

CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE ON BANTUSTANS : AN
ADDRESS BY GOVAN MBEKI ON THE ROLE OF THE
BANTUSTANS IN THE CURRENT DEBATE FOR A
NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT : 11 AUGUST
1990

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COMRADE CHAIR, COMRADES, FRIENDS, LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN.

OUR MEETING HERE TODAY TAKES PLACE AT A MOST
OPPORTUNE TIME - AT A TIME WHEN THE ATMOSPHERE
IS THICK WITH TALK OF REFORMS WHICH HOPEFULLY
MAY LEAD TO CHANGES THAT MAY ALTER THE POLITICAL
SCENE IN THE COUNTRY. WE MEET TO EXAMINE IN BROAD
OUTLINE THE WORKING OF THE APARTHEID POLICIES OF
THE NATIONALIST PARTY GOVERNMENT, IN PARTICULAR
AS IT APPLIES TO AFRICANS; AS WELL AS INDICATE
THE WAY I HEARD.

BY WAY OF A BACKGROUND TO THE APARTHEID POLICIES
AS WERE SET OUT AFTER THAT NATIONALIST PARTY CAME
INTO POWER IN 1948 WHEN ITS CHIEF ARCHITECTS -
DOCTORS HENDRIKS VERWOERD AND EISELEN ^{WORKED OUT} - LET US
TRACE BRIEFLY THE HISTORY OF "NATIVE POLICIES"

WHICH WERE PURSUED BY BOTH COLONIAL AND UNION GOVERNMENTS AFTER THE END OF THE WARS OF DISPOSSESSION. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POLICIES WAS FIRSTLY TO LIMIT THE AREA FOR AFRICAN OCCUPATION TO THE AREAS TO WHICH AFRICANS HAD RETREATED DURING THOSE WARS. THESE WERE WHAT WERE DEFINED AS "NATIVE RESERVES" AND SECONDLY TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS FOR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION FOR AFRICANS OUTSIDE THE DECISION MAKING PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS WHICH REMAINED THE PRESERVATION OF THE WHITE MEN. EXPLAINING THE REASON FOR INTRODUCING THE GLEN GRAY ACT OF 1894 CECIL JOHN RHODES TOLD THE CAPE PARLIAMENT -

"WE (THE WHITES) ARE TO BE LORDS OVER THEM (THE AFRICANS). THESE ARE MY POLITICS AND THESE ARE THE POLITICS OF SOUTH AFRICA".

HE PROCEEDED TO SHOW THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE GLEN GRAY ACT WAS TO ESTABLISH LOCAL COUNCILS FOR AFRICANS SO THAT THEIR MINDS SHOULD TURN AWAY FROM PARLIAMENT AND CONCENTRATE ON LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE NATIVE RESERVES. HE STATED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL SYSTEM WAS

"TO KEEP THE MINDS OF THE NATIVES OCCUPIED
IF THEY (THE WHITES) ALLOWED THEM TO THINK OF
THEIR ROADS AND THEIR BRIDGES AND EVEN TO DEAL
WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF SCAB INSPECTORS AND WITH
THE PLANTING OF FOREST, THEY WOULD OCCUPY THEIR
MINDS USEFULLY . . . AND HAVING PROPOSED THAT THEY
SHOULD FORM COUNCIL, SO THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE A
FORCE, LET THEM TAX THEMSELVES, AND GIVE FUNDS
IN THE MATTER OF BUILDING BRIDGES".

THAT STATEMENT BY CECIL JOHN RHODES SET THE
PATTERN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL COUNCILS
IN THE NATIVE RESERVES. FOLLOWING THAT PATTERN
THE BUNGA SYSTEM WAS SET UP IN THE TRANSKEI AND
OTHER VARIATIONS OF THE LOCAL COUNCIL SYSTEM
SPRANG UP IN OTHER PARTS OF THE NATIVE RESERVES.
THE PURPOSE OF SETTING UP OF SUCH LOCAL COUNCIL
WAS TO CREATE REPRESENTATIVE MACHINERY OUTSIDE
PARLIAMENT. ALREADY BOTH THE AFRIKANER BOND
WHICH REPRESENTED THE INTEREST OF THE AFRIKANER,
ON THE ONE HAND AND THE ENGLISH POLITICAL PARTIES
ON THE OTHER WERE AT ONE ON DISENFRANCHISING THE
AFRICANS IN THE CAPE EVEN THOUGH THE TWO AGREED
ON NOTHING ELSE.

THE BUNGA SYSTEM REFERRED TO ABOVE DID NOT CATER FOR THE INTEREST OF AFRICANS IN THE URBAN AREAS. TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR THE FRANCHISE BY URBAN AFRICANS THE STALLARD COMMISSION OF 1921 RECOMMENDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY BOARDS WHERE AFRICANS IN URBAN AREAS COULD AIR THEIR VIEWS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF SUPERINTENDENT OF THE LOCATION. THUS THE STALLARD COMMISSION CONCLUDED :

"WE ... RECOMMEND THAT MUNICIPAL COUNCILS SHOULD BE EMPOWERED BY LAW TO MAKE REGULATIONS (SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES OF NATIVES IN NATIVE VILLAGES, AND THAT THESE REGULATIONS SHOULD DEFINE THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THESE COMMITTEES".

IN THIS WAY THE GOVERNMENT THOUGHT THAT IT HAD SET UP SUFFICIENT MACHINERY TO GIVE AFRICANS BOTH IN NATIVE RESERVES AND THE URBAN AREAS TO ENABLE THEM TO AIR THEIR VIEWS ON LOCAL MATTERS. AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED THERE WAS NO NEED FOR AFRICANS TO THINK OF NATIONAL ISSUES SUCH AS WERE ADDRESSED IN PARLIAMENT.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS HOWEVER WERE FAR FROM SATISFYING THE DEMAND BY AFRICANS FOR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION. AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN 1912 THE DEMANDS INCREASED AMONG THE AFRICANS FOR REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND TO MEET THIS THE GOVERNMENT PASSED THE NATIVES REPRESENTATION ACT OF 1936 UNDER WHICH THE NATIVE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED AND THUS PROVIDING FOR REPRESENTATION OF AFRICANS AT A NATIONAL LEVEL. SUMMING UP THE APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT GENERAL J.B.M. HERTZOG ARGUED THAT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE AFRICAN DID NOT ASPIRE TO GO TO PARLIAMENT HIS ANSWER LAY IN THE CREATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF A :

"UNION NATIVE COUNCIL WHERE THE AFRICANS WOULD SATISFY THEIR DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY".

IT WAS THIS PYRAMID OF THE COUNCIL SYSTEM WHICH THE NATIONALIST PARTY FOUND IN 1948. BUT AS THIS ARRANGEMENT DID NOT COMPLY WITH APARTHEID POLICIES HENDRICKS VERWOERD WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN 1950 DECIDED TO

SCRAP IT BECAUSE IT STILL GAVE THE AFRICAN AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS IF UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT : IT STILL ALLOWED AFRICANS TO HAVE REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT BY WHITES AS WELL AS IN THE SENATE. IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO VERWOERD THAT THE VOICE OF THE AFRICANS COULD BE EXPRESSED IN A WHITE PARLIAMENT EVEN BY WHITE REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRICANS ACTING AS A BLOCK IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AND IN THE SENATE; NOR THAT THE AFRICANS SHOULD MEET IN THE NATIVES REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL AS A NATIONAL GROUP TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFRICANS AS A NATIONAL GROUP. THAT HAD TO BE DESTROYED, AND THE BANTU AUTHORITIES ACT OF 1950 WAS DESIGNED TO DO JUST THAT. IN TERMS OF THE APARTHEID POLICIES, THE BANTU AUTHORITIES ACT WAS PASSED AS AN ENABLING ACT TO ENSURE THAT FASCIST INSPIRED POLICIES TO ENTRENCH RACISM IN THE COUNTRY WERE ENFORCED. HE THUS SET ABOUT THE TASK OF BREAKING DOWN ANY IDEA OF UNITY AMONG THE AFRICANS FIRSTLY BY ENSURING THAT AFRICANS COULD NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS A NATIONAL GROUP BUT HAD TO BE BROKEN UP INTO ETHNIC ENTITIES THAT WOULD CONCERNED THEMSELVES WITH PROMOTING ETHNIC CHAUVINISM.

IT WAS TO ACHIEVE THIS END THAT HE SET ABOUT REVIVING CHIEFTANCY WHICH HAD BEEN VIRTUALLY UTTERLY DESTROYED BY THE END OF THE WARS OF DISPOSSESSION. THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS WHO HAD EXPERIENCED THE RESISTANCE OF AFRICANS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHIEFS FOR A CENTURY WOULD ONLY FEEL HAPPY IF THE POWER OF THE CHIEFS AS LEADERS OF THEIR PEOPLE HAD BEEN UTTERLY DESTROYED. THE INCIDENT THAT TOOK PLACE AT KING WILLIAM'STOWN WHEN SIR HARRY SMITH HAD CALLED ALL THE CHIEFS IN THE AREA TOGETHER AT THE MARKET SQUARE. A DISTANCE FROM THERE WAS A WAGON UNDERWHICH HAD BEEN PLACED A CHARGE OF DYNAMITE, AND TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT WOULD HAD HAPPENED TO THEM IF THEY CONTINUE TO RESIST BRITISH COLONIAL RULE HE TOLD THEM TO LOOK AT THE WAGON AND SEE WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO IT. HE ORDERED THE DYNAMITE TO BE SET ALIGHT WHEREUPON THE WAGON WAS BLOWN BY THE POWERFUL EXPLOSION INTO PIECES THAT FLEW INTO THE AIR. FROM THEN ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AFRICANS IN THE RESERVES WAS UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF NATIVE COMMISSIONERS AND THE CHIEFS WERE REDUCED TO A STATUS OF HEADMEN. VERWOERD DEvised A PLAN FOR THE CONTROL OF AFRICANS WHICH HAD A SYSTEMATIC THEORETICAL APPROACH TYPICAL OF NATZI THOROUGHNESS.

HE FUSED TOGETHER THE INDIRECT RULE POLICIES WHICH HAD BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE BRITISH IN THE WEST AFRICAN COLONIES WITH DIRECT RULE WHICH HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE PORTUGUESE COLONIES. IN TERMS OF THESE POLICIES HE SOUGHT WITH A SINISTER AND BRUTAL APPROACH TO REVIVE THE POWERS OF THE CHIEFS WITH A VIEW TO SERVE THE INTEREST OF THE APARTHEID POLICIES, THE INTEREST OF RACISM AGAINST THE PEOPLES OVER WHOM THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTED CHIEFS TO RULE TO THEIR DISADVANTAGE. TO ACHIEVE THAT END HE TOGETHER WITH THE VAST MACHINERY OF CIVIL SERVANTS OF ALL TYPES THAT HAD BEEN SET UP IN THAT EMPIRE OF THE NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT FREELY USED THE SCRIPTURES TO FIND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ROLE WHICH THE CHIEFS WERE TO PLAY UNDER THE BANTU AUTHORITIES ACT. THE NATIVE COMMISSIONER STOOD AT A DISTANCE AND BY REMOTE CONTROL GOT THE CHIEFS TO DO THE DIRTY WORK WHICH SHOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN DONE BY THE WHITE CIVIL SERVANTS THEMSELVES.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO INTRODUCE THE REHABILITATION SCHEME TO REDUCE LIVE STOCK IN THE NATIVE RESERVES, THE NATIVE COMMISSIONER INSTRUCTED THE CHIEFS AND HEADMEN TO DO IT;

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WAS IMPLEMENTING THE INFLUX CONTROL REGULATIONS UNDER ITS LABOUR BUREAU SCHEME IN TERMS OF WHICH AFRICANS WHO WERE NOT EMPLOYED BY WHITES TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE WHITES WERE THROWN BACK INTO THE BANTUSTANS, IT USED THE CHIEFS TO SELECT AFRICANS WHO WOULD GO AND WORK IN THE VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMIC SUCH AS WORK ON THE FARMS, OR ON THE VARIOUS TYPES OF MINING. ACCORDING TO THIS ARRANGEMENT WHOEVER CHARGED THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT OF BRUTALITY, THE GOVERNMENT COULD STAND AND SPREAD ITS HANDS SAYING :

"OUR HANDS ARE CLEAN". IT IS THE BANTU THEMSELVES WHO ASKED FOR THIS TREATMENT AND METED IT OUT.

THE SINISTER PLAN TO MAKE THE CHIEFS DO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXPRESSED IN A VERY CLEAR MANNER BY THE CHIEF NATIVE COMMISSIONER OF THE TRANSKEI AFTER THE BUNGA ACCEPTED THE BANTU AUTHORITIES ACT. HE SAID :

"WE HAVE GIVEN YOU A HORSE TO RIDE,
BUT YOU SHOULD NOT GO TO SLEEP ON
IT.

WE WILL BE STANDING BEHIND
YOU WITH A SJAMBOK TO MAKE
SURE THAT IT CANTERS".

THUS INDIRECT RULE AND DIRECT RULE WERE MADE
TO OPERATE SIMULTANEOUSLY PLACING THE CHIEFS
AND THOSE WHO ADMINISTERED THE BANTUSTANS
DIRECTLY IN CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE SO THAT
WHEN THESE MASSES ROSE AGAINST APARTHEID THEIR
ANGER WOULD BE DIRECTED AT THEM INSTEAD OF THE
REAL VILLAINS. HITLER APPOINTED JEWISH AUTHORITIES
IN THE GHETOES TO SELECT JEWS WHO WERE TO GO INTO
THE GAS CHAMBERS, BUT THEY ENDED UP IN THE QUEUE
ALSO.

THE SECOND LEG OF THE APARTHEID POLICIES IS
CONCERNED WITH THE QUESTION OF LAND DISTRIBUTION.
WHEN THE UNION GOVERNMENT PASSED THE NATIVE LAND
ACT OF 1913 THE BLACK POPULATION AS PER THE 1911
CENSUS WAS 4 MILLION AND THE NATIVE RESERVES
COVERED AN AREA OF 10 MILLION MORGEN OUT OF THE
TOTAL AREA OF SOUTH AFRICA OF 143 MILLION MORGEN.
THUS THE AFRICANS WERE ALLOWED TO OCCUPY 7,3%
OF THE TOTAL AREA. IN CONTRAST 1,276 MILLION WHITES
OCCUPIED 133 MILLION MORGEN. THIS POSITION WAS
ONLY TO CHANGE SLIGHTLY IN 1936 WHEN THE HERTZOG -

SMUTS COALITION GOVERNMENT SET ASIDE 7 MILLION MORGEN AS A SWOP FOR THE COMPLETE DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF THE AFRICANS. AT THAT STAGE THE AFRICAN POPULATION WAS 7 MILLION AND THE 18 MILLION MORGEN THAT WAS THEN SET ASIDE FOR THEM CONSTITUTED ONLY 12,5% OF THE TOTAL AREA. TODAY WHEN THE AFRICAN POPULATION IS ESTIMATED AT 29 MILLION IT IS STILL CONFINED IN THE AREA WHICH WAS FIXED IN 1936. IF THE AFRICANS ARE TO SURVIVE THEY MUST BREAK OUT OF THIS STEEL RING.

THE PROBLEMS THAT FACE SOUTH AFRICA TODAY CENTRE AROUND THE KEY ISSUES OF THE FRANCHISE AND LAND DISTRIBUTION, WHEN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WAS FORMED IN 1912 IT WAS FACED WITH THESE ISSUES. AND TO MEET THAT SITUATION THE VARIOUS CONGRESSES THAT HAD OPERATED IN THE FOUR COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIONS BEFORE UNION SAW THE ANSWER IN THE UNITY OF THE AFRICANS. THEN THE URGENCY OF THE NEED FOR AFRICAN UNITY AND FOR THE FORMATION OF AN ORGANISATION THAT UNITED THEM WAS SO WELL EXPRESSED IN THE WORDS OF PIXLEY KA I SEME : WHEN HE SAID :

"THE DEMON OF RATIO²LISM, THE ABERRATIONS OF THE XHOSA - FINGO FEUD, THE ANIMOSITY THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE ZULU'S AND TONGA'S, BETWEEN THE BASOTHO AND EVERY OTHER NATIVE MUST BE BURIED AND FORGOTTEN ... WE ARE ONE PEOPLE".

"THESE DIVISIONS, THESE JEALOUSIES,
ARE THE CAUSE OF ALL OUR WOES AND
OF ALL OUR BACKWARDNESS AND
IGNORANCE TODAY".

SO THEN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WAS FOUNDED
ON THE ROCK OF UNITY. FROM 1912 TODATE THE ANC
HAS SOUGHT TO UNITE NOT ONLY THE AFRICANS BUT ALL
THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THIS COUNTRY AGAINST
ALL RACIST POLICIES THAT AIM AT NATIONAL OPPRESSION.
THROUGH THE YEARS THE MEMBERS OF THE ANC HAVE BURST
INTO SONG TO EXPRESS THE NEED FOR UNITY THUS :

"SIKHALELA IZWE LAKITHI
ELATHATHWA NGAMAGALAJANE
MZULU, MXHOSA, MSUTHU HLANGANANI".

TO BREAKOUT OF THE STEEL RING WHICH THE APARTHEID
POLICIES HAVE THROWN AROUND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE
OF THIS COUNTRY THEY MUST UNITE IN ORDER TO RESERVE
THE PROCESSES OF DIVISION WHICH NATIONALIST PARTY
GOVERNMENT HAVE OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS CAUSED THE
NEED TODAY FOR THE UNITY OF THE OPPRESSED IS AS
GREAT, IF NOT GREATER THAN AS WAS THE CASE IN 1912.
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AS THE SPEARHEAD OF
THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION IS CALLING

UPON ALL THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY TO UNITE AGAINST APARTHEID. IT IS CALLING UPON THEM TO REJECT THE BANTUSTANS ADMINISTRATIONS, THE URBAN LOCAL COUNCILS AND MANAGEMENT COUNCILS FOR INDIANS AND COLOURED. IT IS CALLING UPON THEM TO REVERSE THE PROCESSES OF DIVISION WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET THIS COUNTRY.

IN ITS TIRELESS SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION THE ANC HAS INITIATED THE TALKS THAT PRESENTLY ARE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITSELF. IT IS IN THIS WAY POINTING A NEW WAY FORWARD. APARTHEID HAS LANDED THIS COUNTRY INTO A SITUATION WHERE ITS PEOPLES LIVE IN FEAR AND MISTRUST OF ONE ANOTHER, WHERE ITS RESOURCES ARE BEING SQUANDERED ON UNWORKABLE AND UNREALISABLE DREAMS; WHERE ITS ECONOMY SHUTTERED AS IT IS BY THE PURSUIT OF THE RACIST WILD GOOSE IS TAILORED TO SERVE THE INTEREST OF A FEW AND NOT THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE.

IN THIS SEARCH THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IS HOPEFUL THAT ALL THOSE WHO DESIRE PEACE, STABILITY, AND PROSPERITY ARE GOING TO JOIN AND SUPPORT IT IN THE TALKS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ANC.

AFTER THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE REMOVED ALL THE OBSTACLES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS AS SET OUT IN THE HARARE DECLARATION THE WAY WILL HAVE BEEN CLEARED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO TAKE PLACE TO DRAW UP A CONSTITUTION THAT WOULD HAVE THE APPROVAL OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. TOWARDS THAT END THE ANC CALLS UPON ALL DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT BANTUSTANS AS WELL AS ALL THOSE WHO VALUE FREEDOM TO JOIN IT IN ITS STRUGGLE TO SET UP A UNITED, NON RACIAL, DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA.

LET US ALL JOIN HANDS TO BUILD ONE NATION OF EQUALS IN ONE SOUTH AFRICA.

THANK YOU

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