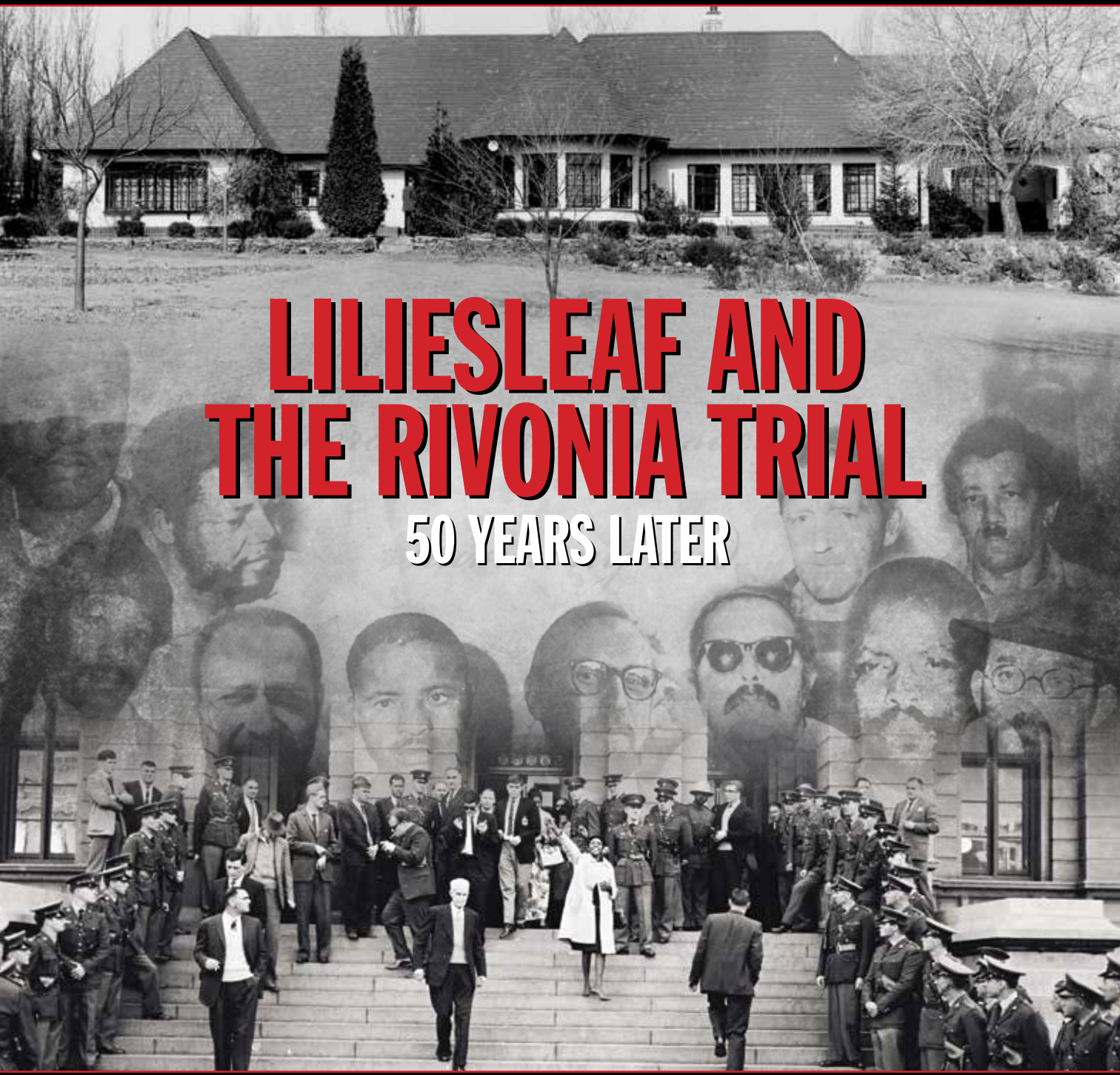
JUNE 2013 / VOLUME 52

The Thinker

FOR THOUGHT LEADERS



LILIESLEAF AND THE RIVONIA TRIAL

50 YEARS LATER

SOUTH AFRICA R29.95

9 772075 245006 13052

USA $2.95 UK £2.95

Kgalema Motlanthe on The philosophical, political and moral obligations imposed on us by the Rivonia Trail

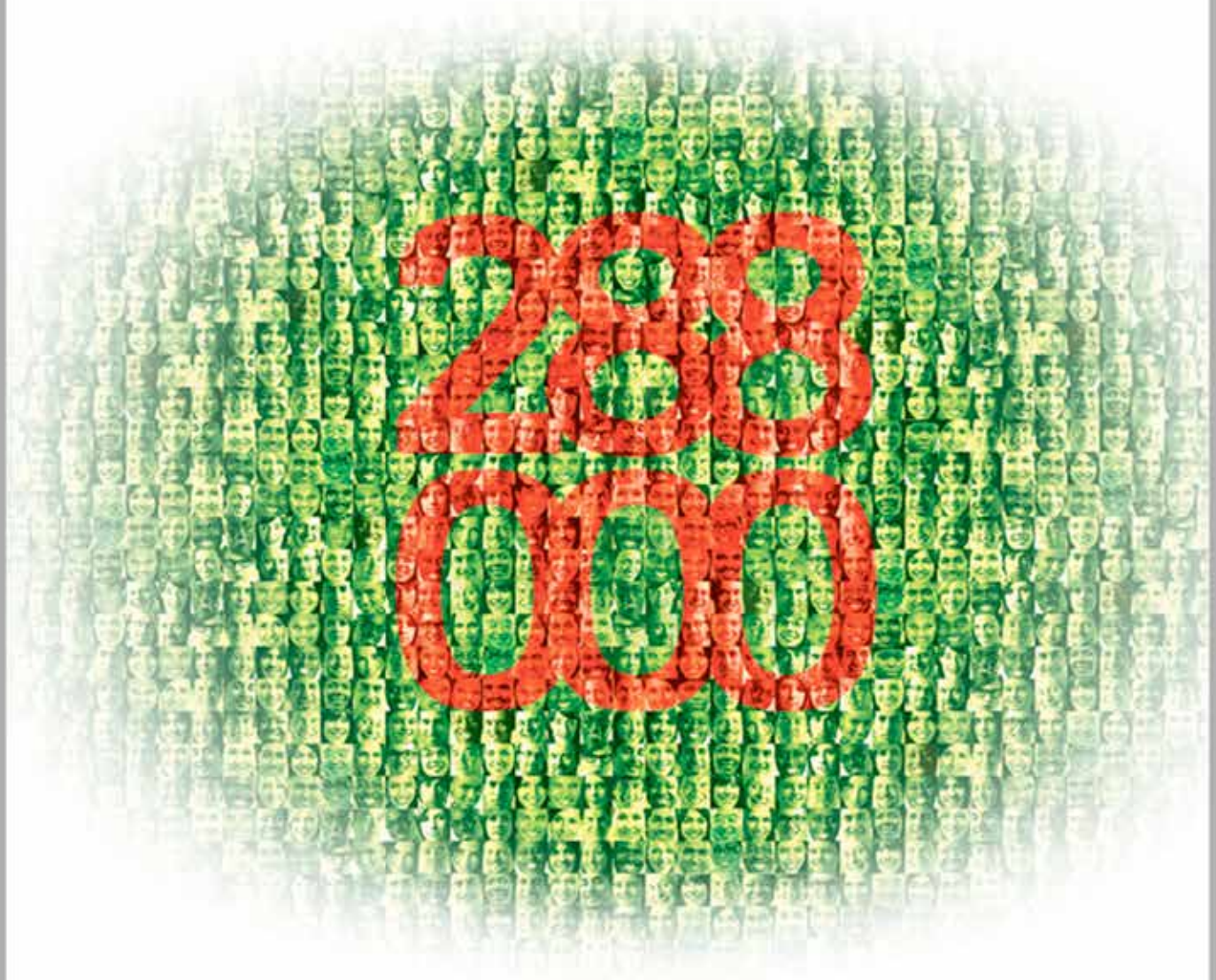
Ronnie Kasrils on the Role, Function and Achievements of Umkhonto we Sizwe

Trevor Manuel on The complexities of Governance for the new Democratic Government

Jackie Sedibe on The Role of Women in MK

Steven Friedman on Wolpe and Theorisation of the Struggle

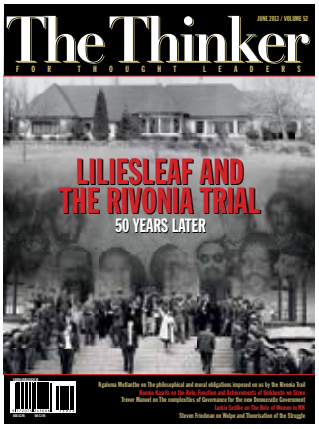
NEW JOBS OVER THE NEXT 7 YEARS



MDS
MARKET DEMAND STRATEGY

TRANSNET

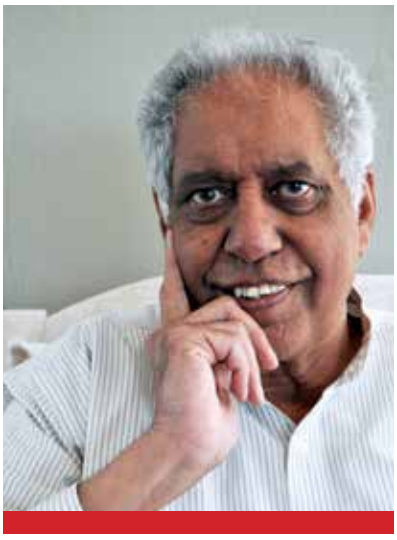
In This Issue



On the Cover:

Events and actions that shapes or present and future should never be forgotten.

Lest we forget!



On 12 June 1964, Judge de Wet sentenced to life imprisonment the Rivonia Trialists, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni, Denis Goldberg and Ahmed Kathrada. This sentence, as harsh as it was, was received by millions of people in South Africa, Africa and the world with a sigh of relief. From the inception of the trail in October 1963, there existed the very real possibility that the accused could be sentenced to death.

As Kathrada points out:

The spectre of the gallows had loomed large in our minds since the moment of arrest, and we had effectively resigned ourselves to the inevitable. Even at my most bold and blunt during interrogation by Rooi Rus Swanepoel, I was concealing my innermost and deepest fear. Now our lawyers had spelt it out in the clearest possible language.

Our strategy from the outset was to treat this as a political trial and to conduct ourselves with pride and dignity. The eyes of our people, and the world, would be on us, and dared not show weakness. We could not rely on the Appeal Court to overturn a death sentence, only the struggle and international solidarity could save us from the gallows. Therefore, in the event of a death sentence we would not lodge an appeal. We prepared ourselves for the worst.

We had no idea what specific charges we would face, but we were determined to force the prosecution to prove each and every allegation levelled at us, and challenge every shred of fabricated evidence they placed before the court. We would make admissions or volunteer information only if this was politically expedient.

And, regardless of the consequences, we would not apologise for our political beliefs or activities. (Ahmed Kathrada: Memoirs: 166)

The dignity and courage displayed by the accused, combined with their determination to uphold the justice of their cause, provided inspiration for many, many millions in South Africa and the rest of the world to bring to an end the evil system of apartheid. Their unbowed spirits and the great fortitude they showed during the following many years of imprisonment generated immeasurable support for the international struggle against what was described by the United Nations as "a Crime against Humanity".

This issue of *The Thinker* is dedicated to marking the 50th anniversary of the raid on the Liliesleaf farm on 11 July, 1963, and the subsequent Rivonia Trial, which lasted from October 1963 to June 1964.

We feel privileged that Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, Ronnie Kasrils, Denis Goldberg, Jackie Sedibe, Sifiso Ndlovu, Sipho Pityana, Greg Houston, Mosie Moola, Mandla Dube, Abba Omar, Steven Friedman, Trevor Manuel and Nicholas Wolpe contributed to this issue. The authors capture in a most vivid way the history of our struggle as well as the contemporary challenges confronting the ANC government and the people of our country.

It is the duty and responsibility of the living to keep alive the glorious history of the resistance movements and the selfless sacrifices made by so many cadres and leaders. We should never allow this history to fade and finally disappear from the consciousness of our nation.

In that context, Liliesleaf farm transformed into a "Place of Liberation", in a project driven by Nicholas Wolpe, and "Freedom Park", a concept initiated and developed by former President Thabo Mbeki and given practical shape by Wally Serote, should remain iconic places of remembrance and reverence.

In recollecting our own history of struggle we should always pay homage to the international anti-apartheid movement. In a moving address to the Special Committee of the United Nations on 8 October 1963, the day the Rivonia Trial began, Oliver Tambo said:

I cannot believe that the United Nations can stand by, calmly watching what I submit is genocide masquerading under the guise of a civilized dispensation of justice. The African and other South Africans who are being dragged to the slaughterhouse face death, or life imprisonment, because they fearlessly resisted South Africa's violations of the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, because they fought against a government armed to the teeth and relying on armed force, to end inhumanity, to secure the liberation of the African people, to end racial discrimination, to replace racial intolerance and tyranny with democracy and equality, irrespective of colour, race or creed.

Every single day spent in gaol by any of our people, every drop of blood drawn from any of them, and every life taken – each of these represents a unit of human worth lost to us. This loss we can no longer afford. It is surely not in the interests of South Africa or even of the South African Government that this loss should be increased any further. (*Oliver Tambo Speaks*: 46)

Just 50 years later, after far too much loss of dignity, blood and human life, negotiations finally gave birth to a democratic South Africa. But, as Stephen Friedman points out, there is still much to be done:

Important as the breakthrough of 1994 was, it has not guaranteed the shift of power to apartheid's victims: this has depended on the extent to which the dominated have been able to use the rights which democracy offers to turn the promise of a say into reality. ■

Rivonia Trialists celebrated through Art

The paintings shown here are currently on view at the University of Pretoria. As Professor Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo says, "History is about going into the inside of the human mind. Therefore, study the paintings as contributed, as a means to learn about history."

The artist, Marie Vermeulen-Breedt, "had a confrontation with history and the circumstances surrounding our attainment of freedom. The men portrayed were the catalyst for reform, resolutely confronting the wrongs created by apartheid. I hope that their portrayal, for the first time in paint and as the twelve trialists, will make the viewer aware of their service and sacrifice to the people of South Africa."

The twelve Rivonia trialists are fearless. Study the visual expressions. Many years ago their faces were not allowed to be seen because they were viewed as a threat. These paintings portray them as persons with a vision and mission to change South Africa in perpetuity. They are teachers and pillars of a nation struggling to emerge, human beings willing to sacrifice their own lives. Their portrayal projects men who would not settle for less than what they knew was right, and what they knew their people deserved.

Nelson Mandela

Walter Sisulu

Govan Mbeki

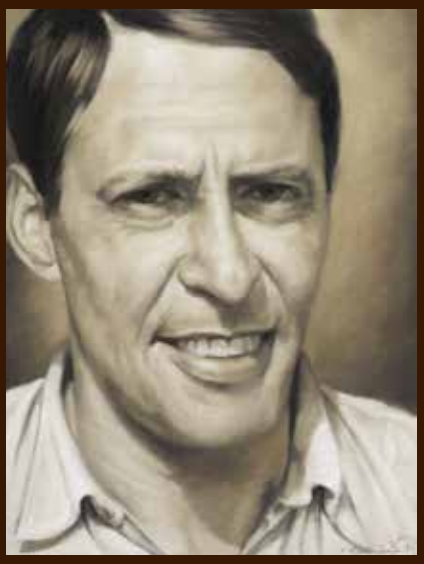
Rusty Bernstein

Raymond Mhlaba

Ahmed Kathrada

Dennis Goldberg

Jimmy Kantor



Arthur Goldreich

Andrew Mlangeni

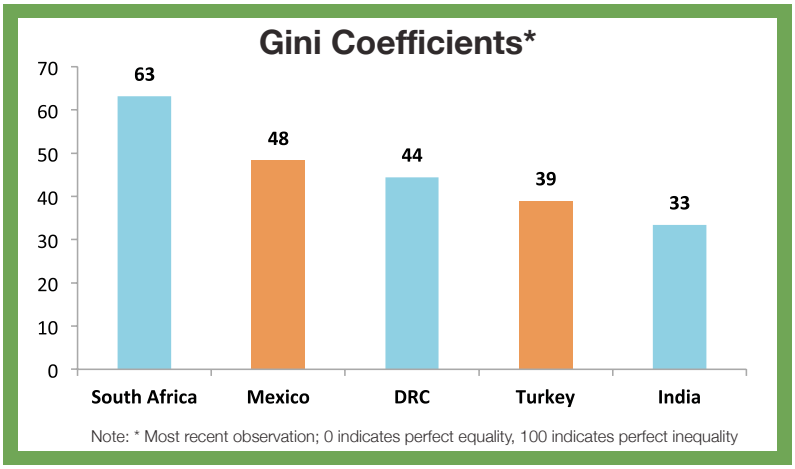
Harold Wolpe

Elias Motsoaledi

Social and Economic Progress in Democratic South Africa

It is sometimes said that South Africa's social and economic progress has been too slow and too concentrated since 1994.

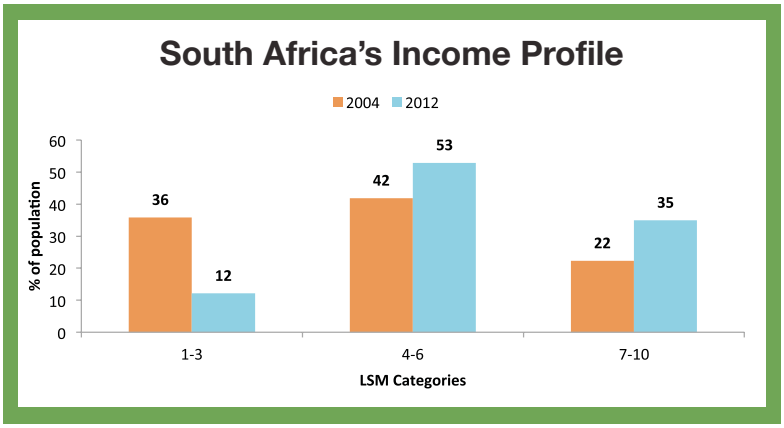
Our country's Gini coefficient, a popular measure of income inequality, has significantly worsened since the onset of democracy. Not only has the indicator been moving in the wrong direction, it also compares poorly to South Africa's global peers. The most recent estimate of our Gini coefficient stands at 63.1, contrasting strongly with countries such as Mexico (48.3), Turkey (39), India (33.4), and the DRC (44.4).



It is easy to conclude from the above data that South Africa is on a negative path. However, a fair conclusion can only be drawn from a balanced analysis. If we consider the migration of South Africa's Living Standards Measure (LSM) profile over the years, tangible improvements in the lives of the poorest become more evident. According to data compiled by the South African Audience Research Foundation, the concentration of South African citizens living in the lowest three LSM categories declined sharply from 36% to 12% of the population between 2004 and 2012. As a result, the proportion of the population in the middle income and higher income LSM categories has increased quite materially over the past eight years.

The migration of our LSM profile is not the only indication of progress. Referring to World Bank data, the proportion of South Africa's population living on an income below the equivalent of $2 per day declined from about 40% in 1994 to just above 30% in the most recent observation, further supporting the idea that life is better now than it was then for much of the country's poor.

Undoubtedly, government's role as the administrator of a progressive tax system and a distributor of income to those in need has been important in ensuring the relative social stability that we have seen over the past two decades. In the 2013/14 national budget, transfers and subsidies to households make up a sizable 16% of consolidated government expenditure. Additionally, social grants expenditure is now equivalent to 3.4% of the national economy, providing a major boost to overall consumption. The demand for goods and services created by higher levels of consumption feeds naturally into lower unemployment and faster growth than otherwise would occur, as multiple rounds of new spending are generated.



Considering the more balanced view of South Africa's economic and social progress since 1994, the value of the sacrifices made by those who were part of the struggle becomes abundantly clear. While development has been slower than what the country has hoped for, South Africa has certainly not moved backwards.

The robust political debate amongst diverse members of society through the various media platforms gives us a striking reminder of the extent of progress made in issues such as freedom of speech and association. The substantial growth of a new black middle class also shines light on positive changes for many of those whose incomes were previously stagnant or declining.

However, if our country is to reach its full potential, we will need to become active on a number of fronts. Evidently, the South African economy is heavily reliant on the social safety net of government's welfare system. While this method of stimulating the economy has been important to maintaining social cohesion and income growth, it cannot continue on the same scale forever. South Africa's long term prospects therefore rest on the implementation of more sustainable supply-side policies, aimed at improving the competitiveness and capacity of our industries while slowly but methodically reducing the burden on government to keep the economy afloat. In this regard, we have seen policy migrate towards an emphasis on global competitiveness, infrastructure development, and cost control in key network industries. With sufficient political buy-in from all levels of government and society, the deliberate and consistent implementation of these supply-side policies have the potential to move the South African economy into the territory of true emerging market growth. The full value of those sacrifices made during the struggle will be felt when South Africa reaches this state. ■

All contributing analysts write in their personal capacity

Mandla Dube is a writer and award winning cinematographer. He lectured at Wits Television and at Tshwane University of Technology, and has a Master's degrees in both cinematography and heritage management. Mandla worked on *Sobukwe: A Great Soul*, which won SAFTA's 2013 best film, editing, directing and educational documentary. He has also worked on *Kalushi* at the South African State Theatre and the Rivonia Trial play, and on films like *Tsotsi, The Italian Job*, and *Strike Back*. He is currently developing feature film scripts.

Prof Steven Friedman (D Litt) is a political scientist and is Director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Rhodes University and the University of Johannesburg. Over the past decade, he has written on the relationship between democracy, social inequality and economic growth as well as the significance of citizen action. Friedman is the author of *Building Tomorrow Today*, a study of the South African trade union movement, and editor of *The Long Journey* and *The Small Miracle* (with Doreen Atkinson) on the South African political transition.

Denis Goldberg has a long history of involvement in the freedom struggle in South Africa. In 1963 he was arrested at Liliesleaf and after the Rivonia Trial he was sentenced to four terms of life imprisonment and confined to a white prison in Pretoria. Whilst in prison he took degrees in Public Administration, History, Geography, and Library Science. He was halfway through a law degree when he was released, in 1985, after 22 years in prison. In 2010 he published his autobiography, *The Mission: A Life for Freedom in South Africa* (STE Publishers).

Derek Hanekom was the Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, and he is now the Minister. He was the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs in the Nelson Mandela government. An anti-apartheid activist in the NGO sector, he was first arrested in 1976. He served a prison sentence for his political activities from 1983–1986, and was exiled in Zimbabwe, where he was a coordinator of the Popular History Trust in Harare from 1988-1990. He has been a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee since 1994, and is currently the chairperson of the ANC's disciplinary committee.

Dr Gregory Houston is a previous Executive Director of the South African Democracy Education Trust and has contributed chapters to five of SADET's six volumes. He is a chief research specialist at the HSRC, and holds a PhD in political science from the University of Natal. Dr Houston has authored *The National Liberation Struggle in South Africa: A case study of the United Democratic Front, 1983-87* and co-edited *Public Participation in Democratic Governance in South Africa*. His research interests include theoretical and empirical studies of the politics and history of resistance, issues of identity and race, and public participation in political processes.

Ronnie Kasrils (ANC Khumalo) was a member of the Natal Regional Command of MK at its inception in 1961. He became its Chief of Military Intelligence in 1983; served on the Lusaka based Political Military Council, on the ANC's NEC and the SACP's Central Committee for many years. He has written a best-selling book about MK entitled *Armed and Dangerous* and another prize-winning book, *The Unlikely Secret Agent*, about his late wife Eleanor's role in MK and the underground. Ronnie was also Deputy Minister of Defence, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry and Minister of Intelligence in the Mandela and Mbeki governments.

Trevor Manuel studied Civil and Structural Engineering at Peninsula Technikon. He also did an Executive Management Programme at Stanford National University in Singapore. He became active in the anti-apartheid struggle in the late '70s and served on the executive of the United Democratic Front. He was repeatedly detained without trial or placed under house arrest, spending a total of thirty-five months in detention. He was elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC and appointed head of the Department of Economic Planning in 1991. He was appointed Minister of Trade and Industry in 1994, in 1996 he was appointed Minister of Finance and in 2009 he was appointed Minister in the Presidency: National Planning.

Mosie Moolla, a former Treason Trialist and 90-day detainee was forced into exile in 1963. He joined the external mission of the ANC in Tanzania, edited its weekly news digest - *Spotlight on South Africa* - before being posted to head the Asian mission of the ANC in Delhi. Thereafter he was ANC Chief Representative in Egypt and the Middle-East and concurrently on the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation. He was re-posted to India in the '80s before being sent to Helsinki to represent the ANC on the World Peace Council. He joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1990 and served as Ambassador to Iran and High Commissioner to Pakistan.

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe has served with distinction the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), COSATU, SACP and the ANC. In the early 70s he was a member of the ANC underground and Umkhonto we Sizwe. In 1976 after spending 11 months in solitary confinement, Kgalema and his comrades Stan Nkosi and Joseph Mosoeu were charged under the Terrorism Act. They were sentenced to ten years which they served on Robben Island. On his release he worked for NUM. He was elected Secretary General of the ANC, 1997-2007. In 2007 he was Elected Deputy President of the ANC. In 2008 he was elected as President of South Africa following the resignation of Thabo Mbeki. Following the 2009 election he was appointed as Deputy President.

Dr Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu obtained an MA in History at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) and a PhD in History at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is currently the Executive Director at the South African

Democracy Education Trust (SADET). He is one of the authors of *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* series. Dr Ndlovu's other main research fields focus on youth, labour and pre-colonial history.

Yacoob Abba Omar is Director: Operations of the Mapungubwe Institute (MISTRA). He was South Africa's Ambassador to Oman from 2003 to 2008, and then to the United Arab Emirates from 2008 to December 2012. Abba worked as the Deputy Director-General of Government Communications (GCIS) from 1998 to 2002 and prior to that as General Manager: Corporate Affairs of Armscor. During this period he was appointed onto the South African National AIDS Council and facilitated the Presidency's Scenario Project in 2002 and in 2007. He worked for the ANC from 1985 to the first democratic elections.

Sipho Pityana is a business leader and the Chairperson of the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution. A former Director General in the departments of Labour and Foreign Affairs, he played an important role in laying the foundations for South Africa's democratic constitutional order, introducing the labour reforms that changed the face of South Africa's labour relations system. In 1989 he coordinated the Nelson Mandela International Reception Committee and returned to South Africa in 1991. He is widely published and wrote *Beyond the Factory Floor*, a survey of COSATU shop stewards. He joined the private sector in 2002 and currently serves as a director of Anglo-Gold Ashanti, and as Chairman of Munich Reinsurance and Izingwe Capital.

Jackie Sedibe joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and was sent to the Soviet Union for military training and selected for advanced training in Moscow. She served as a soldier in MK in Tanzania in a unit with eight women and about 500 men.. Later she served on the political military council of the ANC. Sedibe was among the first group of former MK members to be integrated into the South African National Defence Force. In 1996 she was promoted to the rank of Major-General and in 1997 appointed as Chief Director of equal opportunities in the SANDF. Sedibe was married to former Defence Minister Joe Modise.

Nicholas Wolpe is one of three children of Harold and Annmarie Wolpe. The family went into exile following Harold's escape from detention prior to the Rivonia Trial. Nicholas was educated in the UK and in 1988 attained his BA Hons in Sociology from the University of Warwick. In 1991 he returned to South Africa from exile. In December 2001 he organised the Rivonia Trial Reunion. He is the founder and CEO of the Liliesleaf Trust and is the driving force behind the Liliesleaf Legacy Project which has preserved, restored and developed a dynamic immersive interactive exhibition. ■

The Thinker

FOR THOUGHT LEADERS

The Journal for Progressive Thought

Publisher
Vusizwe Media

Editor
Dr Essop Pahad
egp@thethinker.co.za

Managing Editor
Meg Pahad
megpahad@mweb.co.za

Editorial Assistant & PA to Dr Pahad
Zain Dindar

Advertising, Production & Distribution
Zain Dindar
zain@thethinker.co.za
Saki Mabhele
saki@babanagroup.co.za
Tel: +27 82 750 3729

All Correspondence To
The Editor
The Thinker
editor@thethinker.co.za
Vusizwe Media
Office 253, 2nd Floor
Dunkeld West Shopping Centre
c/o Jan Smuts & Bompass
Dunkeld West
2196
Tel:+27 11 325 2078
Fax: +27 86 608 4799

Design & Art Direction
Liesel van der Schyf
liesel@vdsdesign.co.za
Tel:+27 82 336 7537

Accountants
Karolia Jeena inc.
+27 11 537 3700
karjeena@iafrica.com

Contributing Analysts
Haroon Bhorat, Willie Esterhuyse, Brandon Foot, Steven Friedman, Mel Gooding, Shadrack Gutto, Adam Habib, Francis Kornegay, JP Landman, Peter Lawrence, Chris Landsberg, Garth le Pere, Riël Malan, Eddie Maloka, Tshilidzi Marwala, Zamikhaya Maseti, Kuben Naidoo, Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu, Aziz Pahad, Angina Parekh, Mike Prior, Ronald Suresh Roberts, Anver Saloojee, Mongane Wally Serote, Khadija Sharife, Mats Svensson, Yves Wantens

Le Penseur by Auguste Rodin

Printed by CTP Printers, Cape Town, South Africa

www.thethinker.co.za

Subscriptions
Zain Dindar
subscription@thethinker.co.za
Tel: +27 82 369 7422

The philosophical, political and moral obligations imposed on us by the Rivonia Trail

With hindsight we now know that the Rivonia Trial was a constitutive historical moment that created a climate change that began a gradual process of the withering away of the apartheid ideology.

By Kgalema Motlanthe

Looking at the 50th anniversary of the Rivonia Trial as well as the 20th anniversary of democracy in South Africa, one cannot help noticing the striking manifestation of the notion of causality as it plays itself out in history.

Indeed it appears incontestable that the emergence of the democratic breakthrough of April 1994 was intrinsic to a process that began with the raid of Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia and the subsequent sabotage charges brought against the anti-apartheid fighters in what would be known as the Rivonia Trial. One would be hard put to identify causative conditions that made South Africa's democratic breakthrough possible in our historical narrative outside the defining episode of the Rivonia Trial.

There does not seem to be universal agreement on a clear and univocal definition or description of what causation is or what it means to say something causes something else. (For a comprehensive treatment of this subject see the works of Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* and *Metaphysics*.)

The causal link between the two historical poles may not be self-evident at first sight but a closer examination of all the political emanations of the Rivonia Trial throws the underlying connection in bold relief. Without sounding deterministic, it can also be contended that subjective conditions created by the political actors in the Rivonia Trial largely shaped the resultant historical process into specific directions that would inexorably lead to definite long-term outcomes. At the same time, objective conditions imposed themselves on the path to the future the struggle was carving.

At a philosophical level the spirit behind the Rivonia Trial – the very spirit whose intensity propelled the historical process until the end of apartheid - necessarily brings up the full weight of the seminal thought of Georg Hegel that:

> *It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; the individual who has not staked his or her life may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he or she has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness*

(Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind*:23)

In these Hegelian terms, the democratic breakthrough of 27 April 1994 was the culmination of the claims for freedom made by the African National Congress (ANC), whose years of hard slog in the theatre of struggle for liberation had generated a self-consciousness that transcended the extraneously imposed servile status on the oppressed to stake a claim to its innate personhood. In consequence the epochal events of the Rivonia Trial 1963-4 represented, with the advantage of hindsight, the distinct possibility for a day such as April 27 1994 when the highly unequal relationship of lordship and bondage in South Africa would be finally ended.

Background

While it remains true that the Rivonia Trial became the central event that led to the possibility of April 1994, it should be borne in mind that the Rivonia Trial was itself an outcome of numerous preceding events that need to be surfaced for the strategic importance of the Rivonia Trial to be appreciated.

> "While the apartheid justice system sought to use a semblance of justice to put the anti-apartheid leadership away, it unintentionally created propitious conditions for this leadership to articulate the core vision of the struggle to the whole world."

The evolution of a non-racist perspective within the ANC gradually enabled all progressive forces to coalesce around the notion of a free and just post-apartheid society. The Doctors' Pact, signed in 1947 by Doctors

Mama Albertina Sisulu attending the Rivonia Trial.

Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo, provided the stimulus for the subsequent Defiance Campaign of 1952.

The ANC had passed a resolution in its 1951 Congress to mobilise the masses into action in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Interestingly, the resolution was drawn up by the joint Planning Council, which comprised the leadership of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress.

During its span of five months the Defiance Campaign clearly demonstrated to the regime that South Africans of all descriptions and races were united behind the vision of political equality and democracy.

The ANC, the Congress of Democrats, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the South African Indian Congress and the South African Coloured Peoples' Organisation came together in what became known as the Congress Alliance and began

> "These lofty words did not only sum up the spirit and idea of the struggle for liberation but became hymnal, a sort of divine inspiration that breathed life into anti-apartheid activism everywhere in the world."

to mobilise the people towards a common vision for a post-apartheid society – The Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter provided a platform for the espousal of a non-racial society, and its preamble clearly states that:

> *We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:*
>
> *that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.*

By elevating the principle of non-racism, the Freedom Charter broke new ground by offering an alternative worldview that philosophically undercut the prevailing dominant thought system of white supremacy even as it drew many progressive-minded South Africans together.

When the police swept on Liliesleaf on that fateful day on 11 July 1963 and arrested the leaders on charges of sabotage, the die was already cast on a number of imperative fronts. Firstly, non-racism had taken root at the coalface of the struggle, cementing inter-racial solidarity. Secondly, the resort to violent means of overthrowing the regime was established as a strategy that would guide the struggle from this point on; and lastly, the regime's intransigence and determination to defend racial domination was recognised as an accepted fact.

The Historical Significance of the Rivonia Trial

Once again, with hindsight we now know that the Rivonia Trial was

a constitutive historical moment that created a climate change that began a gradual process of the withering away of the apartheid ideology. From the Rivonia Trial to the dissolution of apartheid in 1994 when for the first time all South Africans cast their vote for the government of their choice, several distinct anti-apartheid permutations emerged, the aggregate effect of which would in time prove too formidable for the apartheid state.

The first permutation to come out of the Rivonia Trial as a long-term cause of the future 1994 breakthrough was the emergence of the iconic figures in the firmament of our history, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg and Andrew Mlangeni. They were able to articulate the innermost yearnings of oppressed South Africans, projecting the future post-apartheid society whose moral underpinnings undermined the grounds of apartheid claims.

Secondly, in a feat of historical irony, the Rivonia Trial afforded the struggle both a national and an international platform it could otherwise not have had. While the apartheid justice system sought to use a semblance of justice to put the anti-apartheid leadership away, it unintentionally created propitious conditions for this leadership to articulate the core vision of the struggle to the whole world. More than at any time in the anti-apartheid struggle the quintessential vision that made up the core of the struggle was expounded with exceptional clarity. For instance Mandela's speech in the dock was to reverberate across the world in ways that were until then never thought possible. The following excerpt from the speech was to internationalise the exalted credentials of the struggle:

> *During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, my lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.*

> "It was also transcendent in that it envisioned the contours of a post-apartheid society, imposing obligations on us, its modern inheritors, to live within its moral parameters and philosophical paradigm."

These lofty words did not only sum up the spirit and idea of the struggle for liberation but became hymnal, a sort of divine inspiration that breathed life into anti-apartheid activism everywhere in the world. They became a trope for the struggle between good and evil and the refusal of the human spirit to submit to oppression. The trial had the desired effect of igniting international consciousness about the apartheid system and the insufferable experience of black South Africans under conditions of political inequality, social discrimination and economic exploitation.

Mandela's speech was either extracted or reported in various influential international publications. In addition, the international community was jolted into action. During the trial the United National even sent messages to the South African government asking it not to impose capital punishment on the trialists. Immediately after the conviction of Mandela and his comrades the United Nations condemned the trial and called for sanctions against the apartheid state.

> "We went into the court room determined to put apartheid in the dock, even if this were to put our own lives at risk."

International solidarity went into a high gear, with 106 members of the UN voting in favour of a resolution calling for the end of the political trial, which was a major moral victory over the illegitimate state. Trade unions around the world were refusing to handle SA goods, with US senators and UK MPs staging marches, which was unprecedented. Gradually over time all these measures begin taking their toll on the regime despite its contrived facade of composure and bravado.

The third permutation, closely related to the Mandela impact at the level of symbolism, is the moral and legal dimensions of the Rivonia Trial, which, in the same measure of irony, put the whole apartheid system on trial. In terms of this permutation the trial, as seen by the players then, provided a media platform upon which the ANC could crystallise the ideals of the struggle through an institutional record, placing in a formal court of law its understanding of the National Democratic Struggle. In the final analysis, as Mandela later explained "We went into the court room determined to put apartheid in the dock, even if this were to put our own lives at risk." (Diane Halpern: *Thought and Knowledge*).

An expansive view of the nature and ultimate goals of the struggle was further given by Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Ahmed Kathrada. Walter Sisulu clarified the nature of the struggle by arguing that "in the face of violence, men struggling for freedom have had to meet violence with violence. How can it be otherwise in South Africa? Changes must come. Changes for the better, but not without sacrifice. Your sacrifice. My sacrifice." (Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge*:760)

As such the trial, despite the spectacular setback the Rivonia arrests represented for the struggle, evolved to become an avenue to define the values of human dignity, equality, non-racism, non-sexism, the supremacy of the Constitution and universal adult suffrage as the ANC understood it. As the trialists explain in their generic

Winnie Mandela attending the Rivonia Trial

letter about Joel Joffee, their attorney: "He has understood and accepted that, above all else, we would not compromise our belief or consciences for legal advantage and in that understanding he has advised us along a course which we fully believe to have been politically correct, and legally as well." (Joel Joffee: *The State vs. Nelson Mandela: The Trial that Changed South Africa*)

Fourthly, the non-racial composition of the struggle undermined the entire philosophical edifice upon which the apartheid state had sought to justify its social domination, by among others, depicting apartheid as a natural order of things as well as rooting it in a Christian world outlook. Yet, when both national and international media covered the trial a large section of society benefiting from the status quo was shocked to discover that the struggle was made up of people from different racial backgrounds. This insight, following so soon after the Treason Trial of 1956 to 1960, did not only pour cold water on the hare-brained ideological machinations of the system but would later on inspire countless young South Africans from among the ranks of the national minorities to follow the example set by the Rivonia Trialists. Indeed the activists that swelled the ranks of the United Democratic Front in the 1980s as well as many other resistance formations that emerged from the 1970s, included white, Indian and Coloured South Africans who had grown impervious to the ideological manipulation of apartheid partly because of the inspiration drawn from the non-racial composition of the struggle.

> “The Rivonia Trial passed into history as the prime matrix event, thereby pre-inclining our historical trajectory in a particular direction for subsequent generations.”

Lastly, through the efforts of the ANC President in exile, Oliver Tambo, the isolation of South Africa became a reality. Isolating the apartheid regime was one of the four pillars under which the struggle was waged. These were international isolation, the armed struggle, underground work and mass mobilisation. While the concept of the four pillars of the struggle emerged explicitly in the ’80s, it is worth noting that, in practice, all these pillars had underpinned the struggle from as early as the 1960s when President Oliver Tambo went into exile.

Conclusion

While the historical value of the Rivonia Trial as the stage in our history that defined the future cannot be gainsaid, it is equally important not to see this event in isolation. A host of political developments in the previous decade resulted in the Rivonia Trial, though as a happenstance.

Crowds awaiting verdict of the Rivonia Trial

From the viewpoint of the ANC and the Congress Alliance at large, the Rivonia Trial was a massive setback, although, as it has been shown, this setback turned out positive permutations, not by chance but because of the political wit and strategic vision that guided the struggle. Ultimately what appeared to be unmitigated failure finally yielded positive outcomes as attested to by the number of permutations which, it is argued, led to the final moral, political, economic and social vitiation of the apartheid behemoth.

It is widely agreed that the Rivonia Trial had short- and long-term consequences on the course of the freedom struggle. While imprisoning key leaders of the struggle did represent a setback, at least in the short-term, it also imbued the imprisoned activists with the mantle of martyrdom, and an epic air of legend, immortalising their names and, ironically, inspiring many more young activists to follow in their footsteps. Besides, the Rivonia Trial also signalled the urgent need to begin employing alternative means of struggle to strike at the heart of the apartheid state. As a result the underground networks outside and inside South Africa gained strength and more sophistication as more young South Africans from across the racial divide continued to fill the ranks of the ANC.

The raiding of the Liliesleaf farm and the subsequent trial of the key activists and leaders of the struggle became a meta-context in which everything else that happened in South Africa played out. The Rivonia Trial passed into history as the prime matrix event, thereby pre-inclining our historical trajectory in a particular direction for subsequent generations. While it is not always advisable to pose hypothetical questions in history, it is interesting to ask what could have happened had the leaders of the South African revolution decided not to embrace freedom as the essence of what distinctively lies at the heart of the human makeup and instead gave in to the apartheid system. In other words, what if, in the Hegelian sense, all those individuals had decided against staking their lives, and in that way failed to attain 'the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness'?

Looked at closer, the essence of the Rivonia Trial resides in its trans-historical character. While it constituted the philosophical basis as well as the reference point of the struggle, it was also transcendent in that it envisioned the contours of a post-apartheid society, imposing obligations on us, its modern inheritors, to live within its moral parameters and philosophical paradigm. This is summed up by Mandela's words that:

> *We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity"* (Nelson Mandela, inauguration address, 10 May 1994). ■

The Thinker puts Questions to Ronnie Kasrils

on the Role, Function and Achievements of Umkhonto we Sizwe

MK High Command Joe Slovo, Chris Hani and Joe Modise

Every MK combatant was required to have a clear understanding of ANC policy in respect of what we were fighting for and who the real enemy was. They were clear they invoked a people's cause; not a personal agenda of some war-lord or individual leader.

Q: Can you recall where you were and your situation at the time of the raid on Liliesleaf Farm?

Well, on that fateful day fifty years ago I was in hiding outside Durban with Ebrahim Ismail, Abolani Duma and Bruno Mtolo *(who proved to be a traitor and was a star state witness at the Rivonia and Pietermaritzburg MK trials)* at what later came to be called "Little Rivonia" – a safe house organised by my late wife Eleanor – at that time my girlfriend. The four of us had retreated there to continue our activities after evading an SB round-up of Durban MK operatives in May that had netted Billy Nair, Curnick Ndlovu, Sunny Singh and scores of others.

Eleanor, an MK member herself, was our key contact with above-ground comrades in Durban, and the national leadership in Johannesburg. Usually cheerful, she arrived at our hide-out looking grim.

She had the morning newspaper with her which told the sensational story of the arrests at Rivonia – eighteen in number. Those who would eventually be put on trial, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and company, had all been under house arrest and had disappeared months before to lead the struggle from underground. Hopes of our entire movement were very high and the masses had enormous faith in their leadership. Their arrest was a massive setback to the struggle and our highest hopes were deflated. We were all devastated but after the impact had sunk in it was decided that Eleanor would go to Jo'burg to meet with her contact Bram Fischer so that we could fully assess the situation, obtain directives and plan for the next phase. There was absolutely no question of giving up - *A luta continua!*

Q: Can you recount the challenges that led to the decision to undertake armed struggle and to the formation of MK?

This has been written about so many times that let us begin, for the sake of originality, by examining the question within a broad international context. Historically, revolutionary armed struggle has been undertaken in civil war; resistance to foreign invasion and occupation; in struggles against dictatorships; where a government becomes increasingly oppressive; or for reasons of people's self-defence.

It was the imposition of a repressive racist regime in our own country using unbridled violence that led to the establishment of MK. This decision did not derive from a lust to kill, to see blood on the floor, out of reckless adventurism or the glorification of the gun, but rather because our people were prepared to lay down their lives when they saw that there was no other choice available if we were to overthrow apartheid.

It was only by 1960, with state repression reaching an all time high - following Sharpeville and the banning of the ANC and other organisations - that the necessity for armed action became clear. In this context the legal space for non-violent, extra-parliamentary protest, that had been progressively narrowed over the years, effectively closed. State violence and repression had become increasingly brutal in crushing resistance: Zeerust (1957), Sekhukhuniland (1958), Cato Manor (1959), Pondoland (1960), Warmbaths (1961). The crushing of the three-day stay-at-home led by Mandela (by then underground and dubbed the "black pimpernel") in May 1961 in addition to Sharpeville the previous year, gave the final impulse to those pressing for a change in tactics. Non-violent methods having been virtually exhausted, the conditions for armed struggle had emerged.

"Hopes of our entire movement were very high and the masses had enormous faith in their leadership. Their arrest was a massive setback to the struggle and our highest hopes were deflated."

In arguing for the need to review our position on non-violence, the leadership explained how the regime had left the liberation movement with no choice but to resort to armed activity to counter apartheid brutality and bring about the necessary change. They reasoned that it would be wrong and immoral to allow our people to be subject to state violence, without providing them with an alternative. They argued that people's justified violence would inevitably occur, as was already happening in certain areas, where communities were beginning to defend themselves in the face of increased state repression such as in the killing of police in Cato Manor at the end of 1959. A century earlier Karl Marx had analysed how the violence of an oppressive state gave rise to the increasing resistance of the masses, and how this interaction created higher levels of revolutionary organisation and sacrifice as the spiral of repression and resistance intensified, ripening revolutionary options.

It was in such a context that MK was launched on 16 December 1961, with a series of attacks against government installations. Whilst conditions in South Africa did not favour the development of a fully-fledged guerrilla struggle, its operations were inspirational in reinforcing the political mass struggles of our people. The psychological factor, firing-up our people and undermining the confidence of racial supremacists, was highly significant and grew in importance over the next three decades.

MK's founding Manifesto (16 December 1961) declared:

> *It is…well known that the main national liberation organisations… have conducted themselves peaceably at all times… they have done so because the people prefer peaceful methods of change to achieve their aspirations without the suffering and bitterness of civil war. But the people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation where there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back…in defence of our people, our future and our freedom…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 Party is leading…before matters reach a desperate state of civil war… .

The MK Manifesto had explained that the organisation was formed by Africans, but included in its ranks South Africans of all races. MK made its political allegiance quite clear by stating that it "fully supports the national liberation movement, and our members jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of the movement."

Who were those members? Many were from the ranks of the ANC, but a large number were from the underground SACP from the Coloured and Indian Congresses, trade unionists from SACTU and the small but energetic COD (white democrats). In fact units of the Party had already started functioning earlier in that year. The Party was jointly responsible for the creation of MK with Joe Slovo and Govan Mbeki playing a leading role with Mandela in its policy formulation, strategy and tactics, planning and operations. Laloo Chiba, one of MK's trail-blazers, recounts in the book *Men of Dynamite* that in early 1961 his underground Party cell "was changed into an SACP sabotage unit under the leadership of Wolfie Kodesh" and during the latter half of the year "became part of MK" (Ahmed Kathrada Foundation: *Pen Portraits of MK Pioneers*).

MK was not a terrorist organisation. All units were instructed to avoid injuries or loss of life of civilians. Twenty-seven acts of sabotage were carried out on the night of December 16th in Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. MK suffered its first casualty when Petrus Molefe on an operation in Soweto died when his explosive device malfunctioned.

The Sabotage Campaign increased in intensity. We started with home-made explosives and graduated to using dynamite. Operations spread throughout the country in both urban and rural areas. A huge haul of dynamite was stolen near Durban and distributed throughout the country. This was a tense and dramatic period. The Minister of Agriculture's office in Pretoria was demolished and the City of Durban plunged into darkness when three strategic pylons were simultaneous destroyed. That the struggle had reached a new higher phase was illustrated by Water Sisulu addressing the country through a radio broadcast from a secret location. South Africa was abuzz with all these sensational developments. The government and its supporters were in a state of anxiety; the masses getting a sense that our day would soon arrive; the media chasing every rumour. Volunteers were being secretly recruited and sent across the Botswana border (then the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland) on the long trail to Dar es Salaam and further afield to undergo military training. Mandela himself slipped out of the country as did Slovo, Kotane, J.B.Marks and Duma Nokwe to assist Tambo and Dr. Yusuf Dadoo organise training facilities, weapons and international support. Tambo had been hard at work in arranging reception facilities in Tanzania. Joe Modise, who had been key to creating the underground routes out of the country, was involved in establishing the means of transport back. The first batch of trained comrades, amongst them Raymond Mhlaba, Wilton Mkwai and Joe Gqabi were infiltrated back home from a military course in China. We were gaining in experience and confidence, taking on more dramatic operations, reading and discussing books on guerrilla warfare, and looking forward to the next stage of armed struggle.

"This was a tense and dramatic period. The Minister of Agriculture's office in Pretoria was demolished and the City of Durban plunged into darkness when three strategic pylons were simultaneous destroyed."

Of course the enemy was not sleeping. They were gearing up to track us down by all means. They were learning from Western intelligence agencies, notably British and American. Some SB men had been to Algeria to study the French methods of counter-insurgency and the use of torture. The arrest of Mandela, in August 1962, who had returned home the previous month, was a huge blow and pointed to the work of an informer and security weaknesses on our part. There was a spate of defiant MK operations after his arrest and we vowed to free him. Instead an even more severe blow was dealt to us within eleven months. July 11th 1963 saw the axe fall with the raid on the Liliesleaf property where the leadership had decided to meet for one last time sensing that the SB were hot on their heels. Too many people had visited the establishment and its security had been undermined. The intention was to shift to other quarters but it is history that their luck had run out.

Q: How did the Rivonia arrests and imprisonment of the leadership affect our capacity to prosecute the struggle?

The SB officer leading the Rivonia Raid, Captain Dirker, bragged to Walter Sisulu on arresting him: "We have set you back twenty years." He was quite right. It was only by 1981 or thereabouts that the struggle had re-established itself somewhere approaching the mass defiance of the 1950s. Rivonia, as already mentioned, had become an inspirational symbol of resistance.

The arrest of Mandela in 1962 and then the Rivonia leadership the following years certainly ranks as the biggest set-back we faced in the entire period of struggle. Arrests and round-ups of other leaders and activists, including Wilton Mkwai and Bram Fischer, whose brave attempts to keep things going after Rivonia, saw the organised presence of the entire liberation movement almost wiped out. Although there were immediate bomb blasts after the Rivonia sentences and defiant slogans painted on walls

such activity soon petered out. The underground ceased to exist and there was no capacity to even issue statements or leaflets. Those who survived arrest were under strict banning orders and struggled to provide support to the political prisoners. Many had to flee the country into exile. The struggle was at its lowest ebb.

Fortunately the prescience of the movement in deploying leaders such as Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo, JB Marks, Moses Mabhida and others abroad was a life-saver. Not only were they tasked with international political and solidarity work but notably the establishment abroad of training and support facilities for MK. Already from 1961 hundreds of seasoned MK volunteers had been sent abroad for military training.

Vanguard elements such as Wilton Mkwai, Raymond Mhlaba and Joe Gqabi had already returned home from training in China. The plan was that as comrades returned home they would be absorbed into the underground network and reinforce the operations already underway.

Post-Rivonia no infrastructure existed; recruitment came momentarily to an end as did infiltration of trained cadres into the country. The masses were intimidated and the regime cock-a-hoop. Justice Minister John Vorster, boasted that he had "destroyed" the freedom movement. The Sabotage Campaign ended with its chief actors either locked-up for long years in prison or in exile. Those in our Tanzanian camps were virtually cut-off from home. This was a dire situation – the nadir of the struggle. In these circumstances leadership and organisation passed to those in exile.

Q: What were the main obstacles we faced in seeking to accelerate armed actions in the country?

Well, MK's organised presence was now located outside South Africa and a far cry from our country's borders. There was a *cordon sanitaire* around South Africa, and although Zambia became independent in 1964 allowing the ANC to be established there, it was still a long and dangerous route home through Ian Smith's Rhodesia, Botswana or Portuguese controlled Mozambique. Whilst it was possible to slip back through Botswana there was no longer an underground re-infiltration network to assist in getting our people safely home. At home there was no longer the underground network to safely receive and accommodate returnees. As a result MK operations came to a halt as did mass political activity. We had no friendly borders, nor extensive forests and mountain ranges which might provide the establishment of internal bases or liberated territory. The country's modern road and communication system, large social support base amongst the white population including the network of farmers, was an advantage to a regime boasting a large, well-resourced military and police force.

> "Of course the enemy was not sleeping. They were gearing up to track us down by all means. They were learning from Western intelligence agencies, notably British and American. Some SB men had been to Algeria to study the French methods of counter-insurgency and the use of torture."

The 1967-68 MK incursions into Rhodesia (the Wankie and Sipolile campaigns), in alliance with ZAPU's military wing ZIPRA, was a gallant attempt to deploy MK combatants back inside South Africa through that territory. Whilst this was a historic baptism of fire for our trained combatants, who together with their Zimbabwean counterparts, exhibited outstanding bravery on the battlefield and punished Smith's forces, it failed in its objectives and demonstrated the weakness of guerrillas acting without a secure support base inside the combat area. The regime, however, by now was experiencing grave doubts about Vorster's boast of having vanquished us. Police Minister Muller reported to the racist parliament that he had deployed one thousand policemen along Rhodesia's border with Zambia. There were enormous increases in the defence budget and conscription of white youth into the SADF escalated.

Home was still a long dangerous journey away from our bases. Life could be arduous and boring once training courses were over. There were inevitable tensions in our camps and pressure on the leadership.

Q: What was the importance of the Morogoro conference?

The ANCs previous consultative meeting was in Gaberones in 1962. The time was ripe to re-assess the situation, review developments at home and internationally, learn lessons from the Zimbabwe campaign, consider how to overcome shortcomings, ventilate the concerns of the cadres and meet the challenges. There was clearly a need for renewal. Tensions had developed in the camps. A petition had been received from Chris Hani and a group of disaffected cadres, complaining about the behaviour of certain leaders who it was alleged were more interested in international travel than focussing on the armed struggle. Complaints mounted that not enough was being done on the home front. Also on the agenda was the need for new structures to integrate and involve the non-African comrades and bring the SACP more into the picture. These demands came from the camps.

The Morogoro Conference took place from April 25 to May 1st 1969. It was attended by seventy delegates from many parts of the world; some involved in international political and solidarity work but the overwhelming majority were MK cadres from the camps. It was chaired by Uncle JB Marks and characterised by open and democratic discussion with a frank critique of leadership. It was felt that the behaviour and commitment of some leaders was not up to standard; that they were neglecting their duties and not doing

nearly enough for the armed struggle; that authoritarianism was creeping in; that change was necessary. But the changes called for were not just about leaders. The movement's shortcomings were viewed as emanating from strategic errors.

Underground work was needed to build structures at home so that the guerrillas could find sanctuary as fish in the sea. The armed struggle was viewed as the leading factor to change the situation. Structural changes were required for this. Whilst the African people, and the working class, were seen as the motive force of the struggle for national liberation, the necessity to integrate all oppressed national groups and revolutionary forces under the banner of the ANC was stressed. Our international alliances, characterisation of the socialist block as our firm allies, and the advances being made by the world anti-imperialist forces - and particularly the Vietnamese struggle against US imperialism - were reiterated. This included our support in Africa; the decisive material assistance and military training being received from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries; and the contribution from states such as Sweden and the global anti-apartheid movement. It was resolved to further develop the alliance with ZAPU and increase co-operation and co-ordination with Frelimo, MPLA, PAIGC and SWAPO.

A smaller NEC was elected with Oliver Tambo as Acting President. A Revolutionary Council (RC) was created with comrades from all racial backgrounds. Tambo was Chair of the RC and Dr. Dadoo Vice-Chair. The RC was charged with the task of intensifying the armed struggle and the full mobilisation of the masses in support of the revolution. Changes were made in the organisation of external solidarity work.

As the *African Communist* observed:

> *...those who had perhaps speculated on divisions or confusion arising and spreading were bitterly disappointed. The overwhelming unanimous will of the conference at Morogoro was for Unity within the Ranks; for rededication to Congress and its capable leader...O.R.Tambo; for determined concentration on the central task – development of the armed struggle, the organisation of the revolution to free our country. (Third Quarter 1969)*

The Morogoro Conference marked yet another watershed in the struggle. Its immediate results demonstrated its seriousness and underlined the fact that it was not a talk-shop but that its resolutions were being applied. A spate of leaflet bombs took place in all major cities of South Africa within a year spreading the message of struggle. Infiltration home was on the increase including leaders and not only rank-and-file. One such was the new commissar of MK, a stalwart member of the SACP and ANC, Flag Boshielo. Tragically he and his group were killed in an ambush whilst crossing the border near Livingstone. The attempt to land guerrillas on the Transkei coast from Somalia had to be aborted when the ship's engines failed off Mombasa. In the spirit of *never say die* those cadres crossed into South Africa from Swaziland and Botswana with the assistance of an internationalist Alex Moumbaris and his wife Marie-Jose in 1971. Several others were smuggled into South Africa on board cargo ships calling at our ports or on foot.

> "Fortunately the prescience of the movement in deploying leaders such as Oliver Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo, Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo, JB Marks, Moses Mabhida and others abroad was a life-saver."

Clearly the best intentions of the Rivonia and Morogoro leadership were being implemented.

Q: Please elucidate on the critical importance of political leadership over the armed wing as well as the interconnection and interaction of the political and armed aspects of the struggle.

In undertaking armed struggle, MK soldiers were subject to very strict principles, discipline and training in the conduct of war. One of our Soviet instructors back in 1964 used to quip that revolution was not rock and roll in order to stress how serious the business of armed struggle was. From its very inception, MK stressed the supremacy of politics over the military, where MK placed itself under the direct guidance of the ANC, which meant that "the political leadership [had] primacy over the military… [and] our military line [derived] from our political line". It is important to point out that an armed struggle conducted without clear political leadership, goals and discipline invariably descends into anarchy and itself can become a parasitic monster pitted against the masses. Lenin particularly stressed that without high moral principles - socialist principles - guerrilla warfare would descend into banditry.

Every MK combatant was required to have a clear understanding of ANC policy in respect of what we were fighting for and who the real enemy was. They were clear they invoked a people's cause; not a personal agenda of some war-lord or individual leader. Our military activities did not exist in isolation but rather were specifically directed to reinforce the mass resistance of our people in pursuit of our political objectives.

Throughout our existence we invariably sought to avoid civilian casualties, despite the difficult conditions in which we operated. Our struggle was against an oppressive system and not against whites as such. We directed our fire at the institutions of apartheid, its security forces and those reactionary functionaries that served it and not at a community or ethnic group or to settle personal scores.

Notwithstanding the difficulties confronting us, this principled approach to armed struggle was consistently asserted by the leadership, as reflected in a statement by Oliver Tambo in 1987. In commenting on those few instances where our operations had run counter to this policy, where bombs were placed in restaurants, Tambo stated that MK: *"must continue*

to distinguish itself from the apartheid death forces by the bravery of its combatants, its dedication to the cause of liberation and peace, and its refusal to act against civilians, both black and white" (8 January Statement).

Q: What were the issues, challenges, problems that we confronted in our camps in Tanzania and later Angola?

In the first place in both those countries and at different periods of time the main problem that arose was impatience to return home. The problems that emerged in Tanzania in 1969, leading to the Morogoro Conference, stemmed from this problem but also dissatisfaction with aspects of policy, non-involvement of non-African revolutionaries, pressure for changes in the organisations structure, loss of faith in some leaders.

To some degree this can be partly attributed to conditions of camp life or authoritarianism going unchecked. What distinguishes the situation that developed in Angola in 1983-4 was the degree to which spies of the regime acted as *agents provocateurs*. They exploited the weariness of young cadres who had not bargained with the idea of a protracted struggle and wished to return home as speedily as possible. Whilst a great degree of infiltration back home was underway it was not possible to speed the process up for all. It had become necessary to deploy a large number of our cadres together with FAPLA (the Angolan armed forces) against Unita bandits. This was not simply an act of solidarity, as important as that was, but also out of necessity. Unita, with SADF support, was becoming more active and threatening the supply lines to our camps. These joint operations at first went very well and saw huge casualties on the side of Unita. When we began to sustain casualties the *agents provocateurs* exploited the setbacks and began to question why our cadres were dying in Angola and not going home. This period had seen the deployment of our most seasoned cadres to the home front leaving insufficient mature leaders in Angola. This weakness was exploited by mutinous elements which led to the first ever mutiny in MK's history with a score of loyalists and mutineers dying in the process.

The ANC moved quickly to address the problem. Chris Hani played a key role in regaining the trust of the disaffected elements. One of the most vexing complaints was the over-zealousness of the security organs intent on uncovering enemy agents. This was necessary work but prone to get out of hand. Investigation revealed the extent to which enemy agents had infiltrated MK - some at camp command level. Such elements deliberately antagonised cadres under their command. Once the spies were exposed, MK and the ANC leadership, learning from these costly errors, were able to normalise the situation and Angola once more became a stable base.

> "The Morogoro Conference marked yet another watershed in the struggle. Its immediate results demonstrated its seriousness and underlined the fact that it was not a talk-shop but that its resolutions were being applied."

MK was not the only movement to experience such problems. We know of similar frustrations experienced within SWAPO and the other Southern African movements but also those further afield. I recall a discussion with commanders of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front of Salvador (regarded even by the Cubans as one of the most outstanding guerrilla movements). They were astonished to learn that we had kept up our armed struggle from exile for so long. With all their exceptional achievements they confessed they experienced enormous problems when they sent a large batch of guerrillas for training abroad. Because the trainees were unable to return home within a year they had to virtually write them off as effective combatants.

Q: Was the decision for a negotiated settlement anathema to MK's role and existence? How would you explain the decision to lay down our arms?

The MK Manifesto of 1961 contained the following words:

> *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 Party is leading…before matters reach a desperate state of civil war…*

What this showed was that the leadership had a hope that civil war could be averted and there was a way other than the use of force. It took the Nationalist Party twenty-nine years to accept that there was a need to talk.

Clearly the decision to embark on armed struggle in 1961 was appropriate, given the context of the time. It was undertaken only as a last resort, when all peaceful means of struggle had been exhausted. We agreed to lay down our arms during the transition process in 1990, precisely because we had reached the stage where the regime finally agreed to talk, opening up the possibility for peaceful change.

Q: How important was the Cuban and Soviet support for MK?

The answer to that is simply "incalculable." Our initial support was from African states. Mandela visited Ethiopia in 1962, and Morocco where the Algerians were providing military training whilst waging their war of liberation against the French. Egypt too provided initial courses. Without Tanzania's hospitality which allowed the ANC to establish its headquarters and open a training base at Kongwe, and allow transit in and out of the country, of both cadres and weaponry, we could never have got things going. These African states did not have the resources, facilities and advanced training that the Soviet Union, China and other socialist states could provide. Of the East European states the GDR (German Democratic Republic) provided considerable training in

guerrilla warfare, intelligence and security.

The Soviet Union was in a league of its own, providing basic courses in guerrilla warfare, advanced courses for officers, specialist training of all kinds. In time they developed what was called MCW (Military Combat Work) which integrated underground political work with military training and the preparation for insurrection. It was the most popular course of all. Such training was being provided for liberation movements from all over the world. Weapons training covered the field from small arms through to field artillery and anti-aircraft defence. We even learnt how to drive tanks and infiltrate from the sea. There were specialist courses for our security and intelligence specialists. Our every request was met with the Russian word "Moshna" (It's possible).

Cuban training was practical and outstanding. They focussed on guerrilla warfare and clandestine methods. We received uniforms, food and weapons of all descriptions from the USSR, our main supplier, from Czechoslovakia and Cuba. Soviet and Cuban instructors assisted us in training at our own Angolan camps. We provided intelligence information for them on the SADF as we did for the Angolans. MK can claim to having assisted the Angolan-Cuban forces in getting the better of the SADF invaders and our information helped make a difference at the Battle for Cuito Cuanavale - 25 years ago. Our MK Afrikaans speakers assisted them with interpreting South African radio traffic. There were no strings attached to any of this support. These countries believed it was their internationalist duty to help us and the other liberation movements overthrow colonial rule. We enjoyed outstanding relations with them, and their ruling communist parties, their diplomatic and military personnel, treated us as equals with comradely warmth and concern.

Q: How successful was MK? Certain commentators and academics scoff at MKs efficacy and claim that it was a failure?

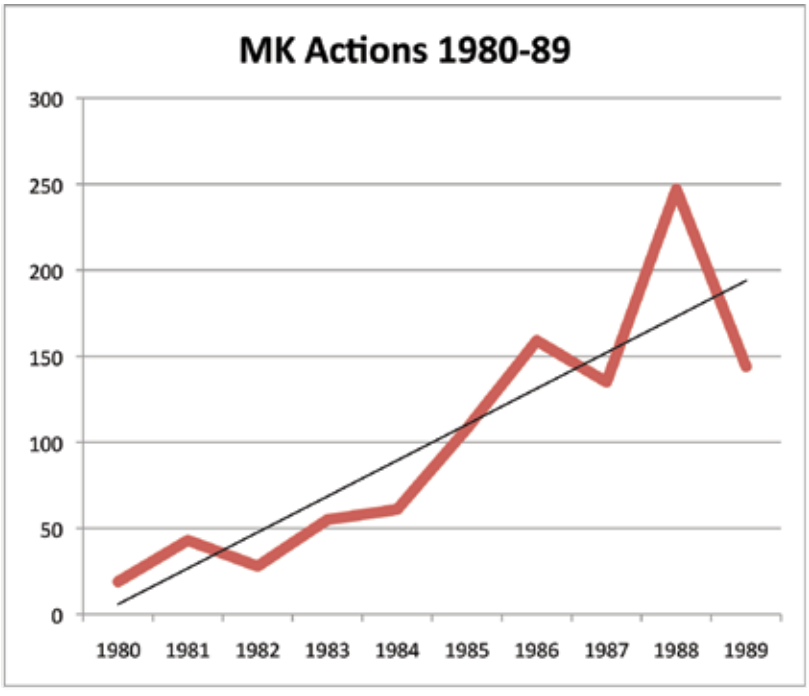
That makes me laugh. They have no idea of what they are talking about and fail to grasp what MK's role was. They do not even consider how MK's operations were increasing over time and becoming more effective. Of course the regime and those who were in power - politicians and security people - seek to belittle both MK's activities and the ANC's leading role. After all they peddle the claim that change came about, not as a result of the struggle, but through their good intentions.

We never claimed that our armed struggle could match the extraordinary heights of the Vietnamese and Cuban struggles. We had no forest sanctuaries as existed there and in Angola and Mozambique.

Over time we strove to develop a People's War with strong emphasis on the open political and underground organisation of the mass of our people. That mobilisation unbanned the ANC. Our theory and perspectives needed to change with the developing situation. That was very different when MK was created in 1961, when the Rivonia arrests occurred in 1963, post the 1976 Uprising and with the escalation of above ground mass political organisation in the 1980s. The development of our thesis of Four Pillars of Struggle and MCW training summed up the richness of our experience. Those categories of struggle were: Political, Underground, Armed and International Solidarity.

We considered the political mass organisation of the people as primary, to be reinforced by armed struggle and clandestine underground work which would fuse the political with the military. This is how the role of MCW which was an art form developed in struggle. Solidarity work would isolate the regime and build support for our struggle. We saw armed struggle as psychological in inspiring the people and undermining the will of the apartheid regime and its social support base - as well as its need to use Bantustan leaders and other lackeys. With the maturing of a revolutionary situation we worked for and contemplated an insurrectionary path to power. The fact that this did not come about was not the result of shortcomings in MK but because the regime was forced into negotiating a peaceful settlement precisely because they feared revolution.

Let me turn to the quantity and quality of MK operations. These grew in number and sophistication over time and particularly towards the final phase of the struggle. The number of MK operations grew dramatically during the 1980s as the following graph demonstrates:



The graph was compiled from independent statistics by the University of Maryland in the USA. Recall that in one year of the Sabotage Campaign in 1962 some 190 MK operations were recorded.

By no means can it be said that MK failed. Armchair academics might like to pontificate, and the die-hard ideologues of apartheid might wish to pretend that MK did not count. Baloney! The masses knew differently and idolised MK.

They were amongst the finest sons and daughters of our people and were products of the struggle. As MK combatants they are the legacy of December 1961 and the Rivonia leadership. And how courageous and devoted they proved to be. Thirty years is a considerable length of time to sustain any war. It needs a special brand of dedication and determination.

The military disparity within our country meant that we had no alternative but to rely on external preparation at great distances from home. Many cadres remained abroad for years devotedly serving MK and the ANC in our training bases and structures. Cut off from home and their families, often facing the tribulations of hunger, malaria and loneliness, our cadres always kept going even in the most difficult times.

Having skipped the country, the typical M K cadre faced enormous obstacles and privations; lived and trained in numerous countries; fought wars against Unita, Portuguese colonialists and Ian Smith's regime; shot it out with Boer hit squads in neighbouring states; slipped back home to organise underground bases and engage the enemy on home terrain in spectacular operations such as the missile attack on Voortrekkerhoogte, mortar attack on Slurry military base, the Koeberg nuclear power station bombing, the car bomb outside Air Force HQ Pretoria which killed 22, the springing of Gordon Webster by Robert McBride, the elimination of a dozen collaborators on the East Rand by Clement, the Sasol bombings under Barney Molokwane's command. Many like Barney fell in battle, amongst them others like Looksmart Ngudle and Ahmed Timol died during interrogation; scores walked the lonely steps to the gallows – amongst them them Vuyisile Mini, Wilson Khayingo, Zinakile Mkaba and Washington Bongco soon after MK was launched. Young cadres such as Solomon Mahlangu, Jerry Mosololis, Marcus Motaung, Simon Mogoerane and Andrew Zondi (the Amanzimtoti bombing) were executed in the 1980s.

During the Wankie-Sipolile campaigns Patrick Malao, Basil February, Johannes Sibanyoni, James Masimini, Michael Poo and Delmas Sibanyonu displayed outstanding gallantry in the face of the enemy; during the 1970-80s young lions fell in combat, amongst them Barney Molokwane (fell in action after leading second attack on Sasol), Zwelakhe Nyanda, David Skosana, Titus Jobo, (the Silverton bank heroes) Thami Makhuba, Wilfred Madela and Fani Mafoko, Khuduga Molokwane, the Dobsonville schoolteacher, Nkululo Njongwe (Bryce Motsamai) died in action near Fort Jackson Eastern Cape; Clement (killed in action on East Rand), and Clifford Brown in an attack on Durban refinery; Petrus Jobane (the lion of Chiawelo) died in action in Soweto. There were those who were killed during raids such as Motso Mokgabudi, Mduduzi Guma, Krish Rabilal (died in the Matola raid), Phila Ndwandwe (was executed near Pietermariztburg), Sello Motau (Paul Dikaledi) and Job Tlabane (Cassius Make) assassinated in Swaziland, Jacob Moliwane (Biza) abushed near Francistown; Charles Makoena (Naledi) killed in the Gaberone raid; Lulamile Dantile (Morris), Nomkhosi Mini, with Leon Meyer and Jackie Quin his wife were murdered in Lesotho; David Rabkin died whilst training in Angola; Joe Gqabi was assassinated in Harare; Coline Williams and Robbie Waterwitch fell whilst on a mission in Cape Town and so many more. They were the unforgettable martyrs of our struggle whose deeds and memory we cherish.

> "The Soviet Union was in a league of its own, providing basic courses in guerrilla warfare, advanced courses for officers, specialist training of all kinds. In time they developed what was called MCW (Military Combat Work) which integrated underground political work with military training and the preparation for insurrection."

"Tell my mother and my people that my blood will nourish the tree of freedom," declared Solomon Mahlangu - epitomising, like Vuyisili Mini 14 years before him, the courage and sacrifice of MK combatants. He speaks for them all.

In our twentieth year of liberation the central task confronting us is to ensure that we continue to mobilise our people in disciplined efforts to defend, consolidate and advance our hard-won freedom and democracy, as enshrined in our country's Constitution. It was for this that so many sacrificed and served long years in prison and our martyrs paid with their lives: Vuyisile Mini, Flag Boshielo, Basil February, Ahmed Timol, Solomon Mahlangu, Ruth First, Dulcie September, Steve Biko, Barney Molokwane, Hector Petersen, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Joe Gqabi and Chris Hani amongst them.

We need to emulate the qualities of those martyrs. Leadership - at all sites and at all levels of our liberation movement - has a special responsibility in this regard. We cannot only 'talk the talk', but more importantly we must lead by united action and example; resolutely demonstrating our commitment in both word and deed. It is these values that comrades like Chris Hani embodied in their character and conduct, honesty and integrity, which we are duty-bound to emulate. We owe it to his proud memory. We dare not let him and our other martyrs down. That is the best way to respect their ultimate sacrifice.■

The complexities of governance for the new democratic government

Government had to simultaneously transform the economy and institute policies to attract both foreign and local capital into our economy. It is this singular challenge that continues to plague economic policy.

By Trevor A. Manuel

It is an honour and a privilege to be able to write an article commemorating the Rivonia Trial and the raid on Liliesleaf Farm in 1963. When one looks at the list of people arrested in Rivonia, one stands in awe of the quality and calibre of leaders that the movement had in the 1960s, a tradition that started decades earlier and one which would continue for decades beyond Rivonia. Even today, when one rattles off the names of the people arrested in that raid, one gets goose bumps. Their courage, integrity and values have come to define all that is good about South Africa and the struggle against apartheid.

This article focuses on the

complexity of governance and the critical challenges that confronted the democratic government from 1994 onwards. Taking power, forming a government and running a country are daunting tasks. After centuries of colonial oppression and racial domination, the expectations confronting a movement taking power are immense and potentially overwhelming. To add to that pressure, the list of failed transitions after colonial or military rule dominates the history books from Africa to Latin America and even Asia.

The objectives of the democratic government

The new democratic government had two broad objectives. It sought to build a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country where all enjoy equal rights, dignity and freedom. The second, related, objective was to uplift the majority of South Africans from the poverty and deprivation that they had been subjected to for centuries. In practical terms, this meant providing education, healthcare, housing, water, sanitation, public transport, safe communities and social security. To reduce poverty, government would have to grow the economy, create jobs and generate the revenue required to deliver the public services legitimately expected by all South Africans.

The challenges confronting the new government

The challenges that confronted the new democratic government included a poorly performing economy and one skewed towards benefiting a few, a state with uneven capacity particularly in the poorest areas and a massive skills constraint throughout the economy and public service. Racial discrimination, poor quality education, a distorted spatial development pattern and an emerging new disease in the form of HIV/Aids posed real challenges to the new state.

On the economic front, the economy was performing poorly since the 1970s, government debt was high, the budget deficit was over 9 percent a year, the public finances were in a mess, corruption was rampant, major sectors of the economy were uncompetitive and employment levels were low by international standards. A low savings rate and two decades of underinvestment in economic infrastructure constrained growth potential. Critically, there was a huge degree of mistrust between captains of industry and the newly elected government.

Strengths that the ANC could draw on

There were also many positives that the new government came into power with. Most importantly, it had political legitimacy amongst all South Africans, even amongst those who did not vote for the ANC. The country enjoyed international admiration and respect for the manner in which apartheid was defeated and the transition managed. The ANC had highly skilled people working for it in dozens of countries. In the areas of education, health and law, the ANC had members with international experience and knowledge that could not be matched by the old South African government. The inclusive and non-racial character of the internal struggle against apartheid gave the new government access to many of the best and brightest minds in the country, ready and willing to contribute towards the reconstruction of the country. President Mandela's character, wisdom and style of leadership were huge assets for the movement; and indeed for the country. He had the almost unique ability to unite people from diverse backgrounds around a common programme.

"And so while the challenges were daunting, the ANC was arguably better prepared to take power than any other liberation movement in the history of the world."

On the policy front, under the leadership of President Oliver Tambo, the ANC had begun thinking deeply about what it meant to govern, what policies it would pursue and what form of democracy we would promote. On the economy too, the ANC had begun a process from the late 1980s to define its economic policies.

And so while the challenges were daunting, the ANC was arguably better prepared to take power than any other liberation movement in the history of the world.

Key trade-offs in early policy-making

The ANC's constitutional principles defined the new Constitution adopted in 1996. In the negotiations for the new constitution, the ANC won almost all of the demands and principles that it came into the negotiations with. On issues such as socio-economic rights, the separation of powers, proportional representation, the Bill of Rights and media freedoms, the ANC had got its way. There were areas to do with the intergovernmental system where the ANC had to compromise; but these compromises were relatively minor in the big scheme of things.

The Constitution struck a clear balance between the need to protect property rights which were essential for investment and economic growth; and the need for redress, transformation and affirmative action.

The ANC also confronted some difficult trade-offs in the early years. In respect of the public service: on the one hand the ANC was committed to protecting the rights of existing workers and also knew that buried within the apartheid state were key capabilities that it would need in its transformation programme. On the other hand, the ANC sought to inject a new leadership into the civil service; a leadership with a new ethos, character and commitment to democracy and empowerment. In short, the ANC tried to keep the best of the past while transforming the public sector into an efficient and effective tool in the hands of a democratic state.

A key challenge was that in the areas where the poor lived, particularly in the former homelands, the capacity of the bureaucracy was at its worst. To boot,

a culture of corruption, patronage and cronyism was entrenched. So it was not so much that old white senior civil servants were blocking transformation but a key obstacle was the bureaucracy in the former homeland governments. With 19 years of reflection, the ANC was able to transform the civil service from a racial perspective, but many of the traits of the old homelands were not only entrenched, but became the dominant culture in many areas.

While the new government had hundreds and hundreds of incredibly skilled and talented people who went into government, it still underperformed for two reasons. Firstly, running a complex and large bureaucracy requires tens of thousands of skilled managers and skilled technicians (engineers, IT professionals, scientists, accountants, etc). The hundreds of skilled professionals brought in by the new government simply could not get to every major institution or region. Secondly, the government had failed to build new managerial talent in sufficient quantities to enable better service delivery. One could add that as the culture of corruption and poor performance permeated an increasing share of the public service, it became harder to retain and attract skilled professionals and managers; leading to a downward spiral.

On the economy, the democratic government faced a problem that is simple and straightforward to explain, yet infinitely complex to solve. Economic growth requires investment and capital. South Africa has very little capital of its own. It has one of the lowest savings rates in relation to other middle income countries. Secondly, the savings that it did have were largely in the hands of existing businesses. Therein lay the challenge. Government had to simultaneously transform the economy and institute policies to attract both foreign and local capital into our economy. It is this singular challenge that continues to plague economic policy.

Government's strategy was as follows. On the one hand, government would introduce a range of measures (legal and other) to force, nudge and cajole businesses to broaden the base of ownership to include the historically disadvantaged and to introduce affirmative action measures to affirm employees from disadvantaged backgrounds. The state would also 'incentivise' firms to spend more on training their staff so that both the firm and the economy could benefit. On the other hand, the state would create the legal and economic framework to protect property rights, introduce transparent taxation arrangements, ease restrictions on foreign capital flows and open up the economy from a trade perspective.

An area of policy that did not receive sufficient attention in the early years was employment policy. The most empowering thing for a young person leaving school is being able to get a job. In hindsight, the difficult balances between improving workers' rights and the need to create millions of jobs for often poorly skilled people were not confronted. The effect is that today we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the world and almost two-thirds of young black people are not working or not in an educational institution.

> "A key challenge was that in the areas where the poor lived, particularly in the former homelands, the capacity of the bureaucracy was at its worst. To boot, a culture of corruption, patronage and cronyism was entrenched."

A major challenge confronting government in 1994 was how it could generate the fiscal resources to deliver on its mandate. High government debt, high inflation, high interest rates and limited access to capital markets was what faced the government when it came into office. The quick way to generate more resources was to simply borrow the money. The ANC government was reluctant to borrow heavily both because it had seen first-hand the effects of debt on African economies and it did not want to lose its policy freedom to the World Bank. Furthermore, at the time, interest costs consumed about 22 percent of the budget.

President Mandela was clear that borrowing would simply push up the future interest bill. The more sustainable way of generating the resources was to lower public debt which would lower interest costs and, in time, leave more room for spending on education, housing and the like. By restructuring the public finances, lowering the deficit, improving the tax system and enhancing the budget process, government was able to lower its debt and spend more on public services. This transition took several years and is still the subject of debate even today.

Conclusion

While the challenges confronting the ANC and the new democratic government were immense, the quality of leadership in the ANC, the calibre of its cadres, the international goodwill that it enjoyed and its inclusive character and democratic traditions enabled it to navigate those very difficult early years. Yes, there were mistakes; but in general, the successes outweigh the failings. Today, we have a stable democracy, key institutions for democracy to thrive, a soundly managed economy and less poverty than in 1994. However, we still have millions of people who are unemployed and the level of inequality is as high as ever.

The Rivonia trialists set such a high bar on leadership that not all future generations have been able to live up to it in equal measure. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rivonia Trial, we should all take a look back at those leaders, both individually and as a collective and look at the qualities and traits that characterised them. From them, we should draw strength and inspiration to continue to strive for the type of society that they fought for and were prepared to die for. ■

technology innovation
AGENCY

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) was established in terms of the TIA act, 2008 (act no. 26 of 2008), with the objective of stimulating and intensifying technological innovation in order to improve economic growth and the quality of life of all South Africans by developing and exploiting technological innovations.

TIA's core business objective is to support the development and commercialisation of competitive technology-based services and products. The Agency primarily uses South Africa's science and technology base to develop new industries, create sustainable jobs and help diversify the economy. It invests in the following technology sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Industrial Biotechnology, Health, Mining, Energy and ICT.

MANDATE

TIA's mandate is to support and enable technology innovation across all sectors of the economy in order to achieve socioeconomic benefits for South Africa, thereby enhancing its global competitiveness. This entails supporting the development and commercialisation of research outputs from higher education institutions, science councils, public entities and private research institutions, with a view to bringing these to the market.

VISION

To be a world class innovation agency that supports and enables technological innovation to achieve socio-economic benefits for South Africa.

MISSION

To support technology innovators to unlock South Africa's global competitiveness and deliver socio-economic value.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Agency's strategic objectives are as follows:-

1. To stimulate the development and demonstration of technology based products, processes and services.
2. To support the commercialisation of technology innovations.
3. To develop an enabling environment for technology innovation and commercialisation in South Africa.
4. To develop an enabling internal environment within TIA to successfully execute its strategy.
5. To facilitate the development of innovations skills to support technology innovation and commercialisation.
6. To become a schedule 3B entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act.

The key TIA differentiator with the government funding agencies is that TIA invests in high-risk early stage technology. TIA has invested in more than R2 billion in technology innovation ideas of which some of these are beginning to be profitable.

For enquiries, Funding Application Guidelines and Application Forms visit
www.tia.org.za

An initiative of the Department of Science and Technology

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MK

From Leadership in the Trenches to Leadership in Government and Society

South Africa still battles with a reality of sexism and a culture of patriarchy in the workplace that needs to be addressed. We must consider all avenues towards changing the mindsets of our people so as to ensure that our children eventually work in environments that are not stifled by narrow stereotypes.

By Jackie Sedibe

My name is Refiloe Florence Sedibe. I am a retired Major General of the South African National Defence Force and have spent a combined total of 40 years in military service as a soldier in the liberation struggle and later, as a senior official in the SANDF. I'm blessed to have also been wife to my loving husband Joe Modise, whom I miss dearly, and mother to our two lovely daughters Boipuso and Lesedi. The perspective that I have gained from each of these experiences; soldier, major-general, wife and mother, today forms within me a deep appreciation for the many challenges, which at times may have appeared insurmountable, that were faced by so many brave and determined women in the fight for South Africa's liberation. This article represents my attempt to cast some light on the lesser told stories of female cadres in the military wing of the ANC - Umkhonto we Sizwe. It is an effort to identify the difficult and lengthy path that women in the MK had to walk to finally gain acceptance into and legitimacy within its male-dominated ranks. Gender equality on the battle field is hard won - and perhaps unsurprisingly, the same was true within the MK. For those of us who had to sacrifice, struggle and endure under very difficult circumstances to earn fair recognition for our contribution to the liberation struggle, notions of equality thus take on special relevance. I hope to present the context in which women in the MK, from all walks of life, of differing talents, experiences and ages found the courage to prove that they were no different from any other cadre and had the strength to survive the inhospitable climate of war. I will also discuss my experiences as a female MK veteran in the post-Apartheid South African Defence Force (SANDF) and in South African society upon returning from exile.

I left my childhood home in Mpumalanga, South Africa, as a young girl in 1964 to join the MK shortly after the Rivonia trial. Leaders of the ANC had begun to recruit young men and women for military training abroad at the time and my father - who held a position in the ANC - spoke to me about the prospect of my enlisting

in the MK. I immediately indicated my wishes to join and was recruited by a family friend. After a dangerous crossing on foot from Zeerust to Lobatsi in Botswana, I formed part of a small contingent of youths who were headed to Tanzania for MK orientation. When I left South Africa, my understanding of politics was limited to the matters that I had overheard in discussion among members of my family, many of whom were actively involved in the ANC, and to the concerns that neighbours would raise as they recounted experiences gained under the oppression of apartheid either at work, on a plaas, or in the cities. My decision to join was thus partly made in anger at the brutality and hatefulness of the apartheid system but also, out of what was then a vague but sincere longing for a democratic South Africa.

I was educated by the MK while I was in exile; I received training in radio communication in conventional war at a military academy in Odessa, in the Soviet Union, and thereafter learned clandestine communication which included cryptography, frequency modulation and Morse code in Moscow. I also gained formative field experience in Tanzania. There were very few women in the MK at the time of my joining and at the camp in Kongwa, Tanzania, we numbered eight women amongst approximately 500 men. In fact, in those days there was very little knowledge of women, in any country of the world, taking up arms alongside men. We women of the MK trained and studied with our male counterparts and had to complete all of the same physical exercises. We were not granted, nor did we request, any gender based leniency and I believe that MK women in the camps gained resolve and a greater sense of purpose in being the exception. I learned that women in the MK could earn respect by show of skill and bravery. In terms of skill, most of the women in our camp were highly capable snipers; I and others were able to assemble and disassemble pistols and AK47s blindfolded. We also deepened our knowledge and understanding of politics through regular debate. This placed us on par with our male contemporaries in the camps. In terms of bravery however, 'very dangerous tasks' were an area where women were seen to excel: we had women involved in MK activities in the early stages of its formation, particularly in regional commands. Women would volunteer to carry suitcases packed with weapons into the forward areas – those territories closest to South Africa, facing danger and the risk of long term detention almost on a daily basis. We lost some of our women to the horrors of Vlaakplaas and also in battle, while defending our bases in Angola against UNITA militia. Women completed covert missions from 'underground' houses in Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa and successfully operated under the nose of the notorious Special Branch without detection. Women also played a fundamental role in demonstrating that the liberation of South Africa was a cause that was championed by individuals of many nations and indeed, many races; we had operatives who were mainly white women sympathisers who drove cars, fully packed with weapons, into South Africa and similar international operatives who joined the struggle and agreed to smuggle weapons at various border posts when supplies were needed.

"In terms of skill, most of the women in our camp were highly capable snipers; I and others were able to assemble and disassemble pistols and AK47s blindfolded. We also deepened our knowledge and understanding of politics through regular debate."

I returned from exile in 1993 with a husband in the senior ranks of the ANC and two young children, to a country at the dawn of a rebirth. Change was imminent and there was a strong mood of excitement but it was however tempered by the painful sacrifices that had been demanded by the struggle. Nevertheless, our people were generally happy when we returned; we were greeted by friends and family who felt that at last, their fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters who had been away for so many years were now back and ready to dismantle the remaining structures of the evil system of apartheid. They believed that with trained cadres of the movement living amongst them, there would no longer be harassment and intimidation by the security forces of apartheid structures. But real change would prove slow and deliberate.

The integration process of seven different armed forces into one South African National Defence Force after 1994 was one of the most difficult integration processes to be completed by any national defence force. I strongly believe that successful integration was achieved because so many of us from the non-statutory forces (ANC MK) were determined to be integrated into the statutory system in order to effect necessary changes from within the system. The process demanded sincere compromise, discounting years of service, field experience and the level of training of former MK cadres. This meant that most had to be re-trained in conventional warfare, regardless of age or rank, which proved problematic because tutors in the SANDF were often very junior in terms of rank and experience relative to their pupils. This in turn promoted a culture of confrontation and animosity between the old guard and former non-statutory force personnel. I can assert from personal experience that gender equality within the SANDF was, and will continue to be, an important area requiring careful attention. I was a Major General in the MK, where I sat on the highest decision making body of the wing – the revolutionary council. Upon induction into the SANDF however, I had to accept the junior rank of a Brigadier. The justification that I was given for the modesty of my new rank was that there were no female generals in the former SADF and that I would find it difficult to cope as the solitary woman among men at

senior levels of the SANDF. Some felt that I should be grateful for the rank of Brigadier since my being an African female in the role set a new precedent in itself. I had to come to terms with a role that required me to salute higher ranking male colleagues who, as MK cadres, had been my juniors. Many MK women, men as well, gave up a lot to be integrated into the new structures of the SANDF.

New rules were introduced in the broader Public Service when the Employment Equity Act was introduced in the SANDF. With it came a wave of personnel re-shuffling and consequently, considerable anger amongst senior officers of the former SADF. This was mainly owing to the fact that finally, all senior officers were subjected to some form of scrutiny. Those who could not present a matriculation certificate had to vacate their positions or show that they were studying towards achieving a certificate. We saw a sizeable number of white officers leave the SANDF by opting for the exit packages that were introduced at this time.

In 1997, I was appointed as head of the Equal Opportunities Chief Directorate and worked tirelessly for that structure to gain recognition in the SANDF. We slowly gained respect from those who embraced change and I travelled extensively in South Africa and also travelled abroad to talk with troops and senior officials about my directorate and its policies. The international community in particular, received us well; I remember when I visited the United States as a Major General of the SANDF to attend the annual general meeting of the Defence Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) that our directorate's presentation on the subject of women in the SANDF - their training, deployment and experiences - received a standing ovation. I was subsequently invited to address different universities on the role that women played in the liberation struggle as it was understood that in South Africa both men and women had fought for the liberation of their country.

I established a gender forum for men and women to exchange ideas and develop protocols on how to interact in the work environment. This forum helped me to understand the fears and concerns of both men and women and some of the causes of discrimination against women in the workplace. These interactions were instrumental to me in formulating new policy that was sensitive to *both* genders. In later years I broadened the focus of our directorate to include special attention to the values of the SANDF while South African soldiers were deployed outside the country. I believe that a strong appreciation of the core values of the SANDF is necessary in those troops engaged in peace keeping operations abroad. I would like to believe that I was perceived by my colleagues in the SANDF as a woman of strong character with a sincere interest in building a better, more inclusive defence force. I feel a sense of accomplishment in the fact that when I left the SANDF in 2004, there were more than 10 female generals in various arms of service – a striking contrast to the reality of just 10 years prior, when I was integrated into the statutory force. Today, the SANDF is still male dominated. This is mainly because of the nature of its mandate - but this fact should not be misinterpreted as sufficient grounds for complacency. It simply means that women in the SANDF have still farther to travel along the road to gender equality; and to these women I say: 'A Luta Continua!'

> "Women would volunteer to carry suitcases packed with weapons into the forward areas – those territories closest to South Africa, facing danger and the risk of long term detention almost on a daily basis. We lost some of our women to the horrors of Vlaakplaas and also in battle, while defending our bases in Angola against UNITA militia."

South Africa still battles with a reality of sexism and a culture of patriarchy in the workplace that needs to be addressed. We must consider all avenues towards changing the mindsets of our people so as to ensure that our children eventually work in environments that are not stifled by narrow stereotypes. I believe that gender mainstreaming courses, which inform personnel of the necessary role of women in the defence force, will be imperative in promoting gender equality in the SANDF. These courses should be included in the defence force training curriculum from formative to senior levels and regarded as among the courses required for the promotion of candidates. The defence force will become more merit based and equitable once the perception that the adoption of gender sensitive norms amounts to the lowering of standards is eradicated.

MK veterans, both women and men, can and should continue to play an important role in our defence force. The knowledge and understanding of politics that these individuals developed through their experiences in the non-statutory forces is a valuable resource that can be used to facilitate more measured and informed decision-making in current diplomatic assignments. I also believe that MK veterans have a strong role to play in curbing crime within their communities by heading community policing fora.

I salute those men and women who swelled the ranks of the MK, some of whom sacrificed not only their youth but their lives for this great nation and her people. We cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe, many of us barely out of childhood, were drawn to the movement in the hope of liberating our country in our lifetimes. The impossible was accomplished and freedom was won. The onus now lies with current and future leadership to safeguard and indeed reanimate the principles that governed the conduct and inspired the selfless sacrifice of so many of the cadres and leaders of our movement. ■

From top to bottom: Graziano Delrio (Front row second from left) Italian Minister of Regional Affairs and Local Autonomies with the delegation from Reggio Emilia; Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe with Ivan Soncini son of Giuseppe Soncini; Antonio Mongalo – former Chief Representative of the ANC to Italy at the monument dedicated to Giuseppe Soncini in Reggio Emilia; President Zuma presenting the National Order of the Companion of OR Tambo to Bruna Ganapini Soncini widow of Giuseppe Soncini.

OR Tambo signing the Pact of Solidarity with Reggio Emilia on June 26, 1977;

Images: © Girolamo Florio; Elmond Jiyane and Zain Dindar

100 YEARS

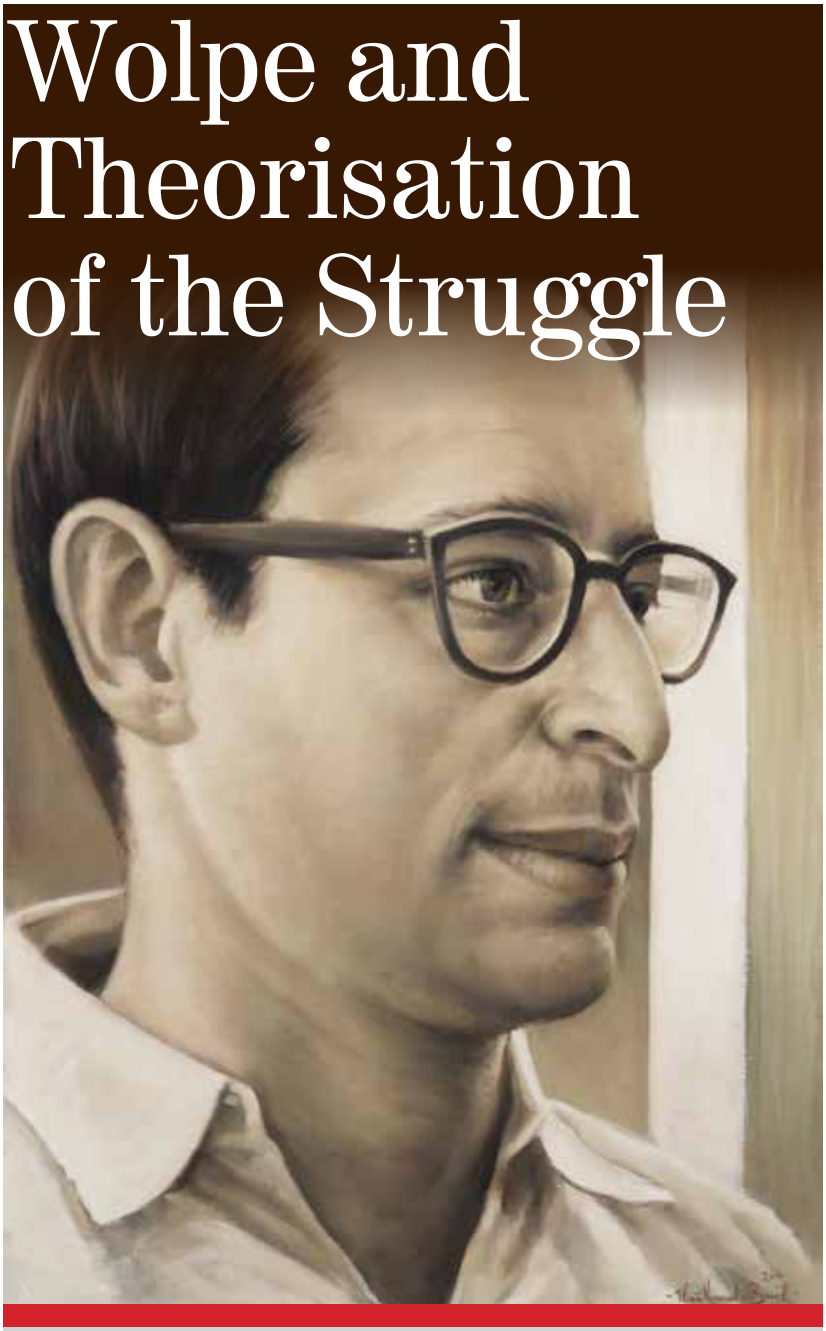
ANC • REGGIO EMILIA • HIP

"Continuing collaboration, cooperation and dialogue"

The Italian section of the HIP Alliance congratulates the late Giuseppe Soncini

on receiving the National Order of the Companion of OR Tambo in Silver. Giuseppe Soncini from Reggio Emilia was instrumental in building the solidarity movement with the ANC in Italy.

Wolpe and Theorisation of the Struggle



Important as the breakthrough of 1994 was, it has not guaranteed the shift of power to apartheid's victims: this has depended on the extent to which the dominated have been able to use the rights which democracy offers to turn the promise of a say into reality.

By Steven Friedman

If we want insights into some of the problems which face us today, we need to read the writings of one of Lilliesleaf's cast of characters – Harold Wolpe. Ironically, his ideas (the subject of a forthcoming book by this author) which would most help us today are not those for which he is best known.

Wolpe achieved some fame twice – first when, as a 'struggle' lawyer and underground SA Communist Party and ANC member, he played a significant supporting role at Lilliesleaf. He helped Arthur Goldreich buy the farm with SACP money and later recalled that his job there was to service the Roneo machine, a duplicating device used to make pamphlets. After the Umkhonto we Sizwe High Command was captured at Lilliesleaf, he was arrested and escaped from the police's Marshall Square headquarters in Johannesburg with Goldreich and MK operatives Mosie Moolla and Abdulhai 'Charlie' Jassat (see article by Mosie Moolla on p46). The escape was a much-publicised embarrassment for the apartheid state: the two white escapers, who made their way to London with the ANC's help, were given most of the attention and, for a while, Wolpe and Goldreich were celebrities. There Wolpe embarked on the career which was to offer him a new celebrity – as a Marxist theorist. Despite his limited qualifications in sociology, he worked his way up the academic ranks to a lecturing post at Essex University, from where he began to analyse apartheid.

Beyond Boer-Bashing: Bringing Class Back In

In 1972, Wolpe published an article, *Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid*, which made him a cult figure among young (mostly white) radicals at the English-speaking universities.

It was one of several Marxist social analyses which, in the form of grubby Roneoed or photocopied papers, was passed from hand to hand by young radicals looking for an alternative to the view of apartheid which reigned among its white critics.

For the dominant liberal view of the time, apartheid was the product

of Afrikaner prejudice, an irrational obstacle to economic development. White English-speaking business and professional people were thus victims of the system, not perpetrators. The SA Communist Party largely agreed, seeing apartheid as Colonialism of a Special Type, a form of colonisation in which the colonisers shared a country with the colonised. But the young radicals believed that the genteel suburbs in which they had been raised were not guiltless – they were making money out of apartheid and their criticism of the system was more anti-Afrikaner prejudice than moral conviction. Wolpe and other Marxist analysts such as Martin Legassick and FA Johnstone gave theoretical voice to these beliefs.

Wolpe's article argued that apartheid was not an obstacle to capitalism – on the contrary, it was essential to the market economy in South Africa. The segregated rural reserves to which black people were consigned were not ideological creations – they performed an important economic task, enabling businesses to depress black wages.

According to Marxist theory, capitalists extract profit by paying workers no more than the cost of reproducing themselves – the minimum required for them and their families to survive. If this cost could be reduced, capitalists could make bigger profits. Segregated black reserves, because they provided workers with some subsistence, reduced the amount needed to survive. This enabled capitalists to cheapen labour and enhance profits.

As important as this was to capitalism it was, Wolpe argued, unstable. The reserve economies could not withstand the power of the stronger economic system and so they began to collapse as a means of subsistence. By the 1940s, this had bitten into worker incomes, triggering strikes and demonstrations. Capitalism's saviour was apartheid which reacted by repressing black resistance and ensuring continued cheap labour even though the reserves were no longer able to support workers and their families.

The theory seemed tailor-made for university-based radicals. Apartheid, it insisted, was not an irrational imposition on business – it was capitalism's survival strategy. At the same time, it also seemed to break with the SACP's use of Marxist slogans to justify a view in which race, not economic exploitation, was the source of white domination, a position the students rejected both because it seemed crude and because it seemed to give a free pass to the exploitation of one class by another. Wolpe's work was intellectually sophisticated – and it implicated white English-speaking society in apartheid.

Wolpe's ideas and those of his colleagues inspired dozens of young whites to join the trade union movement and the ANC.

"In reality, the company owner has considerable power which can impact on the life of the shack-dweller just as harshly as that of the state. This was so under apartheid and is so now. A public debate which ignores private power shifts the blame for our challenges onto one actor, government."

Pointing to Private Power

Wolpe's theory drew attention to a reality which often remains unappreciated in South Africa today: that power can be wielded by private as well as public actors. Like the mainstream view of apartheid, much of today's public debate sees power as the property of the state only. And so a democratic society is one in which citizens ensure that the state serves them and does not infringe their rights - whether the citizen lives in a shack or owns a mining company.

In reality, the company owner has considerable power which can impact on the life of the shack-dweller just as harshly as that of the state. This was so under apartheid and is so now. A public debate which ignores private power shifts the blame for our challenges onto one actor, government, when private interests share in creating the problems and could help to solve them. Wolpe and his colleagues, by stressing the role of economic power-holders in creating and sustaining apartheid, shone a spotlight on private power: our current debate needs to do the same.

Wolpe's theory saw apartheid as a product of class differences because it enabled owners to exploit workers. And so it opened the possibility that class divisions were important in black society, explaining something which mainstream 'liberation' thinking could not understand: divisions between black people despite the fact that all were oppressed by apartheid. It could explain why, from the 1970, migrant workers from KwaZulu Natal fought black people who were allowed to live in the cities. It also alerted some in the ANC to the need for a democratic system which would recognise this difference.

But for all its impact, Wolpe's theory could not – as liberal and Marxist critics showed – explain apartheid. It under-estimated the power of racial ideology and over-estimated the power of the state by assuming that it could simply impose its wishes on society. And it ignored the degree to which, as the economy grew, apartheid began to obstruct growth.

It also helped justify what Wolpe saw as a dangerous view: that, if apartheid was essential to capitalism, the fight against racial domination was also a battle for socialism. It was this thinking which gave rise, in the early 1980s, to a rebellion by four London-based ANC members led by Legassick: they wanted the ANC to pay less attention to guerrilla war and more to organising workers. Their argument was based partly on the claim that apartheid and capitalism were so intertwined that the one could not be defeated unless the other was.

Legassick and his 'Gang of Four' were expelled from the ANC and it may have been at this stage that

Wolpe concluded that he needed to correct the impression that his theory contradicted the ANC and SACP view that the fight against apartheid was not a battle against capitalism. Whether it was for this reason or because he was responding to academic critics of his 'cheap labour' article, Wolpe began an intellectual journey which took him away from his intellectual roots towards a sophisticated understanding of South Africa which is still relevant today.

Real Politics, Real People

The most obvious shift in Wolpe's position was his recognition that race mattered.

Using the work of the French Marxist Louis Althusser and Stuart Hall, a Jamaican-born British left theorist, Wolpe tried to show that racial domination could take on a life of its own under capitalism. In Marxist theory, capitalist society is divided into classes which are shaped by their relationship to productive property: to own is to dominate, to labour is to serve. This is an economic divide, not one shaped by race, and so some Marxists argued that race was an illusion, a fig leaf to hide capitalist domination. Wolpe insisted that, although class domination was central to capitalism, the system could also tolerate other forms of domination such as racial oppression. And so in South Africa, white domination could have a life of its own. So, while he continued to insist that class was crucial, Wolpe argued that race was important too.

At the time, this was not controversial – only a few socialists challenged it. By making the point, Wolpe was signalling his support for the SACP and ANC position. But it is relevant to today's circumstances.

Since 1994, it is no longer some on the left who insist that race is an artificial division used to secure economic dominance. Now many liberals and right-wingers insist that the new black elite manufactures racial divisions which should have been buried in 1994.

Wolpe's work reminds us that race domination has deep roots in the society – far too deep to disappear simply because we have a democratic constitution. And it implies that we need to continue to take seriously the fight against racial domination.

The other contributions of his later work were more complicated but no less important to our current circumstances.

In the 1980s, Wolpe began to argue that apartheid was changing. As the economy grew, it had become an obstacle to profit and business now wanted reforms to the system. This reality and the growth of black resistance had pushed apartheid into retreat, forcing the state to introduce reforms. While Wolpe endorsed the ANC and SACP view that the reforms aimed to make domination work better, he challenged mainstream thinking in the movements by insisting that they offered opportunities for resistance.

"Wolpe's work reminds us that race domination has deep roots in the society – far too deep to disappear simply because we have a democratic constitution. And it implies that we need to continue to take seriously the fight against racial domination."

This strategic point was an important challenge to thinking on the left. The dominant view was that no shifts in the balance of power between the dominator and the dominated could happen until the apartheid state was overthrown and a new state governed by the popular forces prevailed. This misreads how change really happens.

Over the past century, the real shifts in power have occurred when the dominated use their collective muscle to win greater rights and more of say. A change in control of the state can help. But it is not essential. Equally important, a change in who governs will not shift the power balance unless the dominated are organised and able to ensure that the promise opened by political change becomes a reality.

This is certainly true of our recent history. Shifts from the dominator to the dominated began to occur after the 1973 Durban strikes and the 1976 Soweto uprising, as well as the conflicts of the 1980s. The most obvious example is the trade union movement which gave workers a voice. Less well known but as important was the role of some civic associations, such as that in Port Alfred led by Rural Development minister Gugile Nkwinti, in winning joint control of their area in negotiation with the local power elite. Apartheid was ended by bargaining, not the storming of the Union Buildings. And, important as the breakthrough of 1994 was, it has not guaranteed the shift of power to apartheid's victims: this has depended on the extent to which the dominated have been able to use the rights which democracy offers to turn the promise of a say into reality.

Wolpe's work anticipated these realities (even though Wolpe himself did not immediately see the implications – in the late 1980s, he was still arguing that a negotiated end to apartheid was not possible). It invites us to think of South Africa today in a different way to that suggested by much current analysis: not as a society in which freedom had been achieved but is being squandered by selfish and corrupt politicians, but one in which the battle for freedom is still incomplete: democracy opens up possibilities but does not automatically end the domination entrenched in the past.

The State and Its Limits

This breakthrough may also have enabled Wolpe to make perhaps his most important contribution to our current challenges – his work on the limits of state power.

From the early 1980s, Wolpe began writing about the dangers of 'instrumentalising' the state. Mainstream left thinking's belief that only an overthrow of the regime could bring change stemmed from a particular understanding of the state.

In Marxist theory, the state is the instrument of the ruling class. Private power – ownership of the factories, shops and banks which produce wealth – is meant to enable public power and so government and the state are not neutral: they are controlled by and serve the owners of wealth. Control of society meant control of the state – control of the state meant control of society. And so state control was the key – the ruling class could use it to oppress the people, the people could use it to free themselves if they won control over it.

Wolpe's early work was deeply influenced by this idea: his assumption that the apartheid state was all powerful and able to turn all its plans into realities followed from the idea that the state could reshape society at will.

Later, influenced by work on the state by his Essex colleague Bob Jessop, also a Marxist thinker, Wolpe began to argue that the state was far more complicated. There were important conflicts within it which could create opportunities for the dominated. A South African example was the tension between the courts (a branch of the state) and parliament when, in the 1980s, judges overturned aspects of the pass laws which barred most black people from the cities and the Group Areas Act which enforced racial segregation in living areas.

Second, and crucial for our current debates, he argued that the state was not all powerful – it had to contend with many interests in society which had the power to frustrate it. To 'instrumentalise' the state was to assume that it could do whatever people in power wanted it to do – which was sure to end in failure and disappointment.

Wolpe's final paper arguing this was a discussion of the 1995 White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) written just before his death. The White Paper promised to unite all of South Africa behind a programme to overturn the inequalities of the past and insisted that the machinery of state would be used to achieve equity and democracy. Wolpe warned that the consensus which the White Paper proclaimed was a fiction – the society remained divided between interest groups working for and against change and some who were doing both. It would have to navigate itself through these minefields if it wanted to change society. And so, Wolpe's last article suggested, governing the new South Africa would be effective only if those who controlled the state realised the need to engage with the many interest groups and networks which could frustrate it.

A Lesson for Us All?

The analysis was prophetic. Control of the state by the representatives of the majority did not miraculously bring non-racial equity. One reason was that many in government over-estimated the power of the state, failing to realise that it was something to be built, not automatic.

> "Over the past century, the real shifts in power have occurred when the dominated use their collective muscle to win greater rights and more of say. A change in control of the state can help. But it is not essential."

It is also very relevant to our immediate realities. The weaknesses of post-apartheid governance is often seen as a failure to use the powerful state machine well – on one side, skills backlogs, affirmative action and 'cadre deployment' are said to have stunted the efficiency of the state, preventing it from becoming an instrument of economic growth. On the other, the ANC has responded to disaffection in its constituency by promising to make government more efficient. Both ignore what Wolpe showed – that the state only becomes effective if those who run it build effective relationships with both those who support their goals and those who might obstruct them.

The point is illustrated by the last two national budget speeches. The 2012 version is full of brave promises to root out corruption and ensure efficiency – the 2013 speech reports that this has faced many points of resistance and that the only way round them is for the major interests in the society to co-operate in fighting the problem because government could not beat it on its own.

Wolpe anticipated this and so the theorist of class conflict in the 1970s became an advocate of inclusive decision-making in the 1990s. In an article on higher education – the field to which he devoted the last years of his life – he noted that universities and colleges faced a twin pressure: to meet the country's labour needs and to reverse the racial and class inequities of its apartheid past. This, he pointed out, was a reflection of differing interests: those who had benefitted from the past stressed efficiency, those who had been dominated wanted equity. The only workable answer was negotiation in which all interests would be included.

This development in Wolpe's thinking argues against those voices who insist that our problem is the negotiated settlement of 1993 which failed to sweep away minority power. He tells us that change of government does not sweep away existing power – it only creates an opportunity to erode it. And that this can happen only if power is engaged, not wished away. The settlement reflected the balance of power which then existed. That balance needs to change and it can do so only in the process of negotiation which Wolpe believed education needed and which, he implied, the RDP White Paper had ignored.

Some of Wolpe's admirers believe he would have been a critic of our current realities. They are probably right. But they are wrong to imply that he would have been an angry critic of compromise, demanding a more militant march to social justice. His later work shows that he would have been an advocate of compromise – one who would warn against many of the misconceptions in our current debate which prevent us seeking and finding the negotiated change which we need. ■

The Politics of Transition

As South Africa enters a new phase in its development, we can all learn from the experiences of the Rivonia Trial and apply the lessons to the current transition.

By Yacoob Abba Omar

The old word is dead.
The old books are dead…
We want a generation of giants.
Arab children,
Corn ears of the future,
You will break our chains,
Kill the opium in our heads,
Kill the illusions.

These words of Syrian intellectual Nizar Qabbani echo through my mind as I contemplate the significance of the 50th anniversary of the raid on Lilliesleaf which led to the famous Rivonia Trial. Those happenings of 1963 represented the most significant inflection point in the history of the liberation struggle. There are profound lessons which can be gleaned from the transition the democratic movement went through at that point in time for the transition we are going through today.

In the last seven decades, South African politics has gone through three key transitions: from the late forties to the beginning of the sixties when the

ANC developed a truly mass character; from the sixties to 1994 when the ANC had to combine underground organisation with other forms of struggle; and from 1994 to 2014 when the organisation had to transform into the ruling party.

The momentum which had started in the 1940s with the ANC and its allies resorting to more and more radical and direct action was to be irretrievably rerouted by the repressive developments of the late fifties and early sixties. Just as a combination of external and internal forces made for a fundamental realignment of the strategy and tactics of the ANC then, I believe there is now a series of global and national features which will help a reconfigured ANC to emerge in the next few years. In doing so, I believe we will break the chains of bad habits, kill the opium of self-aggrandisement and destroy the illusions of hubris.

Like all transitions, this will not be an easy one. But neither was the transition our elders saw in the early sixties. The global context of the time was characterised by countries like India gaining their independence. This period was best epitomised by the Bandung Conference where 600 leaders and delegates of 29 newly independent countries from Asia and Africa met from April 18-24, 1955. The Philippines representative to the conference, Carlos Romulos, captured the spirit very well when he said in his statement: 'The age of empire is being helped into oblivion by the aroused will and action of the people determined to be masters of their own fate'.

From the late 1940s, energised by the dynamism of new leadership of the ilk of Dr AB Xuma, Yusuf Dadoo, Nelson Mandela, Moses Kotane, JB Marks, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, the ANC was at the vanguard of arousing the masses. Borrowing heavily from the experience of the Indian nationalist movement and the example of Mahatma Gandhi, these varied actions coupled with the vision of the Freedom Charter drawn up in the very year of the Bandung Conference, demonstrated the determination of the oppressed majority of South Africa to be the drivers of their own destiny.

Through most of this period the question of resorting to the armed struggle was always kept on the back-burner, as an option to be considered when the circumstances demanded it. The banning of the Communist Part of South Africa (forerunner of the SACP) in 1950, the confinement of many leaders of the Congress Alliance, the imprisonment of many others, the torture in detention of many leaders and cadres of the movement – all these served to underline the need to consider military action against a regime which simply refused to budge in the face of popular opposition.

This came to a head in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960 and the subsequent banning of the ANC, PAC and other organisations on 8 April 1960. The ANC and its allies had to undergo a radical transformation in its modus operandi, the most important of which was trying to survive in the climate of illegality.

"Perhaps the most important of the lessons is the bold selflessness the leadership showed. At no point was there any slacking up in the one basic role of leadership – that of providing direction and moral example."

The manner in which this political transition occurred holds many lessons which I shall highlight here and return to when the current conjuncture is considered. Perhaps the most important of the lessons is the bold selflessness the leadership showed. At no point was there any slacking up in the one basic role of leadership – that of providing direction and moral example.

Will we ever again hear a South African leader utter the kind of words that Nelson Mandela uttered at his trial: 'I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die'.

The ANC leadership had already shown this kind of backbone in the first Treason Trial where, as Ahmed Kathrada puts it: 'Our strategy was to include our political beliefs and an exposition of the struggle at every opportunity, and there was no room in our plan for lack of courage or conviction'[1].

This, coupled with the second lesson of the need to have foresight, ensured that the Congress Alliance embarked on several strategies simultaneously. These included sending OR Tambo, Yusuf Dadoo and a number of other cadres to set up the external mission of the ANC while Mandela and others headed up the internal efforts.

The third lesson was to learn to subdue one's personal preferences when the rest of the organisation had taken a different decision. The best example of this is the understanding Chief Albert Luthuli showed with the ANC moving towards armed action, despite his discomfort.

The fourth lesson is to continuously review the impact of your decisions. As Slovo has said, one of the key reasons for MK's misfortunes in the early period of its existence was the misguided feeling that the South African security forces were either unable to change their way of operating or too backward to do so. However, as Vladimir Shubin points out: ' As soon as armed activities commenced South African security forces received training abroad which drew on the French experience in Algeria and the US experience in Korea and Vietnam. The security apparatus was 'completely refashioned' '[2].

11 July 1963 was the fateful day on which the High Command of MK was arrested at Lilliesleaf. This was the harbinger of trials throughout the country which went on until 1966. Not only had the internal and organisational

dynamics changed. The global context in the next transition the ANC had to undergo had also changed. This was captured in the ANC's *Strategy and Tactics* document of 1969:

> *[Ours] is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world – a world which is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the elements which make such control meaningful – economic emancipation.*

To the credit of the ANC's leadership, despite all the assistance rendered to it by the countries of the socialist world, the leadership ensured its independence of thinking. This is an important fifth lesson derived from this transition. Such independence was best illustrated by the way the ANC and SACP managed their relationship with the Soviet Union. While Moses Kotane is known as the South African who led our side of the relationship, there has been little appreciation of the independence the South Africans insisted upon. The key interlocutor on the side of the CPSU was Boris Ponomarev who, when presented with the detailed analysis of the situation inside South Africa and the strategic options being considered, remarked: 'You know better'[3].

The shift from elite politics to mass-based politics was temporarily halted in the mid-sixties. This engendered the next major phase in the transition of the ANC and its allies as the liberation struggle mobilised international support, mobilised the people, and built the underground. This transition in itself was not easy but fortified with the strength of conviction the ANC managed to not only survive, but to also triumph over the many hurdles.

The ANC's efforts served to isolate the apartheid regime even from its white base, enfeebled the government's claims to legitimacy and laid the ground for a negotiated settlement. Lesson six can be distilled from this phase: that we have to keep the long term perspective in mind. Whenever I read of the early days of the ANC in exile, with much of its leadership on Robben Island, I have images of the Ruth Mompatis, Anthony Mongalos and Vella Pillays armed with pick-axes breaking new ground, turning the soil, laying the basis for the subsequent waves of ANC cadres.

The ending of the Cold War was an important aspect of the global context. The holding of the first non-racial, democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 and the adoption of one of the most progressive constitutions in the world in 1996 signalled the beginning of a new transition.

> "The ANC has forced all other parties to prove their credentials in terms of the extent to which they are committed to the well-being of South Africa society."

The transition to becoming a ruling party from 1994 onwards was in itself fraught with difficulties. It would be tempting to allow our view of the past twenty years to be blinkered by the massacre at Marikana, corruption of some of the leaders and public officials, the splintering of the ANC after Polokwane, the removal of Mbeki without grace, and so forth.

These events should not detract from what has been achieved in this period. The most important achievement has been setting the basis for a humane society which has made the welfare of all the people of South Africa the concern of every political party. The ANC has forced all other parties to prove their credentials in terms of the extent to which they are committed to the well-being of South Africa society.

Joel Netshitenzhe has often pointed out what I regard as the seventh lesson of our transitions: the biggest progress has been made in those areas in which the government can act directly such as in the provision of basic services. Powerful as it may be and while in many critical areas it can set the parameters, the state can only succeed if it works with social partners. Its effectiveness therefore has to be measured also in terms of its ability to mobilise for partnership in carrying out the national agenda.

The ANC showed its insight once again when in 2007, before the Great Recession of 2008, in its assessment of the global situation, the organisation concluded that it is an environment of contradictory tendencies represented by 'the dominance of a capitalist system with minimal regulation [that] presents enormous challenges for social development and for global governance and security'. At the same time, the ANC argues, 'programmes of progressive social change are finding pride of place on the agenda of many developing nations and some global institutions. Most African countries have successfully set out to resolve conflict, entrench democracy and reconstruct economies in a manner that benefits the people.'[4]

As we look forward to the next transition, let us summarise the lessons we have learnt thus far:

- That leadership must be possessed of bold selflessness
- That we have to keep the long term perspective in mind. For that,
- We must exercise foresight. Also,
- We must continuously review the impact of our decisions
- Once a decision has been arrived at we must subdue personal preferences and ensure effective implementation
- Notwithstanding who our friends are, we must remain capable of independent thinking
- Progress is possible through government's efforts but there are limits to state power.

As we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the raid on Lilliesleaf and the beginning of the Rivonia Trial, what is the context we find South Africa in? At the global level we find that imperialism, which had been expressed through colonialism for most of the

past few centuries, has taken on a new form. Partha Chatterjee captured this well when he wrote 'flexible capital combines with flexible sovereignty to produce empire that is flexible enough to adjust itself to conjunctural and local situations and to thus devise new and appropriate forms of governance'[5]. Today, empire has changed its form and so the potential of an industrial proletariat being the vanguard of a full frontal assault on the citadels of capital has been reduced.

This has led progressives to look at all manner of exotic strategies – Negri and Haadrt, for example, have argued in *Empire* for universal citizenship which can take on the universal nature of empire. Others have tended to accept the inevitability of Western hegemony. Atul Bharwaj has given an example of what this means: 'India has got itself trapped into an anti-China matrix set in place by the United States'[6].

While organisations like the UN remain impervious to democratisation, new multilateral bodies are emerging. At its core, BRICS is an association to counter-balance Western political and economic dominance, and to increase the political and economic space of these countries and their developing world allies. The African Union, which shows tremendous potential to also challenge the hegemony of Empire, is a site of struggle against the hegemonic agenda of imperialism as well.

As previously colonised countries liberated themselves, the nature of the postcolonial state came to be debated. 'Modern statecraft', Chatterjee wrote, 'cannot resolve 'the very real tensions' which 'are apparent in the political life of every postcolonial nationalist regime in the world. In numerous cases they appear as separatist movements based on ethnic identities, proofs of the incomplete resolution of 'the national question'. More significantly, they often appear as fervently anti-modern, anti-Western strands of politics, rejecting capitalism too for its association with modernism and the West and preaching either a cultural revival or a utopian millennialism.'

Hamid Dabashi, writing in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, declared that for too long the peoples of the Arab world had been oppressed by postcolonial regimes. The Arab Spring was 'a point of rebellion against domestic tyranny and globalised disempowerment, now jointly challenged beyond the entrapment of postcolonial ideologies'[7]. He concludes that 'These uprisings, in the long run, will leave not a stone unturned in the economic, social, political and above all cultural dispositions of these societies, and by extension the geopolitics of their region, and thus beyond into the global configuration of power'[8].

The South African transition from 1994 to 2014 has been very similar to that of many other postcolonial experiences. We have seen a ruling party less and less in touch with the people it is supposed to be the vanguard of. We find a leadership bereft of moral conviction or boldness to stand up against the attacks on the sovereignty of the state and country.

Despite having engaged in many attempts at looking at the long term perspective through the Presidency's Scenarios and developing long-term plans through the National Planning Commission, we still find Ministers resorting to short-termism. Lip service is paid to the NDP or it is reinterpreted to suit the favourite project of some faction or the other.

Being an eternal optimist I always look for the best possible scenario emerging from a depressing reality. In conclusion I would like to trace two key interventions which, if followed through, will ensure that we avoid the fate of the postcolonial Arab dictators, and set our country and people back on the high moral ground as well as a higher growth trajectory. Both the interventions depend on the kind of bold, selfless, farsighted and collective leadership we have written of above.

The first is commitment to a developmental state. The ANC has since 2007 formally committed itself to the creation of a developmental state, which includes the following features: "The first attribute of a developmental state in our conditions should be its strategic orientation ... The second attribute of our developmental state should be its capacity to lead in the definition of a common national agenda and in mobilising all of society to take part in its implementation… The third attribute should be the state's organisational capacity… The fourth attribute should be its technical capacity..."[9]

Adopting such a long-term orientation will ensure that South Africa can lay the basis for being defined as a developed country.

The second intervention requires showing disgust towards corruption and the celebration of clean officials. Joel Netshitenzhe, in an unpublished speech, described how rottenness sets in: 'Cadres get drawn into the marshes of corruption. From small favours, to regular gifts, to free shares in companies, to getting beholden to varied business-persons or sections of capital, the cancer spreads infecting first individuals and ultimately determining collective political choices and conduct'.

The ANC had noted that 'our efforts to change people's material conditions take place virtually in a vacuum in terms of spiritual sustenance in the form of a defining and self-assertive culture of an emergent democratic nation. It is in this context that the call for an RDP of the Soul should be seen: a cultural revolution without which all the other efforts will lose meaning and dissipate…'[10]

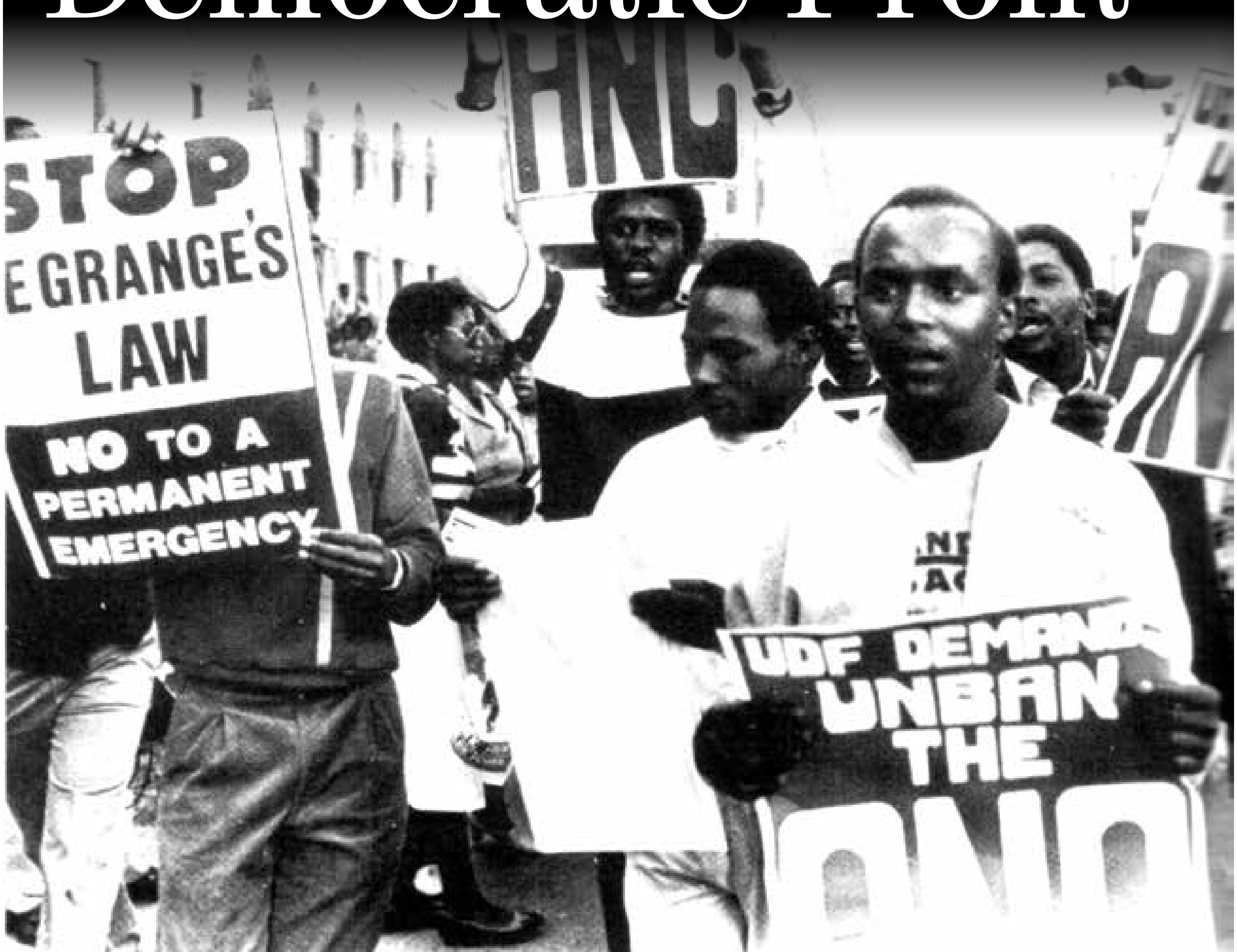
South Africans will then be able to claim, in WE Henley's words from *Invictus*:

It matters not how straight the gait
How charged with punishments the scroll
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul. ■

References

1. Kathrada, A. 2004. *Ahmed Kathrada;Memoirs* Cape Town: Struik Publishers.
2. Shubin, V. 1999. *ANC: A View from Moscow*. Bellville: Mayibuye Books. p57.
3. Ibid, p41
4. *Building a National Democratic Society, ANC Strategy and Tactics,* adopted at 52nd National Conference (2007)
5. Chatterjee, P.2009. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflection on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. Delhi: Permanent Black, p102
6. Bhardwaj, Atul. 2013. 'The China-India Relationship: A Possible New Paradigm', in *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol XLVIII No 20, pp 12-15
7. Dabashi, H. 2012. *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism.* London: Zed Books, p4.
8. Ibid, p6
9. *Building a National Democratic Society, ANC Strategy and Tactics*, adopted at 52nd National Conference (2007)
10. *Umrabulo*, No 10, 1st Quarter 2001

The United Democratic Front



UDF Rally against the draconian state of emergency and also calling for the unbanning of the ANC

In 1983, the UDF brought together close to 600 organisations with a combined membership of over one-and-a-half million people. It also brought together people from almost every walk of life, young and old, male and female, educated and uneducated, petty bourgeois and working class, socialist and liberal, religious and non-religious, Christian and Muslim, and black and white.

By Gregory F. Houston

At the time of the arrest of the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) at Liliesleaf Farm on the 11 July 1963, the leadership was holding discussions on a plan for an ambitious campaign known as Operation Mayibuye. The plan, according to Nelson Mandela, envisaged the commencement of guerrilla operations that would eventually spark a mass armed uprising against the apartheid government. The involvement of the 'masses' was seen as critical to the success of this campaign. Again, in its 1969 *Strategy and Tactics of the South African Revolution* strategic document, the African National Congress (ANC) stressed that mass involvement was vital if the movement was going to present an active challenge to the apartheid regime.

Mass involvement had reached unprecedented heights for the ANC in the course of the Defiance and Freedom Charter Campaigns in the 1950s. This was the decade of mass mobilisation, which resulted in the movement reaching an impressive 100,000 members. However, the banning of the movement in 1960 was followed by the imprisonment and harassment of thousands of its members. Many were forced underground or into exile, while political activity for the bulk of the membership was suppressed. The ANC suffered a further blow when its leadership was arrested at Liliesleaf and some of the most important leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were imprisoned for life in the subsequent Rivonia Trial. It was to take more than twenty years for the movement to reach a stage where it was able to substantially increase its active membership and support inside the country. An important factor in the phenomenal growth in the level of mass involvement in the struggle was the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983.

The formation of the UDF

In the late seventies, the upsurge of internal popular struggles after the 1976 Soweto uprising and general acceptance within ANC circles that the armed struggle on its own was insufficient convinced ANC leaders of the need to transform its strategy[1]. Consequently, in 1978, a high-profile ANC delegation visited Vietnam to conduct a study of the Vietcong's revolutionary strategy[2]. The delegation's report was considered at a meeting held in Luanda between 17 December 1978 and 1 January 1979. It was decided that a commission be set up to review the ANC's strategy, tactics and operational structures based on a number of strategic questions that arose during the review of the delegation's report. These included, among others: the elaboration of an overall strategy based on mass mobilisation; and the creation of the broadest possible national front for liberation[3].

The Politico-Military Strategy Commission submitted its report, popularly known as *The Green Book*, in March 1979. The commission argued that the main tasks of underground political work included, among others: mobilising and organising the masses into active struggle by attracting all potential forces and establishing the broadest possible unity of all forces; creating mass organisations and assisting and guiding existing organisations; and directing all internal struggles by providing slogans and issues around which people could be mobilised[4]. The commission's recommendations were formally adopted by the ANC in August 1979, and the movement identified four pillars in its new 'people's revolutionary war' strategy: mass mobilisation, armed operations, underground organisation and international solidarity work. The task now was to lay the basis for the people's revolutionary war, which included the building of a united front of legal and semi-legal organisations opposed to apartheid[5]. The ANC subsequently embarked on a three-year propaganda and organisational campaign to lay the basis for a people's war.

> "The task now was to lay the basis for the people's revolutionary war, which included the building of a united front of legal and semi-legal organisations opposed to apartheid."

In 1980, a series of activities were conducted to popularise the ANC's Freedom Charter. This includes the distribution of thousands of copies of the document to the masses of South Africans; various meetings to commemorate the Charter; and the adoption of the Charter by various significant organisations such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). In the same year, a campaign was launched for the release of Nelson Mandela, drawing attention to the ANC's jailed leader and rallying nearly all sectors of the black population behind him. This also had the effect of raising the stature of the movement to that of 'an all-embracing popular front'[6]. The ANC also stepped up armed propaganda activity, in which it used military actions to attract popular support for the movement. By linking its attacks with popular actions and carrying out high-profile operations the ANC was able to ensure that military actions 'had a vital contribution to make towards domestic political mobilisation'[7].

From 1980 on, the ANC underground also embarked on a campaign to create new legal and semi-legal organisations, and was instructed to assist with the formation of civic associations, and student, youth, women's and trade union organisations. The initial activities of the ANC underground were to become active in the existing civic associations. By mid-1983 most of these associations had aligned themselves with ANC-inclined ideological positions. By the early 1980s, as well, the main student organisations in the country – COSAS, the organisation for students at schools, and the Azanian Students Organisation, the organisation for tertiary students – had adopted the Freedom Charter.

The two student organisations were also instrumental in the formation of youth organisations, and in 1982 alone the Cape Youth Congress, Port Elizabeth Youth Congress, Soweto Youth Congress, and the Alexandra

Youth Congress were formed. Similarly, a number of women's organisations formed in the early 1980s, while not declaring open support for the ANC and the Freedom Charter, shared the same principles and objectives as the ANC. In the early 1980s, as well, ANC underground activists had become leading figures in some of emerging trade unions, including the South African Allied Workers' Union, the Motor Assembly and Components Workers' Union, the General Workers Union of South Africa, and the General and Allied Workers' Union. Although these unions did not explicitly declare their support for the ANC or its policies at the time, their policies and objectives were clearly ANC-aligned.

Unity-in-action was facilitated by a number of campaigns in the early 1980s that followed the Freedom Charter and Release Mandela campaigns. The most significant of these were the campaigns against festivities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the South African Republic in May 1981, against the elections for the South African Indian Council (SAIC) scheduled to take place in the same year, and against a new constitutional dispensation and the so-called "Koornhof Bills".

In the Anti-Republic campaign, a special Anti-Republic Celebrations Committee, supported by various ad hoc committees, was formed, bringing together organisations from all political persuasions opposed to apartheid. However, at various activities arranged to demonstrate opposition to the festivities there were indications of support for the ANC, including the burning of the apartheid regime's flag and the hoisting of the ANC flag in its place.

Similarly, anti-SAIC committees were formed during the course of the anti-SAIC campaign, particularly in the then Natal and Transvaal provinces, which drew in membership from organisations of the various race groups. The ANC saw the campaign as an opportunity to 'raise the political consciousness of the masses of our people; and build a unity of action of Africans, Indians, coloureds and democratic whites'[8]. Soon after the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee (TASC) was established in June 1981, it committed itself to the Freedom Charter.

In 1982, the President's Council recommended the extension of political rights to the Indian and coloured communities. The new constitutional dispensation provided for a tri-cameral Parliament, in which coloureds and Indians were to be given their own houses of Parliament linked to Ministers' Councils which were responsible for the administration of "own affairs". However, effective political power was to remain in the hands of the white government. Opposition to the constitution gave rise to the formation of Anti-President's Council Committees to mobilise various community organisations. In the first half of 1983 a number of meetings were held throughout the country, drawing together numerous organisations to plan united action against the constitutional proposals.

> "By linking its attacks with popular actions and carrying out high-profile operations the ANC was able to ensure that military actions 'had a vital contribution to make towards domestic political mobilisation'"

Similarly, the Koornhof Bills, named after the then Minister of Plural Relations and Development, provoked widespread resistance and organisation. The Black Local Authorities Bill provided for the establishment of Black Local Authorities, which were provided with a limited degree of autonomy to legitimise the exclusion of urban Africans from the central government. The Orderly Movement and Resettlement of Black Persons Bill, among other things, placed an additional constraint on the movement of Africans from the rural homelands to the urban areas of 'white South Africa' by introducing measures for the prosecution of employers of illegal migrants. The Black Communities Development Bill proposed placing Administration Boards under the control of the Department of Co-operation and Development, and making them responsible for influx control, local government in African areas, housing, and co-operation with other government departments in their areas of jurisdiction.

From 1980 onward, various publications of the ANC and SACP smuggled into the country, as well as speeches of the President of the movement, Oliver Tambo, on Radio Freedom, contained calls for the establishment of a united front against apartheid. This call found a responsive audience among ANC-aligned individuals and organisations inside the country. By the beginning of 1983, sentiments in favour of the formation of a united front were being expressed by people from all the anti-apartheid formations, whether ANC-aligned or not, as the resistance against apartheid gained momentum. When Dr Allan Boesak called for the unification of all forces opposed to apartheid and the formation of a united front at a TASC conference in January 1983, it met with a positive response. The conference appointed a commission to investigate the feasibility of establishing a united front. The commission drafted a statement laying down the basis for the internal structure of the UDF, and guidelines for the new organisation which included dedication to the creation of a non-racial, unitary state and the adoption of a non-racial form of organisation.

A steering committee was set up to establish the UDF, followed by the election of an interim national executive. Mobilisation for the establishment of the organisation then followed, and regional UDFs were formed from May onwards. The inaugural conference was held at Rocklands Civic Centre, Mitchells Plain, attended by approximately 1,000 delegates representing 575 organisations. These included political, civic, student, youth, women's, trade union, sport, religious, professional

and other organisations from many areas of the country. Between 10,000 and 15,000 people attended the subsequent rally, where the decisions taken at the conference were endorsed.

The place and functions of the UDF

Initially, the prevailing view on the role of the UDF was that it would coordinate opposition to the government's reforms. Thus, it immediately devoted attention to the upcoming elections for the Black Local Authorities, scheduled for November and December 1983. Anti-Community Councils' Election Committees were formed in many parts of the country by UDF affiliates. UDF volunteers distributed thousands of pamphlets and conducted house-to-house campaigns. In this campaign the pattern was set for meetings at houses in the townships where eligible voters were encouraged to boycott the elections. Percentage polls were generally lower than the 1978-79 elections for the former community councils: for instance, in Soweto, 10.7 per cent, Lekoa, 14.7 per cent and Evaton, 5.9 per cent.

Elections for the coloured and Indian chambers were scheduled for the end of August 1984. The UDF and its affiliates, together with other major anti-apartheid organisations, decided on a boycott campaign. But, as a test of its support and of opposition to the reform proposals, the UDF launched a "Million Signatures Campaign" on the 21 January 1984. The campaign offered an opportunity to educate South Africans about the aims and objectives of the UDF and the implications of the constitution, to build unity, to establish grassroots support, and inform the international community of the mass rejection of apartheid. By October, fewer than 400,000 signatures had been collected. Eventually the focus shifted to a boycott of the elections for the Indian House of Delegates and coloured House of Representatives.

On the one level there was the direct mobilisation of Indian and coloured people through the UDF and its affiliates. This involved a series of mass rallies, house-to-house campaigns, distribution of literature and the holding of public meetings in which UDF spokesmen urged those attending to boycott the elections. On another level, the UDF mobilised every potential anti-apartheid force through the trade unions, youth, student, women, religious, civic and other organisations. The results of the elections in August 1984 indicate the widespread opposition to the new dispensation: the official percentage poll in the coloured election was 30 per cent and in the Indian election 20 per cent. The UDF put the figures at 17.5 per cent in the coloured election and 15.5 per cent in the Indian election.

The ANC had achieved one of its objectives for underground political work when the UDF was formed in 1983: the basis had been laid for a people's revolutionary war. The emphasis now shifted to expanding the people's war, which meant drawing more and more people into the liberation struggle. During this phase of the struggle the ANC's primary objective was to firmly establish the primary conditions for an all-out people's war by initiating, encouraging, and guiding numerous popular struggles. The UDF was an important instrument to achieve this objective.

> "Communities were organised around concrete local issues and problems, linking worker, rent, transport, group area, community council, and other local issues."

Once the campaign against the tri-cameral parliament was concluded, activists began calling for the UDF to play a role in uniting opposition against all aspects of apartheid. For example, trade unionist Sisa Njikelana argued that the UDF made it possible for the fragmented and localised struggles of the dominated groups – rent, transport, consumer, trade union, student, unemployed, women, etc. – to be organised under a "national structural form which guarantees the broadest possible unity in action of different social groups". The UDF thus emerged as "a mechanism that ensures the maximum concentration of energies and resources of organisations previously acting independently"[9]. In 1983, the UDF brought together close to 600 organisations with a combined membership of over one-and-a-half million people. It also brought together people from almost every walk of life, young and old, male and female, educated and uneducated, petty bourgeois and working class, socialist and liberal, religious and non-religious, Christian and Muslim, and black and white. Later in the decade the UDF began to use tactical alliances with groups outside the "broad democratic movement" in order to broaden its political and moral influence over the widest possible range of South Africans. The UDF spread its influence by developing a working relationship with groups such as taxi-owners, traders, sports bodies, and religious and cultural groups, as well as with sectors within the ruling bloc – members of the Progressive Federal Party, professionals, and big business.

In addition, the UDF played a role in mass mobilisation and organisation, a process it embarked on soon after the anti-election campaign. Communities were organised around concrete local issues and problems, linking worker, rent, transport, group area, community council, and other local issues. UDF organisers assisted in forming civic associations, youth congresses and student organisations by bringing people together on the issues which directly affected them. From 1985 onwards, in particular, the UDF shifted emphasis from mass mobilisation to mass organisation. The Front identified the need to develop "well-knit, cohesive mass organisations" to take advantage of widespread popular mobilisation during the previous year. This placed emphasis on the need for organisational coherence and UDF activists proceeded to establish numerous community organisations.

Local activists and UDF organisers stepped up their efforts to establish civic associations in unorganised areas.

A number of existing organisations were also revived, in particular those in the Eastern Cape. That year also saw the development of the street committee system, which was adopted by most existing civics by the end of 1986. In addition, the collapse of the urban councils by mid-1985 created an administrative and political vacuum in the townships. Many civics stepped into this vacuum, performing limited administrative and judicial duties. In certain areas the authorities were forced to enter into negotiations with civics on a wide range of issues.

Consumer boycotts were introduced in 1985 by UDF affiliates in the Eastern Cape, and spread to the rest of the country by the end of the year. The emergence of vigilantes and the activities of municipal policemen, as well as clashes with other political organisations led to the formation of defence systems around street committees in some areas. These units soon became responsible for enforcing consumer boycotts and stayaways. Civic organisations also began to challenge the state's authority by forming people's courts as an alternative means of administering justice in the townships.

In addition to the national campaigns against the new political dispensation and the Koornhof Bills, a large number of UDF affiliates were involved in a wide range of regional and local popular struggles during the first years of the Front's existence. However, the wave of resistance which took place during the second half of 1984 and the first half of 1985 took the form of a revolt[10]. The characteristic features of this revolt involved school, rent and consumer boycotts, attacks on town councillors and collaborators, and street-fighting with the security forces. From September 1984 to May 1987, the "unrest" situation in South Africa was marked by widespread violence.

The first phase of this revolt began in the Vaal Triangle townships on 3 September 1984 and reached a climax with a ninety per cent successful mass stayaway strike on November 5 and 6. Town councillors were called on to resign, and three town councillors were murdered while others were subjected to continuing pressure to resign. The uprising soon spread to the Pretoria and Witwatersrand areas and was taken up in the Eastern Cape. The ANC also made its call on the struggling masses to make themselves ungovernable at this time. During the first half of 1985, popular resistance to local government spread to small rural communities, and by June only two African townships still had functioning councils. In addition, a wave of student boycotts began during the middle of 1983 and continued to the end of 1986.

The wave of popular struggles waged by UDF affiliates during the uprising transformed the Front from an organisation formed to oppose the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills, to the political centre of the internal struggle against apartheid. Although the UDF was not the only united front of anti-apartheid forces in the country – the other was the National Forum, an umbrella organisation of Black Consciousness-aligned organisations also formed in 1983 in opposition to the reforms – the sheer scale of the struggles waged by UDF affiliates, the large number of organisations affiliated to the Front, the large membership of these affiliates, and the UDF's relationship with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the ANC meant that the Front occupied central place in the internal struggle.

"The wave of popular struggles waged by UDF affiliates during the uprising transformed the Front from an organisation formed to oppose the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills, to the political centre of the internal struggle against apartheid."

The relationship between the UDF, other formations of the Mass Democratic Movement and the ANC

For the UDF, the most important strategic alliance inside the country was with the organised labour movement. From the outset, the UDF called on organised labour to join the Front. This call was rejected by sectors of the trade union movement, in particular the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). However, during 1984 FOSATU's resistance to involving its affiliates in political campaigns began to dissipate in the face of the events in the Vaal Triangle. By mid-1985 the UDF had a total of 19 trade union affiliates. These were to play a significant role when COSATU was formed in December 1985, strengthening the relationship between the trade union movement and the UDF. COSATU's inaugural conference adopted a resolution calling for close relations with other organisations of the mass democratic movement, including the UDF.

Although the inaugural conference did not adopt a resolution on COSATU's political direction, the new federation's leaders soon displayed their ideological preferences in public statements and in discussions with the ANC in Lusaka in March 1986. The Lusaka meeting led to an agreement "that lasting solutions can only emerge from the national liberation movement, headed by the ANC and the entire democratic forces of our country of which COSATU is an important and integral part". At the federation's second national conference, held in July 1987, a resolution was adopted in which COSATU affirmed its ties with the ANC-led alliance in exile and the UDF internally. A resolution taken at the UDF's 1987 national conference called for the building of united front structures which included COSATU affiliates at all levels.

On 22 February 1988, the government imposed restrictions on 18 organisations, including the UDF and 14 of its affiliates. These organisations were prohibited from engaging in a wide range of political activities. The restricted organisations could only act to preserve their assets and perform certain administrative

tasks. The UDF underwent a revival in 1989 when it joined with COSATU (in the Mass Democratic Movement) in a civil disobedience campaign against government-controlled hospitals and schools. Thus, during 1989 the emphasis was on national campaigns of the MDM (with the main organisational base provided by trade unions) rather than on actions which involved local UDF affiliates.

A number of the organisations that came together to form the UDF were ANC-aligned before the formation of the Front. ANC supporting organisations were revived or created after the UDF was formed, and many ANC underground political activists had leadership positions in affiliates of the Front. However, in the first years of its existence the UDF consciously avoided adoption of the Freedom Charter or openly declaring its allegiance to the ANC. Initially, then, adherence to the goals of the Freedom Charter was not a pre-condition for affiliation to the UDF. The objective was to draw all possible anti-apartheid forces into the Front, and not just those who supported the ANC.

However, the UDF was closely identified with "Charterism" by the end of the first year of its existence, while Black Consciousness-inclined organisations had united to form the National Forum. From the outset, most UDF leaders saw adherence to the Freedom Charter as an indication of an advanced stage of ideological progress. In consequence, the early years of the Front was characterised by repeated references to the Freedom Charter by prominent UDF leaders[11].

Many of the UDF's leaders were close to the ANC, or were even ANC members before the organisation was banned. Its three presidents, Archie Gumede, Oscar Mpetha and Albertina Sisulu, were all members of the ANC before it was banned in 1960. Its patrons included the imprisoned ANC leaders, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, as well as imprisoned members of MK. The ANC, for its part, pointed out soon after the formation of the UDF that it would be by the "calibre of the leadership and guidance" that it offered that it would "come to occupy the leadership of the united front"[12]. ANC strategy was to have a presence in all legal formations through its underground political activists, who were instructed to take up leading positions so that they could guide such formations, including the Front[13].

Policy decisions made at a UDF National Working Committee in 1987 included a call on all affiliates to discuss the adoption of the Freedom Charter by the Front. It was noted that a large number of key affiliates had already adopted the Charter. According to the Committee, if the Charter was adopted, it would provide the UDF with a political programme. In addition, it contained all the popular demands of the people which the UDF has been articulating. The Freedom Charter had also served as a unifying document, and could be a tool for education, for mass mobilisation, and for building organisation and unity. It was also seen as the people's alternative to various divisive and undemocratic schemes[14]. The UDF officially adopted the Charter in August of the same year.

"ANC strategy was to have a presence in all legal formations through its underground political activists, who were instructed to take up leading positions so that they could guide such formations, including the Front."

Conclusion

Mass mobilisation was one of the central pillars of ANC strategy during the liberation struggle. The impetus for the formation of the UDF was a new constitutional dispensation and the Koornhof Bills. However, the Front has its genesis in a change in the strategy of the ANC and a deliberate campaign to encourage mass involvement in the liberation struggle. The UDF served as the mechanism for the ANC to achieve this, and to establish the primary conditions for an all-out people's war by initiating, encouraging, and guiding numerous popular struggles. It soon became the political centre for the internal struggle as its affiliates embarked on a wave of popular struggles, soon taking the form of a revolt. In the course of these struggles, more and more people were drawn into the struggle, and eventually the UDF reached a position where it was able to declare its adherence to the Freedom Charter and, by implication, its allegiance to the ANC.

By their courageous actions of mass mobilisation and building of a mass democratic movement the UDF played an immeasurable and extraordinary role in making the country ungovernable and compelling the apartheid regime to open negotiations with the ANC and to the release of Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. ■

References

1. Mzala, 'Has the time come for the arming of the masses? *The African Communist*, 86 (Third Quarter, 1981); Ki. Migwe, 'Further contribution to the arming of the masses', *The African Communist*, 89 (Second Quarter, 2982); and Howard Barrell, 'The turn to the masses: The African National Congress' Strategic Review of 1978-79', Southern African Seminar, *Work in Progress*, (October 1990).
2. Howard Barrell, *The ANC's armed struggle* (London: Penguin Forum Series, 1990), 58.
3. African National Congress, *The Green Book/Theses on our Strategic Line*, ANC, 1979. Available at www.anc.org.za.
4. Ibid.
5. Barrell, *The ANC's armed struggle*, 38.
6. Stephen Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's Hidden War* (Yale University Press, 1987), 49.
7. Joe Slovo cited in Howard Barrell, 'Conscripts to the Age: African National Congress operational strategy, 1976-1986' (D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1993), 247-9.
8. 'Boycott the SAIC!', *Sechaba*, August 1980, 30.
9. Sisa Njikelana, 'Unions and the UDF', *Work in Progress*, (No. 32, July 1984), 30-1.
10. Tom Lodge, 'Rebellion: The turning of the tide', in Tom Lodge and Bill Nasson (eds.); *All, Here, and Now: Black politics in South Africa in the 1980s*, South Africa Update Series, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1991), 65.
11. Tom Lodge, "The United Democratic Front: Leadership and Ideology", Paper presented to the African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, 24 August, 1987, 6.
12. Working Committee of the ANC, 'The constitutional proposals and the UDF', 26 October 1983. Karis-Gerhard Collection, University of the Witwatersrand.
13. Interview with Popo Molefe conducted by Howard Barrell, 27 November 1990.
14. See United Democratic Front, UDF focus on the Freedom Charter, (Johannesburg, UDF, 1987), 2; and UDF, 'National Conference: We did it!!', *UDF News*, Newsletter of the Transvaal Region, (Vol.4, No.2, June, 1987).

The spark of freedom that could not be snuffed out

The more the state employed terror tactics the greater was the determination and response of a people long suppressed to free themselves from the iron heel of tyranny.

By Mosie Moolla

This year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Rivonia arrests, the implementation of the notorious 90 day detention clause of the Criminal Laws Amendment Act and the escape of four detainees from the holding cells of a maximum security police station (Marshall Square) in the heart of Johannesburg.

By the time of the arrests of leading members of the African National Congress (ANC) and its military wing (Umkhonto we Sizwe – The Spear of the Nation) and the South African Communist Party the country was already reeling under a tightening dictatorship of a racist white minority regime determined to preserve and perpetuate an evil and criminal system – Apartheid.

1960 had seen the banning of the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the South African Congress of Democrats, following the mass killings of peaceful anti-pass protestors at Sharpeville (a small African "township") south of Johannesburg, on March 21st and the ANC's pass burning campaign launched on March 31st. A State of Emergency had been declared and over 20,000 South Africans of all political persuasions and from all walks of life were rounded up for their opposition to the racist regime.

1960 was also the year of resurgent Africa as the struggle for independence and liberation was being intensified in all parts of the continent. A number of countries were in various states of upheaval and turmoil and flexing their muscles to free themselves from the yoke of imperial, colonial and racist rule.

Ghana had become independent in 1957 after decades of British colonial

and imperial rule. The Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) overthrew one of the most oppressive, exploitative and brutal regimes known in human history under the inspiring leadership of that great African patriot, Patrice Lumumba. But Lumumba was arrested, tortured and brutally assassinated by paid lackeys of the Belgian overlords with the backing of the CIA, who ensured the installation of puppets who did their bidding for another four decades to the detriment of its hapless people. The under-development, poverty, misery, strife and chaos bedevilling the DRC today is a direct consequence of Belgian colonial and neo-colonial rule.

The French colony of Algeria was in the throes of an armed revolutionary struggle for independence that began in 1954 and was on the verge of attaining its own freedom and independence; the British colony of Kenya under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta was in the grip of an advancing freedom struggle and which was to culminate in total freedom a year later.

From east to west, north to south the continent seethed with discontent and upheaval. Country after country asserted themselves and the clamour for national liberation, freedom and independence became unstoppable. With few exceptions the erstwhile colonial powers had no option but to "grant" and accede to the basic urges and aspirations of peoples long suppressed and enslaved.

The decade of the 1960s was justifiably characterised as the decade of African independence and liberation. And Southern Africa could not be insulated from or made immune to the seismic events taking place elsewhere on the continent. The Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, South-West Africa (Namibia), Northern and Southern Rhodesia (Zambia and Zimbabwe) were to liberate themselves through peaceful struggles (Zambia) or through armed movements for liberation (Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Zimbabwe) in the years that followed.

It is against this backdrop that the outlawing of organisations and the further suppression of civil liberties in the country, the application of more draconian measures and the creation of a climate of fear, intimidation and terror to stem the freedom tide in South African should be viewed.

Preceding the Rivonia arrests on July 11th, 1963, the enforcement of the notorious and desperate no-trial, no-charge clause of the Criminal Laws Amendment Act was put into effect on May 10th. A country-wide swoop and 14 activists (this writer included) of the freedom struggle were detained at various times of the day and night and held incommunicado in solitary confinement for as long as the state deemed necessary. The country had now entered the phase of being transformed into a fully-fledged police state.

It had failed dismally to crush the movement for liberation during the preceding decade through its desperate but futile efforts of bans, banishments, house arrests, press censorship, suppression of free speech and assembly, and the marathon high treason trial of 1956 to 1961 which saw the arrest and incarceration of 156 leaders and activists of the congress movement. The regime now truly became more vicious and desperate. The more the state employed terror tactics the greater was the determination and response of a people long suppressed to free themselves from the iron heel of tyranny.

"From east to west, north to south the continent seethed with discontent and upheaval. Country after country asserted themselves and the clamour for national liberation, freedom and independence became unstoppable."

The infamous 90 day no-trial law was used to break the morale and resistance of detainees to co-operate and betray friends, colleagues and comrades, implicate them in trials that had failed earlier or were thrown out by judicial tribunals. No warrants were required to arrest detainees, place them in solitary confinement for interrogation and subject them to mental and physical torture.

The period of detention varied depending on how "co-operative" the detainee was – it could be for a couple of weeks to months or even years. The first weeks were used to soften the detainees and to coerce them to "co-operate" with the authorities. If the soft method failed there was no hesitation in applying harsher methods, i.e. brute physical and mental torture. In the case of the author it was made abundantly clear that non co-operation could mean repeated periods of detention as in the words of the then Justice Minister, John Vorster, to be kept "this side of eternity". The message was clear: play ball or you'll be held indefinitely for as long as the authorities deem necessary. Many a detainee was kept for long periods, subjected to psychological and physical torture resulting in many becoming physical or mental wrecks.

What did 90 day detention actually mean? It meant solitary confinement with the right of *habeas corpus* removed, the right to be charged in a law court done away with; denial of writing and reading material, no radios, no legal or medical visits, no contact with family or friends – in other words total isolation. A detainee's only human contact was with warders or interrogators.

It will be observed that 90 day detention was a well thought out plan and a determined device to bludgeon the resistance movement into submission and arrest the gains made over the years. Though the gains were meagre at the time they were, nevertheless, significant in the sense that the regime failed to crush the spirit of resistance and snuff out the spark of freedom among our people.

It was this failure to curb and destroy the freedom movement that forced the authorities to employ more and more drastic measures and the weapon of torture more extensively

to extract information to obtain the desired results. Physical and mental torture became the order of the day.

This was the context in which the raid took place on Rivonia where leading members of the movement were meeting to discuss ways and means to counter State terrorism and draw up plans to intensify activities of the armed wing of the ANC - MK.

Liliesleaf was the headquarters of the banned South African Communist Party (Communist Party of South Africa was outlawed in 1950) following the implementation of the newly passed Suppression of Communism Act.

It was at Liliesleaf that Nelson Mandela had taken refuge after his return to the country in 1961 from his visit to a number of African countries to seek moral and material support for the prosecution of the armed revolutionary struggle. Comrade Mandela also utilised his foreign sojourn to do a crash course in military science and guerrilla warfare in Algeria besides visiting Britain to meet with leading members of the Labour Party and other supporters of the ANC such as Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Father Trevor Huddleston, Canon John Collins and of course his old comrade, friend and legal partner and leader of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, who was mandated by the ANC to mobilise the international community to isolate South Africa by imposing sanctions – economic, diplomatic, cultural etc – against the racist State.

When the Rivonia raid took place on July 11th I was already on my third month of detention being among the first 14 detainees arrested on May 10th 1963. I was later joined by Comrades Abdulhai (Charlie) Jassat and Isu Chiba. Both had been severely tortured by members of the Special Branch who were attempting to implicate them in the sabotage case of Reggie Vandeyar, Indres Naidoo and Shirish Nanabhay who had earlier been sentenced to ten years imprisonment for trying to blow up an electrical sub-station in the Johannesburg suburb of Industria. Isu and Adhulhai were members of the same MK unit which was infiltrated by a police informer – Gamaat Jardine. Though no evidence was found to connect them with the attempted act of sabotage they were promptly detained under the 90-day detention law.

Isu and Abdulhai's detention, a week or so after my own, came to my knowledge by sheer accident. To boost my own spirits and attempting to remain sane I used to hum and sing old revolutionary songs every evening. On this particular day I heard somebody echo the song I was singing. I repeated the song to make doubly sure it wasn't my imagination but a genuine echo of the song I was humming and singing. The singer in the adjoining cell was none other than Charlie Jassat, an old friend, comrade and executive committee member of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress (TIYC). Charlie and I had known each other for over a decade, were members of a choir and incidentally escaped from the clutches of the police while putting up posters in support of a general strike against the establishment of a racist republic called by the ANC and its underground leader, Nelson Mandela. The poster had a simple message: 'stay at home', calling people to absent themselves from work as an expression of their rejection of the racist Republic. This could have landed us for long periods in prison for so-called "incitement" to strike.

> "What did 90 day detention actually mean? It meant solitary confinement with the right of *habeas corpus* removed, the right to be charged in a law court done away with; denial of writing and reading material, no radios, no legal or medical visits, no contact with family or friends – in other words total isolation."

Jassat informed me about the detention of himself and Chiba (who was ensconced in a neighbouring cell) and the terrible ordeal they were subjected to by the special branch to force a confession and incriminate themselves in the aborted sabotage act. Jassat became an epileptic as a consequence of the electric shocks and physical torture inflicted upon him. The scars of this brutal treatment remain to this day – five decades after the torture.

It was fortuitous that they were placed in cells on either side of mine for this gave us the opportunity to communicate with each other and allow us to make physical contact whenever friendly warders were on duty. The mere fact of speaking to or meeting with old friends was a tremendous morale booster and, of course, became very handy when planning our unauthorised and extended leave from Marshall Square with our neighbouring white compatriots – Arthur Goldreich and Howard Wolpe (the prospective Rivonia accused).

A particularly friendly and politically conscious African warder made our lives much easier to bear by giving us the opportunity to meet clandestinely at night whenever he was on duty. He also agreed to go and meet our loved ones and inform them about our state of well-being. Messages to and from relatives and friends, in time, became a common occurrence. We also received snippets of news from the outside world and, now and then, a smuggled newspaper or two besides cigarettes on a regular basis. In time, we also received food parcels from home which were shared with fellow inmates.

These clandestine get-togethers not only helped to lift our spirits but provided a wonderful opportunity to plan our escape from detention.

On the evening of the Rivonia arrests our African friend came to my cell and took me to meet with the newcomers. It must have been about nine or ten at night when I met Arthur and some other persons in the rather large cell they were herded in. I remember in particular, meeting with a Festenstein who was commonly referred to as "H". Festenstein was a medical practitioner

and a family friend of the Goldreichs who happened to be on a social visit and found himself to be in the midst of a political raid which was to shape the country at large and have a profound impact internationally. (The poor chap had no idea of what had hit him but was eventually released). Rivonia helped to a great extent in the mobilisation of international public opinion and to boost the struggle at home. As a fellow detainee I did my duty to receive the newcomers by giving them cigarettes, a most welcome commodity in times of stress, anxiety and uncertainty. More importantly however was that we had made contact and got factual news about the raid and of political developments in the country.

A few days after the Rivonia raid Marshall Square had a new inmate, Harold Wolpe, a prominent defence attorney and active member of the liberation movement who was picked up on the Bechuanaland-South Africa border attempting to flee the country. His arrest was another blow to our cause.

Rivonia, undoubtedly, changed the political landscape. On the one the regime was basking in the glory of its "successful" raid since the dramatic arrests of Comrade Nelson Mandela in August the previous year. On the other, the national liberation movement was gravely weakened and suffered a major set-back. The situation called for a deep introspection and re-assessment of the general state of affairs affecting the movement.

The prospect of the Rivonia accused receiving long terms of imprisonment at best or the death penalty at worst, was real. Our two comrades, Harold and Arthur would most certainly have joined the others as fellow accused if there was enough evidence to implicate them.

At one of our irregular meetings someone suggested that we consider the possibility of breaking out of prison. As to who it was in particular I am not sure, but it most certainly was one of our white comrades. Be that as it may, the suggestion was discussed and conveyed to friends outside who responded favourably but requesting new details.

With the positive responses we began in all seriousness to consider the various possibilities open to us. These were *inter alia* to:

a) entice a warder into one of our cells, overpower him, take the master key and "walk" our way out of the police station;
b) make use of a hacksaw to saw our way through the steel bars;
c) make our impression of the master key and have it smuggled out for a replica to be made; and lastly
d) to seek the co-operation of one of the friendly warders to assist us in securing our freedom with the offer of a handsome reward.

As time was running out and the likelihood increased that Arthur and Harold would be moved to a different facility to join the other Rivonia trialists, our own 90 day period coming to an end soon and not knowing whether we would be re-detained and where, it became urgent to speed up the process. For a number of reasons the first three options were discounted and plan (d) was put into effect.

> "Comrade Mandela also utilised his foreign sojourn to do a crash course in military science and guerrilla warfare in Algeria besides visiting Britain to meet with leading members of the Labour Party and other supporters of the ANC."

Comrades outside were alerted to the situation and we were given the green-light to make our offer to the warder Johan Greeff. Johan was a pleasant, friendly and a likeable human being who was sympathetic to our plight.

On the 89th day of my detention I was taken to Mondeor police station, some 20 kms from Marshall Square, kept overnight and released the following morning at about 11am only to be promptly re-detained after walking for about a hundred yards and brought back to Marshall Square where I met Chiba who was on the verge of being released. I was hoping his "release" would not be a farce like mine.

A few days later, Jassat, Arthur, Harold and myself agreed that the time had come to approach Greeff with the offer. Jassat and I had to speak to Johan for his co-operation which we did a day later. He was called into my cell, pledged to secrecy under oath and the offer was made. Greeff promised to let us know in a day or so – a new nerve-wrecking period. What if he informed his superiors about our plan? And what of the dire consequences that might follow?

To cut a long story short: our plan to leave Marshall Square without permission was successful. Escorted by warder Greeff to the exercise yard next to the police parking lot, we bade farewell to our friend whom we were to meet again some three decades later.

The early hours of August 11th, 1963 and the escape of four political detainees from a so-called Maximum Security Police facility was greeted by many an oppressed South African as a "victory" for the liberation struggle particularly after the devastating blow delivered by the regime at Lilliesleaf Farm a month earlier.

After all B.J. Vorster had to swallow his words uttered during the Rivonia Raid that the back of the ANC had been broken. He now conceded that the Marshall Square episode showed how well-organised the ANC was, notwithstanding Rivonia. We pay tribute to Molvi Cachalia, Moosa Angamia, Salim Saleh, Suliman 'Babla' Saloojee, Fatima Adamjee, Braam Fischer, Barney Simons, Sayed Cachalia, Amina Cachalia, Manny Brown and Peter Joseph for facilitating our escape from prison as well as out of the country, suitably disguised.

All four of us spent our days in exile mobilising international public opinion to impose sanctions against the racist regime and to garner moral, material and diplomatic support for the prosecution of our struggle for freedom and human dignity.■

Memory, Legacy, Heritage and Monuments define us as people and a nation

An aerial shot of Liliesleaf farm the 60s

As a place of dialogue and engagement Liliesleaf exemplified the essence and meaning of the struggle and gave expression, substance and meaning to the Freedom Charter.

By Nicholas Wolpe

In the *Long Walk to Freedom* Nelson Mandela said the following: "Liliesleaf was an old house that needed work and no-one lived there. I moved in under the pretext that I was a houseboy or caretaker that would live there until my master took possession. I had taken the alias David Motsamayi, the name of one of my former clients. At the farm, I wore the simple blue overalls that were the uniform of the black male servant."

On his final visit to Liliesleaf in 2005 Nelson Mandela articulated what made Liliesleaf unique. He said Liliesleaf was a place of intellectual, ideological, strategic military discourse and engagement. It could be argued

that this idea that Liliesleaf symbolised and represented a tradition of dialogue, engagement and debate was carried forward into CODESA. The willingness to debate ideas and consider political compromise became the template of the ANC and its alliance partners which allowed for a more inclusive political participation. As Mahmood Mamdani, in a paper he recently delivered at The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection, argued, CODESA represented what he termed political justice, which was predicated on inclusivity, compromise and political reform. These I would argue are key features that characterised and symbolised the core ideals that were given expression and articulation at Liliesleaf and epitomised the core values of ANC tradition. As a place of dialogue and engagement Liliesleaf exemplified the essence and meaning of the struggle and gave expression, substance and meaning to the Freedom Charter.

Liliesleaf was a 28-acre farm, which had been purchased in August 1961 by the South African Communist Party as a meeting place for its leadership. It was situated in the then secluded and isolated area of Rivonia, some 12 miles from Johannesburg city centre, and as such was ideal for political gatherings and meetings.

In 1960 South Africa was in the grip of an overwhelmingly oppressive apartheid regime whose system of institutionalised racial discrimination continued to intensify. On 21 March 1960, a peaceful protest against apartheid laws resulted in the Security Police killing 69 unarmed demonstrators and injuring more than 180; many of those killed and injured were women and children. Uproar amongst the oppressed majority was immediate and the following week saw demonstrations, protest marches, strikes and riots around the country. In a 1963 Freedom Radio Broadcast Walter Sisulu said "in the face of violence, many strugglers for freedom have had to meet violence with violence. How can it be otherwise in South Africa?"

The Sharpeville Massacre was seminal and defining as it forced the shift in ANC policy away from non-violent resistance to armed struggle. The purchase coincided with this decisive shift and Liliesleaf, as Ahmed Kathrada aptly remarked, through a process of osmosis became the High Command of the newly formed military wing of the ANC. It became the bedrock and cornerstone of underground liberation activities and from there they planned the military overthrow of the apartheid Government.

The events and activities that took place at Liliesleaf pushed the door ajar and propelled the liberation struggle down a new path. It formed a crucible of the liberation movement and became a distinctive place of memory for definitive leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Wilton Mkwayi, Bram Fischer and those associated with Liliesleaf and the liberation movement and struggle.

> "It was from Liliesleaf that the Secretariat, the Congress Alliance and the High Command planned and strategised a path that played a seminal role in changing the course of South African history."

Arthur Goldreich, a member of the Communist Party, together with his family, fronted as the "white owners" of Liliesleaf, thereby projecting the façade of a 'white front', while the thatched cottage and outbuildings were used to house and conceal underground liberation activities. It was from Liliesleaf that the Secretariat, the Congress Alliance and the High Command planned and strategised a path that played a seminal role in changing the course of South African history.

Today encapsulated within its landscape is a narrative of enduring value. The historic buildings and structures and the surviving trees and vegetation, combined with the stories that have been told and uncovered during the research collectively project an iconic symbol that holds relevance today. Liliesleaf is a link to the past but also our connection to the present and our bridge to the future.

The raid on Liliesleaf, and the subsequent Rivonia trial which effectively crushed all internal resistance, propelled the apartheid state and system permanently into the international political arena. On the afternoon of Thursday 11 July, 1963, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel "Rusty" Bernstein, Raymond Mhlaba and Bob Hepple were meeting in the Thatched Cottage "debating" Operation Mayibuye, the "proposed" military plan and strategy to overthrow the Apartheid State. In the lounge of the Manor House was Denis Goldberg, reading a banned book *Brighter than a thousand Suns*, a personal history of the atomic scientists by Robert Jungk. A dry-cleaning van drove down the driveway of the small holding and 16 armed policemen and a dog named Cheetah burst out, and from that moment, when the security forces arrested the core of the MK leadership the word 'Rivonia' became synonymous around the world with the resistance movement in South Africa. The raid on Liliesleaf resulted in the Rivonia Trial, where 8 of the 10 accused: Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, Denis Goldberg, Andrew Mhlangeni and Elias Motsoaledi were sentenced to life imprisonment. Following the sentencing Chief Albert Luthuli remarked, "They are sentenced to be shut away for long years in the brutal and degrading prisons of South Africa. With them will be interred this country's hopes for racial co-operation. They will leave a vacuum in leadership that may only be filled by bitter hate and racial strife".

Ironically, the leadership were concerned that the security of Liliesleaf had been compromised and were intending to shift operations to another farm. Annmarie Wolpe, wife of Harold Wolpe, who also had briefly been arrested in the aftermath of the Liliesleaf raid, recalled the period in her autobiography, *The Long Way Home*. She quotes her husband, saying, "The tragedy is that this was scheduled to

Security Forces raid Liliesleaf Farm

be the last meeting there. We'd been worried for some time, and everything was due to be moved away from the house."

Thus the story of Liliesleaf commemorates a strategic and seminal point in South Africa's history and represents a beacon on the national and international landscape of human memory. It is more than just a historical site that is rich with history and tradition. It is what underlies this rich history and tradition which ultimately personifies the essence and meaning of the site. Therefore the preservation of Liliesleaf, which today is a National Heritage Site and recalls the stories and events through immersive and dynamic interactive exhibits, is not only to ensure that a period in South Africa's recent history is preserved for current and future generations; it is also to ensure that society does not forget the struggle and the sacrifices endured to bring about a new dispensation defined by the Freedom Charter and enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

This has taken on particular significance and relevance as we are beginning to forget the meaning and essence of our liberation struggle. Every 4th July Americans celebrate not the actual act of independence but rather the principles behind the act which are given expression and meaning through the Declaration of Independence. In celebrating Human Rights Day, Freedom Day and Heritage Day, South Africans should be celebrating the principles and ideals behind our liberation struggle that gave rise to our freedoms, Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Today, therefore Liliesleaf takes on more significance and meaning as the passage of time can blur and distort our recollection of events. It ensures that events and actions that influenced and shaped today's South Africa are not lost or forgotten. As time passes it is easy to forget where we have come from and what we, as a people have been through. With each generation the gap gets wider and the importance of our past has the potential to fade from the historical landscape and narrative. "When memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it through individual means," Pierre Nora argues in *Between Memory and History*.

"As time passes it is easy to forget where we have come from and what we, as a people have been through. With each generation the gap gets wider and the importance of our past has the potential to fade from the historical landscape and narrative."

Why should we be concerned with the past? Pierre Nora, who has written extensively on the notion of memorialisation states, "over the last quarter of century, every country, social, ethnic or family group, has undergone a profound change in the relationship it traditionally enjoyed with the past" and it is for these reasons that there has been an "upsurge in Memory, demands for signs of a past that had been confiscated or suppressed; growing interest in "roots" and genealogical research; all kinds of commemorative events and new museums; renewed sensitivity to the holding and opening of archives for public consultation; and growing attachment to what…is called heritage." Thus according to him it is about trying to regain an understanding and sense of who we are and what binds us together as a nation, through our heritage, memory, monuments and legacy.

However, it goes well beyond just this notion of a profound change with the past. It represents a cognitive understanding of how the past, its values, traditions and experiences shape, bind and ultimately inform the present. It is this which informs and defines our collective shared experiences, which in turn forms the foundation for defining our collective consciousness and hence our sense of unity. Emile Durkheim, one of the great social thinkers of the 19th Century, argued that *society is the union of minds and interests*. The question then is how this union of minds and interests is created. I would argue that this involves not only preserving one's heritage, history, memory, monuments and legacy but also ensuring it is inculcated into the social fabric and being of society. Thus memory, legacy and monuments are essential and vital features and forces in defining who we are as a people and ultimately a nation. The Minister of Arts and Culture has

asserted that "at all times we must reaffirm our liberation heritage as an integral part of our country's collective memory and cultural history. Equally it is important that we continue to celebrate and draw lessons from the lives of those who shaped our country's history and contributed to the freedom and democracy that we enjoy today".

Today there exists disengagement between the past and present. We live in a global world where we forget quickly. We are often told to "move on", that somehow there is a dialectical contradiction between memory and progress, that in order to progress we must "forget" the past. It is a bizarre twist of fate that memory is considered a hindrance to progress.

We are indeed in danger of forgetting much of the history of our liberation struggle against apartheid. The many names and the roles they played during this multi-faceted story are being forgotten or neglected, which is not unusual in post-revolutionary situations. A case in point is our own liberation struggle and more specifically the ideals, principles, values and beliefs that underpinned and defined our liberation struggle. It is these very ideals, principles, values and beliefs we need to inculcate and promote, and we have so far failed to do this.

As our direct link to the past fades and those that gave selfless dedication, sacrifice and commitment pass away, we are left with their legacy and memory, which should stand as a testimony and example to all. Within this construct, historical institutions like Liliesleaf have a role and responsibility to keep the flame of selfless sacrifice alight to ensure that society appreciates, understands and applauds the sacrifices endured to bring about the rebirth of our country. As Professor Asmal remarked "the recollection of our past is not to suppress, but to allow a gathering of all. The triumph of memory against forgetting is part of heritage. We have to work out not only a shared identity, but also a shared history and so a shared memory." Thus a unified nation cannot be built in a vacuum, without looking to its past.

Even though our fledgling democracy is only 19 years old, we need to concern ourselves with the reality that the memory of our liberation struggle and its meaning is growing ever tenuous, as the thread that links and connects us slowly passes and can easily be forgotten. Today this takes on more significance and meaning as we tend to forget that the twenty and thirty-somethings of today have no personal memory and in most instances any recollection of the struggle. They were either not born or were mere toddlers when Nelson Mandela and the other Rivonia Trialists were in prison. It is for this very reason that sites like Liliesleaf are essential as they aim to ensure that we don't forget.

© Liliesleaf Trust

Liliesleaf farm today

Where should South Africans look to find our sense of purpose, unity and cohesion? The post-liberation period of our country is failing to embrace the values, ideals and principles of our liberation struggle and in particular the vision of our struggle leaders. Therefore a South African discourse should be opened to determine the most effective way to inculcate the values, ideals and principles that were so fundamental to our liberation struggle in developing a concept of social cohesion and integration.

A starting point therefore must be to reaffirm our liberation heritage, the ideals, values, principles and goals which drove our liberation leaders. Equally, it is important that we continue to celebrate and draw lessons from the lives of our liberation leaders who shaped our country's history and selflessly contributed to the democracy and freedom that we as South Africans enjoy today. The election of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected President signified the end of apartheid and the start of the National Democratic Revolutionary process towards constructing a truly non-racial, non-sexist, integrated and cohesive society built on shared and collective values. Despite this vision we have fallen short; and are indeed in danger of forgetting who we are and what fought for.

Sites like Liliesleaf must educate, inculcate and foster a collective memory. Thus part of the struggle now is about keeping the memory and legacy alive. Liliesleaf gives, for visitors, voice, expression and meaning to the Freedom Charter and in particular the preamble to it "we, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people".

As Czech novelist Milan Kundera said, "The Struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting". Thus it is essential to know to whom and to what we owe our existence. It is for this very reason that sites like Liliesleaf are essential. ■

Liliesleaf –A Place of Liberation can be accessed on: www.liliesleaf.co.za

The Constitution as the Embodiment of the Values of the Liberation Struggle

To the extent that it is a product of the struggles… the Constitution is a social construct. As an outcome of negotiations by a democratically elected assembly of the people's representatives, it is a social contract to which we are all bound.

By Sipho M Pityana

I uttered these words at the launch of the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution (CASAC) in September 2010 at Liliesleaf Farm.

The recent debates between political parties and the contestation for ownership of the principles and values of the liberation struggle are an indication of the importance of these values and principles in contemporary South Africa. This scramble to assert rightful ownership of these values is undoubtedly part of an unfolding electoral process – the scramble for votes in next year's national elections – but it is also an acknowledgement that these values are ingrained as part of the national psyche for many South Africans.

These values and principles were developed, chiselled and finessed in the course of the struggle for freedom against the brutal and repressive colonial and apartheid states. They have come to define us as a nation despite the fact that we still too readily seek to focus on our differences. We are a society of contradictions – we revel in the label of the rainbow nation, yet we are blighted by the legacy of our apartheid past, particularly the gross inequalities. The promise of the Constitution – that of a society founded on the principles of equality, dignity and respect within a modern democratic state – is one that galvanises our nation. The contestation to claim these values will therefore continue, not only among political parties, but also various players in society in general. It is linked to the desire to claim involvement if not leadership of the liberation struggle, and is also intertwined with the claim to be the trusted guardians of the values of the Constitution. These sets of claims necessarily assume that there is a link between the values and principles which guided the liberation struggle and the values and principles that underpin South Africa's democratic Constitution. Is there indeed such a link, and how did it come to endure through the various stages of the liberation struggle?

Section 1 of the 1996 Constitution summarises the principles of our constitutional democracy:

The Republic of South Africa is one sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:

(a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms,

(b) Non-racialism and non-sexism,

(c) Supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law,

(d) Universal adult suffrage, a national common voter's roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.

These values and principles are underpinned by a justiciable Bill of Rights that is far-reaching in both its breadth and depth. This unique approach has been universally lauded because it includes within its remit both socio-economic rights and nouveau 'third generation' environmental rights.

> "In the current jostling for the ownership of the values of the Constitution, it is critical to emphasise that it is ultimately the people of South Africa who are and must be the true custodians of the values and vision of the Constitution."

The Constitution is both a transformative and aspirational document that seeks to improve the quality of life for all its citizens and to create a State that will be respected by its peers on the global stage.

The ANC was formed to bring together all Africans in a quest to secure their economic, social and political emancipation. From its inception in 1912 the African National Congress (ANC), Africa's oldest liberation movement, sought an accommodation from the settler colonial power – the early years of the ANC were characterised by deputations and petitions heading to London seeking suffrage and an amelioration of the plight of African people. Such a strategy was based on an inclusive approach to our colonial situation, accommodating the local settler communities.

The South African freedom struggle was a *national liberation* struggle that had to confront the denial of the basic rights of citizenship, of human dignity and dispossession from the land. It was not just about racial discrimination but about overcoming human degradation. It therefore sought to assert the dignity of people and the principle of equality. It characterised *apartheid* as 'colonialism of a special type' because the oppressor and the oppressed shared the same territorial boundaries; the colonial force was not an external power. The struggle was therefore not about defeating a foreign, occupying force. It was this that caused the struggle to focus on an inclusive solution in which all the people within the borders of the country could be accommodated. This is most clearly articulated in the preamble to the Freedom Charter which declares:

"That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white…"

In similar vein the Preamble to the 1996 Constitution states:

"We the people of South Africa…. Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity…"

Our democratic dispensation which ultimately came about as a result of a process of negotiations that spanned several years was influenced to a large degree by the experiences of the liberation struggle. The ANC had spent many years preparing for negotiations. Not only had its founding fathers sought this route but throughout its history and through the various phases of struggle, mass mobilisation, underground work, international sanctions and armed struggle, the ANC had always kept open the door to a negotiated solution.

The Freedom Charter, adopted after an extensive consultative process, at the Congress of the People in 1955, articulated the basic principles of the ANC and its allies in the 'Congress Movement'. These included equality, human rights and the enhancement of

the socio-economic conditions. This document served as the guiding light of the ANC for several decades.

In its January 8th Statement on the occasion of its 75th anniversary in 1987 the National Executive Committee of the ANC pronounced as follows:

We must unite all these forces, both black and white, around the democratic perspectives for which so many people have already laid down their lives. Once more, we reaffirm that in the new South Africa the people – all the people – shall govern… (the) new reality should reinforce and entrench what we are accomplishing now, in struggle: the building of a nation of South Africans. It must reflect and enhance our oneness, breaking down the terrible and destructive idea and practice of defining our people by race, colour or ethnic group. The revolution will guarantee the individual and equal rights of all South Africans without regard to any of these categories, and include such freedoms as those of speech, assembly, association, language, religion, the press, the inviolability of family life and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention without trial. For all this, the victorious revolution demands and must ensure thorough-going democratic practice…. As we mark the 75th Anniversary of our movement, we reiterate our commitment to seize any opportunity that may arise, to participate in a negotiated resolution of the conflict in our country. This we would do in the interests of the masses of our people and those of Southern Africa as a whole, with the specific aim of creating a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa.

Later in that year (1987) the ANC, at the instigation of its then President Oliver Tambo, released a set of Constitutional Guidelines to prepare the ground for a negotiated solution and to set the basis for such negotiations. Its departure point was the Freedom Charter which it said must be "converted from a vision for the future into a constitutional reality". It proposed that South Africa shall be an independent, unitary, democratic and non-racial state with a Bill of Rights that "shall guarantee the fundamental human rights of all citizens irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed, **which shall provide appropriate mechanisms for their enforcement**." The notion of a justiciable Bill of Rights for South Africa was therefore firmly placed on the table.

These developments did not occur in a vacuum – pressure against the apartheid regime was mounting both inside and outside the country. Increasing repression under states of emergency galvanised the anti-apartheid forces. Segments of white society in South Africa began to make overtures towards the ANC to gauge the willingness of the liberation movement to engage in negotiations and to see how a route forward could be charted. Meetings in Dakar, Senegal and Lusaka, Zambia had taken place featuring academics, artists, intellectuals and businessmen. The ANC was determined that if negotiations were to take place they needed to be conducted on a firm democratic basis.

> "We are a society of contradictions – we revel in the label of the rainbow nation, yet we are blighted by the legacy of our apartheid past, particularly the gross inequalities."

By 1989 the ANC's diplomatic strategy led to an Ad Hoc Committee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopting what came to be known as the 'Harare Declaration.' This proved to be an historic initiative that led to both the Commonwealth and United Nations adopting similar positions with regard to the objective conditions for a negotiated settlement in South Africa. The Harare Declaration again postulated the idea of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. This idea may now be one that we take for granted, but it was the subject of some contestation even in the late 1980s when the western world were still flirting with the notion of "group rights" within a "federal dispensation" – that is, apartheid without the overt brutality and inhumanity – aspects that had so pricked the conscience of the world.

The Harare Declaration enunciated a set of constitutional principles that included:

- Common and equal citizenship
- Universal suffrage
- Free political activity
- Universally recognised human rights, freedoms and civil liberties under an **entrenched Bill of Rights**
- Equality
- Independent judiciary
- An economic order to promote and advance the well-being of all South Africans.

The ANC leadership had correctly paid due attention to the issue of a negotiated settlement to the conflict in South Africa, whilst simultaneously intensifying the battle on the other fronts, including mass mobilisation and the isolation of the Pretoria regime. This preparatory work was to prove crucial in the future as the formal negotiations process unfolded.

We arrived at the 1996 Constitution through a carefully navigated process after the unbanning of political organisations in 1990, the release of political prisoners and the opening up of space for free political activity.

The Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes agreed between the ANC and the government of FW de Klerk in 1990 evidenced an intention on the part of the apartheid government to create the conditions for normal political activity, despite the continuing grip of violence on ordinary people, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. Whilst violence plagued the transition process it failed to derail the journey to a democratic country.

These agreements paved the way for the convening of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in late 1991. In his opening address to CODESA Nelson Mandela said:

It is imperative that we also reach consensus on the definition of democracy. From the ANC`s

perspective, democracy entails:

- *that all governments must derive their authority from the consent of the governed;*
- *no persons or groups of persons shall be subjected to oppression, domination or discrimination by virtue of their race, gender, ethnic origin, colour or creed;*
- *all persons should enjoy the right to life;*
- *all persons should enjoy security in their persons and should be entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions, including the right to acquire, own or dispose of property, without distinction based on race, colour, language, gender or creed.*
- *all persons should have the right to hold and express whatever opinions they wish to subscribe to, provided that in the exercise of that right they do not infringe on the rights of others.*

The Declaration of Intent agreed by the participants at CODESA committed them:

to set in motion the process of drawing up and establishing a constitution that will ensure, inter alia:

a. *that South Africa will be a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist state in which sovereign authority is exercised over the whole of its territory;*
b. *that the Constitution will be the supreme law and that it will be guarded over by an independent, non-racial and impartial judiciary;*
c. *that there will be a multi-party democracy with the right to form and join political parties and with regular elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage on a common voters roll; in general the basic electoral system shall be that of proportional representation;*
d. *that there shall be a separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary with appropriate checks and balances;*
e. *that the diversity of languages, cultures and religions of the people of South Africa shall be acknowledged;*
f. *that all shall enjoy universally accepted human rights, freedoms and civil liberties including freedom of religion, speech and assembly protected by an entrenched and justiciable Bill of Rights and a legal system that guarantees equality of all before the law.*

These broad constitutional principles survived the various phases of the negotiations process and have been encapsulated in the 1996 Constitution. It confirms the triumph of the liberation struggle to ensure that a basis has been laid to pursue rights and secure human dignity for all the people of South Africa.

The 1996 or the final Constitution was the culmination of a democratic, inclusive and participatory process. The Constitutional Assembly comprised the 490 elected representatives of the National Assembly and the Senate (the predecessor to the National Council of Provinces). Whilst the ANC had always insisted on an elected assembly of the people to hammer out a new constitution, the National Party (NP) wanted negotiations to be conducted by a multi-party forum such as CODESA or the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum. The NP felt that they could secure the entrenchment of group rights through such a process, whereas the ANC wanted to ensure equal rights for all within a unitary state. Mindful of the role played by ordinary people in the crafting of the Freedom Charter in the 1950s the ANC again sought to ensure that there was popular participation in the constitution-making process.

> “The challenge that we continue to face is that of closing the gap between the vision of the Constitution and the daily experiences of far too many of our people.”

The Chairperson of the Constitutional Assembly declared on 24 January 1995:

...It is therefore important that as we put our vision to the country, we should do so directly, knowing that people out there want to be part of the process and will be responding, because in the end the drafting of the constitution must not be the preserve of the 490 members of this Assembly. It must be a constitution which they feel they own, a constitution that they know and feel belongs to them. We must therefore draft a constitution that will be fully legitimate, a constitution that will represent the aspirations of our people.

Having involved ordinary people in the development of the Constitution we must now also ensure that they are active participants in its realisation.

The challenge that we continue to face is that of closing the gap between the vision of the Constitution and the daily experiences of far too many of our people. The ANC has correctly identified overcoming the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment as the key to our real emancipation. In CASAC's submission to the National Planning Commission on the draft National Development Plan we said:

Our Constitution envisages a participatory democracy in which citizens play an active role in the reconceptualization, reconstruction and development of their country. This is a role that goes beyond oppositional engagement with government. We assert that an accelerated departure from our undemocratic past is largely contingent on liberating our people from being subjects of state rule, dependent on the government largesse for their development, to becoming active citizens and partners in governance.

We have sought to assert that citizens must be placed at the heart of their own development, to be given the space and tools to be the architects of their own future in partnership with the government of the day.

In the current jostling for the ownership of the values of the Constitution, it is critical to emphasise that it is ultimately the people of South Africa who are and must be the true custodians of the values and vision of the Constitution. It is far too important a responsibility to be left in the hands of any one political formation, not even an erstwhile national liberation movement whose struggles shaped those values. ■

Mandela as public face of the African National Congress[1]

By Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu

During the early 1960s the African National Congress took a strategic decision to use multi-lateral organisations such as the Pan African Freedom Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) and the United Nations as sites to pursue the struggle for national liberation. The General Assembly's Special Committee on Apartheid became the specific focus of many of the ANC activities and offered badly needed access to the international community. In July 1963, for example, Duma Nokwe, Robert Resha and Tennyson Makiwane made this proposal to the Special Committee:

> *All countries should...implement immediately the resolutions adopted at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly which included a request that all members break diplomatic relations with South Africa...boycott all South African goods and refrain from selling anything to South Africa...the UN should demand the immediate release of all political prisoners... banned persons*.[2]

Nelson Mandela's demeanour – including his impeccable attitude of mutual respect for his colleagues – was praiseworthy; he harboured no personal ambitions to oust the exiled Tambo from the ANC leadership. This is evident in Mandela's diary entry of Wednesday, 1 February 1962, which later formed part of the apartheid state's evidence against him during the Rivonia Trial. It records a pre-conference planning meeting between Mandela and his colleagues in Dar es Salaam. They were about to depart for Addis Ababa to attend a conference convened by the PAFMECSA to be held from 2–10 February 1962. Mandela, who was then the commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, was appointed by his colleagues to address this important meeting on behalf of the ANC, instead of Tambo, who, as the then deputy president of the organisation formed part of the official delegation, as Chief Albert Luthuli, the president of the ANC was in South Africa. Mandela was uneasy about this arrangement and wrote in his diary:

> *… in the evening, OR [Tambo] … Mzwayi [Piliso] and I have a discussion and they suggest I should lead the delegation. I feel, however, that this may undermine OR's position and affect his weight in his general work [for the ANC]. We eventually reach a compromise [and consensus on the matter]*[3].

Mandela successfully addressed the conference which was opened by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and his paper was subsequently adopted by the PAFMECSA conference as an official record on the current situation in apartheid South Africa.

Giving Mandela the platform at the conference indicates that as early as the 1960s Tambo and other members of the ANC's executive committee regarded Mandela as the public face of the organisation - a status that would be officially confirmed during the early 1980s. But Mandela always insisted that the leader of the ANC was OR Tambo and therefore he was accountable to him. It is worth elaborating the fact that Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Wilton Mkwayi and other leaders respected him profoundly and felt honoured to be led by him. In return, Tambo later supported efforts to use Mandela, through the Release Mandela Campaign, as a unifying symbol of the anti-colonial struggle for liberation. It was a clear case of mutual affection, displaying the human side of the liberation struggle[4]. In fact the official title of the campaign established in 1980 was "Release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners".

However, a collective is a collection of individuals and there are times in the life of a political movement where individual leaders embody some of the outstanding qualities one would expect from an astute leader. According to Mandela, the ANC had been extremely fortunate in this regard when past leaders are placed under scrutiny. Mandela had these affectionate words to say about O.R. Tambo:

> *It is a phenomenal leader who can succeed in exile to keep united a vast multiracial organisation with divergent schools of thought, with a membership deployed in distant continents, and a youth seething with anger at the repression of their*

people; a youth who believe that anger alone without resources and proper planning can help overthrow a racist regime. Oliver Tambo achieved all this. To political and common law prisoners inside the country, to foreign freedom fighters, diplomats, Heads of State, O.R. was acknowledged as a shining example of a smart and balanced leader who was sure to help restore the dignity of the oppressed people and put their destiny in their [own] hands[5].

Release Mandela Campaign

In 1980, the ANC leadership officially called on its structures and supporters inside the country to embark on a Release Mandela Campaign. Percy Qoboza, the redoubtable editor of the *Sunday Post* in Johannesburg, launched the initiative in an editorial on 9 March 1980. He called on his readers to sign a petition and more than 86 000 responded, drawing in the support of many organisations and prominent leaders. A Release Nelson Mandela Committee was formed that same month[6]. Why was the official establishment of the campaign projecting Mandela as the movement's public face necessary?

The answer is provided by the ANC's strategic decision to focus on the importance of international solidarity as one of the four most important pillars of the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. For the ANC, the question arose during the early 1960s: How could international solidarity be nurtured and then sustained for the duration of the liberation struggle in apartheid ruled South Africa? The challenge was for the ANC to develop a multi-faceted strategy to strengthen its international appeal and to consolidate this burgeoning solidarity with the support of various social movements, non-governmental organisations, multi-lateral organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Non Aligned Movement. This also included the support of various governments throughout the world.[7]

With Kwame Nkrumah spearheading international solidarity during the late 1950s and the anti-apartheid movement in England following suit, the exponential growth of the global anti-apartheid movement meant that the ANC had to fine-tune its strategy to be disseminated to the wider world. Later, in addition to economic sanctions, sport and cultural boycotts entailed using public history and other new sites of the struggle for national liberation. These new sites included the mass media, ANC journals such as *Sechaba* and *Mayibuye*, banners, posters, placards, stickers, t-shirts, theatre, drama, protest songs and dance including musicians and performance artists such as Amandla, Miriam Makeba, Harry Belafonte and Hugh Masekela.

But the challenge still remained that an engaging public face was needed by the liberation movement to further propel it to new heights. The answer may have been found in the rising influence of television as a tool of mass communication and its massive impact on US politics during the 1960s. In fact one has to take into cognisance the fact that television became a central part of American life in the 1950s. Moreover, technological advances made television sets less expensive and accessible to consumers throughout the US and therefore by the 1960s the majority of the households in America had a television set. Thus the television became a part of everyday life of the American people. As sales boomed there were new opportunities for broadcasters and political parties. This was because politics in most parts of the world, particularly in the West, were becoming more personalised. If one analyses the US elections of 1960 - the presidential race to the White House involving Richard Nixon and John Kennedy – and the election of subsequent US presidents - it is evident that it was far easier for television and related forms of broadcasting media in the US to focus on a particular individual rather than on entire national executive committees of the Democratic Party or Republican Party.

It is worth emphasising the point that the 1960 election was the closest in history despite Kennedy's stirring rhetoric and apparent triumph in televised political debates. In their book entitled *Politics and Television*, Gladys and Kurt Lang write that in 1960:

Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy were the first presidential candidates to appear together before the television cameras. Four times – altogether four hours – within a span of four weeks they answered questions put to them by a panel of four newsmen. In their first encounter, on September 26 in Chicago, and on October 27 in Washington D.C., and October 21 in New York, the two men spoke from the same studio. On October 13, when Nixon was in Los Angeles and Kennedy was in New York, they met each other at a distance – through split-screen technique. Judged by the audience they reached, the broadcast was a huge success. Between 65 and 70 million watched any one telecast; somewhere between 85 and 120 million were estimated to have witnessed at least one of the four (television broadcasts)[8].

Indeed, from the 1960s onwards it gradually became clear that in terms of a sound political strategy and in order to appeal to voters, a public face representing a leader of a given political party had to be the focal point of a political campaign that called for widespread grassroots support of the party's policies and political programmes. This was also the case in Europe which had to adopt the US example regarding the impact of television on the political fortunes of rival political parties. As an example, both the Labour and Conservative parties in Britain mimicked their US counterparts and used the television during political campaigns in the 1960s. It was courting disaster to organise a political campaign for the president of the USA or the prime minister of the United Kingdom by using the collective draw card of a given political party national executive council. But some in the Congress Alliance argued that in terms of promoting inclusivity and transparency this was still possible concerning the struggle for national liberation in South Africa. The exiled ANC disagreed with this viewpoint because it was becoming increasingly difficult for the liberation movement to promote its international solidarity campaign by focusing on only the Congress Alliance as a collective or its national executive committee as a

group.

It became obvious to the leadership of the ANC that the advent of multimedia, particularly television as a mass communication tool was not merely a passing fad. But there were questions which needed answers.

Firstly, was it correct to identify one individual to promote the struggle for liberation in South Africa? If the answer was yes, would not the ANC and allies create a situation where the cult of the personality would be the order of the day, as had happened in the Soviet Union with Joseph Stalin; in Cuba with Fidel Castro; and in China with Chairman Mao Tse Tung? It was obvious that if one wanted an influential international solidarity campaign to succeed, one could not just have a general campaign such as: 'free all political prisoners incarcerated in South African prisons by the apartheid regime' – end of story – however noble this human rights ideal was! That would suffice to intellectualise such ideals in abstract terms. But how would one get the international community and democrats across the racial divide to focus on that noble issue without identifying one individual to become the symbol and the 'public face' of that concerted political campaign? As argued earlier, a formal decision was adopted by the exiled National Executive Committee of the ANC during the early 1980s to assign this role to Mandela. Immediately, the international community and members of the anti-apartheid movement in various countries were focused on Mandela who became the symbol of all political prisoners, not only in South Africa but in other parts of the world too. In Marxist terms the identification of Mandela as the public face of the liberation struggle could be defended from a Marxist view about the relationship between the particular and the general.

What were the circumstances behind the choice of Mandela by the ANC to play such a crucial role?

- Mandela was the ideal choice because he was the first leader of MK, the military wing of the ANC. He had also spearheaded the All-in-Africa Conference held in South Africa in 1961 - defying the apartheid regime's security forces after the Sharpeville Massacre. Furthermore, by the 1960s he had already shown signs of remarkable leadership potential within the organisation. Those who knew him and had worked with him in South Africa argued that he possessed charismatic qualities; qualities that were essential in a leadership role. He had what we call gravitas, a magnetic personality, so much so that when he entered a hall or a meeting, he immediately became the focus of attention.
- Mandela already had a larger than life image among the majority of the oppressed; they referred to him as the 'Black Pimpernel' and had unbounded admiration for his exploits in outwitting the regime's security forces while he was operating in the ANC's underground during the early 1960s and underwent military training outside the borders of South Africa. Henceforth, the majority of the people were already talking about 'Mandela the revolutionary'. Furthermore, his secret sojourns elsewhere on the African continent and the links he had established with other nationalist struggles and leaders, stood him in good stead.
- However much the apartheid racist regime tried to destroy his name, his courageous and fearless conduct as a principled member of the ANC during the Rivonia Trial served to elevate and augment his international stature. Mandela's dignified conduct at this trial was underscored by his now famous (and often quoted) statement that he was ready to die for the cause. Therefore the ANC was certainly not taking an unknown figure into the international arena.
- Very interestingly, if one looks at the Mass Democratic Movement after the release of Mandela and other political prisoners, no one in the ANC disputed the leadership of O.R. Tambo by pursuing factional politics and agendas. That says something about their level of political consciousness, maturity and understanding of the challenges that faced the banished organisation. There was no overt animosity in the leadership structure and this was an important reason why the Release Mandela Campaign achieved its goals.
- The drive to garner international solidarity would not have enjoyed the same impact if relationships had been fractious on the decision to use Mandela as the public face of the campaign. To be sure there were instances when the leadership at Robben Island had their squabbles – Harry Gwala, Oom Govan Mbeki had sharp differences with Mandela. But these were internal dynamics that were duly resolved in routine organisational structures.
- Mandela was highly principled and grounded as far as the political traditions of the ANC were concerned. For example, when the devious apartheid regime tried to set a divide-and-rule trap to besmirch his reputation, he saw right through it. Pretoria sent his cousin Chief Matanzima (the leader of the Transkei Bantustan) and others to try and convince him to forsake the struggle as an individual and in this way 'buy' his freedom. He would have none of it and bluntly refused the offer. His forthright political principles further convinced the ANC to structure the campaign for the release of political prisoners around Mandela.
- Even if the oppressed in South Africa did not express it loudly, the fact of the matter was that Mandela's name resonated with them and they appreciated and understood the great sacrifices he and other political prisoners had made to realise the liberation cause.
- The Release Mandela Campaign was inclusive although it bore Mandela's name. All the posters, t-shirts, placards, memorabilia, banners, flags, stickers, protest songs etc. proclaimed the release not only of Nelson Mandela but also of other well-known political prisoners such as Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Andrew Mlangeni Dennis Goldberg, Wilton Mkwayi, and so forth.
- In hindsight, there was also the element of mystique that surrounded

Mandela at the time and continues to do so into his twilight years. The ANC had no real photographs or other forms of images of him since his incarceration on Robben Island except the one with Sisulu. This perhaps contributed to the aura and interest that fuelled the international campaign.

- All these factors culminated in the famous Release Mandela music concert in Hyde Park, London, in the late 1980s when the message spread across the world was the release of political prisoners in South Africa. Had the ANC not been able to introduce the political element as the cornerstone of this hugely successful extravaganza, it would have become just another popular music concert. International artists and music stars such as Simple Minds, Tracy Chapman, Joan Armatrading, UB 40, Eurhythmics, Whitney Houston, George Michael and Stevie Wonder, to name a few, participated.

But it is important for us to guard against concluding that the ANC was unique and exceptional in using the tactical strategy of harmonising the individual and collective imperatives in a given struggle for political emancipation.

The international context: Latin America and South East Asia as case studies

For example, in the case of the politically oppressed in Latin America, particularly Chile, the World Communist Movement adopted a similar political strategy and made an international call for the release of Luis Corvalán, the long-time leader of the Chilean Communist Party whose support was critical to the rise in 1970 of Salvador Allende, the first elected Marxist head of state in the Western Hemisphere. Corvalán will be remembered in the west as a high-profile political prisoner in General Augusto Pinochet's regime of terror. He was subsequently exchanged for the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky in 1976.

Although there were many other Chilean political prisoners incarcerated in jail, the Soviet Union and others launched a concerted campaign for Corvalán's release. The call for Corvalán's freedom became the symbol of Chilean resistance. When he was finally set free Corvalán travelled to the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist countries to thank those who had supported him so valiantly. Corvalán also attended international conferences and was one of the first political prisoners to publicly support the call for the release of Mandela and other South African political prisoners.

Another interesting case study is that of Ananias Maidana, the former general secretary of the Communist Party of Paraguay. He served more than twenty years as a political prisoner under the violent dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner. The Paraguayan regime was exceptionally repressive at the time but the international solidarity movement was unable to build an effective campaign for his release. The World Communist Movement and others demanded that he be set free but could not sustain a specific campaign to this end. Yet Maidana's case was just as deserving as those of Corvalán and Mandela. He served a long term of imprisonment just as Mandela did and was just as courageous. The crucial difference was that the ANC, as a liberation movement, was able to mobilise its struggle around Mandela in a manner that no political organisation in the world had ever done before or since.

In terms of the geopolitics of the Cold War in South East Asia – in particular the freedom struggle in Vietnam – the relationship between the individual and the collective was also identified as vitally important. It was quite clear that Ho Chi Minh was a central figure in Vietnam's international solidarity campaign. His name featured in slogans, protest songs, etc. But of course General Giap was also prominent because of his tremendous capacity as a symbol of guerrilla warfare and a famed military leader who held the invading forces at bay. It was not surprising that the ANC established a fraternal relationship with their Vietnamese counterparts. During the late 1970s the ANC's Politico-Military Strategy Commission, led by the ANC's president, Oliver Tambo, and made up of Thabo Mbeki, Joe Modise, Moses Mabhida, Joe Gqabi and Joe Slovo, was invited by their political colleagues to undertake a study tour in Vietnam. After the visit, the Commission submitted its report (also known as The Green Book/Theses on our Strategic Line) to the ANC's national executive committee in March 1979[9].

To conclude this article which mainly focuses on the relationship between an individual and a collective in contemporary politics, when Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, there were internal dynamics in the liberation movement that might have scuppered his ascendancy to the presidency of both the ANC and the country. But this did not happen, because Mandela's colleagues in the ANC made it possible for him to reach the pinnacle of politics and assume the presidency. To say this is not to downplay Mandela's personal role in his achievement. It also says a great deal about the ANC's leadership maturity and level of political consciousness. The collective and consultative traditions of the ANC proved invaluable during Mandela's term as the first president of the democratic Republic of South Africa. These traditions, as much as Mandela's charismatic personality, shaped the style and the achievements of his brief time in office. ■

References:

1. This paper benefitted immensely from extensive oral history interviews with Essop Pahad conducted by Sifiso Ndlovu, SADET Oral History Project,
2. UN General Assembly, *Official Records*, Resolution 1761, XVII Session, 6 November 1962.
3. South African National Archives (hereafter SANA), Transvaal Province Depot (hereafter TPD), Criminal Case (CC) 253/64 (Rivonia Trial), Exhibit 17.
4. For such a viewpoint, see 'Oliver Tambo', speech delivered by Mandela at the funeral of O.R. Tambo, 2 May 1993, in K. Asmal et al., *Nelson Mandela, from Freedom to the Future: Tributes and Speeches*, (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2003), 489–492.
5. Mandela, *Conversations with Myself*, 345.
6. See for example, 'For the sake of SA, free Nelson Mandela', Post, 21 March 1980; 'Release Mandela call is growing rapidly', *Rand Daily Mail*, 2 June 1980; 'Churches must save the soul of the nation by supporting the campaign to free Mandela – or commit an act of treason against God', Post, 23 March 1980; 'Worldwide calls to free Mandela', *Post* , 12 October 1980; 'Swapo joins Mandela call', *Post*, 6 April 1980; 'Free Mandela say Tanzania and Kenya', *Post*, 13 April 1980.
7. See SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3, International Solidarity* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010).
8. G.E. Lang and K. Lang, *Politics and Television* (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1984),97; G. and K. Lang, *Voting and Nonvoting* (Boston,: Blaisdell, 1968); T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).
9. http:/www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/green-book.html

Gaps closed – And gaps still to close

History has a habit of taking much longer than the actors hope for.

By Denis Goldberg

At Liliesleaf Farm in June and July 1963 we thought we were on the brink of an uprising that would see us marching to Pretoria to take power and rapidly put an end to apartheid and its deeply entrenched attitudes in the minds of the oppressed and the oppressor. History has a habit of taking much longer than the actors hope for.

Now, looking back over the 50 years since the raid at which I was arrested that led to the Rivonia trial in which I was an accused, I am amazed at how far we have come in closing the gaps that apartheid created between the living conditions of our people. The first 30 years until 1994 were the years of getting to the start line for us to begin to close the gaps by rebuilding our country to embody the vision of the Freedom Charter first expressed 60 years ago, when Professor Matthews proposed to the ANC National Conference that we needed a Congress of the People to draw up a Freedom Charter.

Our vision of the shape of the new South Africa has been realised in our constitution of 1996. We said 'The People shall Govern'. Our people do govern!

All have equal political rights and can stand for election to all elective bodies and vote for the parties of their choice and so indirectly for the candidates of their choice. I hope that we will in time move to a more direct electoral system of being able to vote directly for our candidates for parliament and the provincial councils as we do in municipal elections.

As important as the formal institutions of government is our freedom to speak out for and against government and the private sector. Our democratic rights are powerful in controlling government and the private sector. Elections occur freely and fairly though some small groups of people resort to violence that is unnecessary and counterproductive.

We said 'All shall be equal before the law'. Well, all our laws apply equally to all our people so that is a gap that has been closed. But of course, financial resources make it easier for some to approach the courts and hire lawyers than it is for those without resources. Yet, important constitutional court cases have been fought for the poorest of the poor to achieve redress and to compel government to seriously approach the issues of housing and service delivery in general. In Mrs Grootboom's case she asked the court to order the government to make

serious plans to provide housing where she lived. The judgement compels government to make written plans and not just express an intention.

When it comes to health care we know that millions of people who had no possibility of health care under apartheid are now able to get treatment. Many clinics have been built and basic care is available in many rural areas that were not previously served. I recall that in the Eastern Cape social surveys showed that as many as half of all children died by age five years. Hunger and lack of medical care in our rich country were responsible. There was one doctor on average for 80000 people! In townships like Soweto there was only one doctor for 3000 people but for whites there were on average one doctor for 400 people. This is a gap which we have started to close.

Our health care professionals work astonishingly hard for inadequate pay in hospitals that are overcrowded so that staff members are overburdened and yet they continue. There are concerns however. One major problem that emerges from media reports is that management in hospitals, large and small, and in Provincial Health Departments needs urgent attention. There appears to be inadequate attention to detail with medicines and consumables not ordered in time and wrong priorities in supply chain management. It also appears that because of the overload of patients there is a tendency in some institutions to allow standards of hygiene to fall with sometimes fatal consequences for patients. This is about leadership at every level in the service. It is great to have a dynamic Minister in Dr Matsoaledi but I would like to see all professionals and all staff making the sacrifices needed to make the system work better. It is painful to hear that most provincial departments are not able to spend their allocated funds each year. It is also important that control over the spending of public funds be tightened.

It cannot be right that we have not solved a problem confronting nurses in their quest for better housing. They are paid above the maximum allowed for a government housing subsidy, but their pay is too low for them to get a mortgage bond from the banks to buy or build their own houses. It must be possible for Treasury to intervene to enable the National and Provincial Health Ministries and the Human Settlements Ministry to coordinate their policies to enable nurses to emerge from living in shanty towns with no respect for their professional abilities and status.

The Freedom Charter said 'All shall have access to education'. We have not yet achieved this goal but about 90% of children do go to school. The gaps in education are being closed. I despair when our media fail to recognise what has been achieved while recognising that there is uneven development. Great strides have been made to close the gaps between education for different ethnic and social groups and between urban and rural areas. In 1994 there were 14 different departments of education in the four provinces and the various Bantustans. Each had its own curriculum, teacher training requirements and spending on infrastructure, equipment and salaries. It is easy to forget that 98% of teachers in White schools had university degrees plus higher or lower teaching diplomas. In Bantu education schools teachers in some areas had 10 years at school and no training. Others had 12 years and some training. The first requirement was to integrate the systems and establish new norms. This was itself an enormous task. And even though education received nearly a quarter of the national budget there was not much left over at first for building new schools or classrooms.

> "It must be possible for Treasury to intervene to enable the National and Provincial Health Ministries and the Human Settlements Ministry to coordinate their policies to enable nurses to emerge from living in shanty towns with no respect for their professional abilities and status."

As with health care, management at provincial level is a major problem in many provinces. One notorious example is the failure to provide textbooks until well into the school year. Similarly the failure to allocate enough teachers to each school to maintain adequate ratios of teachers to pupils is a failure. The major trade unions involved, SADTU and NEHAWU are affiliated to COSATU which in turn is allied to the ANC, the ruling party, and one is entitled to expect that teachers and managers should work together to transform our country. It cannot be only about salaries and working conditions. We are all citizens and have a duty to continue the struggle to close the gaps and so realise our goals set out in the Freedom Charter.

Nevertheless it is striking that at our universities one sees a sea of faces of all ethnicities instead of just a sea of white faces only. Quite rapidly our universities have become overcrowded as tens of thousands of new matriculants qualify. Two new universities are to be opened in the coming years. But there is a gap still to close, namely that of places for training skilled workers, carpenters, electricians, welders, riggers, machinists and so on. Industry requires such skilled workers if we are to progress. That is not only a matter of places in colleges of further education but of places in industry and commerce where students can do the practical work needed to become proficient and fully productive. Industry and commerce have to play their role in making this possible. But even more important is that historically oppressed groups of people need to see that such work is honourable and that it provides a respectable income. The brilliance of the developments in arts and culture and sport and leisure activities is amazing.

Since that fateful day 50 years ago we have come a long way. Since our first democratic election in 1994 there has been significant progress in the effort to deal with the appalling legacy of racism and apartheid. But we still face enormous challenges to close the gaps of poverty, unemployment and inequality. ■

New SAB Maltings plant to boost local industry

South African Breweries

The South African Breweries (SAB) will invest in a R700 million new state-of the-art maltings plant in Alrode, Gauteng, as part of its continued efforts to support the local economy and drive job creation.

Construction on the new plant will begin during the course of this year, and will produce 130 000 tonnes of malted barley a year once it is completed in 2015. It will allow SAB to reduce the amount of malted barley it imports, and to further its programme of developing the local agricultural sector by supporting small black farmers. Malted barley is a critical component in the brewing of beer.

SAB MD Mauricio Leyva said the construction of the new plant was an important development for the company. "The new maltings plant will have significant cost saving and growth benefits for SAB. It makes good financial sense to undertake this investment. It will allow us to reduce our exposure to volatile international markets and replace a significant share of our imported malt and barley with local barley."

SAB currently sources about 65% of its barley locally and, once the new maltings plant is up and running, this will potentially increase to between 90% and 95%.

"We have been looking at ways to locally source more of our agricultural raw materials, including barley, for some time, building on the work we have been doing with our Barley Breeding Programme and with local farmers to develop competitive local barley varieties. Additional barley trials have been undertaken in the North West and more recently with emerging farmers in Limpopo."

Leyva said: "We will partner with leading suppliers to ensure an innovative and cost-efficient design using cutting-edge technology. We will also strive to ensure we maximise local industry involvement in the construction of the new plant in order to help develop the communities in which we operate."

SAB executive chairman Norman Adami said the new plant was a win-win scenario and showed SAB's clear commitment to working for South African society. "It will allow us to drive even higher local sourcing of barley which will, in turn, help drive the empowerment of small farmers in some of the most poverty stricken areas of SA."

The maltings plant will be built next to the existing Alrode brewery, with the land having already been secured and geotechnical trials currently under way. Construction on the new plant will begin once the land ownership transfer has taken place, which is expected during the middle of this year.

SAB currently has two malting plants, one at Caledon in the Western Cape which malts about 180 000 tonnes of barley a year and an existing plant at Alrode which malts about 40 000 tonnes a year. The existing Alrode plant is about 40 years old and coming towards the end of its economic life. It will be decommissioned once the new plant is fully operational.

> "The new maltings plant will……allow us to reduce our exposure to volatile international markets and replace significant share of our imported malt and barley with local barley – Mauricio Leyva, SAB MD"

SAB's annual spend on raw agricultural materials in South Africa is about R2 billion. Each year, SAB buys more than 1.8 million tons of barley, GMO-free maize, hops, apples and grapes. A consistent supply of raw materials is critical to the company, which supplies millions of people each year with their preferred drink, be it beer or soft drinks.

To ensure a secure, diversified and sustainable supply chain, SAB is committed to local procurement and agricultural development by supporting small-scale and emerging black farmers, and supports several projects such as the barley and GMO-free maize farmers in Taung in the North West and the farming of GMO-free yellow maize by local farmers in KwaZulu-Natal.

More than 90% of SAB's total purchases are purchased from South African Companies, and this investment will take SAB's local procurement spend to between 93% - 95%.

Background

SAB's involvement with malting began with the construction of a malting plant at the company's Isando Brewery in the late 1950s, resulting in increased involvement in local malting barley development programmes.

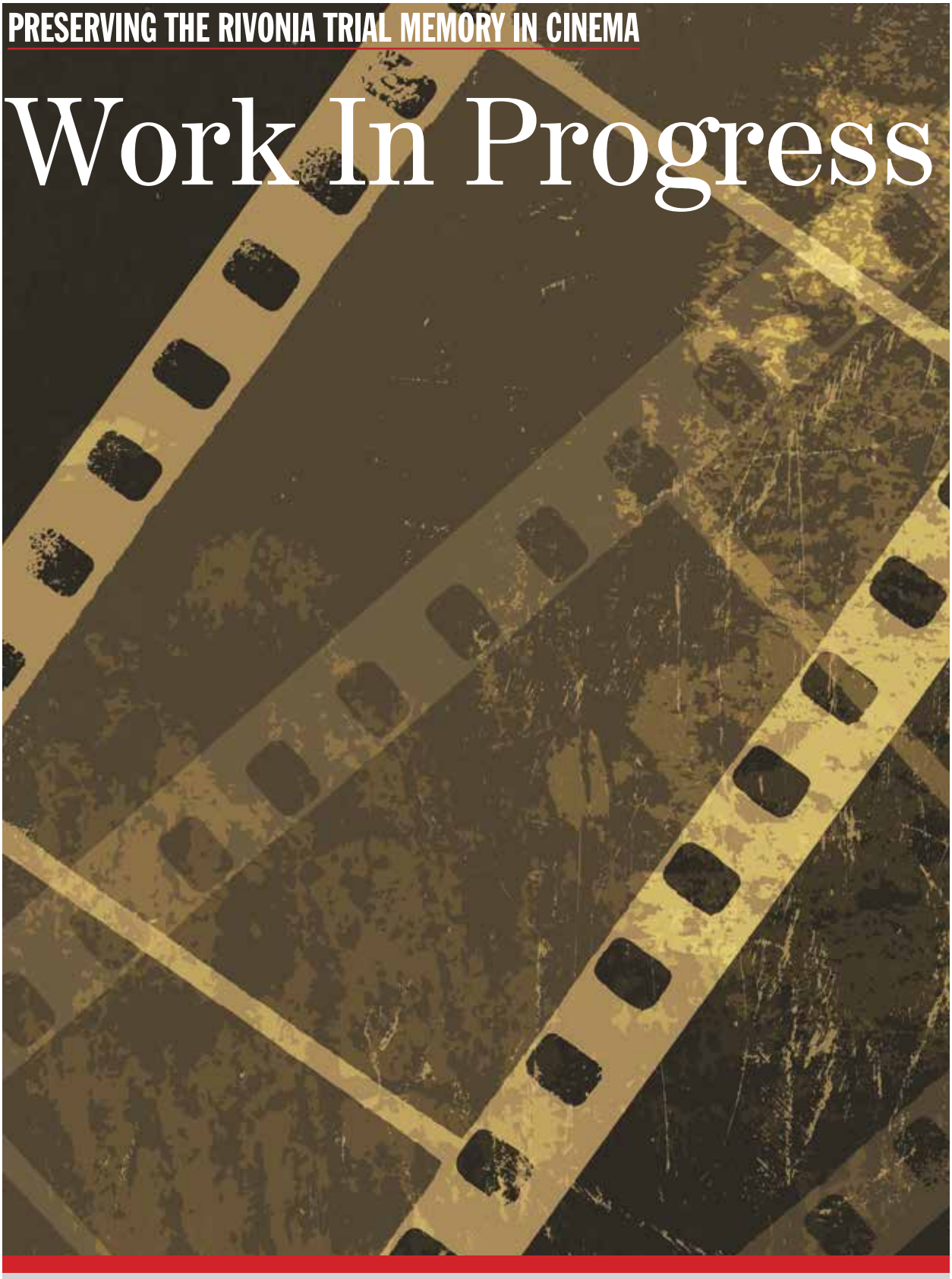
The 1970s marked SAB's first serious attempt to move local production of malting barley towards a degree of self-sufficiency. In 1972, SAB acquired Nasionale Mout's sorghum plant at Alrode and converted it into a barley plant, quadrupling its processing capacity in 1978.

Caledon Maltings is the biggest malting facility in the southern hemisphere, with an annual capacity of 180 000 tonnes of malt.

Malted barley is barley that has been allowed to germinate to a degree and then is dried. This is done by soaking the barley seeds in water for several days to allow it to germinate and sprout. The germination process is stopped after about five days by fanning the grains with hot, dry air in a kiln. The roots are removed and the malt cools down and is allowed to rest for about three weeks, after which it is ready for brewing. ■

PRESERVING THE RIVONIA TRIAL MEMORY IN CINEMA

Work In Progress



By Mandla Dube

The memory of liberation in South Africa is fast fading into the sunset and most heritage practitioners and curators or custodians of this legacy are frustrated about the lack of appreciation of yesteryear's icons. But that can only be the fault of those who are tasked with memorialising this heritage by asserting our own story in books, monuments or multimedia. In an attempt to curb this phenomenon Pambilimedia conceptualised the Legends of Freedom Series (LOFS) which comprise: The Rivonia Trial, Solomon Mahlangu and the Silverton Siege Trio. LOFS aims to take this content to the mainstream while building this heritage into a self-sustaining brand.

I have often wonderered how the Jewish holocust is such an 'industry. Who funds it and how is that all over the world we are able to preserve this henous crime against humanity, is it guilt? Well it occured to me that conservation and preserving its memory is at the centre of this multi million dollar discourse through motion pictures: documentary and fiction. This epiphany gave birth to LOFS producing a stage play, an exhibition, a documentary and now fiction.

With the participation and support of the South African Post Office, SABC, The South African State Theatre and Nelson Mandela Foundation, Pambilimedia engaged various stakeholders to preserve the memory of liberation and conserve print, digital and oral history in relation to these Legends of Freedom. The intention is not to make anyone feel guilty but to use culture and art as a means of dialogue about our past while reaffirmiing our identity.

Former President Thabo Mbeki's speech made on May 8, 1996 "I am an African" pays homage to the contribution of the Khoi-San liberation icons who faught fearlessly against the Dutch occupation of the Cape in mid 1600s. That speech sparked debate on who is an African and who is the custodian of culture: we all are! But the Ewemina of Ghana in West Africa say it best *"Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story."* Our collective memory of The Rivonia Trial needs authors who are bold and not afraid to get into trouble for saying what might offend others as this narrative has so many points of view. And there is no one owner of this story, even though at the dawn of our democracy I learned that the Oppenheimer Foundation had purchased the Rivonia Trial transcripts from prosecutor Dr Percy Yutar. In fact the editor of *The Thinker* went to ask Dr Yutar to give back these transcipts and whatever collection he may have as it belonged to the 'nation.'

American Professor Kenneth Broun recently published *Saving Nelson Mandela: The Rivonia Trial and the Fate of South Africa*, which is based upon talks with many of the case's primary figures and portions of the trial transcript. Broun situates readers inside the courtroom at the imposing Palace of Justice in Pretoria. Here, the trial unfolds through a dramatic narrative that captures the courage of the accused and their defense team, as well as the personal prejudices that coloured the entire trial. The Rivonia trial had no jury and only a superficial aura of due process, combined with heavy security that symbolised the apartheid government's system of repression.

"But the Ewemina of Ghana in West Africa say it best *"Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story."* Our collective memory of The Rivonia Trial needs authors who are bold and not afraid to get into trouble for saying what might offend others as this narrative has so many points of view."

This book was published in 2012, two years after Pambilimedia premiered The Rivonia Trial stage play at the South African State theatre. I met with Prof Broun about the possibility of adapting his book into a motion picture, but it occurred to me that would defeat the whole Lion and Hunter story above. Earlier I had approached Lord Joel Joffe to adapt The State vs. Nelson Mandela and Others, which did not have an in-depth account of the emotional impact the trial had on the trialists and their families. So there I was, having to rely on archives and taking this story one bite at a time. I finally resorted to taking a creative license, and began to create fictionalised accounts that are loosely based on the truth. I chose Accused No 9, Andrew Mlangeni, the unsung hero in the Rivonia Trial. The extract below is from the first act of the script where our hero Andrew Mlangeni has to leave his family to go for basic training in China; he is with his wife telling her about the planned departure.

EXT. MLANGENI HOME ORLANDO - JOHANNESBURG - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE IN on ANDREW and 37 year old NANCY MLANGENI seated in the passenger seat. The car pulls into the gate of his house, it comes to a stop and he looks into the house. A decision has been taken that he along with his other compatriots is to leave the country for military training abroad. He is to leave for China.

NANCY MLANGENI

We don't see you for weeks and now you leaving for China? China? Andrew?

ANDREW MLANGENI

It's only for three months…

NANCY MLANGENI

Why doesn't Slovo go?

Andrew looks at Nancy in disbelief

NANCY MLANGENI (CONT'D)

Let him feel what its like to be removed from your loved ones.

ANDREW MLANGENI

I won't answer that.

NANCY MLANGENI

Or, Rusty Bernstein even Arthur Goldreich: any of those white families, hau Andrew. When are you going to stand up for us, as a family? Not for the struggle but us?

ANDREW MLANGENI

All of us must go military training - its not about white or blacks

NANCY MLANGENI
But I bet more black families are sacrificing
ANDREW MLANGENI
Listen woman! This is our country first and foremost, isn't it?
NANCY MLANGENI
I suppose you are right. We will miss you.
ANDREW MLANGENI
Me, too.
NANCY MLANGENI
When are you supposed to leave?
ANDREW MLANGENI
Tonight.
Andrew looks into the house; two figures appear and wave at them. Nancy drops a tear and starts crying. ANDREW affectionately pulls Nancy close and hugs her.
FADE TO BLACK.
The following is an imaginary training sequence that Andrew in my story encountered while being trained by the RED ARMY in China.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - LEONING PROVINCE - MORNING - 1960
INSERT TITLE: CHAIRMAN MAO WELCOMES MK CADRES, OCTOBER 1960
CHAIRMAN MAO
I am disappointed in the ANC sending only four men to learn about guerilla warfare. How does your leadership expect to win against such a fierce army?
Andrew is in a group with Abel Mthembu, Ray Mhlaba and Yusim Kassim. The MK foursome look at each other with blank faces. Amongst them are Angolans, Palestinians and Chinese Military Commanders dressed in Green and Red. The Chinese soldiers do not blink their eyes or smile. Chairman Mao Tse Dung is standing in front of the column that looks at him with amazement and awe. Andrew keeps eye contact with MAO and follows him as he paces the beneath the tree and in front of them.
CHAIRMAN MAO (CONT'D)
Am sure by now you must appreciate that we had to pull you into the countryside for the specific reason that a people's war is not fought from the cities, if you look at the geography of any country you will notice it has rivers, mountains, desert, caves or forests.
He stops. Looks into the distance. Then turns to the group eyeing them one by one, MAO's POV (camera view point).
CHAIRMAN MAO (CONT'D)
South Africa, you will see that it is surrounded by sea; there are mountains, and many rivers. This is the liberation army's studio of enforcing chaos upon the enemy. It is the job of every cadre to know the names of these mountains, rivers and roads.
CUT TO:
EXT. BENXI WATER CAVE - RIVER - AFTERNOON
Commander Chueng Xi, who seems to have worked out a march drill rhythm that only he has mastered, leads Andrew and column.
COMMANDER XI
Choong! Chi ya pu! Choong Chi Ya Pu! Choong Chi Ya Pu!
The trainees are struggling to keep up with him. He stops to look behind him and raises his commanding stick.
COMMANDER XI (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for?
They are all resting their hands on their knees breathing in and out heavily. Andrew begins to recover and pushes Raymond, Yassim and Abel to keep running. The other trainees follow suit and soon Commander Xi takes off again.
COMMANDER XI (CONT'D)
Choong! Chi ya pu! Choong Chi Ya Pu! Choong Chi Ya Pu!
They start singing the drill.
TRAINEES
Choong! Chi Ya Pu! Choong Chi Ya Pu.
Commander Xi is pleased and waits for them to catch up and run past him, he nods.
INT. BED TENT - RED ARMY CAMP - OUTSKIRTS LEONING - NIGHT
Andrew is laying on his makeshift bed facing down; on the floor next to his bed is a candlelight he uses to read MAO's Red Book. His POV, the book has both English and Chinese translations. As he read and pages the book we hear the voice of MAO.
CHAIRMAN MAO
Revolutionary war is a war of the masses, what is a true bastion of iron? It is the masses, the millions upon millions of people who genuinely and sincerely support the revolution. That is the real iron bastion, which it is impossible, and impossible, for any force on earth to smash.
EXT. RIVER NIGHT.
A full moon is out and low. A line of lanterns on the riverbanks is used to illuminate the scene, where the trainees are inside the water in the shallow end. They lay down and carry AK47s on their feet facing up. No shirts on and only their underwear.
CHAIRMAN MAO
The counter-revolution cannot smash us; on the contrary, we shall smash it. Rallying millions upon millions of people round the revolutionary government and expanding our revolutionary war, we shall wipe out all counter-revolution and take over the whole of China.
We pull up to reveal the line of 25 soldiers training in and out of water as they chant.
TRAINEES
Choong Chi Ya Pu!
CUT TO:
ANDREW READS THE RED MANUAL
CHAIRMAN MAO (V.O.)
The imperialists are bullying us in such a way that we will have to deal with them seriously.
Andrew and company are in a martial arts class. Eggs are suspended on their joints while they stand in formation over a very hot sunny day.
CHAIRMAN MAO
Not only must we have a powerful regular army; we must also organise contingents of the people's militia on a big scale. This will make it difficult for the imperialists to move a single inch in our country in case of invasion.
The Palestinians joined by Yassim, an MK cadre; at dusk all turn to the east where the sun sets toward Mecca for prayer.
Slow mood music under the Salat VOICE.
Andrew looks on from his tent intrigued by their unison, commitment.
He nods his head to "agree with the prayer" and looks off screen.
DISSOLVE:

The above is an excerpt from the script being developed with the National Film and Video Foundation to author and assert one's identity in post-colonial apartheid South African cinema. ■

Business Process Service Mega Investments 2012/13

ABSA	Standard Bank	FullCircle	bizworks	RICOH imagine. change.	CORACALL
Investment: R497m	Investment: R64m	Investment: R498m	Investment: R27m	Investment: R241m	Investment: R128m
Incentive: R55.8m	Incentive: R41.6m	Incentive: R22m	Incentive: R36.4m	Incentive: R46.3m	Incentive: R67.8m
Jobs: 537	Jobs: 400	Jobs: 1 877	Jobs: 350	Jobs: 446	Jobs: 652

The Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**) aims to stimulate and facilitate the development of sustainable, competitive enterprises through efficient provision of effective and accessible funding mechanisms (i.e. incentive schemes) that support national priorities.

Through the Business Process Services Incentive, the dti has generated a total investment of R1.3 billion during the 2012/13 financial year, which created 3 838 jobs in the sector.

12i Investments 2012/13

Tiger Brands	Bio Diesel Project PhytoEnergy	Cape Town Steel Works for DHT Africa Holdings
Investment: R144m	Investment: R2.8bn	Investment: R220m
Allowance: R83m	Allowance: R909m	Allowance: R123m
Jobs: 96	Jobs: 264	Jobs: 360

12i is an incentive scheme from the Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**) that has been established to promote industrial upgrading and new investment in manufacturing. During the 2012/13 financial year 12 projects were approved with an investment value of R10 billion. The incentive has helped to create 1, 357 direct jobs and 44 221 indirect jobs.

Projects Approved: 12
Investment: R10bn
Total Allowance: R3.35bn
Tax Forgone: R940m
Direct Jobs: 1 357
Indirect Jobs: 44 221

Unveiling the mysteries of the past

As the SKA seeks to understand the ancient origins of the universe, the CoE in Palaeosciences will expand on this theme and answer fundamental questions on the origin of life on earth, the development of ecosystems and the understanding mass extinctions and their causes.

By Derek Hanekom

South Africa's prolific evidence of the origins of life on earth has shed significant new light on how life on our planet has evolved over millions of years. Through our increasing mastery of the two disciplines of palaeontology and astronomy, we are fast becoming the world's leaders on unveiling the mysteries of the past – how the universe came to be, what made us what we are today, and what significance this knowledge may have for our decisions about our future.

We made our mark in the field of Palaeontology when one of our eminent scholars from the University of Witwatersrand, Prof Lee Berger and his team made the remarkable discovery of what is referred as "the most significant palaeontological find in nearly a century" - the two fossil skeletons of a previously unknown hominid species at the Cradle of Humankind, now known as *Australopithecus sediba*. These early ancestors of ours lived in the area some 2 million years ago. The painstaking research undertaken to ensure the success of this project speaks volumes about the calibre and dedication of our scientists. Yesterday, Prof Berger and his team had another six articles published in *Science*, one of the world's most prestigious journals, coinciding with the launch of the Palaeosciences Centre of Excellence.

Last year on Africa Day, South Africa was announced as the host country for the lion's share of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope - one of the great science projects of the 21st century. This project is of such magnitude that the SKA central computer will have the processing power of about one hundred million PCs, and the dishes of the SKA will produce 10 times the data of the current global internet traffic. It will serve as a giant magnet for science in South Africa. The SKA will be far more sensitive than any telescope that exists anywhere in the world today. It will enable scientists to address fundamental unanswered questions about our Universe, including the formation and evolution of stars, galaxies and quasars, the nature of gravity and dark matter; and it may even answer the perennial question: is there intelligent life out there?

While astronomy explores the universe and the very distant past, the discipline of palaeoscience aims to reveal the history of life on earth – our small part of this universe - over a period extending from deep time to our recent past, but over a period long before there was written history. The answers to these questions cannot be obtained from written records but have to be interpreted from rocks and sediments.

The palaeo- and evolutionary sciences are the only disciplines able to provide reliable information on past biodiversity. They are thus

key to understanding not only the development and history of life on Earth, but are becoming increasingly important in improving our understanding of the effects of climatic changes and catastrophes on the biodiversity of our planet. This is particularly relevant as the world grapples to understand the current biodiversity crisis in the light of what has been labelled the 6th extinction, where more than 50 000 species are going extinct every year, and the causes and mechanisms that drive biodiversity change. The long-ranging and rich fossil and archaeological record we have in our country makes us one of the few regions in the world offering tangible and comprehensive records of the past and thus the possibility of understanding both past and present changes in biodiversity. Indeed, at least three of the recognised five major global extinctions which have occurred over the past 500 million years are represented in the rock record of our country.

Because of the antiquity of the rock record of our country and the fact that South Africa has fossil bearing rocks of all different ages - from the oldest evidence of life on Earth more than 3.5 billion years ago, right to the relatively recent emergence of modern humans and culture, this country has a huge competitive advantage relative to any other country in the world when it comes to unravelling the history of life on earth. In fact, this unique antiquity of our rock record makes South Africa the only country in the world that can boast all of the following:

- the oldest evidence of life on Earth;
- the oldest multi-cellular animals;
- the most primitive land-living plants;
- the most distant ancestors of dinosaurs;
- the most complete record of the more than 80 million year ancestry of mammals; and
- a remarkable record of the origins of humans and their earliest technological achievements over the last four million years.

This uniquely rich and time extensive fossil heritage of South Africa, coupled with the internationally competitive palaeontological, palaeoanthropological and archaeological research undertaken in this country, means that the story that we have to tell on the development of life is of great international significance. In fact it is not possible to write a comprehensive text on the development of life on earth without referring extensively to the South African fossil record.

Informed by the recently launched South African Palaeosciences Strategy, we have established a Palaeociences Centre of Excellence which is hosted by the University of Witwatersrand together with its partners, the University of Cape Town and Iziko Museums in Cape Town; Albany Museum and Rhodes University in Grahamstown; the National Museum in Bloemfontein; and Ditsong Museum in Pretoria. I firmly believe that it will be a hub of groundbreaking multidisciplinary research with programmes that map the history of life on Earth through the fossil record.

“Research on several individuals from the Malapa Site in the Cradle of Humankind continues with more than 300 early human ancestor remains discovered in recent months amidst the remains of hundreds of fossilised flora and fauna, truly making South Africa a hub for palaeosciences research in the world.”

It will simultaneously explore the driving mechanisms of biodiversity changes though time. Because of the public's fascination with ancient history, and the importance of understanding the mechanisms for biodiversity change through time, the CoE will run an extensive public outreach programme, thereby assisting in providing a context for understanding the present biodiversity crisis. The outreach programme will create the storyline for palaeotourism initiatives in an effort to provide much needed employment opportunities.

Palaeoscience is a relatively new discipline – there is still a lot to learn and discover. Just recently we learnt of new ground breaking and internationally significant fossil discoveries, and there are more in the pipeline.

The six studies by Berger and his multidisciplinary team of over 100 scientists, academics, professionals and technicians from South Africa and around the globe, describe how *Australopithecus sediba* walked, chewed and moved. The research indicates that *Au. Sediba* appears to be mosaic in its anatomy and presents a suite of functional complexes that are both different from that predicted for other *australopiths*, as well as that for early *Homo*. This study will have implications for interpreting the evolutionary processes that affected the mode and tempo of hominin evolution and the interpretation of the anatomy of less well preserved species. Research on several individuals from the Malapa Site in the Cradle of Humankind continues with more than 300 early human ancestor remains discovered in recent months amidst the remains of hundreds of fossilised flora and fauna, truly making South Africa a hub for palaeosciences research in the world.

In the famous words of the late Professor Phillip Tobias, "Africa gave the world humanity, and that is no small thing". But the spread of humanity around the world and burgeoning global population growth has had a profound impact on our natural resources, and presents us with the greatest of all challenges: *what do we need to do to ensure a sustainable future for humanity?* As the SKA seeks to understand the ancient origins of the universe, the CoE in Palaeosciences will expand on this theme and answer fundamental questions on the origin of life on earth, the development of ecosystems and the understanding mass extinctions and their causes. ■

science & technology
Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THROUGH A CREATIVE LENS

The Editor welcomes contributions that take into account *The Thinker's* vision of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and caring South Africa. Submissions of poetry and the written word should be brief. For visual material, a high-resolution document is required (300dpi Jpeg). Please send your work electronically to editor@thethinker.co.za for consideration.

CREDO

– a poem on the Freedom Charter

Credo, the Latin for "I believe", is a statement of personal belief. But perhaps it is often more a statement of our faith and hope.

I had a deep need, one I share with many South Africans of my generation and younger, and hopefully of every generation to come, a need to connect with the spirit, the expression of idealism that our nation invested in the freedom charter.

In the poem, I set myself the task to attempt to distil in the simplest and fewest words, in the clearest human terms, in words as uncluttered as possible, some essence of the Freedom Charter.

The Charter was itself an act of extraordinary imagination, of the people's imagination, to envisage a better, more just world, and that act of the imagination created the vision we still have preserved somewhere within all of us as a nation because of that document.

I also wanted to free that spirit from a certain amount of noise that comes with the language of the Charter itself, because of its context in a previous space and time. I wanted to get away from the mechanics, which can divide us on how we realise or approach its values.

Poetry instils in us human values which appear, to me at least, to have an eternal dimension. So the poem and other credos are put into words in order to try and persuade people to change themselves and their attitudes, to make us better people, to remind us of bigger truths, of us not only as South Africans, but as part of the whole human enterprise.

Brent Meersman is a writer based in Cape Town. *Reports Before Daybreak*, his novel about the struggle years from 1978 to 1990 was published by Random House in 2011. His latest book, *Five Lives at Noon*, about South Africa during the transition 1990 – 1994 will be published in July 2013.

Credo

We, the people of South Africa declare for all our country
and all the world to know
that the world belongs to all who live in it
by right not will

That power is not one person's will,
but the good will of the people
free people

Around a stone fountain
we sang, naïf birds
sweet songs
sparing neither strength nor courage

our
poem
the freedom charter

We turned stones to words
ideas to paper
illiteracy to debate
ability to merit

We the people, declare:
All will have a voice
for law is by consent
and justice education

duty is understanding
proxy by agreement
representation elected

the police protect
privacy respect

Hate is crime
contempt original sin

peace is liberty
land prosperity
community opportunity

Life is not for drudgery
For the purpose of work is well-being
labour is given not taken
manufacture for comfort, not oppression
farms for nurture, not slavery
prisons are failed states

Lifting our stones we uncovered
for all to share
these beds of coal
these wells of gold
these rivers of diamonds
these cradles of loam

By preserving the earth
we banish hunger
we walk upright
driving our cattle
freely across these lands
far far as the horizon

For we the people
We will roll back the barbed wire
drain the slums
put out the spotlights
raise hearths of stone
where once ghettos clung

We will prevent, before
we have to cure,
with medicines
not armaments
in hospitals for compassion
not profit

The sick must have time
mothers space to heal after birth
fathers take care

For where children rest gently
a family has meaning

The poets may arrange their rhymes
thinkers speak their thoughts
writers seek their words
workers protest their rights
children sing at play

Our beliefs will not stop at our borders
diplomacy not become expediency

When the lights start going out
all across the world once more
our Africa will rise
arise the south
beacon of hope

Let all people who love say here:
with words of stone, we will fight

Let us all pledge ourselves
to strive together,
sparing neither strength nor courage,
until the democratic changes here set out are won.

One people, we the people
Until the day we win these liberties
We the people, the Freedom Charter, South Africans. ■

AN INTERVIEW WITH

James April

James April, from Cape Town, became active in the Coloured People's Congress in 1961. April underwent a brief spell of military training at Mamre in 1962, and was detained, together with Basil February in 1962 for painting political slogans, and re-detained and charged for attending the Mamre training camp in 1963. He subsequently left the country with February for military training. April participated in the Wankie campaign.

Courtesy of the South African Democratic Education Trust (SADET). Edited by Gregory Houston from an interview conducted by Nhlanhla Ndebele and Moses Ralinala, 30 July 2001, Pretoria, SADET Oral History Project.
The footnotes of this interview and some text has been omitted for reasons of space.

My father was very politically conscious. He was a big communist at the time. I don't think he was a member. But he was a supporter. He used to attend the rallies at the Grand Parade in the late '40s. You see, the post-Second World War period was a period of this resurgence of the communist philosophy. It was the time that China became an independent communist country. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe all became communist. Not the Soviet Union. But it was expanding in Eastern Europe. Generally, the communist mood strengthened, not only in Europe, but also in what you call the East. The liberation struggles first took place there; in Indonesia, in China. That's where the liberation struggles took place. That gave a boost. I think if you were a worker you wanted a workers' state, determining your own destiny and so on.

We went to church. My mother sent us to Sunday school. My father didn't stop us from going, us children. But he encouraged us to question the bible. "Where does God come from?" Simple questions like that. We couldn't answer. But it was mainly a struggle for existence. I went to school barefoot.

Our high school wasn't really a political school, so to speak. My principal was totally conservative, you know, politically. His politics was regarded as conservative. He was criticized in fact by the more radical elements in the "Coloured" political spectrum. At that time the political school in Cape Town was Trafalgar High. That is where the political teachers were, and Livingstone in Claremont in Cape Town. Those were the teachers who were really political teachers. They were intellectuals. They were the people who influenced me, because they were members of the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) and the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA). I remember with the introduction of Bantu Education from the early '50s, from the mid '50s, a lot of these teachers were expelled from the teaching profession because of their opposition. Many of them had an important impact on the education – they were really

dedicated teachers – of the youngsters because of that political background. So, many members of our staff were in the opposition to the introduction of Bantu Education. Later on there was that Coloured Education. Most of the teachers, for instance, at Trafalgar School in District Six – it is still standing there – and Livingstone belonged to the Fourth International (FI), socialists you see, and were belonging to these different societies; the FI and Forum Club, for instance.

There were also a number of Jewish socialists teaching at Coloured schools. They played a very prominent role in the education of the black population during the 1940s and 1950s – members of the Communist Party. They also influenced the teachers. They, in fact, helped form the opposition to the introduction of separate institutions for blacks; firstly, for Africans, and then Coloured schools. I was also influenced by that. I took part in civic work, forming parent-teacher associations while I was an aspiring teacher.

I was interested in politics when I left school, because of my father's influence as well. When I started matric some of these lecturers were there. A.C. Jordan was living in the same area as us, in Athlone. Pallo Jordan's father and mother were prominent members in the area. His father was lecturing at the University of Cape Town. And Dan Kunene was also there. They were prominent Congress people in the area. I went to University together with Fikile Bam. So we had quite an interesting mix. But A.C. Jordan was prominent. But in 1960 he broke away. Although they were militant, you know, basically they were in a sense restricted by their class position.

There were no other organizations among the Coloureds in Cape Town except the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). Although there was a CPO (Coloured People's Organisation) group, they were very weak. And they made a very basic mistake in 1958 when they fielded a candidate for the separate elections. The Unity Movement was saying the Coloureds should boycott the elections, because they had just lost the issue of the common roll. They fought the common roll issue. And the NEUM said, no, we must boycott the elections. And then the Congress group fielded a candidate. Subsequently, they managed to ouster the Unity Movement. Of course, they didn't have their roots. Technically, the intellectuals were the Coloureds, because they were the ones who set the tone – formed opinion, you see. The organised Coloured workers were not strong. So, the political intelligentsia of the Coloureds formed opinion, and they were strongly in the Unity Movement. So that is why we can say, no, what happened in the second election – the Unity Movement reached their apogee. They went out campaigning against the separate election, night after night. That was in 1958.

You see, they did not go out to organize the masses before they campaigned against the elections. The NEUM was just prepared to boycott, unlike the Congress Movement, especially the ANC, who would draw the people into various campaigns. The boycott was a tactic that was very suited to the petty bourgeoisie. It doesn't expose them to retribution so much. But if you go out and campaign, marching and so on, that is a thing that is very inconvenient. Socially they were better off than their African counterparts. And that was probably one of the things that led to the split. The South African Coloured People's Organisation (CPO) was very weak. They were just formed, and Alex la Guma and Richard van der Ross were among the founders. They had certain limitations. There were rumours, for instance, that these were the communists. La Guma was well known. But the organization itself was not well-known. It's only in the early '60s, when the name changed to the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), and many people were disillusioned with the Unity Movement, that many of the youth crossed over to the Coloured People's Congress. They infused it with a lot of energy and drive, new blood. And it was the political consciousness of the 1960s that infused the Coloured People's Congress with a new spirit.

"The NEUM was just prepared to boycott, unlike the Congress Movement, especially the ANC, who would draw the people into various campaigns. The boycott was a tactic that was very suited to the petty bourgeoisie. It doesn't expose them to retribution so much."

I spent two years at UCT from 1958. I didn't complete university because I spent too much of my time on politics. I was interested in politics basically. I did have time to study, but I didn't complete my second year. I have no real excuses because I started off well. But then I got involved in politics in my second year and academic studies became secondary. When I left I went to work full-time. I worked in various places, first as a clerk, and so on. My first job I worked as a costing clerk. I subsequently worked at a factory where they refined oil for ten months. I then worked for a re-insurance company, for more than a year, during the time I was arrested. I went back after the detention.

You see, truthfully, the Coloured People's Organization wasn't a strong organization. There were unions amongst the Coloured people. SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) at its heyday had 55,000 workers, 1960, '61. It was building up slowly. The one union that was really strong among the Coloured people, SACTU union, was the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU). The Garment Workers Union was concerned with conservative issues – very conservative issues. They were very happy with very immediate gains, almost like the sweet-heart unions. They were not a sweet-heart union, but they were close to being one. They were very conservative. Actually the more militant unions were the ones to which a lot of the Africans belonged to, such as the Railways Workers Union, which was one of the hardest hit. It was small numerically.

My first campaign was the separate

election campaign in 1958. Then in 1960 there was Sharpeville and the stay-aways. The Coloureds were not interested in stay-aways and the anti-pass campaign – they didn't have to carry passes. They had to be persuaded to stay-away for another reason. And it wasn't easy. It was very tricky to organize among the Coloureds especially because they just lacked political consciousness. There were just certain pockets, very few, who would take part in political action. I joined the Coloured People's Congress in 1961, when the Coloured People's Congress changed its name. I was in the same branch with Alex la Guma. He had quite a history of political activism. I was secretary of the Athlone branch. Most of our work was to organise people. We were a newly-established branch, and our first task was to consolidate, try to mobilize around day-to-day issues. And later on, of course, it becomes national issues – show them the link between the day-to-day, the local issues, and national issues. And it was not easy because people were more concerned with things that were affecting them right there. And that was our problem. They found it very difficult to see the link between the national issue and the local issue. It was hard. It was much harder for us than for people who were working amongst the African people.

The people we know who were active were the ANC. The ANC was very active, especially in 1960. There were people like Elijah Loza, Archie Sibeko, Looksmart Ngudle and so on. Barney Desai was Vice-President and Reggie September was the secretary. So we worked closely with them; they used to come to talk to us. We also used to try to popularize *New Age*, which came with the message. Also distributing leaflets for the strike of 1961. Barney was the main organizer of the underground. We also had structures so that we don't expose all our leaders to unnecessary arrest. A lot of the guys were picked up because of the advocacy of the strike of 1961. George Peake, September and Desai were arrested. September was one of the first to be put under twenty-four hour house arrest. So it made it very difficult to operate. The government was also trying to break the open organizations. We were the next line of leaders to take over, to run the show. It was Erics and Barney Africa, who also joined the leadership outside, who took over.

Now when Reggie and them were arrested, skipped the country or went underground, we took over as the executive. The CPC used to meet regularly, in secret. Now we never used to say where we are going to meet. We just used to meet at a particular spot, get picked up in a car, and get taken to the meeting. Howard Lawrence used to arrange our meetings, take us by car to some place. It was about five of us. The next day the police would go to the house where we had the meeting, intimidate the owner of the house. We knew that it was one of us who was giving that information to the police. Gugulethu was just being built that time. So we used to meet there on Sundays at one guy's house. So one of the guys in our group of five was asking this guy where he works, and all those things. And, a few days later Howard was telling us that this guy is a spy. We had being infiltrated.

> "My father wasn't a scientific socialist. Because he was a worker he believed that it's good for the workers to be socialist. He saw the success of socialism in the Soviet Union, especially in 1957 when they launched their first rocket. He saw this as a triumph for Soviet production, Soviet science and technology."

My father wasn't a scientific socialist. Because he was a worker he believed that it's good for the workers to be socialist. He saw the success of socialism in the Soviet Union, especially in 1957 when they launched their first rocket. He saw this as a triumph for Soviet production, Soviet science and technology. Relatively the Soviets were still weak compared to the United States at the time. Industrially and economically they didn't even have half of what the United States had. But in order to achieve those things, to show that they were mobilizing their manpower, correctly, they made these achievements.

The Unity Movement also had Marxists ideas, but they went with the Trotskyites. When I was at the university, in first year, I didn't know much about Trotskyism and Stalinism and the differences between the two. And then one day Richard van der Ross wrote an article – he used to write a weekly article for a newspaper in the Cape – and he said, "Yes, as it is known, the difference between the two leading liberation movements in this country, that is, the Congress Movement and the Unity Movement, is the difference between Trotskyism and Stalinism." And basically that was the first time I learnt about this – the two different approaches. And that's why a lot of the Unity Movement guys were – I won't say all of them – socialist. Some were not. But the hardcore, who grew up in Cape town, some from the Spartacus School of the '30s and '40s, they were the ones who built on Trotskyism. The Stalinists were Jack Simons, Michael Harmel, you see. Albie Sachs's father was a Stalinist but his uncle, Bernard Sachs, was a Trotskyite. They were a bit older than J.B. Marks and them. But they were based in Johannesburg, and because of their activism they were able to influence a lot of people. Johannesburg was really the centre of political activism. Johannesburg was really the political centre. It wasn't the white political centre. But it was the black political centre.

The first time I was arrested was in '62 when there was this Cuban missile crisis. You know, when the United States couldn't invade Cuba, it started building all those missiles. We went to demonstrate against this. To say: "We want peace, not war",

at the United States Consulate. And then we were arrested and charged later. And we were fined 10 pounds for demonstrating. Later in '63 they introduced detention without trial, the so-called 90-day Act. It affected quite a few of the guys who were picked up. But we were only picked up – I wasn't picked up, we were arrested – because we were painting slogans at the time, Basil February and I. So we went to prison in Roeland Street (it's the Archives now). We got out on bail. While we were on bail they picked us up again because of some sabotage that was taking place. They just picked up people at random because they couldn't solve the case. And then we were held and subsequently charged. I forget to tell you, in 1962, we were invited to a camp, in Mamre. There we were taught the rudiments. It was supposed to be a ten-day camp. We were just there for four days – the fourth day a chap came there and brought the police. It was towards the end of the year. We had just got into the question of drill, marching, some guerrilla warfare, and how to operate a car. There were very few cars around, but we had to be able to run a car. They didn't arrest us. They arrested some of the guys in the camp. And they told the guys that: "Look, guerrilla warfare can't even work in this country." The first chaps were arrested. Denis Goldberg was one of the key guys in the camp. Another key guy was Looksmart Solwande Ngudle.

I met Chris Hani at the *New Age* offices at the corner of Barrack Street and Plein Street. Sonia Bunting introduced me to Chris. Chris had just been in Cape Town for a short period. His father had been in Cape Town for some time, but Chris had been studying at Fort Hare. I met Chris again years later outside at the camp in Kongwa, and he reminded me about the meeting with Sonia. The Buntings were running the *New Age* office.

In '63 they arrested us for painting slogans, and the bail was paid. But they also charged me for furthering the interests of an illegal organisation, because I had in my possession some illegal documents; how to organize, and so on. The charges were very vague. The ANC had adopted the armed struggle, but we (the CPC) were still a legal organization. So, we tried to make use of our legality. But, at the same, the police also knew our movement and they were clamping down on us. So, we decided we can't expose ourselves like this. We must do certain things underground because of the situation. But even then I knew that when I see ANC people – they were very few – they were underground people. They were operating underground.

We were charged and I spent some time in prison, waiting trial. We appeared twice and we were charged for sabotage, arising from the incident in the camp in 1962 – Basil was not at the camp. We came out in January '64, and I was approached and told I must leave the country. A chap like Albie Sachs, when we were out on bail in '63, Basil February and myself, we thought we were either going to spend some years in jail – we expected a sentence of three years – or we were going to leave the country and join the liberation movement outside. And we put it to him, and he wasn't at all keen. He told us, then: "It will be alright to go out, and save your skins and all that. But what affect will it have on the morale of the people here? We must think of that because a lot of our leaders have left. And that is already demoralizing." But some of them had been sent out to go and work for the organization outside – to be part of the External Mission. Others had left because of persecution. Others like Leon Levy and Wolfie Kodesh were told: "Look, you have to leave the country permanently." Albie told us: "Try and serve the three years. And then when you come out you can still work. If you run away – although you can still work there – it will have a very bad affect on morale." So we decided to stay. And everybody was asking us: "Why don't you leave the country? Are you going to stay here? Why aren't you gone yet?"

"In '63 they arrested us for painting slogans, and the bail was paid. But they also charged me for furthering the interests of an illegal organisation, because I had in my possession some illegal documents; how to organize, and so on. The charges were very vague."

And, actually, we stayed on until we appeared in court, until we were picked up again. And then we were charged. Basil got a fine. We were very young. The slogans were like: "Free detainees!"; "Fight for the liberty of all!" – painted on the road and on the walls. Albie Sachs was the one who insisted that we stay, because he was our legal representative, and our lawyer was [Dullah] Omar. Albie was our advocate. They knew one another from university. Albie was the first student to be banned in the fifties. He had quite a lot of credentials. People respected him, especially the youth in Cape Town. We were not sentenced. I was with the guys arrested for the sabotage because I was in the camp at Mamre. Basil was fined, because apparently he made a very good speech, impressed the magistrate. The magistrate said: "Okay. Because of your youth you will pay the cost of cleaning the paint". I was kept in prison for another two months or so, awaiting trial, until early in '64 when we were charged. Most of the guys were from the ANC who were at that camp. Some of the guys had already left the country. Now they said: "You would be more of a danger because now the police know you. There is not much work you can do without being a danger to other people. Rather retreat, go outside the country. And then re-emerge." Basil was underground; the police were still looking for him, to charge him again. So we met. We decided there is nothing much we can do inside the country. So we decided to leave the country.

Abbas Gadief had a shop, and he organised the train-fare for us to

leave. Although he was in the Indian Congress he worked more for the CPC. There were four of us who left for Johannesburg. It was Basil, a chap called 'Army', and Kenny Jordan. Kenny Jordan was with Neville Alexander's group, and they (the security police) wanted him to give evidence against Neville and them. And he didn't want to. So he went underground because the police were looking for him. He couldn't stay underground for long, so we decided to help him get out of the country. The organization wasn't so narrow, you know, to take care only of its own members. They were fighting the government as well.

The person who collected us in Johannesburg was Babla Saloojee, who took us to Maulvi Cachalia's house. I didn't know him. Maulvi was talking to us there, and I was sitting with him and asking him where are the Cachalia's, because the Cachalias were a very famous family in the fifties. I didn't know I was taking to Maulvi. He took us to various places in Fordsburg – I think to Jassat and Mosie Moola. We stayed in Fordsburg for a night. Then we went to Coronation and then to Grassmere; stayed there for a few days while we were waiting for them to take us out. The guy who took us out is a brother of Mokgotsi. He took us to the border, near Zeerust. It was in April 1964. We were not illegal, but we had no passports. So one day he just took us and brought us to the station. We went by bus to Zeerust. We then went by bus to Mopane. And then we walked the rest of the way across the border to Lobatse. This guy knew the route. We were walking in the darkness. We were received by Fish Keitsing in Lobatse – ANC people who were in the Botswana People's Party. When we were in Lobatse we got the news on the radio about the sentencing of Neville Alexander and the others.

We just stayed there for a day. The next day we went by train to Francistown. It was a whole-day journey. And then in Francistown we stayed for a few weeks while transport was being organized for us to Kasane on the border. We stayed there in a refugee camp. There were also PAC refugees. It took us three days to get to Kasane. The roads were bad, and we were traveling through bush and forest. We even got stuck at one time. It was a four-by-four land rover. We stayed in Kasane for about a week or so before we crossed the border into Zambia – it was still not independent then. We stayed in Livingston for a day or so. We were met by some ANC guy there, and we stayed in a hotel for a night. And from there we were taken to Lusaka, where we were met by Tennyson Makiwane. We stayed there for a day or so. We had met Benny Bunsee in Francistown. Benny was from the Coloured Congress in Cape Town. I knew him. So we met there in Francistown and went up together. And he was going to stay in Lusaka. But they wouldn't accept him, so he stayed with us. From Lusaka we went to Dar-es-Salaam. We stayed at various places along the way.

> "It took us the whole night to cross the river. We started when it was still light. We had to use ropes to go down; a boat took us across. You had this haversack on your back – each of us a haversack."

We were very young. What influenced us is the news we heard of Neville Alexander's sentencing. Basil was related by marriage to Alexander. Neville got ten years, and the others five. So Basil felt that he is not going to go anywhere – he must come back and fight for freedom. We were in a way already persuaded to take up arms. Basil initially wanted to go and study under the auspices of the organization. But this persuaded him to postpone his academic studies. When we reached Dar-es-Salaam, the following day the secretariat saw us – that was the deputy president [Oliver Tambo], Moses Kotane the treasurer, Barney Desai and Duma Nokwe the secretary-general – we were asked what we want to do. We told them we want to train, quite voluntarily, and we went to stay in Luthuli House. And we stayed there for a short while. The ANC wasn't so well-organised then – outside the country. But, at the same time, the police inside were not so sophisticated. However, they had many people working in the organization, as agents. They checked out our credentials, you see, and then you stay in the camp. You don't go out. We were not too many because at that time we were coming in little groups. But later on the numbers grew, and we were taken from the house complexes to Kongwa. From there I went in a small group to Czechoslovakia in June 1964 for military training.

The Academy had many faculties – we were in the foreign campus. At this faculty there were also students from, say, Afghanistan, Egypt, and so on. We were given commander's training; training in small arms, explosives, infantry training, engineering, camouflage, how to fire a mortar, how to calculate distances, first aid, how an automobiles runs, and political science (very important part of the training). In political science we were taught the fundamentals – basics – of Marxism. They taught us the national liberation struggle – national democratic struggle. They taught us how capitalism works, and also taught us other aspects of Marxism – Leninism, and so on. The chap who taught me had been a youngster of 16 years old in the resistance to Nazi occupation during the Second World War. He had been involved in organizing the resistance during the war and was arrested. So, he was sent to a concentration camp in Poland and in Germany. He stayed a few years there. He taught us how they operated underground in the concentration camp. It was more theory. We were also trained how to conduct ourselves in cases of chemical warfare.

We changed our names when we went out. We all took our mothers' maiden names. Basil February's mother's name was Petersen. My mother's maiden name was Brian. We found other cadres there, in Czechoslovakia, who had been there since '63 – we joined them in June '64. But they stayed only just a few months

while we were there before returning. We were there for about 11 months. There were also about 20 Kenyan students there. And then, the other students who were there were the foreign students from Africa, who were there in the University there. There were a lot of foreign students from Africa – Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia and so on – who were studying at the University. They had a Foreign Students' Society. We also interacted with the local population. They did not restrain us. We got off on a Wednesday afternoon from 11 o'clock, and the weekend we got off – Saturdays from 1 o'clock. This allowed us to out. Sundays we were off the whole day until 11 o'clock. Some chaps got married to local girls there.

After our training we returned to Dar-es-Salaam – stayed there from a short while before they sent us to Kongwa in 1965. Kongwa was a base camp – we didn't get much training there. We were just waiting. People who had gone for training returned there. We used to teach one another what we had learnt in the various places. Sometimes we used to go out on marches. The food was regular – predictable. It was enough to keep you going.

The dissatisfaction of people with the leadership for failing to put us into action was one of the big bones of contention; waiting, waiting. Others had been waiting before us for almost a year. They got impatient. You weren't just sitting and waiting – you had to occupy yourself – kept busy. We worked out a programme – besides what the organisation had for you as a soldier. There were youngsters from Zeerust – they were very young when they came there, about 11, 12 years old – who were taught the basics of education. They got their education there. Other guys used to play chess, draughts and so on a lot. The leadership used to come quite often to Kongwa. [Moses] Mabhida, who was the army commissar, came quite often. He was based in Morogoro. The ANC had moved its headquarters to Dar-es-Salaam. But MK leaders were stationed in Morogoro. So Joe [Modise] and Mabhida, who were members of the high command, the administration, came quite often. They spent weeks sometimes. J.B. Marks and Oliver Tambo would come at times, especially when there were troubles in the camp.

Some of the guys were impatient. They just refused to be objective. They didn't believe there was this commitment among the leaders to get the cadres back home. The leaders had suffered these reverses inside the country, first with Rivonia. And then later on the other leadership was arrested. So the leadership inside the country was cut off. And it fell now onto the leadership outside the country. Their primary task when they were sent out was not to conduct the struggle. That was to be done by the internal leadership. They were there to garner support, international solidarity, to get funds, receive the recruits from home, to organize the training and send them back; and also, at the same time, to build up international solidarity. And they did have that structure to do that. They had a guy representing in Egypt, who was there to organise training with the Egyptian government; the same with the guy in Algeria. They had somebody in London because London was a central place for Europe. That was in the in the early sixties. And those guys had to come from time to time to meet with Oliver and the secretariat there – Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, Duma Nokwe – to work out strategy. Now, the task fell on them to conduct the struggle. There was this group from Natal who wanted to pressurise the leaders to send the cadres home. We had a 'people's court', but nothing happened. They were arrested by the Tanzanian government. We decided that we are not going to punish them. We just wanted to show that it was wrong morally. There was no real reception machinery inside the country.

Some of us were in transit; we were not supposed to stay there. I was given my assignment by Joe Modise and Moses Mabhida. We were a group, with Basil February, who had been recruited from the Western Cape. We were given this mission in Morogoro, where we had gone from Kongwa. I then went to Zambia, where we were put in houses. There were quite a number of guys in Zambia, the Phokanoka's and so on, and they were raided by the Zambian police. The Zambian police were still working with the Rhodesian whites. So those guys had to retreat, while a number were held by the police for a short while. This was in early 1966. We stayed away from the population, staying in the houses until '67. We also stayed on a farm with one of the guys.

The ANC had to negotiate with ZAPU about the mission to return. And the first indication we got that something like this was going to take place was when Uncle J.B. [Marks] made a speech at a seminar in late '66 in which he flogged the idea that Southern Africa was one region. We can't separate the struggle – the struggles in South Africa, the Portuguese colonies and Southern Rhodesia were one. The liberation movements must therefore cooperate very closely. The colonial powers were walking closely, and we must also work closely together. He was not saying that we must integrate our forces and work as one force. No, he didn't. Only months later when the idea was put forward that ZAPU and the ANC must form an alliance then there was opposition. I know Moses Mabhida was opposed to it – I am not sure why. I know, some people were saying that a guerrilla army would have the maximum advantage if it is like fish in the water – merging in its surroundings. Like Vietnam – a peasant during the day and a guerrilla at night. It mustn't go into countryside it doesn't know. We must know the countryside like the palm of our hands. But we weren't going to stay there [in Southern Rhodesia]. We weren't going to stay and fight there – we were just going to use it as a route down south. The minute we go through Botswana we get arrested and sent to jail. Initially Botswana didn't put us in jail. They sent the guys back. But then they said: "No, we can't continue". Put some pressure on by putting us in jail. They did that. They put [Ureah] Maleka and [Tlou] Cholo in jail.

Ultimately, although some people felt that we are going south, some of us can stay in Southern Rhodesia; prepare bases; allow us to operate; fighting with ZAPU. It wasn't possible to spare many comrades for this, just a few to build relationships with the people, and not to put all our eggs in one basket; it wasn't our intention. In fact

O.R. was very upset about this later. A lot of our guys were sent to the east, Sipolilo. And he questioned this at the Morogoro Conference. He asked: "But why did you send so many guys there, Sipolilo?" The military headquarters said that they had made a collective decision to put most of the guys in the eastern Front. It was for us a political decision and a military decision. The main goal was to get to South Africa.

We were called together to discuss the Wankie campaign. We didn't have a very long discussion. Oliver was very strict, especially with Lawrence Phokanoka, because Lawrence had reservations about this. He was in charge of that group going to Sekhukhuniland.

People started getting ready for the journey across. We were together at one time with the ZAPU people in the camps. There was one camp just outside Lusaka, about 40 kilometers from Lusaka. We were concentrated there, training. There was another camp where some of our cadres were – Chris Hani and his lot. We were camping on a farm. There we trained, to refresh ourselves from the previous training. And later on we were marching, on roads, on ploughed fields, and so on – it was part of the training programme. And that carried on for about two weeks.

The plan was for two groups to go in – one to go to the east and the other to go to the south for infiltration into South Africa. Chris Hani and the leader of the ZAPU group were going to the south. People like Andries Motsepe were tasked with establishing bases – establishing ourselves was in itself a big problem because it was very far from the rear bases. But the fellows wanted to be there to establish bases because they needed something for the South Africans. They were not going to be too far from the Botswana border. It took us the whole night to cross the river. We started when it was still light. We had to use ropes to go down; a boat took us across. You had this haversack on your back – each of us a haversack.

The thing is that we might have taken on too much – this long march. You see, instead of going south, we should have actually stayed, all of us, and established ourselves in Zimbabwe and moved south gradually. We could have been close to our rear bases. It was important to be able to retreat to the bases and get supplies; because sometimes the locals are so intimidated by the security forces, terrorised by them, you know, it is difficult to get cooperation. But we could only do it over time. That is why we needed a lot of guys [ZIPRA forces] from the local population, and to be able to establish links over time. Of course that was very vital for us. But if you want to go straight down – the main thing is that it was the wrong time of the year. And the water question. Then there are those catchment areas But I suppose those things, if planned… That's why OR told us, subsequently, that the people selected for operations were going to be involved in the planning. One of things that was not We were given things like packets of cream crackers. It takes up a big space in your haversack. But in … You can't eat as a biscuit. Things like chocolates are important to give you energy. … Some of the preparation was bad, logistically speaking. But these things were ironed out subsequently. But I think the main thing was preparation – we needed to have infiltrated people earlier in these areas. ZAPU had contact with people… And this was part of their preparation. But because of the nature… The guys were very critical when they returned, and they made it known publicly. And that is why OR subsequently resolved this. The issue of planning, preparation – he made it quite clear that the people participating in operations should have the major say. … They sent boats – dinghies – across the Zambezi... Things like that we should have forseen – anti-aircraft [weapons], the issue of water. That is why I say the guys were too hasty. From the outset.

> "I tell you it is damn heavy carry these extra guns. And we had to carry the radios. And that night, we were approaching the village… and these guys… I think John Dube tried to fire something, just to frighten them for fun."

In 1968 there was another attempt to the East – to establish themselves in the east. The enemy came in numbers, dropped by planes, because they knew our guys were not too many. And we lost some good guys. But it was not easy for them to forget. In Wankie, those guys were just coming and saying "surrender, surrender", and shooting at us.

One of my close associates, Charles Mashuga was injured. In any guerrilla camp you are not supposed to stay – just quickly move off. And that's what we did. And we had to carry these guys that were injured and their guns. I tell you it is damn heavy carry these extra guns. And we had to carry the radios. And that night, we were approaching the village… and these guys… I think John Dube tried to fire something, just to frighten them for fun. And then the enemy – we were just at the village – the enemy panicked, and they just started shooting. They were totally in a panic because they thought we were attacking them; firing shots behind these guys. The next day, this was around about the 22nd of August, we just marched and marched. So, in the end we decided to get away. The helicopters were around us. The whole night we had marched, carrying M and all these… When the enemy started bombing – they came with fighter bombs and started bombing; just around us. It went on for close to an hour. And then they withdrew. What happened is that the enemy always came and checked after they bombed the place. Our words were scarcely cold, just a few metres... And once more they were driven back. I had an old gun – a pre-Second World War gun. And the gun used to get jammed. So I took a dead comrade's AK-47. I didn't have bullets for that gun. And that gun also jammed. I had to use my pistol to defend myself. It's only afterwards that I got this. The enemy was driven back. ■

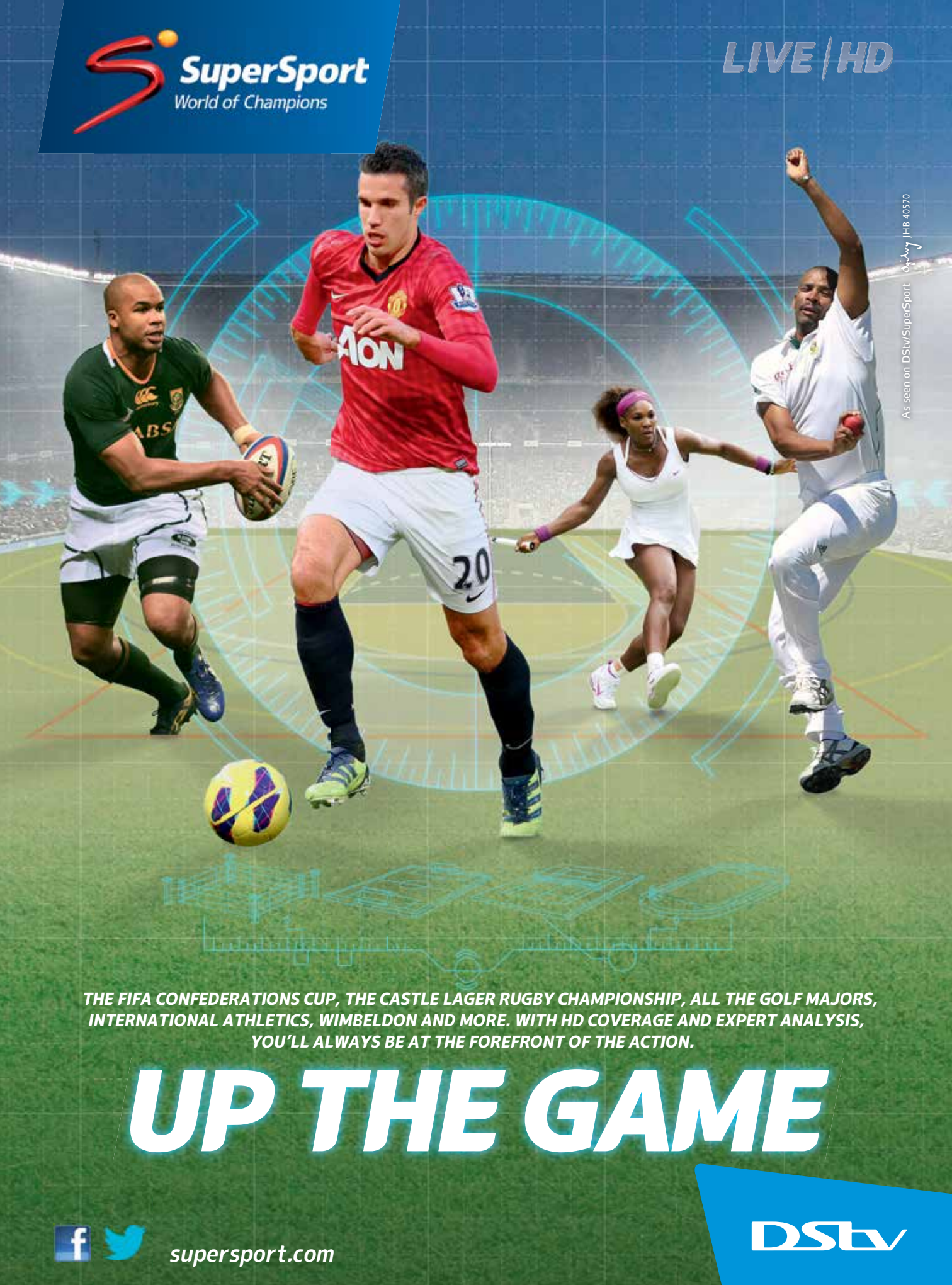
WITH OUR GLOBAL LCL SERVICE, SHIPPING RELIABLY AND COST EFFECTIVELY IS THE WAY TO GO, PAYING ONLY FOR THE CONTAINER SPACE YOU USE.

Deutsche Post DHL – The Mail & Logistics Group

For comprehensive LCL solutions, call +27 11 923 7816

When it comes to shipping ino Africa, DHL's LCL is he container groupage service that allows you the convenience of shipping smaller volumes directly, when you need to, without having to wait for a full container. We only use DHL systems throughout the shipping process, so there are no delays – just cost-efficient, unparalled service. Because it's direct, it's more efficient. Call us to find out more.

EXCELLENCE. SIMPLY DELIVERED. DHL GLOBAL FORWARDING


SuperSport
World of Champions
LIVE | HD
As seen on DStv/SuperSport
Ogilvy | HB 40570
AON
20
THE FIFA CONFEDERATIONS CUP, THE CASTLE LAGER RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP, ALL THE GOLF MAJORS, INTERNATIONAL ATHLETICS, WIMBELDON AND MORE. WITH HD COVERAGE AND EXPERT ANALYSIS, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE ACTION.
UP THE GAME
supersport.com
DStv