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Draft Speech of the Secretary General of the African National Congress, Comrade A Nzo, to the Bonn Conference. October 1984.

Comrade Chairman,  
Distinguished members of the Presidium,  
Comrade delegates and friends,

Allow me to bring to you the revolutionary greetings of our President, Comrade O R Tambo and our National Executive Committee. This Conference takes place on the hundredth anniversary of the Berlin Conference. A Conference which brought together representatives of the imperialist powers for the purposes of carving up Africa. Today once again these powers are engaged in attempts to reverse the advances of freedom and social emancipation in Southern Africa. However the apartheid regime, which occupies a pivotal place in this strategy, is faced with a prolonged crisis which has seldom been more acute. The speed with which events are taking place has meant that even while we speak here today dramatic and complex developments are unfolding. These events have demonstrated that the revolutionary ferment sweeping through South Africa not only continues unabated but every day draws in more and more formations into organised opposition - a revolutionary tide which must surely wash apartheid away and transfer political and economic power to the democratic majority. Furthermore events have emphasised that the manouvres carried out by the racist regime, the tinkering and tampering with the machinery of apartheid rule amounts to nothing more than what has been appropriately termed a reshuffling of deckchairs on the Titanic. As we have repeatedly stated before - apartheid cannot be reformed. The solution to the problems of our country and the whole subcontinent lie in the total destruction of racist rule in South Africa. This noble aim is not a pipedream - the initiative



has passed irrevocably into the hands of democratic forces in South Africa who are shifting from defensive to offensive positions to ensure that on every front and at every level we drive home our advantage and send the apartheid ship to the bottom of the sea.

A few short months ago the racist rulers were loudly trumpeting that the crisis had been averted. That the signing of the Inkomati and Swazi accords would somehow curtail or stop the peoples resistance and that the implementation of the new constitutional proposals would herald a new dawn for South Africa and the subcontinent. The recent past has amply demonstrated the emptiness of these claims. The racist regimes abrogation of such agreements, specifically the sustained subversion of the puppet MNR counter-revolutionaries as well as other acts of naked aggression and destabilisation have reaffirmed our view that the racist regime cannot be an architect of peace and justice on the subcontinent. Its initiatives, cloaked with a facade of reconciliation, bear the stamp of its ruthless efforts to establish its political, military and economic domination of the subcontinent. Events have confirmed that its real intention is to isolate and emasculate the African National Congress, liquidate the armed struggle, weaken the Front Line States, destroy the SADCC and replace it with a constellation of client states with a status of Bantustans. They intend also to utilise such advances to undermine the worldwide anti-apartheid campaign and legitimise its own inhuman and genocidal policies.

Confirmation of these intentions is reflected in the regimes attempts to foist agreements on Botswana and Lesotho by sustained coercion and open threat. The regime has established a political party in Lesotho, (the Basotho Democratic Alliance) with a



platform advocating closer links with South Africa, Financed, supported and operationally directed the self styled Lesotho Liberation Army, withheld customs revenue due to Lesotho, stopped or delayed the flow of trade to Lesotho in complete disregard for international law, threatened to cut back the migrant labour quota and abrogate previous economic agreements such as the Highlands water scheme. With regard to Botswana it has threatened to deploy troops along the common border and disrupt traffic, retard imports and exports and disrupt economic and financial relations. Both Botswana and Lesotho have taken steps to alert the international community to these ultimatums and threats while reaffirming their internationally accepted right to receive and assist refugees. The regimes insistence that any such agreements must include clauses for the repatriation and deportation of refugees and 'joint security structures' points to its wish to extend its iron fisted control beyond its own borders. These demands are based on a false premise - countrywide opposition to apartheid including frequent acts of armed resistance inside South Africa have surely demonstrated that the ANC does not operate from bases in neighbouring states and that the struggle to destroy apartheid is being decided by its people on South African soil. Furthermore, that the violence and destruction that the regime is perpetrating not only on the people of South Africa but against all those on the subcontinent gives the African National Congress the right and the duty to expect that we will receive all the necessary support which will hasten the downfall of apartheid. This in the final analysis is the only real and secure guarantee of peace and prosperity on the subcontinent.

The wanton destruction and violence perpetrated against the People's Republic of Angola graphically illustrates the lengths to which the regime is prepared to go in pursuit of its strategic objectives, trampling roughshod over its commitments and agreements. The continued occupation of huge tracts of



Angolan land; the destruction of natural and economic resources ; the murder of innocent civilians and the installation of puppet UNITA forces in occupied areas states more eloquently than words that South Africa will be satisfied with nothing less than total domination of the subcontinent. The presence of Jonas Savimbi, chief amongst puppets, amidst the fascist pomp and glory of Botha's inauguration as a military dictator over our people is no less a clear statement of South Africa's real intentions. The Reagan - Botha strategy to force Savimbi onto the Angolan people must be defeated.

The character of the crisis facing the regime is also reflected in what many observers have called the worst recession since 1932. A three comma one per cent contraction of the economy, decreased exports and a massive increase in imports is reflected in a foreign debt of three comma five billion rands. With the gold price at its lowest mark since 1975 the regime has been forced to borrow two thousand million rands from its allies, most of it through the IMF despite opposition even from within this body. In addition, to finance government spending running at an annual twenty eight comma eight percent of the Gross Domestic Profit, the regime has been forced to double the recently imposed General Sales Tax and increase income tax by forty percent. The economic crisis is not only a symptom of the current world recession but a terminal illness in <sup>the</sup> very structure of the South African economy with the state consuming a third of the country's GDP to finance military spending and the monstrosly wasteful structures of apartheid. It goes without saying that the burden of all this has inevitably fallen on the shoulders of the Black oppressed. Unemployment has risen to thirty one percent or three million of the workforce. The rural poor have been particularly hard hit by massive agricultural cutbacks partly spurred on by drought.



The recent period has in addition witnessed a never ending flood of consumer goods, rent, transport, fuel and medical care increases.

The African National Congress has consistently recognised that one of the pillars of the struggle to defeat the racist regime is the united mass action of our people in combination with the actions of our armed and unarmed underground structures as well as the international campaign to win all round support for our struggle and isolate the regime. In its January eighth and subsequent statements the ANC has called on the people of South Africa to destroy the organs and institutions of government. We have pointed to the need to render the instruments of control unworkable and render the apartheid state ungovernable. Our people have taken the battle to the enemy and have given concrete expression to this strategy. The recent period has witnessed organised resistance of a quantitatively and qualitatively different order. Firstly in the overwhelming rejection of the new constitution expressed in an ignominiously low poll in elections for the coloured and Indian parliaments as well as widespread and sustained mass actions around this issue. These have destroyed any claims by the regime to the legitimacy of these institutions which it has nevertheless seen fit to proceed with. Of the one and a half million Coloured voters eligible to vote only twenty five thousand did so and eighty three thousand of the half a million Indian people cast a vote. A large proportion of these votes, twenty five thousand in the case of the Indian elections, were so-called special votes which included people allegedly sick, away and in some cases it transpired actually dead. All told, and including the White population the regime has a mandate of one out of sixteen South Africans to proceed with its fraudulent constitutional plans. The rejection



of the new proposals came despite vicious and widespread repressive measures including the arrest of over two hundred anti-constitution campaigners, the use of leather wips, tear gas, batons rubber bullets and live ammunition against demonstrations which have left an unknown number of persons dead and thousands injured. The rejection of this election farce supported by widespread protest demonstrations by all sections of the community came as the culmination of months of well organised and sustained campaigning led by the UDF and its affiliates. August and September's massive campaigns, demonstrating as they did popular rejection of the new segregated parliament also witnessed a heightened period of struggle which has left the system of Black education in tatters and the regimes control and administration under direct challenge in several big African townships. The political character of the protests, the tactics and forms of struggle, the linking together of different issues in struggle, the breadth of community, trade union, student, womens, religious and other groupings involved in united struggle reflect the development and maturing of the revolutionary process and the mood of the people. This process has of course already found expression in previous years in the destruction of the so-called Coloured Persons Representative Council, the rejection by the Indian community of the South African Indian Council and the rejection of the local management committee's and community councils. The national campaigns against the White Republic, the campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and the Freedom Charter campaign to name but a few have provided a national perspective for mass campaigning and a basis for united action. In the course of these campaigns we have witnessed the concrete organisational expression of the growing unity and breadth of forces dedicated to the goals of liberation in South Africa.



Events of the last few months have expressed in no uncertain terms popular rejection of the entire political structure and framework of apartheid. Almost every area of the country has witnessed mass action of some kind. The anti-constitution campaign for example was not only well supported in the urban areas but was widely taken up in the rural areas, including the Bantustans. The local Urban Black Councils established in 1983 despite the fraudulent and failed elections to these bodies were the focus of open and direct attack. The resistance in the townships have focussed not only on the puppet councils but have also involved organised resistance to rent and tariff increases and attacks on government buildings and puppet institutions. The people have vented their rejection of apartheid through attacks on collaborating Black councillors and policemen. As a result in one African township four town councillors were killed, others forced to flee the township and in some cases the entire council forced to resign. In another township the house of every single councillor was burned to the ground. One of the leading collaborators complained that the government had exposed his councillors to the wrath of the people. Can there be any doubt of our unpopularity he said when all our houses have been reduced to ashes. Botha's announcement to the new dummy Parliament in September that his special cabinet committee, working with four Bantustan leaders on the question of finding 'suitable political mechanisms which will be acceptable to and in the interests of the urban Black communities' has already been laid to rest in the grave dug by popular resistance of the last few months. The control and administrative functions which these councils were meant to perform through rent levies of their constituents has been made increasingly difficult by the refusal of people to pay for their own oppression. In recent weeks the people in the townships have mounted an all-out assault on the collaborators and structures which Pretoria has so painstakingly attempted to erect as barriers



between itself and the oppressed. As these have been swept away the regime has been forced to deploy its troops in the frontline of the townships. Thus one of the foundations of the Botha regimes constitutional plans for the twenty three million African majority is faltering and on the brink of total failure. Our people will pursue this campaign until all the dummy institutions of apartheid have been laid to rest on the ash-heap of history.

† The events of August and September were heralded by a long wave of working class militancy and the regimes claims to be moving toward reform have been dramatically exposed in its treatment of South African workers and their trade unions. The calling of the first 'legal' strike Black miners by the National Union of Mineworkers was hailed as a milestone on South Africa's road to labour reform. Despite the overwhelming support that the strike call had received, expressed in a ballot of over 45 thousand unionised miners, the mine bosses in collusion with the state did not hesitate to call in the police. Their attacks on the striking miners left sixteen miners dead and over five hundred injured. Nevertheless the strike can have left no doubt in the minds of the regimes rulers and the captains of industry profiting from super exploitation that there is a rapidly growing understanding among workers that their exploitation as labourers under apartheid is intrinsically linked to the question of state power. That the struggle for economic demands alone ~~are~~ are invariably rendered meaningless by brutal repression and exploitation in all other spheres of their daily lives. SACTU's and the ANC's position that the fight for trade union rights and the struggle for democracy and national liberation are inseparable is increasingly being taken up by the democratic trade union movement. Not only have workers actions been characterised by growing solidarity and joint actions but in addition involve increasing participation by workers organisations in community and national campaign initiatives. However the continuing search for a formula which will bring the democratic trade union movement under one umbrella is still facing difficulties.



It is vital that these obstacles are resolved and that a united federation representing all progressive and democratic trade unions is established. The widespread repression and harrassment of trade unionists continues unchecked including within the bantustans where in some cases unions which are said to be 'South African based' are prohibited. Nevertheless following on the example of 1983 when there were eighty three strikes involving sixty four thousand workers, to date 1984 has witnessed more strikes and disputes than any other single year.

Protests by youth and students have not only focussed on educational issues but have included much wider demands and campaign initiatives in concert with other sections of the community. Even the continuous and sustained protests by our youth which has become a feature of the South African struggle has been taken to new heights in the recent period. Boycotts of schools and universities have involved over a million students; schools have been burned and others closed indefinitely; campuses and schools occupied and others barricaded against police attack. Students have joined with working youth and other sections of their communities in marches, demonstrations and other acts of defiant protest often in total defiance of government bans and involving violent clashes with the police who in some cases have been forced to withdraw from townships.

The mass resistance of the recent period, itself a product of a long process of struggle cannot be divorced from the historical organisational achievements secured by our people. The formation of the UDF with an affiliated membership of three million, the mushrooming of local community, residents and other organisations, the achievements of our women in uniting their struggles across the country, the organisational and membership gains of the



democratic trade unions, the growth and consolidation of youth and student organisations and the emergence of rural organisations fighting the cancer of forced removals and other iniquities has meant that we have set out on the road towards building the necessary organisational capacity for a sustained attack on the apartheid edifice. Undoubtedly much still has to be done but we are confident that the tasks already completed and the accumulated experience in the face of brutal enemy repression, has laid the foundation for successful work in the future. Our underground structures are increasingly providing the strength and backbone on which mass democratic action in our illegal and harsh conditions of struggle must rest. An ongoing trend of national and local struggle has been the extent to which the Freedom Charter has become a unifying factor around which different communities embracing many different organisations have united in popular struggle. The Freedom Charter has also increasingly served as a pivot around which the demands of most of these campaigns have been formulated.

In attempting to distance itself from being perceived as the immediate perpetrator of repressive action the regime has turned the Bantustans into puppet institutions and instruments of terror and repression. This has been most glaringly revealed in the Ciskei where the puppet administrations' horrific acts of brutality have become known throughout the world. Many people have been shot, others including trade unionists detained and tortured, with a football stadium being especially set aside for this most unusual and bizarre of sporting pastimes, whilst others have had their homes destroyed and subject to violent assault. But even the worst excesses of torture have left the people undaunted. Trade Union and community organisations continue to mobilise the people in support of popular demands and a call for the boycott of buses in protest at high tariffs have left the buses



running empty for two years and the commuter 'freedom' trains have become centres of resistance in the face of the prohibition of all meetings. Even the puppet Sebe has been forced to admit that his authorities no longer have control in South Africa's biggest township of Mdantsane.

At this juncture we must also make mention of Gatsha Buthelezi who together with some of his misguided supporters gives cause for grave concern. The ANC condemns the constant attacks on UDF personalities and the breaking up of their meetings; the attempts to forcibly incorporate Lamontville into the Kwazulu Bantustan; the constant armed sorties by members of Inkatha into Lamontville which have already resulted in several deaths and the brutal murder of five students at the Ngoye tribal university. We call on the international community to expose these and other actions of the Bantustan storm-troopers and to intensify their activities for the total rejection of the Bantustans and for the breaking of all links with them.

To date the genocidal forced removals programme has resulted in the removal and dumping of three and a half million or four hundred people a day with an estimated one and a half million still to be moved. In the urban areas the forced removals are designed to leave behind smaller more pliable township populations with fewer unemployed, less crowding and easier control whilst in the Bantustans poverty, isolation and despair are the criminal devices used to curb dissent and protest. When the knocking down of schools, cutting off of pensions, the stopping of water and open threats have failed the bulldozers, bullets and dogs complete the task of forcing the people to move. We charge the apartheid regime with genocide and call on the international community to bring these criminals to book and secure an immediate cessation of this hideous crime.



One of the pillars of our drive for freedom has been and will remain the armed struggle. Armed actions carried out by the heroic detachments of MK guerillas continues to serve as the cutting edge of our struggle and powerful stimulus to popular resistance. These detachments neither operate from nor are trained in bases in the Front Line States - they are to be found among the people of our land, in the cities and in the countryside the length and breadth of South Africa. The Matola and Lesotho massacres, the victims of murder and assassination outside the borders of SA and the aggression directed against independent states designed to force them into submission and to abrogate their international obligations with regard to the rights of refugees has nothing to do with fictitious military bases in these countries. Proof of our existence inside the country is more than adequately demonstrated in the catalogue of armed actions over the last few months. In the last three months for example there have been nine acts of sabotage in the centre of Johannesburg alone. The regime has been forced to increase the size of its para-military police force by forty /five percent to sixty eight thousand. According to the regimes own figures our heroic guerilla's have attacked the symbols of racist oppression on two hundred and seventeen occasions between 1976 and 1983, one hundred and forty nine of these having being carried out in the last three years. These actions have met with massive support by our people. Huge crowds, the draping of coffins with the ANC flag, ANC slogans and freedom songs and open defiance of proclamations banning all gatherings have been a prominent feature of the funerals of our combatants killed in action. The ANC is being unbanned by the people the length and breadth of the country and no amount of terror inflicted upon them has been able to reverse this process. The dictator Botha, hailed in some quarters as a peacemaker on the subcontinent and wined and dined by these same quarters during his recent tour



of Western Europe has neither listened to the crescendo of protest from the South African people nor hesitated to unleash a reign of terror against the democratic movement. Trapped in a corner of his own making and faced with the imminent collapse of his newly created apartheid monstrosity he has resorted to well practiced repressive measures. A state of emergency reigns throughout the country, troops have been employed in the townships and meetings of every kind including those involving three persons are outlawed. Sweet sounding words of reform and democracy should surely have died on the lips of apartheid apologists when Law and Order Minister Le Grange prohibited indoor meetings which he described as 'All gatherings held where any government or any policy principle or any actions of the government or any statement, or the application or implementation of any act is approved, defended, attacked, criticised or discussed or which is in protest against or support or in memoriam of anything'. A ban on outdoor meetings has been in force for eight years. The morbidly familiar tales of intimidation, arrests, detentions, teargas, batons and bullets, torture and deaths in detentions have been the states reply to all protests. Yet again our children, some as young as six years old have been gunned down in the streets. One such account recalled an incident in which three children were shot by police while watching demonstrations in the street from inside their own home. Five hundred and seventy two persons have been detained in the first eight months of the year including forty one boycott campaign leaders but excluding the thousands such as the five hundred and ninety eight people simultaneously arrested while attending the funeral of one of their number shot down by police at a demonstration.

The regimes response to the massive upsurge of popular activity sweeping the country has been to press on regardless with its frenzied efforts to complete the total militarisation of the



state in preparation for protracted war, not only against the people of SA but against its neighbours as well. The military take over of the machinery of state, the restructuring of society and the integration of the civil economy with military production are indicators of this process. The regimes constitution is designed in part to provide a constitutional facade for military rule, in particular the State Security Council - the supreme decision making body of the state which is overwhelmingly dominated by military and intelligence personnel.

Additionally it is intended in part to provide a rationale for the conscription of Coloured and Indian people to augment the current compulsory conscription of Whites. However, in common with its other initiatives the regimes conscription proposals have met with widespread rejection. Even among Whites all is not well. IN addition to the growing numbers of those refusing conscription, evidence of dissatisfaction and resistance within the armed forces is emerging. A classified document now in the hands of SWAPO, records the minutes of a meeting of counter-intelligence officers held recently in Namibia. It includes a detailed account of numerous acts of sabotage, poor discipline and behaviour regarding as endangering security, personnel,

material and equipment. Once such incident which the press reported as an accidental fire at a Walvis Bay military base is revealed as an act of sabotage 'incited by a White ANC-inclined national serviceman'. The document discloses widespread support for SWAPO and the infiltration of SWAPO members of the SWA Territorial Force. Clearly even Whites are coming to realise that it is not enough to not want to die in defence of apartheid but that it is necessary to stand up and fight a system which is a blight on everybody's lives both Black and White.



The continued flouting of the 1977 UN arms embargo by Western states assists South Africa in its massive arms build up. Persistent violations coupled with cynical use of loopholes in the embargo have been well documented elsewhere and have laid to rest the myth of South Africa's self sufficiency in arms production. The west must bear the blame for the threat South Africa poses to Africa and the peace of the whole world.

It is significant that this Conference takes place during the year in which progressive mankind is commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the defeat of German fascism. Yet forty years on the spectre of war and oppression still haunts our daily lives. Our national liberation movement and the peoples of South and Southern Africa face a sub-imperialist power acting with the direct support of and in the interests of imperialism, US imperialism in particular. The undisguised offensive that these circles have launched against the forces of peace and progress throughout the world, and in our case publicly expressed support for and assistance to Pretoria has given succour to the beleaguered racist regime. The policy of constructive engagement, advocated by western governments is no more than a smokescreen for the continuation and consolidation of a long history of military and economic collaboration between these governments and South Africa whose real purpose is the continued economic plunder of Namibia and the reaping of superprofits which accrue from SA. Nuclear weapons and the capacity to deliver them in the hands of Botha and his race mad generals and the secret but extensive military relations between the regime and the NATO powers is the most dangerous facet of this collaboration. It is for these and other reasons that the ANC cannot and will not place itself outside the united and mighty alliance of forces struggling for national independence, democracy, social



progress and peace. We affirm that peace and national liberation are inextricably linked and ~~declare~~ declare that we will spare no effort in striving for these noble and just goals.

The ANC joins all those who raise their voice in protest against the war mongers of NATO who threaten to destroy mankind in a nuclear holocaust, who have embarked on a new and most dangerous escalation of the arms race and who have raised international tension and insecurity to new levels.

We condemn out of hand the criminal plans <sup>of the USA</sup> now apparently reaching a climax to invade the sovereign republic of Nicaragua, as well as the gross and illegal interference in El Salvador in support of a regime guilty of wanton mass murder. We condemn the criminal invasion of Grenada and express our support for the people of Granada struggling to throw off the yoke of the US occupation forces.

We salute the struggle of the people of Palestine fighting under the leadership of the PLO for their birthright.

We extend our greetings and fraternal support to SWAPO, the combatants of PLAN and the people of Namibia locked in battle with our common enemy. Eighteen years of anti-colonial war which has cost the lives of ten thousand people has not dampened the spirit of this heroic people to be free. We condemn unequivocally the illegal South African occupation of Namibia and the persistent connivance of the Western powers in sabotaging all efforts to secure implementation of UN resolution 435. The linking of the presence of Cuban forces in Angola - a matter of exclusive concern to the government of Angola - is a convenient diversion placed in the way of granting the Namibian people their inalienable rights.