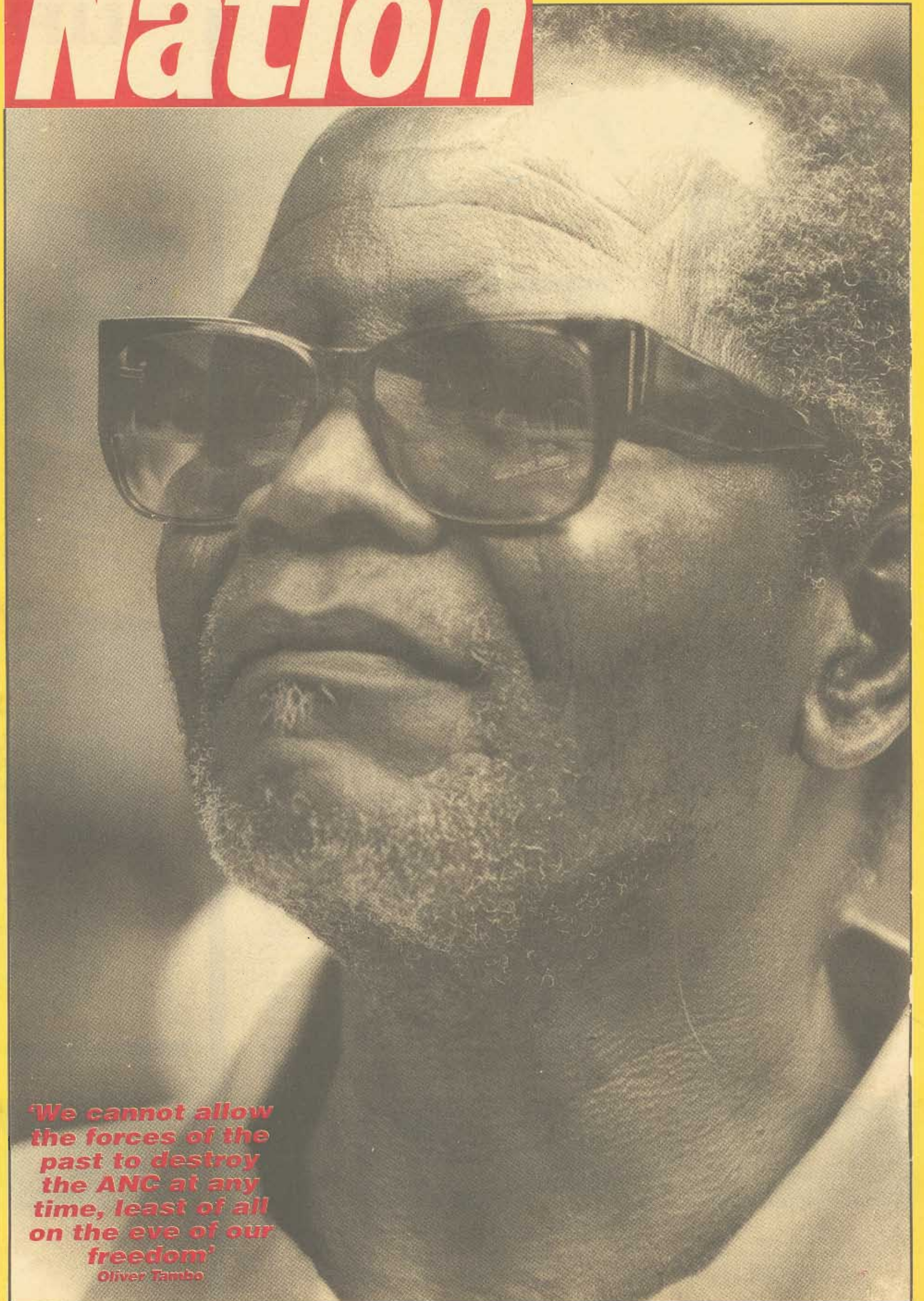


WELCOME HOME O.R.



New
Nation



*'We cannot allow
the forces of the
past to destroy
the ANC at any
time, least of all
on the eve of our
freedom'*
Oliver Tambo

OLIVER TAMBO: LIFE AND MISSION

AL2446/1613



"...LET US ACT TOGETHER FOR FREEDOM"

COMRADE Chairperson, leaders of the ANC and the MDM, compatriots all: This is a joyful day for all of us. It is a day of celebration for all the people of our country.

Those who have chosen to turn their backs on our festivities are the small minority who continue to cling to the anti-human concept and practices of racial arrogance, white minority domination and the super-exploitation of the masses of our people. Yet they too are part of our heritage. They are part of that history and continuing reality of our country which has meant and means the imprisonment of the best representatives of our people for a quarter of a century and more; the murder of thousands by the apartheid army and police and their secret murder squads, the detention of tens of thousands under the state of emergency, including the very young who ought to be free as the wind to enjoy the pleasures of Childhood; the millions who have suffered from the daily violence inherent in the apartheid system.

Our continuing obligation to uproot and obliterate the apartheid system contains within it the responsibility to release these slaves of the criminal ideology of white supremacy from the kraals in which they have incarcerated themselves.

In the end, they too must learn to celebrate freedom and not oppression; life not death; our common humanity and not the separation and definition of people according to racial and ethnic groups. But as of now we meet without this story told to celebrate a victory that truly belongs to all the people of our country as well as the countless millions throughout the world who are engaged in struggle to help us end the apartheid system and transform South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

Comrades, Walter, Govan, Kathy, Raymond, Elias, Andrew, Wilton and Oscar welcome to you all. Welcome back to the foremost ranks of the mass army that is engaged in an

heroic struggle to deliver our country and our people out of the long night of apartheid tyranny. Welcome back to active service within the collective leadership of the people's movement the African National Congress.

As we meet today to welcome back our leaders, we will without doubt also pledge ourselves to continue and intensify the struggle in whatever form the situation demands until freedom has been achieved. Of this nobody should harbour any doubt including the armed men and women who surround us as we celebrate. If FW de Klerk finally accepts the position the ANC and the masses of our people have upheld for decades by opting for peace with justice, he may yet earn a place among the peacemakers of our country, many of whom have had to bear arms or carry the honoured title of young lions as they prosecuted the struggle whose aim is precisely the attainment of peace and justice for all our people and for the entire region of Southern Africa.

We must state it here that if the Pretoria regime seeks a path to a genuine political settlement of conflict in our country, the way forward has been clearly spelt out in the Harare Declaration which you the people of our country and your organisation, the ANC, prepared and which now has the express support of over a hundred countries.

If, on the other hand, FW de Klerk continues to entertain the illusion that he can perpetuate Apartheid by the use of force and deceitful manoeuvres, he will need to know that thereby he condemns himself to disappear forever into the dim mists of history together with the criminal system he will have sought to defend.

We are strengthened by the knowledge that within the country we have a powerful cadre of leaders both young and old, men and women, black and white, who will together with the tried and tested stalwarts who have now been released, and

those yet to be freed as well as patriots who are in enforced exile, work in unbreakable unity to lead our people to the deeply cherished goals of national and social emancipation.

Your glorious rally today expresses exactly that unity, dedication and common resolve. We look forward to the day which is not far from now when we shall rejoin within the country as servants of the people to take further orders from these heroic masses as to what new task they give us to perform.

To the great masses of our people so well represented at this rally today we say: you know the task facing us better than anybody else. Continue to unite in action and to act in unity. Continue to be as resolute and fearless as you have been. Nelson Mandela and other comrades are still in prison. We must free them. The state of emergency remains, we must end it through our actions. Our organisations are still banned, we must unban them. The fratricidal violence in Natal continues. We must end it. Whatever obstacles some might place on our way as we seek to achieve this goal. The Conference for a democratic future is ahead of us, we must make sure it succeeds as a true parliament of all people and a point of focus to unite millions of our people in struggle to achieve our common goal. The apartheid system remains in place, we must make a final determined drive to abolish this crime against humanity and, like the sister people of Namibia, take the final steps to our liberation.

Compatriots, the future of our country is in our hands. At this historic moment, let us act together for freedom. Our common victory is in sight.

Revolutionary greetings to you all.
Amandla! Maatla!
All power to the people

Excerpts of a speech delivered on behalf of O.R. Tambo at the Welcome Home rally for released leaders October 1989

Born five years after the birth of the ANC, Oliver Reginald Tambo has spent most of his life serving in the struggle against apartheid OR, as he is popularly known by his peers, was born on 27th October 1917 in a rural town, Bizana, in eastern Pondoland in the Cape Province. His parents had converted to Christianity shortly before he was born.

1924 At the age of seven he began his formal education at the Ludeke Methodist School in the Bizana district and completed his primary education at the Holy Cross Mission. He then transferred to Johannesburg to attend St Peters College, in Rosettenville where he completed his high school.

1941 From St Peters, Tambo went to study at the University College of Port Hare, near Alice, where he obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1941. It was at Port Hare that he first became involved in the politics of the national liberation movement. He led a student class boycott in support of a demand to form a democratically elected Student Representative Council. As a consequence he was expelled from Port Hare and was thus unable to complete his studies.

1942 In 1942, he returned to St Peters College as a science and mathematics teacher. At St Peters he was to teach many of those who were later to play prominent roles in the ANC. Among these were Duma Nkomo who became the first Black South African Advocate of the Supreme Court and ANC Secretary-General.

1944 It was in Johannesburg that Tambo threw himself body and soul into the ANC. He was among the founding members of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944 and became its first national Secretary. He was elected President of the Transvaal ANCYL in 1948 and national vice-president in 1949.

1946 In the ANCYL, Tambo teamed up with Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Ashby Mda, Anton Lembede and others to bring a bold, new spirit of militancy into the post-war ANC. In 1946 Tambo was elected onto the ANC Transvaal Executive. In 1948 he, together with Sisulu were elected onto the National Executive Committee. This was of great significance to the ANCYL's effort to change the ANC.

1949 Instrumental in achieving this transformation was the Programme of Action, piloted by the ANCYL from branch level to the 1949 national conference of Bloemfontein. Tambo served on the committee that drew up the Programme of Action, which was adopted as national policy in 1949.

The Programme of Action envisaged the transformation of the ANC from an organisation that held public meetings and occasionally petitioned the government to a campaigning movement that would draw in large numbers of people through mass actions, involving civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and other forms of non-violent resistance. It was through these means that the ANCYL hoped to change the ANC from an organisation addressing the African elite to a movement of struggle involving the mass of uneducated and unskilled Black workers.

1952 Tambo left teaching soon after the adoption of the Programme of Action and set up a legal partnership with Mandela. The firm soon became known as a champion of the poor, victims of apartheid laws with little or no money to pay their legal costs. During the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws in 1952, Tambo was among the numerous volunteers who courted imprisonment by deliberately breaking apartheid laws. His law firm partner and colleague, Mandela was the national volunteer in chief.

1955 The South African government's attempts to suppress the Defiance Campaign resulted in one of the first mass trials in South African legal history. Though he himself was not among the accused, Tambo was close to the trial, it resulted in the designation of Sisulu and others found guilty of organising the Defiance Campaign as statutory "Communists". (That is, though they were not Communists, in terms of the violations of the Suppression of Communism Act they had committed, the judiciary declared them "Communists" in terms of the statute). One result was that in 1955 Sisulu, ANC Secretary-General, was banned in terms of the Act and ordered to resign his post as Secretary General. Tambo was appointed to fill the post, pending ratification by the annual conference. Hounded by banning orders and other restrictions, many of Tambo's peers were unable to attend the Congress of the People in June 1955. Tambo was not only on the platform but also served on the National Action Council which heeded the mobilisation for the COP. It was because of this role that Tambo found himself among the 156 accused in the marathon Treason Trial in 1956.

1956 In 1956, Tambo left the post of Secretary-General to become the ANC Deputy-President. In 1959 he, like many of his colleagues was served with a five year banning order. After the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, Tambo was designated by the ANC to travel abroad to set up the ANC's international mission and mobilise international opinion in opposition to the apartheid system. Working in conjunction with Dr Yusuf Dadoo he was instrumental in the establishment of the South African United Front.

The organisation merged with the ANC, together the external missions of the ANC, the PAC, the SA Indian Congress and the South West African National Union (SWANU). As a result of a successful lobbying campaign, the South African United Front was able to secure the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961. After this initial success, the SAUF broke up in July 1961.

1961 Assisted by African governments, Tambo was able to establish ANC missions in Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and in London. From these small beginnings, under his stewardship the ANC acquired missions in 27 countries by 1990. These include all the permanent members of the UN Security Council, with the exception of China, two missions in Asia and one in Australasia. The suppression of the 1961 Stay-at-home strike led to the ANC adopting the armed struggle as part of its strategy. Tambo was again an important factor in securing the cooperation of numerous African governments in providing training and camp facilities for the ANC. In 1965 Tanzania and Zambia gave the ANC camp facilities to house trained Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) combatants. In 1967, after the death of ANC President-General Albert Lutshuli, Tambo became Acting-President until his appointment to the Presidency was approved by the Morogoro Conference in 1969.

1970 During the 1970s Tambo's traversed the world, addressing the United Nations and other international gatherings on the issue of apartheid. He became the key figure in the ANC's Revolutionary Council (RC) set up at the Morogoro conference to oversee the reconstruction of the ANC's internal machinery and to improve its underground capacity. When Portuguese colonialism collapsed in 1975, the ANC stood poised to take maximum advantage of the geo-political changes. Angola offered camp and training facilities for MK, and the long-standing relationship with Prelimo enable the ANC to acquire diplomatic facilities close to South Africa.

1985 In 1985 Tambo was re-elected ANC president at the Kabwe conference. In that capacity he served also as Head of the Politico-military Council (PMC) of the ANC and as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto weSizwe.

1990 Tambo returns home after 30 years to join his comrades in the ongoing struggle for a free, democratic, non-racial South Africa.

During his years in the ANC, Oliver Tambo has played a major role in the growth and development of the movement and its policies. He is among the generation of African nationalist leaders who emerged after the Second World War and were instrumental in the transformation of the ANC from a liberal-constitutionalist organisation into a radical national liberation movement.



"It is our responsibility to break down the barriers of division and create a country where there will be neither whites nor blacks, just South Africans, free and united in diversity"



"1990 some say, is the year of change, the unbanning of organisations, the release of some leaders ... but are we moving forward to real change or dancing the foxtrot of one foot forward one foot backward?"



NELSON MANDELA

"Oliver Tambo is much more than a brother to me. He has been my greatest friend and comrade for nearly 50 years. If there is any amongst you who cherishes my freedom, Oliver Tambo cherishes it more. There is no difference between his views and mine. Our confidence in him as an individual, in the dynamic and committed men and women around him, their immense commitment to the principle of collective and unflinching sensitivity to the needs of their fellow man, has inspired us beyond words, and put the entire freedom struggle on a new dimension. As a student, school teacher and lawyer, he established a solid reputation as a clear thinker and accomplished speaker, a reputation which became a valuable asset when he turned politician."



WALTER SISULU

JOE SILOVO

"As we flew home on May 6 on our way to Groote Schuur, the first thought that occurred to me was that our return was made possible largely by comrade OR's achievements. And it was sad that he could not take an active part in a process that was a culmination of these achievements. And we all spoke about his contribution and felt that he should have been with us to lead us back home. One achievement that stands out above others is his success in holding the ANC together through some of the most testing periods in our struggle."



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