

1976 to the present

Joe Slovo

Then came Soweto 1976 and the events connected to it in Southern Africa, i.e. the liberation of Mozambique, Angola, the intensified struggle in Zimbabwe, etc. Real possibilities opened up not just for getting men and material inside the country but also continuing to service them and maintain some kind of contact which was not possible previously. People who went in were just cut off as it were. They had to rely on their own resources in an atmosphere where people were not in a militant mood and the country was filled with informers.

1976 brought about a change. The mood created by the 1976 uprising provided a political base in a very general way. It then became possible to send men in successfully.

action. There were, of course, periods of ups and downs but in general the scale of actions grew in intensity and sophistication.

This stage of armed propaganda was extremely successful in that it played a seminal role in creating the political mood which led to the ferment and upsurge which we have been witnessing for the last two years in particular but had begun growing long before.

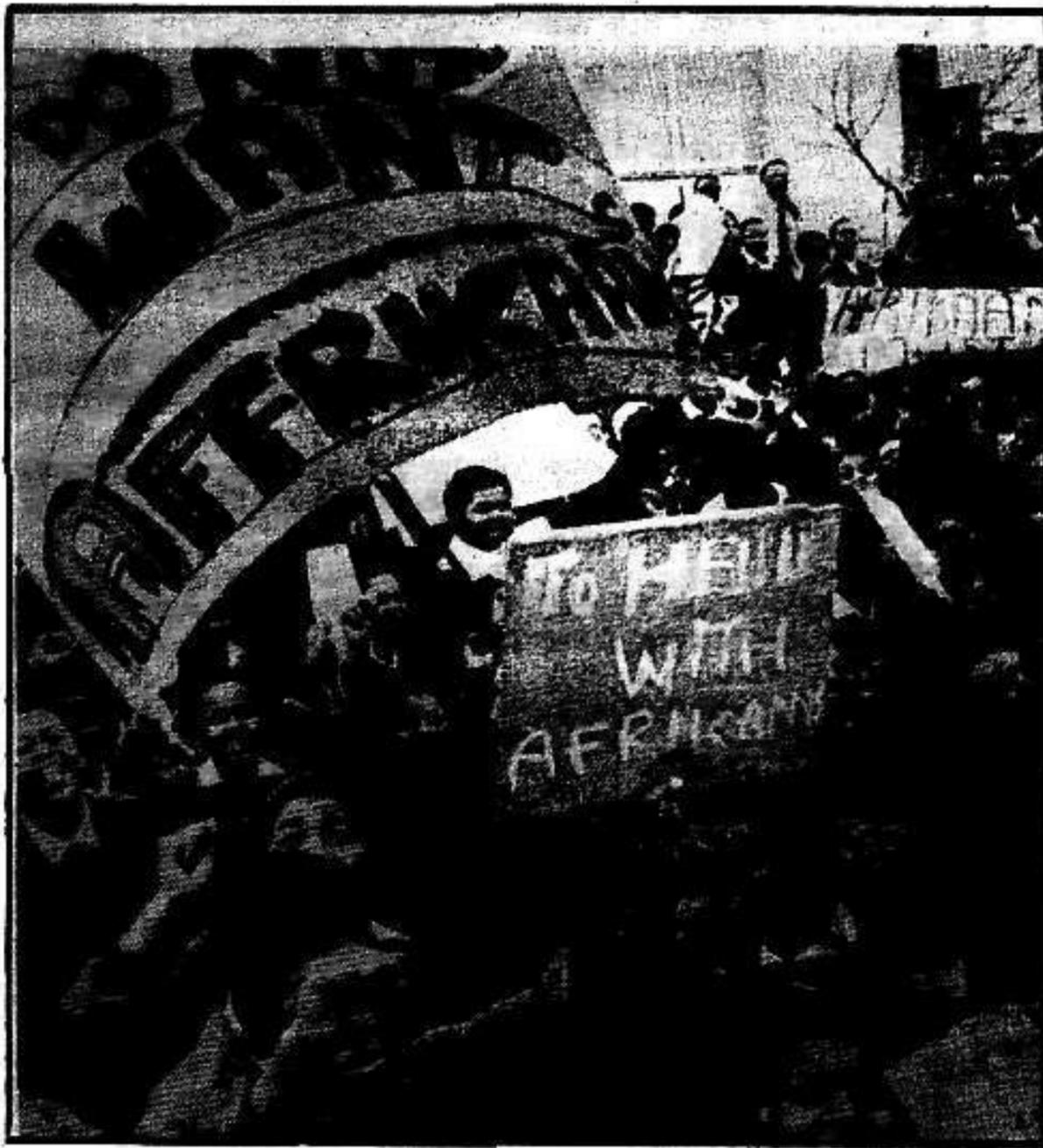
In the early 80's it became necessary to examine the need to change the quality of military activity. That is to move from armed propaganda to military activity which lay some foundation for people's war. In other words to move away from MK activity as being against mute targets, however flamboyant and sophisticated,

Some of the most important units which distinguished themselves in that new phase were the 'G' units which fell under the Transvaal Command. They attacked many police stations like Orlando, Boyseens, Wonderboom, etc. and began to deal with enemy collaborators.

Broadly speaking we are still in this phase of creating an organised army internally in both the urban and rural areas, and tackling not just mute targets but enemy personnel as well. Perhaps within that phase one can add that an additional sub-phase is in a process of being entered, that is to act in such a way that the impact of confrontation is felt not just in the black areas but also within the white electorate, the main constituency of support for the regime.

This sub-phase incorporates the campaign in the countryside on which we are engaging at the moment. This campaign is directed against the white farming community which we regard as part of the enemy's military and para-military apparatus. There are no countryside white civilians in the true sense of the term. They are all part of organised military and para-military groupings, there to prevent MK from entering and surviving in the countryside.

Minewarfare had had an important impact. It has resulted in denuding portions of the countryside, particularly the border areas. It is therefore part of a very important process of cleaning up the countryside to make it an area for freedom fighters. Also, one can say that up to a few years ago we were very anxious to avoid civilian casualties. We still are anxious. But there were moments in our military activity when we could have engaged the enemy effectively but opted out of that possibility because of the danger of civilian casualties. We are no longer completely guided by that consideration. If there is a legitimate target, surrounded by white houses, we can no longer be restricted in engaging the enemy just because there happens to be civilians in the vicinity. So in that sense too we have altered our approach.



That phase from 1976 onwards had armed propaganda as its primary objective, i.e. to announce once again the presence of MK in the only way an army announces its presence:

and begin to deal with enemy personnel because that is what war is about in the end.

As a result of that decision we witnessed the beginnings of organised assaults on the enemy.

LONG LIVE JUNE 16!