

19.2.84

PLANNING FOR PEOPLES WAR

Comments submitted by a comrade in Botswana and received in
Lusaka on 30.1.84

While agreeing with the propositions set out in the Memorandum, the contributor makes some qualifications that should be considered by PMC for possible inclusion in the final draft. A summary of the major qualifications follows.

1. The Armed Struggle is secondary (par. 2)

Quite so. In practice, however, armed struggle and political struggle should form two prongs of our movement, each reinforcing the other. By emphasising one at the expense of the other we run the risk of poor coordination and imbalance

2. The ANC and its Allies stand virtually unchallenged (par.4)

Let us avoid the complacency inherent in the statement. Our enemies are many. They are planning our downfall in many ways, not least of all by coopting sections of the oppressed and quislings of many kinds in the struggle against the ANC. Our position is far from being unchallenged. People may on occasion behave as if 'the ANC is a legal organisation' (ibid.) but the fire is still only kindling and can be quenched by too much complacency on the part of the movement

3. Creation of guerilla zones (par.6)

While agreeing that this action is long overdue, the contributor suggests that security, which should be a prime consideration, may be endangered by adherence to the proposal (6(d) of involving 'all levels of the political and military machineries' is the selection and preparation of the zones. As regards the selection & training of personnel (6 (g)) the care stressed in the memorandum should be applied to all areas of our work and all organs. No person should remain in office if he fails to perform satisfactorily or of a better substitute is available. Offices ought to be rotated

4. Rear Bases (par.7,A)

We cannot do without external bases, especially as conceived by the regime as 'any house accommodating an ANC refugee, office of the ANC, any point at the border where an MK fighter might cross into SA' The regime is demanding of the frontline states that they must as a security police for SA, defend its borders & apply its security laws. We must convince these states that a riskless neutrality does not exist for them. They must collaborate with the liberation forces or with the enemy

Our structures should immediately prepare to go undergrounds. This precaution must be taken by both the political & military wings in the external mission everywhere & particularly in frontline states. We should regard them as no different from enemy territory

We should also build pro-liberation groups in the local population of these states in consultation with their governments

5. Bantustans (par.7 B)

They are the regime's first line of defence against the liberation army. An attack on a Bantustan is therefore equivalent to an attack on 'white SA', but not psychologically. White minority does not feel immediately threatened by such attacks. In the same way as the SADF prefers to fight its internal wars across SA borders, it will

prefer to fight in Bantustans rather than in white SA. We might play into the enemy's hands by 'highlighting' our operations in Bantustans. They are integral parts of SA but psychologically they do not appear to be the 'weak link'. That is in the urban centres. They are the concentration of white power & 'epicentres of revolutionary discontent'

6. Arming the People (par.7 E)

We should tell people to arm themselves by disarming police & informers and by manufacturing their own weapons especially explosives

Ends

Summary by J & R