

# Talk by Sisulu salutes nation

**FRIENDS, Comrades, and the people of South Africa, I extend warm fraternal greetings to you from all of us who have been released recently, from Comrade Mandela and from the hundreds of our comrades in arms who still languish in apartheid jails.**

We salute you, the people of South Africa, for the courage, determination and sacrifice you have made under the most difficult and repressive conditions to ensure that the flag of our struggle is held high. You do, indeed, constitute a constant source of inspiration during our long years in prison.

We salute, in particular, the rank and file membership and the leadership of the African National Congress for coming out organisation after organisation to the mantle of leader of the South African struggle. Let all gathered here send a special Greeting to our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo.

We salute the United Democratic Front and the mass organisations of the youth, women, students and trade. You have played a decisive role in propagating the mass apartheid front today. In particular, we salute the young men organised under the banner of SAYCO for taking the struggle to new heights.

We salute the Congress of South African Trade Unions for organising workers on a scale unparalleled in the entire history of our struggle. Your historic role symbolises the centrality of the

working class in our struggle. We salute the students of our country whose heroic deeds were demonstrated in the 1976 uprising.

We pay special tribute to the high quality of those and other mass organisations and the tremendous skill of the new leadership that has emerged.

Today we also remember those of our comrades who are in death row. We cannot cease to spare no effort in order to save them from the gallows.

We pay tribute to our combatants and the thousands of unarmed protesters—the real heroes of our struggle—who have paid the ultimate price in the struggle. I ask you to rise in a moment's silence in remembrance of our fallen comrades.

We congratulate our sports persons and cultural workers for their role in our struggle against apartheid.

We pay tribute to our religious organisations. You have demonstrated the powerful force of the good Christian, the good Muslim, the good Hindu and the good Jew in the struggle against evil.

Today we also salute the international community for the contribution of the international labour movement and the World Council of Churches. We salute the role played by the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and Europe as our struggle.

We salute the role played by the Frontline States and as particularly the mobilised Zambia has made, under the leadership of President Kenneth Kaunda, in housing our headquarters and thousands of our people.

We salute the role that great African leaders such as Comrade Samora Machel, President Dos Santos, President Mugabe, President Chavema and President Mwanza have played in the unfolding liberation of our people. We salute President Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba for the heroic role they have played in the fight against imperialism in this region.

Today we see the apartheid regime facing a deep and intractable crisis. All its political strategies of reforming apartheid have failed miserably. Corruption and scandals plague the ruling class. The financial system is in disarray. Internal racial repression under apartheid leaves all emergency has failed to defuse the anger of resistance against our people.

The thousands of our comrades National Party governments has reached its economic chaos. Spreading inflation is the order of the day. This crisis has been accelerated by the rigors by the international community of apartheid as a crime against



**Left: WALTER SISULU circles the stadium. Above: Huge banners of the ANC and SACP hung behind the stage.**

# Flags fly welcome

**VIVA ANC, VIVA!** A cheering, excited crowd of 85 000 people greeted the released ANC leaders at a giant 'Welcome Back' rally at Soccer City, near Soweto, on 29 October. It was the biggest political rally ever seen in South Africa.

Old and young sang, danced and waved black, green and gold flags to welcome back the seven released leaders.

Others carried the red flag of the South African Communist Party or banners to show their



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# Rally speech calls on all to unite in

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humanity. Sanctions, boycotts and divestment have laid bare apartheid South Africa as the pariah of the world.

The Labour Relations Act and other anti-worker measures have spurred the resistance of the working class. Great battles have been fought by the trade unions to defend the rights of workers. Let us not forget that there is more that unites workers than divides them. We call for the unity of all organised workers under the banner of our country, our federation.

Friends of the apartheid government argue that sanctions are unnecessary. Sanctions, boycotts and divestment have laid bare apartheid South Africa as the pariah of the world.

They no longer have a vision of the future. Today the ANC has captured the consciousness of political life in South Africa.

More and more people, black and white, are being inspired by the ideals of the ANC. The vision of a new, racial, democratic and united South Africa is shared by all sections of South African society. These ideas are permeating every corner through the very organs of repression.

More and more white youth are rejecting military conscription. We condemn the operations of the paramilitaries. In the police force, Government Backmen and others have begun to show the way. We call on policemen to raise their heads and to stand by the people: they should become part of the people.

In recent months millions of our people have united in mass action under the banner of the United Democratic Movement. The rights of hundreds of thousands of peaceful protesters using the streets of our cities and townships as battle arenas should be an inspiration for us to intensify the struggle for total liberation.

We call on our people to join the mass organisations under COSATU and the UDF.

The building of disciplined and accountable organisations of our people must remain one of our principal tasks.

In 1978 COSATU, the then President of the ANC, wrote to Prime Minister Vorster, asking him to negotiate.

In 1979 UDF led by the then President of the ANC, wrote to Prime Minister Botha, calling on him to negotiate.

In 1980 the ANC was banned and thousands of leaders and members were jailed or harassed.

Just before 1 pm a guard of honour dressed in khaki escorted the leaders around the outside of the pitch to allow the crowd to greet them.

Mobster Shoja, Ahmed Kathrada, Elias Maseko, Wilson Mthembu, Andrew Mtsheni, Elias Mthembu and Oscar Mpetha carried the pitch. They were joined by ANC former national chairman Govas Mthethi whose restrictive order were lifted to allow him to attend the rally last night to speak.

# high at rally to back leaders

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The eight leaders took their places on the stage beneath a large banner reading 'ANC lives, ANC leads' flanked by the ANC and SACP flags. Thelwani, and Mrs Nkhahleza, Letlhoti and Mrs Winnie Mandela were situated on the stage.

NUM general secretary Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa said Johannesburg chief magistrate had been concerned the rally would be used to propagandise ANC ideas.

He said the National Negotiating Committee had agreed: 'The ANC does not have to have its ideas propagated, they are cherished in the hearts and minds of the people.'

A message from the ANC welcoming back the leaders was read by Comrade Murgu Maryia Mwale of the UDF.

'Your return is not only a tribute to the resilience and historic courage in secure your immediate and unconditional release. It is also, in no small measure, due to your steadfast refusal to be cowed by the rigours of the apartheid regime.'

The message from ANC President Oliver Tambo said it is the Pretoria regime which has taken a genuine political settlement of the struggle but to be intensified messages of support come from 19 international and local organisations.

In a post-rally message the

general secretary of the South African Communist Party, Joe Slovo, said that he hoped the prison doors was the masses of our country supported by the world-wide anti-apartheid movement.

The achievement of a truly democratic South Africa was his immediate aim shared by all, he said. 'Let us ensure that the doors of apartheid are torn into a leading phrase.'

A solidarity message from SWAPO said: 'The concession made by the regime, however grudgingly to allow the ANC to be heard and address the nation on the burning issues facing your country is a historic victory for the gallant people of South Africa.'

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**Many members of the 80 000 strong crowd wore 'Welcome Back' t-shirts**

Govas Mthethi was barred by state restrictions from addressing the huge crowd. COSATU assistant general secretary Nyikoye Makhadzi spoke on when Mthethi would have said.

Mthethi would have said, according to Makhadzi, that many people had sought to see divisions between the ANC and the SACP.

The 'alliance which was referred to by the ANC and SACP is going to continue until the struggle against apartheid is totally eliminated, he said.

Comrade Raymond Mthethi outlined the history of the ANC which was formed in 1912 to

among other things, 'advocate on behalf of the black masses equal rights and justice'. The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe was not because the ANC was blood-thirsty, Mthethi said, but because of oppressive laws.

Comrade Ahmed Kathrada said after spending 27 years in jail they had returned to find the fundamental contradictions of apartheid still firmly in place. He said the oppressed people were still waiting for the National Party to 'acknowledge their mistakes and show genuine remorse for 40 years of Nationalist apartheid.'

Let us also strengthen our solidarity with friends and the people of Namibia, it was also hoped will have a victory for southern Africa as a whole.

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**Symbols of power were everywhere**