

**ARTICLES, SPEECHES AND
LETTERS BY W. A. SISULU**

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¹ From: *Liberation*, Johannesburg, February 1957. Mr. Sisulu was then on trial on a charge of high treason.

² Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (eds.) *From Protest to Challenge*, volume 3, pages 759-60.

³ From: Benson, Mary (ed.) *The Sun will Rise - Statements from the Dock by Southern African Political Prisoners*. London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1981.

**REPORT OF THE JOINT PLANNING COUNCIL OF THE
ANC AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS,
NOVEMBER 8, 1951**

To the President-General and members of the Executive Committee of the African National Congress and the President and Councillors of the South African Indian Congress:

WHEREAS the African National Congress, at the meeting of its National Executive, held on 17th June 1951, decided to invite all other National Executives of the national organisations of the Non-European people of South Africa to a Conference to place before them a programme of direct action, and,

WHEREAS a Joint Conference of the National Executives of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress and the representatives of the Franchise Action Council (Cape) met at Johannesburg on the 29th July, 1951, and

WHEREAS it was resolved at the aforesaid Conference:

(1) to declare war on Pass Laws and Stock Limitation, the Group Areas Act, the Voters' Representation Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Bantu Authorities Act;

(2) to embark upon an immediate mass campaign for the repeal of these oppressive laws, and

(3) to establish a Joint Planning Council to co-ordinate the efforts of the national organisations of the African, Indian and Coloured peoples in this mass campaign.

NOW THEREFORE, the Joint Planning Council, as constituted by the foregoing resolution, have the honour to report to the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress as follows:

We, the undersigned, were constituted into a Joint Planning Council in terms of the resolution adopted at the Joint Conference of the Executives of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress and the representatives of the Franchise Action Council of the Cape, held at Johannesburg on the 29th July, 1951. Dr. J. S. Moroka, the President-General of the African National Congress, was elected as the Chairman and of the four remaining members of the

Council, two each were nominated by the executive organs of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress.

2

We are, in terms of the resolution mentioned above, charged with the task of co-ordinating the efforts of the national organisations of the African, Indian and the Coloured peoples in a mass campaign agreed upon at the Joint Conference for the repeal of the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act, the Voters' Representation Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Bantu Authorities Act, and for the withdrawal of the policy of stock limitation and the so-called rehabilitation scheme.

3

Having given due and serious attention to the task before us, we have great pleasure in recommending the following plan of action to the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress for consideration and decision at their forthcoming annual Conferences.

4

The African National Congress, in Conference assembled at Bloemfontein on the 15th-17th December, 1951, should call upon the Union Government to repeal the aforementioned acts by not later than 29th February, 1952. This call should be supported by the Conference of the South African Indian Congress and by all other democratic organisations which find themselves in full agreement with it.

5

In the event of the Government failing to take action for the repeal of these Acts which cannot be tolerated by the people any longer, the two Congresses will embark upon mass action for a redress of the just and legitimate grievances of the majority of the South African people. It is our considered opinion that such mass action should commence on the 6th April, 1952, the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary. We consider this day to be most appropriate for the commencement of the struggle as it marks one of the greatest turning points in South African history by the advent of European settlers in this country, followed by colonial and imperialist exploitation which has degraded, humiliated and kept in bondage the vast masses of the non-white people.

Or, alternatively, on June 26th, 1952. We consider this day equally as significant as April the 6th for the commencement of the struggle as it also ranks as one of the greatest turning points in South African history. On this day we commemorate the National Day of Protest held on 26th June, 1950, the day on

which on the call of the President-General of the African National Congress, Dr. J. S. Moroka, this country witnessed the greatest demonstration of fraternal solidarity and unity of purpose on the part of all sections of the Non-European people in the national protest against unjust laws. The 26th June was one of the first steps towards freedom. It is an historical duty that on this day we should pay tribute to the fighting spirit, social responsibility and political understanding of our people; remember the brave sacrifices of the people and pay our homage to all those who had given their very lives in the struggle for freedom.

Although we have suggested two alternative dates, the Joint Planning Council strongly favours the earlier date as it considers that three calendar months would give the people ample time to set the machinery of struggle into motion.

6

With regard to the form of struggle best suited to our conditions we have been constrained to bear in mind the political and economic set-up of our country, the relationship of the rural to the urban population, the development of the trade union movement with particular reference to the disabilities and state of organisation of the non-white workers, the economic status of the various sections of the non-white people and the level of organization of the National Liberatory movements. We are therefore of the opinion that in these given historical conditions the forms of struggle for obtaining the repeal of unjust laws which should be considered are:

- (a) defiance of unjust laws; and
- (b) industrial action.

7

In dealing with the two forms of struggle mentioned in paragraph six, we feel it necessary to reiterate the following fundamental principle which is the kernel of our struggle for freedom:

All people irrespective of the national groups they may belong to, and irrespective of the colour of their skin, are entitled to live a full and free life on the basis of the fullest equality. Full democratic rights with a direct say in the affairs of the Government are the inalienable rights of every individual - a right which in South Africa must be realised now if the country is to be saved from social chaos and tyranny and from the evils arising out of the existing denial of franchise rights to vast masses of the population on grounds of race and colour. The struggle which the national organisations of the Non-European people are conducting is not directed against any race or national group but against the unjust laws which keep in perpetual subjection and misery vast sections of the population. It is for

the transformation or creation of conditions which will restore human dignity, equality and freedom to every South African.

We believe that without realisation of these principles, race hatred and bitterness cannot be eliminated and the overwhelming majority of the people cannot find a firm foundation for progress and happiness in South Africa.

It is to be noted, however, that the present campaign of defiance of unjust laws is only directed for the purposes of securing the repeal of those unjust laws mentioned in the resolution of the Joint Conference.

8

Plan of Action. We recommend that the struggle for securing the repeal of unjust laws be Defiance of Unjust Laws based on non-cooperation. Defiance of unjust laws should take the form of committing breaches of certain selected laws and regulations which are undemocratic, unjust, racially discriminatory and repugnant to the natural rights of man.

Defiance of Unjust Laws should be planned into three stages - although the timing would to a large extent depend on the progress, development and the outcome of the previous stage. Participation in this campaign will be on a volunteer basis, such volunteers to undergo a period of training before the campaign begins.

Three stages of Defiance of Unjust Laws:

(a) *First Stage.* Commencement of the struggle by calling upon selected and trained persons to go into action in the big centres, e.g., Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Durban.

(b) *Second Stage.* Number of volunteer corps to be increased as well as the number of centres of operation.

(c) *Third Stage.* This is the stage of mass action during which, as far as possible, the struggle should broaden out on a country-wide scale and assume a general mass character. For its success preparations on a mass scale to cover the people both in the urban and rural areas would be necessary.

9

Joint Planning Council. In order to prosecute and put into effect the plan of Defiance of Unjust Laws and in order to co-ordinate the efforts of the various national groups, as well as of the various centres, both urban and rural, it will be necessary for the Planning Council from time to time to make recommendations to the Executive Committees of the national organisations who will jointly

conduct, prosecute, direct and co-ordinate the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws as agreed upon by the Conference of the African National Congress and supported by the Conference of the South African Indian Congress. The Council must be empowered:

(a) to co-opt members to the Council and fill vacancies with the approval of the Executive Organs of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress.

(b) Invite representatives from Non-European organisations which are in full agreement with, and active participants in, the campaign, to serve as non-voting members of the Council.

(c) To frame rules and regulations for the guidance of the campaign for approval by the National Executive.

(d) To set up provincial, regional and/or local councils within the framework of the existing organisations.

(e) Issue instructions for the organisation of volunteer corps and frame the necessary code of discipline for these volunteers.

10

Under the direction of the Joint Executives, a provincial, regional or where possible local council will have the primary task of organising and enrolling volunteers into volunteer corps on the following lines:

(a) A leader to be in charge of each volunteer corps for the maintenance of order and discipline in terms of the "code of discipline" and for leading the corps into action when called upon to do so.

(b) Corps to consist of members of both sexes.

(c) The colours of the African National Congress - black, green and gold - shall be the emblem of the Volunteer Corps.

(d) Each unit of the Volunteer Corps shall consist of members of the organisation to which they belong, viz., ANC, SAIC, FAC. The Coloured organisations in the provinces of Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, participating in the campaign with the approval of the Joint Planning and Directing Council, shall also be allowed to form units of the Volunteer Corps.

(e) In certain cases, where a law or regulation to be defied applies commonly to all groups, a mixed unit may be allowed to be formed of members of various organisations participating in the campaign.

Laws to be Tackled. In recommending laws and regulations which should be tackled we have borne in mind the Laws which are most obnoxious and which are capable of being defied.

The African National Congress

Insofar as the African National Congress is concerned, the laws which stand out for attack are naturally the Pass Laws and the Regulations relating to Stock Limitation.

Method of Struggle on the Pass Laws:

- (a) A Unit of Volunteer Corps should be called upon to defy a certain aspect of the Pass Laws, e.g., enter a location without a permit. The Unit chosen goes into action on the appointed day, enters the location and holds a meeting. If confronted by the authorities, the leader and all the members of the Unit court arrest and bear the penalty of imprisonment.
- (b) Selected leaders to declare that they will not carry any form of passes including the Exemption Pass and thus be prepared to bear the penalty of the law.
- (c) Other forms of struggle on the Pass Laws can also be undertaken depending on the conditions in the different areas throughout the country.

Rural Action

Whilst the Volunteers go into action on the Pass Laws in the urban areas, the people in the rural areas should be mobilised to resist the culling of the cattle and stock limitation.

- (a) Stock Limitation: People in the rural areas to be asked not to cooperate with the authorities in any way in culling cattle or limiting livestock.
- (b) Meetings and demonstrations to be held.
- (c) Regional Conferences: Such Conferences in the rural areas should be called to discuss the problems of the people and to decide on the most suitable form of Defiance of Unjust Laws in the area.

The South African Indian Congress

Insofar as appropriate action by the South African Indian Congress is concerned, the conditions and effects of the laws vary in the three provinces, but

we submit the following for the consideration of the South African Indian Congress:

- (a) Provincial barriers
- (b) Apartheid laws such as segregation in trains, post offices, railway stations, etc.
- (c) Group Areas Act -- if and when possible.

The Franchise Action Council

- (a) General apartheid segregation in post offices, railway stations, trains, etc.
- (b) Group Areas Act -- if and when possible.

Both (a) and (b) will apply to the Coloured people in the other provinces as well.

In the Cape a strong possibility exists of having mixed units rather than having separate national organisation units.

12

The Population Registration Act

During the conduct of the campaign it should not be forgotten that the Government is preparing the machinery for the enforcement of the Population Registration Act. This Act is repugnant to all sections of the people and the campaign must pay particular attention to preparing the volunteers and instructing the masses of the people to resist the enforcement of this Act. The campaign on this Act may well take the struggle from stages one and two into stage three of mass action.

13

We cannot fail to recognise that industrial action is second to none, the best and most important weapon in the struggle of the people for the repeal of the unjust laws and that it is inevitable that this method of struggle has to be undertaken, at one time or another, during the course of the struggle. We also note that in the present-day South African conditions, the one-day protests on May 1st and June 26th, 1950, and the one-day protest in the Cape on May 7th, 1951, against the Separate Representation of Voters' Bill, demonstrated the preparedness of the people to undertake this form of struggle with no mean success. We are nevertheless of the opinion that in this next phase of our campaign lawful industrial action should not be resorted to immediately, but that it should be resorted to at a later stage in the struggle. In this new phase of the campaign a

sustained form of mass action will be necessary which will gradually embrace larger groups of people, permeate both the urban and the rural areas and make it possible for us to organise, discipline and lead the people in a planned manner. And, therefore, contrary to feelings in some quarters, we are not keen to advocate industrial action as the first step, but only as a later step in the campaign against unjust laws. It should be noted, however, that our recommendations do not preclude the use of lawful industrial action during the first stage provided that conditions make its use possible on a local, regional, provincial or national scale.

14

It is apparent that the plan of action herein outlined cannot be put into effect without the necessary funds to back it. It is also apparent that no body of men can sit down and work out a budget estimate for such a vast national undertaking. Suffice it to say that a full scale campaign will require thousands of pounds. Conscious of this essential requirement, we recommend with some confidence that if the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress undertake to launch a "One Million Shilling Drive," it can sustain the campaign. The drive should be conducted under the slogan: "One Million Shillings by the end of March 1952 for Freedom."

National Pledge

This Council is strongly of the opinion that an inspired National Pledge should be issued which could be read out at public, factory and group meetings and repeated by all those present. A special day, e.g., April 6th should be set aside so that special meetings are called everywhere, in towns, villages, and hamlets, in factories and locations, and special church services be held on this day, where the National Pledge could be publicly read out. This day or any other day which the Conference of the African National Congress sets aside for the purpose should be called "The National Day of Pledge and Prayer."

(Sd.) J. S. MOROKA
(Chairman)

Y. M. DADOO
Y. CACHALIA
(Representatives of the
South African Indian Congress)

J. B. MARKS
W. M. SISULU
(Representatives of the African National Congress)

Thaba `Nchu
November 8th, 1951

**LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER D. F. MALAN ON BEHALF
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, JANUARY 21,
1952**

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

P.O. Box 9207,
Johannesburg,
21st January 1952

The Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa,
House of Assembly,
Cape Town.

Sir,

In terms of the resolution adopted by the 39th session of the African National Congress held at Bloemfontein we have been instructed to address you as follows:

The African National Congress was established in 1912 to protect the interests of the African people in all matters affecting them and to attain their freedom from all discriminatory laws whatsoever. To this end, the African National Congress has, since its establishment, endeavoured by every constitutional method to bring to the notice of the Government the legitimate demands of the African people and repeatedly pressed, in particular, their inherent right to be directly represented in Parliament, Provincial and Municipal Councils and in all Councils of State.

This attitude was a demonstration not only of the willingness and readiness of the African people to cooperate with the Government but also evidence of their sincere desire for peace, harmony and friendship amongst all sections of our population. As is well-known the Government through its repressive policy of trusteeship, segregation and apartheid and through legislation that continues to insult and degrade the African people by depriving them of fundamental human rights enjoyed in all democratic communities, have categorically rejected our offer of cooperation. The consequence has been the gradual worsening of the social, economic and political position of the African people and a rising tide of racial bitterness and tension. The position has been aggravated in recent times by the Pass Laws, Stock Limitation, the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and the Voters' Act of 1951.

The cumulative effect of this legislation is to crush the national organisations of the oppressed people, to destroy the economic position of the people and to create a reservoir of cheap labour for the farms and the gold mines, to prevent the unity and development of the African people towards full nationhood and to humiliate them in a host of other manners.

The African National Congress as the national organisation of the African people cannot remain quiet on an issue that is a matter of life and death to the people; to do so would be betrayal of the trust and confidence placed upon it by the African people.

At the recent Annual Conference of the African National Congress held in Bloemfontein from the 15th to 17th December, 1951 the whole policy of the Government was reviewed and after serious and careful consideration of the matter, Conference unanimously resolved to call upon your Government, as we hereby do, to repeal the aforementioned Acts by NOT LATER THAN THE 29TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1952, failing which the African National Congress will hold protest meetings and demonstrations on the 6th day of April 1952 as a prelude to the implementation of the plan for the defiance of unjust laws.

In the light of the Conference resolution we also considered the statement made by the Prime Minister at Ohristad on the 5th instant in which he appealed to all sections of our population, irrespective of colour and creed, to participate in the forthcoming Jan Van Riebeeck Celebrations. It is our considered opinion that the African people cannot participate in any shape or form in such celebrations, unless the aforementioned Acts which constitute an insult and humiliation to them are removed from the Statute Book.

We firmly believe that the freedom of the African people, the elimination of the exploitation of man by man and the restitution of democracy, liberty and harmony in South Africa are such vital and fundamental matters that the Government and the public must know that we are fully resolved to achieve them in our lifetime.

The struggle which our people are about to begin is not directed against any race or national group but against the unjust laws which keep in perpetual subjection and misery vast sections of the population. In this connection, it is a source of supreme satisfaction to us to know (that) we have the full support and sympathy of all enlightened and honest men and women, black and white, in our country and across the seas and that the present tension and crises have been brought about not by the African leaders but by the Government themselves.

We are instructed to point out that we have taken this decision in full appreciation of the consequences it entails and we must emphasise that whatever reaction is provoked from certain circles in this country, posterity will judge that this action we are about to begin was in the interest of all in our country, and will inspire our people for long ages to come.

We decide to place on record that for our part, we have endeavoured over the last forty years to bring about conditions for genuine progress and true democracy.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Dr. J.S. Moroka
President-General

W. M. Sisulu
Secretary-General

[The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, M. Aucamp, replied on January 29, 1952. He wrote, *inter alia*:

It is noted that your submission is framed in terms of a resolution adopted at its recent session in Bloemfontein of the "African National Congress". Resolutions adopted by the African National Congress at its annual meetings were, in the past, sent to and dealt with by the Minister of Native Affairs and his Department. On this occasion, however, there has been a definite departure from the traditional procedure in as much as you have addressed yourself directly to the Prime Minister in order to present him with an ultimatum. This new approach is probably accounted for by the recent rift or purge in Congress circles, after which it is doubtful whether you can claim to speak authoritatively on behalf of the body known to the Government as the African National Congress.

The Prime Minister is, however, prepared to waive this point and to reply to various points raised by you and also to your ultimatum as he feels that the Government's attitude in the matter should be clearly stated...

You will realise, I think, that it is self-contradictory to claim as an inherent right of the Bantu who differ in many ways from the Europeans that they should be regarded as not different, especially when it is borne in mind that these differences are permanent and not man-made. If this is a matter of indifference to you and if you do not value your racial characteristics, you cannot in any case dispute the European's right, which in this case is definitely an inherent right, to take the opposite view and to adopt the necessary measures to preserve their identity as a separate community.

It should be understood clearly that the Government will under no circumstances entertain the idea of administrative or executive or legislative powers over Europeans, or within a European community, to Bantu men and women, or to other smaller Non-European groups. The Government therefore, has no intention of repealing the long existing laws differentiating between European and Bantu.

You demand that the Union should no longer remain a State controlled by the Europeans who developed it to the advantage of all groups of the population. You demand that it should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Bantu, Indian and other non-European groups together with Europeans without any distinction whatsoever, and with no restriction on the possible gradual development of a completely mixed community. Nevertheless you apparently wish to create the impression that such demands should be regarded as a generous gesture of goodwill towards the European community of this country. It is quite clear that the opposite is true. This is not a genuine offer of cooperation, but an attempt to embark on the first steps towards supplanting European rule in the course of time...

Your third point is that the differentiating laws are of an oppressive and degrading nature. This again is a totally incorrect statement. The laws are largely of a protective nature. Even those laws which are regarded as particularly irksome by the Bantu people, have

not been made in order to persecute them, but for the purpose of training them in the performance of those duties which must be fully observed by all who wish to claim rights...

It is even more significant that you should condemn the Bantu Authorities Act, which was designed to give the Bantu people the opportunity for enlightened administration of their own affairs in accordance with their own heritage and institutions, adapted to modern conditions...

I must, now, refer to your ultimatum. Notwithstanding your statement that your Congress has taken the decision to present its ultimatum to the Government in full appreciation of the consequences it entails, the Prime Minister wishes to call your attention to the extreme gravity of pursuing the course indicated by you. In the interests of the Bantu he advises you to reconsider your decision. Should you adhere to your expressed intention of embarking on a campaign of defiance and disobedience to the Government, and should you in the implementation thereof incite the Bantu population to defy law and order the Government will make full use of the machinery at its disposal to quell any disturbances and, thereafter, deal adequately with those responsible for inciting subversive activities of any nature whatsoever...]

**LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER D. F. MALAN ON BEHALF
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, FEBRUARY 11,
1952**

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

P.O. Box 9207,
Johannesburg

11th February 1952

The Honourable the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa,
House of Assembly,
Cape Town.

Sir,

We, the undersigned, have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th January 1952.

The National Executive of the African National Congress, at a special conference convened for the purpose, has given careful consideration to the contents of your letter, and has instructed us to address you as follows:

It is noted that exception is taken in your letter to the fact that the resolution adopted by the African National Congress at its 1951 Conference was directed to the Prime Minister instead of the Minister of Native Affairs and his Department. The African National Congress has at no time accepted the position that the

Native Affairs Department is the channel of communication between the African people and the State. In any event, the subject of our communication to you was not a Departmental matter but one of such general importance and gravity affecting the fundamental principles of the policy practised by the Union Government, and its effect on the relations between Black and White, that it was considered appropriate to bring these matters directly to the notice of the Prime Minister. The suggestion that we were actuated by a so-called "recent rift or purge in Congress circles" is without foundation and entirely beside the point in so far as the substance of our case is concerned.

In reply to our demand for the abolition of differentiating laws, it is suggested in your letter that there are "permanent and not man-made" differences between Africans and Europeans which justify the maintenance of these laws. The question at issue is not one of biological differences, but one of citizenship rights which are granted in full measure to one section of the population, and completely denied to the other by means of man-made laws artificially imposed, not to preserve the identity of Europeans as a separate community, but to perpetuate the systematic exploitation of the African people.

The African people yield to no one as far as pride of race is concerned, and it is precisely for this reason that they are striving for the attainment of fundamental human rights in the land of their birth.

It is observed that your Government rejects out of hand our claim for direct representation in Parliament and other Councils of State. This is the kernel of the policy of apartheid which is condemned not only by the African, Indian and Coloured people, but also by a large section of White South Africa. It is precisely because of this policy that South Africa is losing caste in international circles.

Your letter suggests that the policy of your Government is motivated by a desire to protect the interests of the African people in various spheres of life, e.g., land rights, and unspecified privileges not enjoyed by them in other countries. The Reserve land policy has always been designed to protect European rather than African land rights, and even within the so-called Reserves, Africans hold only occupancy privileges at the discretion of the Government. These Reserves are notoriously congested and overcrowded, and the so-called rehabilitation scheme, notwithstanding the protestations of just intentions with which it is camouflaged, has aggravated the misery of the people and rendered thousands destitute and homeless, and has exposed them to vexatious regimentation by Native Commissioners petty Trust officials. In this connexion we note that even the Native Laws Amendment Bill, which is now before Parliament, in spite of all its harsh and draconian provisions has been described as a "protective" measure. There can be no doubt that, like similar measures passed hitherto, this Bill is intended to protect and advance the interests of Europeans and not those of Africans. It is those discriminatory laws that are preventing the African people from developing their ambitions and capacities, and along lines satisfactory to themselves.

As far as the Bantu Authorities Act is concerned, it is clear that this Act is part of the policy to which we are opposed, namely, that "the Government is not prepared to grant the Africans political equality", and is not, as you suggest, "designed to give the Africans the opportunity of enlightened administration of their own affairs". Nothing contained in the Bantu Authorities Act can be a substitute for direct representation in the Councils of State.

With reference to the campaign of mass action which the African National Congress intends to launch, we would point out that as a defenceless and voteless people, we have explored other channels without success. The African people are left with no alternative but to embark upon the campaign referred to above. We desire to state emphatically that it is our intention to conduct this campaign in a peaceful manner, and that any disturbances, if they should occur, will not be of our making.

In reiterating our claim for direct representation, we desire to place on record our firm determination to redouble our efforts for the attainment of full citizenship rights. In conclusion we regret that the Prime Minister has seen fit to reject our genuine offer of cooperation on the basis of full equality, and express the hope that in the interest of all concerned the Government may yet reconsider its attitude.

(Signed) Dr. J. S. Moroka
President-General

W. M. Sisulu
Secretary-General

**STATEMENT IN COURT, DURING DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN,
BEFORE BEING SENTENCED FOR PASS OFFENCE, JULY
21, 1952⁴**

Your Worship has just pronounced his verdict in a case in which I and fifty-one other colleagues are charged with Pass Offences. Before your Worship passes sentence on me, I want to indicate that I am the Secretary-General of the African National Congress, which was founded in 1912 to fight for the abolition of all discriminatory laws and for the freedom and national independence of the African people. Since this date, Congress has endeavoured by every constitutional means to bring to the notice of the Government the legitimate aspirations of the African people. Far from improving, the position of my people gradually deteriorated through the passage of such laws as the Land Act of 1913, which deprived us of our land, the Native Urban Areas Act, of 1923, which introduced the infamous

⁴ Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (eds.) *From Protest to Challenge*, volume 2, page 484.

Section 17 under which hundreds of thousands of innocent people are hounded by the police and gaoled every year, the Natives Administration. Act of 1927, which vested the Government [Governor-General] with unbridled despotism in his government of the African people, the Representation Act of 1936, which deprived us of our Franchise Rights, and numerous other measures which are calculated to prevent the realisation of our destination. Our position has so worsened that today white South Africa has placed into office a government which has closed all constitutional channels between itself and my people and whose barbarous and Godless policies have shocked enlightened opinion all over the world. As an African, and National Secretary of the Congress, I cannot stand aside in an issue which is a matter of life and death to my people. My duty is perfectly clear - it is to take the lead and to share with the humblest of my countrymen the crushing burden, imposed upon us because of the colour of our skins. In conclusion, I wish to make this solemn vow and in full appreciation of the consequences it entails. As long as I enjoy the confidence of my people, and as long as there is a spark of life and energy in me, I shall fight with courage and determination for the abolition of discriminatory laws and for the freedom of all South Africans irrespective of colour or creed.

**MESSAGE TO THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 1952⁵**
(Transmitted through the Council on African Affairs)

The Working Committee of the African National Congress has directed me to place on record our sincere appreciation of the moral and material support which our cause and the Campaign for the Defiance of the Unjust Laws in particular has received from the Negro people of the United States of America.

The African people are presently engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the barbarous policy of racial discrimination pursued by the Malan regime. During the last forty years, my organization has waged a relentless struggle against this policy and has always held the view that a system of government which permits human exploitation and the denial of fundamental human rights to its citizens must be condemned and eradicated from the face of the earth.

The policy of racial tyranny contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a direct threat to world peace. It offends enlightened world opinion and condemns the Malan regime as a group of infamous renegades whose barbarous atrocities perpetrated on the sons and daughters of the soil have shamed humanity. Though we face severe odds, we are confident of our power to halt this brutal onslaught on our civil liberties.

The interest taken by the Negro people in the struggle of the oppressed people both in our country and other parts of the world, their sentimental and historical affiliations to the Continent of Africa, and their contribution in the campaign for world peace and international harmony are factors which make them our comrades-in-arms inspite of the considerable distance and space that separate us.

Walter Sisulu
Secretary-General
African National Congress

LETTER TO DR. W.E.B. DU BOIS, MAY 6, 1953

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

^{5 5} From William A. Hunton papers at Schomberg Center of the New York Public Library

44 Commissioner Street,
Johannesburg
May 6, 1953

Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois
23 West 26th Street
New York 10, NY

My dear Dr. Du Bois,

Yours letter of the 9th ultimo is to hand and I hereby acknowledge it with thanks. I am very grateful to you for the offer you have made to co-operate in bringing about the proposed conference. I also thank you for the suggestions you made in connection therewith.

We are quite aware of the numerous difficulties we shall be faced with; but we feel quite confident that this being the feeling of the people of Africa, a way out will be found. Though we would have preferred a conference in the continent of Africa, conference shall have to be held somewhere else if possible.

I also enclose herein a copy of our letter to various national organisations and Governments in this continent and also to the list of addresses as suggested by you. I have also written to Mr. George Padmore in terms of your letter.

Yours in the cause form Freedom
(sd) W.M. Sisulu
Secretary-General

LETTER TO PAUL ROBESON, JUNE 9, 1953⁶

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

44, Commissioner Street
Johannesburg
June 9, 1953

Mr. Paul Robeson
Chairman,
Council on African Affairs, Inc.
53 West 125th Street,
New York 27, N.Y.

⁶ From William A. Hunton papers at Schomburg Center of the New York Public Library

Dear Friend,

The African National Congress highly appreciates the good work and tireless efforts made by your Council in educating our American Negro Brothers and the public of America as a whole.

We also express our gratitude for the assistance you have given us in our Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws.⁷ The continuation of this valuable work has become more important in these days in view of the powerful propaganda waged by the South African Government in an attempt to discredit the liberatory movement by branding it subversive and anti-White.

It is not accidental that your organization has become the victim of the reactionary Eisenhower-McCarthy ruling clique who are conniving with other imperialists for the oppression and exploitation of millions of colonial and semi-colonial peoples.⁸ We are, however, confident that the progressive forces the world over, united as they are in their determination to expose and end oppression and domination of one group by another, will triumph for their cause is just.

Yours in the cause for Freedom,
(sd) W.M. Sisulu
Secretary-General

LETTER TO W. A. HUNTON, JUNE 6, 1954

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

38, Market Street
Johannesburg
June 6, 1954

Dr. W. A. Hunton
Secretary
Council on African Affairs
Suite 6, 139 West 125th Street
New York, 27, N. Y.
U.S.A.

Dear Friend,

⁷ The Council sent \$2000 in aid of the arrested volunteers and their dependents.

⁸ The Council on African Affairs was named by the United States Department of Justice as a "subversive organization".

Thanks for your letter of the 11th May 1954 with the enclosed resolution adopted at your Conference in support of African liberation. Please convey our deep appreciation to the Council for the continued support we are receiving. Your work is a great inspiration to the African people and other democrats in South Africa.

During my tour of Europe and China I had the occasion of witnessing the effect and importance of the work carried out by your Council. There can be no doubt that it is because of the influence and power of the work done by your Council that has led to restrictions being placed on such an outstanding world figure, champion of peace and justice and world artist as Paul Robeson.

I would like to mention with a view of getting your support, our growing concern at the mass murder and atrocities carried out by the British troops against innocent and defenceless Africans in Kenya. The need for an intensification of the campaign for immediate cessation [of] this war of mass annihilation and the release of the leaders of the Kenya African Union and other African leaders who are in jail and in concentration camps, as a prelude to an honest peaceful discussion between the African leaders and the imperialist Government of Great Britain.

I am confident that a call by Paul Robeson and Dr. Du Bois similar to the one they sent to the people of Africa in 1952, will have a tremendous support in various parts of the world. The Kenya Committee, in December, launched a peace campaign which had a great effect on the British public and forced the British Government to attempt, though not very honest, peace negotiations. For further particulars you may communicate with them at, Kenya Committee, 86 Rochester Row, London S.W.1.

Yours Fraternally,
(sd.) W. M. Sisulu
Secretary-General

“LET US WORK TOGETHER”

Statement on the Call to the Congress of the People, June 1954⁹

From every corner of the country, the first reports are coming in, telling of the enthusiasm with which the Call to the Congress of the People is being received.

“Let us speak together of freedom!” This is the slogan that helps us on. This is the spirit too which burned in all the national leaders of all our racial groups who

⁹ *Fighting Talk*, Johannesburg, June 1954

gathered in two historic conferences of the S.A.I.C., S.A.C.O.D., S.A.C.P.O. and A.N.C. executives to plan the whole campaign and draft the Call to the People. Never has there been, between people of our different races, such a close spirit of association, friendship and cooperation, as was established at these two gatherings.

And to no one individual does the credit for that harmony more rightly belong than to the Chairman of both the meetings, Chief A.J. Luthuli, who set the tone for our working together, and handled the difficult and complex discussions so firmly and fairly.

From the United States, from the Council on African Affairs led by those outstanding world figures, Paul Robeson and Dr. Du Bois, has come a moving message, applauding “the decision of the African National Congress to invite the cooperation of other organizations of the people, in convening a great Congress of the People”.

But what of our own people; what of the tasks that lie before us who have to turn the decision into living reality? All organizations have been asked to join in the campaign for a Congress of the People. Let us see to it that our organizations answer that call, and take their place with all who value freedom. All Provincial Congress organizations have been asked to convene Provincial conferences of all organizations. Let us work to see that those conferences succeed on a grand scale.

Above all, the national leaders have stressed that the campaign to build the Congress of the People and to gather the country’s demands into a Freedom Charter must not be divorced from any of the daily grievances and issues of our people. Let us see to it that everywhere the Congress of the People comes to symbolize the struggle against that which people oppose, and that which they fight for, that they may know Freedom before they die.

LET US WORK TOGETHER, FOR FREEDOM.

**STATEMENT AFTER BEING ORDERED TO RESIGN FROM
MEMBERSHIP OF THE ANC AND FROM HIS POSITION AS
SECRETARY-GENERAL, AUGUST 20, 1954¹⁰**

I have been ordered by the Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart to resign from the

¹⁰ Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (eds.) *From Protest to Challenge*, volume 3, pages 133-34.

African National Congress and from my position as Secretary-General. I was elected to this position by you in 1949, since when I have endeavoured to the utmost of my ability to serve my people and to be worthy of the confidence you placed in me.

Now I am forced to resign from the Congress but I wish to assure you that I shall be entirely at your disposal and will not hesitate to answer any call which may be made by the African National Congress. In my message to the members of the African National Congress and to all oppressed people I wish firstly to remind you about the statement of the A. N. C. and its allies in 1950 on the Suppression of Communism Act, in which we showed that the primary aim of the Act was to silence all opposition to the tyranny of the Malan Government, especially from the Non-European organisations. The truth of this assertion will not be denied today, even by those who did not believe us at the time. The wisdom of the leaders of the Liberatory Movement was shown by their swift action when for the first time they called a nation-wide political strike and created unity among all democrats as an answer to what they correctly believed to be a major step in the establishment of a police state.

The ruthlessness of the Government in the use of this Fascist measure has affected even those who feared to participate in a positive struggle against the Nationalist onslaught. Whilst we cannot deny the effects of these bans on the national liberation and workers' movements, we are nevertheless confident, placing our faith in the invincible spirit of broad masses of the people, that they cannot succeed in their oft-proclaimed intention to crush the people's movement. The crippling effect of these bans on the leading most energetic and unwavering champions of freedom in South Africa must not be minimised. The people's leaders have been forbidden to attend any gatherings whatsoever, they have been forced to leave their place of employment, some have been exiled. Almost the entire National Executive of the African National Congress has been removed from office. Some of the provinces and branches have also been affected, and it is clear from what has already taken place that our organisations are going to be affected in all provinces and all the branches. Yet despite all this [our] movement is growing in strength, gaining new adherents and reaching new levels of effectiveness and determination.

Let me remind you once more that these bans have affected gallant and beloved leaders of the people with outstanding records in the liberatory struggle, such as Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Mandela, Tloome, Njongwe, Mji, Molema, Bopape, Matji, Tshume, Matthews, Ngwevela, Mhlaba, Motshabi; the exiled leaders Ngwentshe and Lengisi and many others of the African National Congress. Also Dr. Dadoo, Cachalia, and Nana Sita of the Indian Congress; Fischer, Williams, Kahn, Bernstein, Watts, Bunting and Hodgson of the Congress of Democrats; James Phillips of the Coloured People's Organisation and Ray Alexander, Kunene, Reddy, Du Toit, Moumakoe and Weinberg of the Trade Union movement. These and all the other banned leaders still belong to you. They will

remain your leaders because they still believe in our liberation struggle and still find some way to make their contribution. They have not been rejected by us but forcibly thrown out by our enemies.

What should be our answer to this? The only way whereby the oppressed masses of this country can express their implicit trust and confidence in their elected leaders and prevent the effectiveness of these bans is:

- * to carry out unreservedly the policies of the national organisations as enunciated from time to time.
- * to carry on more effectively the work they have been engaged on.
- * to be loyal to the principles and ideals for which the leaders have pledged themselves.
- * to prevent opportunism, sabotage and careerism, and to expose relentlessly the reactionary tendency and reactionary leadership.
- * to fight vigorously the penetration of spies and government stooges planted in our organisations.

You are called upon to intensify your campaign in the fight for freedom and to build the most powerful organisation and to produce even more efficient leadership, even more Illustrious Sons of the Soil than those I have already mentioned. You are called upon to recruit our fine youth and women for the struggle in a manner never before achieved. You are called upon to resist apartheid - to defeat the Western Areas Removal Scheme, the Bantu Education Act, the Group Areas Act, the Schoeman anti-trade union measures and many others. You are called upon to make the greatest sacrifice in the preparation of the great Congress of the People in the building of a united South Africa, by which means you can crush finally and for all times the reactionary rulers of the present day.

This is how you can make easy the tasks of those who still remain; the tasks of Chief A. J. Luthuli, beloved president of the people, the task of Dr. Naicker, Dr. Van Der Ross, Beylveld and Massina, and all those who work and stand with them. In this you must be guided by the rich literature our organisations have produced, especially since the first nation-wide political strike of 1950 up to the present day of the Congress of the People.

This can only be useful and appreciated when you use it as a guide in your practical work so that your understanding is clear at all times. Honesty, selflessness, vigour, initiative, determination and faith are some of the qualities you require. The government has already been shaken, the time has passed when they could rule the country as if we, the people, did not exist. Time is against them, the world is against them! We on the other hand are encouraged by the great spirit of the people of South Africa, by the growth of the national liberatory movement, by the unprecedented political consciousness of the people, and by the fact that the truth is with us. We enjoy the confidence of the entire world in this

noble and just task for which we are pledged to fight until the dawn of Freedom.

FORWARD WITH THE FREEDOM CHARTER¹¹

It was not for nothing that thousands of South Africans from all walks of life, of all races, of different political outlooks, religious beliefs and of different social status, travelled to take part in the greatest assembly ever known in our country, the Congress of the People (C.O.P.). These men and women came in response to a clarion call made by the Joint National Executive of the Congress movement, to meet and plan the future of their country as they would like to see it.

On June 26, these sons and daughters of our land unanimously adopted the “Freedom Charter” embodying their faith and their aspirations.

“We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people.” The Charter further declares that: “The people shall govern. All national groups shall have equal rights! The people shall share the country’s wealth! The land shall be shared among those who work it! All shall be equal before the law! All shall have equal human rights! There shall be work and security and comfort! There shall be peace and friendship!”

Mirror of Our Struggle

What is now to be done? The Congress of the People is over and the “Freedom Charter” has been adopted. The question cannot be answered simply by saying that the Joint Executives have decided to campaign for one million signatures to the Charter. It is necessary first to understand the significance of the “Freedom Charter” itself.

For the “Freedom Charter” is not just another resolution.

It is the common programme of our movement now and in the future. It is the mirror of our struggle. Its significance does not lie in its fine words, but in the fact that it is a document drawn up by the people themselves. It is the expression of the collective demands of the peoples, even from the remotest corners of the country. It is the embodiment of their aspirations, the total sum of their demands; and it is therefore the creed of the people.

The “Freedom Charter” is the basic law of our liberatory movement, a declaration of principles uniting all the people in our land, except for the few reactionaries,

¹¹ *Fighting Talk*, Johannesburg, September 1955

who see in the Charter the end of their long established domination and exploitation. The Charter is the picture of future South Africa, in which oppression and exploitation shall be no more. It is a document to be treasured by all who love freedom, for generations to come.

The Nationalists know the significance of the Charter even more than some of us. They remember the effect of the American Declaration of Independence; they remember what the Chartist movement meant to the English masses many years ago.

The People's Era

Once our people understand the Charter and its significance, the attainment of economic and political power in our lifetime – nothing can stand in the way of making its demands a reality.

The opening of the campaign for one million signatures has begun; yet the important thing about the campaign for the Freedom Charter is not just the collection of signatures; nor is it just the bringing of the ideas of the Charter to every home and making them the golden household words of the people. This is, by itself, very good indeed, but the important thing is that the overwhelming majority of the South African population should proclaim the “Freedom Charter” as their guiding star. In other words, they must understand fully the meaning, the inspiration and the significance of the Charter. As someone has already said the end of the C.O.P. was but a beginning.

The campaign which produced the “Freedom Charter” was the beginning of our great campaign, of the building from our multi-racial society of a united nation, free from poverty and misery, free from racial strife and antagonism. It is our hardest campaign which will bring to the broad masses of our people the understanding that they have much more in common than the things which superficially appear to divide them; that they have nothing to lose but much to gain, from the victory of the “Freedom Charter”.

The government have great fear of the “Freedom Charter”. They know how powerful the “Freedom Charter” movement can be, and how it can fire the imagination of the millions of our people. They are haunted by the knowledge that the Charter means the beginning of the end of their era and the opening of a new era – the People's Era of Freedom!

The Joint Executives of the four Congresses have correctly decided to campaign for the endorsement of the Charter by one million people from the multi-racial South African society. It seems clear that we cannot achieve this gigantic task of educating the people, popularising the Charter and obtaining one million signatures, without first examining the weaknesses which showed themselves during the C.O.P. campaign so that we can build on a foundation which is more

solid after the experiences of that campaign. It is hardly necessary to enumerate all the weaknesses here. Suffice it to say that the organizational plan set up in the early stages of the C.O.P., the establishment of committees in every town, dorp, village or factory in the Union – was not accomplished. We failed to link up the C.O.P. with our daily struggles. Many people in the movement, including some leaders in the ANC particularly, did not very well understand the C.O.P. They suspected it was to be a new organisation which would come to replace the ANC or to dominate the ANC. Some regarded the C.O.P. as nothing more than just a big conference unconnected with their positive struggles. Others thought it was an attempt by the leadership to evade the positive and militant struggle of the people against the Nationalist onslaught on their rights.

Win the Future

These views can well be understood, especially when they come from the ordinary members of our organisation, but when they come from the leadership they are very harmful and extremely dangerous. Now that the C.O.P. is over, there should be no more such wrong ideas. If we are to succeed in our great task these mistaken views must not be carried over into the “Freedom Charter” campaign. They will undermine the people’s struggle, and prove very dangerous to the whole movement.

What was not achieved in the C.O.P. campaign can now be achieved in this campaign, provided our weaknesses are honestly admitted and set right, provided these corrections of wrong views are made and provided the rich experience gained in the first campaign is fully utilised. The success of the “Freedom Charter” campaign depends on the building of committees in every town, dorp or factory. It depends on the daily issues of the people being related to the demands of the Charter. This will be far easier now than it was during the C.O.P. campaign since there is no issue to which the “Freedom Charter” does not point the answer and the people’s goal. Whether it be matters of culture, education or religion; of freedom of movement or press; of population registration or pass laws; of removal of the group areas; high rent or lack of houses; of low wages or unemployment – everything is closely and vitally connected with the “Freedom Charter”. We can talk about culling of stock or shortages of land, cattle dipping or payment of poll tax, and a chapter of the Charter can and should be quoted.

How can I describe the “Freedom Charter” for my readers to have the same inspiration which I have? I can say no more than this: that it is the harnessing of all the springs and the rivers of our land, to wash down all that is dirty, undesirable and unhealthy; that it is the clean water which will quench our thirst for all times, water our vast tracks of land and create beautiful gardens for all to live in.

The Charter is our inspiration now, and in the future. Let us all go out to win South Africa to accept it. Let us work with goodwill and unity, with the spirit of

dedication to freedom which inspired the delegates at the Congress of the People to declare:

“These Freedoms we will fight for, side by side throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty.”

THE EXTENSION OF THE PASS LAWS¹²

When the Pass Law was first introduced to control the movement of slaves in 1760 by the settlers of the Cape, no one could have imagined that this slave measure was to cause so much bitterness and misery to millions, generations after its introduction.

It was this measure which gave an idea to Caledon who introduced a proclamation in 1809 requiring the African tribes (Hottentots) to carry passes when moving from one area to another. This infamous Caledon proclamation was the beginning of a forced labour system. It had its basis in the slave system which had taken root in the colony. Since then it has been extended from time to time to the various South African regions, by both Republican and Colonial governments. It has been one of the most important techniques to create a system, not only of forced cheap labour, but also the migratory labour system.

In this system today is found a method for regulating the economic relations between black and white, a method unique in its nature to South Africa. The extension of the pass system to children, African women, and other racial groups in this country, is in fact a continuation of this slave and feudal measure started almost 200 years ago.

A Challenge to Society

The Pass Laws are therefore not only just one of the Nationalist Government's oppressive measures, but fundamentally a slave measure deeply rooted in the economic system of South Africa. Hence a struggle against this system is both political and economic. It is a struggle against white domination and exploitation; a challenge to the ruling class, the Nationalist Government, and in no less way, to the mining and industrial groups, and the big farmers. Once we have grasped this fact, we shall be in a better position to understand the full implications and the full significance of the present anti-pass campaign. No short cut measures, therefore, no dramatic moves alone can advance such a struggle.

The Nazis and the Jews

¹² From *Liberation*, Johannesburg, March 1956

In spite of the various commissions that have had to be appointed to enquire into the whole system of the pass laws, and in spite of the fact that almost all of them have indicated that the pass laws are a cause of friction between black and white in this country, the Nationalist Government, instead of easing or abolishing this system, have consolidated and coordinated it, extending pass laws to women and children, and to other racial groups.

This system is designed to serve two purposes:

1. To continue, in the case of Africans, to force them into the chains of farm and mine-owners, and to keep their wages down forever at the lowest possible level.
2. In the case of other racial groups it is a measure to entrench the *herrenvolk* policy; to classify each section into a racial group for the purpose of discriminating against and oppressing certain groups, just as Nazis made every Jew wear a badge to identify him as a Jew. Can one claim this identification is in the interests of the group concerned? Was it in the interests of the Jews to be so distinguished from the “true Aryans”? Can such race classification ever be for any purpose but the oppression of one group by another?

A Never-ceasing Struggle

It should be remembered that the pass laws and land question are the two issues which Congress vowed never to let rest until they had been uprooted. There has thus been a continuous struggle against the passes since the formation of Congress, waged in various forms and at different times. Deputations, demonstrations, passive resistance strikes, up to the 1952 Defiance Campaign, are the various forms of struggle which have been used in the past.

There has been shooting and imprisonment in this struggle, but the fight against the pass laws has never been lost. Every campaign which has been conducted on this issue has had its own effect on the rulers, especially when we consider the struggle of women against the passes, a struggle which has at all times come out victorious. The women have had to suffer by going to gaol, some expectant, some with their babies on their backs, to defeat the introduction of passes to women.

But Times Have Changed

It would, however, be very wrong to imagine that we will do exactly what was done in 1913; and not to realise that times are different, and that the methods of the oppressor are not exactly the same as they were in the past.

Although fundamentally there may be no change, yet it cannot be doubted that the tactics have changed. The Government's fear of the people is greater today than it

has ever been. On the other hand, the hatred for passes and the political consciousness of the people have both grown. But methods of organisation have also been made more difficult. We would be foolish to minimise the strength of the enemy, to underestimate its propaganda. In other words, to take the campaign lightly, and to be carried away by emotion and sensationalism.

There is a tendency, especially on the part of the leadership, to ignore the preliminary stages necessary for the carrying out of an effective campaign; and at times to become extraordinarily militant, not so much in their work as in their words, thus misleading those who look to them for guidance.

It is, admittedly, very difficult to ignore in any campaign the traditional approach of the people, yet it is equally dangerous to conduct a struggle on traditions only, often with less regard for the changing situations; hence the question of waiting for an announcement of the date of action, or even by implication to give an impression that the leaders will mysteriously come out with the solution, can have serious setbacks on the entire movement.

What type of action is proposed in this campaign?

Faith in the People

Obviously, the present campaign must be properly planned and provided the leadership at all levels correctly and honestly carries out daily activities, house-to-house campaigns, and discusses with the people every aspect of this nation-wide anti-pass campaign, together with the problems and difficulties which arise, then our struggle shall have been raised to a higher level.

In this campaign, we should place implicit faith in the abilities and intelligence of the mass of the people, and be inspired by their response in our protest meetings and demonstrations. We need, in such a campaign, both men and women who are not only courageous, but who are also determined, disciplined, and above all have a clear understanding of the task which faces them.

There are no short-cuts. There are no easy answers. There are no complete formulas. Only continuous campaigning among the people, with continuous response to their own activities, taking them a step forward each time, can lead us to our goal.

This is the only way to achieve our purpose.

IN THE TRANSKEI, WHERE FAMINE RULES, PEOPLE FEAR THE FUTURE¹³

It is two years since I was last in the Transkei and the Ciskei and my birthplace Engcobo. When I visited these areas last month I was shocked by the signs of drought and famine written across the face of the countryside and the people.

In the first few words of greeting with all I met the fear of the months to come intruded. "We don't know what will happen to us this year," the people said. "The drought... The famine..."

March is one of the greenest months in the Transkei – or should be. In normal times, the people and the livestock are fittest at the end of the summer. The fields should be high enough to hide a man. This is the time of the year when the people eat their fresh produce from the fields.

Crops Destroyed

Last month the crops were short and stunted. The crop sown in November was destroyed by the drought; the second sowing was too late and has no chance of thriving. The stumps stand in the fields but the yield is hopeless and lost to the people. We ate neither green mealies nor pumpkin anywhere in these Reserves. Listlessly the people sit about and talk of the bleak months to come. I overheard a group of young women discussing the crop failure. One had been to her home village some distance away. "We are better off than what I saw across the Bashee River," she said. "There, people are already going to the shops!"

Already in March buying back some of last year's crop from the trader! Ordinarily, people are driven to buy from the shops only from October or November onwards after they have exhausted their crop reaped in June and July. There is no fresh food this March, there will be no crop worth talking of this winter... and who dares to say how the people will survive the months later this year?

Many of the cattle I saw seemed too thin and emaciated to survive the winter.

There were few men to be seen in either the Transkei or Ciskei villages. Those still there are making arrangements to leave to find work outside the territories.

Bantu Authorities

Another question that is uppermost in the minds of the people in the Transkei and Ciskei today is that of the Bantu Authorities Act and its effects. Chiefs, headmen,

¹³ From *New Age*, Cape Town, April 12, 1956

Bunga members and even ordinary people have been thrown into a ferment by this new system.

On the day of our arrival at Umtata we met Councillor Sakwe, one of the champions of this Bantu Authorities Act who told us of a meeting under the auspices of the Transkeian Chiefs and People's Association to which Government and *Bunga* officials had been invited to speak on Bantu Authorities. The meeting was held at the Great Place Bambane, the home of the Paramount Chief of the Tembu, Sabata Jongihlanga Dalengebo. We learnt that the Paramount Chief himself did not attend the meeting, though the chiefs of Eastern and Western Pondoland did.

The reports current at the time said that the Tembus had disrupted the meeting which ended in disorder. Councillor Sakwe told me that sarcastic questions had been asked, like: "Now that you have decided to give us freedom, what is it that you want amongst us?" Chiefs at the meeting asked why the members of the *Bunga* had accepted the Bantu Authorities without the authority of the people. Such questions were branded "political" and ruled out of order.

It is an open secret that the Government is very perturbed by this meeting and the attitude of the people, and few will be surprised if the Government decides to take action against the Paramount Chief of the Tembu.

Signs of Unrest

This is a topic of conversation everywhere, and there are signs of unrest in the Territories over the Bantu Authorities Act. Some Chiefs and leading individuals are openly hostile to it; others are trying to use it and are maneuvering and campaigning for position. Rivalries between chiefs are springing up as some angle for promotion at the expense of others. Chiefs with ambitions for higher status are maneuvering for a split in their tribe so that they can be the supreme head of a portion of their subjects, and not subordinate to some other, greater chief. This is especially so in Griqualand. Tribal hostilities are being encouraged by these intrigues and the unity and amity of the people being disrupted. Much of this still flows beneath the surface but it will undoubtedly burst into the open.

Meanwhile the stock of the members of the *Bungas*, never high in the eyes of the people, has reached its lowest ever since they accepted the Bantu Authorities Act without making the slightest effort at consulting the people.

SOUTH AFRICA'S STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

Article in *Africa South*, Cape Town, January-March 1957

The fundamental principle in our struggle is equal rights for all in our country, and that all people who have made South Africa their home, by birth or adoption, irrespective of colour or creed, are entitled to these rights. The fight for a democratic South Africa is assuming greater dimensions. Since the 1952 Defiance Campaign, the liberatory movement, faced with extreme difficulties, has not again taken the offensive on so wide a scale. Yet the movement is gaining momentum in its general mobilisation of the non-European masses, with the support of a small, but determined and growing number of European democrats. The country is in a state of ferment. The racial segregation and racial conflict on which the Europeans have based their government is now reaching unprecedented heights as a result of the numerous repressive apartheid laws of the Nationalist Government of Mr. Strijdom.

In dealing with the development of South Africa, it is important to mention two events which will go down in history as the two major turning points since the end of the frontier wars.

The first was the formation of the Union, when four separately, ruled provinces were brought under one central government on the 31st May, 1910. From the very day Union was established the Europeans allocated to themselves the exclusive right to govern, and, except for the non-Europeans in the Cape Province who had a qualified franchise, to vote. Even this slender qualified right of the non-Europeans in the Cape to vote on a common roll with the whites was taken away from the Africans in 1936 and from the Coloureds in 1956, although the legality of the latter act is still being tested in the courts. Following Union the exploitation and the robbery of the Africans was legalised, mainly by the Labour Regulation Act of 1911 and the Land Act of 1913. The Africans lost their land and their movements were increasingly restricted.

The second important stage was reached when the Nationalist Party, inspired by Nazi racialist ideology came into power in 1948, after furiously whipping up racial hysteria among the more backward section of the electorate, especially in the rural areas. They impressed upon the electorate that the Afrikaner nation was fighting for its very existence against Black domination and Communism, which they alleged were encouraged by what they called the "liberal" policy of the United Party. They claimed that they had a solution to the Native Problem - a systematic apartheid, policy, which would prevent the dangers of miscegenation, integration and equality.

In an attempt to implement their policy, the Nationalists passed numerous oppressive laws. They promoted their chief propagandist and architect of the apartheid policy, the former newspaper editor, Dr. Verwoerd, to a key position in the Cabinet, to become, as Minister of Native Affairs, "Ruler of the Black Colonial Empire". His appointment as Minister of Native Affairs was appropriate, for Dr. Verwoerd was, during the war years, an ardent admirer of the Hitler Nazi

regime.¹⁴ His arrogance and the ruthless manner in which he administers the apartheid policy, as if he cared nothing for human dignity, shows this up clearly. Only a man of his type could have spoken the way he did at Potchefstroom recently, where he is reported to have said:

"The fight which our forefathers fought against an overwhelming majority of barbarians is still being carried out, but now it is not against uncivilised people and barbarians, but the shrewdest, cleverest and most dangerous enemies, both from overseas and in our country" .

The effect is to imply that open warfare exists and to incite the Afrikaner people against the African people. What a statement to be made by a Cabinet Minister! The European opposition parties have shown themselves incapable of offering any effective opposition to the Nationalists. They have confused themselves by waging a battle of words, unrealistic and meaningless. "What is the meaning of apartheid, what is the definition of this mysterious word, apartheid?" Answering themselves, it means *Fanakalo* (like this). To the present day, the United Party does not seem to know exactly what it wants, what in fact it should tell the country. The United Party is not ashamed to tell townsmen that apartheid means oppression, and then to go to the platteland and tell the Nationalists' supporters that the Government is spending too much money on the Natives.

The non-Europeans have no time to look at dictionaries, nor to pretend not to know what apartheid means. They have known apartheid to mean precisely what Hitler's racialist policy meant to the Jews and to the world. For this reason they forewarned the country of the dangers of apartheid. And now Europeans also in the country are beginning to see and appreciate the correctness of these predictions made almost ten years ago.

The non-European political organisations have grown in strength and in status and have aroused confidence in their ability to save South Africa from the iron rule of the Nationalist police state.

The bitterest battles which have been fought by these organisations since their inception have been on the land question and restriction of movement. Even to the present day, these are still the burning issues, issues which will inevitably bring about continued clashes between oppressor and oppressed until the people have won the rights to own land and to move freely without passes. Both the Indian Congress and the African National Congress have fought against the pass system as far back as the beginning of the present century. The latest phase in this fight

¹⁴ "The question is whether. . . he (Dr. Verwoerd) is entitled to complain if it is said of him that what he writes supports Nazi propaganda and makes his paper a tool of the Nazis. On the evidence he is not entitled to complain. He did support Nazi propaganda, he did make his paper a tool of the Nazis in South Africa, and he knew it".

- Excerpt from Judgment of Mr. Justice J. Millin in the case of Verwoerd versus Paver and Others, 1943. Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

was the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and even to the present day, a vigorous struggle is being organized around the pass system, Group Areas and restrictions on the Trade Union movement. Recently there have been a number of women's demonstrations, the biggest of which was the 20,000 strong march of women to see the Prime Minister on the 9th August, 1956, in protest against the extension of the pass system to African women. Successful All-In Group Areas Conferences have been held by the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress. The people seem to be in no mood for retreating.

The fact that the women have now taken such a firm stand in the fight against the tyranny of the Nationalists must be regarded as the writing on the wall, the warning to all those who still have illusions of the permanency of White domination. It is true that the youth of the country has not yet been organised to take part in the liberatory movement, but any struggle waged against the passes is bound to bring the African youth into the movement.

Foremost in the freedom struggle in South Africa is the Congress movement, comprising the African National Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation, the South African Indian Congress and the South African Congress of Democrats, the Federation of South African Women and the South African Congress of Trade Unions. The Congress movement having realised that the majority of the people were very much concerned with the future of their country and in particular the solution to the racial problem, convened a Congress of the People, to which political, economic and cultural organisations of all races were invited to participate and which was held at Kliptown, Johannesburg, on June 25 and 26, 1955. Among the numerous organisations invited were the Government Nationalist Party and the Official Opposition, the United Party, both of which declined.

This most historic multi-racial assembly adopted a Freedom Charter based on the demands of the people throughout the land. The Freedom Charter is now the policy and programme of the Congress Movement. It declares that the Government of the country shall be based on the will of all people, Black and White, and that all adults shall be entitled to a universal suffrage, and that all national groups shall be equal and racialism shall be considered a serious State crime.

This distinguishes the Congress movement from the Nationalist Party Government policy of apartheid, the United Party policy of segregation and the Labour and Federal Party policies of qualified franchise. To many Europeans, this policy is "unrealistic", yet to the followers of the Congress movement, this policy is not only correct in principle, but represents the only real alternative to apartheid, segregation or White domination. Yet though Congressmen are convinced that the struggle for the Freedom Charter is the only correct policy, they are prepared and anxious to cooperate on specific issues with all who oppose any manifestation of oppression and apartheid..

The alliance in the struggle against apartheid is broadening. Congress realises that not all people who are opposed to apartheid accept the Freedom Charter. But if for instance, the Liberal Party, the Labour Party, or the Black Sash Movement do not yet accept all demands of the Charter, they may nevertheless stand with us on many questions.

An important step in the direction of broadening the basis of a united front against apartheid was taken at the recent All-In African Conference at Bloemfontein. This Conference which was called to discuss the Tomlinson Report, after full discussion, held in a calm and objective atmosphere, unanimously rejected the Tomlinson Report and the policy of apartheid. It further called for a multi-racial Conference and concluded its three-day session by making the following stirring call to the country:

"This Conference is convinced that the present policy of apartheid constitutes a serious threat to race relations in the country. Therefore, in the interests of all the people and the future of the country, this Conference calls upon all national organisations to mobilise all people, irrespective of race, colour or creed, to form a united front against apartheid."

It is heartening to note that some of the newspapers in the country welcome the proposal for the calling of a multi-racial Conference to consider an acceptable solution to the country's problems. Most of these newspapers have hitherto tacitly or expressly supported reactionary policies. Their attitude is an indication that the idea of a united front is gaining ground.

Thus we see two powerful forces crystallising out in the country - the one represented by the Congress movement and its allies, and the other by the Nationalist Party. As far as the Nationalist Party is concerned, any serious analysis will reveal that it has reached its high-water mark. There is no possibility of the Nationalists growing stronger than they are at present. They have played all their cards, but one - namely, the Republican issue, which itself appears unlikely to arouse any greater enthusiasm for the Nationalists than exists today. Already there are signs that the edge of the Nationalist blitzkrieg is blunted in the face of the determined and growing resistance of the people.

On the other hand, the liberatory movement does not only derive strength from the knowledge that the colonial peoples everywhere are achieving their independence, and that a larger part of the world is hostile to racialism and White domination, but even more than that, they derive strength from the fact that their forces are growing, the resentment against oppression is becoming greater every day and in particular, the Europeans of the country are gradually beginning to see that South Africa has no choice but to follow the road to a multi-racial society free from sectional domination and on the basis of the Charter of Human Rights.¹⁵

¹⁵ Presumably "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (editor)..

The coming year will be decisive in the struggle against the Nationalists. Even the United Party will have to make up its mind. It will be faced with the question of joining with the Nationalists completely and sharing the fate which will face all racialists, or joining with the larger family of the democratic forces against apartheid.

BOYCOTT AS A POLITICAL WEAPON¹⁶

Boycott has been used as an effective political weapon in different countries ever since it came into use as a recognized method of struggle against the Irish Land Act of 1880.

There are outstanding examples from all over the world of the effectiveness of boycott in political struggle: the boycott of the Duma in Russia during the struggle against the Tsarist regime; the boycott against the British Legislative Council in India by the Indian Congress. And we in this country are in a particularly good position to understand fully how effective the boycott weapon can be, both as an economic and political weapon. It is still one of the few methods of struggle which are not illegal in South Africa today.

Since the end of the last war, we have seen outstanding examples of successful boycotts: the Alexandra bus boycott of 1944; the Western Native Township Tram boycott; the Port Elizabeth bus boycott; the Cape Town bus boycott; the unique Evaton bus boycott which continued for more than a year, and finally brought down the bus owners to their knees. No less remarkable is the bus boycott on the Rand and Pretoria at the time of writing this article. The fact that people can walk for twenty miles a day, week in, week out, in a 100% effective boycott, organized in less than two weeks; and in such diverse areas as Sophiatown, and Western Native Township in less than two days – this is a tribute to the determination of the people in utilizing this form of struggle.

Tens of thousands of Africans have participated in these boycotts, and even more compelling is the fact that 20,000 Africans in the Moroka-Jabavu areas have carried on a boycott in sympathy, in support of their brothers who are struggling against higher fares.

In these boycotts our experience is that each time they have raised the political consciousness of the people, brought about a greater solidarity and unity among the masses. In this way they have raised the peoples' organizations to a higher level, demonstrating the correctness of the action.

¹⁶ From: *Liberation*, Johannesburg, February 1957. Mr. Sisulu was then on trial on a charge of high treason.

However, inevitably people with limited democratic rights and few means of expressing their grievances begin to think of boycotts as a means to demand political rights. And it is our main concern in this article to discuss boycott as a political rather than a purely economic weapon.

When to Boycott?

There has been controversy over the correctness of the timing of various boycotts against existing institutions and Parliamentary bodies. Such controversies existed in the left movements in Europe, in Germany, Austria, Hungary and to a lesser extent in England; the issue being whether or not it is correct for members of progressive parties to participate in parliamentary elections and other reactionary institutions. In our own country this controversy has existed for more than ten years. This is a question on which we must have a clear decision. Taking the history of these countries, learning from their experience, we may be able to understand our own problem more easily. For although conditions differ from one country to another, yet the principle is much the same.

During and after the war the national liberatory movement took a greater interest in the boycott weapon; the Unity Movement, the Communist Party of South Africa, and the African National Congress all decided at different times on the boycott of the different political institutions, such as parliament, Advisory Boards and *Bungas*. Even during this period the issue was a highly controversial one within the organisations concerned. It was during this period that the political consciousness of the people began to emerge, and the militant spirit of the masses was felt. It was also a period of industrial development, of historic strikes and protests of the people; the Squatters movement of 1944-45; the Mine Strike of 1946 in which many Africans were killed. All these things raised the greatest indignation among the people. This was, therefore, correctly regarded as the best time to build the national movements and to force the powers by mass action instead of by petitions or deputations. This also made people naturally regard government institutions with contempt.

It was also argued that people did not distinguish clearly between their own organisations and reactionary bodies; and that there was a need of making people adopt an attitude of contempt to the Advisory Boards and Councils, and to understand their functions and limitations. To work within these bodies and at the same time to condemn them unreservedly would have led to confusion. Therefore the best approach seemed to be an active boycott of such institutions.

There were, however, some who chose the weapon of boycott because it seemed an "easy" course, one which would not expose either the people or their leaders to any hardships. This school of thought is found even today amongst those who shout the loudest and become more militant when they talk of boycott. They see no other suitable form of struggle save boycott. That explains also why some of

those who favour boycott are so strongly opposed to any other form of struggle, under the pretext that the people are not yet trained and ready.

Since the decision of the A.N.C. in 1949, this issue has come up for discussion at almost every conference. There are differences of approach. As far as the Unity Movement is concerned, anyone who participates in any of the elections of various political institutions are collaborators of the government; that whoever so participates, even when fighting for the destruction of such institutions, betrays the struggle. It sounds very militant, of course, to talk about positive boycott, about collaborationists and non-collaborationists. This tendency is confined not only to the Non-European Unity Movement, but has penetrated the ranks of the A.N.C.

This surely is being dogmatic. It is a serious political mistake of confusing the tactics with the principle; which means that the decision to boycott is not subject to any changes.

Let us examine the arguments advanced by both sides, those who believe that boycott is the best possible weapon with which to oppose these inferior political institutions, and those who believe that boycott is not necessarily the best or the only method.

Militant or Extreme

From the first point of view, the argument is advanced that these institutions were created to serve the interests of the oppressors and to deceive the oppressed and fool them into believing that they have some political rights. It is argued that the effect of this is to retard the progress of the oppressed people. That to participate, therefore, in these institutions amounts to collaborating with the oppressors, confusing and bluffing the masses; and that the correct thing to do is to have nothing at all to do with these institutions at any time, under any circumstances.

This, indeed, sounds very militant and uncompromising, and it is this approach which raises a tactic into a principle. On the other hand, it is argued that boycotting of these institutions may not necessarily be the best and correct method to fight against their existence. But on the contrary, participation in these institutions may at certain times be the most effective and correct method of exposing them and struggling for more effective representation.

This approach clearly recognises the fact that these institutions exist not because of our wishes, nor are they due to our making; that the people may participate in them for various reasons, and that the correct thing to do is to educate the masses about the purpose of these institutions, thus making them have no confidence in them as such. This approach recognises the fact that the principle is not the boycott of the institutions, but the principle is the rejection of differential political institutions.

Conditions Change

The failure on the part of many people to realise the seriousness of elevating a tactic of struggle into a fundamental principle could do irreparable harm to the movement. Take, for instance, this decision to boycott taken several years ago. Does it follow that because it was correct then it is correct today? Have conditions not changed at all since the decision was taken? They certainly have. Many forms of struggle which were legal then are illegal today. Organisations and leaders have been banned. Almost all forms of protest have been outlawed. Holding meetings has become almost impossible. Surely the wisdom of leadership lies in knowing what tactics to apply at a given time, dictated to leadership by the prevailing conditions. The correctness of such tactics must be judged from their effect on the movement. The primary thing is that such tactics raise the standards of the organisation higher and higher. Once we differentiate between the principle and the tactic, in other words, in this case to know that the boycott is a tactic and the rejection of reactionary political institutions is the principle, then the fight against such institutions can include participation in them with a view to rendering impotent the system that gives rise to them.

The A.N.C. resolution for the boycotting of these institutions also made provision for the establishment of the Council of Action, whose function was to decide upon the institution to be boycotted. It was realised that it was not sufficient to say that we boycott these institutions, when people may not be ready for it. There are people even within the A.N.C. who do not realise that boycott is a tactic and only one of the methods to be used for the struggle for national independence and against white domination and discriminatory laws. In fact, some of them argued at the Queenstown National Conference in 1953 that they regarded the decision to boycott not just as a tactic.

They were wrong, and Congress should rediscuss the whole matter now with a view to reviewing the unclear and unsatisfactory 1949 resolution, which no longer reflects a greatly changed situation.

CONGRESS AND THE AFRICANISTS¹⁷

Article in *Africa South*, Cape Town, July-September 1959

In recent months much has been published in the South African press about the 'Africanists' and their attempt to capture the leadership of the African National Congress. The struggle reached a climax at the Transvaal Provincial Conference

¹⁷ Mr. Sisulu wrote this article while on trial on a charge of High Treason.

of the A.N.C., held under the auspices of the National Executive on the 1st and 2nd November, 1958. The Africanists attempted to "pack" the conference, but most of their supporters failed to qualify as delegates. They then tried to break up the conference by force, and, when this attempt was defeated, they withdrew, announcing that they were leaving Congress and intended forming a new organisation.

The whole affair has been much exaggerated in the newspapers, especially in the so-called 'Bantu' press. Newspapers tend to thrive on sensations, and some of them were obviously motivated by malice towards Congress and a desire to emphasise and add to its difficulties. In reality, the Africanists were never able to muster much support or gain much influence in the A.N.C. Their departure has greatly pleased the great majority of Congressmen, who regarded them as a noisy and disruptive clique, and who consider all the talk of a "major split" in Congress as absurd.

It is unlikely that the Africanists will make much progress or maintain much cohesion among themselves now that they have left Congress. They appear to have little or nothing in the way of a constructive policy or original programme to offer to the public. They have had a lot to say, it is true, but so far it has been exclusively destructive and critical of Congress leadership. All the leaders have shown themselves to be quarrelsome, unruly and ambitious; one doubts whether they will ever achieve agreement on aims and leadership.

Yet it would be wrong for any student of politics in this country to ignore the significance of this development. Even though the Africanists have not evolved any definite programme and policy, the general trend of their ideas is manifest: it lies in a crude appeal to African racialism as a reply to White arrogance and oppression. The principal target of their attacks is the broad humanism of the African National Congress, which claims equality but not domination for the African people, and regards South Africa as being big enough and rich enough to sustain all its people, of whatever origin, in friendship and peace.

This broad outlook of Congress finds its clearest expression in the opening sentence of the Freedom Charter, which declares that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White". It is precisely this formulation which is most strongly attacked by the Africanists. In their letter of secession from the A.N.C., they declare that "the Kliptown Charter" is "in irreconcilable conflict" with the 1949 Congress "Programme of Action", "seeing that it (the Freedom Charter) claims that the land no longer belongs to the African people but is auctioned for sale to all who belong to this country". Leaving aside the inflated polemical language of this statement (characteristic of all "Africanist" writings), the intention is clear: it is a denial that any section of the population other than the descendants of indigenous Africans have any rights in the country whatsoever.

There are several other issues used by the Africanists in their attacks on A.N.C.

leadership and policy. They bitterly denounce the Congress Alliance - the working partnership which has developed between the A.N.C. and the Indian Congress, the (White) Congress of Democrats, the Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Trade Unions. They say that the alliance "waters down African nationalism", and charge that it is dominated by the Whites of C.O.D. and the Indians of the S.A.I.C. They say that the Whites in the alliance are not sincere and cannot be relied upon in the struggle to end White supremacy. They say that the A.N.C. leadership is Communistic and out of step with the nationalist movement in the rest of the continent, which has no alliance with other racial groups. They say that the Congress leadership has abandoned traditional Congress policy "as it was formulated in 1912", and that they, the Africanists, are "launching out as custodians" of that policy (Letter of Secession, November, 1958).

In the first place, it should be stated as emphatically as possible that the Africanists' principal charge - that Congress has departed from its traditional purpose and policy - is untrue and unfounded.

The constituent Conference of 1912, at which the African National Congress was established, set forth the following objectives:

- (1) To unite all the various tribes in South Africa;
- (2) To educate public opinion on the aspirations of the black man of South Africa;
- (3) To advocate on behalf of the African masses equal rights and justice;
- (4) To be the mouthpiece of the African people and their chiefs;
- (5) To represent the people in government and municipal affairs;
- (6) To represent them in the Union Parliament, and generally, to do all such things as are necessary for the progress and welfare of the African people.

Within the framework of these broad general objectives, Congress has continued steadily, up to the present day. It has consistently demanded "equal rights and justice". It has never advocated the replacement of exclusive rights for Whites, as established by the Union's Constitution, following the precedent of the two Boer Republics, with exclusive rights for Africans as now proposed by the "Africanists". In putting forward this conception, it is they who are departing from the original objectives and purposes of the founders of Congress; it is the present Congress leaders who are the true continuers and custodians of those purposes and traditions.

An important policy statement, known as the "Bill of Rights", was drawn up in 1943 by a committee composed of leading Africans from various parts of the Union. It was issued by the A.N.C. at the time, in a pamphlet entitled "African Claims", as a formal statement of Congress policy. It declared, *inter alia*:

"We, the African people in the Union of South Africa, urgently demand the granting of full citizenship in South Africa. We demand abolition of discrimination based on race, and the extension to all adults regardless of race of the right to vote and be elected to Parliament, Provincial Councils and other representative institutions. We demand the right to an equal share in all the material resources of the country. We demand a fair redistribution of the land as a prerequisite for a just settlement of the land problem."

Finally, I may cite the Programme of Action of 1949, which the Africanists continually declare to be inconsistent with the Freedom Charter, and which they claim as "their own" programme. "In 1949 we got the African people to accept the nation-building programme of that year", declares the Africanists' letter of resignation of last November. Actually the 1949 Programme of Action was a regular Congress document, adopted at a national conference on the initiative of the Congress leadership and issued over the signature of the present writer. Only one or two of the Africanists had any hand in it.

The 1949 "Programme" was really a plan of work, dealing mainly with proposed methods of struggle, such as strikes, civil disobedience and boycotts, but it opened with a short political preamble. This preamble consists primarily of an endorsement of the "Bill of Rights," cited above, and emphasised the demands for the immediate abolition of all discriminatory laws and the participation of Africans in all Councils of State.

The Freedom Charter of 1955 is in a direct line of succession to the various documents cited above, and to the many other statements of Congress policy and principle down the years. Beginning with the statement that South Africa belongs to the people who live in it, but that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, peace and liberty by an unjust form of government, it goes on to claim that every man and woman shall have the right to vote and to stand as candidate for election to all bodies which make laws, and that the rights of all people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex. The Charter goes on to demand equality in every sphere of life, in its ten famous chapters, which are identical in spirit and closely parallel in content to the eleven points of the "Bill of Rights", as published in "African Claims", and specifically endorsed in the 1949 "Programme of Action".

The above, of course, is no more than a brief sketch of the evolution of Congress policy down the years. Nevertheless it is sufficient to demonstrate amply that, while A.N.C. policy has naturally evolved down the years, in changing circumstances at home and abroad, becoming more detailed and clearer in formulation, it has retained throughout a fundamental continuity and consistency which is striking and remarkable. Tested against the facts, the Africanists' accusation that Congress has departed from its traditional programme cannot be sustained.

Nor is it true that the African National Congress has ever pursued a line of exclusive "Black chauvinism" and hostility to other racial groups, as now advocated by the Africanists. From its early days, Congress has rejected the whole ideology of "master races" and "servant races" as expressed in the Constitution and structure of the Union. It has repudiated the idea of "driving the White man into the sea" as futile and reactionary, and accepted the fact that the various racial groups in South Africa have come to stay. It has consistently sought the co-operation of other political groups and other races, of religious, liberal and leftist groups and organisations, in its struggle for freedom and equality. Indeed there was a time when the Congress leadership, contrasting the relatively enlightened policy of the "liberal Cape" with the blatant "inequality in Church and State" of the northern republics, placed too heavy a reliance upon the goodwill of White leaders, and tended to react to such early manifestations of 'apartheid' as the 1913 Land Act by sending futile deputations and appeals to Whitehall.

In the disillusioning years that followed, the African people and Congress have learned to put their trust not in aid from others, but in their own strength and organisation. Nevertheless Congress has at all times welcomed and taken the initiative in achieving co-operation with other organisations representing different population-groups, provided always that such cooperation was on a basis of equality and disinterested adherence to mutual aims. It is this consistent Congress policy of unity and anti-racialism which has borne fruit in the present-day Congress alliance, which is continually broadening its scope and winning the support and allegiance of increasing numbers of South Africans, and which has won the A.N.C. world-wide admiration and respect. This policy enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of the Congress membership, who recognise it as being in the best traditions of the organisation. Every attempt by the Africanists to reverse the policy of alliance and replace it with one of narrow sectionalism and exclusiveness has been crushingly rejected by the membership in provincial and national conferences.

Thus, the so-called "African nationalism" of the Africanists turns out to be a mere inverted racialism, foreign to the spirit and traditions of the African people, and more in line with the Afrikaner Nationalist Party than with the progressive liberationist nationalism of Congress. This type of racial exclusiveness has been condemned the world over, and not least by the progressive African national movements of this continent. The recent All-African Peoples' Conference at Accra roundly condemned, in a formal resolution,

"the practice of racial discrimination and segregation in all its aspects, all over the world."

The fact that, due to differences of historical development and present conditions, African liberationist movements in many other parts of the continent have not found allies in their struggle among other population groups, unreservedly

accepting equality, self-government, independence and democracy as their programme, is unfortunately misunderstood or distorted by the Africanists to imply that they oppose such alliances on principle. Nothing could be further from the truth. Africa and its peoples have suffered too much in the past from racialism and the "master race" ideology to adopt any such dangerous doctrines. Nothing has brought greater credit to the A.N.C. in the eyes of Africa and the world than its steadfast refusal to respond to the vicious persecution of the Nationalists and their predecessors in the Union Government by a blind and irrational "anti-Whiteism". It has shown the African people to be larger-minded than, and morally superior to, their oppressors; it strikingly refutes the ridiculous claims of "White South Africa" about alleged African "immaturity" and "unreadiness for self-government".

The isolation and repudiation of the Africanists became more complete with their open sabotage of the Congress cause after the National Workers' Conference of March, 1958. The A.N.C. and the other Congresses had decided to demonstrate during election week against the undemocratic travesty of a "General Election" which debarred the majority from any participation. All the forces of oppression were mobilised against the proposed demonstration. The Prime Minister threatened retaliation "with the full might of the State". The United Party called upon the Government to take firm action against Congress. The police force, the Native Affairs Department, and the army were called into action against the proposed general strike. Newspapers, ranging from the Nationalist and United Party dailies down to the so-called 'Bantu' press, preached continually and vociferously against Congress. Employers of labour and Verwoerd's "loyal chiefs" added their threats and warnings.

When the Africanist leaders Madzunya and Leballo joined in this all-out campaign against the people, they were hailed in the daily papers as "the most responsible and powerful Native leaders". Overnight they had become heroes to the upholders of White supremacy. And overnight they forfeited whatever small respect or confidence they might still have enjoyed within the ranks of Congress.

Congress is a broad and tolerant organisation, firmly wedded to democratic principle and refusing to impose any single ideology upon its members. But, at the same time, the A.N.C. is not merely a debating society, and cannot tolerate open sabotage of its struggle. The National Executive promptly expelled Madzunya and Leballo for their treacherous activities, and it is notable that this action was warmly applauded by branches throughout the country. It was the end of the Africanists' noisy career in Congress. True, ignoring his expulsion, Mr. Madzunya announced himself as a "candidate" for the position of President of the Transvaal at the November conference in Orlando. And true to form, his clique, attended by a number of armed supporters, came to Orlando hoping to repeat its tactic of smashing the conference. But this time the Congress membership was ready for him, and in no mood to tolerate any further mischief. When they saw

they were outnumbered, the Africanists suddenly withdrew, and, as we have, seen, announced their "secession". It was a damp squib.

For a few days some newspapers tried to build up the "major split" in Congress as a sensation. It soon became apparent, however, that the departure of this faction had strengthened the organisation, not weakened it, and that they commanded no support inside or outside Congress. The "sensation" petered out. The national conference of Congress in December proved to be a remarkable demonstration of the confidence of the people in the present leadership, the Freedom Charter, and the Congress alliance.

For, however much free publicity the Africanists may receive in the anti-Congress press, they are not likely to succeed in building any stable organisation or win much support for it, still less offering any serious challenge to the leadership of the people by the African National Congress. Many of them are not really serious.; they handle "politics" like professional browsers, as though the South African struggle will be resolved in a study. They use Africanism as a sort of escape from the discipline, the hard slogging day-to-day work, and the possible personal dangers which face the ordinary Congress member. Pride or conscience will not allow them to withdraw from politics altogether, so they think the best thing is to play safe, become sofa critics of Congress, and use revolutionary language occasionally at Conference, safe in the knowledge that the Government will not take any action against them.

Yet, these truths should not blind us to the fact that there are men and women amongst them who genuinely believe that the salvation of our people lies in a fanatical African racialism and denunciation of everything that is not African. And such a policy is not without its potential mass-appeal.

It would be unrealistic to pretend that a policy of extreme nationalism must, in the nature of things, always be unpopular. The people are quick to detect the insincerity of the mere demagogue, and they have confidence in the courage and wisdom of their tried and trusted leaders. But in a country like South Africa, where the Whites dominate everything, and where ruthless laws are ruthlessly administered and enforced, the natural tendency is one of growing hostility towards Europeans. In fact most Africans come into political activity because of their indignation against Whites, and it is only through their education in Congress and their experience of the genuine comradeship in the struggle of such organisations as the Congress of Democrats that they rise to the broad, non-racial humanism of our Congress movement.

With a State policy of increasingly barbaric repression of the African people; with the deliberate destruction of every form of normal human contact between people from different population-groups; and with the systematic banning and isolation of the convinced and fervent anti-racialists among the Africans from political activity, there is no knowing what the future will hold.

The Africanists have thus far failed, but their mere appearance is an urgent warning to all democratic South Africans. The Africans have set a wonderful example of political wisdom and maturity to the rest of the country, but they are not perfect, any more than any other community of men and women sorely beset. In certain circumstances, an emotional mass-appeal to destructive and exclusive nationalism can be a dynamic and irresistible force in history. We have seen in our own country how - decade after decade - the Afrikaner people have followed yet more extreme and reactionary leaders. It would be foolish to imagine that a wave of Black chauvinism, provoked by the savagery of the Nationalist Party (and perhaps secretly encouraged and financed by it too), may not some day sweep through our country. And if it does, the agony will know no colour bar at all.

DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST PROCLAMATION OF REPUBLIC

Answers to questions by *Drum*, May 1961¹⁸

[*Drum* asked several non-European leaders for answers to three questions concerning the planned demonstrations. The following are answers of Mr. Sisulu.]

Question: Do you advocate peaceful demonstrations for May 31?

Answer: The time has come for the South African people to demand a big change. We cannot allow the Nats to continue to disregard call for a non-racial democracy.

Question: What form should the demonstrations around Republic Day take?

Answer: This has been dealt with by the official spokesmen of the campaign. The withdrawal of labour would be most desirable and would seem to be what the people want.

Question: What aim should the demonstrations – against a republic on which our people have not been consulted – aim at?

Answer: We aim to rouse public opinion at home and in countries overseas against the callous attitude of the Nationalists. The people have a right to use the best methods to impel the Government to pay attention to their quite reasonable demands.

¹⁸ *Drum*, Johannesburg, June 1961

BROADCAST ON THE CLANDESTINE ANC RADIO, JUNE 26, 1963¹⁹

Sons and Daughters of Africa:

I speak to you from somewhere in South Africa.

I have not left the country.

I do not plan to leave.

Many of our leaders of the African National Congress have gone underground. This is to keep the organisation in action; to preserve the leadership; to keep the freedom fight going. Never has the country, and our people, needed leadership as they do now, in this hour of crisis.

Our house is on fire.

It is the duty of the people of our land - every man and every woman - to rally behind our leaders. There is no time to stand and watch. Thousands are in jail including our dynamic Nelson Mandela. Many are banished to remote parts of the country. Robben Island is a giant concentration camp for political prisoners. Men and women, including my wife, rot in cells under Vorster's vicious laws to imprison without trial. Men wait in the death cells to be hanged. Men die for freedom.

South Africa is in a permanent state of emergency. Any policeman may arrest any South African - and need not bring him to trial. People may be hanged for appealing to the United Nations to intervene. Under the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, the pass laws will turn children into orphans, wives into widows, men into slaves. We must intensify the attack on the pass laws. We must fight against the removal of the Africans from the Western Cape. We must reject once and for all times, the Bantustan fraud. No act of Government must go unchallenged. The struggle must never waver. We the African National Congress will lead with new methods of struggle. The African people know that their unity is vital. Only by united action can we overthrow this Government. We call on all our people to unite and struggle. Workers and peasants; teachers and students; Ministers of Religion and all Churches. We call upon all our people, of whatever shade of opinion. We say: The hour has come for us to stand together. This is the only way to freedom. Nothing short of unity will bring the people their freedom. We warn the Government that drastic laws will not stop our struggle for liberation. Throughout the ages men have sacrificed - they have given their lives for their ideals. And we are also determined to surrender our lives for our freedom.

In the face of violence, men struggling for freedom have had to meet violence with

¹⁹ Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (eds.) *From Protest to Challenge*, volume 3, pages 759-60.

violence. How can it be otherwise in South Africa? Changes must come. Changes for the better, but not without sacrifice. Your sacrifice. My sacrifice.

We face tremendous odds. We know that. But our unity, our determination, our sacrifice, our organisation are our weapons. We must succeed! We will succeed!

Amandla!

EVIDENCE IN THE RIVONIA TRIAL, 1964: EXCERPTS²⁰

SISULU: "Since its inception, the ANC adopted a democratic policy. That is, it advocated that there was room in South Africa for all racial groups which existed. It advocated that it should participate in the Government councils of this country. This policy was clearly stated in a document drawn up during the war years in 1943. The document was called 'African Claims'. The drawing up of this document was inspired by the Atlantic Charter which was proclaimed then, which inspired many nations of the world that all peoples, irrespective of their colour, will have a future and a stake in their respective countries... (The committee that drafted the document) was the cream of the African leadership, leading intellectuals, leading businessmen, conservatives and communists, all united by their desire to achieve freedom for themselves and for all the people who have made South Africa their home...

ADVOCATE BRAM FISCHER (DEFENCE COUNSEL): Now, Mr. Sisulu, as a background to what eventually made the ANC agree to permit sabotage, what happened to all those efforts which had been put forward in 1945?

SISULU: Well, I'd like to mention that both in policy, programme and practice, the ANC adopted the most reasonable and sober attitude for the unity and harmony of its citizens... but the Europeans of this country, through their political representatives, were not prepared to accept the line we have chosen to a peaceful settlement of all problems by negotiations. Instead they chose to make South Africa an armed camp... With the banning of meetings, banning of organisations and suppressing of all legal methods, it was not possible for Africans to accept this situation. No self-respecting African would accept this situation...

The Africans in South Africa are among the best informed about events, particularly in their own country. (By 1960) they were aware that in Africa, one country after another was getting freedom and that the ANC, although it was one of the oldest organisations, was not coming anywhere near their cherished ideals. It did not surprise some of us that the people should become impatient... I was myself convinced that civil war would eventually become inevitable unless the Government

²⁰ From: Benson, Mary (ed.) *The Sun will Rise - Statements from the Dock by Southern African Political Prisoners*. London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1981.

changed its policy... I felt that in the interest of my own people it would be better that we should bring about a state of affairs whereby such violence would be controlled...

....

DR. PERCY YUTAR (PROSECUTOR): ... that is your solution of the problems of this country - the concept of black and white co-operation?

SISULU: Oh yes. We have absolutely no doubt that as a feasible proposition it is the only answer - no other. The question of what Africa says or anybody else is not the real issue. The question is, what do we feel in this country?

YUTAR: And yet the rest of Africa - I am putting it a bit too high, but many States of Africa are the countries to whom you have appealed for assistance, military and financial?

SISULU: Yes, that is correct.

YUTAR: And they are the countries that are supporting you militarily and financially?

SISULU: In spite of our policies...

YUTAR: And they are the countries who are against this concept of partnership between black and white ?

SISULU: Yes.

YUTAR: And notwithstanding that, you still say that can be the position in this country?

SISULU: Of course. I am saying that the position is decided by the people of South Africa, not the people outside... It merely emphasises the difficulties, and the problems of our organisation, of our policy, and yet we are prepared to stand by it. We educate other people in this country and abroad, that the only solution in South Africa is living together of black and white, and no other...

YUTAR: Sisulu... perhaps it is pertinent at this stage just to ask you this: if eventually the non-Europeans got control of the country, what would be the position if the responsible leadership made a few more mistakes and dropped a few more bombs in houses of the whites?

SISULU: Well, on the question of responsibility insofar as this line is concerned, it is not a question of colour. Europeans have done worse things in this country, they have bombed each other.

YUTAR: I am talking about the responsible leadership that you have referred to that made mistakes - what if they cut away some more railway lines ?

SISULU: I said that the question of being irresponsible is not a question of colour. The leadership of the ANC has demonstrated for the last fifty years that they are most responsible.

YUTAR: Most responsible?

SISULU: Oh yes.

YUTAR: And notwithstanding it, you gave your benign blessing to the creation of *Umkhonto* and allowed them *carte blanche* to commit acts of sabotage ?

SISULU: Very much against our feeling. We have tried, by all means, not to get into this situation . . .

THE COURT: And you also have a duty to persuade the people that they are oppressed, is that so?

SISULU: If it's so, I don't know if it's merely a question of persuading the people. It would be a strange thing that the Africans in South Africa are the only people who do not know that they are oppressed....

YUTAR:... The police don't arrest indiscriminately.

SISULU: They arrest many people indiscriminately. For no offence people have been arrested.

YUTAR: Would you like to make a political speech?

SISULU: I'm not making a political speech, I'm replying to your question.

YUTAR: How do you know they arrest people innocently?

SISULU: I know.

YUTAR: How do you know?

SISULU: They arrested my wife, they arrested my son... They arrest other people.

YUTAR: Yes, without any evidence whatsoever?

SISULU: What evidence?

YUTAR: I don't know, I'm asking ...

SISULU: I have been persecuted by the police, Special Branch. If there is a man who has been persecuted it's myself. In 1962 I was arrested six times. I know the position in this country.

YUTAR: You do?

SISULU: I wish you were in the position of an African. I wish you were an African to know the position in this country!

“WE SHALL OVERCOME!”: AN ESSAY WRITTEN IN PRISON in 1976²¹

[This essay was written by Mr. Sisulu in prison in 1976, at the suggestion of Mac Maharaj, and was smuggled out by the latter on his release. It was published in 2001, along with essays by Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and four other prisoners.]

Every organisation engaged in national liberation constantly has to isolate, analyse and search for solutions crucial both to its continued existence and growth, and to the success of the struggle as a whole. Stripped to its bare essentials the national liberation struggle reduces itself to a struggle for political power - a struggle born of irreconcilable interests. No ruling class has ever relinquished power voluntarily and we dare not bury our heads in the sand in an effort to escape the problems simply because they appear intractable. Indeed, there are no insoluble problems. Some problems may appear so: more often this is so not because a problem is insoluble but rather because it has been posed incorrectly.

In a certain sense, the story of our struggle is a story of problems arising and

²¹ From Mac Maharaj (ed.), *Reflections in Prison*. Cape Town: Zebra (Division of Struik Publishers) and Robben Island Museum, 2001

problems being overcome. It is understandable that many of the problems should generate much controversy and emotion. However cool and detached we may strive to be in our analyses, the fact remains that we are deeply involved and interested parties and the solutions we adopt are solutions we ourselves have to implement. It requires a strong sense of revolutionary discipline for one to implement with zeal what one has vigorously opposed and disagreed with in debate. While it is not always possible to control the degree of emotion generated, it is possible and necessary to maintain a sense of proportion. Problems should be examined against the background of the nature of our struggle and in terms of their interactions with the general struggle if they are to be seen in their true dimensions.

Furthermore, in evolving solutions we should avoid that style of thinking that gravitates towards 'final solutions'. There are no final solutions. Solutions must always be open to modification and adjustment on the basis of experience and fresh evidence - sometimes they may even have to be discarded. It is in this spirit that an attempt is made here to isolate and examine certain problems that are important to our struggle.

The central feature of the revolution in South Africa is that it is an African revolution. In the first place, the oppression and exploitation of the African people is the pivot around which the whole system of white supremacy revolves. There are other oppressed minority national groups in South Africa, and to characterise our revolution as an African revolution is not to gloss over the oppression of the other national groups, nor is it to ignore or minimise their contribution to the unfolding revolution. To speak of the African revolution is to emphasise a fundamental aspect inherent to the structure of oppression, namely, that the liberation of the African people is a necessary condition for removing the oppression of all other national groups in South Africa. This is not the case if the liberation of anyone or several of the oppressed minority national groups is characterised as the pivot. The concept of the African revolution reaches into the heart of the mechanism of the system of oppression as it obtains here and projects a vision of a free South Africa, which is assured of the complete elimination of national oppression of all groups. That such a broad expanding outlook is inherent in African Nationalism is not derived from idealistic notions born out of abstract considerations, but from the concrete conditions giving rise to it. It is verifiable by an examination of African Nationalism as an historical process both in South Africa and in Africa as a whole. Different organisations in the national liberation movement in South Africa have reached towards this facet of our revolution in different ways and with varying degrees of accuracy. Nowhere has it been so tersely and compellingly set forth as in the Freedom Charter, which embodies the basic policy of the revolutionary forces headed by the African National Congress.

Ours is not an isolated struggle. If it were, the prospects of victory in the near future would be gloomy - not so much because of the inherent strength of the white minority racist regime but because of the underpinning it enjoys from the most reactionary imperialist powers. This support flows out of objective relationships. But reality is many-sided and the very conditions that create a community of interests between the ruling classes in South Africa and the imperialist powers also result in

the inextricable interweaving of our movement with the national liberation and other progressive movements throughout the world. Such a perspective fully justifies the conviction that the enemy cannot long forestall the victory of our revolution.

The development of capitalism stamps the character of our struggle and is central to the creation of these interconnections. Plunder and loot from the colonies played a significant role in the process of primary capital accumulation that led to the emergence of capitalism. As capitalism established itself as the dominant mode of production in several Western European countries its dependence on the colonies increased. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the first phase of industrialisation of the Western world was nearing completion and capitalism entered the phase of imperialism. This phase marked significant changes in the structure of capitalist economies. Inter-imperialist rivalries became a dominant feature, with embittered struggles for investment outlets, markets and sources of raw materials. Capitalism spread its tentacles to every nook and cranny of the globe, tying up the whole world in a tight system of ruthless oppression and exploitation.

However harsh and evil the consequences of this process, it was in the nature of capitalism to unleash forces that made our world one world. The insatiable appetite of this system effected this without design and without regard to the fate of peoples and nations. Autarchic economies were destroyed, nations and peoples subjugated. Imperialism and colonialism created a unified world in their own image - a world enslaved to serve the interests of the ruling classes of a handful of imperialist countries.

Wherein lies the unity of the world?

Within the imperialist states capitalism forged two nations - the exploiters and the exploited - eyeing each other across the chasm of social revolution. Across state boundaries, imperialist states, driven by the common pursuits of wealth through exploitation at home and abroad, have been and continue to be locked in rivalries that are the powerhouse of world wars. The trade routes from the colonies and former colonies to the imperialist states, along which the superprofits are drained out of these areas, are sign-posted with national and social revolutions. The epoch of imperialism ushered in by the First World War is the epoch of wars, of national and social revolutions.

The unity of the world is not to be found in any community of interests between imperialists, nor can it reside in any hopes of harmony between oppressed and oppressors. The unity of the world is embedded in the forces striving against exploitation and oppression, against imperialism. The struggles of the oppressed and exploited, issuing in national and social revolutions, are giving birth to a new world, the world of peace and friendship between the peoples of the world, of freedom and national independence. And every blow struck against oppression and exploitation hammers out the new era. These are the forces whose community of interest rests neither on rivalry nor oppression nor exploitation, but on the realisation of humankind's humanity.

The period that marked the crisis of capitalism and manifested its inherent tendencies towards stagnation, economic and political crisis, and imperialist

conflagrations, also ushered in the era of triumphant national and social revolutions. Even as the world of imperialism signalled its bankruptcy with the senseless slaughter of the First World War, the new world heralded its birth with the triumph of the October Revolution of 1917 - a revolution which, in an age of great social and national revolutions, still stands as perhaps the greatest revolution of all times. The October Revolution broke the chain with which imperialism girdled the world and gave socialism, whose core is the drive to end the exploitation of man by man, a home. A lone child in a singularly hostile world, it survives not only through the blood, sweat and tears of the Soviet people, but also because it was founded on the unity of all oppressed and exploited peoples within and outside the Soviet Union. That this unity was the essential condition for its triumph was clearly understood and stated by V.I. Lenin, the architect of the October Revolution and one of the world's greatest revolutionary strategists and tacticians.

The triumph of the October Revolution became the opening shot of the worldwide socialist and anti-colonialist revolutions. How significantly the world has changed since then! In many ways the Second World War was but a continuation of the First World War and marked a new peak in inter-imperialist rivalries. At the same time it differed radically from the First World War in that revived German imperialism, under the banner of Nazism, set out not only to re-divide the world and establish its dominance, but to reshape the world on an avowedly anti-democratic basis. This altered the character of the war and stamped the efforts of the Allied powers a defence of democracy.

Two important consequences attended the aftermath of this war. These were the emergence of the socialist camp and the growth of the national liberation movements, with the ultimate emergence of independent states in the former colonial areas. That these two consequences should be linked is not fortuitous. The two processes are intertwined and inseparable. Both developments reinforce each other and together continue to reshape the world.

Thus by the end of the Second World War the liberation of the colonial peoples had become a practical proposition. The oppressed peoples by their own struggles placed the issue of national liberation on the agenda and in the post-Second World War world the flames of freedom spread like a veld fire, leaping across continents. The age of independent national states in Asia, Africa and Latin America became a reality.

The interconnectedness of these two processes has been highlighted at the Bandung Conference of 1955, the Afro-Asian [Peoples'] Solidarity Council that followed, and the Tri-Continental Conference held in Havana in 1966.

In this process it is useful to see the advance of the national liberation struggle on the African continent and the emergence of independent African states in terms of a continent-wide African revolution. By doing so we do not in any way overlook the interrelations with, and the unity of, the national liberation struggles throughout the world, as well as with the advance of the socialist camp. On the contrary, on precisely this basis, we are able to give meaning to the idea of the African revolution by highlighting the particular features that are present in the African revolution.

From its inception the national liberation struggles in Africa have been marked by the recognition by all leading organisations that the liberation of the African people is a single process. This fact has been translated into practical form through the series of pan-African conferences that originated from a meeting in 1900. It has been carried through into the phase of independent African states by the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU seeks to harmonise the interests of the independent states and thereby to facilitate their progress and development, and also to liberate the remaining areas of Africa that are still trapped in the jaws of colonialism and white minority racist regimes.

Furthermore, despite the diversity of colonial and imperialist powers that have made our continent their hunting ground, the common history of our peoples is imprinted with a particularly traumatic experience, which colonialism seems to have earmarked for our people - the wholesale slave trade that ripped open and destroyed the fabric of African societies. Slave-owning societies have existed before in many parts of the world and are related to a particular stage in the historical evolution of human society. But the slave trade that transported millions of our people into slavery in North and South America in particular, and killed many more millions in the process, was associated with developing capitalism and was practised on a scale that has never been equalled.

Finally, while it is common practice for the colonialists and imperialists, in the process of subjugating and maintaining their rule over the colonial peoples, to denigrate the culture of our peoples, in our continent this practice was carried to its ultimate limits. In Africa, imperialism completely denied our cultural past and history and applied the theory of race superiority so as to stamp our peoples with the mark of permanent inferiority.

This, of course, happened to be convenient as a device for rationalising the most inhuman practices to which our peoples were subjected. In the period of the slave trade, those who profited from trading in human beings therefore lived with intact consciences. So, too, did those who built plantations on slave labour. (It is no accident that the Deep South of the USA remains even to this day one of the bastions of racist views.) And, even after the end of the slave trade, this pernicious racist doctrine was entrenched in southern and central Africa.

Again this was no accident. Imperialism requires a social base in each dominated area to serve as its agent and to facilitate its exploitation of the people. It has never hesitated to recruit such forces from the local population. But in the case of that curve stretching from the south up to central Africa and culminating in what has long been known as the 'White Highlands' of Kenya - areas which proved climatically suitable for permanent white settlement - it was not necessary to recruit these forces from the African people. That social base was available in the form of white settlers at a price that was to make these white settlers and their descendants the world's repository of racism.

The African revolution matured rapidly in the post-war period and resulted in a number of independent states. The price paid for independence has not been small and each state's road to independence is rich with experience and sacrifice. Fired by

the desire for freedom, our peoples have joined the forces of progress and are engaged in translating their political independence into meaningful social and economic terms. This process continues unabated.

Even as this elemental force swept through our continent, the colonialist and white minority racist regimes in southern Africa were shaken by the struggles inside these areas. The Portuguese colonialists, backed by NATO arms, clung to power and forced the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau into a long war for freedom. British imperialism, temporised in Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, put forward elaborate schemes for a Central African Federation in search of formulas to assure the whites of their privileged position. It ended by yielding to the liberation forces, which established Zambia and Malawi, but succumbed to the politics of skin colour and racism in Southern Rhodesia. Thereby it paved the way for the illegal racist regime of Smith that has forced Zimbabweans to an armed struggle for freedom. South Africa, long wishing to swallow Namibia, found its path checked by the people of Namibia and the progressive forces of the world, but holds on to the veto in the United Nations Security Council of the US, French and British governments. Nevertheless, the Namibian people have taken their destiny into their own hands and have taken to arms too. And South Africa, bastion of racism in Africa, turned a deaf ear to the horror of the post-Hitler world, instituting a reign of terror in an effort to crush the liberation forces thereby driving our people onto the inevitable path of the armed struggle.

The African revolution that swept through the continent knocked at the doors of southern Africa. The doors remained bolted. It has become the historic mission of the African revolution to batter these doors down and force entry.

When we in South Africa grasp the content of our revolution in this way, we are able to recognise its inner unity with the continent-wide African revolution, as well as with the anti-colonial and progressive struggles throughout the world. To see our revolution in terms of its nature and these interconnections is of special importance in our situation. It is only in this way that we can reach towards an understanding of what is unique and particular to our situation, and what is general to the national liberation and other progressive movements. This is also the basis on which we can absorb the experiences of the struggles in other parts of the world and creatively adapt these in charting the path of the African revolution. Such an understanding also helps us to recognise who are our friends and who are our foes.

In broad outline the main features of the way in which society in South Africa is ordered may be set out as follows:

- The South African economy is a developed and industrialised capitalist economy with a developing machine tool sector and harnessing sophisticated modern technology.
- At the same time this economy is sharply etched with colonial features. Its industries, mines, agriculture and commerce are built and dependent on sweated black labour. Black workers, by legislative and administrative fiat, are confined largely to unskilled and manual jobs. Cheap black labour is the source of the super-profits

that make South African enterprises such an attractive proposition to both local white and foreign investors. The core of this labour force consists of Africans. Africans, and to a lesser extent Coloureds, provide the agricultural labour force. Mining is totally dependent on African labour, which is largely employed on a migratory basis. In industry and commerce, while Indians and Coloureds are granted limited opportunities in skilled jobs, the general norm is that black labour and African labour in particular is confined to manual and unskilled work. Equal pay for the same work is unheard of and the wage differentials are extremely wide.

- In all spheres the condition of black people is similar to that of oppressed peoples in the classical modern colonial set-up. They are politically subjugated, economically exploited, socially discriminated against and treated as inferiors.

- Political power is monopolised by the whites. The whites control the economy. Socially the life of the whites is so organised that blacks are admitted into it only to wait at their tables, nanny their children, and as domestic servants.

- The colonial model breaks down here in the sense that no foreign country remains as the colonising power. The whites in South Africa constitute this power. South Africa's capitalist class is drawn from its white population.

- At the same time, foreign investments play a substantial role in our economy, with British and US capital investments holding the field against more recent penetration by West German, French and even Japanese investment.

Where, then, does racism fit into this model? Racism in South Africa has deep roots going right back to the early days of colonisation by Europeans. We do not propose to make any lengthy examination of this phenomenon here. It is our purpose to stress that racism on its own can never survive as a significant force in the life of a country for long, unless it is buttressed by the way in which the material conditions of life are ordered. In South Africa this objective basis for the entrenchment of racism came about via imperialism's resort to the whites as the social base through which it set out to maintain its exploitation of our country. This provided the basis for racism to develop into and hold the dominant position it now occupies. The South African ruling class has barricaded itself by erecting social, economic, political, legislative and psychological barriers between white and black. Racism is the gospel to herd the whites into a *laager*. Racism serves to perpetuate the privileged existence of the whites, and apartheid, which is racism in its most virulent form, is the ideology founded on and giving expression to this privileged way of life.

It is this interplay between the way in which the material conditions of life of the whites is structured and racism that has made racism such a powerful and dangerous force in the life of South Africa. By means of it, the social and economic forces that would tend to bring about a closing of ranks between the blacks and

sections of the white population are muzzled and distorted, and every section of the white community is nurtured with the idea that its position is threatened by the blacks. Thereby racism has become a material force in its own right and prevents any sizeable section of the whites from being drawn into the national liberation struggle.

The appeal of racism, buttressed as it is by such a privileged way of life, places those few and brave whites who ally themselves with the black man's struggle under constant and tremendous pressures to return to the *laager*. Racism and the maintenance of the privileges the whites enjoy have become so hopelessly intermeshed in the life and thoughts of the whites that a reactive anti-whitism as a phase in the development of the political consciousness of individual blacks is almost unavoidable. The fact that non-racialism is a *leitmotif* in the programmes of almost all the forces in the struggle becomes an outstanding testimony of the maturity of their political and philosophical outlook and also points to deeper economic factors that are at play, and which rise above and beyond the constraints of racism.

If the objective conditions of the whites put blinkers on their vision and thereby confine their outlook to their short-term interest, the mainstream of thought among the blacks, and African Nationalism in particular, has consistently risen above such constraints.

This caste-like division of our society into white and black renders it all the more necessary for us to be clear at all times as to how and where we draw the lines between the enemy and the people in our revolutionary struggle. The drawing of such lines, if the process is to be meaningful and of service to the revolution, cannot be allowed to be simply an outlet for bottled-up emotion. It must rest on the prevailing objective conditions and the long-term forces at work within the system, while taking into account the views and actions of the different sections of the population.

Objectively we, as the oppressed people, possess by our overwhelming majority a strategic advantage over the enemy, an advantage that guarantees the victory of our revolution. The enemy, by drawing the lines between white and black and, on this basis, attempting to make inroads and sow divisions among the blacks, hopes thereby to assure itself, first, of the undivided loyalty and support of all whites, and, secondly, to weaken what it regards as the strategic strength of the revolutionary forces.

Monopoly of power has helped and does help the enemy to look with confidence to enjoin the support of the majority of whites. Whatever strata of the white population we look at, we can clearly mark out real and tangible benefits that accrue to it by virtue of the existing system. But to treat the matter solely on these terms is to hand to the enemy a gratuitous and unjustifiably inflated strength at the strategic level.

For any revolution to succeed, it is essential to pare away the strength of the enemy and to pin it down to the narrowest limits. Revolutions triumph not on the basis of absolute strength but on revolutionaries gaining a position of relative superiority over the enemy. Furthermore, signs of fissures and cracks in the unity of the ruling classes are one of the most reliable indicators of the stage a struggle has reached. Every reduction of the enemy's strength has a much greater effect than

absolute numbers. At this level there are two aspects to weakening the enemy - that of winning sections onto the side of the revolution and that of neutralising sections of the enemy camp. To achieve both we have to take account of the fact that white supremacy benefits all sections of the whites. This means we have to look more closely at the structure of their societies and the different forces and currents of thought among them to devise appropriate tactics.

This means that we must be alive to the contradictions among the white population group. Consider, for example, the National Party and its image as the authentic voice of a united Afrikanerdom. Significant changes are taking place among the Afrikaners. They have gained entry into and become an integral part of South Africa's capitalist class. This came about through the opportunities that opened up for them, particularly from the beginning of the Second World War. In addition, the National Party made use of political power since it became the ruling party in 1948 to speed up this process and force the entry of sections of the Afrikaners into a class that was once much the preserve of the English-speaking section. As a result, the Afrikaner community has become fully stratified and the National Party has begun to show signs of difficulty in projecting a convincing image to the Afrikaner that it represents all Afrikanerdom. It must continue to appear to serve all strata among the Afrikaner while in reality control of the National Party belongs to that section of Afrikanerdom that has become increasingly integrated in the capitalist class, either as fully fledged members or as bureaucrats and technocrats serving that class's interests.

The difficulties have not become unmanageable, but ripples are visible on the surface. Among the Afrikaners there has emerged a small group of intellectuals who are raising in their literature matters of a nature that are extremely disturbing to our rulers. There has grown a school of thought that actively espouses 'commitment' in literature, and the powers of the state and Afrikanerdom in general have reacted angrily. We need only refer, for instance, to the fact that Jan Rabie's *The Agitator* and Andre Brink's *The Saboteur* were refused publication. Brink's latest book was banned after publication. It is noteworthy that, in the field of literature, Afrikaner writers appear to be rapidly showing themselves more forthright and outspoken on questions of oppression and racial discrimination than their English-speaking counterparts, who have delved somewhat delicately into such questions over a longer period.

Furthermore, white students and other intellectuals have begun increasingly to question the foundations of apartheid. Perhaps this is partly a result of the fact that as students they are in a phase of life in which their consciousness of the economic and other benefits they derive from the system as whites is less constricting on their thoughts and actions and that in later life they eventually succumb to the corrupting influence of the system. But this is not an invariable law. The activities of these students are important - many will carry into their lives the lessons of these experiences. They show, as students, an awareness of the gap between themselves and their counterparts in other parts of the world, and are doing something about it. Recently even Afrikaner students at the Afrikaans universities have been showing signs of some independent thinking. They are pulling away from the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB), while at the English-speaking universities, the tendency towards a radical outlook and activities is becoming more pronounced.

At a general political level there are also signs of incipient, often very hesitant, new alignments among which we have the setting up of the Progressive Reform Party. South African whites show themselves extremely sensitive to every triumph in the anti-colonial struggle and their concern arising from the triumph of FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola has a touch of hysteria. The *laager* is increasingly proving to be a source of nail-biting insecurity.

All these are important signs. Small and insignificant as they may appear, our task is to look beneath them and find ways to exploit these fissures, widen them and whittle away the enemy's strength. This is supported by the experiences of other countries. There we are often able to see how developments in the colonies and the metropolitan countries interact to the advantage of the anti-colonial and the progressive forces in both countries. We have an example close to us in the recent triumph of the revolutionary forces in the Portuguese colonies in Africa and the democratic forces in Portugal. The experiences of the Portuguese soldiers in defending colonialism in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau were an important part in their awakening and their overthrow of the Caetano regime. In its turn the April coup in Portugal and its subsequent development considerably speeded up the victory of the liberation forces in the three colonies. Similarly, the struggle and triumph of the Vietnamese against the leading imperialist power showed a close interaction between the Vietnamese struggle and the anti-war forces in the United States. Vietnam won its freedom. Inside the United States the effects of the defeat are still at work in that society.

The enemy rallies the whites on the basis of their survival being at stake. This is false. What is at stake is their privileged position. The clearest way of reaching the whites (and all other national groups too) is for the liberation forces to explicitly state their position with regard to the whites. We recognise all people as belonging to our country and the Freedom Charter states this in no uncertain terms. This approach will help divide the enemy camp, for it exposes the falsity of its propaganda.

We can rally all sections of our people and make inroads into the white community by raising the banner of 'Destroy Apartheid', for this is the crucial and immediate task of our revolution. Along this path we will be able to work with the widest and most diverse forces among all population groups and link up with the anti-apartheid forces inside and outside government institutions. Those who fear that such a wide platform is purely negative misconceive the situation. They are correct in demanding that as the vanguard of the revolution we must place before the people positive goals, a clear vision of not only what we are against, but also what we are for. We hold that this is essential and that this is precisely what the Freedom Charter does.

With regard to the black people we wish to give attention to the divisive forces at work because these are the factors that prevent us from realising and giving effect to the potential strategic superiority that belongs to our revolution. Our emphasis will be to show the basis on which these divisive forces exist and to pinpoint the need for our constant and conscious effort to overcome them. In other words, we focus attention on the fact that such divisive tendencies are the direct product of the enemy manoeuvres.

At first sight, racism and the system of national oppression of all blacks objectively place all blacks into one camp. Whatever their class position, all blacks are denied the power to determine how our country is governed and are denied equality of opportunities. Nonetheless, while this is valid for the overall picture, the enemy has been unceasing in its efforts to drum racism into the thoughts and style of life of the blacks. We must face the fact that the enemy has made inroads. A vast array of measures that differentiate one black group from another is built into the apartheid system. While these measures were in existence long before the Nats came to power in 1948, the accession to power by the Nats heralded a steady increase in such measures. The basis of the differential treatment is the division of the black population into three groups: African, Coloured and Indian. In present-day South Africa differential wage scales apply to these three groups and jobs are reserved for one group or another. Coloureds and Indians may belong to recognised trade unions. African trade unions are not recognised by the law. Africans, Coloureds and Indians have to live in separate residential areas and go to separate schools and universities. These and many other measures provide an objective basis for the enemy to inject the poison of racism into our people. The manoeuvre is patent: let the different black groups see each other as threatening each other's position, isolate the different segments of the black people, drive them apart, detract their sights from the common enemy.

Whether between white and black or black and black, one of the ways in which the system indoctrinates the people and attempts to sugar-coat the pill of racism is to premise its differential treatment on the heterogeneity of the different population groups. The questions it evades are the questions that must be asked if we are to find our way out of this jungle: Who created this system? In whose interest was it created? Whom does the system benefit? The heterogeneity of the cultures of our people is our wealth, which ought to cross-fertilise and broaden the humanity of our people. Instead it is abused at the altar of white supremacy.

The enemy has also set out on a consciously designed path of dividing the African people along tribal and ethnic lines. Again, it bases its appeal on drawing fine distinctions of culture and tradition and tribal lineage and to hold out the promise of each ethnic group's destiny outside the framework of the whole. This is one side of its many-pronged design that lies behind the Bantustan policy. The aim is clear: divide the African people to deal with them piecemeal.

Finally, in its arsenal of divide and rule, we have the time-worn and world-wide technique of anti-communism. On a world scale, in our own lifetime, we have been witnessing how the reactionary forces of the world drummed up a crusade against the socialist countries through the Cold War. The real aim of the Cold War was not only to destroy the socialist countries, but also to halt the progress of the anti-colonial revolutions and to keep those countries that had gained political independence within the imperialist fold.

It is no longer open to doubt that the imperialists have long used the cloak of anti-communism to impede the struggles of the colonial and former colonial peoples. Many have been deceived by its appeal, but the passage of time continues to unearth incontrovertible proof. In the midst of the Watergate scandal and its aftermath is there

anyone who can point with confidence to any struggle of the oppressed and exploited and say: here the CIA kept out; here the CIA refrained from its notorious activities? The murder of Patrice Lumumba. The fascist coup in Chile. Numerous attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. There is no need to catalogue the instances. The hand of the CIA is visible.

In our own struggle the gospel of anti-communism is preached and used by both the racist rulers of South Africa and foreign imperialist powers. To give but one example of the latter: in the early 1950s, and even before the Nat regime dared to openly dub the ANC and its allies communist organisations, the foreign office of a well-known imperialist power had drawn up a list of 'communists' active in our organisation and treated our organisations as such. As for the white racist regime of South Africa, anti-communism has been a long-standing technique to divide our people and movements. To them every effort of the black people to liberate themselves is nothing but the work of 'communist agitators' and 'terrorists'. Its standard weapon for attacking, persecuting, banning, torturing and imprisoning freedom fighters is the Suppression of Communism Act.

Those who may be tempted to say that the racist regime in our country has so overplayed its anti-communist propaganda as to make it palpably unbelievable may have a point, but it would be dangerous to underestimate the extent to which the enemy indoctrination has penetrated our people's movements. We cannot ignore that much of the disunity among the organisations has been around the question of communism and communist participation in the struggle. John Vorster has already set out to present the presence of Cuban troops and of Soviet assistance given to the MPLA government of Angola as proof that communism is the threat to all Africa. Of course, Vorster is trying to deflect attention from the activities of his own racist regime and to breach African unity which has solidly opposed the Vorster regime. The presence of the two states, Mozambique and Angola, on our borders, whose ruling parties openly declare themselves Marxist, and the way in which South Africa has set out to whip up anti-communist hysteria around developments in Angola, may well turn out to be the opening phase of a new high peak in the racist's internally directed anti-communist crusade.

The power of anti-communism lies in the way in which even well-meaning people succumb to it. Thus the late George Padmore, knowledgeable as he was, in his book *Pan Africanism or Communism*, instead of setting out the African revolution in terms of Pan-Africanism versus imperialism and colonialism, posed the issue in terms of Pan-Africanism against communism.

The majority of the black people are wage earners in one form or another, and it remains true even for present-day South Africa that workers and peasants constitute practically the whole of the black population. The black working class is at the forefront of our struggle. We, in the national liberation movement, can neither ignore this nor close our eyes to the fact that Marxism explains the nature of exploitation in a way that enables the worker to give meaning to his condition. The ANC and its allies in the Congress movement have consistently supported and assisted the organization of black workers. The task of the national liberation movement is to unite all our

people, irrespective of their class positions. National liberation is our goal, the unity of all classes and strata the condition for its attainment.

This is not something peculiar to the South African situation. Other countries waging national liberation struggles have faced similar problems. Achmed Sukarno made one of the clearest statements on this matter in the early years of the Indonesian struggle for freedom. In an article published in 1926 and entitled 'Nationalism, Islam and Marxism' he examined the diversity of elements to be found in the Indonesian struggle. After isolating nationalism, Islam and Marxism as the predominant elements he asks: 'Can these three spirits work together in the colonial situation to become one Great Spirit, the spirit of unity? The spirit of unity which can carry us to greatness?' He was convinced that this was possible and concluded that 'the ship that will carry us to free Indonesia is the ship of unity'. The achievement of Indonesian independence shortly after the Second World War was a product of that unity. While Islam is hardly a significant force in our struggle, African Nationalism and Marxism are.

We would seriously endanger the success of our revolution if we were to allow anti-communism to destroy the basis of the strength of our liberation struggle. The experience of the ANC confirms the value of the co-operation of these forces and shows this as the firm basis for our strength and resilience.

Racism, tribalism and anti-communism are the three most dangerous impediments in the path of realising our strategic superiority over the enemy. They are part of the divisive armoury deployed against our struggle by the enemy. We have to wage a constant struggle to remove all trace of these divisive ideas among our people. In one form or another they divide our organisations and create disunity within them. Precisely because there is some objective basis for their existence, we cannot hope to eliminate them overnight. Thus racism can only be overcome with the triumph of the revolution. At the same time the very existence of such differential treatment shows that we must not allow our attention to be deflected from the source of our oppression and our common enemy. We must recognise and handle the problems arising within our ranks within the framework of contradictions among the people. That is to say, our struggle to overcome them must be founded on educating and persuading our people. Men and women are drawn into the struggle not as ready-made freedom fighters. They come into the struggle covered with the scars and mire of an oppressive society. Within our organisations and in the course of active struggle and constant political education, it is our duty to wash off the mire, heal the scars and make them steeled fighters for freedom. We live in a society permeated with racism, where tribalism and anti-communism are drummed into our people in a thousand ways. Even inside our organisations and sometimes, regrettably, in individuals holding high positions, vestiges of such thinking survive and bedevil our work. Such ideas are incompatible with our goal and we must never relax our efforts to rid our organisations of them.

One of the promising aspects in this connection is the emergence of Black Consciousness, which has been championed by the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and the Black People's Convention (BPC). That these organisations, the majority of whose members are African, have reached out and made Black Consciousness an idea which draws in all black people - Africans,

Coloureds and Indians - is a measure of self-confidence and increasing maturity of the awakening forces in our country. That most of their activists are students, products of the education in racially and tribally organised government schools and universities, shows how repugnant apartheid is to our people and how all the power of the enemy cannot overcome the long-term objective forces that have been and are shaping our people as one people, and our country as one country.

It would be appropriate to address a few remarks here to the specific question of the unity of the organisations in our struggle. The problems of unity of our people, unity of our organisations and unity within our organisations are interrelated. One of the essential standpoints of this article is that we are servants of our revolution, of our people, and whatever organisation we may belong to, we must accept that much of the disunity evident among the masses arises from the disunity of our organisations. Our task should be to enlighten the masses, not to confuse. Any organisation or member of an organisation who goes to the masses to vilify other organisations in the liberation struggle or uses arguments founded on racism, tribalism or anti-communism to gain the support of the masses, serves no other purpose than to confuse and sow disunity among the people, and thereby makes the task of unity between the organisations even more difficult to achieve. These, fortunately, are errors that the ANC has assiduously avoided. As far back as 1950 the ANC sought to bring about the unity of the organisations in the struggle and its record in pursuing this objective is second to none. The achievement of unity between the organisations would be a triumphant milestone on our road to freedom. However, we must be realistic in our expectations. Such unity cannot come about by the efforts of one organisation alone. It can only be the product of reciprocal action. The time is long past for speaking of the desirability of unity. We need to translate our desires into concrete terms. Our desires should be reflected in our actions. Our priorities should mark our realism. Our principal target must be: Destroy Apartheid!

We have a proud history of struggle behind us. Our people waged a long and bitter campaign of resistance from the earliest days of colonisation. Resistance was crushed by force of superior arms and organisation. The white man's conquest was made easier because our people had not reached the stage where the different tribes could be mobilised into one single mighty force, though there is evidence that already there were emerging individual leaders who were beginning to see the necessity for this. Resistance was crushed, but memories of those historic exploits remain to inspire us in our present struggles. In the present century too, we have accumulated a proud record. The path has never been easy. Moments in which we have been in a position to carry the fight to the enemy stand out as brief, brilliant flashes and beckon us to greater exploits.

We are living in one of the most difficult and challenging periods. Those short-lived days when, despite the enemy having driven our organisations into the underground, freedom fighters emerged in the dark night to unleash bombs that reverberated across the country are now part of history. Since then our struggle has been one of regrouping, reorganising and preparation, while the enemy has set out to execute a many-pronged offensive aimed at destroying not only our small tactical strength, but also our strategic superiority.

Someone who has been in prison throughout this difficult period cannot hope to make an adequate examination of the problems that have arisen. There are, however, two problems that lend themselves to some comment.

The Armed Struggle

The first of these problems relates to the decision to wage an armed struggle for the liberation of our people. In particular, two possible divergent views are isolated here, which, it is submitted, do not grasp the significance of the armed struggle in a balanced perspective. One rests on treating the armed struggle as a form of struggle that is exclusive of other forms of struggle. The other, which is the reverse side of the same coin, ignores the reality of the armed struggle, and exhorts us to seek the realisation of our goals solely through forms of struggle that would exclude the armed struggle. To see the path of our struggle in either of these exclusive terms is erroneous and harmful.

The armed struggle is not a form of struggle which, merely by decision in its favour or by its commencement, automatically becomes the dominant form of struggle. There exist at all times a multiplicity of forms of struggle that a movement exploits as part of its arsenal of weapons. Any form of struggle, including the armed struggle, can only emerge to dominance over time and as a result of consistent effort. Nonetheless, even if a given form of struggle emerges as a dominant one, this does not mean that other forms do not co-exist. What it does mean in such a situation is that the other forms come to occupy a subsidiary place and are essentially reinforcing the dominant one.

Several organisations in South Africa have committed themselves to the armed struggle. The leading organisation in this respect is the ANC and it is clear that its decisions and activities are dedicated towards raising the armed struggle to a position of dominance. It is also clear that the armed struggle has become a reality. Armed guerrillas of our liberation forces have for some years been actively engaging the forces of the enemy. This has happened in Zimbabwe, where forces of the Vorster regime were present to assist the illegal Smith regime, along the Caprivi strip and in Namibia. Our guerrilla forces are striving to overcome major difficulties in carrying the armed struggle right onto South African soil. There is every indication that this will become possible in the near future. Furthermore, the enemy recognises that the greatest threat to its continued rule emanates from our trained cadres who spearhead the armed struggle. All the efforts of the enemy are directed towards forestalling the growth of the armed struggle. In my view the armed struggle is destined to mature and steadily reach a position occupying centre stage in our struggle

Within South Africa one of the most unreal aspects of political activity among blacks is that such activity totally ignores the reality of the armed struggle. This comment stands despite awareness of the rigid censorship imposed by the Vorster regime and the obvious slant that press reports must carry to depict all clashes as either being fairy tales or having gone against the guerrilla forces.

Under these circumstances one of the easiest mistakes would be for voices to emerge advocating that the liberation organisations should devote their entire energy towards the armed struggle, and desist from other forms of political activity which, along these lines, are regarded as diverting our energy and resources. Such a view misconceives the nature of our struggle and the relationship between other forms of struggle and the armed struggle. It amounts to ignoring the cardinal fact that the armed struggle, as we understand it, must develop into a people's war if it is to succeed, and as such depends for its success on the support of the masses, not only in providing guerrilla recruits but in a thousand other ways. The masses at this stage can only be drawn in by activating them through their day-to-day struggles against the Vorster regime in a variety of forms that may be conveniently described as non-violent. Further, such a view leaves the movement bereft of any guidance to the masses in areas where no armed action is taking place. When the masses, for example, ask what they must do about a given Bantustan government in their area, is it seriously suggested that the answer that this would be solved by the coming armed struggle can be treated as adequate, however much it may be backed by lengthy exposition of our struggle and its future course?

The responsibilities of our organisations should be clear. Thus, for example, the claim that the ANC is 'the sword and the shield of the people' can only remain valid as long as this is evident not only from afar, but is felt by the masses in all spheres of their lives, where they are confronted with practical problems of both an immediate and a long-term nature.

As for the opposite view, little needs to be said here beyond what has already been said to expose its policy. The importance of activating the masses - and this remains the most effective way to their politicisation - must take into account that the

enemy has created a situation where the road to change by any means that excludes the armed struggle cannot lead us to our goal. The limitations of non-violent forms of struggle that, among other things, brought about the realisation of the need to prepare for and give effect to the armed struggle remain as valid today as they were then.

We face a powerful enemy and a long war for freedom and we would do well to draw lessons from the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people. They have faced the power of France and the power of the almighty US and triumphed. One of the lessons of the Vietnamese struggle was that their victory was as much a political as an organisational one, achieved by building and maintaining a mass movement. One of the ways in which they succeeded in building up this political machinery was by setting up a structure of interlocking self-help organisations throughout South Vietnam. Without efficient political machinery in the country our armed struggle will always be walking on one leg.

The Bantustans

Much of the confusion surrounding the relationship and interaction of the armed struggle and other forms of struggle becomes evident when another problem, namely, that arising from the Bantustans, is considered. The above should help us to find correct answers. From several points of view the enemy's thrust along the lines of its Bantustan policy gives rise to some of the most pressing problems facing us.

Faced with the growing power of the liberation movement, the rising threat of the armed struggle, and the hostility of world opinion to its policy, the enemy set out on a long-term manoeuvre that finds expression in its Bantustan policy. The beginnings of this manoeuvre lie in its attempts to substitute the policy of what it calls separate development for apartheid. Fundamentally this is no shift in policy and the objective is the same - the preservation of white supremacy. What it does reflect is a measure of growing subtlety and sophistication on the part of the Nat regime's methods. Instead of crudities like 'Keep the Kaffir in his place' there is the glib talk of each group's 'national identity'. And in selling their policy the method of the carrot and the stick has been prominent. On the one hand they bludgeon the popular organisations, imprison their leaders, torture and murder some, ban and banish others, and ban the organisations. Having terrorised and intimidated the people they appoint those among the blacks who are prepared to play ball and dangle the carrot of 'homelands', 'independence' and talk of consultations with 'national leaders'. The dishonesty of this manoeuvre is self-evident: the basis must always be that you can decide for yourselves, but only what we, the Nats, have decreed. They who destroyed the culture of the African people, pose here as preservers of our culture and lecture us on the need for the preservation of our culture and traditions. Dedicated to fashioning their lives and living on the backs of the black people, they pose as our benefactors guiding us to 'independence'. And if anyone should see in all this a gross insult to the intelligence of the African peoples, why, such a person can be nothing else but a 'communist', a 'terrorist' and an 'agitator'.

But the Nats have never had it all their own way. The introduction of the Bantu Authorities Act met with the overwhelming opposition of the African people, including the chiefs. Those who voluntarily accepted the scheme were few and far between. Within the atmosphere of terror and intimidation, the racist regime forced Bantu Authorities on our people. It owes its successes in this respect to its relentless determination to force its policies on our peoples, the resources it commands by virtue of its control of the state, the weaknesses of our own organisations, and the presence of elements among our people who voluntarily agreed to play the game according to the rules laid down by the Nats and who, under the tutelage of the racist regime, have been elevated to the status of 'national leaders'.

In pursuing its objectives the Nat regime trimmed its policy to meet the developing situation, sharpened its propaganda offensive, but always kept a firm grip on its aims. In particular, it has long been evident that at the highest level the Nats had allowed for the possible development of the Bantustans to so-called political independence. That such a move was possible within the framework of its policy would have been evident to anyone who closely attended to the significance of the colonial model, as it has been adapted to explain the basic set-up in our country. Faced with the reality of the armed struggle, the resistance of our people and the hostility of the world, it has had to accommodate the idea of independence.

Today there can be no doubt that 'independence' for the Bantustans is coming and this adds a new dimension to the problems that confront our movement. Within the 'politics of the Bantustans' it is hardly possible to conceive of any successful legal opposition that would make anti-independence its platform.

This must be acknowledged, although we understand the depth of the feelings we have against the machinations of the racist regime. With 'independence' for Bantustans the Nats will have gone a long way in dividing our people along ethnic lines. Furthermore, the Nats have sown seeds that may well become a time bomb that will explode in our midst long after they and white minority rule have been vanquished. They have determined that if they are to fall, South Africa should nevertheless be plagued with tribalism and regionalism.

Further, in a limited way, by 'independence' the Nats will have effected a *de facto* partition and dismemberment of our country. They would be only too pleased if such a partition could be accepted as a complete solution and that thereby the whole question of blacks in so-called 'white' South Africa could be willed away. But this is a pious hope out of joint with reality.

Our anger is all the more exacerbated because we realise that all the objective and long-term forces that shaped the development of our country and fashion its future show that the only path to the unity of its people, to a harmonious and peaceful way of life free of the poison of racism and tribalism lies in one South Africa, one nation, based on 'one person, one vote'. What strains and difficult, painful moments

'independent' Bantustans will set in motion until we reach that goal are matters that lie ahead in the future. We shall only experience their full impact when the revolution has triumphed over apartheid. Nonetheless our vision of the future enshrined in the Freedom Charter remains unshaken and we shall carve our future out of the reality that will be inherited by the revolution.

In the meantime, we have to shape our tactics on the concrete circumstances. Specifically, this means that we cannot close our eyes to the fact of 'independence' of the Bantustans, and prosecute our struggle as if 'independence' does not exist. Bleak as the foregoing picture may appear to some, there are real and genuine grounds to make us confident that 'independence' of the Bantustans will in the process generate even greater problems for the enemy, whatever the problems it generates for our movement. That this will occur is evident in the latent and manifest contradictions present in the set-up, and the full effect of these will only come into play if we base our tactics on exploiting them.

Can it be done? When the Bantustans were introduced we decided to boycott the elections and hoped to kill the enemy designs in the cradle. In this we failed. The boycott was ineffective because we were never really in a position to effect it. Perhaps one of the vital points we overlooked in opting for the boycott is that its success depends on the complete and undivided loyalty of the people. We must examine the lessons of that episode and the subsequent developments with regard to the Bantustans dispassionately and clinically, and especially with a view to discerning our own weaknesses and errors. On the basis of those lessons we shall be in a better position to formulate and devise our tactics towards 'independent' Bantustans.

The broad outlines are clear. One of the important tasks of the national liberation movement is to work ceaselessly for the unity of our people. The future of our country lies in the first place in the unity of the African people, and as much in the unity of all our people. We have to work for this everywhere, even in the Bantustans. We need to bring the people of the Bantustans into the field of unity. This means that, while we uncompromisingly expose the fraud of these 'stans' and attack those leaders of the stans who kowtow to the white racists, we should at the same time unceasingly educate and persuade the people in the Bantustans to realise that their future is intertwined with the future of all the people in our country. They must be made to realise that as long as the white racists are in power freedom would be a mere word. These regions, even after 'independence', would remain colonies of white South Africa.

The readiness of the white racists to grant 'independence' to the Bantustans has become possible for the ruling class of South Africa because it can be accommodated within the basic framework of maintaining the exploitation of our people. It is also reflected in the so-called 'outward looking' policy towards the rest of Africa that the Verwoerd-Vorster regimes have made much of in recent years. The kernel of this development lies in the fact that capitalism in South Africa has reached the point of expansion where it entertains imperialist ambitions for which overt and direct political control is not vitally necessary, as the experience of the other colonial and imperialist powers have shown. What it requires are investment outlets, markets, sources of raw materials and, in the case of the Bantustans, a reservoir of cheap

labour. Hence its adjustments directed towards the rest of our continent are aimed at opening them to South African imperialist penetration, under the guise of helping them. Many African states, by virtue of the extremely low level of economic development and depressed conditions of life, may find this tempting. While Africa as a whole is fighting to establish its economic independence in the face of neo-colonialism, South African imperialism hopes that it can slip in through the back door and secure Africa as its preserve of economic exploitation. In the same way, by granting 'independence' to nine Bantustans occupying a mere 13 per cent of the surface of South Africa, and marked by the absence of any real possibility of economic viability, the ruling class see in their 'independence' no real disappearance of the exploitative bondage to which our black people are condemned. This shows not only that the white racists remain the controllers of the real destiny of the people in those areas, but also that South African capitalism and South African racists pose an enormous threat to the freedom of the whole continent. Already white South Africa puts out feelers for a wider grouping of southern Africa. The African states have a magnificent record with regard to giving support and assistance and are continuing to give to our liberation forces. They have been relentless in pursuing the goal of freeing the whole of our continent from imperialism, colonialism and white minority racist rule. In helping to bring about the success of our revolution they are helping not only the oppressed peoples of South Africa, but also assuring the whole of our continent of a future in which the freedom of our continent will be meaningful to its peoples. As long as the white racists rule in South Africa, all Africans remains in danger.

We cannot abandon our peoples in the Bantustans to the dictates of the white racists and to those who choose to kowtow to them in the Bantustans. White South Africa, in granting 'independence' to the Bantustans, hopes to win them over against the liberation forces. Cutting ourselves off from the people in the Bantustans would amount to playing right into the hands of the enemy. We have an alternative to offer to the people in these areas. We shall be able to offer it if we accept the reality of the political 'independence' of those Bantustans and set out to utilise every means available to expose the contradictions that make their 'independence' unreal and show them that their future lies not in co-operation and friendship with the white racists but in supporting and assisting the liberation movement, whose real target remains the white racist regime of South Africa. The Bantustans must never be allowed to become the buffers of white South Africa.

This is not an easy task. In devising our tactics, we shall be required to tax our ingenuity to the utmost. We shall have to display flexibility without succumbing to opportunism. But it can be done. We have the organisations, the leadership and the cadres capable of seeing the web of ramifications and relationships that make our struggle so complex and capable of prosecuting the revolution by drawing on the extensive armoury of methods and forms of struggle that belong to the arsenal of revolutionaries. Within the Bantustans there exist forces that sympathise with our goals. One of our greatest mistakes is to see in every man and woman who works within these apartheid institutions an enemy of the revolution. Many are open supporters of apartheid. Yet many others in these institutions do not accept the regime's policy. Of these, many will undoubtedly develop vested interests and lose their way. But at all times we must be able to isolate and distinguish their motives and

link up with the anti-apartheid forces. Apart from those active in these institutions there are the masses in each of the Bantustans who are the storehouses of latent forces. We must activate them and draw them into the battle against apartheid.

In the course of a liberation war there are many long and dark days. The tiny nation of Vietnam, in a war that stretched over more than 30 years, faced many such bleak moments. But a people who want freedom, who are prepared to fight for it, are capable of super-human efforts. We face a powerful enemy, but never can it match the strength of the enemy the Vietnamese fought and vanquished. The hatred of our people towards apartheid is deep and enduring. The people are our strength. In their service we shall face and conquer those who live on the backs of our people. In the history of mankind it is a law of life that problems arise when the conditions are there for their solution.

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW TO *TIME*, OCTOBER 1989²²

Q. The police have just paid you a visit. Is there a problem?

A. That was General Viktor, the commander for this region. He was quite polite. He said it was time we wind things up. He doesn't want to be forced to act. I told him to give us a few days. By the way, General Viktor is the man who took my fingerprints 26 years ago. I said to him, "I remember you. I know you very well. You charged us." He said, "Yes, I remember."

Q. What have you discovered upon your return to Soweto?

A. What is new is the political consciousness. Even in the ordinary kid in primary school. The quality of the young people who are now handling the situation is very high. When we were running things, we never reached that stage.

Q. You met with Nelson Mandela just five days before your release.

A. When I saw him, I said, "You have never looked so bright." He looked tip-top. He told us the authorities had decided to release us and expressed his delight.

Q. Has Mandela discussed other matters with the government?

A. He told the government that there would be no solutions unless it met with the African National Congress and that it was the duty of the government to

²² From *Time*, weekly newsmagazine, New York, October 30, 1989. Scott MacLeod, Johannesburg bureau chief of *Time* magazine, interviewed Mr. Sisulu at his home in Soweto, three days after he was released from prison. He had spent more than 26 years in prison.

create the necessary conditions.

Q. Do you think F.W. de Klerk wants to negotiate with the A.N.C.?

A. I think he has such aims.

Q. Is Mandela in effect leading the anti-apartheid movement from prison?

A. The A.N.C. has an elected leadership. Whatever Mandela does, he first has to consult those leaders. Although the A.N.C. recognises Mandela's standing, he cannot direct the group. What he can do, and what he has done, is communicate with the movement, reporting what he has done or what is being said to him (by the government).

Q. When will Mandela be free?

A. I don't know. But it is his opinion that he will not be released this year.

Q. De Klerk speaks about a step-by-step process. Thus far he has permitted protests and released some political prisoners. Is this a reasonable approach?

A. As long as he is beginning to recognize the voice of the people, we do appreciate that. But we don't want a step-by-step process. We want immediate radical change.

Q. The government says anybody favouring peaceful change can participate in talks. Does the A.N.C. meet this condition?

A. That type of thing we dismiss with contempt. The armed struggle continues. Until the government negotiates a new situation, including the end of violence, there is no way of stopping it.

Q. Do you believe you will see black majority rule in your lifetime?

A. I think so, because of the interaction of various forces internationally and at home, including the conflict among Afrikaners themselves.

Q. What can you do to calm the fears of whites who are concerned about black domination?

A. This is old propaganda. The most important thing is to educate the Afrikaners and the whites in general. When Afrikaners meet the A.N.C., they all come back impressed.

Q. Can education work?

A. In my cell I was alone but guarded all the time by a (white) warder. He would make comments and become very hostile when he saw certain things about the A.N.C. on TV. I then took a chance to talk to him, to educate him. In the end, he understood.

**SPEECH AT A RECEPTION FOR THE PRESENTATION TO
HIM OF THE AWARD OF *PADMA VIBHUSHAN* BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, JOHANNESBURG, 15 JULY 1998**

[The *Padma Vibhushan* is a national award of India for exceptional and distinguished service in various fields of endeavour. Walter Sisulu was given the award for his struggle against apartheid. He was the fourth person who is not a citizen of India to be bestowed this award. The High Commissioner of India, Mr. L.C. Jain, presented the award to Mr. Sisulu at a reception in Johannesburg.]

Master of Ceremonies;
Your Excellency, High Commissioner of India to South Africa;
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Guests;
Comrades and Friends.

It is my honour and privilege to stand here today to receive this award. I stand here before you not as Walter Sisulu the individual. I stand here as Walter Sisulu, your humble servant.

I stand here today on behalf of Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani, Joe Slovo, Helen Joseph, Yusuf Dadoo and countless South Africans - unsung heroes and heroines - who have sacrificed life and limb for the common good, for the freedom that we are enjoying today.

I stand here on behalf of millions of South African men, women and children whose dream for a better life is the cause of our very being, the reason why we toil, be it in government, civil society, or indeed, the private sector. I therefore dedicate this award to all these masses and leaders!

Tempered in the crucible of common struggles against British colonial tyranny, relations between India and South Africa go back a long way.

The arrival in South Africa of Indian indentured labourers in the nineteenth century heralded the beginning of a long association between our two sister peoples which has produced giants of struggle of the calibre of Mahatma Gandhi and Drs. Naicker and Dadoo.

Forced to eke out a living under the most appalling conditions, and denied the most basic human rights, the Indian population of Natal soon began organising themselves into a resistance movement which culminated in the formation of the Natal Indian Congress led by Gandhi.

Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha inspired many African leaders of the time and contributed immensely to the crystallisation of the ideology of the South African National Liberation Movement led by the ANC.

Without any measure of exaggeration one can say that the defiance of unjust laws campaign of 1952 was inspired to a considerable measure by the philosophy of Satyagraha.

Upon his return to India, the Mahatma initiated the Indian Liberation Movement drawing much on his experience in South Africa.

In subsequent years, Indian South Africans like Dr. Naicker, Ismail Meer, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and many others were to play an important role in the South African Liberation Movement.

Shortly after her own emancipation from British colonial rule, India was amongst the first and very few countries at the time to openly declare at the United Nations her abhorrence at the system of racist colonial rule in South Africa and her support for the legitimate struggle of the people of our land for their freedom.

Today, four years after the historic victory of the ANC in the April 1994 elections, our two countries and peoples stand shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for a better life for the peoples of the world.

We share a common perspective on the demand for a just and equitable world order.

Needless to say, as our Indian brothers and sisters can testify, this new struggle is much harder than the one we fought before.

It is therefore imperative that those of us who have been charged with the heavy responsibilities of being the midwife of the transformation should remain focused, loyal and dedicated to the cause to which Gandhi, Nehru, Tambo and Dadoo so selflessly gave of themselves.

We owe it to these finest sons of India and South Africa to leave no stone unturned in strengthening the good political, social, economic, cultural and scientific relations which exist between our two countries.

A new millennium beckons.

What does this new era hold in store for the poor in Alexandra, Mumbai, Mowbray, Johannesburg and Calcutta?

Will the new millennium bring hope instead of despair to the "wretched of the

earth"?

Half the battle shall have been won if indeed our efforts as leaders of our countries, parties and communities can at least inspire hope in our people for a better life.

The battle shall have been won if by 2099 our great great grandchildren shall be able to enjoy the benefits of a good education and decent housing.

The battle shall have been won if by the turn of the next century poverty, squalor, degradation and disease shall remain but a distant and fading memory. We have it in our power to make the twenty-first century the Afro-Asian century. It is not beyond us to make the new millennium, the millennium of accelerated development, social justice and economic emancipation for all our people.

In conclusion, Master of Ceremonies, I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere gratitude to the President and Government of India for bestowing the *Padma Vibhushan* award on me.

I am humbled by this honour and feel somewhat uneasy about joining the exclusive club of outstanding personalities like King Wangchuk of Bhutan, Dr. Chandrasekhar of the USA and Ms. Mirabeen of Britain who have been similarly decorated in the past.

May I also seize this chance to salute India and her sons and daughters on the occasion of her 50th birthday!

Your sterling achievements in science, technology and many other critical areas of human endeavour in the past fifty years leave your enemies and the jealous green with envy and inspire confidence and pride in your friends, such as we are.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all of you for finding time to come and share this moment of glory with my family and I.

Long live friendship between the peoples of India and South Africa!