

SERMON BY THE ANC DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS
AFFAIRS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 75TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THE ANC — PRESENTED BY REV. COMRADE
NCUTSHE GQIBA : JANUARY 25 1987

Your Excellency, Comrade the Rt.Hon. Kebby Musokotwane;

The Honourable members of the government of the Republic of Zambia;

Dr. Ishmael Noko from the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva;

The Leadership of the ANC and SWAPO;

Fellow Christians comrades and friends gathered here today

Allow me to read from the Good News's bible the basis for our message, a passage from the book of Amos 5: 10-13; 16-24, Verse 10 - 13.

'You people hate anyone who challenges injustice and speaks the whole truth in court. You have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain. And so you will not live in the fine stone houses you build or drink wine from the beautiful vineyards you plant.

I know how terrible your sins are, and how many crimes you have committed. You persecute good men, take bribes, and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts. And so, keeping quiet in such evil times is the best thing to do!

Verse 16 - 14

"And so the sovereign Lord Almighty says, 'There will be wailing and cries of sorrow in the city streets. Even farmers will be called upon to mourn the dead along with those who are paid to mourn. There will be wailing in all the vineyards. All this will take place because I am coming to punish you,' The Lord has spoken.

How terrible it will be for you who long for the day of the Lord! What good will that day do you? For it will be a day of darkness and not light. It will be like a man who runs from a lion and meets a bear!

"Or like a man who comes home and put his hands on the wall — only to be bitten by a snake! The day of the Lord will bring darkness and not light; it will be a day of gloom, without any brightness.

The Lord says I hate your religious festivals; I can not stand them; I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings. Stop your noisy songs; I do not want to listen to your harps. Instead let justice flow like a stream and righteousness like a river that never goes dry."

Almost all the old testament scholars agree that Amos lived and prophesied in the 8th century B.C. This is about 760 B.C. This is the time when the Jewish kingdom was divided into two: the southern kingdom, also known as Judah ruled by king Uzziah I, and the northern part also known as Israel ruled by King Jeroboam II.

Although Amos originated from the south his ministry was in the north in the kingdom of Israel which was militarily stronger and economically more prosperous. When local markets became exhausted, new unexploited ones had to be established. In order to realise this goal, the ruling elite adopted a new aggressive foreign policy based on military expansionism.

Barbaric military operations were carried out by

Israel against her neighbouring kingdoms. Many innocent people — young and old, were brutally murdered by the Israelites. She became a destabilising force in the region. "Yet, according to the court of heaven, crimes against humanity, are a direct challenge to the unique nature of God."

Israel borders were enlarged at the expense of her neighbours. She took control of all trade routes by annexation. Consequently, a very rich merchant class developed, sharing the nations prosperity with the nobility and building for itself precious stone houses and drinking fine sweet wine from beautiful vineyards.

But, this new prosperity was founded upon the blood of the innocent; the victims of Israel military aggression against her neighbours. This surely was not willed by God. It is equally evident that Israel internal policy was as satanic as her foreign policy. It was ordained by a few — the ruling elite — for the protection of their political and economic interests.

Although they lived in precious stone houses and drank fine sweet wine, they felt politically threatened. They knew that the very comfortable life they were enjoying was not willed by Yahweh; and thus shortlived. It was the fruit of cheap labour, it was achieved in the blood of the poor; the have nots, the down-trodden.

The poor and economically exploited class found life unbearable. They found themselves completely rejected by God; Yahweh became abstract. He was perceived as the property of the rich and the protec-



tor of this ruthless, barbaric minority ruling class.

Here the prophet depicts a society that is torn apart; a stratified society based on the exploitation of man by man; where a brother sells a brother, where there is no respect for human life.

During all this blasphemy they were confident that Yahweh — the God of history would protect them. They thought that God was their sole property which could be manipulated at any given time. And this was an assault upon God's unique nature. God would not only withdraw his protection from them, but will see to it that the entire system was destroyed. In Israel, honesty was sacrificed to profit, the poor turned into pawns of the commercial racket.

It was during these 'happy and prosperous' days among the 'haves' that Yahweh raised within the Jewish community his own earthy divine instrument, Amos — to declare His judgement upon this greedy capitalist — inclined class.

"Enough is enough: thus says the Lord." Amos warned Israel about God's imminent divine judgement. He charged her with crime against humanity, brutal war policies, slave trading and pitilessness. Israel was charged with rejecting God's law and for silencing God's prophets. Thus, her expansionist militarist policies brought God's wrath upon her.

It was during these revelation that Amos was branded a revolutionary agitator. His divine message became a threat to the status quo. Consequently, he was silenced, banned from preaching the God's Gospel in Israel. But, Amos never compromised his principles, and the divine judgement could not be reversed. Israel was doomed.

Comrades and friends, considering the strength of forces of darkness, as represented by the inhuman apartheid system in our country — South Africa, the hour in our region is dark, and it might get darker.

We are called upon to persuade the entire international community to get out of this racist white babylon, because she is about to fall. Her violent and unholy days are numbered. She has to be completely isolated.

are still courting her; enjoying her bloody fine wine. May the divine fires of freedom consume them too. As God's chosen people we declare God's judgement upon them too.

The unbearable wickedness of that regime has reached the ears of Yahweh, it has reached the holy of holies — the God of history; the God of our fore-fathers — The God of Tshaka, Sekukuni, Moshoeshoe, Hintsa, Makana; the God who always intervenes on behalf of the underdog, the down-trodden — is intervening in person.

Let us tell the racist rulers of the white Babylon that the precious stone houses they are having; the fine sweet wine they are drinking are all short-lived.

If God is the God of history; if Yahweh is the God of our fore-fathers; If God is the God who always sides with the weak, the outcast; it thus stands to reason that God in South Africa is on our side. Yahweh is on the side of the ANC and the Frontline States. We walk with God.

If God is on our side, Who can defeat us? Neither natural ability, military equipment nor outstanding courage of the racist white Babylon will stand on our divine march, We are the

past, the present and the future.

No genuine democratic minded people will mourn the fall of the Pretoria regime. The lamentation over her is and will be uttered only by the imperialists, the blood suckers, the agents and the forces of darkness. They are the brutal people who are reaping dividends from the racist system. The children of God have to rejoice over this judgement.

As we mark the 75th Anniversary, as members of this glorious movement with the democratic minded people of the international community — we are commissioned to turn racist South Africa up side down proclaiming God's divine judgement upon the white Babylon.

We have been endowed with the holy spirit. God has rightly chosen us to "bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to announce the release of captives and freedom to all political prisoners. He has sent us to comfort all who mourn; to give joy and peace instead of grief."

We take this opportunity to pay homage to the people of Zambia and the nations' able leader for their solidarity and truly Christian and unwavering contribution to the struggle of S.A. and Namibia. Without your dedication, the political mood in this region could not be what it is today.

We salute the international community for its positive contribution. We thank the front-line states, the OAU, the UNO, the World Council of Churches, the Zambia Council of Churches, and the Lutheran World Federation and many other progressive organisations.