

The ANC, MK, and “The Turn to Violence” (1960–2)

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It is with great respect for the sacrifices of men and women in the struggle against apartheid that I turn to the topic I will discuss today, and with some sense of humility as a newcomer to debates I realize are scrutinized far more carefully than nineteenth and early twentieth century history is. For the same reason I am apt to miss elements of the relevant literature. Ultimately this is part of a book intended to look at the human dimension of the turn to violence in the struggle. But here, I am going to outline a main event, and ask some suggestive questions. And I am going to take a lot of assumed knowledge for granted.

Here is the simplified version of the standard account. The underground ANC and the Communist Party grew closer in the 1950s. In the austral winter of 1961, the leadership of the ANC convened a set of meetings, one of which included Chief Albert Lutuli, the president of the Congress. Lutuli was persuaded of the wisdom of armed struggle. Nelson Mandela became the head of *Umkhonto weSizwe*, or MK, the “military wing” of the Congress. Lutuli was then awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. On December 16th, 1961, MK launched a campaign of “sabotage” and announced that nonviolence had failed. From that point on the ANC was committed to armed struggle. Subsequently

the Rivonia trial and subsequent arrests crushed MK and most of the ANC inside South Africa, but the ANC and MK maintained their external organization thereafter based in London under Oliver (OR) Tambo, and Dar es Salaam, and secondarily Lusaka, with outposts in East Germany, Algeria, and elsewhere.¹

Recently cracks have appeared in the first 2/3rds of this story, problems in the logic of the tale revealed. Partly it is a matter of seeing how the standard tale forgets the furious arrival of the PAC on the scene, the importance of which Tom Lodge made clear in *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*.² Partly it is a matter of contextualizing the international and African environment, about which we know more and more, as new sources are becoming available.³ These include Mandela's handwritten lecture and reading notes, his travel notebook and calendar and indeed much of his "diary" from his military-training tour of Africa (two of them) in 1962, and his interviews by Richard Stengel, which formed much of his autobiography.⁴ Recently Stephen Ellis published an

¹ This broadly is in line with the account given by Carter and Karis, and so by (among others) Evonne Muthien (*State and Resistance in South Africa, 1939–1965* (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1994), 161) and I would like to say, but have not explicitly checked, textbooks from Reader's Digest (Colin Bundy) to Robert Ross and Bill Worger. Lodge offers a more subtle treatment in *Black Protest*.

² Also remedied by SADET, Clive Glazer's work (*Bo-Tsotsi*), and now Lodge in *Sharpeville*, 153–7. In my recent book I am partly recalling Lodge's book.

³ Scott Couper (*Albert Luthuli, Bound by Faith*), Paidrag O'Malley (*Mac Maharaj*), and David Smith (*Young Mandela*), and in a spate of memoirs and biographies recently, including those by Lionel (Rusty) Bernstein, Ahmed (Kathy) Kathrada, and Denis Goldberg, confound the standard story in other, unexpected ways. New evidence is delayed in the SADET series in Volume 1.

⁴ In 2007, Garth Benneyworth discovered parts of Mandela's diary in the court records of the so-called "Litte Rivonia" trial (the State v. Wilton Mkwayi and others, 1963), in "Armed and Trained: Nelson Mandela's 1962 Military Mission as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Provenance for his Buried Makarov Pistol," *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 1 (March, 2011), 78–101. The defense records of the Rivonia trial's proceedings are now on-line courtesy of the Cullen Library, University of

important article, based in part on his excavation of new sources from the Fort Hare ANC archival collection. Ellis argues that the role of the Communists has been underestimated, and that a set of meetings with Mao and with the Soviet Communists in 1960 preceded (and necessarily so) the decision of an SACP “Central Committee” to adopt “armed struggle.” This CC had some fifteen members on it, and Nelson Mandela, Ellis says, was probably one of them, or he would be in 1961.⁵

The most interesting new material I want to pay attention to here, which Ellis luckily does not in his formidable essay, comes from the prosecution’s records in the Rivonia trial (1962–4), the trial that sentenced Mandela and other Congress Alliance leaders to long prison terms. These records include all the handwritten texts, many transcribed by the police, that were seized at the Rivonia farm. In a ca. 2000 discussion between Mandela and Kathrada, they recalled being assured by Joe Slovo that the farm in Rivonia was cleaned, that the papers were “gone.” Kathrada: [Slovo had said] “‘*Everything* is gone!’” [Both men laugh.] Mandela: “Yes I know!” Kathrada: “Then *nothing* was gone. They found *everything*.” Mandela: “Yes.”⁶ One must concede the prosecution had a strong legal case that the accused contravened the Sabotage Act. Until 2008, the evidence was not available to say this, but no longer.

Witwatersrand. Only in 2008 was the prosecution’s case, which was in the estate of Percy Yutar (the prosecutor, who had stolen it), allowed to pass from Oppenheimer’s private library to the National Archives. Crucially these include the exhibitory evidence of the state. In them one finds Mandela’s handwritten notes.

⁵ Stephen Ellis, “The Genesis of the ANC’s Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948–1961,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* (iFirst 2011), 1–20.

⁶ Nelson Mandela, *Conversations with Myself* (New York: FSG, and Johannesburg: Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2010), 70–1.

More problematic, however, is my use — anyone’s use — of the testimony that the state elicited came from witnesses, many of whom had been held in *90-day periods of isolation* in prison, or plausibly threatened with that. That’s three months in a small room with a quarter-hour walk in a courtyard. Some witnesses were physically tortured, sometimes for hours and days at a time. Those who cooperated were told if they gave “useful” information they would be spared prosecution.⁷ Yutar preserved his bounded editions of the original police reports with these witnesses’ depositions. Normally, these filed reports were destroyed by the police. They demand to be read but are problematic.

I have read through the transcripts of about half of the Rivonia Trial, in an effort to contextualize the testimony and figure out how to use it. One can try to use the trial itself to help determine what evidence can and can’t be trusted. Stand-alone statements, such as that MK cells did not consult their Regional Committees about acts of sabotage, have to be discarded.⁸ On the part of the state, because the evidence was thick, not thin, that the accused had been involved in sabotage, a few of the weaker avenues that Yutar traveled, as shown by the defense cross examinations, mark testimony contaminated by torture: one sees a narrative chosen by the police, which produces sometimes an implausible storyline. There is testimony involving Govan Mbeki

⁷ I missed but have heard second hand of Jacob Dlamini’s sensitive keynote plenary speech in Durban this July (2011), which is pertinent here; Denis Goldberg also comments on the problem of torture as an addendum to his *Memoirs* (2010).

⁸ Cullen Library, ANC papers, Defense papers of the Rivonia Trial, AD 1844 Box 3 A12–A16, A 12.1, Bennet Nvuya Mashiyana’s testimony.

that one reads in this vein.⁹ Over all, we have to be a better and fairer judge of testimony than the Rivonia judge.¹⁰

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Stephen Ellis has recently set out a new narrative for the “the turn to violence,” which in many respects matches mine. Therefore I can be brief, and highlight the international side the Chinese element in the story. The shift can be said to begin in 1949, or “after World War II,” if you like, as in 1949, Mao’s Communist guerillas took Peking, and Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe and other young militants went to Moscow on an educational program. In 1952, Sisulu and Nokwe returned to Moscow, and then visited China for an entire month.¹¹ Mandela had asked Sisulu to ask the Chinese if they would promise to fund an armed guerilla conflict that could lead to the defeat of the state by a popular insurrection. (The Chinese, like many guerilla leaders later on, counselled caution.) Recent work has also shown that the possibility of “armed struggle” was seriously raised several times over the next several years. Sisulu and Nokwe were by then probably already members of the banned Communist Party, now called the SACP. The question before these prosecuted men now, and so to the ANC’s National

⁹ For instance, that a key witness placed Govan Mbeki in a car with him, and claimed to have overheard Mbeki say only one thing, “pylon.” Berrange Cross notes, in *Defense Records of Rivonia*, 11 boxes, Cullen Library. For example, in the interrogation reports cited below, Vol. 4, Sikumbuzo Njikelana, 797-9, discussing Benjamin Fihla and, dubiously, Govan Mbeki. Bruno Mtolo said Mbeki ordered informers to be killed.

¹⁰ A recent authoritative piece cites the verdict of the trial as to the personnel and structure of the regional executives of MK in Natal, for instance, which is not so obviously warranted; *SADET* Vol. 1, “The Turn to Armed Struggle,” seven authors, 90, n135. C.f. Cullen Library, ANC papers, *Defense Records of Rivonia*, AD 1844 A 11.5 20/1/64 Abel Thembu’s testimony that Jack Hodgson was the chairman of the Regional Command for Gauteng (for the Rand).

¹¹ Thanks to Chris Lee for alerting me to this source; Evalyn Sisulu, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 167, 179–81; *SADET*, *Ibid*.

Executive Committee (NEC), *as Communists*, was whether the conditions obtained in South Africa for a revolution. It did not seem so, at least judging from the level of popular participation even in the midst of the Defiance Campaign.¹²

There was no groundswell or shift at the level of the masses. Instead, the famous Treason Trial (1956-1961) — which ultimately resulted in acquittals — drew together and concretized the Congress Alliance *leadership*, by incubating discussions among them, and among the initial 156 accused, generally, who were fashioned a “congress of the people.” Of course, that is what the ANC was supposed to be. Among the core group of thinkers and talkers were Mandela, Sisulu, Nokwe and Slovo, who made decisions collectively.¹³ Mandela and Slovo were both lawyers and got along well. In 1956 the accused were granted bail and could go home. At some point during their subsequent discussions during the rest of the trial, and in their homes and in court, this group most likely decided to aim the ANC at a possible future as an underground, guerilla movement.

The South African state was in fact entering a period of heightened aggression against African nationalists, driven by a security mentality after African states began moving toward independence. Imperialism in Africa had given apartheid its truest cover. Now, set among independent states, the country would become a “Republic.” The late 1950s were a period of real and incipient violence, as Lodge showed in his work. In

¹² Certainly not meeting the criteria of the recent wave of mass protests in middle eastern countries, but nor those of Cecil Binton, *Four Revolutions*, either.

¹³ Rusty Bernstein, SADET, Vol. 1, 65; Sampson, 198.

addition to violence at Zeerust¹⁴, Sekhukhuniland, Pondoland, and the cane fields of big sugar estates in Natal, several independent operatives, including a network of white Liberals and academics calling themselves the National Liberation Front, committed acts of sabotage. Ellis repeats the report that Eastern Cape local ANC branches were moving toward violent acts whether or not the Executive supported them and Lodge has shown that there were real ties between them and the Mountain Committee in Pondoland.¹⁵

On the 18th of March, 1960, the PAC (founded in April, 1959) called for an anti-pass protest ten days before a long-planned ANC pass protest. The state responded brutally, and shot sixty-nine fleeing protesters at a place called Sharpeville. Over the next weeks, PAC sympathizers set fire to government buildings in acts of sabotage.¹⁶ Partly in response to the PAC's sudden prominence but also as part of its same momentum, the ANC (and then the PAC) attempted to seize and re-seize the initiative. The core active leaders in Johannesburg, Mandela, Nokwe, Sisulu, and Slovo, planned a response.¹⁷ Mandela and President Lutuli burnt their pass books, and the ANC declared a mass stay-at-home. The "banning" of the ANC was first bruited in the government, and Tambo, Mandela's old law partner, was dispatched to London. On the 30th of

¹⁴ See Siphamandla Zondi's excellent account of the violence in gaMatlala, esp. 154–7, Chapter Three, "Peasant Struggles," in SADET, Vol. 1. In gaMatlala the chiefship maintained a relationship with Congress, and national and local struggles interleaved, but Congress support died out in the mid 1960s.

¹⁵ Lodge, *Black Politics*, 283.

¹⁶ Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville, an Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 48, 162.

¹⁷ Mandela, in his 1964 speech at the end of the Rivonia Trial, said that in the fall of 1960 groups of people outside Congress control were already planning acts of terrorism, while the ANC stood fast against it.

March, the government declared a State of Emergency,¹⁸ and Philip Kgosana, a 23-year old PAC leader, led more than *30,000 people* in a spontaneous, mass march in Cape Town. Entreated, Kgosana disbanded these people, many of whom marched because the pass raids made their lives unlivable, when he mistakenly believed the lie told to him that he would meet with the Minister of Justice. At the same time the government arrested Mandela, Duma Nokwe, Robert Resha, and others home on bail during a recess of the Treason Trial.

In the first weeks of April, 1960, these men, Nokwe and Mandela, Sisulu, Rusty Bernstein and Joe Slovo, again sat together in prison and decided the ANC should move toward violence even more quickly than they had thought.¹⁹ On April 8th the government banned the ANC and the PAC. On April 19th Duma Nokwe conveyed to Helen Joseph that *the ANC* would soon be embracing armed struggle.²⁰ Most of these leaders who so decided that April were members of the illegal Communist party, and several of them had long thought the Congress would renounce nonviolence. It was most likely *after this*, as I read Ellis, but before November, that a delegation went to Moscow and Peking, and secured permission for what the SACP then did: a. the Party declared itself alive and well and living underground, a declaration some in the ANC

¹⁸ Recently I've become aware that both Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben are interested (in their writings) in this question of "the state of emergency" as a normalized situation, in which the "sovereignty" of the state is explicitly constituted. That about describes the experience of the South African state in 1960.

¹⁹ Possibly with Govan Mbeki and Ray Mhlaba as well. Walter Sisulu, as interviewed by Phil Bonner in 1997, cited in *SADET*, Vol. 1, "The Turn to Armed Struggle," 71.

²⁰ *Walter and Albertina Sisulu*, 141, cited in Couper, *Luthuli*, 141. Slovo representing several Communist allies close to the ANC, such as Ben Turok, Brian Bunting, Ray Alexander and Jack Simons, Rusty Bernstein, Jack and Rica Hodgson, Mike Harmel and others.

thought “a betrayal,” and b. in December, 1960, the Party officially embraced “armed struggle,” which offered the pro-violence ANC faction sudden leverage.²¹

But to rewind some months: from the last day of August, 1960, with the end of the State of Emergency, Mandela was again a free man. Almost immediately, however, Poqo, the military force created under the PAC’s auspices, expanded much faster than any other dimension of the struggle. With millenarian attributes in Cape Town and the Eastern Cape, and its simple slogans, Poqo or “Purity” was actually less a “military force” than an insurrectionary recruitment-drive; and it was larger than MK’s membership would ever be. When the Treason Trial verdict came months later on March 29th, 1961, Mandela had been buttonholing his colleagues for years to convince them to embrace armed struggle of some kind as well, if only to guide what was happening already. Communism offered a roadmap Mandela could use to organize this deployment of force. Mandela studied the idea of stages of development and Marx and Lenin, and renewed contact with his Communist colleagues, and immediately went into hiding, rightly fearing rearrest. He called for a three-day stayaway, beginning May 29th. This failed as Mandela believed press reports of its weakness and called it off hastily, perhaps because he had already given up on such methods. Mandela gave an interview to the *Mail* in which he “suggested that the days of nonviolent struggle were over.”²² And he read more Communist and insurrectionist literature.

²¹ Yusuf Dadoo, Mike Harmel, and Joe Matthews were met directly by Mao. Ellis found a report that Mao told the South African delegation that perhaps warfare-wise “Algeria” was a better model for them than China; Ellis, “The Genesis,” and *SADET*, Vol. 1, “The Turn,” 72–3.

²² *Long Walk*, 270.

Mandela supposedly criticized the Party for its internal racial hierarchy in this period, in a way suggesting that he knew the Party from the inside out.²³ I see no reason to doubt Mandela was a Party member. But my verdict is that the move to violence came from within the ANC, not the SACP. It matured and used Communism to achieve the end of national liberation. We need only look around today here in South Africa to notice that in fact that is exactly what happened. I am not sure I would give Ellis's agency to the admittedly mechanical decision-making in Moscow. Again, the particular competition occasioned by the Sino-Soviet split by 1960 presented opportunities to the ANC and well as pitfalls. Now, it is so that the first Communist sabotage attacks launched in August of '61 (or earlier), well *before* MK.²⁴ But men in the ANC had nurtured hopes of armed insurrection and led the SACP to the same conclusion.

The SACP gave no hint of the new policy in its May Day message for 1961.²⁵ But the International Bulletin of the SACP from April, 1961, embraced the Pondoland uprising as revolutionary, not reactionary — Africans desirous of reestablishing their ability to rule themselves; the paper called the actions of the state counterrevolutionary, and hindted at military actions to follow against the state.²⁶ Even then the ANC had not made any declarations, and in fact had released a list of demands,

²³ Smith, *Young Mandela*, 213, citing O'Malley, *Mac Maharaj*. Stephen Ellis, *Journal of Southern African Studies*.

²⁴ Rusty Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting: Memoirs from a Life in South African Politics, 1938–64* (London: Viking, 1999), 23, makes it seem otherwise, but see Denis Goldberg, *Memoirs*, and Andrew Mlangeni, in *SADET* Vol. 1, "The Turn," 71.

²⁵ Carter and Karis; Simons Papers, "May Day, 1961" flyer.

²⁶ Sullen, Sylvia Neame Papers, A2729, B13, *International Bulletin*, SACP, April, 1961; also with a copy of Harold Barrell, St. Antony's College, "The Historian and Conspirator: The ANC of South Africa and the Political-Military Relationship in Revolutionary Struggle," Oxf. Univ. S.A. Hist. and Pol. Seminar, May 20, 1990, "Int. with K-1."

including an end to the State of Emergency, wage-hikes, and a repeal of “Nazi laws,” ordinary and expected in its form.²⁷ Whatever the small, perhaps 3–500-member strong, cell-structure, secretive Party was, it showed Mandela how politics could survive underground even if illegal. But whatever the small, secretive Party did, was ultimately a lot less important than what the ANC would do or would espouse.

We will come to the hotly debated issue of whether Lutuli fully approved the ANC turn to “armed struggle” in a moment, noting first that two previous authors have the story about right,²⁸ but first, we must note that what this constituted is unresolved. At this stage of struggle, in the framework of South Africa as a “special case” of colonialism, the plan Mandela touted was “sabotage” and not yet guerilla war. Sabotage was much easier for militants to swallow than human targets. On the other hand, it is not immediately apparent how sabotage would advance the struggle.²⁹ In an interview Rusty Bernstein recalled the decision to go forward with sabotage was made from a position of weakness, off the back foot.³⁰ In contemporary publications sabotage was either lauded as “striking a blow” and “heroic,” or explained as an act of desperation understandable if to be regretted, or framed as a canalization of anger liable to burst out in worse ways. Mandela and other comrades in their recollections are proud to distinguish sabotage from terrorism, because they did not (officially) target human

²⁷ Cullen, ANC, AD 2186 fa23, “Statement of the Emergency Committee of the ANC,” 1 April 1960; in contrast, by 1962 “courage, loyalty and devotion” are asked of the people by the ANC, AD 2186 F-G Box 5 Fa44, “War Provocation,” 26 mar. 1962.

²⁸ Ellis; Couper, *Luthuli*.

²⁹ E.g. Lodge, *Black*, ch. 10, conclusion.

³⁰ Hilda and Lionel (Rusty) Bernstein, interview with Terry Barnes, Cullen Library, A3299E1 ANC Univ. of Cape town Oral History Project, 28/2/2001: MK developed in a time in which “we are not any longer in command of the situation — they are.”

beings, but the rationale for sabotage was sometimes quite similar to the rationale for terror, from Yasser Arafat and others. It was to bring the state to change policies. The SACP's view in 1961 and even 1962, if we are to credit a printed 1962 flyer on the subject, was: "Why do people resort to violent acts like sabotage? They only do so when there is no other way of expressing their aspirations for freedom. . . . So Vorster's Nazi law means more violence, more sabotage in South Africa."³¹ Sabotage was a negative; to stop it, Vorster must be stopped. As Lodge allows, however, in Mandela's understanding in 1961–2, moving toward sabotage meant moving toward guerilla war and insurrection. Much later Mandela's view changed to reflect the influence of the United Democratic Front alliance, and he suggested the idea had been about convincing the government to negotiate.³²

Let us see. In June and or July, 1961, there were apparently several relevant Congress Alliance meetings, according to one interrogated witness, in one of which attended Govan Mbeki, Sisulu, Kotane, Dan Hlume, Duma Nokwe, George Mbele, Stephen Dhlamini, Dr. G.M. Naicker, N.C. Naicker, Hurbans (who testified at Rivonia), Piet Beyleveld, Rowley Arenstein, George Peake, and perhaps a couple others.³³ Govan Mbeki according to one Rivonia witness gave a short and speech, in which he said "the state of this country is now as such that we must change our tactics." He was "agitated" and thereby showed he was in favor of violence. Kotane spoke about "fighting" but "in a

³¹ Cullen Library, Simons Papers (copy), Reel 8, 6.14.1, Flyer, "Vorster's Nazi Law Can Never Destroy Communism." Similarly, the Dec. 16th flyer "warned" that MK was trying to prevent civil (i.e. race) war.

³² Lodge, *Sharpeville*, in "Sharpeville and Memory," and recheck *Mandela: A Life*.

³³ Yutar Papers, Police Interrogation Reports, 385/23, Vol. 2, Gopallal Hurbans, an Indian man and acquaintance of Dr. E.R. Naidoo, pp. 293-6.

peaceful manner” (and Kotane must have been aware of SACP sabotage), and nothing was decided. In Mandela’s account, it was at this meeting that Kotane dismissed his argument “cheaply.” Six months later Mandela spoke at length with Kotane, who was Lutuli’s trusted confidant and the key liaison (apparently more than Walter Sisulu, the official “Commissar”) between the core of the ANC and the core of the SACP. Mandela later told *Newsweek*’s Richard Stengel that he argued to Kotane that Kotane was

doing precisely what the Communist Party in Cuba did; they said the conditions for a revolution had not yet arrived. Following the old methods, you see, which were advocated by Stalin[; while here] we have to decide from our own situation. The situation in this country is that it is time to consider a revolution, armed struggle.³⁴

Nonetheless, Kotane thereupon allowed Mandela to bring it up again, apparently in a marathon discussion in Durban or perhaps Groutville. (Stephen Ellis suggests that Kotane was insubordinate to Moscow because he did not immediately accede to Mandela’s requests for armed struggle.) The meeting lasted all night, in part one suspects because a Congress Alliance meeting had been set up for the following day. The formation of MK was provisionally approved, and the NEC stamped its okay. Next came the meeting with the Congress Alliance 24 hours later, and Lutuli, according to Mandela, said at that meeting, in essence, “even though we the ANC has decided this,

³⁴ NMF, Stengel, 5/4/93.

let us present it as undecided to everyone else,” and so it was presented that way.³⁵ In this meeting Kotane supposedly told Rowley Arenstein to be quiet in his particular opposition to violence because “you are a white man and we are Africans.”³⁶ Arenstein, interviewed later on, said Lutuli was “brushed aside” by the cohort of men who wanted to form MK. Or perhaps, after “thorough” debate, Mandela’s position triumphed.

Kotane was no clear ally of violence. Certainly Lutuli was present at some part of this discussion, but it must be recalled that he was not well and had suffered a traumatic stroke. In any case it is said that what took a great deal of convincing was not that he support MK, but that he *not publically condemn* MK. That was the extent of his acquiescence, and apparently that of Moses Kotane.

Mandela’s published autobiography contains an error on this substantive issue. Apparently the result of trying to blend two parts of Stengel’s interviews, or more likely one of the interviews with a previously (at Robbin-Island-) written section, “Mandela” on pages 272–3 twice presents Lutuli’s (“and others”) maneuver of refraining from telling the Indian and other Congress allies of the NEC’s decision to establish MK: once positively, once negatively, as if there were two occasions, and not one. To clarify: to Stengel, Mandela actually recalled the following: at one point that Moses Kotane said that the verdict was

you can go on and start this organization, but . . . we as the ANC we are
formed to prosecute a nonviolent policy, this decision can only be

³⁵ In *Conversations with Myself*, another version of the recollection appears, in which Luthuli told the meeting the ANC had decided the issue, but asked the meeting to consider it as if it were undecided.

³⁶ *SADET*, Vol. 1., “The Turn.”

changed by a national conference. We are going to *stick* to the old policy of the ANC.

This was Lutuli's position as well and the Indian Congress activists' in the "Durban" meetings, according to Mandela.³⁷ Kotane had nothing more to do with MK either, as far as I know.

This was nonetheless a huge victory for Mandela and the quite defensible reasoning he had followed from the early 1950s. Kotane and the others were dragged along by Mandela, Nokwe, Sisulu and their allies, who closed the deal in open debate. From the point of view of the Communist Party, this was a seizure of the vanguard role by the ANC-faction of the SACP, despite Kotane's anomalous role. It followed from the deracialization of the party in the late 1950s.

In the ANC, in ordinary times, such a momentous policy shift would surely have involved all the branches voting Chief Lutuli out of the Presidency with it. On the other hand, there was a long tradition of generational divergence in the ANC, while the leadership (here "the chief") was still greatly respected. Arguably this was an aspect of even ancient African political organization.³⁸ Now, Lutuli could not dissuade the pro-MK men; the state had already attacked constitutional actions with bullets. The question before him was whether to resign, or to stay and condemn the turn to violence, and so condemn his colleagues, and split the SACP from the ANC, and thereby fracture the Congress; or to abstain from condemning and blame apartheid, and to continue with his nonviolent ANC presidency. He chose to allow a separate organization he and the NEC

³⁷ Ibid, and 15/4/93. Also in *Conversations with Myself*, p. 78.

³⁸ Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400 to 1948*.

could still influence. Lutuli never agreed that the non-MK, M-Plan ANC would renounce nonviolence, and this is abundantly clear from both Mandela's unpublished interviews, and Lutuli's published newspaper columns even after 1961.³⁹

So while Ellis's analysis is strong on many points, and resourceful in recovering evidence, I see the workings of Communism in the move toward violence as recuperating the demands of the nationalists, which had been in their lead. Ideologically there is no doubt that the shift in 1960 was plotted by Communist ANC men, but they could only succeed as Congress leaders leading the Congress forward. But one should not go too far. According to Denis Goldberg, he had driven out to Natal to investigate the uprising in Natal over cattle culling and dipping tanks, and they had seen schools and churches burnt down, and drafted a letter to their superior in the Party to the effect that this violence should be guided, and that the ANC was thought "inadequate to lead such an issue."⁴⁰

If one looks at Natal, one sees with the initiation of MK that the devil was in the details. Natal was the province of the All-In Africa Conference called in March of 1961, Mandela's first public address since 1952 and his most electrifying; the home province of Chief Lutuli, and of the star witness for the prosecution, Bruno Mtolo; the province in which the Congress Alliance was probably most important (with the Natal Indian Congress branches and SACTU); the province in which MK was arguably most active; the province in which Mandela was betrayed and arrested. Natal always presented special challenges to MK, and special opportunities. The big hurdle was to convince Indian

³⁹ Ellis, Couper.

⁴⁰ Cullen, Neame papers, Interview with Denis Goldberg, 1/10/87.

Congress allies of the wisdom of the shift to armed struggle. This was not so much of a problem on the Rand, where Communist South Africans of Indian descent apparently dominated the Transvaal Indian Congress, producing men such as Lalu Chiba, Indres Naidoo, Mac Maharaj. Even Ahmed Kathrada acted as a saboteur before the founding of MK.⁴¹ But in Natal, there was serious opposition to MK from Yusuf Cachalia, Dr. Monty Naicker, and other activists. While some Communists opposed MK, Communists were still at the center of the Natal branch. According to Lodge they oriented themselves more toward Mao (as a peasant Communist Party) than toward the Soviets, in part because of their rural connections.

Of course, before MK, there was the ANC's "M-Plan." This was a Communist-Party-cell-structure model adopted for the mainstream branch memberships to substitute for their big meetings. The M-Plan is recently discussed by Raymond Suttner.⁴² Each Zone, of seven streets or so, was to be put under the control of an officer appointed by a Branch Executive presumably from the Zone. This would be the Chief Steward according to one schema. No contact was allowed between Zones. Furthermore, "No zone shall have the right to question the appointment of officers." The Chief Steward (Zone) and the Prime Steward (Ward) will recommend Cell Stewards, in charge of a cell (a street). Members of the Executive Committee, which had been 25

⁴¹ With Wolfie Kodesh; especially in Fordsburg. Rasheed Sedat and Razia Saleh, ed., *Men of Dynamit: Pen Portraits of MK Pioneers* (Johannesburg: Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, 2009), *passim*.

⁴² Suttner, *The ANC Inside South Africa*.

persons, would supervise groups of Zones, called Wards.⁴³ The new NEC would be reduced under the M-Plan to only seven persons. Some thought this was a turn toward “Boss Politics,” and branches were still debating the implementation of Plan M in 1962, and the regional executives, some still with close relationships to the old branch memberships (there were dozens of branches in Durban), elected representatives to a conference in Lobatse even then.

According to Cecil Nduli, the normal branch executive at Chesterville (a suburb of Durban) served in that role until the banning, and then in October 1961, Milner Nsangane arrived and explained the “M-Plan” and addressed a “residents’ association” (ANC) meeting at a private home. Another branch executive was elected, but then in 1962 yet another one was (with Noel Dhlamini as Chairman), and finally, a seven-man executive was elected, representing Chesterville, Cleremont, Kwa Mashu, Cato Manor and other areas around Durban, including Stephen Dhlamini, a Communist. Seven was the new cell-based magic number. Then there was a 1962 meeting of all *branch* ANC executives in Hammersdale, including Stephen Dhlamini, Milner Ntsangane, Curdick Ndlovu, and others, in which — completely independently of MK — it was decided to “resort to some sort of violence.” They submitted this to the regional executive, and after some months, heard that the National Executive Committee had already changed their policy to violence.⁴⁴

⁴³ Yutar papers, 385/308/1 “Essentials of the M Plan,” and 385/4/4 “Organization Plan” which projected 550 Zones in South Africa by the end of June, 1961.

⁴⁴ Ibid note 11, 26, Vol. 4, Nduli, p. 782.

The redirection of the ANC among these mainly Johannesburg-based, younger Congress leaders, moved through Communist channels, and it was the Communist and the guerrilla-war “cell structure” that was adopted. In most places Plan M was concretely conveyed to the ANC branches after the State of Emergency ended at the end of August, but mostly afterwards.⁴⁵ Some stories from Rivonia diverge. Stephen Dlamini lectured at trade union events and inducted recruits into the SACP, according to Bruno Mtolo. One day in late 1960 while at SACTU in Billy Nair’s office, a white man from Johannesburg came and told them that the National Executive of the ANC decided violence will be used, and that a High Commission of sabotage organizations has already been formed.⁴⁶ But another witness at Rivonia said that in September or October 1960 he was invited to a “broad meeting” of ex-members of Natal provincial executives of the banned ANC, at M.D. Naidoo’s house, where Walter Sisulu addressed the ten African men present, and said the Congress “was to go underground.”⁴⁷ More information would be sent soon.

Some old ANC cadres (like Johnny Makatini) went directly into military training and were never caught.⁴⁸ Stephen Dlamini, George Poonan (a close friend of Billy Nair),

⁴⁵ Suttner, *The ANC Inside South Africa*, is more positive in his estimations of Plan M; and Yutar papers, 385/308/1 Essentials of Plan M.

⁴⁶ Yutar papers, 385/26, Vol. 4, 722: Bruno Mtolo.

⁴⁷ E.S.J. Maponya, a sometime personal secretary of Chief Lutuli, who himself monitored a Zone. Yutar papers, 385/25, Vol. 3, Epaphros Selbourne John Maponya, age 33, 491–512.

⁴⁸ SAHistory.org (2010) and Paidrag O’Malley’s website host interviews with 1960s actors, including Joe Gaobakwe Matthews, Interviewed by Sifiso Ndlovu and Bernard Magubane, 18 July, 2001, Pretoria, SADET Oral History Project, p. 20, edited by Mbulelo Vizikhungo Msamane, referencing Makatini.

Curdick Ndlovu, and Solomon Mbanjwa were apparently Communists too.⁴⁹ The debates about the ANC's future often occurred at Indian Congress leaders' and unionists' homes, and many of them were Communists. Arguably the strength of the Congress in Natal was the ability of people of different backgrounds to work well together, and Communism was one binding thread. In this light it is interesting to note that Chief Lutuli's major venture at home was a worker-coop sugar cane plantation, which harkened back the early colonial experiences of Indians and Zulu-speakers, as both worked as cane cutters.

Ultimately in Durban, the ANC eventually reacted to its distance from MK by managing to elevate Curdick Ndlovu, a Communist *and* ANC leader, to the regional "command" of MK. In contrast Eric Mtshali, for instance, was SACP and MK but not ANC, and would suffer difficulties. And so sluggish implementation of the M-Plan must surely have been common. In Cape Town, the M-Plan was only implemented in 1963, after the arrest of all the national leadership.

Whether the ANC reconstituted itself as a leafleting and informational underground, as it did in some places, by September 1961, MK began to vacuum up the same personel. Sometimes the shift to the M-Plan was simply explained as "from now on, action, not talk."⁵⁰ Recruiting from among often unemployed young men, Joe Modise, Elias Motsoaledi, and Looksmart Ngudle among others built teams of would-be guerillas and arranged for them to travel to the Soviet Bloc and elsewhere for military

⁴⁹ Yutar Papers, 385/26, Vol 4, Abel Mthembu, and Vol. 4, Bruno Mtolo (722 ff.)

⁵⁰ Yutar papers, 385/32/3/10, Exhibit T29, 25 Ap., 1963; cf. MK leaflet, 6/12/1961, in 385/32/2/7.

training.⁵¹ But MK was also a local organization, and drew members from the familiar pathways of the Communist Party, the SACTU, and the ANC's branches and where active, the "Zones." For MK, too, cells were seven persons each (although in practice, often five). Whites, Indians and Coloureds worked together, and drew finances from the Africans-only ANC, not the Alliance. And at the top, MK's "High Command" was distinctly multi-racial and overwhelmingly Communist — often under the political direction of SACP white Communists like Mike Harmel and Ruth First.

At the risk of repetition, note again that the meaning of the shift in the ANC was to substitute *a command-and-control structure* for a democratic branch membership that elected representatives, and then to do this again for MK, which soon took over the lion's share of funds. To avoid mass arrests, cells were not supposed to mingle, or "Zones" (the equivalent of seven avenues or blocks). But as a result, Plan-M institutionalized a command-structure with the rising new executives at the helm at the exact moment that their creation, MK, demanded ANC support. Thus regionally, MK was an shift of the core mission of the ANC into the hands of the Congress Alliance's regional leaders, who would have unprecedented power.

Richard Stengel, Mandela's ghost writer, recorded the following on tape.

Mandela: "So then now having got that decision at the ANC, we brought in Joe Slovo, Jack Hodgson and Jack Hodgson [Mandela is thinking out loud] and Rusty Bernstein, we brought them in and formed a committee, a High Command [along with Walter Sisulu]

⁵¹ The very first group went to China organized by Joe Gcabi. Yutar Papers, 385/32/4/4 above also listed 17 persons sent to China and 30 to the Soviet Union (c.f. Shubin) for one year. There were apparently hundreds of young men in the pipeline even before 1964.

and I was Commander of Umkhonto and the chairman of the High Command.” A confusion followed, as Stengel does not understand whites as MK leaders. Mandela says, “Haven’t I not mentioned the names there?” and Stengel says, “No,” so Mandela says, “I forget now, you know? But then the two[,] the Communist Party and the ANC met from time to time, to give us, the High Command to listen to a report . . . and give us instructions.”⁵² Mandela could have hardly been clearer.

The first official MK actions came on December 16th 1961, except for Durban, which happened the night before; the damage was minimal and the flyers that were posted were mostly torn down before dawn. One person blew himself up tragically and another was injured. The flyers announced *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, Spear of the Nation; the Congress itself had been called “Umbutho we Sizwe” on letterhead for decades. The deliberate echo was the very name of the ANC. The flyers also declared that nonviolence was dead, and that the new strategy replaced it.⁵³ An account of the aftermath appears in the *SADET* Volume 1, for part of which Curdick Ndlovu (in an interview done in ca. 2000 or 2001) is the only source. The visit he refers to below supposedly took place directly after the Dec. 16th, 1961, sabotage campaign, and the posting of the flyers.

I was sent by the people at Rivonia at that time to go to him [Chief Lutuli].

The only thing he raised was that he was not aware that the leaflet was

⁵² Ibid Stengel, and 9/4/93

⁵³ Yutar Papers, 385/32/2/7 Umkhonto we Sizwe issued by MK “6/12/61”.

coming out that day. He was not opposed to it. He said he could not oppose the feeling.⁵⁴

The wording here raises suspicions, since after the Rivonia accused were sentenced, Lutuli put out a public message with similar valence. That is what Ndlhovu must be recalling.

In fact Lutuli was upset by the flyers and not because they came out on this day or that. The role of sabotage in anticolonial struggles, in the readings and lectures that Mandela scrupulously took handwritten notes on, suggest another reason for his distress. For in all these texts, sabotage was not just a nudge to the state, but was a prelude to or a part of guerilla war. Mandela's own actions in Algeria, Ethiopia, and at the Pan-African Freedom Movement of Eastern and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in 1962, before his rearrest and then his imprisonment for the duration of the Rivonia Trial (1962–64), confirm this understanding of sabotage. In the last part of this paper, I will show this by focusing on two issues: Mandela's intentions for the struggle in 1961, and Mandela's visit to the PAFMECA (the Pan African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa) conference in February of 1962. My argument is that Mandela wished to

⁵⁴ Seven authors (for a chapter called "The Turn to Armed Struggle") paints a mosaic picture as one might expect, enhanced by the multiple perspectives of the authors, personal reminiscences, and interviews. SADET Vol. 1, 90, n135. Sisulu "was appointed as Political Commissar of the High Command, a job that involved liaison between the ANC's political and military wings," we are told. On the one hand Tambo is recognized to have been completely taken aback by the "policy" change, and other insightful stretches abound — there are seven authors, so absolute consistency cannot be expected. (And what kind of "Command" actually goes out and sets charges themselves, as Jack Hodgson, Elias Motsoaledi and (according to his own testimony) Bruno Mtolo did?) SADET vol. 1, 92. Elsewhere the "scale of the operation" (people being sent to Botswana, to Mozambique, and then abroad), one "particularly large" contingent in 1962 being 70 persons, but whether this was a good portion of the year's total we are never told.

use sabotage first, to create the conditions for wider unrest and guerilla war — this first aim was disappointed in 1961 — and (or) second, to morph into an externally based military movement. The second aim was nearly disappointed in 1962, in circumstances just briefly indicated below.

* * * *

In 1960 and 1961 Mandela prepared to lead MK. He read a great many books on revolution and guerilla war, among them works on the Malay conflict, the Irgun in Israel, the war in Algeria, the Chinese and the Cuban Revolutions, Vietnam. I have compared his handwritten notes to the typescript prepared by the prosecution, which I rely on here, and they are identical. In his interviews with Stengel, Mandela recalled using these ideas in conversation with Moses Kotane in 1961. In his notes on Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare* (Rivonia Exhibit R 25), Mandela stresses two key elements of the Cuban revolutionary's thinking. First, that there is no need to wait for all the preconditions for revolution to fall into place before launching a guerilla struggle. "The insurrection can create" these conditions. People however have to see clearly that it is no longer possible "to fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate . . . peace is already considered broken." Secondly, that sabotage "is an arm of guerilla warfare." Subsequently in his notes on Chinese agrarian guerilla war, he read that specific conditions must come to the attention of "anyone directing a war," and that grasping practical and historical circumstances was critically important. (R 24, "Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War") It must be up to the educated central command as to how and where to wage guerilla war. He put South African historical

battles in the trans-historical framework of warfare outlined, scribbling “Battle of Blood River 1838” and “Battle of Isandhlwana 1879” in the margins of his account of foreign insurrections. He read about the Malay uprising, that was destroyed, of a 4000-man guerilla army, many World War II veterans, who sabotaged mines and colonial estates.

Because he rued that there was “not enough bush” in South Africa to allow the kind of guerilla war he would like to wage,⁵⁵ he was therefore very attracted to the Israelis’ struggle and in particular *The Revolt*, by Menachem Begin. The Irgun, the anti-British terrorist group, was compelling because they fought without bush cover, too. Lest we imagine this embrace of the Irgun was a first, in 1953 at a regional meeting in Zulu and English of the ANC, a long passage from the same book appears to have been read into the record:

And we shall be accompanied by the spirit of millions of our matyrs [*sic*],
our ancestors tortured and burned for their faith, our murdered fathers
and butchered mothers, our murdered brothers and strangled children.
And in this battle we shall break the enemy and bring salvation to our
people, tried in the furnace of persecution, thirsting only for freedom, for
righteousness and for Justice . . .”⁵⁶

Six or seven years later, Mandela was moved by the same account. He summarized: “A new generation arose. It began to fight instead of pleading.” The world does not heed the victims, only those who fight. He was most impressed by the Irgun’s discipline, and

⁵⁵ Echoed in *Long Walk*, 275.

⁵⁶ Jack Simons Papers, Cullen Library, Reel 6, 5.7.1.5. Inthetho ka Mongameli kwi Ngqungquthela Inkomfa Yombutho weSizwe Upondo Lwase Koloni, 1953.

as with Cuba and China his handwritten notes, captured at Rivonia, emphasized centralization:

The High Command controlled all the activities of the Irgun, both military and political. It considered general principles, strategy and tactics, information and training, relations with other bodies and negotiations with their representatives. It took decisions, and orders were given as in all military organizations; but there were never any decisions by an individual. There was always discussion.⁵⁷

And so after discussion and a decision being reached, there had to be absolute obedience. Mandela took dozens of pages of notes on Chinese guerilla war and wrote over twenty five pages of notes to a set of readings or lectures called “How to be a good Communist,” as Ellis notes also. A typewritten document is titled “Organization Plan for the Preparation of Armed Revolution.” This was preparation for “the second phase” of struggle, with a plan to headquarter a Supreme Revolutionary Council in Johannesburg and stress on achieving a “concrete understanding of the real situation” on the ground (quoting Kim Il Sung) in order to do battle.⁵⁸ A document called “The Speaker’s Notes — a Brief Course on the Training of Organizers” was secured like so much else in the raid on Liliesleaf Farm at Rivonia. It begins with the intro: “You have been appointed to perform the important task of organizing the units of Umkonto Wesizwe . . . by the high command.”

Why did it start with sabotage?” the trainer is advised:

⁵⁷ Yutar Papers, R 18; “Irg Z. L. Nat M. Organization,” Para 13, and p. 4.

⁵⁸ Yutar Papers, 385/32/4/4.

Sabotage is an invaluable arm of people who fight a guerilla war. In the initial stages it fulfills the strategic task of creating the conditions necessary for the formation of guerilla units from among the people.

What follows this are sentiments very close to Mandela's own notes on Che Guevara and other guerilla movements from the literature he ordered through Tambo in London. Notably sabotage must either be rigorously directed from a central command, or it must happen in wartime where local actions against the enemy lines are permitted.⁵⁹

Sabotage is not a freelance method, but part of something larger. Sabotage alone will not bring the state to its knees.

Lutuli was upset at the December 16th flyer because it betrayed his agreement to the formation of MK. But the flyer merely followed Mandela's reasoning, which drew on Che's argument that all hope for civil change in a peaceful manner had to be renounced for the people to support a guerilla war and a revolution.

Released after the unexpected Treason Trial verdict, Mandela famously went on the lam, touring African states and sites of insurgency. This trip was delegated to him by a Working Group at the NEC level. He would tour Africa to find material support, training, camps, and funds, for MK. That would be his job in most of 1962.

Mandela spent a lot of time in the presence of the Ethiopian military, hardly a revolutionary body, and then in Algeria, with the FLN. In Algeria, he again wrote to himself and posterity in his "Notebook," that "Masses must be made to understand that political action, of the nature of strikes, boycotts and similar demonstrations, has

⁵⁹ Yutar Papers, 385/33/33 (R 54), "The Speaker's Notes."

become ineffective standing by themselves.” Garth Benneyworth has written recently about Mandela’s military training, in which Mandela learned how platoons advance on a target and how to fire a weapon.⁶⁰ In the midst of that, in 1962, Mandela attended the PAFMECA conference held in Addis Ababa.

PAFMECA, later PAFMECSA after South Africa was added, ultimately became part of the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity. Even though the title suggested east and central (and southern) Africa only, Egypt, Ghana, and China were represented in Addis as well. Robert Sobukwe, the leader of the PAC, had already dispatched Peter Molotsi ahead of Mandela. Ellis has some interesting things to say about Ghana and the Chinese. Why could not the PAC have involved the Chinese in their cause? Their rhetorical stance of the PAC toward “settlers,” tempered a little by the behavior of Liberals at Sharpeville, was declaredly “anti-colonial.” Sobukwe stole Azikiwe’s speech, Mandela stole Nehru’s. Moreover it was the PAC which had the better connections to the Thembu and Pondo insurrectionary villages.⁶¹ Several nations were leaning toward recognizing the PAC and not the ANC as the legitimate representative of the South African struggle. Keenly, Mandela found that both the Egyptian and Ghanaian delegations were unpopular, and that “Communists” were held in contempt by many of the emerging states. No wonder; the Soviet-backed Communists would in the end overthrow Haile Selassie’s regime, but even more crucial, Eric Mtshali apparently wasted goodwill in Tanzania, where the main ANC presence in exile was already planned, because he flaunted his status as a Communist.

⁶⁰ Benneyworth, “Armed.”

⁶¹ *SADET*, Vol. 1, “The Turn,” 673.

It seems likely that China and the Soviets were already competing for influence in Africa. Ghana's pan-Africanism had already alienated many states and "Arabs" were generally distrusted, as one might expect (two years hence, for instance, "Arabs" and Indian merchants would be murdered in a mass pogrom in Zanzibar). But the Chinese had been interested in Africa from the time of the 1955 Bandung Conference, the international meeting that initiated the post-colonial era and the notion of the "third world." Six years later, however, the Sino-Soviet split became public. The surprise is not that Kotane, Harmel and the other Communists were in contact with Moscow, but that the SACP repeatedly had contact with the PRC and Mao after the split. There were other factors at work we can only catch the barest glimpse of: the early planning for the Tan-Zam Railway project; the fact that China had already partially defaulted on a promise to fund an Africa-Asia Friendship Committee.⁶² Their angle now was to play on the commonality of non-whiteness, of colonization, as the key to their engagement.

The deeper meaning of PAFMECA anti-Communism was therefore the need to clearly demarcate Soviet and European Communism as something different from Chinese Communism. The cooperation with settler whites on the grounds that they were Communists directly flew in the face of Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda's experience, for instance, who understood the checkered career of Left white unions. But the issue

⁶² Christopher J. Lee, ed., *Making a World After Empire*, The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010), Introduction, G. Thomas Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar," 205 (196–234); China's appeal to Africa: We've all got ancient civilizations that have been ruined by European colonialism; and Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa, 1949–70: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1971), 59. Kaunda had dealings with the Chinese and apparently the Yugoslavs.

crystallized after Mandela met with Kaunda in private. Kaunda claimed to be unable to influence his country's representatives to adopt his own position, which was to stick with the ANC, as they were bucking for the PAC. He told Mandela that when the delegations heard that the Freedom Charter had been drafted in part (in fact, in toto) by a white person (Rusty Bernstein), they "tore it up" or (in another version) "were repulsed" by it. That was Kaunda's message to Mandela about the four-pronged wheel, the "alliance" model of the struggle. The working model for joining the post-colonial club was the anti-colonial Bandung model, colonized people only.

The Chinese forced the issue out into the open. The Chinese delegation introduced in the Africa-Asia Alliance a resolution that the South African Congress of Democrats (COD), an organization of white Leftists in total alignment with the ANC, should be permitted to seat a delegate at the conference. The response was a unanimous "No" vote from all the rest of the delegates (zero abstentions, so apparently the Chinese voted "no" as well). Soon enough, African countries would reject white ANC freedom fighters from their training programs. The message was sent.

Mandela's exposure to Algerian, Tanzanian, and Ethiopian (i.e. non-Communist) militaries and guerilla-victor states, which brought thousands of dollars in immediate aid, and promises to militarily train scores of African conscripts — also helped bring him to the realization of how he could live with the PAFMECA nations' attitude. It is that realization that I want to close with. Again I think this is connected to what happened with Eric Mtshali, who apparently rejected the chain of command. In the public record is the idea that Mandela understood, and conveyed to Alliance allies, that vis a vis their

Communist allies, the ANC's "tactics" (but not its "policy") would have to change. In this: African leadership and ANC leadership would become more visible, white (and Indian and Coloured) allies less visible. This was the argument made to Indian Congress and Unionist colleagues. It was potentially an explosive issue.

A further document was seen by David Smith in Harry Oppenheimer's private library, when Smith was researching his book *Young Mandela*, but Smith does not discuss it and did not fully realize its significance. I found it independently and I've yet found no other notation of it. The document is a schematic record of a quorum of the ANC National Executive Committee in conversation around June of 1962:

"Xamela" (i.e. "Qamela," i.e. Sisulu):

["]Tactics can be adjusted[.] We must bear in mind the sensitivity with other minority groups . . .

"Madiba" (Mandela): ["]What we lack is initiative. We should change our attitude and exert ourselves. Our friends must understand that it is the ANC that is to pilot the struggle. Something bigger should be arranged in Tanganyika.["]

"Bokwe" (?): ["]We are prisoners of our own sins We allowed ourselves to drift. I think cooperation has been carried too far. I think we should expand our offices . . . like Zapu and Unip . . . [and] make the necessary preparations in Bechuanaland. . . . ["]

"Gowanini" (Duma Nokwe): . . . ["]We must take the situation in Africa realistically. If the cause of the struggle in SA can only be put forward

through the ANC then we must do so. I do not think it is any step backward. We must explain to our colle[a]gue[s] the step[s] that we feel are appropriate. The policy is decide[d,] there is no question of deviation.["]⁶³

This move led Mandela to one further consultation with Lutuli out in his sugar estate in Groutville, and it was on the drive home with Cecil Williams that Mandela was pulled over and arrested. Regardless of what Chief Lutuli said, and Mandela reports that he agreed without seeming fully to understand — Lutuli said that he didn't like other countries telling the ANC how to behave in South Africa. It hardly mattered, as authority was passing, and one can only speculate if this shift would have occasioned a rift in between the Congress of Democrats and the SACP and the ANC (and with the Indian Congress and George Peake and the Unions).

The famous document "Operation Mayibuye" deserves a larger discussion but in my view has entirely unjustly been dismissed as a fantasy. Together with Denis Goldberg's inquiry into producing munitions and explosives on a massive scale, the plan to have 7,000 guerillas waiting for instructions in South Africa was ambitious but not at all absurd. It only required above all money and chains of command. A clue to Mandela's probable thinking can be seen in a commentary he offered the young activist Sylvia Neame during the Rivonia trial on a paper she had written about the Communist Party.

⁶³ Yutar Papers, 385/33/13, R 14 (K.R. 17), headed "Maloone?? 1. Policy of the U.A.R."

On several occasions in history, it has happened that the working cooperation between a non-marxist political organization and the C.P. ceases because policy differences emerged, as they have for example in India between the Congress and the C.P., and in several Middle Eastern Countries.⁶⁴

Perhaps just that was in the cards. Mandela, having absorbed all the lessons he needed in order to be a Communist guerilla, did not really require close cooperation with Slovo, Hodgson, Simons, Turok, Dadoo, and Bernstein. If the state had retreated in 1960 from its mass arrests, MK could revert to an Africanist and nationalist violence, especially because Communist doctrine permitted it, and especially because he himself was a Communist in touch with other Communists. But the ANC as at least in potential a mass organization had to take the front seat in all things. The moral of “How to Be a Good Communist” was disciplined obedience, the same quality necessary for guerillas’ success in the field, whether they were commanded from within the ANC or not. Luckily for both MK and the ANC, regardless of any new direction, the principle effect of 1960-61 “turn” or political reforms remained the “abolition of election . . . and leadership by appointment,”⁶⁵ and as Mandela and his allies, briefly, stood at the tope of the pyramid. That would not last long.

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Sept. 4, 2011

⁶⁴ Cullen Library, A 2729, Neame papers, 1968

⁶⁵ See note 10.