



I'm a New Man

Myna Motau, a platoon Commissar in Umkhonto We Sizwe had a talk with DAWN on her impression of her training.

Before I started training I had misleading information about the life of a soldier of Umkhonto we Sizwe because of the distortions one comes across. But in all, I have enjoyed my training and I have gained a lot too.

I have developed politically, I feel a new person now. If I was at home this could not have been possible. I think psychologically too I have become mature. And physically, I have much more confidence in myself.

It is surprising that this happened in a very short space of time. This is because, during training, I met many people from different walks of life. I learnt how to exist and live with them. Most importantly, I learnt how to approach and relate to comrades. At home one does not learn these things. People are individualistic, each one living for one's self. Here in our army we help one another.

EQUALITY

Women are physically less stronger

than men but here comrades encourage us, and make us feel that we are equal to any other comrade. And one really feels that we are equal. The training is the same and we are given the same tasks and we fulfill the same missions. This destroys the myth that women are inferior.

When I am given a task which is physically demanding, I devise a way of fulfilling it with minimum of physical exertion. In a real way you feel capable of doing anything which other comrades can do. We are not treated as females but as soldiers. On the other hand, comrades are generally very helpful. They are very concerned about our development. In such an atmosphere one is bound to feel encouraged.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Male comrades are better informed on political developments than us because many of them were actively involved and exposed to underground literature. But many women at home do not get this opportunity. Comrades are aware of our position at home. They show a great concern to our political development. It is not the kind of concern coated with

»sympathy for women» but a comradely concern to develop one another. There is a great difference between myself while I was at home and now that I am a soldier of Umkhonto we Sizwe. My approach to life and problems is very different. During training, I had encountered problems and developed confidence in myself in solving them. In all, let me say I am proud of being an MK soldier and confident of myself.



These changes came through politics which developed my psychological preparedness, and strengthened my conviction. As soldiers we must be steeled ideologically and have a strong political conviction in the cause.

PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE

During training everytime I thought about the plight of our suffering people. I could feel that I was training to face the enemy. It has come out clearly that all the problems and hardships we encounter are because of the boers. Now I can say without any doubt that I am ready for any task. I am ready for the enemy.

MILITARY TRAINING

From what I have learnt, I think it is necessary for women to undergo military training. This is where we can develop to face the situation. The boers do not give any consideration to the fact that one is a woman or not. Through military training we shall also be capable of dealing with the enemy.

We must take lessons and draw inspiration from comrades like Dorothy Nyembe. We have a potential for fighting. We have an obligation also to fight for our people. We must realize this. For many years the ANC has discussed with the enemy. Now, the solution is to take up arms and face it.

In 1956 women marched alone to Pretoria, unarmed — but now we have an army to strike at the enemy, alongside with our men. Older women have given us the example of resistance. We must also pass this example to the coming generations, and set the pace for them.

We must join Umkhonto We Sizwe and fight with the enemy arms in hand.

