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MESSAGE OF THE ANC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
TO THE 1ST CONGRESS OF THE MPLA.

LUANDA- DECEMBER, 1977

Comrade President Agostinho Neto,

Comredef Members of the Presidium of the Congress,

Comrades Militants and Combatants of MPLA,

Comrades and Friends:

We bring to this historic First Congress of the MPLA warmest and most fraternal greetings from the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, from its militants and combatants, from the workers and peasants, the women and the youth; from the entire struggling people of South Africa.

We feel genuinely proud that we are active participants in the making of African history here in Angola at this time.

The heroic anti-colonial struggles of the peoples of Africa for national independence, including, in particular, the armed struggles of the people of Algeria, Guinea Bissau and. Cape Verde, Angola, and Mozambique, culminated in the epoch-making collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Africa. The earth-shaking victories of FRELIMO and MPLA brought Southern Africa to the crossroads.

But the revolutionary experience accumulated during the liberation wars ensured that the people's advance towards social emancipation would not be halted.

Thus it is that as the year 1977 opened with the 3rd Congress of FRELIMO, so it is ending with the 1st Congress of MPLA. Both Congresses are the collective voice of the Mozambican and Angolan peoples, proclaiming the continuation of the revolutionary struggle at a higher plain, more arduous but no less glorious than the earlier struggles. The historic significance of the 1st CONGRESS of iA»J?LA is precisely that, for Southern Africa, like the Frelimo Congress, it blazes a new trail out of the crossroads towards the conquest of a socialist future for the peoples

- a future free of exploitation.

Our esteemed Leader, Friend and Comrade-in-arms, President Agostinho Neto, expressed a key and important truth when he said in one of his statements the victory of the Angolan people was "a victory of the peoples advancing towards progress".

This First Congress of 1.º PLA is a victory of the Angolan people. It is also a victory of all the peoples, including the people of South Africa, who are pledged to fight for the creation of new socio-economic systems which will be characterised by the abolition of exploitation of man by man through ownership of productive wealth by the people themselves; characterised as well by the self-government of the ordinary working people through the institution of popular power and characterised also by a commitment to strive for a world that has been rid of the parasites that have imposed on all of us; fascism, racism and apartheid, deprivation and backwardness, ignorance, superstition and destructive wars.

Angola's orientation towards the social emancipation of her people has therefore, like Mozambique, brought to the fore, in our region, the confrontation between the liberating theory and practice of socialism and the oppressive, exploitative and anti-human system of capitalism.

This latter societal system is of course represented, par excellence, by racist South Africa itself. Hence today the open and sharp confrontations between People's Angola and Mozambique on the one side and fascist South Africa and colonial Rhodesia on the other.

Given such a juxtaposition of two diametrically opposed social systems within the same region of Southern Africa, conflict and confrontation become inevitable.

But of major importance for us in understanding the nature of this confrontation, is the fact that the victories of the MPLA and FRELIMO have become a key factor in the politics of the racist regime within its own ranks and generally inside the boundaries of racist South Africa.

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These victories have helped to deepen the general crisis of the apartheid colonial system: they have in the actuality of South African politico helped to strengthen the forces of progress and severely weaken the forces of reaction.

In that fact lies the fundamental reason for the desperate determination of the Vorster regime to destroy these two People's Republics. In that also lies essentially the reason why we of the African National Congress join voices with Comrade President Reto in saying - the victory of the Angolan people is indeed truly our own as well.

In the very first hours of its existence, people's Angola had to defend- itself against the massive military onslaught of a mature but decaying imperialist system. The trials that confronted, the MPLA even before November 11, 1975, right through to 1976 when the racist oppressor army of the Vorster regime was evicted from Angola, were not a test solely of the valour and military preparedness of MPLA and- the people of Angola.

More significant In the longer term, the attempted military destruction of the People's Republic posed the question on the battlefield - had the time come for the birth of the new liberating social system in Angola?

Or was the balance of forces still such that moribund imperialism, with its oppressive and exploitative system of social relations would continue to hold sway, dictating to the people of Angola what kind of independence they should have?

The results of that contest have now become a matter of proud historical record. Progress triumphed over .reaction, thanks to the heroic sacrifices of the people of Angola, supported by their progressive African allies, by Cuba, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and by all peoples advancing towards progress.

What started as a triumphant march by the forces of reaction into the he rt of Angola ended up with a deeper crisis for the Vorster regime inside South Africa itself.

The humiliating defeat of Vorster's army was at the same time defeat for the social system which that army had been created, trained and armed to defend.-

The myth of the invincibility of the racist army was destroyed for ever. For the fascist regime of John Vorster, whose ultimate and principal means of survival is naked brute force, this was a stunning blow.

It proved to our own people, as well as to the more far-seeing sections of the oppressor population including especially the youth, that in the confrontation with the forces of progress, the fascist state is destined inevitably to lose, wherever that confrontation takes place, but above all, and especially, within South Africa itself.

Today the fascist regime is haunted by the spectre that large sections of the white population will, as the struggle intensifies, refuse to be used as cannon-fodder to protect the interests of big capital and fascist domination. Already, thousands of white South Africans have left and are leaving the country. The regime stands in dread fear of the further narrowing of the social base of the system of apartheid domination. In this context, therefore, the so-called landslide victory scored by the Afrikaner Nationalist Party during the recent racist elections in South Africa can only be fragile and temporary.

Terrified at the prospect of the victory of the forces of progress within the country, in the aftermath and as a direct continuation of the popular victory in Angola, the Vorster regime unleashed the bloody terror that is today symbolised by SOWETO.

By this brutal means the enemy thought he would solve that part of 'his crisis' which is characterised by the ready acceptance among our people of the liberating ideas and the revolutionary practice of the LAPLA,

The regime also thought that through the ruthless massacre of our people, it would once again re-establish the terrorist military and political authority that the regime's armed forces lost on the battlefields of Angola.

Inevitably, the racist regime has failed dismally to achieve any of these objectives. So entrenched has the spirit, of revolution among the people â– become that the enemy has been compelled to take extreme measures again and over; those who still preached peaceful transition to democratic rule.

The African National Congress with its allies, is the representative inside apartheid South Africa of the kind of life that the people of Angola and Mozambique are striving to build, the kind of life that all peoples advancing towards progress aim for. 1

Exactly because of this, its authority among the broad masses of our people has risen so high and has proved so indestructible that the enemy himself has had to admit this fact openly and repeatedly.

Instead of submitting to an already disproved invincibility of fascist arms, the best sons and daughters of our people have responded with enthusiasm to our call to them to swell the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe, our own people's army, the military wing of the ANC and to confront the enemy with revolutionary arms now.

The African National Congress therefore continues to find confirmation of the correctness of its positions from the historical experience of the ip LA.

One of these positions is that the victorious revolution cannot be defended successfully without arms. This condition is imposed on all revolutions by the fact that the forces of reaction never hesitate to attempt to reverse this historical process by force of arms.

In building up our own popular army we aim therefore not only at the overthrow of the fascist regime, we aim also at building up a politically conscious and revolutionary gains, conscious of its popular origin, unwavering in its democratic functions and guided by our revolutionary orientation. We know i'APLA is such a force, and we know that, that is why i'APLA is invincible.

We of the African National Congress visualise a South Africa in which the people shall govern, in which the wealth of the country shall be res-tdred to the people and where the land shall be shared' among those who work it. We aim to establish in our country a society free of the exploitation of man by man.

We fight for a South Africa in which the people shall be guaranteed the right to work, in which it will be the duty of the people's state to ensure that the doors of learning, and of culture are open to the working people. We seek to live in peace with our neighbours and the people of the world in conditions of equality, mutual respect and equal advantage.

Those who monopolise political power, the land and the wealth of our country today, these who prohibit the distribution of everything that is progressive in literature and the arts, - those who launch aggressive wars, will naturally do their best to ensure that we do not realise our goal of translating our liberation into a genuine people's liberation, leading to the radical social transformation of our country.

As revolutionaries it is our duty to deny these counter-revolutionary forces the possibility of victory. Part of that denial consists in our ensuring that no elements of the enemy's fascist state machinery, including his armed forces, remain as organised units within the new society.

Angola and Mozambique-....have today ensured that. We also shall have to take the same path. In our view this is as true of Angola and Mozambique today as it will be true of Namibia and Zimbabwe tomorrow.

No element of the South African fascist state can be expected to defend or administer a SWAPO victory in Namibia. Equally, no element of the Rhodesian colonial state can be expected to defend or administer a Patriotic Front victory in Zimbabwe.

For that reason, as in Angola and Mozambique, we support the demand for an unconditional transfer of power to SWAPO of NAMIBIA and to the ZIMBABWE PATRIOTIC FRONT. The collective revolutionary experience of the peoples of Southern Africa teaches us that, where the enemy refuses to accede to this demand, then its realisation has to be fought for.

The imperialist proposals concerning Namibia and Zimbabwe are once again an attempt to ensure that the genuinely revolutionary forces of these countries are denied the possibility to bring about authentic people's liberation, to deny them the possibility

of undertaking a radical transformation of their societies.

The iirLA, the organiser, the leader, the vanguard of the movement of the people of Angola for national and social emancipation wc-s itself confronted,with; similar imperialist attempts, and it successfully foiled them.

But, to rei ch the point in the history of the Angolan Struggle when'it became possible to hold this First Congress, KPBA has had to fight for its very life against formidable enemies from within 'and from without. Imperialist reaction well understood that in order to defeat the Angolan revolution, it had to pierce the heart â— of that revolution, it had to smother its fountain-head, precisely,

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it had to destroy the kPLA.

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The history of the LIP1A therefore constitutes almost an encyclopaedia of the strategy and tactics-of the counter-revolution against the revolutionary forces of Southern Africa.

We have seen attempts to cut the LPLA off from contact with the masses of the people of Angola. 'We have seen also attempts to drive'wedges within the lfcPLA, to foment internal strife and discord through the exploitation of tribe.1 differences, the use of racism, tM encoura gement of a rabid, chauvinistic^nationalism, the fertilisation of blind personal ambition and the vilification of the best representatives of the Angolan people.

We have seen the instigation of extreme leftist elements who, while posing as the true defenders of the interests of the people within the iiPLA, were in fact involved in plots to starve the people into a state of disaffection and rebellion against the people's own fundamental interests.

.We have seen attempts to encourage an anti-popular spirit of militarism among the armed cadres in.an effort to denigrate the political leadership and political persuasion, and put on a pedestal the force of arms. " â€¢

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Imperialism and its multi-national corporations also worked hard to set up alternative third force which would pose as liberation movements while remaining in the pay of exactly the forces against whom they would claim to be waging 'liberation Wars'.

We have seen imperialist attempts to balkanise and dismember Angola itself. We have seen open assassination of leaders and activists.

We have seen the forces of counter-revolution try to create animosity between the MPLA and its most tested and natural allies, to detach it from these allies, especially from the Soviet Union and the Socialist Republic of Cuba. Thus would the MPLA find itself weakened and isolated and therefore ready prey to imperialist attempts to liquidate it.

We have seen all 'this and much more. But we have also seen the MPLA emerge from this enduring crisis triumphant, - stronger than ever before. Such a record of victories is a great tribute to the revolutionary maturity of the MPLA, of Comrade Agostinho Neto personally; it is a tribute to the veterans of two gruelling liberation wars, many of them present here today; it is a tribute to all those other heroes who have sacrificed their lives for the victory of the Angolan revolution and to ensure that once that victory was won, it was not lost again.

To see the MPLA as a target of imperialist attacks from 1956 to 1977, is to gain an idea of the experience of the ANC during the same period. In December, 1956, the entire leadership of the organisations opposing the racist regime, led by the ALC, was arrested and brought to a common trial on charges of attempting to overthrow the racist state. More than 150 leaders faced death sentences. This, enemy act consolidated the unity of the revolutionary movement as never before.

In December, 1961, like MPLA in February of that year, we decided to embark on armed struggle and formed Umkhonto we Sizwe the armed wing of the AUG.

From then on, MPLA and ANC have shared victories and setbacks, we have shared heroes and martyrs; we have marched arm-in-arm and no imperialist edge will ever be allowed to interpose itself between the Angolan people and the mass of the South African people.

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And as with the Angolan experience, the victory of the South African revolution depends on the continuation of the ANC as the-organiser, the leader, the vanguard of the movement for national and social emancipation in South Africa.

The South African fascist regime declared the ADC illegal more than 17 years ago, it committed Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg, Harry Gwala and other national leaders to terms of life imprisonment. It embarked on a wide range of tactics aimed at destroying the ANC. These have included attempts to strangle our revolution by isolating our movement from its allies, especially the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The regime has now embarked on a policy of consistent assassination of the leading cadre's of our revolution. But all this heis served only to heighten the determination of the and deepen the political crisis of the racist regime, bringing' ever nearer the day when these imprisoned leaders of the people will be free to assume their rightful place among the creators' of a revolutionary democratic South Africa, arm-in-arm with the builders of the new social order in Africa and in the rest of the progressive world.

We are in unison with the MPLA when we say that the masses of our people - the workers, peasants, revolutionary youth and intelligents, as a conscious and organised force, constitute the oolitical army of our revolution, without whom, and against whom, victory is impossible.

In their na.me, and in the name of its armed combatants, Umkhonto we Sizwe, the African National Congress renews its pledge to continue the struggle, to fight with arms until our strategic objective of seizure of power is achieved. The.people of South Africa, led by the ANC and its allies, will not betray the victory of the Angolan people, led by MPLA.

The ANC places on record its profound appreciation of the consistent all-round support given by the MPLA with a willingness which fully confirms the fact that MPLA, the Government and people of Angola, regard as their own the revolutionary struggles of

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peoples for national and social liberation. In giving this support, Angola is being faithful to the highest aspirations of Africa, to the basic policy of the OAU, to the principles of proletarian internationalism., . . â–

In this context, we wish to mention the support,, the co-operation and the facilities given us by the countries of the Frontline, including Swaziland and Lesotho.

We wish to acknowledge also the support and assistance we ' receive from our mutual friends, the countries of the socialist -

community, especially the Soviet Union, the GDR and Cuba; from Algeria and other member countries of the OAU; from countries in Western Europe, notably Sweden, as well as progressive movements throughout the world.

The ANC re-iterates from this rostrum of the 1st Congress of the cMELA, its unswerving support for the Patriotic Front, S .APO, the PLO, Frelilin, Polisario and all other revolutionary forces fighting for progressive-change.

On behalf of the masses of the people of our country, we wish this First Congress all success. We have no doubt that its

results will be a 1. sting contribution to the revolutionary

process towards the establishment and consolidation of a new progressive order, not only f'cr the peoples of Africa,, but also for all mankind.

VIVA 0: PLA - PARTIDO DE VANGUARD DA CLASSE OPERARIAI

VIVA 0 PRIMEIRO COKGRFSSO DO kPLAI .

VIVA 0 CAMARADA PRESIDEKTE AG0ST1EH0 METO J â€¢

ABAIZO 0 COLOKIALISMO E RACISMOI

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