

WE MUST TAKE SIDES

Your Grace, Archbishop
Walter Makhulu,
Dame Nita Barrow,
General Secretary of the
World Council of Churches,
Dr Emilio Castro,

Distinguished Commis-
sioners of the Programme to
Combat Racism,

Bishops and Ministers,
Dear Delegates, comrades
and friends.

The peoples of Southern Africa are confronted with the daily reality of war. War means the killing of people, the deliberate act of taking human lives. It entails the planned and intentional destruction of the accumulated products of human labour. In their wake, all wars leave desolate landscape inhabited by orphans, by widows and widowers, by grief and pain.

Go anywhere in Southern Africa today and if you have ears to hear, you will not miss the pitiful cries of the bereaved. You will not fail to see the motherless children nor the mothers and fathers whose offspring has ceased to be mangled into a bloody pulp by the merciless machine of military conflict.

Everybody present in this hall yesterday was surely moved by the memory of the Kassinga Massacre. Equally, the reference to the more recent crime that Pretoria committed in Livingstone, only a few days ago, could not but evoke anger against its perpetrators and a feeling of compassion for the relatives of the deceased and the people of Zambia as a whole. We will all have responded in these ways because we all value life

EXTRACTS FROM THE STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ANC, OLIVER TAMBO, AT THE WCC LIBERATION MOVEMENT DIALOGUE: LUSAKA, 4 -- 8 MAY, 1987.

consider it sacred and a gift that should be nursed and nurtured and not destroyed.

Beyond that, we are united by the deep-seated conviction that life should be lived in its fullness and not shackled, circumscribed or blighted by hunger and disease, poverty and ignorance, by oppression, exploitation and discrimination of any kind.

We are very grateful to the World Council of Churches and its Programme to Combat Racism for bringing us together at this moment in the history of Southern Africa. The peoples of our region expect that through *the decisions we will adopt* here, we will help to shorten their agony. They are convinced that we could not have met at this moment of crisis merely to reiterate our abhorrence of apartheid and once more to denounce this crime against humanity.

Let me state some fundamental position of the ANC clearly and unequivocally. We are committed to the struggle to overthrow the racist Pretoria regime, the transfer of power to all the people under a system of *one person one vote* in a unitary South African state, the use of that popular power to abolish the apartheid system in its entirety and the rebuilding of our country on the basis of the non-racial and democratic perspectives spelt out in the Freedom Charter.

We have absolutely no doubt that what we have said represents and coincides with the views of the majority of the oppressed people of our country and an increasing number of our white compatriots. To our countrymen and women coming directly from South Africa and to our friends from the rest of the world, I would like to say that this is the reality that we all have to deal with, regardless of our likes and dislikes. What it demands of us is that we must take sides. It does not permit of equivocation.

It is perfectly clear that *the source of violence* throughout our region is the apartheid regime. To end that violence, we have to bring the apartheid system to an end. We have been forced to wage armed struggle precisely to achieve this objective. To terminate that struggle would have one effect, and one effect only — the further perpetuation of the apartheid system. This is a result which surely none of us desires.

We would also like to make the point here that to the best of our knowledge the Christian church has never been pacifist. We understand very well the determination of the Church continuously to seek a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in South Africa, Namibia and in Southern African as a whole.



However, it can not be correct that the concept of a just war should be applied selectively and that the reaction of the oppressed to the violence of the apartheid state should be equated to the deliberate state terrorism of the Pretoria regime.

As our struggle has intensified and the crisis of the apartheid system deepened, we have been confronted with a growing deluge of questions about ourselves. Sometimes it has felt as though we were being subjected to the intense scrutiny of an examination room. We appreciate that this is because of the general realisation that victory is in sight, and that therefore there is a genuine desire to know what the future holds in store, a future in which the ANC will necessarily play an important part.

But we should honestly say that sometimes some of this probing is used as a reason or an excuse to avoid taking action against the apartheid system. The probing requires of us to give a number of assurances about various matters to encourage people to oppose the apartheid system. Of course we do not accept this line of reasoning and shall continuously urge everybody to join in the struggle and thereby to place themselves in a position to help determine both the course of the struggle and its outcome.

One of the questions that is raised with considerable persistence is the one of our relations with the South African Communist Party and the Socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union.



What we are asking you to support is a future with which you should find no problem. We are appealing to you to support us in the struggle to turn South Africa into a democratic country.

From the outset we must state it clearly that we consider all these forces as firm and reliable allies in the common struggle for the liberation of our country and people.

Instead of being criticised and denounced for involving themselves in the struggle against apartheid, they should rather be congratulated as should people of other political persuasions, such as social-democrats and liberals who have also joined in the fight against white minority domination.

Ours is a national liberation movement which contains within it different philosophical tendencies but all of which adhere to a common resolve to bring about a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa on the basis of the Freedom Charter. The absolute imperative for the greatest possible unity of all our people in the struggle for liberation demands that we defend and advance this character of our movement.

As in the past, we shall resist all attempts to inject any anti-religious notions into our midst. Indeed,

proceeding on the basis of old traditions within our movement, we are in the process of establishing an inter-faith chaplaincy within the movement to ensure that all members of all faiths have ready access to such religious counselling and assistance as they may require.

As for the South African Communist Party, this is an independent political formation with which the ANC maintains the best of relations on the basis of a common commitment to act as allies in the struggle against apartheid. We see nothing wrong or sinister about that as we saw nothing wrong or sinister about the alliance formed by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union to wage a common struggle against Nazism.

The African National Congress is very interested to see the Soviet Union and the United States act together to help bring a speedy end to the system of apartheid. We are not in the least interested that elements of the East-West conflict should be introduced into our situation.

It would therefore help a great deal if the same spirit that inspired both East and West in the struggle against Hitler Germany should once more prevail, enabling the great powers to act in concert with the common objective of seeing South Africa transformed into a non-racial, non-aligned and peaceful entity.

It is however, also obvious that for all this to happen, the US Administration would have to abandon its policy of constructive engagement, cease supporting such bandit formations as UNITA and firmly and squarely take the side of those who fight for democracy in our country and not those who are committing atrocities daily to maintain the racist system of white minority rule.

We are certain that those of our friends who come from the United States who are present here will help us to effect this turn about in US policy, hard though it may be. We extend the same appeal also to those delegates that come from the other major western countries.

What we are asking you to support is a future with which you should find no problem. We are appealing to you to support us in the struggle to turn South Africa into a democratic country, wherein all will have the right to vote and to be elected to all organs of government and wherein all individual rights to speech, assembly, religion, culture, the press, the inviolability of the family and so on, will be guaranteed.

We are asking you to help us reach the moment quickly when it will be possible for our people to attend to the question of the people raising their standards of living through their own labours and with your assistance, in conditions of freedom and peace. This demands action against apartheid now.

The perspective ahead of us within South Africa is one of a political and military struggle that will continue to intensify. The state of emergency imposed in June last year not only failed to break the will of the people, it also did not succeed to destroy the organised structures of the democratic movement of our country.

Neither the armed occupation of the townships, the establishment of the so-called Joint Management Centres nor the sponsoring of vigilante groups; neither the continuing murder of our people nor external aggression could turn back the tide of liberation which has engulfed the apartheid system.

The white elections due to be held tomorrow will solve nothing. To reaffirm the continuation of white minority rule at this stage, by holding those racist elections, is to throw a challenge to the voteless majority to take all necessary action to ensure that these elections are the last of their kind.

This electoral process lacks all legitimacy and its results are entirely of no consequence to the central question of South African politics; that of the transfer of power to the people. White South Africa must,

in increasing numbers also act in favour of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa and reject unequivocally the so-called tri-cameral parliament and all institutions and "resolutions" based on the system of apartheid in all its elements.

The African National Congress has a long history of association with the Church. Our founders were churchmen and women. Throughout our 75 years that link has never been broken. As we enter the final stages of our struggle we believe that you too have a responsibility to contribute to the maximum to remove a regime which offends the very principles on which the church itself was founded.

Our brothers and sisters from home in particular, must know that we shall continue to knock on the door of the church to ask for the fullest involvement of the church in all aspects of the struggle. The millions of our people who are making such enormous sacrifices can expect no less from a church which is made up in the main of the poor and the oppressed and which should identify itself with these down-trodden masses.

The struggle demands sacrifice from all of us. To end the apartheid crime against humanity we must move together in unity. Let this meeting serve as an important milestone as we strive to achieve this objective.

OUR COMMON VICTORY
IS CERTAIN!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!



PCR CONFERENCE



O.R. Tambo meeting with Bishop Manas Buthelezi.



O.R. Tambo meeting Beyers Naude, with the Most Reverend Walter Makhulu – WCC President looking on.