

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The second stage: Attempts to get back

Joe Slovo

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

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

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

WANKIE/SIPOLILO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WANKIE CAMPAIGN

Chris Hani

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

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

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

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

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

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

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