

liberatory forces. Therefore, we must mobilise all our energies and strength to foil these reactionary ploys. That time has now come!

# WILL ARMED STRUGGLE BRING MORE SUFFERING?

- BORIFI NTATHLA

Since we embarked upon armed struggle many theories aimed at disproving the feasibility of a victorious armed struggle in South Africa have been formulated. The absence of thick bushes like in other parts of Africa, the level of South Africa's economic development and the strength of the 'invincible' South African Defence Force were but some of the arguments in support of these absurd theories. Now that armed struggle has become not only a reality but prespects of a victorious revolution have emerged, the tone is gradually changing. We are told that armed struggle will bring us even worse suffering. These are the apologists of apartheid who condemn armed struggle with the aim of disarming our people so as to prevent or at best postpone the inevitable overthrow of the abominable apartheid system. Not only them. We appreciate with immense regret the existence of staunch opponents of apartheid who, due to ignorance and honest failure to understand the laws of history, still believe that the South African racist regime can be toppled by peaceful means. Though we respect this opinion of the latter, we do not share it. Whether deliberately or not, both groups present our people defenceless in the face of ceaseless and unbridled repression and violence meted out by the enemy.

## NO CHOICE

Our long history of struggle has taught us that the downfall of the apartheid system can be brought about only through force of arms. For five decades the African National Congress counselled non-violence for the attainment of its popular objectives. Who will deny that all peaceful protests during this stage of peaceful struggles were suppressed with varying degrees of violence by the racist Pretoria regime? The Sharpeville Massacre and the subsequent banning of our organisation demonstrated beyond all shadows of doubt the readiness of the enemy to use all the power at its disposal to destroy

our national liberation movement, the ANC. With the closure of all avenues of peaceful struggle, only one choice remained: "Submit or fight". When our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed, an answer to the reactionary violence perpetrated by the racist regime was found - revolutionary violence.

Even after the decision to take up arms had been reached we still hoped to bring the racists back to the world of reason. The Sabotage Campaign of the early sixties was, among other things, a letter to the government to reconsider its policies & draw our country out of the path of bloodshed and civil war. In the words of the Manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe: "We of Umkhonto we Sizwe have always sought - as the liberation movement has sought - to achieve liberation, without bloodshed and civil clash. We do so still. We hope - even at this late hour - that our first actions will awaken everyone to a realisation of the disastrous situation to which the Nationalist policy is leading. We hope that we will bring the Government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that both the Government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war."

Whether armed struggle will bring more suffering or not is not the point we intend debating or do we intend turning a blind eye to the enormous sacrifices involved in a war. The point is that the decision to turn to violence was forced on our people. We had come to realise that the overthrowal of the racist regime by non-violent means would take another 50 years, or even more. The choice of armed struggle was forced on our people for the alternative would have meant submission to perpetual bondage and servitude. All the same, such concern for our suffering is bound to rouse some response. True enough, our acts of sabotage of economic installations coupled up with our call for the international isolation of the apartheid state are bound to, in fact are calculated to engender certain economic set-backs and we also, the oppressed, will definitely suffer our share of the consequences. The acknowledgement of this fact does not and cannot in any way dissuade us from the course we have chosen. The late Chief A.J. Luthuli, as way back as 1964 stated:

"We are committed to suffering that will lead to freedom - as it has been the lot of all oppressed people before us from time immemorial. What we are determined not to do, cost what it may, is to acquiesce in a status quo that makes us semi-slaves in our own country,"

## PAST EXPERIENCE

In an attempt to project armed struggle as the cause of more suffering the oppressors have always resorted to a campaign of deliberate and systematic genocide. Failing to match the guerrillas in combat, the oppressors have always let loose their anger, desperation and frustration on the civilian population. We need only recall the barbaric crimes committed by the Americans in Vietnam where the US air force dropped more bombs than on the whole of Europe during World War II. The atrocities committed by the Rhodesian racist regime of Ian Smith against the peoples of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique defy description. The Rhodesian Sellous Scouts cutthroats hunted down people like game, murdering innocent and unarmed civilians in Chimoio, Nyazonia and numerous massacres. Whole villages, settlements and crops were destroyed and razed to the ground.

This policy of genocide has always been accompanied by a campaign of slander intended to depict the actions of freedom fighters in a distorted way. Numerous acts of banditry have been committed in the name of 'terrorists'. The aim of all these outrages is to instill fear in the masses by portraying armed struggle as an evil responsible for their untold miseries. This, it is hoped, will dissuade the people from supporting their liberatory armies.

## GROWING CAMPAIGN OF TERROR

The South African racists, like all oppressors everywhere, cannot be an exception. They've already demonstrated their readiness to unleash any amount of terror in defence of apartheid. They are daily committing untold crimes against the Namibian people. Arrests, torture and brutal massacres have become the daily life of this small, oppressed but fighting people. The death sentences imposed on six combatants of our revolutionary army; Petrus Mashigo, Naphtalie Manana, Johnson Lubisi, Anthony Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabangu and David Moise in a period of barely nine months is one fine example of Pretoria's naked brutality. The appointment of the former commander of the Rhodesian Sellous Scouts, Colonel Ron Reid-Daley, to head the Transkeian army and many other tyrannical schemes attest to the extent to which the racists are prepared to go in defence of the world-abhorred system of apartheid.

This campaign of terror is not limited within the boundaries of our country but is extended to all countries within the reach of Racist South Africa. The racist Premier P.W. Botha has repeatedly threatened to attack all neighbouring countries which "harbour ANC terrorists". Numerous attacks

against the population and the economic infrastructures of these countries have been launched with unbridled intensity. By attacking innocent civilians and economic installations in the neighbouring African states the racist rulers hope to project our war for national liberation as a cause for more suffering not only for our people but for the entire region. This is calculated to discourage the peoples of these countries from supporting their brother people in their struggle against the cancerous system of apartheid. But no amount of terror can stop independent Africa from supporting our liberation struggle. Each attack against independent Africa convinces the people of these countries more and more that Africa will never know peace and stability as long as South Africa remains in the hands of the white racist minority.

### **UMKHONTO WE SIZWE**

When our army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was formed in 1961 it declared in its Manifesto: "Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front-line of the people's defence." This should serve as a reminder to those who pose haunted by fear of future sufferings that our people are no more defenceless. No terrorism and repression will go unpunished. Our ability to defend our people against all repression, be it police, administration, employers, etc., have been clearly demonstrated by the two explosions which rocked Parcs for Peugeot and Leyland in Durban and numerous other attacks against administrative offices, plants, police stations, etc. As our army grows from strength to strength such actions will grow both in scope and intensity till the achievement of our victory.

### **VICTORY OR DEATH**

When we decided to take up arms we were never geared for an easy victory. We knew as we still know that the struggle will be long and bitter. No oppressor has ever surrendered power to the people without stiff and stubborn resistance. The South African racists will employ all their power in defence of apartheid and their resistance will grow stiffer as the spectre of defeat looms over them. But we have demonstrated already our readiness to sacrifice our all in pursuit of the lofty ideals embodied in the Freedom Charter. "Our task, the task of the ANC and its allies, of the cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe and of the popular masses of our country", in the words of Comrade President O.R. Tambo, "is to take to the battlefield with all its bitterness and fight through to the brightness of a new day, a new South Africa..."