

Award of Isithwalandwe-Seaparankoe to Joe Slovo



Joe Slovo was awarded the Isithwalandwe-Seaparankoe Award by President Mandela at the 49th ANC National Conference at Bloemfontein, December 1994

Comrade Joe Slovo, your militant and unswerving commitment to the ANC embodies many values which we wish to honour today. There are some people who, by pursuing their own convictions and without being self-conscious about it, touch the lives of millions of others. Such has been your life.

I am not sure, comrade Joe, if you have ever particularly thought of yourself as a white South African. Nevertheless, the fact remains that your decades of activism have served as an outstanding example for hundreds of thousands of activists coming into our ranks, and indeed for millions of other South Africans.

In a country in which there is a racially oppressed majority, non-racism is not an outlook that can simply be taken for granted. You have contributed immensely, through your personal example, to nurturing that outlook which is so evident in our ranks and, increasingly, in our country today. Let those politicians who have based themselves on narrow ethnic constituencies, supposedly to safeguard minority interests, now ponder on your example.

Comrade Joe, you also symbolise and personify the alliance of the ANC and the SACP. It is an alliance whose durability continues to bewilder our opponents. They fail to understand its deep historical roots and its ongoing practical relevance.

In your recent capacity as Minister of Housing, I believe that you are underlining what that alliance is all about. It is about a common commitment to overcoming, as the absolute priority, the terrible legacy of national oppression. It is an alliance based on serving the social needs of our people.

Your contributions to our struggle are many. But it is, I think, especially as a strategic thinker that you are held most dear by so many in our ranks. You have

played a role, often a central role, in most of the outstanding strategic documents of our struggle. In the decades of exile I know that yours was a crucial role in the regrouping and consolidation of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

You have always been able to respond practically and dynamically to changing circumstances. You have had the courage of your convictions, spelling out the implications of new situations which sometimes we, as a movement, have found hard to admit. I think, most recently, of your contributions to analysing the complex negotiations process.

We are extremely fortunate to have within our ranks such an outstanding revolutionary, who has combined a rigorous mind with attention to practical organisational work.

It is with a sense of real pride and emotion that I announce today the decision of the National Executive Committee to confer upon you, comrade Joe Slovo, the ISITWALANDWE SEAPARANKOE AWARD.

PRESENTATION OF ISITHWALANDWE/SEAPARANKOE TO THE FAMILY OF JOE SLOVO.

CITATION ISITHWALANDWE - SEAPARANKOE JOE SLOVO

I, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, President of the African National Congress, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the national Executive Committee of the African National Congress and in the name of the people of South Africa who hereby confer on

JOE SLOVO

the high award of Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the struggle for the total eradication of the apartheid crime against humanity and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist country. We commend him to the people of our country and the world, convinced that his memory will live forever.

May 1, 1995