

OTP/017/0141/9

FILE DRAFT SPEECHES

ADDRESS TO THE WEST AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

Leaders of the West Australian Council of Churches,
Fellow fighters against apartheid,

This day, the -- of March will go down in history as one of the most remarkable moments in the struggle against apartheid. On this occasion, the hearts of millions across the Indian Ocean are beating as one. The bonds cemented by our common struggle assume even more profound meaning. We have barely landed on the shores of Australia and here we are, enveloped by the warmth of your welcome and the most vivid expression of our oneness. It is indeed an understatement to say that you have taken us by storm.

On our part, we can only express our gratitude at having been given such a ^{rousing} ~~resounding~~ welcome. We thank the leadership of your Council and its denominations as well as millions of ordinary churchmen and women, who have laboured to make this occasion ^{the} a success that it will surely turn out to be. It is for us an honour to stand in front of representatives of such an august institution as yours. ^{the religious community of west Australia}

^{welcome the opportunity}
We ~~feel humbled~~ to share views with people profoundly concerned with the basic issues of justice, ^{and} peace, and both the spiritual and material well-being of ^{the} ~~man~~ human-kind. Our ^{we} feelings are inspired by the realisation that we are speaking to a movement founded on the principle of ^{"One Church, One Faith, One Lord"} ~~One Grace, One Scripture and One Christ~~ across denominational, racial and nationality differences, and indeed across national frontiers. ^{In that sense we} ~~We~~ are speaking here to our own: the millions of believers across the length and breadth of Australia who share our vision of a world without apartheid, war and suffering.

The overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa have unqualified confidence in the ^{ability of the} Church, both within and without our borders, ^{to help ensure} ~~Their confidence accrues~~ not only from the belief in the better here-after. Rather they also see in the Church one institution from which they can derive the hope that the world we live in ~~can~~ indeed become a just, secure and peaceful place. Thus they expect of the Church both ^{an} ~~a clear~~ and unambiguous statement ^{and a clear stand} against colonial tyranny, and consistent practice in keeping with ^{its proclaimed} ~~the Christian~~ faith. That their expectations rise with the intensity of the conflict in our country attests to the important role a sizeable section of the Church has been playing, as well as the manifest potential the entire ^{religious community} ~~Church~~ possesses to make a decisive contribution in the struggle to transform South Africa into a non-racial and democratic state. ^{In this connection, it is to be noted that some 80% of the population of our country}
~~It is perhaps a contradiction in terms that we speak here of "the people" and of~~

~~"the Church". For the Church is but the assembly of believers under the guidance of God. In our country, where over 80% are Christians and adherents of other religious faiths, to place the two apart lucidly begs the question. Yet the~~ ^{And}
^{yet the} reality is that the South African Church, in particular, is a body that has been at war with itself.

~~And~~
On the one hand the colonial Church sought to justify the act of imperialist plunder and counsel the slave to serve the master unto death while revelling in the comfort of a better life after death. On the other, the slave embraced the hope offered by the Church but sought justification for his right to rebel and become in all fullness the embodiment of God's image.

On the one hand a section of the Church evolved as a tool of evil worldly-powerful men and an instrument in the conception, justification and realisation of the system of apartheid. On the other, various other Churches developed to stand up and challenge this blasphemy and demand that the Church identifies with the poor and the oppressed.

On the one hand yet another section of the Church condemns injustice and accepts the right of the oppressed to struggle: but to struggle only within the boundaries set by Church leaders on the basis of select texts from the Bible. The oppressed people are called upon to strive for reconciliation - under any circumstances - with a heresy and crime. On the other hand the people and sections of the Church leadership call for a truly prophetic ministry that not only recognises the right to struggle but also the need to actively participate in the struggle ^{using} and to use ^{all forms and methods deemed justifiable in the circumstances} ~~all forms suitable, practicable and acceptable under given conditions according to the Christian faith.~~

The African National Congress identifies wholly with the ministry that supports the poor, encourages resistance against the heresy of apartheid, and seeks joint actions with all other anti-apartheid forces in pursuit of justice and democracy. The divisions that have rent the Church apart are not merely a result of different interpretations of religious texts, but also a product of economic and socio-political divisions within society. In other words, it is intensely sinful and yet explicable that those who derive all manner of benefits from apartheid should fight to perpetuate it. Thus it is necessary to use both persuasion and active struggle to bring home the point that apartheid is blasphemous ^{under all creeds} and a source of ^{actual} insecurity for all South Africans.

It is indeed as a result of struggle - within and outside the church - that South African Churches have taken many a giant step in ~~respect of~~ their positions on apartheid and the struggle against it. As a matter of proud historical record, the

African National Congress has made a significant contribution to this process.

When the ANC was formed 75 years ago, many individual Christians and Church leaders were among its founding fathers. The fact that the first 3 presidents and one of the 4 vice-presidents of the ANC were ministers of religion and a lay preacher attests to the importance our people attach to the Church. These individuals and many more before them, and since, took it upon themselves to challenge the false theology of acquiescence and join the multitude of black believers in action for the attainment of freedom and equality. In so far as they contextualised the Christian faith and practice to the experience of the oppressed, they were the pioneers of the anti-apartheid Church in existence today. These pioneers loathed the artificial and debilitating attitudes among some African Christians against each other on the basis of denominations. They called for unity against colonialism. To that extent they were the forerunners of the South African ecumenical movement.

These eminent pioneers saw it as their duty to fight and uproot the evil of colonial domination, not to reconcile with it. They considered it their task to build and defend the African National Congress as the embodiment of the aspirations of the oppressed and democratic forces of our land and beyond. Thousands more - Christians and non-Christians alike - have followed in their footsteps and are to be found at all levels of struggle: be it legal mass actions, the underground network or the armed struggle. These brave men and women understand that united action by all forces genuinely interested in the eradication of apartheid is the key to our success.

It is indeed ironic that those who have made it one of their prime occupations to fight true Christianity arrogate to themselves the task of choosing who our friends and allies should be. The Botha regime shamelessly seeks to be our advisor on how and with whom we should struggle. To them, the alliance of Christians and non-Christians - in particular Communists - evokes the evil hand of some manipulators in Moscow. Such arrogance and attempt at manipulation would have been mind-boggling if we did not know that divide-and-rule is the basis of the regime's strategy. If Pretoria did not act with such devilish brutality against all democrats and anti-apartheid forces perhaps we might have paused to ponder over its "piece of advice". We might perhaps have fallen prey to this dirty trickery if we did not have the historical precedent of Hitlerite Nazism.

In typical fashion, the white supremacists cannot reconcile themselves with the reality that black people are capable of "discovering" that they are oppressed; that they can independently seek to change the status quo, formulate their

objectives, and ways of attaining them. The regime's song about manipulation and domination has had the effect of spurring us to further consolidate our anti-apartheid front within South Africa. The intensification of anti-apartheid actions in Australia and elsewhere, and the very fact of our being together here today, is testimony to the reality that they have failed in their attempts to divide anti-apartheid fighters outside South Africa too. They have failed and shall always fail because what they are attempting to do is to persuade us to accept racism; to be accomplices in the defence of white supremacy. The majority of ^{human kind} ~~man kind~~ refuses to live with super-exploitation and the denial of basic political rights to blacks in South Africa and Namibia, to accept deprivation and racist violence. Rather it has an obligation to eradicate this crime against humanity.

Apartheid ^{thrives on} ~~constitutes~~ oppression and superexploitation. Precisely because such a system is bound to generate resistance, its captains progressively resort to more and more violence in order to keep themselves in power. South ^{Africa} is today under a state of seige. The racist army and police have been let loose on the African townships with the licence to kill and pillage. In addition to these instruments of the state, the racists are systematically employing black so-called 'vigilantes' drawn from criminals and other anti-social elements in the campaign of terror against the mass democratic movement in South Africa.

The spate of detentions and torture is unprecedented in our history, and it invokes the bitter memories of the dark days of fascism in Europe. Children have not been spared this horrid experience: thousands have been killed, maimed, detained, tortured and psychologically abused. And those who have been released have come out of the dungeons scarred for life. To ensure the smooth operation of the regime's gruesome schemes, the media has been silenced.

As could be expected, the anti-apartheid Church has been one of the prime targets of state terrorism. Offices of the South African Council of Churches and other establishments have been pillaged and are constantly monitored; numerous restrictions have been imposed on religious functions; many church leaders and ordinary members such as Father ^{Si Mungalisso} Mkhathshwa, Reverend Tsele and Sister Ncube have been detained and tortured. Forced to rely on violence and more violence, the state has itself become fully militarised, with soldiers and police effectively running the affairs of government at all levels. If a few years ago whites could boast of some semblance of democracy, ^{today that democracy is becoming an illusion} ~~this has become an obvious illusion.~~

Racist South Africa continues to occupy the territory of Namibia in spite of repeated calls by the international community for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435. Precisely because the people of Namibia, under

the leadership of SWAPO, are bound to intensify their struggle, the occupationist forces rely on increasing brute force in order to defend the illegal administration. Open terror against Namibian patriots and the population in general increases by the day.

Within Southern Africa, murder, pillage and rape are apartheid's trade-mark. Through direct invasion and its bandit surrogates - UNITA and the MNR - the regime has disrupted a significant part of the economies of Angola and Mozambique, and brought untold suffering on the people of these countries. Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana have been victims of aggression and all sorts of plots aimed at undermining their governments as well as their declared policy of support for the anti-apartheid struggle. Where its capacity and circumstances would allow, Pretoria would not shun from installing puppet regimes in the neighbouring countries. The regime has a terrible dread for, and strives to sabotage, independent economic development in the region. Pretoria fears such development because it will deprive the racists of their leverage for blackmail and the attempt at complete domination.

The peoples of South Africa and the subcontinent cannot reconcile with the crime of apartheid. The interests of the two parties are diametrically opposed. Besides, where attempts have been made at some reconciliation, it is the Botha regime that has ^{blasted} ^{with bombs} ~~bombed~~ them to smithereens. We refer here to the ^{Nkomati} 1984 Nkomati ^{with Mozambique} Accord ¹⁹⁸⁴ and the Lusaka ^{accord} ^{with Angola} Agreement with Mozambique and Angola respectively. Direct invasion and the infiltration and arming of bandits have since intensified. With regard to attempts at "peacefully" resolving the crisis in South Africa the regime's belligerent answer to the Commonwealth EPG mission confirmed once and for all that ACTION and ONLY ACTION on all fronts can at least persuade the ruling clique to take the ~~necessary~~ steps that would make negotiations possible. And such action has to address the fact that it is foreign investments, loans, secret military deals, diplomatic and political relations and the public backing by the Reagan administration, the British government and that of the Federal Republic of Germany in particular which have shored up the system of apartheid.

Consistent and effective actions against apartheid South Africa do not, neither ~~are they meant~~ to, supplant the struggle within South Africa. Rather they complement the mass and armed actions of the people, and have the effect of weakening the regime and thus, in the final analysis, reducing the amount of bloodshed and material destruction. ^{Already} Too many lives have already been lost, ^{for want of} ~~effective intervention by the international community~~.

Black people in South Africa - like any other people - love life. In spite, and indeed because, of this they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for the creation of a society in which the nurturing and protection of life will ~~be the prime~~ ^{replace} ~~concern~~. ~~Take the place of the daily carnage we are experiencing under apartheid.~~

Pretoria acts with such desperation because it realises that neither terror nor the pretence at reform can stem the tide of the people's march. It has lost control of the situation. Many areas of the country have become ungovernable for the regime; apartheid ^{has become} is unworkable. In the major industrial cities ^{and in} many small towns and rural areas, the ^{organs set up by the regime for the} regime's organs of administration ^{of} African townships and villages have been destroyed. In their stead, ^{there} the people have ^{arisen} formed democratic people's committees ^{which} to run these areas in accordance with the will of the majority. The democratic people's government which ^{will} is to emerge at the ^{hour} instance of liberation has already started to take shape in these localities,

This is happening because the people do not look up to the Botha regime to redeem them. Rather they are their own liberators and are resolved to implement their revolutionary demands themselves, whatever the ~~regime~~ ruling clique does or omits to do. The regime is not an instrument of change; it is the obstacle which has to be swept aside. This qualitatively new form of organisation poses a direct challenge to the legality and legitimacy of the Botha regime. That is why Pretoria is bent on uprooting people's committees physically and ^{dismissing} discrediting them through its ^{however,} propaganda as a brazen form of anarchy. ^{But} The reality is that the organs of people's power represent a new authority and morality, indeed a new socio-political order - perhaps fledgeling and embryonic, perhaps needing improvement here and there, but a reality that is morally superior to the apartheid regime.

It is thanks to the people's committees that the regime has failed to regain control. Through these committees the democratic movement is able to keep in touch with the people and to conduct mass campaigns and actions under the noses of the fascist forces. Through these committees the people can in an organised manner evolve forms of struggle to confront the army and police.

Numerous restrictions have been placed on the legal mass democratic movement, and many setbacks have been suffered, but organisation continues in different forms. The United Democratic Front, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, women, youth, students and the anti-apartheid Church are steadily but surely adapting to conditions of repression at the same time as they fight to remove these conditions. The experience gained in this process is a guarantee that, ultimately, the regime will reap the direct opposite of what it had intended to achieve through the State of Emergency.

The African National Congress is at the head of the battles being waged. 75 years on, and 27 years to the week, after its banning, it enjoys the support of the majority of South Africans. Even its adversaries have been forced to acknowledge that it is central to the resolution of the conflict in our country and southern Africa. This is because it has steadfastly championed the interests and

aspirations of the people; its members - both within and outside of South Africa - have risked and continue to risk life and limb for the attainment of freedom and justice.

In response to unbridled fascist violence, the African National Congress has led the people in armed struggle which continues to escalate. Over the years, actions by the people's army have increased by leaps and bounds giving the necessary cutting edge to mass struggles. Firmly rooted among the people, Umkhonto we Sizwe has grown by drawing the best sons and daughters of our country into its ranks. Today, revolutionary violence has engulfed the whole country and, involving the broad masses, it has assumed the form of a people's war. It is quite natural that those who seek to disarm the people and induce them into submission consistently question our right to fight arms in hand, and denigrate the people as "blood-thirsty terrorists" for daring to face up to the tyrant's brutality.

Our own experience has taught us that it is only in the theatre of action that fundamental change can be effected in South Africa. The mass of the people, supported by their international anti-apartheid allies, and not the regime or its parliament, are the motive forces for such change. The time has long passed when the regime and its supporters could arrogantly set out to decide on the destiny of our country, alone. Yet it is a reflection of this blind adherence to racism and to the past that Botha has called a whites-only election. In so far as the central issues are concerned, this election will be nothing more than a farce: the pitiful performance of an ostrich with its head buried in the sand.

Many among our white countrymen and women have risen above the murky bottoms of self-deception. They are to be found among extra-parliamentary forces engaged in struggle for the establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa. Many more are taking this step and some have held consultations with the ANC because they have realised that the regime does not have the wherewithal to take the country out of the quagmire. Rather it is groping in the dark, unable even to understand itself. Its platform is in a shambles, and divisions within its ranks have deepened. High-ranking officials and ideologues of the ruling Nationalist Party have left and continue to leave because they now acknowledge that in spite of their exhortations and cajoling, the Botha clique is not prepared to move anywhere near attempting to resolve the crisis afflicting the country.

The urgent question facing our people and the international community is not whether, but how we can consolidate the anti-apartheid front and accelerate the disintegration of the forces of racism and repression. The answer is one and one only: action and more action on all fronts. On the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the African National Congress, the South African people have

resolved to further intensify the offensive against the racist regime, under the most appropriate theme of the moment: Advance to People's Power. We feel honoured to report from this podium that, in spite of the difficulties, the people are indeed advancing to the goal of political power.

They are grateful of the support rendered by ^athe cross-section of the Australian people. As the conflict intensifies, they expect of you increased support in the form of:

- * comprehensive sanctions by both the government and the people;
- * complete isolation of apartheid South Africa in sports, culture and other fields;
- * consistent support for such campaigns as against repression and all political restrictions, ^{for the} unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, release of children and other detainees, etc;
- * defence of the anti-apartheid Church and individual churchmen and women;
- * increased solidarity with the African National Congress; and
- * support to the Frontline States and the SADCC concomittant with the difficulties they have to weather.

In these and other actions we are confident that you shall be equal to the task.

~~SOLA GRACIA, SOLA SCRIPTURA, SOLA CHRISTA~~

THANK YOU.

*NB: This is the traditional insignia of the Reformed Churches, not sure whether it is accepted by all denominations.