

Mandela hails opening of this historic convention⁹
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the way in the effort to bring peace to the land of our ancestors.

If there are people who need freedom in South Africa it is the black people. They need it now because their economic situation and welfare deteriorate daily.

The right to vote is the essence of the struggle for freedom. Nineteen ninety-two is the year that must bring the first democratic elections in South Africa.

Codesa, on its own, will not deliver democracy. In recording this fact, there is no attempt to demean Codesa. Even absolute consensus during the life of Codesa will still leave an apartheid constitution in place. We need to be reminded that this very constitution was declared null and void by the UN Security Council in 1983.

The invalidation of the prevailing constitution is the most persuasive argument in support of the view that the incumbent government is unsuited to the task of overseeing the transition to democracy. Its oft-stated commitment to democracy must now compel it to make way for an interim government of national unity to supervise the transition. This is the only cogent outflow from our deliberations at Codesa. The consensus which we arrive at will certainly have far-reaching implications for the birth of a new nationhood. None of us could be satisfied with circumstances where the consensus struck at this meeting is not translated into full legal force.

An interim government, important as it may be, is but the product of agreement between ourselves as political parties and organizations. It will not be the outcome of full participation by the people of our country. Negotiations, to be successful, must be owned and supported by the majority of South Africans.

In the absence of full participation we must commit ourselves to open negotiations to ensure that notions of secret deals do not arise. This process will also hinge on the confidence by each participating party that the communication of developments be absolutely nonpartisan. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the immediate establishment of the necessary mechanisms to ensure that the state-controlled media accurately and fairly represents the views of all participants. The means of establishing an interim government will not be participatory. Therefore the consensus at Codesa should curtail both its mandate and its lifespan.

The ANC remains fully committed to the installation of a government which can justly claim authority because it is based on the will of the people. This reality will have to be underpinned by a constitution which both engenders respect and enjoys legitimacy. There is a compelling urgency about this task. It is inconceivable that such a democratic constitution could be reached in any way but through the portals of an elected constitutional making body, namely a constituent assembly. It's tragic that our country, so well-enr

dowed with natural resources, has been reduced to an economic wasteland by the system of apartheid, based on greed and mismanagement. It is also distressing to note that the deplorable violence has reached such alarming proportions, and others threaten still more. These features are a direct consequence of the determination of a minority to maintain the power and privileges accrued by apartheid. There are large parts of our country where free political activity is still not possible, where law and order is still ruled by the jackboot. and a large number of political prisoners remain incarcerated. In the spirit of our convention. we call upon the government to proclaim an immediate Codesa amnesty before Christmas for all remaining political prisoners throughout the country.

Nothing could be more irresponsible than for those of us gathered here to deny our people the right to peace and freedom of association and to deny our country its due economic growth.

As everybody here is aware. the ANC and the government have been involved in bilateral discussions since May last year. There are still some matters dealt with in these ANC leader admonishes

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are not going to disband Umkhonto we Sizwe. We are not a political party. We are a political organization. perhaps with more support worldwide than he has. We have used Umkhonto we Sizwe to help in the exertion of pressure on the government to change its policies. We have no illusions. It was not the operations of Umkhonto alone which have brought about this development. But Umkhonto has had a very significant contribution. We cannot hand over that instrument to the National Party.

Appe'work seriously

I must appeal to him to work harmoniously and seriously with the African National Congress. This is our initiative. He has tried to undo what his brothers have done to us. Through the policy of apartheid they have created rye beyond words. Nevertheless we are prepared to forget. He has made a contribution towards normalizing the situation, because without him we would not have been this close.

I ask him to place his cards on the table face upwards. Let's work together openly. Let there be no secret agendas. Let him not persuade us that he would be the last speaker because he wants to abuse that privilege and attack us in the hope that we won't respond. I am prepared to work with him in spite of all his mistakes.

I am prepared to make allowances because he is a product of apartheid. Although he wants these democratic changes he has sometimes very little idea what democracy means. Many people regard his statement here where he threatened us. where he says this cannot be done. as very harsh.

He is forgetting that he cannot speak like a representative of a government which has

both legitimacy and which represents the bilateral talks which have not been finalized. We will continue these discussions. among other things, seeking to resolve the question of the control of all armed formations in the country, including Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We can only reverse the current situation if we set our sights on establishing true democracy. The national interest is far, far more important than the sectional interests represented by any party here.

Everybody wants a place in the sun of a post-apartheid South Africa. No delegation here could possibly have been mandated by its constituency, however small, to attend Codesa in order to annihilate itself.

Recognizing this, however, we want to make a strong appeal to everybody present to place the compelling national concerns above narrow sectional interests.

History will judge us extremely harshly if we fail to turn the opportunity, which it now presents us with, into common good. The risks of further pain and affliction arising from violence, homelessness, unemployment, or gutter education, are immense. No majority of the population. These are statements that can only be used by somebody who represents the majority of the population of the country. He doesn't represent us. He can't talk to us in that language.

Nevertheless I am prepared to work with him, to pursue the democratic changes I country or people can afford the extension of this anguish, even for a day. The approach which we adopt at Codesa must be fundamentally inclusive. The price of Codesa's failure will be far too great.

We must not trample on the confidence which our people have placed in the successful conclusion to these negotiations. It would be foolhardy to spurn the world for its efforts in assisting to secure peace and prosperity for South Africa. Our people and the world expect a nonracial, nonsexist democracy to emerge from the negotiations on which we are about to embark.

Failure of Codesa is inconceivable. so too is consensus without legal force. There is absolutely no room for error or obstinacy. The challenge which Codesa places before each one of us is to unshackle ourselves from the past and to build anew.

Codesa can be the beginning of reconstruction. Let our common commitment to the future of our country inspire us to build a South Africa of which we can all be truly proud.

de Klerk

introduced in the country. 'We can only succeed if we are candid and open with one another. This type of thing, of trying to take advantage of the cooperation which we have given him willingly, is something that is very dangerous and I hope that this is the last time he will do so. Thank you.

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Militant/Ruth Haswell

Firebombed house in KwaMashu outside Durban. Mandela denounced the government's role in encouraging political violence against opponents of apartheid.

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Judge absolves HI V victim of attempted murder charge
BY NOREEN McNULTY
AND VALERIE LIBBY

CINCINNATI, Ohio - In early September, Steven O'Banion was stopped by the cops after leaving a downtown gay bar here and accused of jaywalking. He was violently thrown to the ground and handcuffed. He was charged with disorderly conduct and assault of the cop who threw him down.

At the Hamilton County Justice Center things only got worse for O'Banion. While being treated by the center's nurse for the cuts and abrasions inflicted on him by the arresting cops, O'Banion informed the nurse that he had the HIV virus. Later in court O'Banion explained he felt it was his moral obligation to inform health care workers treating him of his infection.

O'Banion said that police officer Robert Bowman, who was present in the cells began to choke him, causing him to gag and cough. Some of his spit hit the nurse, who became hysterical and went running from the cell yelling for disinfectant.

Bowman beat O'Banion, hitting him more than four times in the face.

O'Banion's nose started to bleed profusely, causing hysteria among the cops because of their fear of AIDS. With a battered face and broken nose, he was sent to University Hospital for treatment. During the trial it was discovered that Bowman had been disciplined for using excessive force at the jail the year before. As O'Banion was returned to his jail cell, the cops yelled, "AIDS victim eating through." All night long he was harassed by cops walking by the cell, hitting the door and yelling things such as, "I hear there is a queer in here."

To cover up their brutality, the cops charged O'Banion with attempted murder and felonious assault with a deadly weapon. The prosecution claimed he was using his blood as a lethal weapon.

O'Banion's swollen and bruised face was seen on the TV news as he was arraigned the next day. There was an immediate, angry response to this case of police brutality. Two gay rights groups - ACT-UP and Gay and Lesbian March Activists - immediately began organizing public support for O'Banion. A teach-in on discrimination against gays in the prison system was organized at the University of Cincinnati.

On December 10, the opening of the trial, a demonstration of 150 people took place, demanding that charges against O'Banion be dropped. Participants marched from the Justice Center to the County Administration building shouting, "It is not a lethal weapon, drop the charges now!" and "Gay, straight, Black, white; same struggle, same fight!" Speakers at the rally included representatives of several gay rights groups, the American Civil Liberties Union, Rainbow Coalition, and Coalition for Choice. Participants came from as far away as St. Louis.

Pittsburgh. New York, and Illinois.
After the prosecution rested its case December 17, Judge Gilbert Bettman dismissed the four counts of attempted murder. On December 23. the judge also dropped the felony assault charges. but let stand the three misdemeanor charges wnjaywalking. disorderly conduct while intoxicated. am! assaulting a police oIiIeer and resisting art est. Sentencing on these charges Is scheduled tot February 13 O'Banion could be jailed Io: tip to ISM days and lined \$3.(1(1())i "At no time did I try to inIIiel bodily Iiatin on anyone." commented Steven ()iBtttnoi: after the judgek x ertIietI "I pressed this issue because I wanted the court to make a state ment on what constitutes transniitting'tht AIDS virus."