

OUR PEOPLE'S ARMY IS GROWING

- Amos Aluko

"IN BUILDING UP OUR OWN POPULAR ARMY WE AIM THEREFORE NOT ONLY AT THE OVERTHROW OF THE FASCIST REGIME, WE AIM ALSO AT BUILDING UP A POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS AND REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, CONSCIOUS OF ITS POPULAR ORIGIN, UNWAVERING IN ITS DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONS AND GUIDED BY OUR REVOLUTIONARY ORIENTATION".

- COMRADE PRESIDENT O.R. TAMBO -

It is now 19 years since our vanguard movement, the African National Congress and its allies formed our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, on that memorable December 16 - our Heroes' Day. During this period much has transpired that has had an effect on the unfolding of our revolutionary struggle in general and on the growth of Umkhonto we Sizwe in particular.

Can we, then, at this moment say that our movement has made any progress in fulfilling its aims in building a people's army as set out in the MK Manifesto and reaffirmed by Comrade President O.R. Tambo as quoted above?

To answer this question we need to take a close look at the present state of our army, bearing in mind its past and projecting to the future.

OUR RANKS

Without men to carry out military tasks, there can be no army to speak about. That is why our movement in launching the historic Sabotage Campaign announcing the birth of Umkhonto we Sizwe set as one of its main aims "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".

At first, leading personnel was selected from the ANC and its allies, some of whom had already gone abroad to be trained in the art of guerrilla warfare even before MK was formed. The Sabotage Campaign helped to attract many young men to join MK



and an underground railway had been set up for sending them abroad for training. It was during this period in 1962 when our first Commander-In-Chief, Comrade Nelson Mandela, toured Africa and Europe to obtain international support for the armed struggle and training facilities.

From that time onwards the ranks of our army have been steadily multiplying in spite of the setbacks suffered by our movement following the Rivonia arrests. The painstaking underground political and recruiting work done by our movement and the increasing militancy of our people has led to many people, especially the youth, to join the ANC and MK. The swelling of our ranks following the June 16 Upsurges and the period thereafter are a testimony to this.

It is important to note that the strength of our army lies not so much in numbers - though numbers count - as in that we are an organised force guided by the knowledge of its role in our revolutionary struggle. Also important is the fact that to a certain degree the membership of our army reflects the cross-section of our population.

POLITICAL GROWTH

Our army is not growing in numbers only but in its political consciousness as well. This is so because the approach of our movement in moulding its armed militants is derived from its political line. We understand revolutionary armed struggle, theoretically and practically, as "a political struggle by means which include the use of arms". Hence the emphasis on politics in our education.

Thorough knowledge of our people's history of resistance, the policies of the ANC, our programme, the Freedom Charter, the liberating scientific ideas of the leading force in our national liberation movement, the working class, knowledge of other people's struggles make up the core of our political education. The members of our army are conscious participants in our people's struggle for the transformation of our society, a contribution to the elimination of all forms of oppression and exploitation of man by man throughout the world.

This explains why the African National Congress has been able to make men and women out of us in spite of the fact that the racist oppressor employs every means at his disposal to

turn us into wrecks: racism, tribalism, regionalism, corruption, etc. The moment one joins the ranks of our army, one is overwhelmed by the existing spirit of singleness of purpose, unity and comradeship. An MK cadre fulfils his tasks, aware that they are a necessary contribution towards the fulfilment of our goal - the liberation of our motherland.

An MK cadre has a deep love for his people and all the other peace and freedom loving people of the world. It is from this love that our hatred for the racist enemy and his imperialist allies grows. That is why the Pretoria racists could not break the spirit of our comrades Solomon Mahlangu, whom they murdered, James Mange, whose life was saved by international pressure, our three comrades who fought to death rather than surrender; Johnson Lubisi, Petrus Mashigo and Naph-tali Manana, whom the racists have recently condemned to the g a l l o w s and many other comrades who have fallen and those captured by the enemy. They have not betrayed the cause of our revolution.

COMBAT ABILITY

Emphasising the aims of our movement stated in MK Manifesto and other documents for the creation of a "striking force of the people... for final liberation", Comrade President O.R. Tambo once said:

"Revolution calls for supreme vigilance, organisation and capacity to sacrifice. The movement needs men and women willing to fight and perform all the tasks of war".

With the assistance of our friends, the socialist community, led by the Soviet Union, and our friends in Africa, who offer us equipment and facilities, we have been able to acquire training in modern warfare, a process which has been taking place since the formation of MK.

It is not surprising that the racist enemy has had to swallow his boastful words that he has "broken the backbone" of our liberation movement and admit to the high level of MK's combat ability. Recently small units of MK have proved themselves worthy of battle with outstanding acts of valour at Rustenburg, where a unit of MK, whose presence had been discovered by racist troops and Mangope's puppet soldiers, turned the situation to their advantage by killing 10 racist boer soldiers; the lightning attacks by small units on Orlando, Moroka, Booyens and Soekmekaar police stations has introduced



a new element in our actions - the offensive. Even before the boers could recover from their shock following these attacks on police stations, another unit of MK struck heavily. This time it was on SASOL I Natref and Secunda. The racist Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, de Klerk, was forced to admit to the superiority of MK combatants saying: "It is clear that we are faced with a sophisticated attack, which is evidenced by the fact that there were attacks on three separate installations almost simultaneously".

Thorough planning, timing, excellent choice of targets, swiftness and precision in action are the characteristic features of our combat units. All these are a living evidence of the growing combat ability of MK.

LEADERSHIP

To achieve all this has not been an easy and smooth process. It is thanks to the tried and tested leadership of our movement who have in the course of the past years ensured the continued existence and growth of our army, surmounting many obstacles.

The ever intensifying militancy of our people to which our movement provides leadership, in turn serves as a source of inspiration for our movement and army. Our people have a rich fighting tradition and we are a product of that centuries-old tradition.

We shall never forget the invaluable contribution of our comrades of the Luthuli Detachment, the first detachment of our army to have a baptism of fire during the historic Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns when the racist soldiers of Smith and Vorster had to run for their lives. These are the comrades who have kept the banner of the ANC and its allies high at a time when the imperialists wanted to finish off with our entire movement and army.

The brotherly support we receive from the socialist countries, progressive African states and the revolutionary working class movement and progressive organisations in the developed capitalist countries make us even stronger.

It is the duty of each and everyone of us to safeguard what we have achieved. It is on this basis that we shall proceed, together with the entire masses of our people, led by

the African National Congress, with the fulfilment of our historic mission - the liberation of our motherland. We must not relax in raising the level of discipline, vigilance and combat readiness of our army. This is a necessary contribution towards the attainment of our certain victory whose defence shall be the responsibility of our People's Army.

Human Touch

- Sunrise

NEWSWRITING

The principle of factual presentation is reflected in accurately listing the names and positions of persons who appear in the article. It is also reflected in the listing of accurate figures and other essential data and in an accurate reproduction of formulations of important statements quoted in the article. Your reader must always know that the Freedom Charter was adopted by 3,000 delegates from all walks of life at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, near Johannesburg, on June 26, 1955. It is not polite just to write: "The Freedom Charter was adopted by thousands of people in 1955". What does the Freedom Charter stand for? Go ahead. Write all the facts and don't leave your reader hanging on the air guessing. See how wonderful it is to write simply and straight forward:

"John Mathongo, aged 26 years and father of two children, both girls, stood next to a drum full of benzine. He struck a match to light a cigarette. There was a huge burst of fire, and he was turned into a human torch. He died on the spot".

WORLD OUTLOOK

People who are inclined to the idealist world outlook often give prominence in their lives to god, or some other supernatural forces. They are prone to rely on fate, rather than knowledge of the laws governing changes in their environment. In contrast, people with a Marxist world outlook rely on their activities guided by knowledge of the objective