

INTERVIEW WITH MOTSOAIEDI

INTERVIEWER : PROFESSOR DELIUS

SIDE A

M : It was just a sporadic movement which was coming out of frustration whereby the movement started realising that there must be a change in the whole struggle. Now, the two players are the Communist party and the ANC which feature well in MK. Now, it must be understood that when we talk of MK it is a joint venture of the ANC and the Communist party. Now, in 1961, October 1961, those movement, the underground movement _____. Now they were there. First of all, for the first time the Communist party sent about five to six people to China to train in Guerilla warfare. Now, that was Andrew Mlangeni (names of two others inaudible) Wilton Mkwazi and Steve, I almost forgot his surname, maybe we will check whether it is Naidoo or not. It is something like that.

PD : Naidoo?

M : Yah! But we just have to check whether I have got the surname right, 'cause I am not sure. But now, the sole importance was to infiltrate into the country to come and train the people. Now it needs to be understood that all avenues of communication were....

PD : You mean all avenues of communication _____ of with the government?

M : With the government. Now, during the time of Dr. Malan _____ write a letter to Dr. Malan to tell him of negotiations, to come and negotiate, and (inaudible) Strydom, but the government still refused. And after Strydom it was Vorster or Verwoerd, who came first? It was Verwoerd.

PD : It was Verwoerd, late 1950s and early 1960s.

M : Early 1960s let me say. Sisulu communicated with him in his capacity as Secretary General. Now, in the 1950s, 1958 (inaudible). To send these chaps to China to train in Guerilla Warfare. It must be understood that the ANC was banned by the government. Now it is underground

(inaudible), it was banned in 1960. Then it went underground. Now, it was difficult to go and organise these people, to go and tell them that we are embracing on active resistance, because time and again they would say that is not the position of the organisation. The organisation is non-violent, and that means that you can't come and tell us about that. So much that when the party brought this idea to the top leadership of the ANC it was difficult to convince them. To such an extent that eventually they said it in a conference, they said that this being the case we shall not discipline any of our members who join this armed struggle. That is why we say it was a joint venture. Now, the party always had a major (inaudible) that this aspect of the armed struggle belong to the liberatory movement. The only movements which can prosecute this struggle is the ANC because it is a national liberatory movement. They decided to jointly act in that joint venture. Now, having decided that, therefore formed underground units of the party which will (inaudible). At the same time the ANC also had its own units.

PD : Underground units, of course.

M : Yah! Therefore there was a necessity of coming together joint in this underground movement. Towards the end of (inaudible) this man approached me to say that he wanted me to come in and organise these underground movements. No his reason (inaudible). And, fortunately having been in the organisation for a long time and in the political activities, I was well known to ANC members so that I didn't have difficulties in founding underground movements. These sporadic underground movements, it was for to (inaudible), and fortunately I succeed, I found them. Then I had to bring them together, to say that we are forming an MK organisation. It was not yet (inaudible), but having agreed that doing that was a good job, what was left was now to emerge. Now, it was quite clear that we could not emerge in two minutes, so we had to decide a logical stance to the underground units of the party and the underground units of the ANC to say that we are going to form one organisation and therefore we should have the name of this organisation we form.

PD : If I could just take it there. I understand you to be saying that the ANC formed its own underground units which were non-violent.

M : This time they are violent. The ANC itself was banned, it was underground, but its policy was non-violence (inaudible). We are going to embark on the Guerilla Warfare. You must understand that we are organising on the basis of the very same struggles which have already achieved a character of violence in defense of their rights. When the Pondo revolt, the Sekhukhuniland revolt, and the Zeerust revolt came about this was a culmination of what was going on, now, without being led by any organisation.

PD : So, the ANC or the SACP did play a role in these rural revolts?

M : It is underground, now, being underground you must understand that there has been an alliance between the Communist party and the ANC, so that whoever was there (inaudible). You must understand that the party had a dual affiliation. When you form an underground sporadic movement of that nature you don't give it a name. You were telling the people that we must fight back. Now, it is where the people understand who knows me to say that (inaudible). But now we are trying to give it an official name now. These two parties, that is the party and the ANC decide that that being the case, lets found an independent organisation, it must not be the party, it must not be the ANC, so that even the day of its inauguration, when (inaudible), we described this organisation as an independent organisation. This was one of the advantages (inaudible). The government did not attach it to any of the organisations since the manifesto was there as an exhibit to show that this was an independent organisation. Among other things Brian Fischer, who was the leader of the defense team argued that, in fact, when he was outlining his defence he said that Mkhonto, ANC and the party are not one and the same, and on these grounds the judge decided to say no (inaudible), but he is talking about Fischer's argument in court that the ANC, the SACP and MK were independent of each other. The ANC only adopted the MK only when already existing.

PD : You mean the organisation changed its policy when you are in jail, to adopt the violent judgement?

M : No, no, being underground it was already known that this being a joint

venture units of MK and units of ANC have already merged to form MK. But the important aspect there which needs to be understood is the fact that it couldn't be attached to the party and it couldn't be attached to the ANC. This is how MK was concerned, I have already told you that some of these underground movements were (inaudible).

PD : Do you still remember some of the names of these sporadic movements, did they have names?

M : No, they didn't have names, but I can tell you some of the names that can lead you. There was the African Freedom movement, I think, something of that sort.

PD : ARM, the African Resistance movement?

M : Yes! The ARM. And this became (inaudible). But I must say that the MK emerged before others in the fact that it was the first to organise on the 16th of December. Now imagine the method of sabotage and all that, we were trying all these things you see, now to emerge it had to be a countrywide (inaudible). If the police had seen this, what do we call, many might have been arrested. But all the same they came up the same day, on the 16th of December.

PD : I think you have indicated that in the previous interview.

M : ...but talking about their mechanisms of making chemical bombs.

PD : Where did you learn to make these bombs?

M : Here in our country. Now I don't know whether I told you the composition...

PD : No, I would actually be interested about the actual composition.

M : In the regional command I was the exec (inaudible), we had so many (inaudible). To the extent that we had so many casualties. Now, you can imagine a bomb exploding in the bonnet of the car (inaudible).

I remember one fellow, a friend of mine, had two bombs. I think because of trying to plan these bombs, the glycerine fell inside the bomb, then he was trying to retrieve it with a pair of scissors. If he had understood what exactly was going on he should have gone far away from it. A mere retrieval. It exploded because (inaudible), it exploded. He caught fire, then we had to do the post-mortem. Coming to the post-mortem we made a decision about the man who was going to be in charge (inaudible - but all about the tests on the kinds of bombs they used). Now this is how it came about. Now I was given this task. Can you imagine if you are going to put together things that are underground, that difficult task, obviously you will be exposing yourself. Then you must do it in such a way that you mustn't expose yourself. So I go to this movement which I know is not together with ours (inaudible). My way of conducting. I wanted to know from him whether he knew anything about this _____, mind you this (inaudible) was recording me. On the other hand I come to him, I ask him the question, " This movement which operated last night, was it the (inaudible), was it the movement? ". Then he said " Well, obviously it cannot be (inaudible). The I said " Do you know where it is? ". He says " Yes". I said, " Please, I want a little bit. Can't we make that - because I want to join". I go to them again and I say, " Listen, you people, you don't realise that you are in danger of accidentally killing anyone, in the sense that you do not know exactly the target someone is going to do, and suddenly you may not know the time he is going to operate. As a result you may have the same thing where someone gets injured by somebody in action (inaudible). He decided to take this matter to the movement. When we get there only to find that a man who used to be underground (inaudible).

PD : I remember it, I listened to the tape.

M : They refused to dissolve when they were ordered by the mother body to dissolve. Being an auxiliary to the (inaudible) they refused to dissolve.

PD : He doesn't want to be part and parcel of the MK?

M : Yes, his reason being (inaudible), and that we have no chance. Now,

these are part of the argument which I put forward to indicate, to prove that ANC, I mean the ANC Youth League (inaudible).

PD : Do you actually mind mentioning their names?

M : (Inaudible).

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

M : We continued with MK. I was operating here in South Africa, even the communities had to come to (inaudible). (A very low sound, but Motsoaedi is talking about how they recruited people from the mines and rural areas into MK). Now we already knew that we had recruited so many people into MK, we want money for them.

PD : I was interested in the question of recruiting in the rural areas. Could you just give a clear idea as to how recruiting in the rural areas took place.

M : Well, we had our men there obviously, these men would be required to come here to train as to how to operate in the rural areas. Now, they would like to deal with sabotage, they don't know where, and how exactly to do it. The status of the units is that one unit must not know what the other unit is doing. If you can afford (inaudible).

PD : Why was that?

M : Fear that it would lead to a chain of arrests. If this unit is arrested the victims must be members of that unit alone. If one of them is arrested, he'll expose them all. Perhaps I might as well show you how I operate when I was communicating if I had to do a mission which is very important I divided the mission into two or three parts. If I take, if this mission is from here to here, and from there to there, and from here to here, so that this man must know what is going on here, but must not know what is taking place here. And then this man is coming to collect

here must not know what is going on there - we cut it into such units so that even because of interrogation, immediately the fellow tells the police we know that they are not going to know about this one. Even if he tells them the story of here, they don't know what is going on here. Now I will give you a typical example of this, of how I communicated with my units. I give a person a parcel here to take it to such and such a place, say to town. At a street corner they'll find the man there. They must not know that man, they must not know him, but I will describe how he will meet this man. Now I'll tell that man at such and such a place somebody will give you a parcel. It will be a parcel. You hold it and cover it with newspaper (inaudible -but a continuation of the description of the method of communication and parcel exchange used). So that he doesn't know who is this, and this one doesn't know who is this one. They only know that they have exchanged something at such and such a place. And this one takes it to another place, and when he gets to such and such a corner (inaudible - still discussing strategies) he will say where are you going, are you going to a hospital? He says yes. And he says, I will give you a lift, I am going there. Now he will get into his car. When they pass the hospital he will say, we are already here, get out of the car, but leave this parcel in the car (inaudible - talking about how police could trap MK cadres by pretending to be some of them, thus to be part of the parcel exchange). Even if you torture him, even if you do anything to him, he will not tell, because he doesn't know.

PD : He genuinely doesn't know?

M : He genuinely doesn't know. Now, this is the type of operation that we had (inaudible). Now, another thing that I want to tell you is that I went to Cape Town. Mind you that time these chaps who were training were back.

PD : The six who were in China?

M : Yah, they are back, but they don't match to the standard (inaudible). I will give you a typical example of what happened (inaudible). Was communicating with us right in town, he was sending us dynamites.

(A long time of low noise - difficult to hear). Now they came and find these guys here in Soweto, I mean the day they were being arrested.

(A long time of low noise - Motsoaedi asking Peter if he has any more specific questions to ask).

PD : The last thing that I wanted to ask you to talk about basically is the actual operation, if you can say the number. You know, as you have already indicated there were quite a number of operations, a number of targets, activities that you made. Are there any specific ones that can be remembered?

M : Let me say one specific one which was published in papers, you see. There was Minister of Agriculture offices in Pretoria, and of course, evidence was given in court that I was responsible. Now, that office was smashed (inaudible).

PD : So the explosives that were used were made here and taken to Pretoria. There was a unit waiting to carry out the operation.

M : Yah (demonstrating on a piece of paper the nature of explosives and their effectiveness).

PD : So, basically what were your targets?

M : The targets, we were dealing with apartheid installations, we were saying that we have to unfold our struggle in such a way that (inaudible). These were like post offices, Europeans only places, basically such things (inaudible).

PD : Basically what did you have in mind? What was the purpose of such sabotages?

M : (Answer inaudible)

Peter warning about tape coming to an end. Final comments about how they wanted to prove to the rank and file (harassed by police) that they were doing something - bombardments.