

# THE WAY FORWARD

EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH DELIVERED BY COMRADE NEVILLE ALEXANDER AT CCAWUSA AGM

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Comrades!

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak with you on this important occasion. We are all aware that we are living through the most critical moments of our history. We all know that we are moving forward to a socialist South Africa where there will be no exploitation and no oppression.

## tactics

But the road ahead of us is still a long one and it is terribly important that we understand this properly. Because, if we do understand this it will influence our tactics, i.e., the ways in which we conduct our struggle, what we do from day to day in our factories, our shops, our mines, our farms and in our townships, in our homes and in our schools. And for the same reason, if we do not understand this it will influence our tactics, i.e., the ways in which we conduct our struggle, what we do from day to day in our factories, our shops, our mines, our farms and in our townships, in our homes and in our schools. And for the same reason, if we do not understand this, we can make the most terrible tactical mistakes in our struggle. A soldier that sets out on a long march will have a very different training programme from an athlete preparing to run in a 100 metre sprint!

Just two days ago, P.W. Botha was telling his faithful supporters at the Transvaal Congress of the National Party that they are not prepared to talk to radicals, Marxists and revolutionaries. That is a clear message to us! Let us not allow anyone to fool us into believing that they will talk to us in order to bring about some kind of "negotiated settlement"! Make no mistake: Botha and Co. consider the progressive trade union movement and all other independent organisations of the working class to be on the side of the radicals, the

Marxists and the revolutionaries. They are going all out to destroy these organisations or to tame them.

Their main purpose is to find among the oppressed and exploited people those "moderates" from the black middle class whom they can use in order to prolong their rule. They will do anything in order to divide us, to make us believe that there is some hope for peaceful change as long as we forswear the use of violence.

## differences

Comrades, we live in dangerous times. There are amongst us people who - to our shame and disgrace - go out of their way to divide us and even to make us kill one another. I am speaking about those of us in the liberation movement. What is done to people who oppose the liberation movement is not my business. But within the liberation movement, we must learn to live together even though we have differences of opinion or differences in ideas amongst ourselves. We are one family and one people and we must learn to accept that in any family there are disagreements. But this does not necessarily mean that the members of the family become deadly enemies who must kill each other! Whether one of us belong to AZAPO and another to the UDF, this should not prevent us from uniting in action against the common enemy, even if we disagree on important questions.

## working class leadership

Only the leadership of the organised working class can stop this madness. For it is a madness in more ways than one! The belief that you can simply wipe out an ideology by killing people is a madness! The belief that only one organisation can represent all of

us in this complex country with its many different organisations and ideas, is a madness. We shall get to victory all together or not at all! Unity is our greatest and most powerful weapon in the struggle.

In prison, whether you were Mandela or Pokela, Mlambo or Sisulu, that did not matter. When it came to opposing the prison regime, we had to learn to act together. There were dark and terrible days when all the contradictions, all the prejudices of the different groups came to the surface. For weeks and even months, no proper communication took place. But, always we had to come back to the realisation that unless we acted together and planned together we were simply creating openings between ourselves which the enemy could exploit.

## socialism

Let us remember that we are fighting for socialism and democracy. There is no socialism without democracy and no democracy of and for the working people without socialism. Within the liberation movement, we must learn to accept our differences, allow ourselves to discuss and organise, accept democratically reached decisions of the working masses. This is the way forward. And we must help to free our women. In CCAWUSA, especially, this is an all-important question, because the majority of your members are women. We are not free unless our women are also freed from slavery of sexism and male dominance. The emancipation of the working class, the liberation of the oppressed people and the liberation of women: these three are aspects of one and the same process in South Africa. We have to make conscious efforts not to allow them to be separated by those who have ulterior motives. Freedom is indivisible: it cannot be divided into different parts!