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THE AWARDING OF THE O.A.U. MERIT AWARD POST-HUMOUSLY TO
THE LATE CHIEF ALBERT MVUMBI LUTHULI: PRESIDENT-GENERAL OF
THE BANNED AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: TO BE PRESENTED
ON BEHALF OF THE O.A.U. BY HIS MAJESTY KING MOSHOESHOE II
MASERU: TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 1974. -

WORDS OF APPRECIATION ON BEHALF OF BLACKS OF SOUTH
AFRICA BY: - The Hon. Prince M. Gatsha Buthelezi -

Your Majesty, Her Majesty the Queen, The Hon. the Prime Minister
of LESOTHO, Your Excellencies, Mama Luthuli, distinguished
guests.

I consider it a singular honour for me to be here on this
historic occasion. I thank Mama Luthuli and her family,
Bishop Zulu as the President of the Luthuli Memorial Foundation
in South Africa, and the kwaZulu Executive Council, who have
all insisted on my presence here today. I am here however,
mainly as an equerry to Mama Luthuli, at her own request. I
consider it a privilege I shall never forget as long as I live.
I had the privilege of knowing the late Chief Luthuli, who
later became a mentor to me and millions of blacks in South
Africa from my childhood. I was for this reason amongst others,
given the privilege of delivering an oration at his burial on
behalf of the African people.

When 2/

When his tombstone was unveiled, I was greatly honoured by his family when they asked me to give one of the main addresses on that occasion. I consider this auspicious occasion the climax of these series of involvements with events connected with that great Son of Africa, we all knew and revered, ALBERT MVUMBI LUTHULI.

It is a marvellous privilege to be here with Chief Luthuli's life Companion, who is experiencing on behalf of her beloved husband, the recognition which Africa is according her (Africa's) illustrious Son, with whom she (Mama Luthuli), shared so many sufferings and sacrifices. We thank the Almighty for having spared her life and thereby made it possible for her to receive the honour on behalf of her life Companion, to whom she was such a tower of strength and inspiration.

I wish to express our deep appreciation to the Organisation of African Unity, for this deserved reward to one of Africa's greatest Sons. On behalf of the Luthuli family, may I express our deepest thanks. I have also come to express thanks on behalf of His Majesty the Zulu King and the Zulu people, and on behalf of black people of South Africa whose leader Chief Luthuli was.

Chief Luthuli was a man who was described in his lifetime in the following terms: "Assurance and humility stand the Chief and his country in good stead, as do other qualities? Resilience, Youthfulness of spirit, undaunted courage, wisdom, tolerance, charity, a zest for living, patience. ----- Chief Luthuli's influence, despite his banishment is still strong. He still represents the African wish to bring about a newly-ordered South Africa peacefully, without bloodshed or

unnecessary dislocation".¹ As human beings we would be happy if one had as much as one quarter of these great virtues. In his own words he believed that:

"There remains before us the building of a new land, a home for men who are black, white, brown, from the ruins of the old narrow groups, a synthesis of the rich cultural strains which we have inherited. There remains to be achieved our integration with the rest of our Continent".

His guiding light was to achieve his ideals through non-violent methods. There are many who now consider this approach to be naive. But there are also those amongst us, who still believe that his approach was the right one. We say so, without implying that others have no right to use other methods in accordance with their own convictions. We believe that it is now very important to stress that the whole system of racial discrimination in our Country is structured on violence. Whilst we ourselves are not committed to the use of methods of violence we consider it our duty to emphasize that the violence of guerillas has to be viewed realistically against the background of institutional violence of the Apartheid system in our land.

There may be some incongruity about me praising the Chief when I am operating within the system which he so much abhorred. Let me assure Your Majesty, Your Excellencies and all distinguished guests that I abhor the system no less than the Chief did. Let me assure you that there are many agonies I brought to him on this very point before he died. I believe one must nevertheless not lose the opportunity to make it clear that we have not opted, because the Regime in South Africa never gives blacks any choices. That is why the Chief suffered so much

persecution 4/

persecution and that is why even today we have many people withering away in banishment. This places us in an invidious position. This is no less an invidious position than that which many independent Countries find themselves in Southern Africa.

There are thousands of Citizens of independent black States who are in the Republic out of choice at all. Their Countries cannot keep control of what happens to their citizens in Apartheid South Africa. These Citizens of independent States are recruited legally to work in South Africa in order to earn a living. No one can legitimately accuse the governments of the independent States, where these citizens come from, of abandoning their citizens to the wiles of the Apartheid Regime in my Country. The governments of these African Citizens employed in South Africa cannot protect their Citizens against the violence of the Apartheid System, once they are in South Africa. This fact was highlighted by the unfortunate Carletonville tragedy on the 11th of September 1973.

I further believe that a duplication of a Vietnam situation in this part of the World must be avoided at all costs. I believe that this should be done without sacrificing our human dignity in anyway. The struggle which began in 1912 with the founding of the African National Congress has to go on. Chief Luthuli's labours and those of other African patriots who worked for freedom before, during and after his time, must continue. It is clear to us today that the Apartheid monolith cannot be destroyed merely through military pressures. Nor can it be maintained by those who wield power over us only by force of military might. To me this means that in the various strategies that are being used to bring about the desired change, we

should 5/

should include both diplomatic and economic pressures, even from within South Africa. I am of the opinion that the complexity of the problems in South Africa calls for that kind of composite strategy. This composite strategy involves a number of non-violent methods in the struggle that goes on for human rights in South Africa. One might say that it is a situation where there is something to do for everyone of us in accordance with his situation, ideals and convictions. There is nothing more assinine, in my view, than for those involved in the struggle in South Africa to start shooting at each other. This to me is not only a sign of lack of foresight on those who are doing this kind of thing, but it can only benefit those who are determined to maintain the status quo. That kind of game can only be a result of quite a lack of understanding of the powerful forces arrayed against all those who desire a change.

Against this background, we must view the positive responses made by His Excellency the President of Zambia, Dr. Kaunda, and His Excellency the President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama to Prime Minister Vorster's speeches in the Senate and in Nigel. These diplomatic exchanges should never be pooh-poohed by those of us who believe in more radical methods in bringing about such a desired change. The responses by the two Presidents are important in relation to the entire totality of the situation, even despite the debate that has ensued as to who is honest, and who is dishonest in this whole game about a possible detente.

As an African peasant, let me be allowed to speak in metaphorically just for a little while. In the context of the Southern African situation, the Republic of South Africa's conduct is often viewed by the international Community, as making South Africa, some kind of 'prodigal Son of Africa'. If we were to apply the

Prodigal Son parable to South Africa, can we say that if the Biblical prodigal Son, had been rebuffed with rejection when he repented, merely because of past greed, grime and wickedness, he would ever have been saved? . If South Africa speaks even ambiguously in the opinions of many, about mending her ways, she should be encouraged rather than discouraged. Even a naughty child who wishes to turn over a new leaf can only benefit if he is given the impression that he is believed rather than not believed. This should be done even if there are doubts that he means what he is saying. Putting the child on such a high pedestal on the basis of what he promises sets up high standards, which purely from the point of view of his own ego, he will feel obliged to try to meet.

If on the other hand South Africa does not rise up to the hopes she has raised throughout the World through the recent Speeches by the Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster and Mr. Pik Botha at the U.N., then if any tragedy overtakes us as a result of such failure South Africa will bear the responsibility of whatever comes to her as a result. What bothers one is that if such a conflagration were to occur this would mean a tragedy not only for us in South Africa, but for all the people of Southern Africa.

If any detente in Southern Africa were to occur, it would mean a release of thousands of men at present involved in trying to provide a military solution, for economic productivity which would ultimately advance the cause of economic justice for the blackman in Southern Africa, which we are all seeking.

I would like to emphasize on this occasion that any contact or dealings with Pretoria should never be seen as amounting to any

sell-out 7/

sell-out or betrayal of the blackman's cause. It is good to remember that during the days of the banned African National Congress, attempts were made though, unsuccessfully, to interview the South African Prime Minister. We, who are in South Africa realise the importance of speaking with Pretoria, for our people to keep their heads at all above water. After all these are people who are wielding power in our Country and who represent a viewpoint which uses our race as a pretext for denying us our God-given dignity. These after all are the people who operate the system which gives Whites a monopoly of wealth in South Africa and of decision-making. It is oversimplistic to interpret this as amounting to us contaminating ourselves with a racist regime as some people are inclined to think. Again I realise only too well that many of our brothers in some independent Countries of Southern Africa would prefer not to have anything to do with Pretoria, as a result of the Apartheid system. But if they were to do so, it would almost amount to abandoning their people to the wiles of the men who operate the system they abhor.

By saying these things, I would like to emphasize that we have not abandoned the ideals our people placed before themselves in Bloemfontein in 1912, when the African National Congress was founded. We have not abandoned the spirit of resistance to race humiliation. We can never accept willingly, all the humiliations Apartheid has for men of colour. By speaking to Pretoria as we must, we do not necessarily accept the denial of human rights and human dignity to blacks which is the order of the day, in many respects, in our Country. The ideals for which Chief Albert Mvumbi Luthuli suffered so much for, remain the greatest challenge to all of us in South Africa. His sacrifices cannot be allowed to be sacrifices made in vain.

It is important to bear in mind that the style of the struggle is often dictated by the times in which we are living. Politics has of necessity to be related to reality. It is a game that can only be played within the realm of what is possible. We are left with no more choices than any other politicians in any other political situation. The circumstances of every political situation differ from that of any other, and they dictate the style a struggling people must adopt. The struggling people have of necessity to conduct their struggle in the light of their particular experience in that particular situation.

It is also important to emphasize that this is not a question of saving our skins. It is just common sense and reality. There are many amongst us who could not care less, about saving their own skins, but they feel the heaviness of responsibility in saving or jeopardising the skins of millions of people, who look up to them for leadership. We realise that in a struggle the saving of skins may ultimately not be a matter of fundamental importance at all. We cannot guarantee, so long as White South Africa refuses to share real decision-making, with us, that we will succeed to save even the skins of our people. We realise only too well the profundity of the realisation, that individuals as well as Nations, have some times to perish first, in order that others may have life abundantly. As long as skin-colours are used, as determinants to decide one's status in society, we realise that chances of violent confrontation on the one hand and a non-violent settlement on the other, remain on a 50-50 basis. No blackman can accept that white skins should be determinants for privilege, economic power and political power. Having stated this in categorical terms, let me say that in spite of that situation, it should not seem

incongruous that there are some amongst us who still firmly believe in Chief Luthuli's non-violence. We see this as the only way in which we can contribute towards the avoidance of some catastrophe. We would like to feel, if we should ever be overtaken by catastrophe that we exhausted all ways of warding off such a holocaust.

The times we are living in make the situation extremely tenuous. There are many lines of action, which are perfectly legitimate but which are dangerous. I refer here to actions that can only have the effect of compelling all Whites to seek shelter in a White laager. A backlash which can only retard the struggle or complicate it, must be avoided despite all the provocation that White racism in South Africa provokes. We must continue to challenge white privilege, in the various ways, provided we bear the warning, I have just given, in mind.

Some of us realise that to some of our brothers in independent Africa, our methods might appear even naive. It is good to remember that the struggle differs from one Country to the other, and in no two Countries can it be identical. The South African situation is peculiar in many ways and it has no exact parallel in Africa. Colour prejudice, we realise, exists in many Countries in the World, but most Regimes even in racist societies have never attempted to institutionalise racism in the manner it has been done in South Africa. Those who are imposing this appalling way of life on us are no longer foreigners anymore than one can say White and Black Americans are foreigners in the United States. What we seek to achieve is the total abandonment of the spectre of racism, which it pays most Whites, to embrace. A new formula is needed urgently if we are to survive. A new Society has to emerge in South

Africa 10/

Africa, and that means that kind of society which Chief Luthuli suffered so much, to promote.

We applaud on an occasion such as this one, the role the OAU has played in keeping the South African situation before the eyes of the international Community. We wish to say publicly that we do identify ourselves with the rest of Africa through the OAU. The fact that we cannot be members at present of the OAU is something we can do nothing about at present. When the black leaders within South Africa met the Prime Minister of South Africa, the Hon. B.J. Vorster in March this year, we told him that we blacks in South Africa accept the Lusaka Manifesto as a sound basis for a meaningful detente in attempting to solve the problems of Southern Africa, and of South Africa in particular. This Lusaka Manifesto is proof to all who think that blacks are blood-thirsty thugs, that Africa wants a peaceful solution even for South Africa.

This is a good occasion, to stress that we believe in this and to state that, that blue-print is in keeping with the ideals of the great Son of Africa about whom we are gathered here today, Albert Mvumbi Luthuli. Blacks are determined in South Africa not to rest until we have established in South Africa, a just society, in which all men shall have equal opportunities regardless of race, colour or creed. We feel ashamed that as a Country from which the late General Smuts went out to lay the foundation of the United Nations Human Rights Charter that there is still no determined effort on the part of those who wield power in South Africa, to ensure that there is equality and justice for all in South Africa regardless of race, colour or creed in terms of the United Nations Charter. We can only express a hope that the speech by Mr. Pik Botha, the South African Representative at

the U.N. marks, a turning point in South Africa's attitudes in these matters, as such a change is urgent if disaster is to be avoided. INKOSI ISIKELELI'AFRIKA.

REFERENCES:-

1. ALBERT LUTHULI: LET MY PEOPLE GO: The Autobiography of a great South African leader (Introduction by Charles Hooper. pages 11 and 12).