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SPEECH DELIVERED BY DON MOOLJEE, AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (S.A.)
AT THE NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE
IN WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 12 AND 13, 1977.

Friends, I bring fraternal greetings to this National Conference on Southern Africa from the African National Congress of South Africa which spearheads the struggle in South Africa for national liberation.

This is a historic occasion and one that gives us in the ANC and the struggling peoples in Southern Africa tremendous encouragement and hope that we are not alone in our hour of need - that there are progressive individuals, groups, and organizations that will stand by us against the enemies of peace, justice and a better world.

That this support be strengthened and become country-wide is vital because our enemy is formidable. Every progressive individual and all the forces of progress will have to be recruited if we are to be victorious. These are I believe key areas of the workshop discussions in this conference. We wish this conference every success and thank all the individuals, support groups, non-governmental organizations, churches and trade unions for making it become a reality.

In the past few years Southern Africa has been transformed into a major centre of the global battle against imperialism and racism. In every part of the sub-continent people's forces stand ready to make fresh advances in the struggle for national and social emancipation. The issues involved in the conflict are of importance not only for Southern Africa and the continent as a whole, but also for the wider contest between world reaction and world progress.

In Angola and Mozambique the people's victories are being consolidated by a continuing struggle against internal and external reaction, and by measures which aim to lay the basis for a socialist society free of all forms of exploitation of man by man.

In Zimbabwe imperialist backed manoeuvres to alert people's power have suffered setbacks and new conditions which make possible a more united and sustained armed assault on the illegal Smith regime are emerging.

In Namibia the attempt to transform the country into another of South Africa's Bantustans through bogus constitutional conferences has been answered by the stepping up of armed initiatives against the racist occupying power.

In South Africa itself, in the recent period, new and more favourable conditions of struggle have emerged, reflected in the heightened spirits of revolutionary defiance shown in the Soweto and post Soweto period laying the basis for further advances by the liberation forces.

The dramatic victories of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique have had a profound inspirational effect on the fighting spirit of South Africa's oppressed people, and have created more positive external conditions for our liberation movement.

On the other hand the continuing external threat to the gains of the Angolan and Mozambican revolutions will be effectively reduced by an increased tempo in our own liberation struggle for the eventual destruction of the racist regime. The freedom drive in Southern Africa remains indivisible.

The fact that imperialism is no longer able to impose its will by traditional methods does not mean that it has abandoned its drive to dominate, control and exploit world's labour and economic resources - it is being forced to find new ways to achieve this purpose. The past year has shown clearly reaction's search for new methods to slow down, or put a halt to, the revolutionary process in Southern Africa, vis a vis Zimbabwe and Namibia.

In our sub-continent the struggle has been changed by the establishment of people's power in Angola and Mozambique. In Angola's Second War of Liberation, Vorster's racist troops, backed by foreign mercenaries and local puppets, were defeated. This was an event of profound importance not only for the Angolan people led by the MPLA, but also for the wider struggle against imperialism and racism in Africa.

The defeat is a watershed in the history of Africa, because for the first time massive imperialist intervention was frustrated by the heroism of the popular masses with the aid of direct support forces from the socialist world.

Imperialism's gendarme in Southern Africa, Vorster, received clear notice that his plans for aggression against neighbouring states may not be carried out with impunity. His boasts of the invincibility of his racist forces received a rude shock at the hands of our Angolan Brother-Liberation movement, inspiring our oppressed with new confidence in our ability to triumph.

Vorster and his imperialist allies use a variety of weapons to win over indigenous groups for policies whose main aim is to prevent revolutionary advance. They pose as supporters of "majority rule" and as opponents of "racism". They channel financial and material aid - often through revolutionary sounding funds and foundations - to selected "liberation" groups. They work subtly to divert young militants away from liberation movements, and attempt to capture them ideologically by generous offers of study places in western institutions.

These urgent activities are evidence of the heightened crisis of imperialism and minority domination in the whole of Southern Africa.

The tasks of destroying the remains of minority and foreign domination in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia rest with the people of these countries led by their liberation movements.

It is they and they alone who bear the ultimate responsibility for deciding the objectives of their struggles, the strategy needed to reach those objectives and the acceptability or otherwise of any proposed settlements.

The key to the future of the whole of Southern Africa and indeed, the whole of the African continent, is the liberation of South Africa itself. It is this question which dominates the thinking and actions of Vorster, and of world reaction which stands at his side.

Their tactics in the sub-continent are undoubtedly guided by the desire to "save South Africa" for the west; and today they work more urgently than ever to block any revolutionary advance in this main citadel of imperialism in the African continent.

They do so, however, against the background of improved prospects of internal struggle brought about by changes in the Southern African situation and by the stirring events of the past year and one half inside our country.

The minority regime in South Africa faces a crisis of considerable magnitude which found dramatic expression in the upsurge which hit the world headlines in June 1976. The Soweto and connected events right up to the arrest of over six hundred people yesterday clearly demonstrate the new mood of revolutionary militancy which grips the mass of our people.

Our youth have shown unambiguously their readiness to sacrifice and if need be, to die in the struggle. Our strong and experienced working class responded magnificently to calls for political general strikes which involved about a quarter million workers since June 1976 and inflicted great damage on the economy. The coloured youth and workers joined hands with their African brothers at a time when the regime is trying desperately to drive a wedge between them.

A most significant feature of this upsurge is the persistence with which the youth in particular maintained their revolutionary buoyancy in the face of the regime's response to the Soweto revolt, which was perhaps more vicious than any in our modern history of struggle. The mass killings on the streets, the torture, and murder in the jails, and the administrative actions against all forces of opposition, have been more intensive than in the post-Sharpville and post-Rivonia periods.

Over 1000 people have been arrested since then - many of them members of the ANC - three newspapers were banned, 18 groups disbanded on October 19 and only yesterday, the South African government took wartime powers over industry. Economics Minister, Chris Heunis, announced that the government will assume power to procure and seize goods without legal process. There are also over 50 political trials on all over South Africa. Yet the terror has not created a mood of defeatism or submission; on the contrary all the signs show that the spirit of defiance and the search for ways hitting the enemy continues.

The events in the Soweto revolt and since are not isolated happenings; they have their roots in the crisis which has been building up at every level socio-economic structure. South Africa is suffering not only from the general crisis of the imperialist west, which is part, but also from the special contradictions inherent in the apartheid framework.

Inflation is rampant, unemployment is rising among the whites - a new phenomenon. Vorster's aggressive aims in Southern Africa and a mobilization of greater force against the liberation movement continue to bleed away

economic resources into military expenditure. The political crisis since June 1976 has reached back on the economic situation to further increase the regime's difficulties. The intensity of the Soweto events reflects the development over the years of the people's reactions to the growing crisis of Apartheid.

What happened in the streets of South Africa from June 1976, including industrial supporting actions by large sections of the workers, is relatively well known. There is no doubt that taken as a whole, the Soweto events have opened a new chapter in the history of the revolutionary struggle. Soweto closed the debate about the legitimacy of resorting to the armed struggle.

It made it abundantly clear to the world and the racist regime that our people have reached a stage where they are no longer prepared to behave like sheep led to the slaughterhouse; they are no longer prepared to let other people decide their fate as if they were inanimate objects.

Like the Angolan intervention, the Soweto revolt exposed the vulnerability of the South African clique. Whilst Angola destroyed the myth of the South African military invincibility, Soweto demolished the myth that the government's security forces are able to destroy the people's revolutionary spirit.

An indelible mark has been made on the revolutionary and political consciousness of our people by the Soweto events. They raised the level of the people's preparedness and willingness to sacrifice to a higher level, enhancing enormously the striking power of the liberation movement.

What was the link between the Soweto upsurge and our liberation movement? The regime has repeatedly claimed that the demonstrations were manipulated by "agitators" connected with the ANC. Some critics of our movement totally deny the influence of its organized underground and its ideology on the events.

The demonstration on June 16 was called by the South African Students Movement, a national school-student organization, which had been campaigning for some years on the issue of Bantu Education. What started as a protest by school students against the government's educational policies, soon extended to broader sections of the people and advanced wider demands.

SASM itself was at all times an independent organization. Although SASO (South African Students' Organization) influenced its formation, it was not run by SASO, the BPC (Black People's Convention) or the ANC, even though the ideological influences of all three organizations were present among its leaders.

The placards and slogans used began to reflect the basic questions of race oppression and people's power. The ANC's slogan of "AMANDLA" (power) became an important password. From the early stages there is evidence that some of SASM's leaders turned to known activists of the ANC for advice and co-ordination. Since then, many have joined the ranks of the liberation movement and its armed wing "Umkhonto We Sizwe".

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At the U.N. World Conference Against Apartheid, held in Lagos last August, the SASM, SASO and the Christian Institute were part of the African National Congress delegation.

A large group of some of the most important of our liberation movement have been languishing in Robben Island and Vorster's other prisons for close on 15 years. The freeing of these great heroes in our struggle remains one of our primary duties.

It is therefore vital that we intensify both the national and international campaigns for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners which has been taken up by the Organization of African Unity and the independent African States, by the world community and the governments through the United Nations. The U.N. declared October 13 as the International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners in South Africa.

The trial of the Pretoria Twelve is one of the many trials taking place in South Africa. This trial is the most important since the 1963 Rivonia trial where Nelson Mandela and others faced the death sentence. But there was a tremendous upsurge of international solidarity. We believe they were saved from the gallows due to the international pressure both at the mass level and at the government level and at the level of the U.N.

The regime is becoming frantic in its efforts to crush the liberation movement. The enemy has no doubts that in this period of uprisings, it singles out the ANC as the real threat. This is to be seen in the severity of the sentences that it is imposing where evidence indicates that a person is a member of the ANC.

We have just passed through a trial which ended in July in Pietermaritzburg where 10 of our men were on trial. Five of them were from Robben Island having previously served sentences from 8 to 10 years. The judge sentenced the ex-Robben Islanders to life imprisonment.

In the Pretoria case there are 11 men and one woman on trial. The state evidence alleges that they are activists of the ANC, some of them trained guerillas who had entered the country, had worked in the mass movements, in the Black Consciousness Movement, The South African Students Association, SSRC, Soweto and in the direct underground machinery. Six of the men have served on Robben Island. Some of them have served up to twelve years. It is clear the state is looking for a major conviction and the prosecution has asked for the death sentence. The trial is at its defence stage now.

So, under the demand "Halt the Trial of the Pretoria Twelve", we are calling on the world to halt all political trials. Similarly under the demand of "Free Nelson Mandela" who this year completes his 14th year of imprisonment, we are demanding the release of all sentenced political prisoners and detainees. I am glad to learn that this is a major area of concern of this conference.

We are fighting an unequal war where the state and minority of whites control economic, political, and military power in the country and control the destiny of the majority of the people. Their command of the economic resources, military power and state power immediately places us at a

disadvantage. Their links with the imperialist system gives them added strength. This puts the balance against us at the tactical level.

Our only strategic strength is the fact that we have the majority of the people. In order to try to redress the tactical balance which is against us, we are calling for international solidarity to isolate South Africa totally. The permanent and mandatory arms embargo is a step in the right direction. The next step will be mandatory economic sanctions. Trade relations and investment only serve to prop up the system. Canada is one of the props. Help remove it.

Those who argue that there is a possibility of peaceful change ignore the history of our struggle which had its origins at the turn of the century where we pursued a non-violent path until 1961 in spite of enemy reaction.

Our experience has shown that peaceful solutions are closed. Peaceful solutions essentially revolve around the idea that we can persuade our oppressors and our rulers in South Africa to abdicate power.

It is a system that cannot be humanized by modifications and must be overthrown in its entirety. And that will only be possible through armed struggle.

The armed struggle that is going on is a crucial phase for the struggle for national liberation. More than ever the ANC requires your fullest support and past experience has shown that this is most effective when it is co-ordinated at the local, national and international levels. One of your workshops is concerned with the co-ordination of support for the Southern African struggle.

LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE

AMANDLA!!