 quoted by Davis or

77. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 58.

78. According to Lodge the ANC and Umkhonto had a total membership of about 13 000 people spread between Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and the organisation's administrative, diplomatic and financial offices in Lusaka and elsewhere. He also agreed with Davis' estimate that the ANC and Umkhonto probably do not have more than between 300 and 500 operatives inside South Africa at any given time. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1987/88, p. 701). See also figures quoted in Lodge, State of Exile, (Third World Quarterly, 9 (1), January 1987, pp. 5 - 6).

79. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.05.18.



the 13 000 suggested by Lodge for Umkhonto in 1986-87. The figure of approximately 2 300 supplied by the ANC itself for its forces in Angola is thus closer to the estimates of the Institute for Strategic Studies in Pretoria. It is of course possible that the figures supplied by the ANC with regard to its forces in Angola were deliberately deflated to mislead the South African government, whom they knew would closely monitor their withdrawal from Angola.

2.1.5. The Recruitment of Whites

Since its formation at the end of 1961, Umkhonto had always relied heavily on its White members most of whom were also senior members of the SACP, for its financial, organisational and ideological support. Yet it is significant to note that until the Kabwe Consultative Conference of 1985 no real effort appeared to have been made to recruit new Whites into the ranks of Umkhonto despite the organisation's multi-racial character. Those few Whites such as Kasrils, Slovo and others who formed part of Umkhonto in the early 1960's appeared to have remained at the core of the organisation's White membership through the years of armed struggle. Although a number of Whites such as Hosey, Mounbaris, Martin Legassick, Paula Ensor and others appeared to have become part of Umkhonto's armed struggle during the 1970's, there is no indication that an all-out effort was made to recruit Whites into Umkhonto or that Whites were prepared to join Umkhonto in increasing numbers before the second half of the 1980's, especially before the Kabwe Conference and the accelerated contact that took place between Whites inside South Africa and members of the ANC-SACP alliance after 1985. While it is difficult to fully ascertain the influence that the growing contact between White business, political and community leaders from South Africa and members of the ANC-SACP alliance had on White recruitment and Whites joining Umkhonto after 1985, it is not unreasonable to assume that many Whites, particularly those with strong democratic views were encouraged by these developments and perhaps eventually persuaded by it to join the ranks of Umkhonto by the late 1980's. The opening of the ANC's NEC at Kabwe to people of all races including Whites undoubtedly also encouraged this process. In its recommendations to



the Kabwe Conference on the recruitment and utilization of "democratically-minded Whites" into the ANC and Umkhonto, the ANC's NEC stated that:

Democratic Whites in the country [SA] were faced with a contradiction with the rise of the BCM. They were accused of playing the game while the Blacks stood on the sidelines looking on. Many reverted to playing a 'supportive' role which was mainly providing funds, transport, compiling research material etc. Even with the rise of the Congress movement inside the country and organisations such as Nusas demonstrating their support for the Freedom Charter, democratic Whites are still caught in the trap of playing a supportive role. (80)

Consequently it was recommended that, in order to ensure that Whites become active participants in the armed struggle, they should, among others, work increasingly to popularise the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) and explain to the wider South African community why they should not join the South African Defence Force (SADF).

It was further recommended that special support groups should be formed to serve conscientious objectors, war resisters and their supporters; that where possible, these people should be recruited for the ANC and Umkhonto, and that White democratic organisations should broaden their ranks to include the growing number of dissatisfied Whites, "such as those in the Progressive Federal Party (PFP)", who find the National Party (NP) increasingly unacceptable. (81)

It was also suggested that the ANC should encourage joint action by White trade and democratic unions, as well as the promotion of White youth organisations, to join the tide of resistance throughout the

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80. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, p. 11. See also Tambo Discusses ANC Strategy in White Areas and on Economy, PANA, 1987.01.05, (SWB, 1987.01.07).
81. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, p. 11. See also ANC Calls for Whites to Organize Within the SADF, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1987.01.21, (SWB, 1987.01.24); ANC Speaks to White Community in South Africa, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1987.01.20, (SWB, 1987.01.23).



country. To facilitate this development, White student organisations were to educate their constituencies on the crisis in education and work relentlessly towards opening the doors of learning and culture to all. In this regard, White student organisations had to work closely with other student organisations on the Education Charter Campaign. In addition, it stated:

Democratic, professional unions, eg. lawyers, health workers and educationists, should be encouraged where people could utilise their skills in the course of the struggle.

Finally it was recommended that White democratic organisations should be encouraged to present the Freedom Charter for discussion in those areas where they were based.⁽⁸²⁾

By the time the Kabwe decisions were taken, the UDF, which had an affiliated membership of some 700 organisations, had managed to recruit a number of White organisations such as the Black Sash, the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee, the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the ECC⁽⁸³⁾ into its federal structure. Davis writes:

Their [the National Liberation Movement's] ties to the front gave Congress operatives within the UDF new access to information generated by White activists; at the same time the relationship enabled the White organisations to co-ordinate their actions with those of Black groups involved in the overall attack on apartheid. What is more, in an effort to reach further into the ruling race's ranks, the UDF encouraged its White affiliates to move outside their specialities and communicate broad anti-apartheid goals to their compatriots.⁽⁸⁴⁾

In one response, in October 1985 - less than a month and a half after the Kabwe conference - five predominantly White UDF organisations formed a new group called "Concerned Citizens" to promote through

82. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Internal Commission Report, p. 11.

83. The ECC was banned on 22 August 1988. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.08.24.

84. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 96 - 97.



public meetings in White residential areas such general UDF themes as "the road to peace through dismantling apartheid". Though not directly linked to the ANC, argues Davis, "such projects mirrored the Congress's interest in undermining apartheid's constituency".⁽⁸⁵⁾

Encouraged by these developments inside South Africa, Tambo in an NEC statement delivered to the ANC regarding the organisation's attitude towards and on the role of Whites in the liberation struggle, stated in January 1986, and again in 1987 and 1988, that the organisation must pay the greatest possible attention to the "mobilization" and "activation" of the White population which should fuse with, and become part of, the motive forces of the democratic revolution. He made an emotional plea to "our White compatriots, and especially the youth, to break ranks with the apartheid system, to refuse to serve in its armed forces ..."⁽⁸⁶⁾

In his NEC address in January 1988 which followed the Dakar meeting between representatives of the ANC and a group of 52 South Africans arranged by the Institute for Democratic Alternatives for South Africa (IDASA) in July 1987, Tambo made it abundantly clear that the participation of democratically-minded Whites was vitally important to the liberation struggle, and that meetings between the ANC and Whites from South Africa such as that which took place at Dakar, were at the centre of the organisation's efforts to undermine apartheid and the system of White minority rule in South Africa.

Although the White groups and individuals who were prepared to associate with the UDF in the 1980's were small in number, it nevertheless represented the beginning of a new trend whereby mainstream White groups, although not yet ready to cede their independence to the UDF or any other similar organisation, nonetheless took note of

85. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 97.

86. ANC's Attitude to White South Africans, (The Spear of the Nation, 1986, pp. 15 - 16). See ANC Speaks to White Community in South Africa, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1987.01.20, (SWB, 1987.01.23); ANC calls for Whites to Organize Within the SADF, Radio Freedom, Addis Ababa, 1987.01.21, (SWB, 1987.01.24); Tambo Discusses ANC Strategy in White Areas and on Economy, PANA, 1987.01.05, (SWB, 1987.01.07).



the aims of organisations such as the ANC's new approach to Whites and White organisations inside South Africa, and what this might mean to them. The outcome of this was that between June 1985 and the middle of 1989 more than 70 visits by South African Whites, White organisations, and interested groups to the ANC in Lusaka and elsewhere had taken place. In a policy statement prepared for international audiences marking the ANC's 75th birthday in 1987, the organisation's NEC took great pains to project the organisation as a moderate and responsible body seeking only justice, peace and prosperity for South Africa. In its appeal to Whites for their support it declared that while an ANC government would address the questions of ownership, control, and the direction of the economy, it would focus on creating rather than distributing wealth. At the same time it assured Whites that it supported a multi-party democracy with basic Western freedom and guarantees, that were further endorsed by the organisation in its constitutional guidelines published during the first half of 1988.⁽⁸⁷⁾

To what extent the ANC's call on progressive Whites to join the liberation struggle had an influence on the ANC and Umkhonto's recruiting policy among Whites and the flow of Whites into the liberation movement since 1985 is difficult to say. Indications are that the ANC's efforts were undoubtedly not entirely without success. In December 1986 for instance, it was reported that a 32 year-old career officer in the South African Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) had been arrested for spying for the ANC. According to the charge sheet, Major Andre Pienaar was recruited by the ANC in the Frontline states. He was later arrested with two civilians while entering Jan Smuts airport. Major Pienaar was the second intelligence officer since the beginning of the 1980's to be charged with spying for the ANC. The other person was Roland Hunter, who allegedly passed information to the ANC on the training camps of the Resistencia Nacional Mozambique (NMR) in the Transvaal. Also convicted with Hunter were two White Afrikaner civilians who aided him in his spying activities.⁽⁸⁸⁾

87. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 97.

88. Africa Confidential 28 (10), 1987.05.13 (See section entitled "Pointers").

Other Whites who were recruited into the ranks of the liberation movement via front organisations in South Africa such as the UDF and the ECC since the mid-1980's, were Olivia Forsyth (she later turned out to be a police agent) and the four members of the all-White Umkhonto cell that was captured at Broederstroom in May 1988. The fifth member of the Broederstroom cell, alleged to be Paul Colin Annegran (23) of Benoni, was not among the four cell members arrested in May. It was believed that he was at the time imprisoned in an ANC punishment camp in Angola. He was apparently arrested by the ANC after he had abandoned his mission inside South Africa and went back to Lusaka to express his disillusionment with the armed struggle. In Lusaka he was promptly detained and sent to the notorious Quatro camp in Angola. Annegran was apparently recruited into Umkhonto in 1982. (88)

According to a Press report that appeared in November 1988, (89) it was claimed by a British Conservative Party M.P., Andrew Hunter, that an ANC cell, trained by the IRA and operating in Britain, was recruiting members for the organisation from among disgruntled South Africans. According to Hunter, Ronnie Kasrils who fled South Africa in 1965 at the age of 24, his wife, Eleanor, and a third activist, Timothy Jenkins, were all involved in the cell. (Jenkins was one of those who escaped with Alexander Moubarris and Stephen Lee from prison on 12 December 1979.) According to the South African police and the Ministry of Law and Order, Kasrils was the mastermind behind the recruitment of Whites into the ANC and Umkhonto since the mid-1980's. (91)

Two much-publicised cases of Whites who joined the ANC and Umkhonto that caught the attention of the media in 1988 and 1989, were the cases of Hein Grosskopf and the rather mysterious Bradley Richard Stacey, also known as Hodges. Grosskopf, by his own admission, left

89. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.05.16.

90. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.11.04.

91. Pike, A History of Communism in South Africa, pp. 475 - 476. See also The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 28 July - 3 August 1989.



South Africa in 1986 to join the ranks of Umkhonto. He joined the ANC and Umkhonto in Lusaka after travelling via Botswana. According to police reports Grosskopf was allegedly responsible for a series of car bombings during 1988, which left three people dead and 90 injured. While the police insisted that Grosskopf was responsible for the blasts, the ANC maintained that he was in Lusaka at the time of the attacks. A delegation from South Africa, collectively known as the Five Freedoms Forum, who held talks with the ANC in Lusaka at the end of June 1989, were surprised to find Grosskopf participating in the meeting as Head of ANC Protocol.⁽⁹²⁾

The case of the second person, Bradley Richard Stacey, is less clear. According to reports Stacey and three others (a Coloured and two Blacks) were responsible for the attempted hijack of a Soviet Aeroflot airliner in June 1989, carrying 157 members of the ANC and Umkhonto from Luanda to Dar-es-Salaam as part of the withdrawal of ANC personnel from Angola. The hijack failed and Stacey was subsequently sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in Tanzania. According to information supplied by ANC members caught while entering South Africa, the airlifting of the 157 members was probably part of a process whereby disillusioned dissidents were being dumped in internment camps as far afield as Uganda and that the attempted hijack was a desperate attempt to prevent this from taking place. According to the same source, those who disagreed with the ANC's policies were sent to either Uganda or Tanzania and were never heard of again. Aids, apparently, was a serious problem in the internment camps in Uganda and Tanzania and to be sent to these camps amounted to an almost certain death sentence. It was not clear when Stacey joined the ANC but it appeared to have been during the 1985-86 disturbances. According to reports he was sought by the security police in South Africa in connection with the arson attack on the campus of the University of Natal in 1986, in which the life-work of Prof. Lawrence Schlemmer was destroyed. The ANC however, maintained that Stacey was a South African police agent planted by the police to sow disunity in

92. The Sunday Times (Johannesburg), 1989.07.09.



the organisation following a call by the Minister of Police, Adrian Vlok, to ANC members to renounce violence and return to South Africa. The latter's call to ANC-Umkhonto cadres to denounce violence received extensive media coverage in Africa as well as on the BBC's service.⁽⁹³⁾

It is of course possible that both Grosskopf and Stacey were police agents sent out of the country during the unrest of the mid-1980's to infiltrate the ANC, and that the spreading of rumours and allegations were part of an elaborate security cover for them. While such a possibility cannot be ruled out, it is highly unlikely that they were police agents.

The most recent case of Whites allegedly spying for the ANC was that of Peter and Sue Dobson. According to a report that appeared in the Sunday press on 22 October 1989,⁽⁹⁴⁾ the Dobsons had been spying for the ANC since the beginning of the 1980's. They both joined the organisation shortly after leaving school. According to the report, Peter Dobson's task was to acquire information about government-related organisations and personnel, and to penetrate the sanctions-busting, computer purchasing industry. Sue Dobson's task was more elaborate and varied than that of her husband. As a journalist, she worked on a number of different Sunday newspapers, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and finally, for the state-controlled Bureau of Information.

A question that remains to be answered is the effect that the recruitment of Whites into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto, and the frequent contact that has been taking place between White groups and the ANC has had on White opinion in South Africa. In his reaction to the discovery of the all-White Broederstroom Umkhonto cell in 1988, Lodge stated that it clearly illustrated the "continuing trend of young, well-educated liberal and left-wing Whites who identify

93. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.06.4 - 5.
94. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.10.22.



themselves with the ANC and saw the organisation as a legitimate and morally admirable political force"; and "that the involvement of Whites in the ANC and Umkhonto obviously had a much greater impact on the attitudes of White South Africans than the involvement of Blacks only". (95)

Lodge's views were supported by Wim Booyse, a senior researcher at the International Freedom Foundation in South Africa, who argued that the formation of the Broederstroom cell was the direct result of the decision taken at the Kabwe conference to involve more Whites in the armed struggle. The relative failure of the ANC's military wing since 1984, he said, led to the recruitment and use of more White South Africans who, due to their higher and more sophisticated levels of education, were more easily trained than their Black South African counterparts. (96)

Kasrils, in his assessment of the armed struggle at the end of 1988 and the effects that South Africa's political, military and diplomatic initiatives were having on it, also voiced the opinion that the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto had to make greater use of liberal and radical Whites inside South Africa to swing the armed struggle in favour of the revolutionaries. In a document entitled "Politics and the Armed Struggle: The Revolutionary Army", Kasrils pointed out that in future the ANC and Umkhonto would have an increasingly important task to "work within the enemy forces, to agitate and politicise soldiers, police, vigilantes and other auxiliary forces of the enemy, thus rendering them ineffective to the State". (97)

Kasrils further pointed out that the ANC and Umkhonto should step up their recruitment campaign among White conscripts within the SADF, but more particularly among those who showed dissatisfaction with the army. He argued:

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95. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.04.12 (ANC recruiting Whites).
96. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.04.12 (ANC recruiting Whites).
97. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 12 - 13).



The disaffection of many White conscripts within the SADF creates possibilities of at least neutralising significant sections of the White soldiers and possibly winning over to our side, at the decisive moment, some elements. He went on to point out that given the enemy's acute White manpower shortage the mere neutralisation of even, ... say, one-tenth of the White conscript army at a decisive moment could make all the difference to the balance of forces. But we have to move away simply from encouraging Whites to refuse to serve in the SADF, to getting them actively involved in the SADF for purposes of clandestinely organising and agitating from within, no matter how difficult the task may appear to be. (**)

2.2. External Training 1965 - 1988

2.2.1. Training facilities, Camps and the Nature of Instruction

As we have stated above, Umkhonto's first training facility in Africa was established at Kongwa, near Dodoma in Tanzania probably some time between 1964/1966. (**) Up to this time ANC and Umkhonto recruits were trained in various African countries such as Algeria, Ethiopia and Egypt as well as in other parts of the communist world such as China, the Soviet Union, Cuba and Czechoslovakia. In none of these countries did the ANC and Umkhonto appear to have possessed their own training facilities. With the granting of independence to Zambia in 1964 the ANC and Umkhonto were able to set up training facilities in that country. Thus from 1964, while still sharing the training facilities of other liberation organisations such as SWAPO, ZAPU and others, the ANC and Umkhonto were beginning to take control of their own training. This was at least the case as far as the camp at Kongwa was concerned. Recruits who showed a particular aptitude for guerrilla training or who displayed leadership skills were however still being sent overseas to the Soviet Union or other Eastern European

98. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, p. 13).

99. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.04.10 (ANC builds from within).



countries for advanced military and political training.

An interesting aspect of some of the training facilities that Umkhonto shared with other liberation movements was that it appeared to have made use, where possible, of its own instructors, most of whom were Xhosas. This was especially the case at Dabrasseur (or Dabrazid) in Ethiopia where according to two Umkhonto recruits who received their training there, most of the instructors at the camp were Xhosas. Both the Captain of the camp, Captain Marmo and his Second-in-Command were for instance, Xhosas.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ As far as the training given to recruits was concerned this ranged from drill work to physical exercises, to the use of a wide variety of weapons, both light and heavy as well as explosives, particularly demolition charges and mines. Recruits also received training in map reading, radio work and first aid - in short, they were trained in all aspects of both conventional and guerrilla warfare.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

According to an article, accompanied by a detailed map, that appeared in To the Point in February 1973 it was claimed that no less than seven different liberation organisations were operative in Zambia and that there were more than 80 permanent guerrilla bases in the country. This and the fact that the OAU-based Centre of African Liberation had its permanent headquarters in Lusaka, made Zambia one if not the most important African country by the beginning of the 1970's for the training of guerrilla fighters and the exportation of revolutionary violence to African countries not under Black rule.⁽¹⁰²⁾

According to the above source by 1973 most of the ANC and Umkhonto's training facilities or bases in Zambia were situated in an area

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100. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of A. Jantjies, pp. C7 - 19, and I. Rani, pp. D25 - 26.
 101. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Evidence of A. Jantjies, pp. C7 - 19, and I. Rani, pp. D25 - 26.
 102. To the Point, 1973.02.10 (Secret bases in Zambia), pp. 25 - 29. See also Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, p. 243.



between the Kariba Dam and the town of Livingstone. (See DIAGRAM L.) Most of these camps, with the largest concentration being east of Livingstone, called "West Camp of Deka", were jointly staffed and operated by the ANC (Umkhonto) and ZAPU. The latter organisation also operated a number of training facilities near Chirundu, known as "East Camp", as well as in the Mpata Gorge near Feira. It is thus possible that the ANC (Umkhonto) might also have made use of these facilities from time to time. According to Michael Morris, the ANC (Umkhonto) and ZAPU also operated a combined training facility just outside Lusaka, called Nkomo Camp. (103)

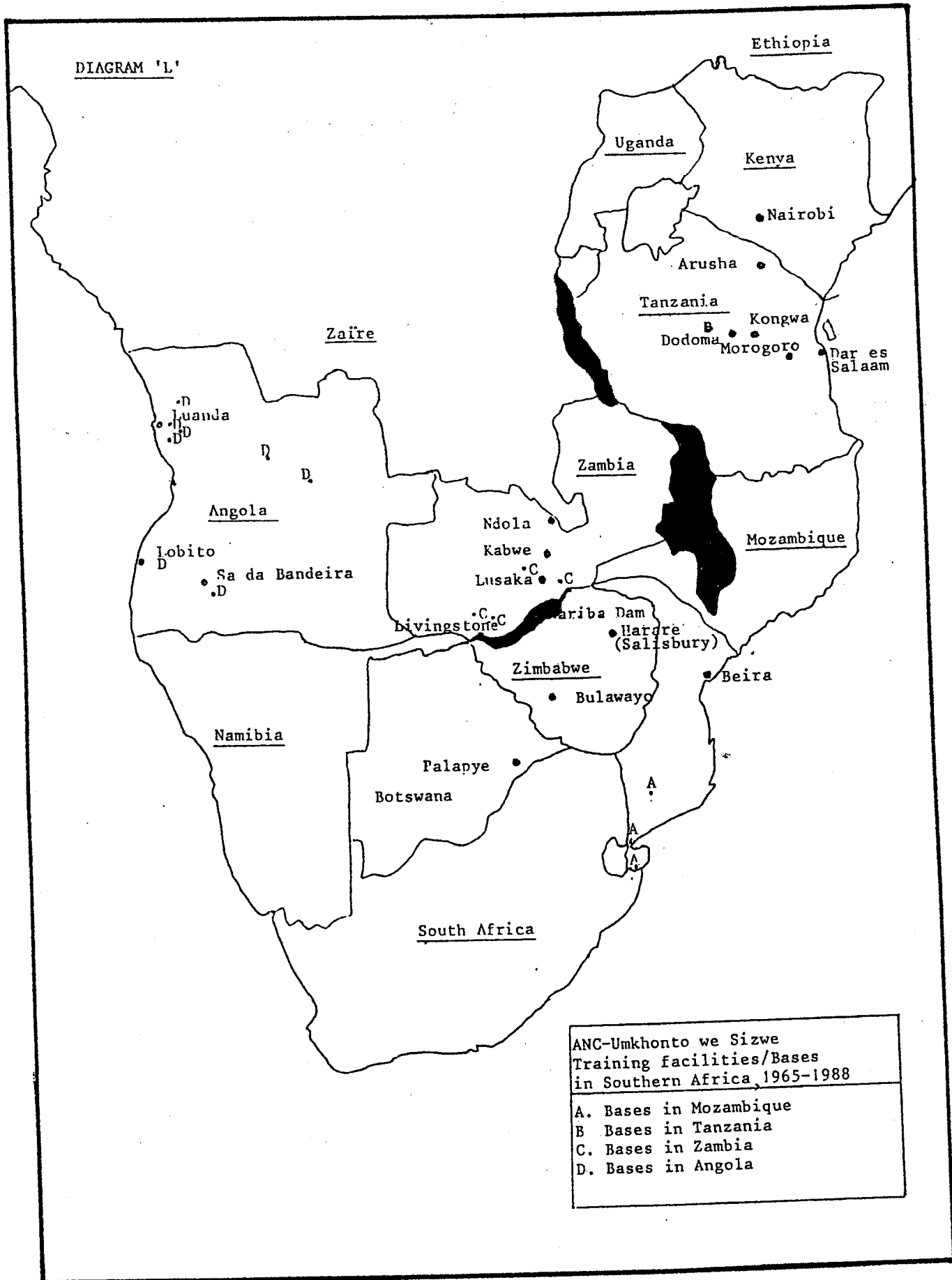
However, as pointed out, not all of Umkhonto's cadres, including those who joined ZAPU in the 1967 to 1969 incursions into Rhodesia, were African trained. A substantial number of the organisation's cadres such as James April, for instance, were trained outside the continent. April was trained in both East Germany and the Soviet Union after he had left South Africa in 1962. Having survived the Wankie incursions into Rhodesia in August 1967, he was one of those later jailed by the Botswana authorities for illegal arms possession when he tried to escape via that country. On his release from prison in 1968 he was deported to Zambia. From there he was sent to London where he was updated by Slovo and Hodgson on the latest techniques of infiltration and secret communication. (104)

With the granting of independence to and the establishment of Marxist regimes in Angola and Mozambique in 1975 the ANC-SACP alliance also set up training and transit facilities in these countries. As a result Angola took over from Zambia and Tanzania in 1977 as the main training ground for Umkhonto's cadres. Most of those who left South Africa in the post-1976 period were channeled to Umkhonto's training camps in Angola. With the collapse of the ANC and Umkhonto's facilities and structures in Mozambique by 1984 following the SADF's repeated raids on them between 1981 and 1983, and the signing of the

103. Morris, Armed Conflict in Southern Africa, p. 245.

104. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, pp. 86 - 87;

Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations, 1973, pp. 80 - 81.





Nkomati Accord the following year Angola became the key training centre for the ANC and Umkhonto. As such it became central to the survival of the ANC's armed struggle in South Africa. At the same time Botswana became the main route through which recruits were taken out of South Africa and trained guerrillas were returned to the country.

Although Angola became the most important centre for the training of ANC-Umkhonto guerrillas by the mid-1980's, indications were that some recruits were also still being trained in Zambia and to a lesser extent in Tanzania. New transit facilities were also established closer to South Africa in frontline states such as the newly-independent Zimbabwe and in Botswana to make up for facilities lost in Mozambique and Swaziland after 1984 and Lesotho after 1986.

2.2.2. The Kabwe Conference on Education and Training

At the 1985 Kabwe conference an extensive policy was adopted on the political, ideological, and military training of cadres as well as the moral, academic and cultural education of ANC-SACP-Umkhonto members. As far as the political and ideological training of cadres was concerned, it was stated that this should be based in "patriotism" and "boundless hatred for the enemy". In addition a "good" cadre should have "sterling revolutionary attributes, loyalty, discipline, dedication, devotion and strong determination". They should further be "staunch believers in revolutionary nationalism and anti-imperialism". At the same time cadres were expected to be well-versed with "the political and ideological forces within South Africa" so as to train cadres to exercise political leadership and to be organisers inside the country. But even more important, they should be sufficiently informed and trained to transmit independently ANC (and Umkhonto) policy to all sections of the people inside the country. Towards this end the liberation movement had set up its own political school which formed part of SOMAFCO at Mazimbu.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

105. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, p. 1; See also SOMAFCO, Official Opening 21 - 23 August 1985, Progress Report, Special Edition.



With regard to the adoption of a cadre training policy, a number of recommendations were made which among others called for the adoption of a special cadre slogan entitled "Fight, Learn, Produce". In other words, the emphasis was not on education as a weapon against apartheid, but on the armed struggle and the preparation of cadres to bring about education through liberation, or to put it more simply, "Liberation before Education".

It was further recommended that the newly-elected NEC of the ANC should gear itself towards the practical implementation of the ANC's educational programme. It was suggested that this should be done as soon as possible to solve some pressing problems, such as the existence of a sizeable number of cadres in Zambia and elsewhere who were not employed in any of the activities undertaken by Umkhonto. In view of the latter situation it was recommended and later accepted by the Conference, despite some sizable opposition to the suggestion, that in future all able-bodied members of the liberation movement would be subjected to compulsory military training.

It was further recommended that since Umkhonto had a high degree of illiteracy among its members, an all-out effort had to be made to see to the education of these people. A call was made on recruiting officers to ensure that Umkhonto cadres should be able to read and write, since propaganda formed an important part of their activities. To ensure that this was done it was suggested that all military training of cadres should go hand in hand with basic education for all in the liberation movement. (106)

2.2.3. The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO)

Although SOMAFCO was set up during the second half of the 1970's to serve the educational needs of the ANC-SACP alliance, many of

106. ANC, National Consultative Conference, June 1985, Commission on Cadre Policy, p. 2.



Umkhonto's cadres seemed to have attended the centre at some or other stage of their training. This was particularly the case during the 1980's. Since political education formed a vital part of the ANC's armed struggle, political commissars were for instance extensively employed in the designing and execution of the educational curriculum and policy at SOMAFCO.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ To ensure that this was done in accordance with the policies of the ANC-SACP alliance, a separate "Commissariat" was established at SOMAFCO during the first half of the 1980's to oversee all political and ideological aspects of the teaching programme at the college. In terms of the latter, a "special political commissar" was appointed to each eight-person dormitory room. Their work in turn was supervised by a "building political commissar" who in turn was responsible to a "unit political commissar" and so on. Presiding over this hierarchy of political education and commissars was a "student political commissar" who reported directly to the head of the structure, the "chief political commissar" who was also the head of the college. This elaborated hierarchy which was typical military in nature appeared to have existed throughout the entire educational set-up at SOMAFCO and was at the basis of the institute's political and educational discipline. As a result, it was virtually impossible for anyone to make a decision or do something without the political commissar and thus the head of the college knowing about it.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

SOMAFCO thus played an important role in the political education of all Umkhonto cadres, particularly during the second half of the 1980's, following the decision taken at Kabwe which made political and military training compulsory for all members of the liberation alliance.

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107. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 61 - 65. See also Douglas and Davis, Revolt on the Veldt, (Harpers 267, December 1983, p. 35)
108. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 61 - 65.



2.2.4. ANC/Umkhonto Training Camps in Angola

As mentioned above, the ANC and Umkhonto had their main training facilities in Angola by the mid-1980's. By 1988 it was claimed that the ANC and Umkhonto had at least eight major facilities in that country for the training and housing of Umkhonto cadres. It is not entirely clear where all these facilities were but at least three, namely Quibaxa, situated about a hundred kilometers north-east of Luanda; Caculama and Pango were positively identified as guerrilla training camps for Umkhonto. Quibaxa, also known as "Camp 13", was reported to be able to accommodate up to 300 recruits while the latter two facilities could accommodate up to 800 and 300 recruits respectively. Pango camp (also referred to as Punga or the David Rabkin Centre) apparently consisted of four separate camps.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ It is not clear whether these latter camps were part of the eight camps referred to above or whether they were merely part of the Pango facility. It is also not clear whether the four separate camps at Pango each could hold 300 recruits at a time or whether the figure of 300 was a combined figure for all four facilities at Pango. The largest of the training facilities namely that at Caculama was equipped with anti-aircraft guns for protection against possible SADF attacks. In addition to the above facilities of which little else is known, the ANC and Umkhonto apparently also operated bases at Funda just outside Luanda and a number of other facilities such as the Vianna transit camp. Umkhonto apparently also had camps at Benguela, the coastal railhead town immediately south of the port of Lobito and at Nova Gagenga.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The Vianna facility which was also known to Umkhonto operatives as "Engineering Camp", was used for political indoctrination and the accommodation of recruits and trainees en route to East Germany for advanced training.

109. South Africa: Hani's Rise, (Africa Confidential 29 (16), 1988.08.12, pp. 1 - 2); Barrett, The ANC. A Political Military Option, (Unpublished paper, Inkatha Institute, Durban, March 1989, p. 5).

110. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 66.



Comrade September, alias Glory Lephosa Sidebe, a former regional commander and an intelligence officer of Umkhonto who gave evidence for the State in the trial of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim and two others - Acton Mandla Maseko and Simon Dladla - was one of the post-Soweto generation who was trained in Angola. The story of Sidebe, who left South Africa in 1977 to join the ranks of the liberation movement in exile, is typical of many of the African youths who left South Africa after 1976 to join the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto.⁽¹¹¹⁾ Having illegally crossed the South African-Swaziland border in 1977, Sidebe applied for political asylum. This was subsequently granted to him. From Manzini he was sent to the Mawelawela refugee camp, together with about 20 other political refugees. He made contact with recruiting officials of both the ANC and the PAC. Approached by both organisations to join their ranks, Sidebe eventually settled for the ANC, which offered him a scholarship to study overseas. After a brief stay at Mabizela he and three others were taken by road to Mozambique. They remained here for a month, during which time they were thoroughly instructed by Jacob Zuma, then deputy Chief ANC representative in Mozambique and member of the MPC, on aspects of politics and political theory. Inspired by what Zuma had to say, Sidebe then decided to join the ranks of Umkhonto. From Mozambique, Sidebe was flown directly to Luanda in Angola and from there to Vianna or "Engineering Camp", as he referred to it. Here he remained for about a week, rubbing shoulders with Cuban instructors and guerrillas from ZAPU and SWAPO. Then in June 1977, Sidebe, together with 30 other recruits, was sent to East Germany (GDR) for advanced training in virtually all aspects of guerrilla warfare. The camp in the GDR was at Teterow (it is possible that it was the name of the camp and not a place), and they remained here for six months. They were trained in basic drill, topography (both in theory and practice), compass and map reading. This was followed by training in fighting tactics, mainly of a guerrilla nature but also aspects of conventional warfare, and the structures of Western military models

111. G. Moss, The Strange Saga of Mr X1, (Work in Progress, 54, June/July 1988, pp. 13 - 16). See also South Africa: Infiltration, (Africa Confidential 28 (10), 1987.05.13, pointers). The Case of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 14 - 16).

such as that represented by the South African, British and American armies. In addition they also received training in the use of explosives, grenades and a wide range of hand weapons commonly used by guerrilla forces around the world. At the end of six months the training course was rounded off by lectures in politics, particularly the set-up and manner in which underground cells operated. During these lectures it was impressed upon Sidebe and the others that there should never be more than three members to a cell, and that no horizontal contact should ever take place between cells. Lectures on African history were primarily conducted by Dr. Pallo Jordan and Aziz Pahad, who were both members of the ANC's NEC, while the history of the ANC and trade unionism was dealt with by Francis Meli, the editor of Sechaba.

Once they had completed their training in East Germany, they were sent back to Angola. Sidebe was sent to Funda (Punga?) camp where he underwent a "refresher" course. The purpose of this course was not so much to determine who was militarily most competent, but to establish and correct areas of weakness in recruits. By March 1978, Sidebe was returned to Mozambique where he was attached to the Transvaal "military machinery" for operational work inside South Africa. As a member of the latter military machinery he was responsible between 1979 and 1983 for a series of landmine and other attacks in the Transvaal. Among these was the attack on the Hectorspruit fuel depot in 1982. The next year (1983) Sidebe was sent to the Soviet Union for intelligence training and on this occasion he was accompanied by Kasrils, Umkhonto's Chief of Intelligence.

On completion of the course at the KGB (Committee of State Security) training school at Esmolova Park in Moscow, Sidebe was returned to Mozambique, but as a result of the Nkomati Accord signed in March 1984, he was sent to Swaziland where he then became part of Umkhonto's Regional Political Military Council (RPMC) and the Co-ordinating Committee that was set up by Slovo to oversee Umkhonto

and the ANC's operations in the Transvaal.⁽¹¹²⁾ This committee was allegedly chaired by Kasrils while Ebrahim acted as both secretary and treasurer.

Controversy surrounded much of Sidebe's evidence, particularly around the explanation as to how he came to join the South African security police. According to the evidence he gave in camera at the Bethal Treason Trial (which began in Piet Retief in the south-eastern Transvaal in 1987 but was later moved to Bethal in the eastern Transvaal), Sidebe claimed that he was arrested as an illegal immigrant by the Swazi police in mid-August 1986. He then claimed that he was later "sprung" from prison in Swaziland by a group of ANC "colleagues" who advised him to hide out in South Africa to avoid the Swazi authorities. Sidebe then claimed that suddenly while walking in the bushes near Piet Retief he decided that he was tired after nine years as an Umkhonto operative and decided to hand himself over to the South African police. As a result of the information gained from Sidebe, the police were subsequently able to destroy much of the ANC and Umkhonto's underground structures in Swaziland and the eastern Transvaal.⁽¹¹³⁾

In addition to the training and other facilities mentioned above, the ANC and Umkhonto apparently also made use of some former ZAPU training facilities in Angola. These latter facilities allegedly were at Boma just outside Luena (previously known as Luso) and at Sa da Bandeira.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The ANC and Umkhonto apparently also operated a training facility at Katenga Camp until 1979, when it was destroyed by the SADF. Until then Katenga was an important training facility and many of those who had left South Africa after June 1976, and who were recruited into Umkhonto, were trained at Katenga Camp. Before its destruction, both Meli and the SACP theoretician, Jack Simons, a

112. Moss, The Strange Saga of Mr. X1, (Work in Progress 54, June/ July 1988, p. 16). See also The Case of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 14 - 16).

113. Moss, The Strange Saga of Mr. X1, (Work in Progress 54, June/ July 1988, p. 16). See also The Case of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, (Sechaba, December 1987, pp. 14 - 16).

114. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 7, 66.



former lecturer at the University of Cape Town, were attached to Katenga. (115)

Most of the training in the Angolan camps was given by a mixture of Umkhonto, Cuban, East German and Soviet instructors. The latter instructors were particularly involved in the training of recruits in specialist subjects such as advance communications and intelligence work. The latter category of instruction was apparently given at a Fapla (Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola) camp near Malanje. (116)

Besides the above facilities, Umkhonto and the ANC also operated a number of other facilities in Angola such as a farm for the production of pork and vegetables at Quela, supply depots, a creche, a garage to service its fleet of vehicles, medical and other support facilities. In addition, the ANC and Umkhonto controlled a number of apartments in Lusaka where cadres were trained in the art of espionage. Some of the apartments also served as accommodation for senior ANC and Umkhonto officials.

The ANC and Umkhonto also operated a detention facility for the "rehabilitation" of cadres at Quatro, near Quibaxa, and another at Pangi in northern Angola. (117) Quatro, also known as "Camp 32" or "Chitiri", was the better known of the two facilities and was often in the news due to the appalling conditions that existed there. As a result the camp was generally feared by even the most hardened of Umkhonto's guerrillas. Those in the ANC and Umkhonto who became discontented with the organisation for whatever reason or who were suspected of spying for the South African government, were sent to either Quatro or Pangi. Many of those in the organisation who were responsible (or thought to have been responsible) for the wide-spread mutiny in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in 1984, or who had

115. South Africa: Crackdown hits Hani's men, (Africa Confidential 30 (18), 1989.09.08, p. 3).

116. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.12.16.

117. See South Africa: Forced out of the Laager, and The Great Mutiny, (Africa Confidential 29 (24), 1988.12.02, pp. 3 - 4).

fallen foul of the ANC security organ, the Mbokodo, were sent to Quatro.

Olivia Forsyth, a South African security police agent who had managed to infiltrate the ANC and Umkhonto in the mid-1980's, but who was later sent to Quatro on suspicion of espionage against the organisation, has given a vivid account of conditions in the camp during her imprisonment there in 1986.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ According to Miss Forsyth, who escaped from Quatro in May 1988, conditions in the prison camp were sub-human, with beatings and interrogation being part of the daily routine. Quatro and Pangi, however, were not the only facilities for ANC and Umkhonto cadres who fell foul of the organisation. Pregnant women and those who had contracted the feared Aids disease, or who were suspected of having it, were sent to what Miss Forsyth has described as a "human dumping ground" for such people in Tanzania. Particularly older members of the ANC and Umkhonto, who were considered disloyal to the organisation and the liberation struggle in South Africa, were sent to this facility in Tanzania.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Unfortunately Miss Forsyth did not expand on the Tanzanian camp and little else appears to be available on it.

With the influx of new recruits into the ANC and Umkhonto during the mid-1980's, most of the organisation's training facilities in Angola had to be expanded to accommodate the new intake which, like the 1976 intake, took the organisation by surprise. As a result the ANC had to step up its farming activities in Angola. According to Davis⁽¹²⁰⁾ the ANC was in the process of developing a new fifteen thousand-acre farm in addition to that at Quela in Angola by the mid-1980's, and more such facilities were being planned for the second half of the decade. Whether these farms were ever established is difficult to say, but there can be little doubt that the New York Accord of December 1988 would have put an immediate end to it.

118. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.02.03.

119. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.02.03.

120. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 66 - 67. See also The Financial Mail (Johannesburg), 1984.06.08.



Thus, by the middle of the 1980's, Angola had without a doubt, become the most significant centre for the training of Umkhonto and ANC cadres since the scaling down of operational bases in Mozambique, following the Nkomati Accord. Angola remained a relatively safe haven for the ANC and Umkhonto right up to the end of 1988 when, as a result of the New York Accord on 22 December, the situation underwent a drastic change.

In short the New York Accord came as a crippling experience for those in the ANC-SACP alliance who favoured an outright military solution to South Africa's political problems. Since the independence of Angola in 1975 and the arrival of the Cubans, the ANC and Umkhonto operated largely under the military protection of these forces. Militarily, some ANC-Umkhonto bases were protected from South African counter-insurgency operations by sophisticated Soviet military hardware supplied to both the ruling MPLA government, and the Cuban forces who were there to support it. It was in fact the growing presence of Cuba's military commitment in Angola and the highly sophisticated types of weaponry, particularly in Angola's air defences, that finally helped persuade the South African government in 1988 to seek a political settlement to the war in Angola.⁽¹²¹⁾

While it is true that the specialist training facilities available to the ANC and Umkhonto outside South Africa, particularly in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries before 1988 were still available to the organisation after December 1988, Umkhonto's ability to recruit, train and invade South Africa with a substantial military force was reduced to almost nil. The spontaneous uprisings of the mid-1980's, together with the diplomatic setbacks suffered by the ANC and Umkhonto in Swaziland in 1982, in Mozambique in 1984, in Lesotho in 1986 and in Angola in 1988, eventually forced the leadership of the ANC and Umkhonto to accept that armed insurrection and revolution would never take place in terms of their 1969 perceptions. Up to 1984 the ANC-SACP alliance believed that revolution in South Africa

121. Africa Confidential 29 (14), 1988.07.05, p. 3.



would not be a spontaneous development, but would have to be "imported" or directed from outside the country's borders by the combined political and military efforts of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto. In this the latter would play a definite vanguard role. In terms of its 1969 document on Strategy and Tactics, the ANC made it clear that:

while guerrilla warfare was the special and in our case the only form in which the armed liberation struggle can be launched, the organisation rejected untimely, ill-planned or premature manifestations of violence [which] 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; it points out, these were symptoms of the militant spirit but not pointers to revolutionary technique.⁽¹²²⁾

This argument by the ANC that popular mass revolt was likely to fail because:

Under the modern highly sophisticated police state (which South Africa is) it is questionable whether a movement can succeed in a programme of mass political organisation beyond a certain point without starting a new type of action,

however, drastically changed after the spontaneous revolt of the mid-1980's. In a recent assessment of the armed struggle and the role of Umkhonto in it, Kasrils stated that the:

armed struggle must complement mass struggle and the development of the armed struggle is dependent on it being rooted among the people. In other words, our MK combatants and organisers must therefore base themselves amongst the people in order to involve the masses in a People's War.⁽¹²³⁾

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122. African National Congress (ANC), Strategy and Tactics of the ANC, Morogoro, 1969, pp. 5 - 8, 9, as quoted in Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 665 - 666).
123. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 1 - 2).

He went on to say that:

events of the past three years [1985, 1986, 1987] have unmistakably demonstrated just how possible and necessary it is to advance our struggle through a combination of armed and mass uprisings. The people have demonstrated just how ready they are to take up arms. In fact one might say that insurrection has been knocking on the door. (124)

Thus, according to Kasrils, in order to exploit any spontaneous revolutionary development, the ANC and Umkhonto had to set up an efficient and well-rooted underground infrastructure inside the country. The aim and task of such an underground would be to provide instant leadership and logistical support, something which up to the beginning of 1988, was made increasingly difficult by the South African government's diplomatic initiatives and the successes of its counter-insurgency operations.

Despite these unfavourable conditions, Umkhonto nevertheless vowed to step up the armed struggle in South Africa. There was however a marked decline in the acts of sabotage committed during the first half of 1989 as compared to the previous year, when Umkhonto launched an impressive number of attacks in opposition to the October Municipal elections. The overall impression is thus that after its expulsion from Angola, Umkhonto had difficulty in living up to its aims and promises and that although it had begun with the meaningful restructuring of its shattered underground organisation inside South Africa since February 1990, not much has come from this development.

2.3. Arming

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, Umkhonto began its armed struggle in 1961 with an assortment of home-made explosives and explosive devices. These types of explosive devices, which were at times supplemented with dynamite, remained the main armaments in

124. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 2 - 3).

Umkhonto's sabotage campaign until at least the mid 1960's when the Soviet Union began to supply more sophisticated weapons and explosives to the organisation. With the discovery of the movement's combined underground headquarters at Rivonia in 1963, the police found a document which called for the manufacturing of masses of explosives and explosive devices, ranging from anti-personnel mines to hand grenades.

Whether the ANC-SACP alliance would ever have been able to manufacture the large quantities of explosives called for in the document was a much-debated point at the trial of the NHC in 1963. In the opinion of experts called by the state to make an evaluation of the document and the amounts of explosives specified in it, it was stated that the 144 tons of ammonium nitrate, 21,6 tons of aluminium powder and 15 tons of black powder mentioned in the document, if manufactured, would have been sufficient to destroy a city the size of Johannesburg.⁽¹²⁵⁾

The raid on Rivonia in mid-1963 however destroyed the immediate possibility of the underground producing its own explosives or weapons inside South Africa. Indications are that the ANC and the SACP were however aware of the almost impossibility of such an operation before the raid on Rivonia, for Slovo and J.B. Marks were sent out of South Africa in May 1963 to discuss Operation Mayibuye and to make arrangements - presumably with the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries - for arms delivery to the ANC and Umkhonto outside South Africa. These arrangements turned out to be successful because in 1964/65 Umkhonto began receiving its first communist-produced arms.

Over the next decade and a half the arms supply from the Soviet Union and its proxies was systematically stepped up until the Soviet Union, by the end of the 1970's, became the chief supplier of arms and explosives to the ANC and Umkhonto.

125. De Villiers, Rivonia. Operation Mayibuye, pp. 71 - 73.

Up to the joint incursions into Rhodesia in 1967, Umkhonto made primarily use of explosives and explosive devices such as limpet mines to conduct its armed struggle inside South Africa. Although its guerrillas received training in the use of small arms such as the famous Soviet designed AK-47 assault rifle, the Makarov and Tokarev pistols as well as the Czech-made Vz-6I Skorpion machine pistol, very few of these weapons were ever found inside South Africa before the revival of the armed struggle during the second half of the 1970's. This means that although underground units of the ANC and Umkhonto were armed with small arms, their main aim up to the mid-1970's appeared to have been to commit sabotage. Small arms, so it appears, were only to be used in extreme cases of self-defence or when detected by the police or the security force.

After 1976, however, the picture began to change. With the availability of Mozambique and Angola to the ANC and Umkhonto, arms and explosives of various types and caliber could be brought into the country with relative ease. As a result between the mid-1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, when Umkhonto intensified its armed struggle, large caches of arms and explosives were found by the police in various parts of the country, particularly in the Transvaal and Natal. The arms caches were found to contain a variety of communist-made arms and explosives. In addition to the weapons already mentioned, they normally also contained a variety of hand-grenades, such as the F.1, the RG-42, and the RGD-5 defence hand-grenades, and the RG-4 offense hand-grenades, the TM-range of anti-tank and anti-vehicle mines as well as the very popular and highly effective SPM range of limpet and mini-limpet mines.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Of these weapons the Soviet-made RG-42 anti-personnel hand-grenade must be hurled from behind cover to guard the thrower against the 25 metre-wide circle of shrapnel that the weapon was designed to

126. M.N. Kramer, Soviet Arms Transfers to the Third World, (Problems of Communism, September - October 1987, p. 54). See also Handbook of Terrorist Weapons, issued to the South African Police, no date, p. 2 - 52; and Morris and Steenkamp, The SA National Congress Rocket Attack on Voortrekkerhoogte, Special Report, TRC, Cape Town, 1982, pp. 4 - 12, 33a, 34 - 39; as well as Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 70 - 71.



produce. The F.l. was even more dangerous in that it has a fragmentation radius of up to 200 metres from point of impact. The RGD-5 defence hand-grenade was lighter and more compact than other Soviet-made grenades, but its effect was similar to that of the RG-42.⁽¹²⁷⁾

Only the Makarov pistol and the RGD-5 grenade, of all these weapons, were in active military service among Soviet and Eastern European forces. Manufacturing of the Skorpion machine pistol by Czechoslovakia has ended. Its presence in South Africa therefore suggested that it was obtained from obsolete stock either in Czechoslovakia or elsewhere in the communist world such as the Soviet Union or Cuba. The Tokarev too was no longer used by the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries, having been replaced by the smaller and lighter Makarov pistol. The AK-47 which formed the mainstay of Umkhonto's armament was also no longer used by the Warsaw Pact countries. It had been withdrawn in favour of the more advanced AKM version. The Soviet Union also no longer manufactured the AK-47. This was left to Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. Similarly, neither the RG-42 nor the F.l. hand-grenades have seen active military service with any of the Warsaw Pact countries since the Second World War.

In short therefore, argued Davis, Umkhonto's arsenal had consisted largely of "surplus supplies of outdated Soviet and East European munitions".⁽¹²⁸⁾ In addition, the weapons also represented a comparatively low level of firepower. The Tokarev and Makarov pistols were both protective weapons rather than assault guns. The AK-47, while being a very reliable weapon with a high rate of fire, was definitely not better than the South African-manufactured R1, R4 and R5 assault rifles. Although the range of weapons made available to the ANC and Umkhonto permitted an insurgent to concentrate most effectively on rapid self-protected assaults on stationary targets,

127. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 70 - 71.

128. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 70 - 71.



few of the arms endowed Umkhonto however with the capacity to directly engage units of the South African Defence Force in battle.⁽¹²⁹⁾

While the above range of weapons were more or less standard equipment used by Umkhonto guerrillas by the end of the 1970's, the beginning of the 1980's however witnessed the use of more sophisticated and heavier arms. In August 1981, following the assassination of Joe Gqabi, the ANC's chief representative in Zimbabwe on 31 July - allegedly by South African agents - a DKZ-B 122 mm surface to surface rocket launcher was for the first time used by Umkhonto guerrillas inside South Africa. This weapon, sometimes also referred to as the Grad-P, is a sophisticated weapon that has seen extensive service on the side of communist forces in the Vietnam War. It was for instance used with great effectiveness in January 1968 in the Tet offensive as well as by the communist-backed Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in its attacks on Israeli positions in the Middle East, as well as in the war in Lebanon. According to an investigative report into Umkhonto's rocket attack on the Voortrekkerhoogte military base in August 1981, the weapon which can be dismantled into several portable units, was brought into South Africa from Mozambique via Swaziland. According to the same report the rocket attack was planned outside the country by two cells consisting of five men each; five of whom were White foreign nationals who had entered South Africa in advance of the attack to set up a base and logistics facilities. They left the country before the attack took place on 12 August.⁽¹³⁰⁾

According to an ANC press statement released in Dar-es-Salaam on 13 August - the day after the attack - it was alleged that the attack was carried out by Umkhonto guerrillas and that it was done to coincide with the commemorative anniversary of the "Wankie" attacks

129. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, pp. 71 - 72.

130. Morris and Steenkamp, The SA National Congress Rocket Attack, pp. 9a - 9c.

fourteen years earlier.⁽¹³¹⁾ Some seven years later in May 1988, the South African Security police having received information, raided a house at Broederstroom near the Hartebeespoort Dam believed to be the headquarters of an all-White ANC cell. Among the arms uncovered at the house (it was considered to be the largest arms cache ever found in South Africa), the police found a Soviet-made SAM-7 multiple missile launcher and rockets similar to that used by guerrillas during the Rhodesian bush war to shoot down two Rhodesian Air Viscount planes, one in 1978 and one in 1979.⁽¹³²⁾

Although sophisticated heavy weapons such as the SAM-7 and Grad-P were finding their way to the ANC and Umkhonto by the 1980's, they were the exception rather than the rule. There is no indication that they were ever supplied to the ANC and Umkhonto in any large quantities or brought into the country in any quantities. On the whole, most Soviet or Soviet Bloc supplies to the ANC and Umkhonto in the 1980's, particularly to the organisation's training camps in Angola never amounted to more than outdated small arms. "Most Soviet Bloc supplies at the Angolan camps, whether through donor restrictions or ANC request", argued Davis, "appeared to be of the more primitive, inexpensive variety."⁽¹³³⁾

3. CONCLUSION

Since the formation of Umkhonto and the beginning of the armed struggle in 1961, a number of important changes have taken place with regard to the recruitment and training of the cadres of Umkhonto. Some of these changes were brought about by developments inside the liberation movement, but the majority were forced on the ANC-SACP alliance by changing conditions inside South Africa and the successes and failures of the South African government's political, diplomatic and military strategy in Southern Africa. The first major change came with the destruction of the ANC, SACP and Umkhonto's combined

131. Morris and Steenkamp, The SA National Congress Rocket Attack, pp. 9a - 9c.

132. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.05.12.

133. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels, p. 72.



internal underground structure and operations between 1963 and 1965. With the direction and control of Umkhonto and the armed struggle being transferred to the ANC's Mission in Exile after 1965, the recruitment and training of cadres for Umkhonto inside South Africa became a serious problem. As a result, for the next ten years, until the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in Southern Africa and the outbreak of the Soweto unrest, the ANC and Umkhonto had to make do with the few recruits they had. The bulk of those who made up the ranks of the two organisations by the early 1970's had been recruited into the underground and external mission during the early 1960's. Although new recruits continued to enter the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto between 1965 and the mid-1970's, these were few and far between. Despite the growing dissatisfaction among Blacks, particularly the African youth inside South Africa with a host of issues ranging from education to the use of Afrikaans in African schools, and the desire for political rights and expression, very few of these people were prepared to actually join the ranks of Umkhonto to be trained for guerrilla warfare. One of the main reasons for this reluctance was the Black Consciousness Movement, which had its origins in the late 1960's and which provided a political outlet for many Black youths inside the country, something that neither the ANC nor Umkhonto could do at the time. As a result of these and other factors, the ANC and Umkhonto had to use a variety of methods including deception and coercion to get people to join its ranks. These methods were clearly not very successful and were partially responsible for the fact that the ANC's Mission in Exile could not successfully revive the armed struggle inside South Africa before the second half of the 1970's.

By this stage, however, a number of developments had taken place that favoured the cause of the ANC and its armed struggle in South Africa. The first, was the granting of independence to Mozambique and Angola and the establishment of Marxist-Leninist rule in both these former Portuguese colonies. The second was the Soweto uprising which, as a result of the heavy-handed action of the South African government, led to the departure of thousands of radical Black youths from the country, the majority of whom joined the ANC, which packed them off



to Umkhonto's training camps in Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and elsewhere. The influx of these new recruits into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto - a development that was accelerated with the banning of the Black Consciousness Movement in 1977 - represented the second major change in the development of the armed struggle since 1961. Up to 1976, the ANC and Umkhonto had to rely on a great deal of deception and good fortune to get people to join their ranks, but after that date, most recruits who joined these two organisations did so of their own free will. With the accessibility of Mozambique and Angola after 1975, the ANC and Umkhonto's recruiting agents could intercept Black youths leaving South Africa and channel them into Umkhonto's training camps. Although deception still occurred, most recruits who joined Umkhonto during these years did so primarily to be trained as guerrilla fighters and to be returned to South Africa to fight the South African government.

Although the influx of the new recruits, first in 1976 and again in the mid-1980's, swelled the ranks of the ANC, particularly Umkhonto, and thus enabled the ANC to resume the armed struggle inside South Africa, it also brought with it a host of new problems. Radically-minded, headstrong, difficult to control, and generations younger than most of the leaders of the ANC and Umkhonto, the Black youths (most of them were African) of the post-1976 era placed a great deal of pressure on the existing structures and leadership of the ANC and Umkhonto, who did not always make the best of decisions or advanced the best solutions to the problems facing it. The inevitable outcome of this was growing dissatisfaction among the rank and file of Umkhonto, which finally flared up into a mutiny in the organisation's Angolan training camps in 1981. Although the mutiny was severely suppressed, the dissatisfaction in the camps remained with the result that by the mid-1980's, when the second major influx of recruits into the ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto began, the ANC felt itself compelled to draw up a detailed policy on the role, position and future of its cadres. This cadre policy, which was drafted by a Commission of the ANC's National Executive Committee and presented to the second National Consultative Conference held at Kabwe in June 1985, was the first such policy ever adopted by the ANC-SACP alliance.

Although the policy was accepted by the conference and a call was made for its immediate implementation, the fact that dissatisfaction remained in the training camps of Umkhonto and that many of the problems which caused the dissatisfaction in the 1970's were still apparent in the late 1980's tended to suggest that the implementation of the 1985 policy on cadres had not been a success.

Since the Kabwe conference a number of developments had taken place that probably contributed to this. The first was the National State of Emergency declared by the South African government in mid-1986. Armed with the extensive powers granted to it by the emergency regulations, the police was able to undermine much of the ANC and Umkhonto's organisational activities as well as its recruitment campaign inside the country after 1986.

The second development was the coup in Lesotho in January 1986. Although Lesotho had never been a vitally important link in the ANC's underground movement in and out of the country, it did act as a recruiting facility for the ANC whose personnel occupied several buildings and offices in Maseru up to the beginning of 1986. The loss of Lesotho undoubtedly increased the ANC and Umkhonto's dependence on Botswana for the movement of recruits and trained cadres in and out of the country at a time when the latter was no longer a safe route.

The third major setback to the ANC and Umkhonto's activities inside South Africa and the training of its cadres outside the country, came at the end of 1988 with the signing of the New York Peace Accord between South Africa, Angola and Cuba, which directly and immediately affected the position and future presence of the ANC and Umkhonto in that country. In terms of the latter peace agreement the ANC had to dismantle all its bases and remove its troops and personnel from Angola. The ANC and Umkhonto thus found themselves in more or less the same position as the Algerian nationalists and their liberation army - the ALN - found themselves in 1960. With their army being neutralised by the French who had something like 700 000 men in Algeria by 1960, the ALN had little choice but to consider the fact



that a military victory was incomplete unless accompanied by a political victory.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Both the ANC and the South African government were learning that lesson by the end of 1988.

As far as the arming of Umkhonto was concerned this, like much of the history of the liberation struggle, developed through a distinct internal and external phase. Attempts to arm Umkhonto internally during the early years of the armed struggle were not very successful due to the watchful eye of the State's security establishment. Moreover, to set up the type of underground facilities to produce enough explosives and explosive devices to conduct the armed struggle as suggested by Operation Mayibuye and some of the other documents found at Rivonia would have been virtually an impossible undertaking. This much was later admitted by Slovo in a candid assessment of the early years of the armed struggle.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Whatever plans the leaders of Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP still had by the beginning of 1963 to arm and conduct the armed struggle from inside the country finally had to be shelved with the police discovery of their headquarters at Rivonia in July 1963 and the rapid elimination of the underground by the police in the months that followed.

At the time that the police discovered the Rivonia headquarters of the ANC and Umkhonto, Slovo, a former commander of Umkhonto, and J.B. Marks were abroad to discuss the mechanics of Operation Mayibuye and the internal manufacturing of massive quantities of explosives and explosive devices. They were still outside the country when the police arrested the NHC of Umkhonto at Rivonia. This immediately changed everything. In future the training and arming of Umkhonto's cadres would have to be done from outside the country. As a result of the close association between Umkhonto and the SACP the latter was able to obtain Soviet military aid for the ANC and Umkhonto in 1964/65. Although little is known about this early Soviet military aid to the ANC and Umkhonto, especially how, where, and when it was

134. Davidson, The People's Cause. A History of Guerrillas in Africa, p. 85.

135. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 25.

delivered to the liberation alliance, there can be little doubt that by the end of the 1960's the Soviet Union and its Marxist allies had become the main arms supplier of the ANC and Umkhonto. This continued to be the case until the end of 1988. Judging by the type of arms and explosives used by Umkhonto's cadres over the decades since the first major attempt to infiltrate armed guerrillas back into the country in 1968, and what has been published on the subject, the general impression is that while the arms and other equipment given to Umkhonto was highly effective and substantial, it was nonetheless outdated and no longer in production in many of the Soviet Bloc countries in Europe or elsewhere. Although more sophisticated weapons were found in the possession of Umkhonto cadres during the 1980's, these latter types of weapons while highly effective, were few and far between. They were clearly not issued to Umkhonto in large quantities. As a result, their impact on the armed struggle, although devastating when used, was relatively small.

Since the intensification of the armed struggle at the beginning of the 1980's the ANC and Umkhonto had managed to smuggle large quantities of arms and explosive devices, mostly limpet and other types of mines, into the country, either for the purpose of storage for later attacks, or as part of special assignments such as the attacks on SASOL and the Koeberg nuclear power station or for the manufacturing of powerful car bombs such as that used in Pretoria in 1983. Exactly how many weapons were brought into South Africa over the years since the mid-1970's is not clear, but judging by the frequent reports of arms caches discovered by the police since 1976, it would appear that fairly large quantities of mines, ammunition, pistols, machine pistols, explosives, and various models of AK-47 assault rifles had been brought into South Africa since the unrest of the mid-1970's. The loss of many of these arms by the ANC and Umkhonto undoubtedly had an inhibiting effect on the armed struggle over the years. Although the police never uncovered all the arms caches, the fact that they did uncover a substantial number of these caches from time to time and that it often involved large quantities of arms has made it difficult if not impossible for the ANC and Umkhonto to establish a substantial arms build-up inside the country.



Without such an arms build-up inside the country and the availability of a well-oiled underground infrastructure to distribute these arms among the people, the ANC and the SACP were largely unable to root the armed struggle among the people by the end of 1988 despite their substantial political and military efforts to do so. This much was admitted by Kasrils, a senior member of Umkhonto's NHC in 1988. (136)

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136. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 1 - 22).



CHAPTER NINE

THE FAILURE OF UMKHONTO'S ARMED MISSION

Perhaps the most publicised and debated issue in South African politics since the signing of the New York Peace Accord in December 1988, has been whether the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto had the ability to continue their armed struggle or whether the swing in both White and Black political thinking was strong enough to force the ANC and the SACP to the negotiating table. Up to the time of the signing of the New York Accord, Black political thinking, and to a great extent also White political perspectives in South Africa, had centred around a military solution to the country's political problems. Since the signing of the New York Accord however and the negative effect that it had on the ability of the ANC and Umkhonto to escalate the armed struggle in South Africa, increasing attention has been given to the possibility of a negotiated settlement in the country, despite persistent refusals from the ANC to disband Umkhonto and to stop recruiting people for the organization.

But how realistic were these claims, and what ability did the ANC-SACP alliance really have of escalating the armed struggle into a full-scale people's war - as it predicted it would do in 1987? Did the ANC, in its alliance with the SACP, have sufficient military forces in Umkhonto to force the South African government to hand over power to the ANC, or should their sabre rattling be seen for what it really was, namely armed propaganda to attract support for the aims and objectives of the Freedom Charter inside as well as outside South Africa? Similarly - why, after almost thirty years of revolutionary armed struggle, did the ANC-SACP alliance remain the only major liberatory force in Africa that had not achieved or even approached



their declared objective, namely to destroy White minority rule in South Africa and replace it with a more democratic system of government? In the course of this final chapter answers to these and other questions pertaining to the state of the armed struggle in South Africa and the position of Umkhonto in it since 1961 will be provided.

1. SOME VIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANC-SACP'S ARMED STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE FACTORS INHIBITING ITS DEVELOPMENT

Since the ANC and the SACP began their armed struggle against the South African government in 1961, a number of publications have appeared in which attempts were made to analyse the struggle and the factors that may have had an inhibiting effect on its development and the attainment of its aims and objectives.⁽¹⁾ The earliest of these publications that deals with the armed struggle in South Africa

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1. The following is a list of the studies that are examined in this chapter to determine some of the factors that inhibited the development of the armed struggle in South Africa: E. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa (1971); J.B. Bell, The Myth of the Guerrilla. Revolutionary Theory and Malpractice (1971); J.B. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution in Southern Africa, (Africa Today 19, Winter 1972); L.H. Gann, No Hope for Violent Liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972); S. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare. A South African Case Study, (Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973); T. Lodge, The African National Congress in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda, (Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), 1983 - 1984); B. Turok, Strategic Problems in South Africa's Liberation Struggle: A Critical Analysis, 1974; Colin and Margaret Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey and Documents 1974 - 1975; P. Rich, Insurgency, Terrorism and the Apartheid System in South Africa, (Political Studies, xxx (11), 1984); T. Lodge, Mayilome! Let us go to War! From Nkomati to Kabwe, the ANC, January 1984 - June 1985, (The South African Review Three, 1985); S.M. Davis, Apartheid's Rebels. Inside South Africa's Hidden War, 1987; M. Radu, The African National Congress: Cadres and Credo, (Problems of Communism, July - August 1987); J. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly, 103 (4), 1988); W.P. Esterhuyse, The International Political Status of the ANC, (Africa Insight, 19 (1), 1989).

and the reasons for its relative failure is that of Edward Feit,⁽²⁾ to whom reference has been made on numerous occasions in this study.

According to Feit, revolutionary situations were not common phenomena because of two basic factors that inhibit their development. The first was the "routenization" of power, while the second was the extent to which the threat of potential revolt was perceived by the privileged minority against whom the struggle was directed. In his examination of the above two factors, Feit drew extensively upon the research and findings of two experts in the field, namely Heinrich Popitz⁽³⁾ and Joseph Lopreato.⁽⁴⁾ Popitz, according to Feit, argued that the majority, like the minority, was a distinctive phenomenon in which numbers appear to carry very little weight. If the relative strength of the minority and the majority was compared, two things stand out clearly; first of all - the superior ability of the privileged (minority) group to organise quickly, efficiently and effectively; and secondly, their ability to legitimize their privileges before the underprivileged (majority) group can develop an effective counter-ideology. According to Popitz, the privileged group can organise more effectively because they have a clear common interest to defend. There were no ambiguities about it. Moreover this interest was maintained by exchanges among privileged individuals. Individual and common interests, according to Popitz, were therefore congruent.⁽⁵⁾

The case of the underprivileged masses, however, was more complicated. While it was certainly in their interest to challenge the privileged, argued Popitz, that challenge does not involve the next step or development, namely, what will happen or what must be the next step once they have attained their freedom or have overthrown the status quo. The individual who was called upon to take risks, has no guarantee or even a certainty that he will personally benefit from

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2. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 301 - 324.
 3. Heinrich Popitz, Prozesse der Machtbildung as quoted in Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 302.
 4. Joseph Lopreato, Authority Relations and Class Conflict as quoted in Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 303.
 5. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 302 - 304.



the proposed or propagated change. The problem of distribution, in other words, who will get what, where, when and how, remained unresolved, according to Popitz. Agreement on what was wrong was thus no guarantee that agreement will be reached on what was right, or what was best, or that what was eventually instituted was acceptable to all.⁽⁶⁾

The privileged, on the other hand, have solved the problem of distribution even if the solution was not acceptable to all. To them a new order was not necessarily a better order or an answer to the existing problem, simply because it was not in power. Thus, argued Popitz, while the problem of distribution forces the underprivileged and the leaders of the organisation representing them to deal with the next step of the revolution only, which was the step immediately following a successful revolt, the privileged can concentrate on the step immediately facing it. They could offer select members of the underprivileged group advantages of immediate effect - such as premiums for loyalty and service or opportunities for personal advancement, which in the case of the latter was a highly sought after commodity.

Popitz further argued that while these advantages can be countered by the underprivileged, the impulse to do so and to organise such action had to be much stronger than that of the privileged if they were to attain equality of force. Resolutions alone were not enough. Great willingness on the part of the individual to submit himself to the common purpose, and a plan for distributive justice that was generally acceptable, was needed to bring the underprivileged to the "niveau" of the minority.⁽⁷⁾

The minority, Popitz went on to state, ruled not only because of vertical legitimisation of the kind suggested by Max Weber, the great German sociologist, but also because of a horizontal legitimisation among the elite. The elite, in other words, legitimise themselves.

6. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 304.
7. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 304.



They were in power because they have solved the problems of distribution and because they have agreed on the order which makes distribution and organisation possible. It thus goes without saying that this legitimisation of the elite rests on the belief that the existing order - as opposed to the one suggested by the underprivileged - was just. Feit argued that there was "a basic legitimacy of the established order. Once a certain ordering of things exists, even the unprivileged has something at stake: It was only rarely true that they have nothing to lose but their chains".⁽⁸⁾ But if there was order and not mere arbitrariness even in exploitation, and if order was enforced by effective threats of violence, the unprivileged, wrote Feit, may come to believe that what they are receiving from the political system (the status quo) was better than nothing - and nothing at all might be the result of revolt.⁽⁹⁾

But how does all this apply to the South African situation? According to Feit the relevancy between Popitz's model and South Africa lies in the fact that according to Popitz:

The main problem for the rulers is at the beginning to avoid carefully anything which could affront the apathetic, individualistic majority, and at the same time to reduce this potentially dangerous group by appointing some of its members to the service class and stigmatising others as the outcasts.⁽¹⁰⁾

Thus, what Popitz was saying and which Feit agreed with, was that in the South African situation the creation of an African elite class - by co-opting them through the system of "separate development" which offered them relatively well-paid jobs and stability - the ruling order or the privileged minority effectively reduced the mechanisms of revolution. The point made by Popitz and Feit was born out by the fact that in 1968 the South African police force consisted of 53

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8. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 304.
 9. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 304.
 10. Heinrich Popitz, Prozesse der Machtbildung, as quoted in Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 304.



percent Whites and 47 percent Blacks (16 755 Whites, 13 044 Africans, 1 371 Coloureds and 600 Indians). The latter were all part of the unprivileged majority as opposed to the privileged Whites in the force.⁽¹¹⁾ By 1987, the ratio between Whites and Blacks in the South African police force had almost reached the fifty percent mark.⁽¹²⁾ Clearly, such cooperation between the privileged and the unprivileged for whatever reason(s) was highly counter-productive to revolutionary development. This was even more true when a section or sections of the unprivileged were incorporated into the political structure of the privileged group, even if this was done in a limited way as was the case with the inclusion of Indians and Coloureds in the constitutional development of South Africa in 1983/84. Although the latter development led to the formation of a series of new political alliances such as the UDF, and was partially responsible for the unrest that broke out in 1984, the mere inclusion of these two minority groups of the unprivileged class substantially weakened the position of the left and thus their revolutionary potential.

These views tie in well with the research and findings of Joseph Lopreato who set out to test the proposition that conflict between two aggregates in any association, rests on whether they were in superordinate or subordinate positions.⁽¹³⁾ According to Feit, Lopreato's findings seem to indicate that more intense status conflict takes place within the authoritative group than between that group and those excluded from authority. "Such conflicts, extrapolating Lopreato's findings, if protracted," wrote Feit, "can spark the kind of 'incapacitating crisis' of which Lenin wrote." Lenin saw revolution as an elemental movement involving millions, occurring at a time of particular upsurge when masses of aggrieved humanity were driven by unusually harsh adversity into an insurrectionary mood that

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11. Horrell, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1968, p. 109.
 12. Cooper, A Survey of Race Relations, 1978/1988, p. 555.
 13. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 305.



could find outlet in action owing to a particular incapacitating crisis at the top of society and government.⁽¹⁴⁾

However, argued Feit:

Whether or not such a crisis takes place depends, it would seem, on whether the fissiparous pressure among the privileged can be contained in the face of a common interest or a common threat. This depends in turn on the perceptions of the interest or the threat among the privileged. If they see the threat to their interests as real and imminent, the tendency to unite may be stronger than the tendency to faction.⁽¹⁵⁾

As to the question whether the ruled can revolt successfully, Feit pointed out that Popitz was sceptical as far as overturning an established power was concerned. He argued that the possibility of change rests on overcoming what he terms "the organisation gap" between the integrated minority - provided that it remained integrated - and the disintegrated or even mutually hostile majority group, which in South Africa would be the African majority.⁽¹⁶⁾

By the "organisational gap" between the privileged and unprivileged, one understood the form of organisation that would enable the latter to successfully revolt against the position of the privileged; while at the same time "routinize" authority to the greatest possible extent. The latter, as Lopreato has pointed out, was not so easy to achieve since conflict was part of the process whereby those in authority will always seek to maintain the status quo, while those without it would constantly try to change it. Thus, according to Lopreato the "crisis of authority" exists not only among the elite of the privileged but also among the elite of the unprivileged. According to Feit one only needs to look at the internecine striving in the ANC both before and after 1960 to find living proof of

14. R.C. Tucker, The Marxian Revolutionary Idea, as quoted in Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 302.

15. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 305.

16. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 306.



Lopreato's theory. What is more, the tension created within the leadership ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto, particularly in Natal where the leadership of the two organisations was at loggerheads for the most part of the early 1960's, was increased from outside by the actions of the government who was in a position to "de-authorize" any leader(s) by exposing the emptiness of his (their) threats or promises.⁽¹⁷⁾

However in doing so the government could at the same time promote challenges to its authority. In other words, by refusing to adhere to the demands of moderate Black leaders, the government actually encourages radicals to belittle the efforts of these moderate leaders in favour of a more radical course of action which was exactly what transpired in the early 1960's and which led to the formation of Umkhonto.

According to Feit,⁽¹⁸⁾ the response of the older leadership intent on maintaining power, was to routinize authority to the greatest possible extent, thus ensuring that the revolutionary movement will be organized along bureaucratic lines. Indeed, the difficulty of control was enhanced, he points out, by the elevated status the leadership of the African majority enjoyed among its own people compared with the low status it has among Whites, who, on the whole, discriminate not among Africans of different classes, but against them as a group.

Feit further argued that the problem of control was intensified by the need for a revolutionary organisation to produce results - ie, to realise its aims and objectives. In order to gain a following, a revolutionary organisation/movement has to make many promises and these promises must be realized if it does not want its status to be challenged. Campaigns launched with fanfare, argued Feit, must - at least partially - achieve their objectives. On the other hand, where a government meets challenges directed at it with success or

17. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 306.

18. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 306.



even partial success (success can never be total) the revolutionary leadership and organisation it represents was either discredited or reduced in status of importance. Even if the radical leadership and the cadres managed to survive the government's action against them, their position and importance will deteriorate with every subsequent successful action against them. The result was that the support group will find it increasingly difficult to mobilize with each succeeding action against it.

Failure and factionalism Feit wrote, feeds on each other in a revolutionary situation. The more often the movement fails, the less likely it is to succeed in the future unless it is extra-ordinarily fortunate. The insurgent leaders under pressure will seek to retain control by imposing a bureaucratic pattern on the revolutionary organisation, the protection of their own status being rationalized as protection of the revolution itself. (19)

According to Feit, Lenin in his revolutionary writings conceived just such a pattern of party organisation, and met objections that such a party might easily be decapitated, with the answer that it was easier for a dozen intelligent people to escape than a hundred imbeciles. But the decapitation of Umkhonto at Rivonia in 1963 and the destruction of much of the combined ANC-SACP underground leadership shortly thereafter, has proved Lenin's philosophy wrong. (20) Although urban underground cells can survive for a time through their own ingenuity or with the backing of support groups, their situation was in the long run precarious if not short-lived. Part of the reason for this was that the police and other security organs have a much better network of agents in the urban areas than in the countryside and although it might take a while to do so they will finally gain access to the underground and its leadership, as was the case at Rivonia in 1963. In addition, because the administrative and military system was more closely co-ordinated and concentrated in the urban than rural areas, even simultaneous attacks at different places

19. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 307.
20. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 307.



can be dealt with fast and efficiently. The period between 1960 and 1964 contained numerous examples of the South African government's ability to deal with virtually every measure that the underground could bring against it in terms of its armed struggle.

But there were also other factors that contributed to the downfall of Umkhonto's internal organisation in 1963 and the collapse of the ANC and the SACP's underground structures by 1965. Since a revolution or a revolutionary situation was a form of war, revolutionary organisations such as Umkhonto were normally organised along military lines. In other words, it follows some form of bureaucratic structure forced upon it partially by its leadership and partially by the conditions under which it had to operate. Yet, the very attributes that were basic to any revolutionary underground situation and which were essential to any successful insurgency, namely quick decision-making, clandestine operations, secrecy, rapid execution of orders, and the need for cadres to operate independently at times without prior approval or direct contact, were basically all anti-bureaucratic in nature. The revolutionaries were therefore faced with the problem of how to advance the armed struggle successfully along non-bureaucratic lines, without losing direction and control over it.⁽²¹⁾ According to Feit, Martin Oppenheimer in his 1969 work "The Urban Guerrilla",⁽²²⁾ argued that the constant need for security and anonymity, and the fear of informers, particularly among their own ranks, poisons the atmosphere among the revolutionaries, who can never really fully trust one another. Since the police must be prevented from discovering the whole organisation, a fractionalized form of organisation was all that the revolutionaries can permit themselves. This meant that those who felt comfortable in an atmosphere of this kind are hardly the kind to further a just and humane society. It was to the credit of the members of the African underground that they did not fit into this kind of atmosphere.

21. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 308.

22. M. Oppenheimer, The Urban Guerrilla, 1969, p. 69 referred to in Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 308.



argued Feit, but at the same time it facilitated the ease with which the police managed to penetrate the underground and finally destroy the internal structures of Umkhonto and the ANC. (23)

Thus, although bureaucratization was important to the underground leadership it was counter-productive to an underground revolutionary situation. The result was that cadres, where possible, seek to escape bureaucratic controls and conduct operations on their own. Bureaucratic control, while important to the leaders of the underground, can thus be crippling to a revolutionary organisation if it was too strictly or dogmatically applied. Yet at the same time if it was too loosely applied and cadres were allowed too much freedom of movement and decision-making, it could lead to a direct decline in security and control which, in turn, would eventually lead to the destruction of the underground as actually took place with Umkhonto in the mid-1960's. After all, to penetrate even the most bureaucratic of underground organisations such as the SACP was always possible as Gerhard Ludi had shown in the 1960's and others since then. The reason for this was that bureaucratic structures such as the SACP, ANC and Umkhonto were normally founded on predictable actions which, like any bureaucracy, were counter-productive to a successful insurgency. According to Feit, the effectiveness of a revolutionary organisation and thus an insurgency, depends not so much on its complexity, which often exists on paper only, but on its ability to strike unanticipated blows at the enemy. These blows or acts must either cause great damage or if the damage was small, have great symbolic value. What is more, the action must be of such a nature that it will gain additional support for the revolutionary organisation and its ideals. (24)

Feit also stresses the fact that besides a natural desire of the underground leadership to retain authority by making it routine, the bureaucratic tendency can also be ascribed to a particular view that

23. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 308.

24. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 309 - 310.



a leadership has of the future. A leadership whose views of the future were based largely on abstract principles would be more likely to adopt bureaucratic forms. In Natal, for instance, where the ANC was clearly committed to the old bureaucratic forms from the pre-1960 period and the idea of a multi-racial society obtained through non-violent means, the local leadership was reluctant to take steps towards a policy of open violence that might endanger their future dream of a non-apartheid multi-racial society. According to Feit:

The ANC had to think of the next step but one; the government of the next step only.⁽²⁵⁾ This had, perhaps, influenced the ANC and its emphasis on non-violent campaigns, its reluctance to turn violence, and its insistence that violence, when employed, was not to endanger life. The hotheads who were to realize the insurrectionary acts were not necessarily imbued with the same goals. Hence bureaucratic command and structures tended to break apart.⁽²⁶⁾

But even more important, argued Feit, was that revolutionary action was normally undertaken by a small minority that had limited resources and was in fact, waging a poor man's war. Although substantial sums of money were allegedly channelled into the ANC and Umkhonto by the SACP after 1961, these funds were not unlimited nor could they even remotely match the financial muscle of the State. Moreover, despite the financial resources available to the underground and despite the exploits of its cadres and however great their courage and ingenuity, the odds were overwhelmingly against them of being wiped out in the long run; unless political, economic and diplomatic circumstances enable them to attract world opinion and support for their cause. Over the years since the beginning of the armed struggle the ANC and Umkhonto has used every opportunity to inform the world at large that the armed struggle in South Africa was forced on them by the South African government's inflexible attitude and that as such their struggle was a legitimate war against oppression and racial discrimination. Armed struggle was adopted because it was

25. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 310 - 311.

26. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 311.



the only alternative left open to them. Yet it was, as Feit pointed out, an attempt to reauthorize the ANC and with it the SACP. By 1960, the authority of the ANC had been severely deflated as one non-violent campaign after another failed to produce any meaningful change to the likes of those on whose behalf the ANC professed to wage its campaigns. In fact, exactly the opposite took place. Instead of elevating oppressive laws, the campaign waged by the ANC with the help of the SACP led to their intensification, and the closing of whatever political avenues were still open to Africans. "By turning to violence," wrote Feit, "the leaders of the ANC may have hoped to re-establish the ANC as the leading African political organisation in response to the challenge of the Pan Africanist Congress [PAC] and its military wing Poqo. This did not happen. The ANC failed in its campaign of militancy."⁽²⁷⁾

But there were other more obvious factors, according to Feit, that undoubtedly had an influence on the failure of the insurrectionary movement in the early 1960's. The first and most important of these was the apparent reluctance that existed among the revolutionaries, even after the decision was taken to adopt armed struggle and Umkhonto was formed, to engage in civil war. Mandela, according to Feit, made it quite clear at the Rivonia trial in 1963 that the ANC and Umkhonto's leadership viewed the situation developing in South Africa with alarm, and that they were fully aware of the fact that civil war could mean the destruction of what the ANC stood for. Moreover, with civil war it would be more difficult than ever to bring about racial peace and harmony in South Africa.⁽²⁸⁾ In addition, the ANC, according to Feit, did not really do very much to deauthorize the White group, to challenge their authority and to tear it down. The ANC was apparently against such a policy and the type of action that went with it; and given the organisation's partnership with the SACP, this was fully understandable. Less understandable, however, was the revolutionary movement's continuous appeal to

27. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 311 - 312.
28. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 312.



the South African government as the source of authority to grant them their wishes. It was the government to whom they looked for concessions and cessions of rights such as the calling of a national convention. Undoubtedly by recognising the South African government, the same authority against whom they were about to wage an armed struggle, was to reduce the stature and importance of their demands and with it the significance of the armed struggle.⁽²⁹⁾

But fear of violence may also have had other roots, argued Feit.⁽³⁰⁾ Considering the nature of the armed struggle and the attacks conducted between 1961 and 1964; as well as the fact that the revolutionaries were in no position, financially or militarily, to wage a guerrilla war against the South African government, one is left with the question as to what the real aim of the armed struggle was. Was it meant to frighten the government into changing its policies in favour of the revolutionaries, or was it intended to overthrow the status quo? The ANC-SACP alliance probably aimed to do both, namely to frighten the White electorate into putting pressure on the government to change its policies, and hopefully through such action to bring about the collapse of the status quo in the country. Unfortunately for the alliance, exactly the opposite took place. The White electorate closed ranks behind the National Party who promised to root out the "enemy" through whatever means available to it. The outcome of this was that the government, in other words the status quo, tightened up its security legislation and put into motion a campaign of counter-insurgency and anti-communist action that all but destroyed the underground by the middle of the 1960's.

Another explanation advanced by Feit for the ANC and Umkhonto having failed to achieve their goals in 1964 was the fact that the SACP, which played a vital role in the revolutionary movement and which was closely involved with Umkhonto and the armed struggle, was run mainly by Whites, who, he alleges, despite their superior organisational and financial, if not social positions, made one error after another -

29. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 312.

30. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 313. See also Barrell, MK, pp. 6 - 7, and Dawn, Souvenir Issue, p. 24.

many quite foolish and obvious.⁽³¹⁾ He added that while on the one hand, these White communists were dedicated revolutionaries committed to the SACP and its ideals of an egalitarian society, they were also White, and doubtless felt a strong and unconscious identification with their own people. "The clash of loyalties and beliefs could be reconciled by acting out the roles of fighters for African liberation, while seeing to it that this struggle always came to naught." Although such a view, as Feit pointed out, was largely theoretical it was certainly not without some merit.⁽³²⁾

Returning to the ruling group and the manner in which they perceived the threat against them, Feit argued that the effect of the 1960's insurgency as represented by the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto was to cement the otherwise divided elements of White society. A view of how Whites perceived the threat against them, was revealed during a survey conducted by the Natal Mercury in 1969.⁽³³⁾ Of the sample group questioned about 60 percent said that they saw terrorism as a "real threat" while some 30 percent saw terrorism as "some threat"; only 6 percent felt that terrorism presented no threat at all.

The question that remains to be answered is why Umkhonto and the ANC (and the SACP) had so little success in mobilizing support for their activities among the African masses, at a time when the ANC felt it necessary to meet apartheid and racial discrimination with a campaign of revolutionary violence. In answer to this, Feit argued that although there was a growing number of permanent African town dwellers in South Africa, much of the African population in the urban areas was migrant labour. As such many Africans were only partially men of the cities and towns; this was true even in cases where no permanent return to the countryside was foreseen. This attitude has of course been encouraged by the government, through its policy of segregation and by the traditional African authority whose interest

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31. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 313. See also Dawn, Souvenir Issue, pp. 24 - 25.
 32. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 314 - 315.
 33. The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1969.01.27. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 317.



it served. (34)

Peasants formed the bulk of the African population in South Africa and were fundamentally conservative and even reactionary. They tended to see their society as being of one fabric of which no part can be changed without affecting or changing it all. They were naturally distrustful of reformers and suspicious of those who promised them amelioration. As a result, revolutions, it has been argued, were quite difficult to form in South Africa (or elsewhere in Africa) despite the manifest and real grievances of most Africans. According to Feit "the stability of South African society and the slow change for the better in economic terms, even for Africans, have reinforced this conservatism, as has the power of the police." (35)

To the conservative nature of the peasant masses must be added the difficulty of the sabotage group to cause major damage to the state with the limited number of saboteurs and arms available to it. While it is so that the tactics and skills of the saboteurs or attack group developed and their attacks became more sophisticated and damaging as the struggle progressed, the ability of the state to meet the onslaught against it did not remain stagnant but effectively kept pace and sometimes even outsmarted the actions of the "enemy". In an industrialized society such as existed in South Africa in the 1960's, minor and sometimes even not so minor damage caused by sabotage could be easily absorbed, as long as the government could limit the frequency with which it took place. Thus, as the South African government through the various means and methods available to it, managed to increase its surveillance and to counter the activities of the revolutionaries, so the latter had to step up its activities and operational capability not only to keep pace with developments, but more so to maintain its status. This meant that a reasonably normal and stable order will have to be significantly disrupted before the masses, particularly the oppressed masses, will feel deprived and threatened enough to engage in collective mass behaviour such as that

34. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 318.

35. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 318.



hoped for by the ANC in its alliance with the SACP after 1961. Such a development, according to Feit, was not evident in South Africa in the 1960's. (36)

If one adds to this the ability of the South African government to maintain relative order and security, despite its unpopularity with the Black masses of South Africa, and the extensive system of informers and agents that served the needs of the security establishment, as well as the fact that it had been gathering information on people and organisations since the 1922 mine workers strike in which the SACP played a prominent role, it is not so difficult to understand why the ANC-SACP alliance failed to achieve their aims and objectives in 1963, and why virtually the entire revolutionary underground movement inside South Africa was destroyed by the state by the middle of the 1960's.

One further and final aspect which also played a significant role in the eventual destruction of the underground in the 1960's and which has been highlighted by Feit in his analyses, was the fact that the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto were so closely interwoven by 1963 that when the police infiltrated the one they automatically gained access to the other. This factor played an important role in the destruction of the internal ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto by 1965. (37)

Most of the theories and factors advanced by Feit in 1971 as having contributed or appeared to have contributed to the collapse of the insurrectionary movement in the mid-1960's were as appropriate to the armed struggle during the 1980's as it was then. In fact, the same problems that faced the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto in the 1960's were still part of the ANC's problems two decades later. If the South African government was considered powerful and difficult to subject in the 1960's, it had become even more so by the end of the 1980's, despite the unrest of the mid-1970's and that which followed in the mid-1980's. Throughout the years since the Sharpeville riots

36. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 318.

37. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, pp. 322 - 324.



the South African government had shown itself quite capable of maintaining the status quo and to meet whatever new challenge the ANC-SACP alliance could bring against it. Even the sanctions campaign that the ANC so effectively launched against South Africa in the 1980's was weathered relatively successfully by the State despite the many problems and hardships that resulted from it.

A second view as to the possible factors and conditions that inhibited the armed struggle in South Africa during the 1960's and which has many points in common with the views of Edward Feit, is that of J.B. Bell,⁽³⁸⁾ who produced a number of works in the early 1970's on revolutionary development and guerrilla warfare around the world. Two of these works that are of particular importance here are The Myth of the Guerrilla: Revolutionary Theory and Malpractice, published in 1971, and a nine page article on the same subject published in Africa Today in 1972 entitled, "The Future of Guerrilla Revolution in Southern Africa". In his review of the armed struggle in Southern Africa, including that waged by the ANC and Umkhonto, Bell argued that while most guerrilla or revolutionary leaders were not fools or knaves, their

persistance in a course evidently doomed to failure or at least a too long, perhaps indefinite, protracted action cannot be fully analysed in orthodox political or military terms. The whole complex of illusions, assumptions, and misinterpretation, wrapped in the seamless garment of theory, have become articles of faith. In recent years many men, in many places, outwardly sane, sensible, sound, hard-minded, and dedicated to victory have accepted this particular course, inexplicable in logic but highly satisfactory for the troubled and desperate. For them, the new myth [that of guerrilla revolution] ... must fulfill a need beyond the orthodox tactics and strategy of revolution. That to the blind or

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38. J.B. Bell is the author of the following publications: The Secret Army: The IRA, 1916 - 1970, (1971); The Myth of the Guerrilla: Revolutionary Theory and Malpractice, (1971); The Long War: Israel and the Arabs since 1946, (1969); The Future of Guerrilla Revolution in Southern Africa, (Africa Today 19, Winter 1972).



the uninitiated, the coldly pragmatic and the purely rational such a faith is based at worst on tenuous illusions and at best on optimism is immaterial to the believer. For him the myth has a comforting reality, fulfills a need in a world which denies his dearest hopes. What to others are illusions are varieties without which life to him would be a continual humiliation and despair. Within the context of the faith, the Myth cannot be seriously questioned, the need it fills is too great to accept alien analysis.⁽³⁹⁾

This myth, argued Bell, was based upon the belief or understanding that justice will ultimately triumph if the cause was right, and just. Thus, in terms of this belief, time was inevitably on the side of the just, and what was not achieved today will be achieved tomorrow. In other words, the armed struggle was a protracted one which in the long run will pay off dividends in favour of the revolutionaries. Closely associated with this part of the guerrilla myth was the fact that the enemy or the status quo was seen as a paper tiger, outwardly awesome, but inwardly weak and rent with dissention and contradiction. Thus, in time, victory will be the reward of the just. The exploiter must collapse, since guerrilla revolutions are inevitably successful. So goes the myth of the guerrilla and the revolutionary. Yet in South Africa the opposite took place between 1961 and 1988 with the capacity of the guerrilla to secure victory remaining visibly limited.⁽⁴⁰⁾

This brings into focus the strategic position and role of the masses, for the success of a revolutionary course was not the result of its own efforts but the degree of support it receives from the people, - the masses. The masses and their numbers were thus vital to any revolutionary development. "We are many and they are few," accurately summed up the position of the guerrilla/revolutionary in the armed struggle. Yet, according to Bell this was an illusion: masses were much of the time merely mouths to feed. As such they were not an asset but a responsibility. Until such time that they can be manipu-

39. Bell, The Myth of the Guerrilla, p. 245.

40. Bell, The Myth of the Guerrilla, pp. 246 - 249.



lated into reaching the sort of flashpoint that can start a revolution, the masses are probably the least revolutionary of the whole social strata in a particular society. Much of the time, they were mere collections of people busy with the minutiae of their overpowering important daily lives - which was mainly one of economic survival. People, argued Bell, have a reluctance to sacrifice their lives for a distant grail, a distaste for a duty seldom properly understood, and they rarely live a life so intolerable that death was preferable.⁽⁴¹⁾ To provide the masses with an adequate reason for revolutionary action, that is to persuade them to take up arms and to overthrow the existing order - something they have been fearful of up to that point - and to transform fear into an instrument of revolutionary action, has proven an awesome task throughout the course of human history, not only in Africa but also outside the continent. It can thus be argued that the odds against the revolutionary were daunting and inhibiting at virtually every step of the struggle. However, this does not mean that the masses cannot be sufficiently primed to acquire a revolutionary character. On the contrary, revolutions around the world have proven that it can be done - but that it was not an easy task, even under the most despotic and repressive of regimes. Most of the wretched of the earth, argued Bell, - the humiliated and the desperate - do not in fact seek recourse by revolutionary means. Most remain engrossed in their daily struggle for existence, in the frugal comforts of their home and family and in their own narrow but supremely important lives. They may well draw some small comfort, a measure of pride from the actions of the men in the hills, wrote Bell, but many still do not choose to abandon their own well-trodden path. On the other hand, there were those who simply cannot sit back and accept a quiet life. The will to fight humiliation, poverty, oppression and misery in general was too strong. Love of glory, hope of power and excess of pride, unexploited talents, ambition, a deep psychological drive, fate or a religious zeal all may be part of the driving force that made the revolutionary what he is. Yet such driving forces were not a general phenomenon, but were part and parcel of a highly individua-

41. Bell, The Myth of the Guerrilla, p. 249.



listic type of character. Revolutionaries, argued Bell, often perceive the world through a peculiar form of tunnel vision, blocking out all but two alternatives - liberty or death.⁽⁴²⁾

In elaborating on his theory of the myth of the guerrilla revolution, and its specific role in Southern Africa, Bell further argued that nowhere has the myth been more attractive than in Southern Africa, for here it embodies the aspirations of Black nationalism, and raised the hope that the poor and humiliated, by taking up arms against the established power, may free themselves from their racist oppressors and the scars of colonialism.⁽⁴³⁾

The power of the myth, Bell argued, has been such that it has inspired at times a most attenuated form of revolutionary strategy where all that needs to be done, was to ignore the disheartening odds and begin the struggle. But, said Bell, there were really no defeats for the strategy of guerrilla revolution in terms of the myth; there were only delays. The reality of the situation was however somewhat different from that of the myth. To begin with, the revolutionaries must have a cause sufficiently attractive to persuade men to risk their lives, but more important, that cause must truly have some possibility of success. As Feit has pointed out, many Blacks were prepared to be members of the ANC while the organisation was legal and the punishment of belonging to the organisation was not too severe. But the minute the ANC was forced underground and Umkhonto was set up in 1961, many - if not the majority - of the ANC members who joined the organisation in the pre-1960 period, chose to terminate or abandon their membership due to the dangers involved. Like Feit, Bell argued that by 1962 very few in the ANC were indeed prepared to make blood sacrifices solely in the name of justice.

It would thus appear, according to Bell, that while it may be easy to start a revolutionary insurrection and pursue it in an unjust society

42. Bell, The Myth of the Guerrilla, p. 251.

43. J.B. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution in Southern Africa, (Africa Today 19, 1972, p. 7).

filled with highly frustrated men, and while such action might be highly satisfying to the revolutionaries and their leaders, such strategies very seldom lead to victory, nor was it everywhere relevant.⁽⁴⁴⁾

There were two basic reasons for this. First, as a strategy, it has little appeal to those in a society sufficiently pliable to accommodate change through democratic means. Secondly, insurrection was not a viable option or alternative in a modern authoritarian state, which was able to make use of whatever weapons of oppression it may need to meet the challenge facing it.⁽⁴⁵⁾ In this, Bell's thinking was very similar to that of Feit who argued that in its attempt to maintain White unity and White minority rule in South Africa, the government effectively suppressed the insurgency and whatever revolutionary development that was in the offing; thereby systematically turning South Africa into a modern police state.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Moving away from Feit, Bell argued that two of the main reasons why revolutionary guerrilla warfare has largely failed in Africa, but particularly in South Africa, was that the revolutionary leadership had grossly misread their opponents, while at the same time overestimating their own importance and abilities.⁽⁴⁷⁾ According to Bell the first had proven to be a crucial factor in Africa's revolutionary development. The winds of change that were blowing throughout the African continent by the beginning of the 1960's and which were heralded in by Ghana's independence in 1957, were highly encouraging to the nationalist leaders of the ANC and the SACP in South Africa.

Similarly, in 1962, after years of bloody guerrilla warfare, the

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44. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, p. 8).
 45. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, p. 8).
 46. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, p. 324; Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, pp. 8, 10).
 47. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, pp. 8, 10).



Algerian nationalists had gained their country's independence from France, while in the Congo, the Belgians cracked at the first serious pressure. This created the unavoidable impression that the colonial powers in Africa were little more than paper tigers who lacked both stamina and conviction. In view of this it was reasonable for the revolutionary leadership in South Africa to anticipate that in time the colonial power of the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, and White minority rule in Rhodesia and South Africa, would also come tumbling down. They were right in their predictions about developments in the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, but were altogether wrong about South Africa; which unlike the former, was not a colonial power - even of the special kind as defined by the SACP in 1962. In terms of international law South Africa, in spite of its political philosophy, has been an independent sovereign state since 1910 and the country and its government has been recognised by the international community as such, despite the fact that many did not agree with the country's racial policies. South Africa has therefore never been a paper tiger that would collapse under or feel threatened by an insurrection of the type launched by the ANC-SACP alliance in the 1960's. Bell wrote:⁽⁴⁸⁾

In South Africa the ANC ... up to 1960 acted as if the Boers were Britons. The Afrikaner was, however, ruthless in the pursuit of his own dream [and] absolutely certain of his destiny. In addition the regime had to hand all the repressive machinery of a vast, wealthy, modern state to achieve that destiny.

Provoked finally to adopt absolute repression, the government in 1960 and 1961 smashed the ANC and PAC beyond salvage. In reaction to this development the ANC in 1961 adopted a policy of violence.

Yet even at this point given the repressive measures used by the government, argued Bell, the sabotage campaign decided upon by the ANC was little more than

48. Bell, *The Future of Guerrilla Revolution*, (*Africa Today* 19, 1972, p. 10).



an extension of the original error in a different form; for the Afrikaner was not going to disavow his mission when confronted by a few bombs; and the African organisations, small, on the run, harried by the security forces, were incapable of directing a real insurrection. ... the sabotage strategy could neither force change nor convert the regime to the wisdom of concession. (49)

As a result, he pointed out, after 1965 the only option left to the ANC and the SACP was to restructure Umkhonto we Sizwe outside the country and to wage revolutionary guerrilla warfare from exile. Thus, according to Bell, one of the major contributing factors to the failure of the ANC-SACP-led insurrection in the early 1960's has been the fact that the two organisations had grossly misjudged the South African government,

but particularly the Afrikaner's reaction to defiance; a disaster for the organisation, who failed to see that one of the vital preconditions for a guerrilla revolution did not exist in any case. The missing component was a general conviction on the part of the African masses that a victory was possible. The Marxists-Leninists in the movement may have had faith in the nature of history and the dedicated leaders of the defiance campaign faith in their people, but such faith was not returned. The Africans, sullen and humiliated, knew the Boer and his capacity. A resort to boycotts or strikes, massed defiance and monster meetings was possible, if permitted. When it was no longer permitted there was no rush to the streets but rather to sabotage, quiet arson in the night. ... To rise against the Afrikaner was the dream of the few. Those few had to keep silent or go into exile. By the end of the decade, the only action within the republic was a few leaflet bombs - and regular treason trials. Adamant, arrogant without compromise, the Afrikaner has constructed a closed society and an efficient state, invulnerable to guerrilla revolution. (50)

But if the revolutionary leaders in South Africa had underestimated

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49. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, pp. 9 - 10).
50. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, pp. 10 - 12).



the South African government, they had also grossly overestimated their own ability to force the government to mend its ways and to accept a democratic multi-racial South Africa. With several exceptions, most of the new African regimes limited their assistance to rhetoric and promises. A good example of this was the sums of money that was promised to the ANC and Umkhonto by a number of African states in 1962. In his opening address at the trial of Nelson Mandela and other members of the NHC of Umkhonto in 1963, Dr. Percy Yutar stated that

large sums of money, varying from R4 000 to R240 000 were promised, accepted and received from such sympathisers and supporters, not only from within South Africa, but also from sympathisers and supporters in several African states such as Algeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria and Tunisia, and also from sympathisers and supporters in other countries.⁽⁵¹⁾

Exactly how much of these promised amounts ever reached the ANC and Umkhonto in the 1960's was never revealed. Indications are that only a very small amount was ever received by the ANC in exile and an even smaller amount by its internal structure and organisation inside South Africa. Most of Africa's newly-independent states were simply too poor to make any major contributions to the ANC and Umkhonto in the early 1960's. As a result much of the money pledged to the latter organisations remained paper pledges.

Bell further argued that while the OAU and the African states' spasmodic contributions of goodwill were sufficient to keep the gears from grinding, allies outside Africa who also contributed to the armed struggle in South Africa, often created more confusion than comfort in their support. More often than not, Bell alleged, the purpose of Soviet support for the armed struggle can be seen as a tactical political manoeuvre to frustrate Chinese ambitions in Africa, while the offers of arms were often made to create a faction

51. Supreme Court, Transvaal Division, Case 65/64, The State against N. Mandela and others, Opening Address Dr. P. Yutar, p. 17.



and embarrass still another African ally.⁽⁵²⁾ It was common knowledge, he continued, that the PAC was largely a recipient of Chinese arms and financial support whereas the ANC received most of its arms and moral support from the Soviet Union and its allies. On occasion Umkhonto cadres were sent to China for military and political training, yet these were more the exception than the rule. Bell went on to point out that, added to the inherent schismatic inclinations of revolutionary movements, not to mention already divided organisations, the competition, not limited to the Socialist Bloc, caused serious trouble.

In the long run, the aid from outside South Africa probably did more harm than good. At least the support of international opinion, the resolutions at the United Nations, the enthusiasm of the Tri-continental delegates, the structural harm although they may have postponed the realization that the real campaign would be won in the bush
... (53)

Add to this the tactical errors such as that made by the ANC and Umkhonto cadres in Rhodesia in 1967, the splits and betrayals, not to mention corruption and the other ills that normally accompany an underground struggle, then one has a reasonably accurate picture as to why the armed struggle failed in South Africa. According to Bell:

to enter the struggle over-confident is not a crucial miscalculation, [but] to begin by misreading the opponent and thus the prospect of applying guerrilla revolutionary strategy can be, - particularly as was largely the case, if the guerrilla movement had limitations that no one could see. (54)

A third opinion as to the reasons for the failure of the 1960's insurgency in South Africa was offered by Lewis H. Gann,⁽⁵⁵⁾ a

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52. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, p.11).
 53. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, pp. 11 - 12).
 54. Bell, The Future of Guerrilla Revolution, (Africa Today 19, 1972, p. 12).
 55. L.H. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, pp. 15 - 19).



prominent American scholar of African history. According to Gann, the development of the armed struggle in South Africa in the 1960's shared many of the problems that faced nationalist liberation movements in other parts of Africa. The ANC in South Africa, like the liberation movements in Southern Rhodesia, for instance, was being constantly frustrated by the activities of people who were willing to inform on it, thereby aiding the counter-insurgency operations of the police. It was through the help of such an informer that the police managed to gain access to the combined underground headquarters of the ANC and the SACP in Rivonia in 1963. Without the valuable help of this particular informer it is doubtful whether they would have managed to destroy the underground by the mid-1960's. But more important, argued Gann, was the fact that the armed struggle in the 1960's centred mainly on sabotage which "is subject to extraordinary weaknesses by its very nature." He went on to point out that "The civilian population at large is likely to be alienated by the disruption of essential services. Moreover, hungry and homeless people become more, not less, dependent on government relief."⁽⁵⁶⁾

But even more significant, continued Gann, was the fact that while a modern industrial economy can easily be hampered by sabotage, it cannot be put out of action or destroyed by such activity alone.

Another factor, according to Gann, that helped to inhibit guerrilla activity in South Africa in the 1960's and 1970's, was the pass laws. The strict application of these laws prevented underground fighters of the ANC and Umkhonto from moving around the country undetected. Security inside South Africa had always been a major problem for the ANC; partly because of poor discipline and the willingness of some people to inform on the organisation, and partly because of the organisation's preoccupation with publicising its activities.

56. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 15).



Gann stated that:

The liberation groups in southern Africa face a cohesive and self-confident ruling class; the very structure of the southern African ethnic hierarchy stands in the way of successful attempts at infiltrating the army, the administration and the security services. The government is better informed than its opponents, many of whom are now exiles with all the exiles' customary misconceptions about their former homes. Since the South African government is neither inefficient nor corrupt, partisans [here] lack the advantages of guerrillas in so many other parts of the world, where resistance fighters can bribe key officials, place their own men in sensitive positions and extract intelligence from likely or unlikely sources. (57)

But what was more, argued Gann, armed saboteurs were faced with the additional problem of acquiring weapons, which could not easily be purchased in southern Africa. All assault weapons had to be supplied from abroad or by friendly African governments, which, once it became known as a source of supply, ran the risk of retaliatory action from the South African government. Weapons could be brought into the country by two methods - by submarine or by couriers across the border; but both these methods proved problematic over the years due to the vigilance of the South African security establishment. Even if these problems were overcome, there remained the problem of terrain, which in South Africa was not at all suitable for guerrilla warfare. While there are several areas in South Africa which can be considered rough and inhospitable, they did not form contiguous and inaccessible bases, nor were there dense jungles, as was the case in Guinea-Bissau, to provide guerrilla armies with natural cover. Both the rural and urban areas of South Africa were of such a developed nature and the country's communications network so developed, that it was almost impossible for any revolutionary force to assemble a guerrilla army in secret or to train guerrilla cadres for any length of time without eventually attracting attention. There was simply no

57. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 16).



part of South Africa over which the government and the security forces did not have effective control.⁽⁵⁸⁾ While it is true that sprawling urban complexes such as Soweto near Johannesburg can provide guerrillas with a relative degree of cover for some time, the very nature of these areas, such as their orderly layout and the fact that they can be effectively sealed off in a very short time by the security forces for operational work, make it highly dangerous for any guerrilla or saboteur to remain in them for too long. There was thus none of the hostile terrain or the "urban jungles" that formed such an important part of the liberation forces' cover and strategy in for instance the Algerian liberation struggle in the 1950's.⁽⁵⁹⁾

To these unfavourable conditions could also be added the difficulty of moving guerrillas and recruits in and out of the country. With only one or two major access routes, such as that through Swaziland and the other through Botswana, available to the insurgents, and with these routes constantly being watched by the South African security forces, the ANC had great difficulty in bringing trained guerrillas into the country without running into the security forces at some or other stage of the operation. Even with the major influx of recruits after 1976 the ANC was still unable to return large consignments of guerrillas to the country, because the police maintained a tight watch on every possible access route in and out of the country.

In view of these inhibiting factors it had been argued that there was little hope of a revolutionary situation or a full-scale revolutionary guerrilla war developing inside South Africa, despite the optimism of the underground leadership that they could bring this about. As long as the South African government remained in power, argued Gann, had the support of the majority of the White voters in the country and could maintain its security apparatus, the ANC-SACP alliance, with the meagre resources available to them, had little

58. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 16).

59. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, pp. 16 - 17).

chance of escalating the armed struggle into a full-scale guerrilla war.

For the ANC and Umkhonto to expand the armed struggle inside South Africa they would have had to rebuild their limited underground structures to the point where they could effectively challenge the existing order. Even more important, they would have had to set up structures that would have been able to effectively parallel the South African government's intelligence network, something Gann believed was beyond the grasp of the ANC-SACP alliance in the 1970's.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Gann further argued that the chances for a revolution were always best in a society or environment where the ruling class was divided, dispirited and corrupt. Preferably, it should have become incapable of further developing the country's resources; and the political institutions that sustain the government should have deteriorated to the point where it serves as a brake on economic expansion. Similarly, the coercive machinery of the state, the army, and the police should be easily penetrable by the underground. Better still, argued Gann, the military forces should have suffered crushing defeats in a foreign war, while the opposition should be united and guided by a determined and cohesive party. Unfortunately for the ANC-SACP alliance, none of these conditions were present in South Africa in the 1960's and 1970's. The most radical European dissidents were mainly to be found in the English universities and Churches around the country. "... their professional aspirations and styles of life in themselves prevent them from penetrating the army, the administration and the police," claimed Gann.⁽⁶¹⁾

On the role of riot and strike action as an instrument in the development of a revolutionary situation, Gann argued that the

60. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 17).

61. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 17).



success of these tools depends largely on the nature and strength of the socio-political structure against which it takes place as well as the strength of the conscience-vote. If the latter is weak and ill-defined it can inhibit the use of riots as an effective political weapon. In South Africa, argued Gann, the police were not merely permitted, but expected, to use firearms when needed to suppress illegal rioting. In addition, the separation of the White and Black population groups from one another and the fact that Whites were heavily armed - as opposed to Blacks who were mostly unarmed - made it unlikely that even under the most severe conditions a riot or unrest situation could spill into a White urban area. In fact, the outbreak of violence may, as has been the case in the past, strengthen the hands of the government by cementing White unity across class lines while at the same time generating support for its counter-insurgency methods and actions, whatever they may be. According to Gann, commotions confined to African townships were liable to destroy public facilities set aside for the use of Africans; hence violence may have the unanticipated result of opening new rifts within Black society. But perhaps even more important was the fact that despite the roles played by the ANC, the PAC, and the SACP, Blacks in South Africa in general lacked a united leadership. Political fragmentation made it difficult for any revolutionary development to reach maturity. Thus, while there was a good deal of unrest and discontent among South Africa's Black masses in the 1960's and early 1970's, due to factors such as rising inflation, unemployment, rising cost of living and increased crime, particularly in the Black townships, those developments were insufficient to generate the sort of atmosphere that would be conducive to a revolution. Moreover, even if a revolutionary situation could be achieved, the masses had to be armed and organised; something neither the ANC nor the SACP could do in these years. "Militants," wrote Gann,⁽⁶²⁾ "cannot easily get arms, and the masses are unwilling to rise at the sound of the clarion for the price of

62. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 17).



failure is too high and the chance for success too small."⁽⁶³⁾

While it is true that the rapid industrialization of South Africa in the late 1960's and early 1970's had brought about a greater militancy among Black workers, its effects were not only negative. It also brought some real benefits to Africans in that it provided new labour opportunities as well as new and improved housing to thousands more, even if this was on an inadequate scale. Gann argued:

Moreover, the uneven impact of capitalist development has created vast regional differences, as well as new economic lines. There are cleavages between migrant and established African workers, between employed and unemployed, between those with vested interest in separate development and those without such a stake. The hope of establishing a successful non-European unity movement therefore, seems poor ...⁽⁶⁴⁾

Having said this, Gann went on to say that, while these conditions were prevalent in the 1960's and early 1970's, it was not inconceivable that strikes and industrial actions could play an increasingly important role in future South African politics, and that strike action could become more common as the African worker took an increasingly important part in industry and advanced into more skilled positions. But, argued Gann, industrial action cannot easily be turned into an insurrectionary weapon. By the beginning of the 1970's, for instance, South Africa's Black labour force was still politically too isolated, too heterogenous in character and too poorly organised, if not occupationally unstable to stage the type of major strike action that could threaten the status quo in South Africa. An important factor that should be kept in mind when examining industrial action as a political weapon, was the

63. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 18).

64. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 18).



availability of a potentially massive labour reservoir just across the country's borders in neighbouring Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique and Botswana. Until this potential labour reserve had been "neutralised", the strike organiser's task in South Africa remained a daunting one. Gann argued:

The militant White South African opposition does not know how to appeal to skilled White workers, technicians and foremen, whose cooperation would be essential for successful industrial warfare. Traditionally, the South African [National] Congress and its allies have come mainly from the ranks of professional men and white collar workers, people not particularly well qualified either to run or wreck an industrial power.⁽⁶⁵⁾

On the point of possible outside military intervention in South Africa in support of the ANC-SACP-led armed struggle, Gann argued that there was little hope of that ever coming about. In theory, the member countries of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) could muster in terms of sheer numbers a massive military force against South Africa. In practice however, they were too poorly trained, too poorly equipped and too disunited to be of any real threat to South Africa. Although the idea and desire for a Pan-African military force had been repeatedly raised at OAU meetings, most of the organisation's member countries were simply too poor to make any real material and financial contribution to such an African army. What is more, the members of the OAU lacked a common high command, not to mention a common tactical doctrine and a common staff organisation to bring about such an invasion of South Africa. In contrast to this South Africa has a highly mobile, well trained and sophisticated army that could strike with devastating power.⁽⁶⁶⁾

A fourth assessment of the armed struggle and the factors inhibiting its development in South Africa that was made in the early 1970's, was that by Sheridan Johns in his "Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare -

65. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, pp. 18 - 19).

66. Gann, No hope for violent liberation, (Africa Report 17, February 1972, p. 19).



A South African Case Study".⁽⁶⁷⁾ In reviewing the history of the armed struggle in South Africa and the problems that faced it over the first ten years, Johns, who is an American political scientist, argued that one of the biggest mistakes made by the ANC-SACP leadership, and which has been acknowledged by them, was that they under-estimated the "ruthless determination" of the South African government to crush the underground. Johns argued that it was generally conceded by most, including the ANC, that the cadres of the ANC and Umkhonto were ill-prepared for the situation of illegality it had to face in the 1960's.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In support of his statement, Johns quoted as follows from a 1972 edition of Sechaba:

Still suffering from the habit of semi-legal days prior to the banning of the movement we have not yet devised a tight conspiratorial method of work which made it extremely difficult for people to know more than they were entitled to. The looseness in the machinery of the organisation made betrayal by the weak and the provocateurs easy. Those who broke down were able to betray many individuals. Notorious traitors emerged who enthusiastically betrayed their former comrades. The most serious blow was the discovery of the headquarters of the High Command of M.K. [Umkhonto] in Rivonia. The enemy was thus able to smash the very heart of the organisation ...⁽⁶⁹⁾

Forced to seek a position in exile for the liberation struggle in South Africa, the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto were faced with three major problems, namely environmental, existential and technical.⁽⁷⁰⁾ With their organisational base destroyed inside South Africa, the ANC's external mission faced distinctive problems in establishing effective bases outside the country. The ability of the organisation to maintain its effectiveness and momentum inside

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67. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 267 - 303).
 68. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 275).
 69. Sechaba, December 1971 - January 1972, p. 14 as quoted in Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 275).
 70. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 275).

South Africa became increasingly difficult with time as its links with South Africa became attenuated, and its leaders and cadres became increasingly preoccupied with the problems of maintaining themselves and their organisation in exile and the changing requirements forced upon them, namely to initiate and direct the armed struggle inside South Africa.⁽⁷¹⁾ According to Johns, these conditions were to a large degree responsible for the decline in ANC and Umkhonto activity inside South Africa after 1965. Although the ANC and the armed struggle in South Africa were generally received in a favourable manner by most African nations and leaders there were those who did not appreciate the ANC's close co-operation with the SACP which, they felt, compromised the nationalist credentials of the ANC and its struggle in South Africa. As a result, some African governments, notably among them Ghana, refused to accept non-African military trainees which, of course, affected the composition and position of Umkhonto whose members were predominantly communist. In Ghana, for instance, which served as a magnet for African revolutionaries in the early 1960's, the ANC encountered scepticism and hostility from Nkrumah's government who did not accept the ANC's multi-racial and largely non-Pan African stand. Although the formation of the OAU and its Liberation Committee introduced a new era in African unity and the struggle against racial discrimination in Africa, the ANC was not the only organisation competing for the new organisation's support. As only one of many liberation organisations operating in Southern Africa at the time, the ANC was forced to compete with its rivals for both material and moral support. This had the result, inter alia, that within the larger councils of the OAU, the ANC had to lobby regularly not only to get general resolutions of opposition to apartheid translated into more concrete commitments of support, but also had to ensure that the composition and mandate of the Liberation Committee were congenial to ANC interests.⁽⁷²⁾ But, continued Johns, "perhaps even greater

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71. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 275).
72. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 277).



efforts have been consumed in direct negotiations with the Liberation Committee regarding the terms of its support and the allocation of funds". Yet despite these efforts the returns have been uneven and mostly disappointing.⁽⁷³⁾

Johns is thus in general agreement with Bell and Gann that the OAU in terms of financial and material aid, was of little help to the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto in the 1960's and 1970's. The organisation was too bankrupt to give any real financial aid, let alone military support, to the ANC and the SACP in their armed struggle in South Africa. Whatever real support the organisation received from the OAU was mostly of a moral and verbal nature. As a result, the ANC like many other national liberation movements in the 1960's, directly approached a number of African states such as the United Arab Republic, Zambia, Algeria and Tanzania for financial and material (military) aid. Undoubtedly, argued Johns, the establishment and maintenance of close relations with these African states and the setting up of bases in these countries was a time-consuming exercise. It involved lengthy negotiations with the governments in question in order to determine and define the terms under which the ANC and Umkhonto could import arms, train its cadres, conduct military exercises and organise its resources for the resumption of the armed struggle in South Africa. Thus, Johns continued, the necessities of infra-African diplomacy placed great demands upon ANC personnel and resources.⁽⁷⁴⁾

Another factor, according to Johns, that inhibited the ANC from resuming the armed struggle in South Africa in the late 1960's, was the organisation's close relationship with the underground SACP and the communist world in general. Although the ANC's close relationship with the SACP, on the one hand, enabled it to gain access to communist arms and other forms of military aid for Umkhonto that would otherwise not have been as readily available to it, its association with the SACP and communism has also embroiled it in the

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73. Johns, *Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare*, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 278 - 279).
74. Johns, *Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare*, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 278 - 279).



dispute between the Soviet Union and China since the 1960's. Johns alleged that while the expanding links with the Soviet Union and its Eastern European supporters sustained a flow of vital material support from the most affluent section of the communist Bloc, it had also provoked some serious contention within the ranks of the ANC itself. It provided an easy target for those within the ANC and Umkhonto who disagreed with the role of the communists in the liberation movement. (75)

A further factor that helped to retard the armed struggle in the early 1960's was the fact that while the ANC and Umkhonto found increasing support for the armed struggle among groups and individuals both inside and outside South Africa, the rising chorus of world-wide condemnation of South Africa's apartheid policies did not always translate itself into appreciable pressure upon the country's major economic partners, nor did it move the western powers, who "continued to maintain correct relations with a regime whose racial policies they professed to abhor. Although the ANC could demonstrate that it had supporters and sympathisers throughout the world, it could find little evidence that their moral stance against apartheid had moved South Africa's rulers," argued Johns. (76)

Johns further claimed that:

While the difficulties of coping with an unfamiliar external environment, and generating effective pressure upon Pretoria, brought uneven success, the problems of maintaining cohesion in exile and organising for a return to salient activity within South Africa proved far more intractable. The ANC (and its rivals) face a determined foe which commands the most powerful state apparatus and the strongest and most sophisticated economy on the African continent. Its determination is immeasurably stiffened by

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75. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 279).
76. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 279).

the fact that for the majority of White South Africans there is no "mother country" to which they could flee; the southern tip of Africa is their only home.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Moreover, these disadvantages which have always confronted African opposition in South Africa, have been compounded by the distinctive features of the ANC's exile existence. According to Johns, perhaps one of the most inhibiting factors influencing the armed struggle in South Africa in the early 1970's was the fact that, unlike all other southern African liberation movements at the time, the ANC had no convenient potential sanctuary in a friendly independent state contiguous to South Africa. An equally serious blow to the ANC's ability to resume the armed struggle in South Africa was the rapid disintegration by 1969 of its ZAPU ally. Consequently, argued Johns, with the final collapse of ZAPU in early 1970, the ANC quietly dropped its insistence on the correctness and necessity of the ANC-ZAPU alliance, and shifted its attention to other means for the return of Umkhonto's cadres to South Africa. In addition, the combined ANC-ZAPU incursions into Rhodesia between 1967 and 1968 had also revealed that without internal organisation, mass mobilisation and mass support, armed activity becomes strangulated.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Thus, according to Johns, the problems that confronted the ANC-SACP alliance in the 1970's were not the mobilisation of support from outside South Africa, but the establishment of an effective base inside the country. Johns wrote:

Although the accelerated implementation of apartheid has brought new misery to thousands of non-Whites, ... among the urban African population there is little evidence that any ANC underground organisation has been able to capitalise upon these events to organise protests against government actions.

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77. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 279).
78. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 290 - 291). See also The African Communist 47, Fourth Quarter, 1971, p. 30.



This inability of the ANC to take full advantage of the changed circumstances within South Africa, he pointed out, was implicitly recognised by the organisation's exile leaders in Lusaka, who were becoming increasingly concerned that despite the growing discontent and protest inside South Africa, the organisation was being isolated from these developments.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The ANC leadership was particularly concerned at being isolated from the new voices of protest in the country such as that of the student-led Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Johns argued:

In response to events within South Africa, the ANC has sought to link itself with the signs of new Black assertiveness lest the direction of protest slip further away from its hands. In a spate of recent analyses on the difficulties and prospects of guerrilla warfare, he pointed out, there is virtually unanimous agreement that earlier efforts to mount an armed struggle in South Africa were doomed to failure, and that future efforts have little chance of success in the short, if not in the long, run.⁽⁸⁰⁾

The reasons for this state of affairs were numerous. According to Felt, whose observations were the first to be examined in this chapter, factors ranging from the ideological to organisational, to poor security and leadership contributed to the failure of the 1960's insurgency in South Africa. Among these Felt however singled out the organisational weakness of the ANC-SACP alliance, and the organisational strength of the South African government, to be the main factors inhibiting the success of the 1961 insurgency. He also pointed out that the ANC's organisational weakness was compounded by the degree of overlapping that had come to exist between the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto. As a result of the close relationship between the three organisations the police only had to infiltrate one to get to the leaders of the other, which was exactly what happened between 1961 and 1965 and which led to the demise of the underground movement

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79. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 293 - 294).
80. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, pp. 294 - 295).



inside South Africa. In such a set-up the protection offered by a cell-based organisational structure was simply not enough, something the ANC-SACP alliance found out to their disadvantage in 1963.

Bell and Gann on the other hand, found the most salient shortcomings or problems facing the revolutionary struggle in South Africa, to be the absence of the very special conditions in which armed revolution had succeeded elsewhere, and the myth and miscalculations that often accompany revolutionary theory and struggle. According to Bell, the ANC-SACP alliance had misled themselves by over-estimating their own strength and under-estimating the power and determination of the South African government. Both Bell and Gann thus agreed that until such time that conditions changed in favour of the revolutionary leaders, there was little hope of successful armed struggle in South Africa.

Johns on the contrary, argued that perhaps the biggest obstacle to revolutionary armed struggle in South Africa, had been the destruction of the internal underground in 1963 and the fact that the ANC-SACP alliance had to conduct their operation from exile. The latter point in particular and the many problems that the organisation experienced in establishing itself in exile, not to mention the fact that it had to compete with other liberation organisations for financial and material support, made it difficult for the ANC and Umkhonto to resume the armed struggle in South Africa between 1965 and 1976.

Thus, although the four analyses examined so far differed in their assessment of the factors that most inhibited the armed struggle in South Africa, they did agree that the overwhelming political, economic and military might of the South African government, its extensive legal and security machinery, and the support it received for its actions and policies from the White voters had been crucial factors in the State's ability to deal with the insurgency action against it. They were also in broad agreement on the material weakness of the ANC-SACP alliance; its lack of effective organisation; its underestimation of the determination and ability



of the South African government and the White population in general, to resist its policies, as well as the imperfect cohesion in the ranks of the liberation movement itself as factors inhibiting the armed struggle in South Africa. They also agreed that the configuration of power in the international arena was in favour of the South African government despite its apartheid policies and that this position was unlikely to shift.⁽⁸¹⁾

Although the views and opinions expressed so far are significant in that they help to explain why the armed struggle failed in the 1960's and why the ANC-SACP alliance was unable to resume the initiative inside South Africa in the early 1970's, they were however largely the views of people outside the liberation movement. This leaves the views of people who were actively involved in the armed struggle to be examined.

Benjamin Turok, who was National Secretary of the Congress of Democrats (COD) in the 1950's and an active member of the underground and Umkhonto until he was arrested and sentenced in 1962, produced a booklet in 1974, entitled, Strategic Problems in South Africa's Liberation Struggle⁽⁸²⁾ in which he examined the non-violent mass action of the 1950's; the transfer to violence which led to the formation of Umkhonto and the beginning of the armed struggle in 1961, and some of the major factors that in his opinion, inhibited the development of the armed struggle from a campaign of sabotage to a full-scale revolutionary struggle. Turok came to the conclusion that while there could be little doubt that the non-violent campaigns of the 1950's politicised large numbers of oppressed people, particularly those in the urban areas, and increased support for the ANC and the Congress Alliance, the end of the decade saw a definite decline in mass support for the ANC's non-violent campaigns. This was particularly noticeable after the organisation's banning in 1960. The effect of this, he argued, was that the ANC in its drift towards a

81. Johns, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare, (The Journal of Modern African Studies 11 (2), 1973, p. 295).

82. B. Turok, Strategic Problems in South Africa's Liberation Struggle: A Critical Analysis, pp. 1 - 58.



policy of armed struggle and an underground existence, became isolated from the mainstream of Black political thinking. As a result, the sabotage campaign, while welcomed by many Blacks, failed to mobilize or politicise the masses, who were in the main caught by surprise. Turok wrote:

The Black population welcomed the actions but showed little willingness to undertake similar acts spontaneously when called on to do so. This is hard to explain but it may be that the techniques used were too strange and difficult. But it is also likely that they had not been shown how isolated acts of sabotage were relevant to bringing about the downfall of the government. Sabotage remained the weapon of an elite corps in the liberation movement. As a consequence, sabotage had the effect of isolating the organized movement from the mass who felt unable to join in this new phase or even to defend the actionists when they were seized.⁽⁸³⁾

Turok further pointed out that the liberation movement was completely unprepared to undertake a campaign of armed struggle in 1961. He wrote:

Having talked of fascism for a decade and more, the movement was nevertheless surprised when the police behaved like fascists. ...Looked at as a single phase of the struggle it must be said that the sabotage campaign was abortive. While most members of the liberation movement would agree that the turn to violence was necessary and historically correct, the actual form of the campaign led down the road to disaster.... It has been claimed that sabotage lifted the psychological shackles of legalism and of respect for White authority and that if the movement had not taken these steps it would not have survived politically [yet] in later years explanations for the setbacks suffered included 'mistakes or insufficient vigilance and inadequate organisation' and 'security lapses'.⁽⁸⁴⁾

Finally, Turok pointed out, what is important is that the sabotage campaign failed on the main count, in that it did not raise the level

83. Turok, Strategic Problems, pp. 36, 45.

84. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 45.

of action of the masses themselves. Thus, although it seemed that the masses supported and welcomed the resort to violence, they could find no way of joining in and of expressing their support. They were, Turok pointed out, "left on the threshold, frustrated bystanders of a battle being waged on their behalf".⁽⁸⁵⁾

Like Bell and Gann in their analyses, Turok also argued that the ANC and the SACP totally underestimated the ability and will of the South African government to resist an insurrectionary development and to mount the necessary measures to defeat it. The important lesson here, argued Turok, was that there can be no move towards armed struggle until such time that a proper line of defence and retreat had been prepared. The line of defence, Turok pointed out, laid in organisational arrangements which ensure that a leak to the police does not lead to the destruction of the organisation. The line of retreat on the other hand refers to the establishment of an adequate underground network of hiding places and routes for flight over nearby borders. "It has become all too clear that without sound organisation at home no developments abroad can really expect to lead to success, not least because of the absence of a friendly border."⁽⁸⁶⁾

To this can be added the absence of suitable terrain inside South Africa for guerrilla warfare as well as the non-availability of friendly neighbouring countries from which insurgents could operate without much interruption. Unfortunately for the ANC and the SACP, Turok argued, South Africa was geographically and politically isolated from friendly, pro-ANC African countries to the north by the buffer territories of Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique, South West Africa and Rhodesia. Although most of these latter countries, with perhaps the exception of South West Africa, would have liked to provide the ANC and Umkhonto with base facilities and have on occasion done so before 1975, they were generally too

85. Turok, Strategic Problems, pp. 45 - 46.

86. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 49.



dependent on South Africa for their economic survival to make this official policy.⁽⁸⁷⁾

South Africa had sufficient military power to launch cross-border strikes at ANC and Umkhonto bases whenever it wanted and this served as a strong deterrent, particularly to the governments of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to officially deny the ANC bases in these countries. Turok made it clear that to start armed conflict without the availability of nearby and friendly borders and safe supply routes, not to mention the ability to receive an uninterrupted supply of new recruits all the time, was to court almost certain disaster. One had only to consider the importance of the North for South Vietnam, of China and the USSR for North Korea in the Korean War, of Tanzania and Zambia for Frelimo and the MPLA, of Guinea for PAIGC, of Tunisia for Algeria, he pointed out, to realise that this was a crucial factor in the conduct of any protracted armed struggle.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The essential requirements for a protracted guerrilla action were and would always be sufficient local support, space for mobility, across the border sanctuaries and relatively safe supply lines for both men and materials. It has often been said, Turok pointed out, that Southern Africa was a single theater of struggle, with the successes of the armed struggle in the countries to the north, but more specifically in the neighbouring states of Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia, serving as an important psychological incentive, yet ... "no movement can predicate the stepping up of its struggle at home on successes elsewhere, particularly when these struggles are themselves likely to develop slowly and distances to the south are great."⁽⁸⁹⁾

Turok also had some criticisms to level at the ANC leadership in exile. He pointed out that although a great deal of propaganda work was done by the Mission in Exile during the 1960's, the feeling was that this was done at the cost of the armed struggle back home. There was always the danger, he argued, that in the hustle of

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87. Turok, Strategic Problems, pp. 49 - 50.
88. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 50.
89. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 51.

international activity and lobbying, leaders far removed from home might become isolated from events back home. In the final analysis Turok wrote, "the only justification for an external organisation of South African freedom fighters lies in the work they do for the struggle at home and in preparing for their own return."⁽⁹⁰⁾

Turok added that there had also been those who blamed the ANC's poor performance on an ageing leadership that had been out of the country too long. Others pointed to the vast bureaucratic structures that developed in exile and with which many of the exile leaders grew comfortable over the years. In his opinion no one argued against or questioned the importance of political and solidarity work but it could easily become a bottomless pit for financial resources and manpower. Year upon year, he pointed out, more people were needed for administrative work which meant that the ANC's civilian structure outgrew its military structure to the point where the latter could not perform its functions properly. As such the movement in exile was tied down with work which was only partially beneficial to the struggle at home. Turok drew a comparison between this development in the ANC and what transpired elsewhere in Africa and pointed out that in the case of both the MPLA movement in Angola and Frelimo in Mozambique, the civilian structures of these organisations were eventually disbanded in favour of a military arrangement with guerrilla training being made compulsory for everyone involved in the organisations.⁽⁹¹⁾ Compulsory military training for ANC-SACP members was only introduced in 1985.

In its attempts to resume the armed struggle inside South Africa, Turok alleged, the ANC, but particularly the Revolutionary Council which was set up in 1969 to guide Umkhonto, had great difficulty in re-establishing a sound foothold inside the country. One of the main reasons for this, according to Turok, was the difficulty of concealing activists inside the country whether it was in the urban or the

90. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 52.

91. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 52.



rural areas. Both these areas - and this was in stark contrast to conditions elsewhere in Africa - were relatively unsuitable for guerrilla warfare and revolutionary activities. In the cities the density of the population and anonymity provided by it was a distinct advantage to the revolutionary, but the concentrated presence of the police and their infrastructure of informers as well as the regular pass raids conducted by them, made it very difficult for an activist to remain hidden for too long. In the countryside on the other hand, the sparse population and the more relaxed attitude of the local police forces made it highly suitable for guerrillas to hide out. This advantage was, however, offset by the presence there too of agents and informers but even more so by the presence of local government agencies and in the case of the independent homelands by the counter-insurgency activities of their administrations.⁽⁹²⁾

Another factor according to Turok that also appeared to have inhibited the resumption of the armed struggle inside South Africa during the first half of the 1970's was the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The formation of the BCM at the end of the 1960's and its strong emphasis on Black power and African unity presented, according to Turok, the first real challenge to the ANC and its multi-racial policies inside South Africa since the collapse of the internal phase of the armed struggle in the mid-1960's.⁽⁹³⁾ However, in 1978 the ANC President, Oliver Tambo, pointed out in an interview with the American newsheet The Black Scholar that Black Consciousness was not a movement like the ANC but merely a phase in the armed struggle. "It is not outside the struggle for human rights - on the contrary - it grows into the mainstream which has been set by the African National Congress."⁽⁹⁴⁾ This statement of confidence it is important to note, was made in 1978, at a time when the

92. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 53.

93. Turok, Strategic Problems, p. 54. See also E. Harsch, ANC Challenges Apartheid Regime, (Intercontinental Press, 1983.07.25, p. 418).

94. The Black Scholar Interviews Oliver Tambo, (The Black Scholar 9, January/February 1978, pp. 32 - 33).

ranks of the ANC and Umkhonto had been filled with new recruits and a year after the government had banned the Black Consciousness Movement. This effectively left the way wide open thus for the ANC-SACP alliance to re-establish their presence and influence inside South Africa. The sudden influx of new recruits after 1976 also enabled the ANC to strengthen Umkhonto and to allow the organisation to accelerate its armed incursions into the country. Consequently, between 1976 and the end of the 1970's the ANC and Umkhonto gradually stepped up their activities inside South Africa in preparation for the wave of attacks that were to follow in the early 1980's.

Conditions both inside and outside South Africa after 1975 were thus generally in favour of the ANC-SACP alliance, not only for resuming the armed struggle but for actually escalating it into a full-scale revolutionary guerrilla war. The wave of attacks that hit the country in the early 1980's and the sophisticated nature of these attacks led many observers to believe that the ANC-SACP alliance had finally attained the ability and necessary skills to escalate the armed struggle into a major guerrilla war. Yet a mere three years later those same observers had to admit that despite the favourable conditions which faced the ANC-SACP alliance since the mid-1970's the ANC and Umkhonto were having difficulty in advancing the armed struggle inside South Africa. Having stated in 1981 that since June 1976, ('95') ... "Umkhonto we Sizwe was able to capitalise on the political exhilaration which was generated by the disturbances themselves in mounting an at times spectacular campaign of sabotage and guerilla warfare ... [and that] all the indications are that it will develop into a full-scale revolutionary war", Tom Lodge, who has always been highly sympathetic to the aims and objectives of the ANC-SACP alliance, had to admit a mere two years later in 1984 that "Since the end of 1982, while the ANC has succeeded in maintaining the level of military operations, the possibility of it being able to advance to a more ambitious stage of guerrilla-warfare has begun to

95. Lodge, The ANC Resurgence 1976 - 1981, (Reality 14 (2), March 1982, p. 1).



seem increasingly remote." (96)

What brought about this swing in opinion? According to Lodge two factors were responsible for this; the first being the South African government's increasingly aggressive regional policies, and the second the fact that the indifference or hostility of certain Western governments was only partially compensated for by the degree of sympathy shown towards the ANC-SACP alliance in Communist China and Australia. (97)

But even more important, according to Lodge, (98) was the fact that Mozambique which became a major operational base for Umkhonto after 1976, proved to be less suitable than what the liberation alliance had hoped for. With its territory in full striking distance of the South African Defence Force the latter launched a number of lightning raids against ANC and Umkhonto bases and operational facilities in and around Maputo between 1981 and 1983. As a result of these attacks and the implications of the Nkomati Accord of 1984, the ANC and the SACP were forced to abandon Mozambique as an operational base. The ANC soon afterwards seemed incapable of exploiting neither the growing international support for sanctions nor the escalating unrest situation in South Africa of the mid-1980's to launch a fully-fledged guerrilla war.

In his assessment of the armed struggle in 1987, Lodge wrote that although the ANC had gone out of its way to capitalise on the spontaneous unrest situation and called for a military offensive that would put the enemy into a strategic retreat, such a message in

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96. Lodge, *The ANC in South Africa, 1976 - 1983: Guerrilla War and Armed Propaganda*, (The Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 177).
 97. Lodge, *The ANC in South Africa, 1976 - 1983*, (The Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 177).
 98. Lodge, *The ANC in South Africa, 1976 - 1983*, (The Journal of Contemporary African Studies 3 (1/2), October 1983 - April 1984, p. 177).



retrospect seemed premature. The State, he pointed out, was yet to be confronted with a military threat that could seriously stretch its resources. "The repression unleashed with the second state of emergency appears at least for the time being, to have checked the tide of insurrection. Though Umkhonto attacks increased significantly," he continued, "the ANC's most conspicuous gains have been diplomatic rather than military."⁽⁹⁹⁾ A year later the ANC-SACP alliance suffered a diplomatic as well as military setback when the signing of the tri-partite New York Accord forced the organisation to remove its bases and facilities from Angola.

While it is true that the ANC had managed to raise its international stature over the last two decades through its contact with leading international statesmen, and through numerous visits to both Western and Eastern Bloc countries by its president, Oliver Tambo, and other senior leaders, not to mention through its contact and talks with White interest groups from South Africa since the mid-1980's, the ANC was nevertheless experiencing great difficulty in rousing the sort of support it needed among Blacks (and Whites) in South Africa to bring about a people's war. In practice this meant that the ANC-SACP alliance proved virtually unable to rebuild Umkhonto's shattered organisational structure inside South Africa. Ronnie Kasrils, a senior member of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto's NHC admitted this much in an article published in Sechaba in September 1988.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ In this he made it clear that in spite of the favourable conditions that have existed in South Africa for revolution since the mid-1970's and Umkhonto's efforts to promote such a development, the ANC-SACP alliance as a whole had not been able to take full advantage of these favourable conditions. The reason for this impasse, according to Kasrils were both theoretical and practical. ... "we have long formulated theoretical positions such

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99. Lodge, The African National Congress after the Kabwe Conference, (The South African Review 3, 1987, pp. 6 - 7).
100. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 1 - 2).



as 'the armed struggle must complement the mass struggle' and 'the guerrilla must be rooted among the people' etc," [but, ... continued Kasrils] "it is one thing to state the theory and quite another to put in into practice."⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Kasrils also reserved some criticism for the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and its leadership inside South Africa, whom he felt was out of touch with developments and the true role of Umkhonto in the armed struggle. "It is clear," Kasrils wrote, "that the most people at home, including within the Mass Democratic Movement regarded MK as some kind of external force that must come and defend them from the vigilantes and destroy the Boers. They do not see themselves as having to be an integral part of the armed struggle."⁽¹⁰²⁾ The MDM had its origins sometime between 1987 and 1988 as an alliance of organisations which have rejected apartheid and committed themselves to the establishment of a democratic alternative to the existing political structure. The main components of the MDM consisted of the UDF, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). It was also claimed that both the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto were served by the MDM, which according to one of its leaders, Titus Mafolo, was part of the National Liberation Movement (Alliance). Like COSATU, the MDM was primarily a working class orientated movement committed to "a working class leadership in the struggle for (National) liberation and the acceptance of the African majority as the main force in the struggle."⁽¹⁰³⁾

Other factors singled out by Kasrils as having inhibited the development of the armed struggle inside South Africa were: organisational

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101. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 1 - 2).
 102. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, p. 4).
 103. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.28 (M. Suliman, Mass Democratic Movement Explained). See also The MDM: Uneasy About Friends and Enemies, (South African Update 1 (1), July 1989, p. 5); and Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, pp. 681 - 682.



weaknesses both inside and outside South Africa; the absence of a proper revolutionary organisation to organise and lead the masses in all forms of struggle - including armed struggle; the need for a policy that would ensure co-operation both on the theoretical and practical levels of operations; greater clarity on what type of organisational structure to create both inside and outside the country and increased co-operation between externally trained cadres and those activists who have never left home. "In fact," Kasrils wrote, "there are extremely few policy positions of either the ANC or SACP on how power is to be seized....What is demanded is a vision of how power is to be seized and a plan for the building of the forces and means to carry out this task."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Kasrils went on to state that central to the creation of a proper organisational infrastructure inside as well as outside the country was the need for a revolutionary army, an army in which Umkhonto would form the core. However, there were two major obstacles that stood in the way of the creation of such an army, namely the South African police and the South African Defence Force of whom the bulk of their members were loyal to the State. According to Kasrils, without the undermining and subversion of the latter forces a revolutionary situation and thus the creation of a revolutionary army was not possible inside South Africa, which explains why the ANC-SACP alliance had been unsuccessful in their attempts to establish and strengthen their position inside the country. As a result the ANC-SACP alliance had been forced to maintain and train the bulk of Umkhonto's cadres outside the country. This made it extremely difficult if not virtually impossible for the organisation to successfully infiltrate large numbers of recruits into the country and to strengthen its position among the people of South Africa. This meant that until such time that this could be accomplished, the armed struggle conducted by Umkhonto remained largely a hit-and-run affair conducted from outside rather than inside the country.

104. Kasrils, *Politics and the Armed Struggle*, (Sechaba, September 1989, pp. 4 - 6).



According to Kasrils, a similar situation existed in Rhodesia in the 1960's and the 1970's, until the guerrilla armies of ZAPU and ZANU were established among the people. (105)

A further factor singled out by Kasrils as having inhibited the development of the armed struggle in South Africa, was the absence of what he considers to be a clear cut strategy on the transfer of power in South Africa. On this issue which, according to Kasrils, ranks amongst the most important the ANC had to settle, the organisation appeared to be totally at a loss for words. It had no programme to bring this about, nor had it ever drawn up a plan to indicate in a systematic manner how this should come about. As a result, Kasrils argued, one was left with the impression that it would come about through a combination of mass struggle, strikes and armed clashes which would somehow place so much pressure on the South African government that it would finally collapse, thereby enabling the ANC-SACP alliance to take control of the country and institute the aims and objectives of the Freedom Charter. (106)

Unfortunately for the ANC, time had proved that such a wait-and-see attitude did not work in South Africa. It did not only allow the South African government to modify its policies and to adjust its strategies to the tactics and actions of the ANC-SACP alliance, both inside as well as outside the country, but a wait-and-see approach also ignored South Africa's economic strength and ability to survive both politically and economically. South Africa was highly industrialised with a sound economic infrastructure that enabled it to survive tough economic times. At the same time, it provided attractive economic and financial incentives for those members of the unprivileged class or group who wished to collaborate with the government. As a result of the latter development in particular, a small Black middle class had developed in South Africa despite the government's apartheid policies. The members of that class, although they may

105. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 6 - 7).

106. Kasrils, Politics and the Armed Struggle, (Sechaba, September 1988, pp. 10 - 11, 17 - 18).



give their verbal support to the armed struggle to protect themselves and prevent their alienation from their own society, are as a group or social strata non-revolutionary in nature since they have economically and socially much to lose.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Even though the growth of an affluent Black middle class may turn out to be no hindrance to the influence and actions of the ANC-SACP alliance inside South Africa, Umkhonto still had to deal with the fact that it was completely outstripped in both size and firepower by the South African security forces. The South African Defence Force (SADF) alone had a budget of some R6,6 billion in 1987 while the South African police (SAP) had a budget of R1,530 billion for the same period.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ In sharp contrast to this the ANC and Umkhonto operated on a shoestring budget of some \$100 million (or R250 million) of which approximately only half was earmarked for Umkhonto. The rest was channelled to the ANC and the SACP. In terms of manpower, the ANC and Umkhonto, even by the late 1980's, were estimated to have had no more than 10 000 men under arms. Of these between only 300 and 400 were estimated to be operative inside the country at any given time. Similarly, the fact that most of the arms used by Umkhonto came from the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc associates, made the ANC and Umkhonto totally dependent on the whims and moods of these countries. The South African government, on the other hand had a highly developed and independent arms industry that by 1988 was exporting arms to more than 39 countries.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Although Umkhonto had managed to increase its armed attacks between 1985 and the end of 1988,⁽¹¹⁰⁾ those attacks never reached the point where it could be considered a real threat to the authority and stability of the State. On the contrary, the escalation in armed attacks since the early 1980's and the repeated calls by the leaders

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107. See Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, p. xxxiv.
108. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, pp. 334 - 335.
109. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, p. xxxix. See also J. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 680 - 681).
110. See Chapter 4 Diagram G, pp. 227 - 231.



of Umkhonto to accelerate the armed struggle and to extend it to the White areas, had exactly the opposite reaction to what was intended. Instead of frightening the White electorate into rejecting the government's apartheid parties, it had the effect of galvanising increased support for the government. In addition, Umkhonto and the ANC also had to pay heavily in manpower and equipment over the years.⁽¹¹¹⁾

In a research paper published in 1988 on the prospects for revolution in South Africa, Jeffrey Herbst,⁽¹¹²⁾ an American expert on politics and international affairs found that everything considered the evidence suggested that the ANC and Umkhonto had been unable to mount a significant military threat to the South African government. Over 60 percent of all attacks conducted by Umkhonto in South Africa were against various forms of infrastructure such as powerlines, government buildings and railway lines, or were done for symbolic purposes. They were, Herbst pointed out, the same type of attacks that the ANC was conducting twenty-five years earlier when Mandela was first arrested. There was thus very little evidence of the ANC moving from "sabotage acts to attack the enemy face to face", as Oliver Tambo had claimed. "While attacks against infrastructure can occasionally be quite damaging and armed propaganda sometimes results in many injuries, in the main they are of little more than nuisance value."⁽¹¹³⁾

The South African government managed relatively successfully to counter virtually every new phase that the ANC and the leaders of Umkhonto introduced into the armed struggle. As a result attacks on businesses that could have been economically harmful to the country and cause despondency among Whites were few in number.⁽¹¹⁴⁾

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111. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 681 - 682).
 112. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 665 - 685).
 113. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, pp. 682 - 683).
 114. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, p. 683).



Similarly, attacks against the State itself, especially against its security apparatus were also almost non-existent. According to Herbst:

While the ANC has developed into a more sophisticated military organisation in the last few years, its attacks against South Africa do not provide any evidence that it is now capable of inflicting truly significant damage on its opponents. ...The ANC, therefore, needs both quantitative and qualitative changes in its attacks against South Africa if it is to pressure the South African regime.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

Given the various facts and arguments that have been advanced so far, especially the change that has been effected to the status of Umkhonto and the armed struggle by the 1988 New York Peace Accord, as well as the major changes that have been taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it is clear that despite the favourable conditions that existed from the mid-1970's to the end of 1988, the ANC-SACP alliance was not only unsuccessful in its attempts to advance the armed struggle into a people's war, but its chances of doing so seemed to have passed by the end of 1988. Militarily, the ANC-SACP alliance had since the beginning of the armed struggle in 1961 never been in a position where it could pose a serious threat to the status quo in South Africa. This meant that if the ANC wished to bring about political change and a transfer of power in South Africa, it had to do so through non-military means such as a political or negotiated settlement. As early as 1975 John Barrett, then Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, pointed out that South Africa's racial problems were basically a political problem in search of a political solution, and that neither great military power nor economic sanctions would solve it.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ His words proved prophetic. In the early 1990's the ANC-SACP alliance abandoned the armed struggle, and Umkhonto, although reluctantly, was compelled to subject itself to this new development and the search

115. Herbst, Prospects for Revolution in South Africa, (Political Science Quarterly 103 (4), 1988, p. 683).

116. Legum, Africa Contemporary Record, 1974 - 1975, p. 417.



for a more peaceful solution to South Africa's racial and political problems. Clearly, the ANC-SACP alliance and their military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe had failed in its mission to promote revolution in South Africa through violence and to seize power.

This development is particularly significant if one views it against the background of revolutionary developments elsewhere in Africa. In most of the revolutionary wars in Africa where a transfer of power had taken place since the end of the Second World War, it was politics and the process of negotiations and diplomacy that finally hooked through the knot in the end. This has been recognised by researchers and political observers such as Tom Lodge, who said:

Guerrilla warfare will remain just one theme in the struggle. While it will be a major aspect, its importance will remain chiefly psychological. It will provide a medium through which the ANC can exercise authority, and can enhance its status internationally. But for a long time it is unlikely to accomplish more. ...even in the long term, the probabilities are against a military-based seizure of power. Like most anti-colonial struggles this one is almost certain to end through talks.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the armed struggle in December 1961 numerous views and explanations have been advanced by scholars and other observers both inside and outside the ANC-SACP alliance on the development of the armed struggle and the possible factors that could have caused it to falter. Although some of these explanations were divergent in nature, there is also a substantial body of broad agreement on some of the key factors that appeared to have frustrated the aims of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, namely to bring about a revolutionary situation in South Africa and to seize power. Most of the scholarly and other views advanced in this chapter including those of people inside the liberation movement such as Ben Turok and

117. Lodge, State Power and the Politics of Resistance, (Work in Progress 50/51, October - November 1987, pp. 3 - 6).



Joe Slovo were in broad agreement that the ANC-SACP alliance had grossly underestimated the ability and determination of the South African government to resist the insurrectionary activities against it and to use force where necessary to achieve its aims. This latter point was particularly highlighted by Slovo in his assessment of the armed struggle some years later. "We," he stated, "were still working on the approach that the enemy's security apparatus was what we knew it in the fifties. We did not sufficiently realise that the beginnings of armed struggle would lead to the very steps which the enemy took. ... Not only did they create a new force but they also began to legislate for new techniques." Slovo went on to state that they also made many mistakes with regards to security and underground work in the 1960's. This was particularly the case with their underground headquarters in Rivonia where many of the members of the NHC of Umkhonto stayed. As a result of this members of the underground were constantly moving in and out of the Lilliesleaf Farm property without being caught. This according to Slovo led to a false sense of security which in the end resulted in the South African police penetrating the underground and destroying it by the mid-1960's. (118)

There also appears to be general agreement among observers that in their under-judgement of the ability and determination of the South African government, the ANC-SACP alliance over-judged their own ability to take on the security and economic might of the South African government. While it is true that in the early years of the armed struggle the aim and objective of the ANC-SACP alliance was not to destroy South Africa's economic ability as such, although many of Umkhonto's early attacks were directed against economic installations or targets whose destruction could be economically disruptive to the country, this was no longer the case by the end of the 1970's when armed propaganda and attacks on economically sensitive installations such as SASOL and the Koeberg power station went hand in hand.

118. Dawn, Souvenir Issue, 1986, pp. 24 - 25.



As Slovo has pointed out, the ANC-SACP alliance made a grave mistake in their judgement of the ability of the South African police and the government's security apparatus in general. By 1963 the Security Police had successfully infiltrated the underground in South Africa. Although attempts were made by the liberation movement to step up their vigilance and to minimise the threat of infiltration, people who were prepared to inform on the liberation movement and the ability of the Security Police to place their agents at the heart of the movement had a crippling effect on the armed struggle over the years. Even in exile the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto could not escape the attention of the security police, who repeatedly managed to infiltrate the ranks of the ANC-SACP alliance since the mid-1960's. A good example of the latter was the discovery allegedly of a major South African controlled spy-ring in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola in the early 1980's. With the aid of this spy network which apparently involved some senior members of Umkhonto in Angola, the South African Security Police was able to trace the movement of recruits and guerrillas to and from South Africa. The Security Police also gained valuable information on the underground structures of the ANC and Umkhonto in Angola. Although draconian steps were taken by the ANC and Umkhonto to destroy the spy-network, ANC-Umkhonto members turning agents for the South African police remained a serious problem for the ANC-SACP alliance.

Other factors agreed upon by observers as having had an inhibiting influence on the armed struggle were organisational difficulties, particularly in exile, limited funds, unsuitable terrain for guerrilla warfare and large scale insurrectionary activities, the apparently dominating role of the SACP in the ANC-SACP alliance, the apparent unwillingness of the South African peasant masses to become militarily involved in the armed struggle, the obvious ability of the South African government to anticipate and counter every new phase of the armed struggle as well as the fact that South Africa, unlike elsewhere in Africa where wars of liberation were fought, was not a colony in the true sense of the word but a fully independent state, legally constituted and internationally recognised as such. The ANC-SACP-led armed struggle in South Africa was thus not directed



against a colonial power or classic colonial conditions - as much as the SACP wanted the world to believe this, but against the political and racial policies of an independent state. The aims of the armed struggle was thus not for independence but political rights for Blacks and the right to rule. In terms of communist theory this right should be exercised through revolutionary violence and the seizure of power.

Although South Africa's apartheid policies were unacceptable to many if not most World powers both in the East and the West, and Britain was one of the first to officially object to the country's racial policies in 1960, it was not until the end of the 1970's that the international community was beginning to take a more concerted stand against developments in South Africa and the country's racial policies. While these latter developments were highly encouraging to the armed struggle and undoubtedly contributed to the escalation in armed activities from 1981 onwards, other facts were already at work to counter these developments. Militarily, the South African Defence Force launched a series of lightning attacks on ANC-Umkhonto facilities in neighbouring states between 1981 and 1986. These latter attacks not only left large numbers of ANC-SACP and Umkhonto members dead but it eventually forced the liberation movement to move its remaining facilities and personnel out of the reach of the SADF. Inside the country, the Security Police in close co-operation with the Department of Military Intelligence and the National Intelligence Service were able to restrict the ANC and Umkhonto's ability to set up an underground infrastructure and to establish sufficient arms caches to initiate a people's war. The inability of the ANC and Umkhonto to re-establish a sound underground presence inside South Africa was one of the reasons singled out by Kasrils in 1988 as having inhibited the development of the armed struggle in South Africa. The fact that the ANC was unable to establish a substantial presence inside South Africa during the 1980's also had political implications for the movement in that it was unable to effectively extend its political work among the Black masses of the country, particularly in the rural areas where it always had a weak presence.



Diplomatically the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto also suffered a number of important setbacks during the 1980's. The first was the signing of the Swazi Accord between South Africa and the Swazi government in 1982. In terms of this agreement which was kept a secret until 1984, the South African and Swazi governments mutually agreed not to allow their respective countries to be used for attacks on one another. This effectively put paid to the ANC and Umkhonto's activities in Swaziland after 1982. The second setback to the ANC and Umkhonto came in 1984 when the South African government signed a similar agreement with the FRELIMO government of Mozambique - known as the Nkomati Accord. In 1986 the South African government through the use of its economic muscle helped to engineer a coup in Lesotho that brought a pro-South African government under Major-General Lekhanya to power. With the support of this latter government and aided by the terms of the Swazi and Nkomati agreements, the South African government was able to isolate the ANC-SACP alliance in South and Southern Africa while at the same time reduce its ability to escalate the armed struggle. The final setback to the armed struggle came in December 1988 with the signing of the New York Accord. Although this latter agreement in itself made a significant contribution to the declining position if not importance of the armed struggle after 1988, it was the background of political change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that witnessed the collapse of orthodox communism and which helped to end the Cold War that permanently altered the role and position of the armed struggle and thus Umkhonto by the end of the 1980's.

Although the above developments had a major influence on the position of the armed struggle by the end of the 1980's and in a way were also responsible for the changes that took place in the South African government's position by the beginning of the 1990's, other factors also had a bearing on the outcome of the armed struggle. Some of those that were singled out by Feit, Bell, Gann, Lodge and others for attention were the organisational weakness of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto, a continued shortage of funds, the role of the OAU which was often more confusing than encouraging, the relative predictability of the ANC-SACP leadership, the apathetic and largely



non-revolutionary nature of the peasant masses in South Africa and the fact that Soviet support for the armed struggle was often seen as little more than tactical support to frustrate Chinese ambitions in Africa. In short, the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto were thus faced with some formidable if not insurmountable obstacles in their struggle to seize power in South Africa. Although some of these problems were clearly the making of the liberation movement itself, others, among them some major factors, were beyond the control of the ANC-SACP alliance or Umkhonto we Sizwe.



CONCLUSION

When the ANC and the SACP created Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 to take up arms against the State for the attainment of basic political rights, few people could have imagined that the predictions made by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, in Cape Town on 3 February 1960, would become a reality in less than thirty years. What he told Parliament and the world at large on that day was that "the wind of change" was blowing throughout the African continent and "whether we like it or not this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact and our national policies must take account of it."⁽¹⁾

To the leaders of the South African government and to most White South Africans at the time Macmillan was not seen as a visionary but rather as a British politician interfering in South Africa's internal affairs. For the government of Dr H.F. Verwoerd, with its strong belief in racial segregation and White domination, to accept the possibility of White Afrikaner nationalism capitulating to African nationalism was inconceivable. To Verwoerd, Black, but particularly African, political aspirations had no future in a South Africa under White rule. For anyone to suggest otherwise or to promote Black political rights, in a multi-racial democracy, particularly through extra-Parliamentary means, was to attack government policy and the right of Whites to rule. Thus any demand by Blacks for equal political rights, with Whites, in a unitary state, whether peaceful or not, was outrightly rejected by the South African government, who banned both the PAC and the ANC in 1960 when, it thought, these organizations had become too radical in their demands.

No longer able to voice their opposition to the government's racial policies through the medium of public debate and open meetings, the

1. The Cape Times (Cape Town), 1960.02.3 - 4.



ANC in association with the SACP, formed Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 to take up arms against the government which they felt would never change its policies unless it was threatened. To the government however, the political demands of the ANC-SACP alliance was not so much for Black rights and privileges as it was part of a wider conspiracy under the leadership of the SACP and the ANC to set up a communist form of government in South Africa. Thus the winds of change that were blowing throughout Africa to which Macmillan had referred, was regarded as not so much a struggle of African nationalism against colonialism, as it was part of the Soviet Union's Third World policy to gain effective control over strategic parts of the African continent. Black political rights in South Africa and the agitation for such rights were therefore regarded as something that had to be resisted with all the power available to the State. A good example of the latter's approach to such issues was the much publicised Treason Trial brought by the State against the leaders of the Congress of the People in the late 1950's. The fact that the State failed to prove that the accused were guilty of high treason or having indulged in treason by supporting communism only made it more determined to view all demands for Black political rights as part of a communist inspired conspiracy to overthrow the State and push for its eradication wherever it could be found.

With such a negative approach to Black political and economic demands and the latter's determination to resist it with everything in its power, even armed violence if necessary, a radicalisation of South African politics and society in the early 1960's was thus unavoidable. In short, for the South African government and the ANC-SACP alliance to have sat down to negotiations in the early 1960's following the Sharpeville riots, and the State's reaction to it, was unthinkable. Neither the State nor the ANC in its alliance with the SACP were prepared to accept each others' views. Both were bent on the destruction of the other. Both followed ideologies and policies that made a negotiated settlement impossible at the time. Yet a mere thirty years later, all this had changed. What was considered unthinkable in 1960 was all of a sudden the political fashion of the early 1990's. Even more remarkable was the fact that



the same hardline nationalist government that had rejected Black political rights in 1960 and had banned both the ANC and the PAC in that year for what it considered subversive anti-government activities, was now prepared to unban all extra-parliamentary political groups including the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto we Sizwe and to begin talks with these organisations on the peaceful transition of power to a multi-racial democracy in South Africa. What has brought about this remarkable change in attitude both on the side of the South African government as well as the ANC-SACP alliance, but more important, what was the role of Umkhonto and the armed struggle in this development?

In the course of this study a number of significant factors and circumstances have been identified that systematically contributed to the changed conditions that marked South Africa's political and economic position by the end of the 1980's. Internally, perhaps the most significant factor that has influenced developments by the end of the 1980's, was the growing inability of the ANC-SACP alliance to escalate the armed struggle into a full-scale revolutionary guerrilla war, despite the favourable conditions that have been available to Umkhonto since the mid-1970's. One main reason for this had been the ability of the South African government to persistently prevent the ANC-SACP alliance from establishing a commanding presence inside the country. Since the start of the armed struggle in 1961, the South African government has successfully managed through the various security agencies available to it to counter almost every phase of the armed struggle. It has also successfully managed to infiltrate the ANC-SACP alliance and systematically destroyed whatever organisational structure the ANC-SACP alliance could muster inside the country for the infiltration of Umkhonto's cadres and the recruitment of new members. The latter was achieved through both military and diplomatic means, which have effectively contributed to a gradual political and military isolation of the ANC in Southern Africa since 1982. Perhaps one of the South African government's strongest weapons over the years has been its ability to adapt both politically and militarily to every new phase of the ANC's armed



struggle, while at the same time skillfully managing to retain, if not strengthen, its support among the country's White ruling minority despite increased international support for the ANC and their growing condemnation of the country's racial policies.

At the same time there has been a growing willingness among a rapidly expanding section of South Africans of all races, particularly among Whites who consider themselves part of the "democratic movement", to establish some form of dialogue with the leaders of the ANC-SACP alliance outside the country. These contacts, which began in earnestness in 1985 (the ANC has however indicated that talks were held between itself and people from South Africa before that date), substantially contributed to the atmosphere of negotiations and dialogue that marked the changes that took place in South Africa's political development by the end of the 1980's.

Externally, at least four major developments contributed to the decline of Umkhonto and the changed political climate of the late 1980's. The first and perhaps the most important has been the dramatic political changes that have been taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980's. Since Gorbachev introduced his policies of glasnost and perestroika in 1985, Soviet and East European politics have undergone a transformation that few would have thought possible a decade ago. Although the changes introduced by Gorbachev were primarily designed to solve the Soviet Union's economic and political problems, it also had a major effect on Moscow's attitude towards the Cold War, international communism, regional conflict and the continued supply of arms of war to "liberation organisations" such as the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto.

Faced with a rapidly deteriorating economic and political situation at home, particularly the problem of ethnic minorities, the Soviet government was increasingly forced to turn its attention from its foreign adventures towards its more pressing domestic problems. Correspondingly, it has become increasingly uneconomical for the



Soviet Union to maintain its economic and political support for governments and liberation organisations in the Third World, particularly those in Africa that showed little prospect of ever becoming anything more than a permanent recipient of Soviet military and financial aid. In its endeavours to rebuild its economy and to overhaul its political system, the Soviet Union could no longer afford such liabilities. It has become increasingly reluctant to continue pouring resources into organisations and governments that have little chance of bringing about the sort of political and economic changes that could be advantageous to Moscow and the cause of international communism.

In 1988 it was reported by political analysts in the United States that a subtle change had taken place in the Soviet Union's views towards South Africa and the ANC. The report pointed out that, while no one thinks that South Africa's conservative government would embrace Moscow or vice versa, there were strong indications that the Soviet Union was prepared to soften its stance on South Africa as part of a wider policy reassessment on Africa. It was further stated that it was becoming increasingly clear to Soviet policy makers that neither the ANC nor the SACP had the ability to bring about political change through revolutionary armed struggle in South Africa. As a result of this realization, it was stated, the Soviet Union's enthusiasm for the ANC and its armed struggle in South Africa has considerably declined by the end of the 1980's.⁽²⁾

This change in attitude by the Soviet Union towards South Africa and the armed struggle did not escape the ANC-SACP alliance which, in January 1990, declared its willingness to adapt itself to the reforms that have been taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe under the leadership of Gorbachev. Thus after more than four decades of faithful support for the principles of orthodox communism and Stalinism, and after having initially shown strong opposition to the

2. The Daily News (Durban), 1988.03.08.



reform initiatives of Gorbachev, the SACP by the beginning of the 1990's had finally come to realise that unless it changed with the times and followed the course of history, it ran the real risk of being totally isolated by changes taking place in the Soviet Union and in South Africa, which increasingly favoured a political rather than a military solution to regional conflicts.⁽³⁾ These developments, particularly in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the diplomatic successes that the South African government has had against the ANC-SACP alliance since the early 1980's and which culminated in the expulsion of the ANC and Umkhonto from Angola at the beginning of 1989, have all contributed to the changed political climate in South Africa.

A third and perhaps less recognised external factor that has contributed to the changed political climate in South Africa and which has prompted the South African government to seriously review its policies, has been the country's declining financial and economic position as a result of the ANC's sanctions campaign. Although the South African government has managed to weather the international sanctions and disinvestment campaign since the early 1980's it could not counter its effects as successfully as it did with the United Nations arms embargo introduced against the country in the late 1970's. Although South Africa managed to obtain most of the advanced technology it needed to keep the country's industries afloat and has managed to reroute most of its exports, the country's economic performance has been steadily declining since the mid-1980's, due to a growing lack in foreign capital; rapid disinvestment; a decline in new investments and a massive outflow of capital needed to settle the country's foreign debt commitment. Although South Africa has managed to convert and "roll over" some of its foreign debt - to the great annoyance of the ANC - a large portion remained that needed to be settled on an annual basis. With a persistently low gold price, an unacceptably high inflation rate, an economy that continued to under-perform and a high security and military expenditure, the South

3. The Daily News (Durban), 1990.01.25.



African government found it increasingly difficult towards the end of the 1980's to balance its books. Although it resorted to the printing of more money, this only fueled the country's already high inflation rate, which had a direct and detrimental effect on the value of the Rand and its exchange rate against the currencies of South Africa's major trading partners.

At the end of 1988 South Africa's total foreign debt stood at 21,2 billion dollars or 56,18 billion rands. Of this some 14,9 billion dollars (39,48 billion rands) were held by American, British, French, Japanese, West German and Swiss banking houses. The rest, some 6,21 billion dollars (16,69 billion rands) were held by foreign companies, institutions and individuals. In terms of the Third Interim Arrangement reached in mid-1989, South Africa had to repay some 1,5 billion dollars (3,84 billion rands) of the 8 billion dollars (20,48 billion rands) inside the "standstill net" agreed upon. This was to be done over a period of three years and six months, starting in December 1990. This figure, even at its quoted lower level of between 6 to 7 billion dollars (15 to 17 billion rands), will place an enormous strain on South Africa's future ability to generate new jobs and to show a positive economic growth rate in order to sustain its rapidly expanding Black population and to meet their social and economic needs.⁽⁴⁾

Although the ANC-SACP alliance has been credited with much of South Africa's economic and financial ills during the latter half of the 1980's, a fair proportion of this credit should also go to the South African government itself for having created part of its own predicament. Much of the country's economic problems began shortly after President P.W. Botha made his now famous "Rubicon Speech" in Durban in August 1985,⁽⁵⁾ in which he confirmed the government's

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4. V. Cramer, Debt Negotiations: A political triumph but economic hardship will follow, (South African Update I (7), 1989.10.15 - 31, p. 7).
 5. The Daily News (Durban), 1985.08.16. See also The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1985.08.25.



commitment to political change in South Africa but failed to spell out what the parameters of this change would be and what steps the government would be prepared to take to bring it about. The speech, which came at the height of the 1985 township unrest, failed to satisfy the international community who were looking for positive signs of real reform from the South African government.

Disappointed by the South African government's lack of real commitment to political change in South Africa, and convinced that Botha's policies and defiant attitude towards the country's problems but in particular the world's demands for change was a sure recipe for racial disaster, the international community led by the major banking houses and other financial institutions began to demand the immediate repayment of all short and long-term loans made to South Africa before 1985. They also refused to grant any further loans to the country. Alarmed by the drastic action of the international banking community, many foreign investors also began to withdraw their investments from South Africa. Better to lose some, than to lose all, they argued. (*)

Financial sanctions, argued South African Update, (7) which had a more harmful effect on the economy than trade sanctions or disinvestment, were implemented not by concerned governments under sanctions pressures - although this pressure had its effect on international banks - but by international bankers and businessmen who were concerned mainly about their investments in a country fraught with political and other problems.

A further major contributing factor to South Africa's financial woes by the latter half of the 1980's was the country's high defence expenditure which was primarily brought about by the war against Swapo in Angola and the ever present need for a strong military force

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6. Cramer, Debt Negotiations, (South African Update 1 (7), 1989.10.15 - 31, p. 7).
 7. Cramer, Debt Negotiations, (South African Update 1 (7), 1989.10.15 - 31, p. 7).



to counter the insurrectionary activities of the ANC-SACP alliance and to meet the possibility of an all-out revolutionary guerrilla war. In 1987/1988 the defence budget was 6,7 billion rands. This was a 30 percent increase over the 1986/1987 budget figure of 5,1 billion rands. In terms of the total South African budget for the 1987/1988 financial year the defence budget represented 14,7 percent of it as compared to 13,7 percent for the 1986/1987 financial year.^(*) For the 1988/1989 period the defence budget was increased to 8,2 billion rands which was a 22 percent increase over the 1987/1988 amount of 6,7 billion rands. The 8,2 billion rands represented 15 percent of the total annual budget of South Africa. The following year, 1989, the defence budget was increased to the massive amount of 9,9 billion rands which represented a 21 percent increase over the 8,2 billion rands of the previous financial year.^(*)

Although the factors and conditions raised thus far all had a major influence on the changed political climate and developments of the late 1980's, the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto too were to a large degree responsible for their own predicament and poor performance over the years. It was abundantly clear even before the signing of the New York Agreement in December 1988 that the liberation alliance and Umkhonto in particular was unable to accelerate the armed struggle or push it beyond the 200 or more armed attacks a year that the organisation had been able to maintain since 1986, many of which were limited attacks directed against minor targets. Although the ANC-SACP alliance has gone out of its way since the inception of Umkhonto and the armed struggle in 1961 to convince the international community of the justness of its actions and that it had the support of the Black masses in South Africa to wage armed struggle against the South African government, the truth of the situation was that Umkhonto was in reality the military wing of the SACP and not the ANC and that while many Blacks in South Africa supported the armed struggle very few, if not the majority, were not prepared to leave

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8. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, p. 512.
 9. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, p. 518.



South Africa and join the liberation alliance, especially Umkhonto. Those who left South Africa in the mid-1970's and again in the mid-1980's to join Umkhonto were largely representative of the radical element in South African Black politics which cannot be identified with the majority of the Black masses in the country, despite the apartheid policies of the government and the latter's growing isolation by the international community.⁽¹⁰⁾ Nor were the conditions for Black economic and social upliftment as poor in South Africa as the ANC wanted the world to believe. On the contrary, social and economic conditions in Zambia, where the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto had their headquarters, were by the ANC's own admission a great deal worse than conditions in South Africa. It is generally accepted both locally as well as internationally that Blacks in South Africa in general had a much higher standard of living either through their involvement in industry and commerce or through their co-operation with the system of apartheid in their capacity as teachers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, police officials and soldiers of the SADF than their counterparts in the rest of Africa.

Many of the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto's problems with regards to the armed struggle were brought about by its own internal problems such as poor organisation, poor leadership, lack of security, the problems of exile leadership, excesses by its security organ(s), lack of control over its cadres particularly inside South Africa, factionalism, rank and file dissention of the role and alleged domination of the liberation alliance by the SACP, persistent dissatisfaction with conditions in Umkhonto's training camps, the quality of instruction, limited finances, poor food, and the use of foreign ideologies in favour of an ideology based on the realities of the South African situation, that would be more acceptable to the people of South Africa. If one adds to this the apparent willingness of a great many of Umkhonto's cadres to inform on the organisation and its leaders,

10. According to a survey conducted in 1987 it was estimated that the ANC at the time only enjoyed the support of some 25 percent of South Africa's Black population (The Daily News (Durban), 1987.11.10).



and the inability of Umkhonto to return the "thousands" of trained cadres it claimed to have to South Africa, not to mention the role of the SACP in its affairs, a relatively clear picture emerged as to why the armed struggle found itself in trouble by the end of 1988. Had the ANC and Umkhonto been as independent and as non-aligned as the liberation movement has claimed it to be and had Umkhonto received its political, ideological and military support from sources other than the communist world, developments in the Soviet Union might have had a less dramatic effect on the armed struggle than was the case by the end of the 1980's. With the ANC and Umkhonto being fiefs of the SACP the armed struggle's status was directly affected by the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since the mid-1980's. The adoption of a new programme on policy by the SACP in January 1990 and the subsequent distribution of this policy programme among the members of the NEC of the ANC and the NHC of Umkhonto in which the SACP rejected its former orthodox Stalinist approach to communism in favour of the political reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union since 1985, was clear confirmation of this.

All indications by the end of the 1980's were pointing towards a declining role and status for Umkhonto and the armed struggle and increased momentum for the forces of peaceful change and a political solution to South Africa's racial and political problems. Clearly, history and time had caught up with both the ANC-SACP alliance and Umkhonto as well as the South African government and its apartheid policies by the end of the 1980's.



POSTSCRIPT

Since the signing of the New York Accord in December 1988 and the collapse of Umkhonto's military presence in Angola a number of significant developments both locally and internationally have taken place that have further advanced the course of moderation and the search for a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems, and retarded the armed struggle and with it the position and future role of Umkhonto, despite claims by the latter that it was both determined and capable of continuing with the armed struggle.

Internationally these factors were:⁽¹⁾

- a) the further collapse of communism in its traditional and orthodox form and a growing desire among Eastern Bloc nations for greater democratic rights and complete freedom from communism;
- b) the ending of the Cold War and with it a marked decline in the incidents of regional conflict and terrorism that had formed such an important part of it;
- c) the desire of the Soviet Union, embattled by serious economic, political and ethnic problems, to reduce conflict with the West in regional disputes through political means;
- d) growing indications of a cooling down of relations between Moscow and the ANC, particularly with regard to the Soviet Union's support for armed conflict; and
- e) growing indications of a change among some European but particularly African leaders in their attitude towards the South African government.

Locally, factors that had an influence on the position of Umkhonto and the armed struggle after 1988 were:

1. South African Update 1 (1), 1989.07.15 - 31, pp. 1 - 8.



- a) a more conciliatory attitude from the South African government towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries in Europe,
- b) increased diplomatic and other activity between South Africa and the Soviet Union,
- c) a continuation of the pilgrimage of South Africans (academics, students, politicians, church leaders and other interest groups) to talk with the ANC,
- d) reports in the local press of a definite shift in Soviet thinking and attitude towards South Africa, the ANC and the armed struggle,
- e) repeated reports that Blacks were sick of protest and violence, particularly Black-on-Black violence,
- f) the unexpected meeting between State President, Botha and the imprisoned leader of the ANC, Nelson Mandela on 5 July 1989,
- g) the government's proclaimed willingness to negotiate with anyone including the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto as long as they foreswore violence,
- h) a growing awareness among the supporters of both the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement that the ANC and Umkhonto were no longer in a favourable position to escalate or intensify the armed struggle and thus bring about the destruction of White minority rule through armed violence,
- i) increased pressure from the White political opposition to the left of the government party to begin talks with the ANC while conditions were advantageous for it,⁽²⁾ and
- j) the resignation of President Botha in August 1989 and the election of a more enlightened government under President F.W. de Klerk to power in September 1989.

The latter development was perhaps the most significant development of 1989 in that it brought to power a new government whose declared

2. South African Update 1 (1), 1989.07.15 - 31; The Daily News (Durban), 1989.03.13; The Sunday Tribune (Durban), 1989.03.19.



policy it was to promote talks with the ANC, the SACP, Umkhonto and other extra-parliamentary groups and to create a new South Africa based on equality before the law and the protection of human rights. Every South African would have the right to participate in the decision-making process at all levels of government affecting his or her interests, but no individual or group would be allowed to dominate or be dominated. The new South Africa would be based on the principle of self-determination regarding own affairs, with joint decision-making on general affairs.⁽³⁾

At a pre-election meeting held in Cape Town in July 1989, De Klerk made it clear that the only obstacle in the way of talks between the government and the ANC was the latter's insistence on the continuation of its armed struggle. He openly challenged the ANC and its leaders to renounce armed violence as a political solution and to commit themselves (as Mandela and President Botha did on 5 July) to a peaceful settlement of South Africa's problems.⁽⁴⁾

The objective of the new South African government under De Klerk was clearly, to convince the international community of South Africa's willingness to move to a negotiated settlement in South Africa; to discredit the ANC-SACP's pro-communist stance at a time when the entire system of communism was collapsing all over Europe, and to move as rapidly as possible to solving South Africa's political and economic isolation.

To the ANC-SACP alliance, on the other hand, the changes that took place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989, and the loss of its operational facilities, bases and general sanctuary in Angola, as well as the changing attitude of African leaders such as President Kenneth Kaunda towards the ability of the ANC and Umkhonto to bring an end to apartheid and White minority rule in South Africa through

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3. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/1989, Overview, pp. xxiv, 501.
 4. South African Bureau of Information, Beleidoorsig. Die Gesprek met Mnr. Mandela, Jaargang 2 (8), Oktober 1989, pp. 39 - 47.



armed struggle, placed it at the cross-roads in 1989. The new South African government's growing willingness, highlighted by the meeting between Botha and Mandela in mid-1989, to meet and talk with the leaders of the ANC, had forced the ANC-SACP alliance to give serious reconsideration to its position on negotiations. It was clear that if it did not react to the South African government's reconciliatory attitude, it ran the risk of being presented as an unwilling partner in the search for a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems.

Although the ANC continued to deny that its ability to bring about an armed victory in South Africa had declined after December 1988, changes that were effected to the organisation's leadership in 1989, clearly indicated that the ANC was giving increasing consideration to a negotiated settlement as an alternative to armed struggle in South Africa. This apparent shift in emphasis was highlighted by the surprise appointment of Thabo Mbeki, the organisation's Chief of Information and Publicity, to head the influential International Department in mid-1989. Mbeki, who is the son of ANC and Umkhonto veteran, Govan Mbeki, was known to be a "moderate" communist and a strong supporter of a political settlement in South Africa.⁽⁵⁾

Since his appointment to the International Department, Mbeki has taken tentative steps to keep the ANC up to date on if not abreast of developments both in Europe and South Africa. There have been two significant developments in this direction. The first has been the strengthening of the Mbeki- and thus the pro-negotiations faction in the ANC-SACP alliance at the cost of military hardliners in the organisation such as Kasrils and Hani. The second has been a growing shift in the ANC's attention and contact from the East to the West. Since Mbeki became head of the ANC "foreign office" in 1989, the ANC has sought increased contact with the United States whom it sees as a natural ally in its search for a political settlement in South Africa. What the ANC and Umkhonto could no longer do through military

5. South Africa: The ANC's Diplomatic Offensive, (Africa Confidential 30 (13), 1989.06.03, pp. 3 - 4).



means after 1988, the United States was now expected to do through diplomatic and economic pressure after 1989. In search of America's support for its campaign against the South African government, the ANC under the direct influence of Thabo Mbeki, established an office in Washington in November 1989. The person appointed to this new office was Dr. Lindiwe Mabuza, the ANC's former chief representative to Stockholm, Sweden, and a personal friend of Thabo Mbeki. In fact it was Mbeki who engineered her transfer from Kenya to Washington in 1989. (6)

Up to 1989, the ANC, because of its strong ties with the SACP and the Soviet Union, has largely neglected the United States as an important ally in its struggle for democratic rights in South Africa. But with the dramatic shift that has taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since the latter part of the 1980's, and the rapid collapse of both orthodox communism and the Cold War, not to mention the changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union's attitude towards regional conflict, America's anti-apartheid stance and its insistence on sanctions have become of vital importance to the ANC in its diplomatic initiatives, in order to force the South African government to the negotiating table.

Since the beginning of 1989, the ANC has also increasingly called on the MDM inside South Africa to intensify its pressure on the South African government. It has also called for a major meeting with the MDM to discuss developments inside South Africa and to work out a joint strategy. Part of the reason for this latter development has been a growing fear in the ANC-SACP alliance that the exile leadership might become isolated by developments inside South Africa and lose the initiative to the leaders of the MDM who were in constant contact with events and developments inside the country. (7)

The meeting between the ANC and the MDM took place at Lusaka between

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6. South Africa: The ANC's Diplomatic Offensive, (Africa Confidential 30 (13), 1989.06.03, pp. 3 - 4).
 7. South African Update I (10), December 1989, p. 1.



6 and 7 June 1989, and involved the entire NEC of the ANC. At this meeting the ANC admitted that there were clear signs that the South African government was serious about a negotiated settlement in South Africa and that it believed that the government would take positive steps towards negotiations and towards meeting the pre-conditions laid down by the ANC in 1987.^(*) In August 1987, following a meeting between representatives of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto and a large delegation from South Africa in Dakar, Senegal, in July of the same year, the ANC announced five "minimal conditions" that had to be met by the South African government before talks about talks between the South African government and the ANC could begin. The five conditions were:

1. the release of all political prisoners, detainees, captured "freedom fighters" and prisoners of war;
2. the lifting of the state of emergency and the withdrawal of all South African Defence Force (SADF) personnel and police from the townships and other African residential areas;
3. the repeal of all "politically repressive laws, which included laws that empowered the regime to proscribe persons, political organisations and institutions and/or restrict freedom of assembly, the press and of speech";
4. the ending of the "bantustan system" and the reintegration of the "independent homelands" into South Africa; and
5. the allowing of the unconditional return of all exiles and political refugees to South Africa.^(*)

Consequently, at the Lusaka meeting with the MDM in June 1989 it was decided that the time had come for the

liberation movement to collectively review our position on negotiations. Our perspective in doing so is to find the appropriate response that fend off this initiative in a manner that:

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8. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20. See also South African Update 1 (1), 1989.07.15 - 31, p. 5.
 9. Du Pisani, When Apartheid Goes: Dialogue with the ANC, p. 3; Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1987/1988, p. 702.



- a) Does not create confusion or division in our ranks
- b) Does not result in the demobilisation of the masses;
- c) Does not result in any lessening of pressure from the international area; and
- d) Results in us maintaining the initiative against the regime. (10)

The meeting also examined the position of the ANC, its major allies and opponents on the question of negotiations and the South African government's diplomatic initiatives. It subsequently concluded that, while the West in general wanted dialogue and a negotiated settlement in South Africa, they differed in their interpretations of how this should come about. America, it pointed out, wanted to initiate a process of contact, dialogue and negotiations similar to that in South West Africa and Angola and which led to the expulsion of the ANC from the latter in 1988. Its role in this process, the meeting was told, was to maintain sufficient pressure on the South African government to come to the negotiating table. Britain on the other hand had a somewhat different approach. Unlike America, it believed that pressure should be applied to both the South African government as well as the liberation movement to force both to sit down to talks on a negotiated settlement. The meeting also concluded that the British government under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher did not support far-reaching changes in South Africa, and was considering sending a new "contact group", similar to the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) to South Africa. The EPG was formed in 1986 to act as go-between between the ANC and the South African government. The group, however, failed in its efforts when the South African government sanctioned a Defence Force raid on ANC-Umkhonto bases in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe in May of that year.

The meeting further pointed out that there were also those in the British government who believed that a solution to South Africa's problems could be found without the ANC and the SACP and that as long

10. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20.

as South Africa showed progress towards a negotiated settlement, the British government should refrain from supporting sanctions against the country.⁽¹¹⁾

As far as the "frontline states" were concerned, the meeting noted Zambia's "predisposition" towards negotiations, Mozambique's frequent contact with South Africa, and Eduardo dos Santos of Angola's view that "we may not have the time to develop that position of strength" in response to the MDM view that "we must be in a position of strength before we commence negotiations".⁽¹²⁾

The meeting also expressed its concern over the changing attitude of its international allies. "At a recent meeting between the Chinese and our comrades," it pointed out, "the Chinese made a distinction between the ending of apartheid and the ending of White rule. Their view was that we should be prepared to move slowly and accept [a] modification of the status quo as a starting point." It also referred to the role of the Soviet Union and pointed out that indications were that the latter was prepared to work side-by-side with the West for a peaceful settlement of the South African situation. The possibility of such a scenario in the immediate future was a great worry to the ANC and the MDM who felt that they might eventually be pushed into a negotiated settlement in which they would not be in a position to dictate the terms. What was particularly disturbing to the group (ANC, MDM) was the fact that the West, with the support of "our long-established friends", was pushing for "a modified/reformed capitalist society" to replace the current apartheid system in South Africa, a society quite different from what they have envisaged and fought for over the years.⁽¹³⁾

In view of these developments and the assessment of the international

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11. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20.
 12. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20; South African Update I (1) 1989.07.15 - 31, p. 5.
 13. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.21; South African Update I (1) 1989.07.15 - 31, p. 5.



community's approach towards South Africa in 1989, it was concluded that the ANC and the MDM must

dictate the terms of change. Nothing should start that we are opposed to. Our struggle is to take control of the process and ensure that negotiations, should they come about, are genuine and serious. For this reason it is important that we should all have the same agreed positions both inside and outside South Africa; we have a strategy to remain in control so those who intervene have to deal with our position ...

It was therefore considered absolutely essential that

We have to present proposals on this issue before the rest of the world comes up with something. The world must deal with our proposal rather than us having to deal with another initiative. This would place us at an advantage and give us the ability to control and direct the process.⁽¹⁴⁾

It was thus critical for the ANC and the MDM to produce an alternative proposal and to ensure that they retained the initiative. At the same time this should be done in such a way that there was no demobilisation of the masses nor the creation of a fake impression that the South African government was prepared to hold genuine negotiations. Since the South African government appeared to be willing to accept the ANC's pre-conditions, it was suggested that perhaps the stakes should be raised through the introduction of new pre-conditions, part of which may be that the negotiating process should lead to the establishment of a constituent assembly or an interim government, to chart a new constitution for South Africa. With the OAU's annual summit meeting only three weeks away at the time and the Commonwealth conference taking place in mid-October 1989, there was understandably an urgency among the ANC and the MDM's leadership to reach unity of action and to win the OAU's support for its pre-conditions on a negotiated settlement in South Africa.⁽¹⁵⁾

14. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20.

15. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.07.20.

Unfortunately for the ANC and the MDM they were not quick enough. The South African government pre-empted their proposed pre-emption when Botha met with Mandela on 5 July. The ANC's official reaction to this development was that it was

a carefully orchestrated ploy by the regime to defuse the struggle inside our country by holding forth prospects of a just political settlement and a ploy of defusing the mounting campaign for sanctions by sending the bogus signals that Pretoria is ready to enter into serious negotiations with the real leaders of our people.⁽¹⁶⁾

1. THE HARARE DECLARATION OF 21 AUGUST 1989

Although the ANC-MDM's negotiating initiatives suffered a setback with the Botha-Mandela meeting in July 1989, the movement however managed to regain its balance in August of the same year with the adoption of the Harare Declaration in which the OAU's Special Committee on Southern Africa attached its approval to the ANC-SACP's settlement plan for South Africa at its Harare conference on 21 August. The Harare Declaration which was allegedly based on a letter that Mandela wrote to the ANC in Lusaka in early 1989 and which was apparently also presented to Botha at his meeting with Mandela in July, was largely an elaboration of the ANC's 1987 negotiating principles and the issues considered by the ANC and the MDM at their meeting in Lusaka in June. Only minor alterations were made by the OAU's Secretariat to the settlement plan of the ANC before it was presented to the organisation's Special Committee on Southern Africa for discussion and ratification.⁽¹⁷⁾

In essence, the OAU's Declaration consisted of two sections, namely a set of "Principles" to be followed in a negotiated settlement for a new constitutional order in South Africa, and a series of "Guide-

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16. Radio Freedom (Lusaka), 1989.07.11; South African Update 1 (1) 1989.07.15 - 31, p. 3.
17. The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 26 January - 1 February 1990, (The Inside Story of Mandela's Peace Plan). See also South African Update 1 (3), 1989.08.15 - 31, pp. 2 - 3.



lines" to serve as a "mechanism" for the drawing up of the new constitution. In the introduction to the "Principles" the declaration stated that it believed that a conjunction of circumstances exist which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the South African government to engage in serious negotiation, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations. Such an eventuality, it stated, should be an expression of the long-standing preference of the majority of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement.

We would therefore encourage the people of South Africa, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate an end to the apartheid system and agree on the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy.

We support the position held by the majority of the people of South Africa that these objectives, and not the amendment or reform of the apartheid system, should be the aim of the negotiation.⁽¹⁸⁾

The declaration listed nine principles which were to serve as the basis for a new constitutional order that would be internationally acceptable. In addition to these principles the declaration also listed five basic pre-conditions that the South African government had to meet in order to create a climate for negotiations. These pre-conditions were similar to those raised in Dakar in July 1987 and listed by the ANC in its official statement released a short while afterwards in August.

The second part of the Declaration dealt with the various "Guidelines to the Process of Negotiations", and contained a nine point "Programme of Action" in which the OAU committed itself to do two things, namely, to gain the widest possible international support for its position on South Africa, and to step up the pressure on the South African government to abandon apartheid and to accept the ANC's negotiating principles.

18. South African Update 1 (3), 1989.08.15 - 31, p. 3.



Unlike previous ANC statements, the OAU's Declaration on Negotiations for the first time stressed the need for an interim government (as mentioned by the ANC and the MDM at their meeting in Lusaka in July) to draw up a new constitution and to effect the transition to a democratic order, including the holding of elections.⁽¹⁹⁾

Although the South African government dismissed the document as "an act of desperation by the ANC",⁽²⁰⁾ the organisation had nevertheless succeeded in having it adopted without any alterations by the 102 member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at its meeting in September, as well as in part by the United Nation's General Assembly at its meeting in December 1989. Although the adoption of the "nine principles" by the General Assembly had been described as "representing no less than the General Assembly's official, though qualified recognition of the ANC's 21 August Harare Declaration",⁽²¹⁾ the Western delegates' opposition to that part of the declaration which called for the establishment of an interim government to supervise the drafting of a new constitution and the administration of the transitional phase leading to its implementation, represented a clear vote of confidence in President de Klerk's reform initiatives since his election to the Presidency in September.

"In many ways, of the Harare Declaration's various clauses," wrote South African Update in its December 1981 issue,⁽²²⁾ "that proposing the interim government is the most significant, because it sets out the most important means by which the ends are to be negotiated. Thus, although the UN resolution accepts much of what would constitute the ANC's negotiating goals, the refusal to accept the means is a setback." It went on to state that, what this meant was that the UN, but especially the West, was showing increased willingness to give De Klerk's reform initiatives a chance and to recognise the South African government's need to retain some of the

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19. Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1988/89, pp. 642 - 644.
 20. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.08.22.
 21. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 1.
 22. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 1.



negotiating initiative.⁽²³⁾

The South African government, however, refused to accept the United Nations' resolution. R.F. (Pik) Botha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, rejected the document as "fundamentally flawed and unacceptable". In a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Botha made it clear that as far as the South African government was concerned, the process of negotiating for constitutional changes in any sovereign state was the inalienable right of that State. Any attempt by international organisations to usurp this responsibility should be rejected. He, however, reaffirmed the South African government's "irrevocable commitment" to the creation of a new South Africa based on a free and equitable constitutional, social and economic system.⁽²⁴⁾

In addition to the United Nations General Assembly meeting on Southern Africa, two other important events on the question of negotiations and a negotiated settlement in South Africa took place towards the end of 1989. The first was the so-called "Paris Indaba" which took place in Paris (France) from 27 November to 2 December 1989 and was organised by Danielle Mitterand, the wife of the French President, and the Institute for Democratic Alternatives for South Africa (IDASA). The Indaba, which was a continuation of the meetings between groups and individuals from South Africa and the ANC which began in 1985, was given an exalted status by the French government. Attended by South African academics, politicians, trade unionists, newspapermen and other interested parties, the meeting was seen as a diplomatic triumph for the ANC. Although the question of negotiations received a fair amount of attention at the meeting, the event was not organised around the issue as such. During the course of the five days that the meeting lasted, a wide range of subjects ranging from recent political developments in South Africa, to the economy, sanctions, a new post-apartheid constitution as well as the need for a Bill of Rights were discussed.

23. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 1.

24. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 2.



According to political commentators and journalists who attended the Paris meeting, some leading anti-apartheid "activists" have criticized the meeting as little more than "an insignificant and purely academic exercise" arranged by the organisers "to presume to choose the peoples' leaders ...".⁽²⁵⁾ Although the identity of the activists who criticized the meeting was never revealed, it was argued by some sources⁽²⁶⁾ that the criticism probably came from some leading MDM figures who were in the process of organising the Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF), that was planned for Johannesburg on 9 and 10 December 1989.

According to Peter Sullivan,⁽²⁷⁾ a journalist who attended the Paris Indaba, the MDM felt that the Johannesburg meeting was of greater importance and significance than the Paris Indaba. In contrast to the Paris meeting, the Johannesburg CDF was attended by more than 4 462 delegates representing some 2 138 organisations and some 15 million people in South Africa.⁽²⁸⁾ While this did not necessarily mean that the MDM leadership in South Africa saw themselves as significantly more important than the ANC's exile leadership by the end of 1989, there were however those who argued that given the role that the MDM had played in the political developments in South Africa over the previous two to three years, and the fact that they were at the centre of the changes that were taking place inside the country, it was not unnatural for the MDM leadership inside South Africa to place themselves on an equal footing with the exile leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance. According to some observers, who attended the Paris meeting, the ideological dominance in the liberation movement appeared to have shifted "from the SACP and the exile ANC to the internal forces of Cosatu, the UDF and the MDM ..." because the "insiders" they argued, were closer to the reality of South Africa than the exile leadership.

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25. The Daily News (Durban), 1989.12.01. See also South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 7.
 26. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 7.
 27. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 7.
 28. South African Update 1 (10), December 1989, p. 7.



They were more familiar with the terrain of apartheid and were more able to see tactical possibilities. In addition, they could act more independently and be more creative in their thinking than the exile leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance.

If the latter assessment of developments in the liberation movement is correct, it will go a long way towards explaining why the ANC had adopted an increasingly moderate stance on a negotiated settlement in South Africa towards the end of 1989. Although the new flexibility and pragmatic attitude of the ANC by 1989 could be ascribed to the influence and views of individuals and factions such as Thabo Mbeki in the ANC, there can be little doubt that the growing power and influence of the MDM inside South Africa and the rumours that Mandela would be released in early 1990, undoubtedly contributed to the growing concern in the exile leadership of the ANC-SACP alliance by the end of 1989, that unless they changed direction and were seen doing so, they might become isolated by the speed with which developments were taking place inside South Africa. This latter concern was clearly reflected by the release of the SACP document "Has Socialism Failed" in early 1990 in which the organisation while stating its continued commitment to the basic tenets of socialism committed itself and thus the ANC and Umkhonto to a "multi-party post-apartheid democracy" in South Africa.⁽²⁹⁾

What made this latter document and its contents even more significant was the fact that it came a mere six months or more after the SACP's Seventh Party Congress held in Havana, Cuba in June 1989. At this latter venue the SACP reaffirmed its total commitment to its old pro-Stalinist beliefs set out in its 1962 document on policy and programme entitled "Road to South African Freedom", allegedly authored by Joe Slovo and Joe Matthews.⁽³⁰⁾

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29. The Weekly Mail (Johannesburg), 1990.01.19 - 25. See also The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1990.01.19.
30. South Africa: The Party Faithful, (Africa Confidential 31 (1), 1990.01.12, p. 1. See also The Natal Mercury (Durban), 1990.01.19, and Cooper, Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990, p. 747.



2. THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC-SACP ALLIANCE AND UMKHONTO,
FEBRUARY 1990

Perhaps the most significant political development of 1990 was the announcement of President de Klerk in his opening address to the South African Parliament on 2 February 1990 that the government had lifted the ban on the ANC, the SACP, Umkhonto we Sizwe as well as 30 other extra-Parliamentary organisations opposed to its policies. Shortly afterwards on Sunday 7 February the government also released Nelson Mandela, the first commander of Umkhonto, from prison. Although the ANC and particularly Umkhonto's reaction to the events of February 1990 was to state that the armed struggle was to continue until the government acceded to the creation of a sovereign constituent assembly and an interim government, the general view among observers was that it was highly unlikely that the ANC and Umkhonto would be able to maintain this view for long or that Umkhonto was in any way in a position, considering the setbacks it had suffered in December 1988, to continue with the armed struggle in any meaningful way. While the militants in the ANC-SACP alliance might have demanded such a development, it would have been increasingly difficult to justify both internationally and to those it wished to draw into an ANC-led front. Any attempt to step up the armed struggle after 2 February would cost the ANC dearly in international support, especially financial support, something without which it could not effectively rebuild its presence inside South Africa. A new spate of bombings and destruction was thus not in the interest of the liberation alliance after February 1990, and any talk of armed struggle or the possibility of armed struggle was likely to remain just that - talk. Both sides had too much to lose to allow the hawks or militants to dominate the negotiating process. Umkhonto we Sizwe was a spent force and all indications are that it will be pushed increasingly into the background as the negotiations process gains momentum in the months and years ahead.



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APPENDIX A

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE. FLYER, RELEASED
ON 16 DECEMBER 1961

Units of Umkhonto we Sizwe today [December 16, 1961] carried out planned attacks against government installations, particularly those connected with the policy of apartheid and race discrimination.

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

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

The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit, and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future, and our freedom.



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

We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The government policy of force, repression, and violence will no longer be met with nonviolent resistance only! The choice is not ours; it has been made by the Nationalist government which has rejected every peaceable demand by the people for rights and freedom and answered every such demand with force and yet more force! Twice in the past eighteen months, virtual martial law has been imposed in order to beat down peaceful, nonviolent strike action of the people in support of their rights. It is now preparing its forces - enlarging and rearming its armed forces and drawing white civilian population into commandos and pistol clubs - for full-scale military actions against the people. The Nationalist government has chosen the course of force and massacre, now deliberately, as it did at Sharpeville.

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

We of Umkhonto we Sizwe have always sought - as the liberation movement has sought - to achieve liberation, without bloodshed and civil clash. We do so still. We hope - even at this late hour - that our first actions will awaken everyone to a realization of the disastrous situation to which the Nationalist policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both government and its



policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war. We believe our actions to be a blow against the Nationalist preparations for civil war and military rule.

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

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

Afrika Mayibuye!

Issued by command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.⁽¹⁾

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UMKHONTO WE SIZWE. ITS ROLE IN THE ANC'S ONSLAUGHT AGAINST WHITE
DOMINATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1961 - 1988

SUMMARY

The above study examines the history and role that Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) played in the armed struggle led by the African National Congress - South African Communist Party alliance between 1961 and the end of 1988. The two dates represents the formation of Umkhonto in November 1961 and the signing of the New York Accord in December 1988 respectively. The latter date is significant in that while it secured a peaceful transition of power in South West Africa Namibia it also helped to destroy the continued presence of Umkhonto and the ANC-SACP alliance in Angola. This latter development, together with other factors such as the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the communist world, contributed to the decline of Umkhonto and thus the armed struggle by the end of the 1980's despite continued assurance by its leaders that this was not the case. By the beginning of the 1990's it had become abundantly clear that neither the ANC-SACP alliance nor Umkhonto were in a position to escalate the armed struggle into a full-scale people's war.

While this study deals primarily with the history and role of Umkhonto in the armed struggle, the fact that the organisation was the creation of the ANC-SACP alliance and that it stood under the full control of the latter, makes it also in a way a history of the ANC and the SACP and their role in the armed struggle. With its formation in November 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe was presented to the world as a new and independent organisation formed by Africans in their struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa. The truth was that while Umkhonto was indeed a new organisation it was neither independent nor a creation of Africans alone. On the contrary, at the trial of the National High Command of Umkhonto in 1963 it was revealed that the organisation was almost exclusively a fief of the SACP.

Not only was it predominantly staffed with members of the SACP and its affiliated organisations such as SACTU, but it was both financed and controlled by the latter. Moreover, White leaders in the SACP



played an active, if not a leading role in the activities and decisions of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Although White members of the Communist Party could not become members of the ANC's National Executive Committee before 1985, this problem was overcome through their membership of Umkhonto and the fact that most, if not all African members of the SACP were also members of the ANC and Umkhonto and vice versa. In 1985 for instance it was decided at the ANC's Kabwe National Consultative Conference that in future all members of the Liberation alliance (i.e. the ANC, the SACP and SACTU) should undergo military training in Umkhonto's training camps in Angola and elsewhere. In fact, the overlapping in membership between Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP was so extensive that for all practical purposes they belonged to one predominant organisation, namely the SACP. All three the organisations were supporters of the Freedom Charter and the Marxist-Leninist, Stalinist principles followed by the SACP which called for the total destruction of the South African government and its replacement with a "democratic" South Africa based on the socialist principles of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. These and other aspects of the special relationship between Umkhonto, the ANC and the SACP are dealt with in chapter six of the study. As for the remainder of the study chapters one to five deals with the development of the liberation struggle; the gradual drift to armed resistance between 1912 and the banning of the ANC in 1960; the decision to form Umkhonto in 1961 and the history of the armed struggle both inside and outside South Africa up to the end of 1988. In contrast, chapters seven to nine deals primarily with the organisation, leadership, funding, recruitment, training and arming of Umkhonto as well as the factors and conditions that helped to prohibit the organisation's armed activities and strategy since the early 1960's. The study ends with a short conclusion followed by a postscript in which the development of the armed struggle since December 1988 to the unbanning of Umkhonto, the ANC, the SACP and about thirty other anti-apartheid organisations in February 1990 is detailed.

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December 1991.

UMKHONTO WE SIZWE. ITS ROLE IN THE ANC'S ONSLAUGHT AGAINST WHITE
DOMINATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1961 - 1988

OPSOMMING

Bogenoemde verhandeling beskryf die geskiedenis en rol wat Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in die gewapende stryd vir nasionale bevryding tussen 1961 en die einde van 1988 gespeel het. Die begin- en einddatums verteenwoordig onderskeidelik die stigting van die organisasie in November 1961 en die ondertekening van die New York Verdrag deur Suid-Afrika, Kuba en Angola op 22 Desember 1988. Deur laasgenoemde gebeurtenis is Umkhonto effektief gedwing om sy militêre teenwoordigheid in Angola te staak, sy strategie te wysig en sy bestaande basisse en ander fasiliteite honderde kilometers noord te verskuif. Na dié terugslag het die leiers van Umkhonto desperaat gepoog om die wêreld daarvan te oortuig dat dit weinig uitwerking op die organisasie se militêre stryd sal hê. Teen die einde van die 1980's was dit egter duidelik dat alhoewel Umkhonto nog aanvalle binne Suid-Afrika kon onderneem, die moontlikheid van 'n volskaalse guerrilla-oorlog verval het as gevolg van veranderde omstandighede buite sowel as binne Suid-Afrika.

Hoewel hierdie studie hoofsaaklik te make het met die geskiedenis van Umkhonto, sy organisasie, leierskap, en die finansiering en bewapening van sy kadres, is dit ook in 'n mate die geskiedenis en verloop van die African National Congress - Suid-Afrikaanse Kommuniste Party alliansie tussen 1961 en die einde van 1988. Met sy stigting teen die einde van 1961 was Umkhonto aan die wêreld voorgehou as 'n nuwe onafhanklike organisasie gestig deur Swartes, maar dit het egter gou duidelik geword dat alhoewel Umkhonto wel 'n nuwe organisasie was, dit beslis nie onafhanklik of deur Swartes alleen gestig was nie; intendeel, tydens die verhoor van die leiers van die Nasionale Opperbevel van Umkhonto in 1963/64 het dit baie duidelik aan die lig gekom dat die organisasie feitlik geheel en al met die finansiële en organisatoriese hulp van die verbode SAKP gestig en onderhou was. Dit het ook duidelik geblyk dat die Blanke leiers in die SAKP 'n leidende rol in die stigting en leierskap van Umkhonto gespeel het. In der waarheid was daar gevind dat die leiers van Umkhonto ook die leiers van die ANC en die SAKP, en vice versa,



was. Die mate van oorvleueling in die leierskap van Umkhonto, die ANC en die SAKP was so omvattend dat dit feitlik onmoontlik was om 'n duidelike onderskeid tussen die drie organisasies ten opsigte van hulle leierskap te maak. Dieselfde geld ook vir die ideologiese en politieke filosofieë wat deur die drie organisasies verkondig was - daarvolgens was dit duidelik dat Umkhonto, die ANC en die SAKP een en dieselfde organisasie was. Al drie was byvoorbeeld voorstanders van die Freedom Charter en die daarstelling van 'n demokratiese Suid-Afrika gebaseer op die sosialistiese beginsels van Marx, Lenin en Stalin.

Die geskiedenis van Umkhonto en die organisasie se verhouding tot die ANC-SAKP alliansie word dan ook in die grootste besonderheid behandel. Die studie ondersoek ook die redes en algemene omstandighede wat aanleiding gegee het tot die besluit in 1961 om tot geweld oor te gaan. Dié en ander gebeure wat aanleiding gegee het tot die stigting van Umkhonto in 1961 word in die eerste gedeelte van die verhandeling uiteengesit - hoofstukke een tot vyf behandel die algemene geskiedenis en verloop van die gewapende stryd vanaf die stigting van Umkhonto in 1961 tot en met die ondertekening van die New York Verdrag op 22 Desember 1988. Die tweede helfte van die studie - hoofstukke ses tot nege - ondersoek Umkhonto in 'n meer tematiese vorm. So byvoorbeeld, behandel hoofstuk ses die hoogs teenstrydige verhouding tussen Umkhonto, die ANC en die SAKP, terwyl hoofstukke sewe en agt Umkhonto, ten opsigte van sy organisatoriese struktuur, leierskap, finansiering, werwing en die bewapening van sy kadres tussen 1961 en 1988, ondersoek. Die laaste hoofstuk (hoofstuk nege), ondersoek die mislukking van Umkhonto se gewapende stryd en die moontlike redes en faktore wat daartoe aanleiding kon gegee het. Die verhandeling word afgesluit met 'n kort samevatting en 'n naskrif wat kortliks die verloop van die gewapende stryd vanaf Desember 1988 tot en met die ontbanning van Umkhonto, die ANC, die SAKP en ongeveer dertig ander anti-apartheidsorganisasies in Februarie 1990 ondersoek.

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DURBAN

Desember 1991.