

A variety of methods and tactics

COMRADE CHRIS HANI, THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR AND DEPUTY COMMANDER OF OUR PEOPLE'S ARMY, UMKHONTO WE SIZWE, DISCUSSES THE MUTUALLY REINFORCING ROLE OF ARMED AND UNARMED STRUGGLE.

"The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small minorities at the head of the unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must be always in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going for with body and soul. The history of the last 50 years has taught us that. But in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required and it is just this work which we are now pursuing and with a success that drives the enemy to despair."

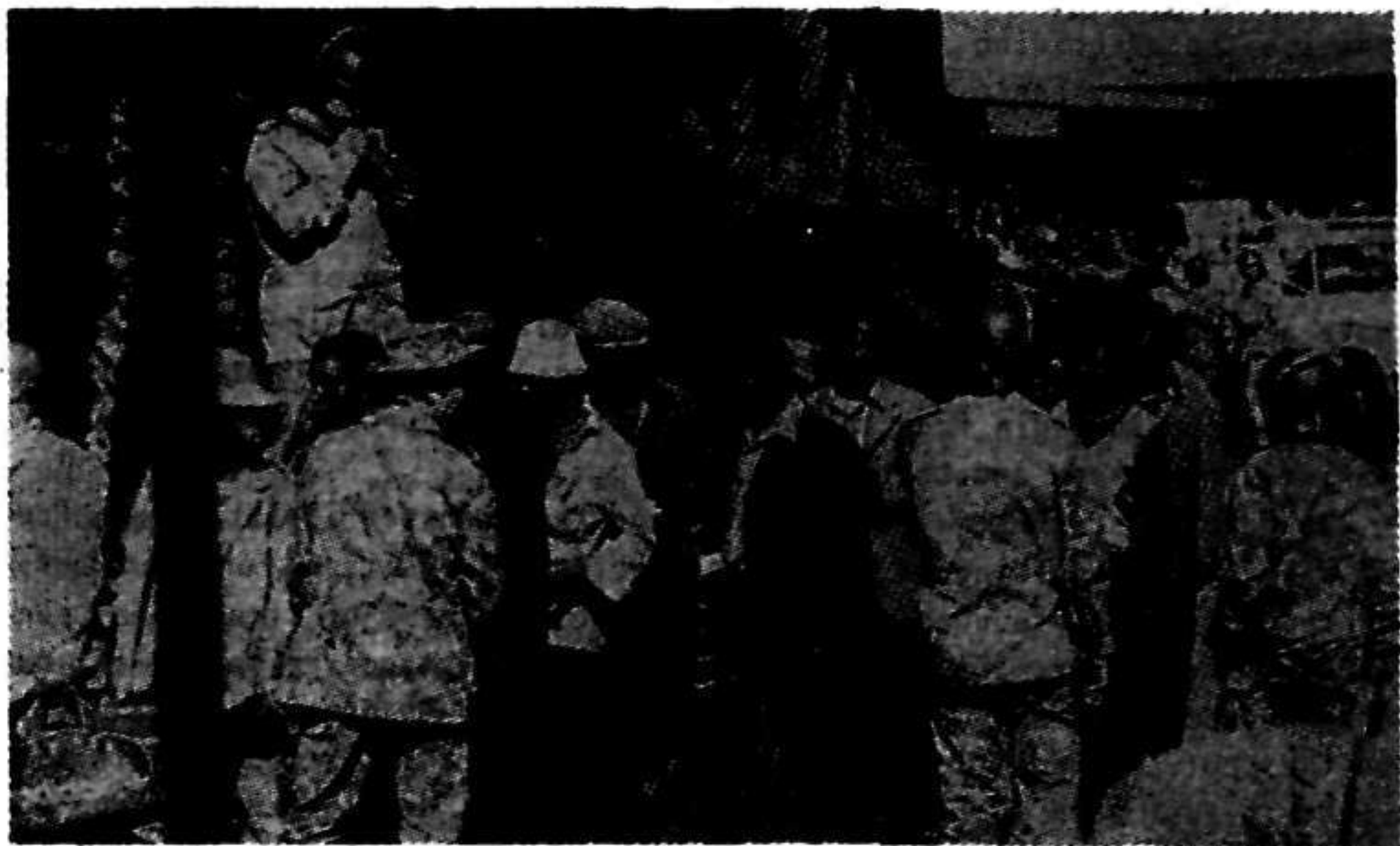
This quotation from Fredrick Engels' "Barricade Tactics" serves to emphasise the overriding importance of the deep involvement and the commitment of the oppressed and exploited masses in our national liberation revolution. Our revolution seeks to build a new society and thus bring about a very deep transformation in our society. Thus such a task cannot be carried out and executed by only a few, heroic and courageous group. It certainly requires the serious participation of all those who have a stake in destroying the racist capitalist system in our country. To set the oppressed masses into motion requires careful thought and preparation. We should begin from the basic premise that our struggle embraces a variety of methods and tactics.

We have got to destroy the often repeated error of isolating one form of struggle and raising it to a disproportionate position. Fortunately for us there is complete unanimity in accepting all forms of struggle as perfectly legitimate. We correctly stress the importance primarily of our underground units which are specifically deployed to provide leadership on the spot. The political training of this leadership is top priority because it must have a global view of the political developments in our country. Such a leadership must be capable of analysing the political situation and working out the correct tactics in order to draw into the struggle all classes and strata from the oppressed.

KASS MOBILISATION

The careful preparation of the objective conditions in our struggle forces us to pay considerable attention to all the aspects of mass mobilisation. Organisation is a hard and demanding pursuit, it requires perseverance, discipline and political maturity.

It demands an understanding and thorough knowledge of all the classes and strata ranged against our enemy. Such knowledge and understanding comes out as a result of collection of data, of our own political connections and inter-actions with numerous patriotic organisations, and trade unions. For instance, the past decade has seen an unprecedented growth of independent and democratic trade unions. These trade unions continue to wage relentless struggles for better working and living conditions as well as for recognition. Generally speaking, the struggles have been mostly economic. By so stating the intention is neither to belittle the trade unions or to reduce the significance of these struggles. Economic struggles and trade unionism do indeed represent the initial stages of class consciousness. Trade unions on their own are not going to embrace the concept and theory of national liberation. This is our task and we have to vigorously explain to the trade unions the indivisibility and inter-connection of the economic and political struggle.

**WORKERS UP IN ARMS**

In real terms this means a broad understanding of these trade unions. It actually enjoins us to deepen our influence at grassroot level. We have to participate covertly in all the topical discussions currently taking place within the trade union movement. Both the African National Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions have to make available all the experience of decades of struggle to the labour movement. As the enemy tries hard to work out sophisticated and subtle methods of trying to control the trade unions, it becomes necessary for us to help in working out tactics in fighting back to preserve the gains of the working class and also working out the way forward. The need to deepen our influence in civic, student and intellectual organisations cannot be over-emphasised. Like in the trade union movement, we need to elevate the quality of the struggle of these movements, drawing into their ranks large numbers of people and helping to transform them into grassroot oriented movements. Such a radical transformation of these organisations is only possible with the expansion and consolidation of our own underground.

OUR ARMY

This immediately brings us to the proper definition of the role of our army in the process of mass mobilisation as well as its own growth and development inside the country. We have correctly stated that ours is a People's Army fighting a people's war. Quoting Karl Marx, Lenin in "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising" stated:

"Revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counter-revolution, i.e. it compels the enemy to resort to more extreme measures of defence and in this way devices ever more powerful means of attack."

With the steady progress of our political and military struggle, the enemy has intensified his attacks on our organisation and our army. In his frantic bid to destroy our movement, the enemy has devised a twin-pronged strategy, namely, the internal and external liquidation of our movement and army. Our reaction naturally has to be swift, well-planned and effective. Our People's Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, has to fulfill two main elements in our strategy, viz:

- a) To raise the level of the limited mass actions in the country. This means that the army should reinforce the people's struggles. Such struggles are taking place along a very wide front. They are the militant struggles of the workers against retrenchments, against inflation and unemployment, against the constitutional proposals of the President's Council', Koornhof's

genocide bills, the struggle against removals and landlessness, the struggle against Bantustans and their puppet governments. Our army has to step up its operations in order to imbue the masses with confidence in their ability to fight back. We have to become a People's Army, rooted amongst the people and capable of quick actions as the situation demands.

- b) Building a People's Army in order to fight a people's war actually means that our movement and our army must create and consolidate the conditions for the existence, survival, growth and expansion of our army among the people. These conditions should be so organised that no matter how hard the enemy tries to uproot us, our existence and our capacity to attack him over a large area increases. We have to prepare ourselves for every twist and turn in our situation and ours is not to wait and stand on the sidelines waiting for the 'great hour'; we look for and find all possibilities for active work even under the most favourable conditions. The task facing us is to bring closer the time of the decisive battle.

In our preparations to root our political and military units among the people we must take cognisance of the fact that we need to develop our work exclusively both in the urban and rural areas. We have to rally substantial numbers of the oppressed and exploited working class, the discarded, harassed and landless peasantry and persecuted and muzzled students and the intelligentsia. In the tackling of these countless tasks, let us regularly remind ourselves of what Lenin said:

"Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. The masses must know that they are entering upon an armed, bloody and desperate struggle. Contempt for death must become widespread among them and will ensure victory."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- (1) V.I. Lenin - Selected Works - Vol. 1 and Vol. III.
- (2) "Left-Wing" Communism - an Infantile Disorder. Selected Works Vol. 3.
- (3) Introduction (1895) to Karl Marx, The Class Struggle in France, 1848-50 - International Publishers.

FORWARD TO WAR