

ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL
CONGRESS TO A RALLY AT THE INDEPENDENCE STADIUM, UMTATA,
TRANSKEI (SOUTH AFRICA)

Date: April 22nd 1990

Comrade Chair, Comrades, Compatriots & traditional leaders of our people (Chiefs): we are privileged to be reunited with you at this critical stage in the history of our country & our people.

After decades of separation imposed on us by the hated policies of apartheid & their offspring, the system of separate development, we cannot but be proud & rejoice at the victories we have achieved so far.

We owe it to you, the people, for our freedom & this reunion. Your courage, your determination to free our beloved country from the clutches of apartheid &, your united mass action burst open the closed & barred gates of the apartheid prisons - and set us free!

We salute your courage & your undying spirit of resistance! Under the harsh conditions of brutal oppression, landlessness, unemployment, & starvation occasioned us by the greed of apartheid, you - the toiling masses & professionals of our country - refused to bow to oppression. You rejected, unequivocally, the attempts to divide the people of South Africa.

On the contrary, you remained stoically committed to the ideal of a single, non-racial, democratic South Africa in which the people - Black & White - shall govern. A South Africa in which the land shall not belong to a few puppets, & the rich, alone - but to all those who work it!

/2... You exemplified the fighting spirit of our forefathers...

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You exemplified the fighting spirit of our forefathers who, in this region, fought in defence of their land & human dignity for one hundred years (1678⁸ to 1778⁸) against the British colonialists who sought to dispossess them of their precious land & to subject them to foreign rule.

You have not only kept the proud tradition of our struggle alive, but have understood very well the message of our people, as enshrined in the Freedom Charter: the programme of your organisation, the African National Congress, when it states, "No government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people".

The apartheid system of government & its Bantustan administrations are not based on the will of the people: they are the result of the greed & undemocratic practices of a racist minority. Therefore, they are undemocratic & illegitimate & cannot claim authority on the people of South Africa.

Accordingly, today, we witness a rapid disintegration of the homeland system as the masses of our people in these regions resist oppression & reclaim their birthright; the right to govern themselves by choosing their own government & their leaders in a South Africa free of injustices, racial prejudice, oppression & violence.

Therefore, in this context, the call for a referendum to give our people in this region the opportunity to demonstrate their desire to become part of a non-racial, democratic South Africa is relevant. We welcome the announcement by General Holomisa's administration that such a referendum will be held. This is, indeed, a positive step.

/3...However, for the referendum to be credible...

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However, for the referendum to be credible, the masses of the people must, through their organisations, participate in the entire process of planning & the implementation of that referendum. The absence of such participation would be contrary to democratic practices - & might render such a referendum illegitimate.

In the light of these positive moves, your organisation - the African National Congress - is confident that, when finally we sit down to negotiate a constitution for a new South Africa you, the people of this region & our people in the rest of the homelands, will support us.

Now, we have applauded the struggles of our people which made the government policy of separate development unworkable. We have also welcomed the idea of the incorporation of these 'backyards' of apartheid into South Africa as echoing the policies & strategies of the African National Congress.

However, we must counsel against blind enthusiasm & precipitated actions. We do not call for incorporation into racist South Africa under the Nationalist Party rule. Our call is explicit: we want the Bantustans to be incorporated into a non-racial, democratic South Africa which the African National Congress & her allies seek to build on the foundations of the Freedom Charter - that beacon of our people.

/4...Therefore, it would be incorrect to pressurise...

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Therefore, it would be incorrect to pressurise those sympathetic chiefs & homeland leaders to immediately incorporate their administrations into the present Pretoria regime. Rather, let those of the homeland leaders who have chosen to make common cause with the liberation movement join the masses of our people in pressuring the regime to end apartheid soon.

The incorporation of the homelands into South Africa will occur as part of the unfolding process of transformation of our country from an apartheid state into a democratic one. The African National Congress, in consultation with the people in the affected Bantustans, will determine how_&_when the process of incorporation will occur.

The most urgent task facing our people in the Transkei & other homelands is to build strong, democratic organisations & to intensify political education to prepare our people for the new South Africa that we seek to create.

You are part of the national democratic struggle, which is led by the African National Congress. You, too, are active participants in the process of building the unity of our people through their mass formations - under the leadership of the African National Congress.

It is important that our people everywhere should understand our perspective of a new South Africa, central to which is the transference of power from the racist minority to the majority of the people of South Africa - Black & White. To this end, it is important that we should seek to understand the steps set out in the Harare Declaration & the declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted last year, which propose the most effective way of creating a climate conducive to negotiation.

/5...But these documents must be studied...

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But these documents must be studied in conjunction with the constitutional guidelines of the African National Congress. This will ensure that the majority of South Africans participate actively throughout the process of negotiations & constitutional arrangement.

Accordingly, we charge all our people - workers, women, youths, students, professionals & the clergy - with the task of strengthening all existing organisations & creating new ones where none exist. Do not create parallel organisations where there are already democratic organisations in existence. All of us are called upon to make a selfless contribution to the unity & struggle of our people. We must speed up the demise of apartheid.

Those chiefs & leaders who work against the aspirations of our people, in pursuit of short-term personal gains, should not hope to be protected by the leaders & organisations of the people. After all, leaders & organisations are created by the people & should therefore never be used as battering rams against those very people.

The message is quite clear: if you hunt with the hounds & run with the hares history will judge you harshly.

If you have not yet made a choice, now is the time to make it. Align yourself with the toiling masses of our people, listen to their voices - & lead them with wisdom & honesty.

/6...We salute our youth...

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We salute our youth, the Young Lions of our country, that vibrant & gallant detachment of our mass formations. You have made an enormous contribution to our present advances towards our liberation! Thus today we can say with confidence that we are on the threshold of the transference of power from the minority to the majority of our people Black & White. In the days ahead, the level of your contribution must be enhanced to make our goal of a non-racial, democratic South Africa a reality. To this end, we are required to carry with us a broad section of our people.

Because the Transkei is largely rural, the support of the chiefs for our initiatives is crucial. We must build strong & lasting relationships with the chiefs to ensure that they do not become co-opted into the strategy of the regime - as was the case in Namibia, where the regime used the chiefs to mislead their people to vote for the puppet Democratic Turnhalle Alliance.

This means that we should respect our chiefs - especially those who govern according to the wishes of our people. Let every action we take win our Movement new members & supporters, rather than alienate potential members. Remember, central to the art of organisation & struggle is patience - & the capacity to persuade those whose views differ with our own.

Dear Comrades & Compatriots, the last few days witnessed concerted attacks upon me & your organisation, the African Nation Congress, by the imperialist media in Britain & here at home. We of the African National Congress are not surprised!

/7...There is no love lost...

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There is no love lost between ourselves, the British Government & its mass media. They have always been hostile towards the African National Congress & its leadership. For many years, they refused to recognise it as a legitimate liberation movement fighting for national self-determination. They sought, in a characteristically shameless fashion, to project us as a terrorist organisation whilst they recognised the Unita of Doctor Savimbi - a loyal ally of the Pretoria regime.

Therefore, it is to be expected that, as the African National Congress grows in strength & stature, they should seek to disparage it. After all, the British government has - over the years - not only acquiesced in the denial of basic human rights to the oppressed people of our country but has, in fact, projected White minority domination as representative of civilised values.

The African National Congress & its leaders do not owe any allegiance to Britain or to her reactionary media. Our loyalty & commitment is, first & foremost, to you - the people. It was the British government which, in 1910, after colonising us for over a century deprived us of our human dignity & birthright when it entered into a conspiracy with the Afrikaaners in this country - to exclude us from the entire constitutional process.

Our current struggles are aimed at undoing the historical injustices of the British government, but still we see from those quarters concerted attempts to impede our advance to freedom. None of these scurrilous attempts will succeed. For seventy-eight years the African National Congress led & served the people of our country loyally & honestly - WITHOUT ANY SUPPORT FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. It shall continue to do so until we attain our goal of a single, non-racial, democratic government.

/8...Within the borders of our country...

Within the borders of our country, right-wing groups have become desperate in the face of the growing popularity of the African National Congress. They cannot countenance an African National Congress with a large White following becoming the future government of South Africa. Consequently racist disinformation pamphlets, designed to discredit the African National Congress, have been widely distributed in the country. The right-wing 'chief', Doctor Treunicht, suggested that the African National Congress has a secret plan to eliminate conservative leaders.

We reject this dirty trick as the most purile politicking by a party that has failed to win the support of the Whites for its racist policies, akin to Nazism - rejected & declared a crime against humanity by the entire world. Clearly, Doctor Treunicht does not have the future of this country at heart, hence making such irresponsible utterances.

Policies of apartheid have caused too much suffering to our people. In the South Africa that we envisage & are busy building, there will be no place for racist practices. It must therefore be made clear to Doctor Treunicht that he belongs to the past & neither to the present nor to the future.

Similarly, we condemn the desecration of the cemetery of the Jewish community in Pretoria. We wish to assure them that the African National Congress is not responsible for those acts of vandalism. The policies of the African National Congress are fundamentally anti-racist & are opposed to anti-semitism. Therefore, there is no way in which any member or supporter of the Organisation could have been responsible for such blatantly criminal acts.

/9... We acknowledge the invaluable...

We acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the Jewish community to our freedom struggle in South Africa. We urge them not to be alarmed or misled by right-wing propoganda, clearly designed to create a state of panic. We wish to assure them that each one of us has a future in the new South Africa which we are building. Let us, together, continue to work towards that prosperous & peaceful future.

We welcome President de Klerk's announcement, in his recent budget speech & in the course of ensuing debate thereon, that he accepts the idea of a common voters' role for all South Africans. The repeal of the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act & the Land Acts constitute a major advance towards a peaceful resolution of the problems of our country.

However, we are concerned about President de Klerk's preoccupation with minority rights, especially if this means minority privilege based on race. We believe that a constitution which enshrines a Bill of Rights & an independent judiciary will sufficiently protect both individual & group rights.

The appointment of an independent judicial commission of enquiry into the massacre of our people in Sebokeng should be applauded. We urge President de Klerk to investigate the shooting of innocent, peaceful demonstrators in the Orange Free State & elsewhere in the country by the trigger-happy police who seem to be bent on frustrating the process of negotiation.

/10...The government must act expeditiously...

The government must act expeditiously & decisively in this regard. We cannot tolerate a situation where the government talks about negotiation whilst simultaneously conducting war against unarmed & defenseless Black civilians. If, at all, an atmosphere of peace is to be created then the government must control its police force.

We refuse to be intimidated into inactivity by this phenomenon of police violence. We must continue to intensify our mass struggles in a disciplined way to ensure that the gains we have made so far are not reversed & that the government does not backtrack from the unfolding process of negotiations.

Now that the African National Congress has been unbanned, all of us have the urgent task of rebuilding it at branch, regional & national levels into a powerful mass movement with the capacity to lead our people into a new, non-racial & democratic South Africa. Each one of us must at least recruit one member each day. To this end, we are inspired by the realisation that we are on the threshold of VICTORY!

We are, more than ever before, convinced that our freedom will come in our lifetime.

AMANDLA! NGAWETHU!

MAATLA! KE A RONA!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!