

Sec. 1
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Statement by Comrade O.R. Tambo, President of the ANC at the 2nd National Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa — Rome February 26-28, 1982.

Italy's solidarity movement with the peoples of Southern Africa has a profound significance for us.

The 1970 Rome conference in solidarity with FRELIMO, MPLA, and PAIGC was followed by the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in 1974.

The Reggio Emilia Conference of Solidarity in November 1978 preceded by only one year the collapse of the Ian Smith settler regime in Rhodesia after the Lancaster House Agreement.

This Second National Conference of Solidarity with the peoples of Southern Africa in the struggle against racism, apartheid and colonialism will certainly be viewed with great apprehension and disquiet by the regime of South Africa and its imperialist allies and agents. For, if this solidarity conference carries the hidden quality of its predecessors, then we do not have long to wait before yet another strategic victory is announced — the independence of Namibia under a SWAPO government.

Liberation of Zimbabwe

Certainly, the march of events in Southern Africa since the Reggio Emilia conference points unmistakably to the demise of the old colonial order in Southern Africa. The independence of Zimbabwe gave a powerful impetus to the revolutionary process which is now rocking the foundations of apartheid-colonial domination in Namibia and South Africa. If the light at the end of the tunnel is not visible to all, the problem is one of political short-sightedness.

It is in this mood of confident expectation and absolute conviction in the certainty of victory for the fighting people of Southern Africa that we greet the participants at this conference, representing "the workers and peasants, the youth, the women, the regional and local governments, organisations, associations and all democratic institutions of the country" — the entire Italian people and their Government.

We salute, in particular, the political Parties and the Trade Union federations who convened this conference with a stirring appeal to the people of Italy, and we congratulate the National Committee of Solidarity on its successful organisation of the conference.

We wish to address special greetings to the Municipality and people of Reggio Emilia, to whom the ANC is bound by a Pact of Solidarity.

We greet all the participants at this conference in the name of the ANC and its leaders, militants and allies, representing the democratic majority of South Africans.

We take this opportunity to convey to the Government and people of Italy our deep appreciation of the generous and valuable material assistance brought by AMANDA, the famous "Italian Ship of Solidarity." Let there be another AMANDA.

The theme of this conference underscores the nature of the conflict in South Africa and Namibia. The struggle does not involve only three parties — the S.A. regime on the one hand and on the other, the people of Namibia and the majority in South Africa. The struggle is that of the peoples of Southern Africa against colonialism, racism, apartheid and fascism.

Our Common Determination

At no time has it been realistically possible to perceive the aspirations of the people of South Africa and Namibia as being separate or different from those of Africa and the rest of humanity. Our daily experience in the sub-continent demonstrates a unity of purpose expressed in our common determination to rid the continent of the criminal apartheid colonial system. The price for the continued existence of the Pretoria regime is being paid in the blood of the peoples of Southern Africa — South Africans, Namibians, Angolans, Zambians, Mozambicans, Zimbabweans; in the blood of the people of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland — the blood of the peoples of Africa.

The struggles of Southern Africa are international concerns in a dual sense. Firstly, the system of apartheid is not a domestic creation, nor does it defend South African domestic interests alone. This economy provides massively for

Reagan Policy legitimises Apartheid

There is a new tide ~~running~~ in international politics since the advent of the Reagan administration in the United States. This policy, disguised behind a catchy phrase — "constructive engagement" — is explicitly aimed at ending the South African regime's international isolation and restoring it to a position of respectability as a legitimate power in Southern Africa. To this end the United States government has encouraged a more active investment policy in South Africa, is orchestrating a conspiracy to patch together a so-called South Atlantic Treaty Organisation between the Pretoria regime and Latin American dictatorships, and is trying to foist cold war issues on the national liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

We look to the democratic forces of Europe to prevent this attempt at legitimising racism. More than this: we have to ~~pride away~~ ^{expunge} the international support on which the apartheid state relies. Sanctions are not yet in full force. Multinationals are still shoring up the apartheid's economy. United Nations resolutions are stronger in words than in effect. There are serious and disquieting moves to emasculate the force of UN resolution 435 on Namibia; to permit South Africa to improvise new ways in which to entrench her rule in that territory, even after independence. Namibia is a direct EEC responsibility, for ~~where~~ ^{whence} does the Contact Group derive its influence?

The International Community must Act

1982 has been designated by the ANC as the Year of Unity in Action, involving not only the people of South Africa but also all opponents of apartheid, colonialism and racism in the international community. 1982 has also been proclaimed the International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions Against South Africa. This is a task which must be accomplished this year, by the people of this country, the peoples of Europe and the rest of the world. It is for this reason that we welcome the participation at this conference of representatives from the United Nations and the European Economic Community.

The ANC once again affirms its support for the people of Namibia in their legitimate

struggle for national independence under the leadership of SWAPO. We recognise the heroic actions of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia in pursuance of the democratic rights of the people of Namibia.

The apartheid regime must be encircled by your struggles, and by your actions; by our struggles, our actions. These struggles we pledge to you. We are resolved to intensify the struggle for the liberation of our country. Together with you, we shall be unconquerable and irresistible.

We take this opportunity to register our support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, the people of East Timor, Western Sahara, the democratic forces in El Salvador and all the opponents of fascist dictatorships.

Once again we call upon the international community to take positive action to isolate the racist apartheid regime. We call for the complete diplomatic isolation of South Africa and the countering of any actions which attempt to block this effort.

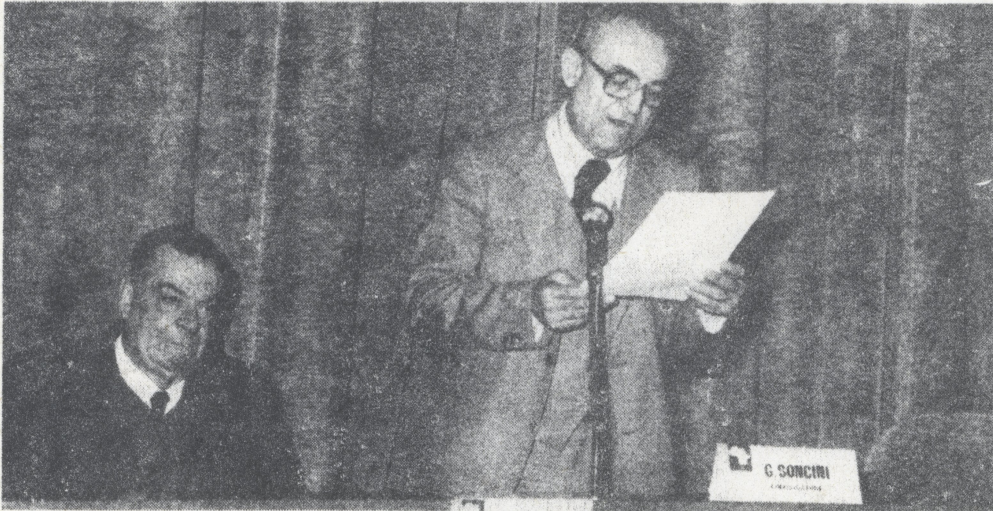
More than declarations and diplomacy: we call for actions and support in as many diverse forms as your political experience and strength can devise.

We ask for political and economic support for the countries of Southern Africa and massive material assistance for SWAPO and the ANC.

We call upon the world community to demand the release of all political prisoners and detainees held by the South African racist regime.

A LUTA CONTINUA!





Giuseppe Soncini presents the Report of the National Committee



ANC delegation to the Conference, front row

military, police and intelligence personnel has effectively displaced the cabinet as the primary decision-making body. All the decisive sectors of the economy contain a strong military presence.

The economy faces a crisis of unprecedented proportions, which while not peculiar to South Africa, does have a number of distinct features. It is characterised by galloping inflation, sharp economic decline, severe dislocation and an ever escalating rate of unemployment; And, in our country, all the unemployed

are ~~without exception~~ black! Those sections of the population who previously batted on racial privilege now stand to lose, and the masses of the oppressed who have been forced to bear the cost of the crisis have seen their burdens increased tenfold.

The inability of the racist state to cope with the upsurge of mass resistance is evident in the sustained eruption of every conceivable form of struggle during this last decade. Under the inspiration and leadership of the ANC, our country has experienced a series of strikes, boycotts,

student and youth rebellions in the schools and colleges, demonstrations in the cities and in the rural areas; peasant struggles, worker resistance, combined political strikes by workers and by students; open defiance in the streets, and armed combat actions led by the guerrilla units of the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Organised resistance is being intensified at all levels, and its forms have never been so diverse.

Our People are not intimidated

During the last ten years, our country has witnessed a phenomenal growth of trade unions, who have employed the strike weapon with a sophistication and resilience that has rendered the repressive apparatus of the regime practically dysfunctional. In the industrial areas, the black working class has forged links of common action with popular organisations: shop floor struggles are linked with consumer boycotts, with community reinforcement of these protests. The unity of the black working class is being consolidated. This phenomenal growth of trade union organisation and worker militancy takes place under conditions of virtual state proscription of the right to organise free independent unions. Fascism drove underground, even smashed the political movements of Europe, and especially of Italy, for several decades; our working class and our people organise and resist under conditions of ceaseless fascist proscription and persecution.

Our people are not intimidated. The African National Congress was declared an illegal organisation in 1960. In spite of this the ANC has, in the recent past, emerged as the undisputed voice of the democratic majority of our people. It is once again in the streets, in the meeting halls. Our flag, our colours, our freedom songs, our demands, our programme, are voiced everywhere; not in whispers or in secret, but in public proclamations of the masses, in their varied forms of resistance; by political leaders — not necessarily those of the ANC itself, but those who head political protest in its own right, and who support the ANC programme for the liberation struggle and a new South Africa.

For, the African National Congress maintains its leadership of the struggle,

not merely by its presence, by the actions of its combat groups and its political underground, but also by its policy and programmatic inspiration to other, related, but independent, resistance.

We wish here to salute those heroic fighters: workers and students; community leaders and representatives; religious leaders and the church resistance movement. We salute the generation of youth who faced armoured cars and machine guns with stones, and with their bare hands. We salute our industrial workers, who extend the skills they have learned on the job to improvising evermore creative forms of industrial resistance. Their strike movement is not limited to wage demands; it is a struggle for the recognition of free, independent trade unions, for the very right to strike, but also for a new political order.

Armed struggle — Part of mass struggle

The regime faces a future in which all these forms of mass resistance, complemented by the planned actions of ANC combatants, will spread. There is one elementary truth about the strength of our movement: it is a popular movement, a struggle waged by the people on many fronts. The ANC does not now, nor will it ever, conceive of the armed liberation struggle as separate and apart from the mass struggles of the people. Our armed struggle derives its legitimacy from the popular struggles waged by the people, and is a continuation of these very struggles employing military means. The close integration of our armed combatants with the masses has enabled our people's army to strike at the enemy with daring and precision. We are confident that as the armed struggle is intensified it will draw into its wake the active participation of ever growing numbers of our people.

Our masses have an inexhaustible potential for struggle, but they struggle against fearful odds. Our political prisoners, led by Mandela, are sealed off from the outside world, some for the rest of their natural lives; there is no remission for political prisoners. Our political prisoners are in the death cells, awaiting execution, for acts of resistance against a system that permits no lawful opposition. There have been political prisoners as young as 14 and 11 years old. Our political prisoners are subjected to

gruesome torture. Our political prisoners have been found dead in their cells. ~~This~~ applies to prisoners and detainees in South Africa and Namibia.

That is why the decision of the Municipality of Rome to proclaim Nelson Mandela a Citizen of this great City of Rome is not only timely but is also a great act of solidarity with the people of Africa, an historic expression of support for all the political prisoners and detainees held by the South African regime, both South African and Namibian, at a time when these detainees are being tortured and even killed, ~~in the process~~, with the knowledge and authority of the South African regime.

The decision of the Municipality of Rome will be conveyed to Nelson Mandela in Robben Island.

The latest of these crimes is the dastardly case of Dr. Neil Aggett, a young white medical doctor, who devoted his life to serving the people both as a medical practitioner and as an organiser for the Food and Canning Workers Union. Dr Aggett was murdered by the racist Security Police because he sought justice for his countrymen. His wife, who like himself was detained, and several other trade unionists, black and white, have been moved from their cells to prison psychiatric wards where they are now being held. The criminal action of the racists in murdering this youthful white patriot is indicative of a significant current that is making itself felt in South Africa today, the movement of numerous whites, especially the young, away from support of apartheid and towards the programme and policies of the ANC.

Apartheid reforms are hollow

The racist regime has tried a number of devices to unravel the crisis in which it is presently embroiled. Its tactics, presented to the world as efforts at reforms, have oscillated between brutal repression and cosmetic superficial changes that have no effect on the substances of apartheid and racist domination. To the insurgent working class it has offered a system of legalised but state-controlled union registration. For the most part black labour has rejected these so-called concessions; our working class does not want corporate

and company unions but free independent worker-controlled unions.

To the Indians and Coloured people it has offered a few poisoned crumbs in the shape of "power sharing" in an attempt to enroll new forces into the ranks of its supporters from amongst the oppressed.

It has tried to win over strata of the black middle class. But this action of co-optation *option* has failed; there is no strata of the African population, with the exception of the small clique of Bantustan rulers, which ~~has spoken~~ *support* up for the apartheid system.

It has tried to train black labour in industrial skills and to promote an upper layer of black workers in the factories. *However,* But African workers want not only industrial skills, and a living wage, but also political rights in the country of their birth.

The regime's ~~co-optation~~ *co-optation* exercise has ~~not worked~~ *failed*. The order of the day is not co-optation by the regime but resistance! It is clearly understood by the mass of our people that the racist regime cannot and will not reform itself. We must not accept the rival claims of the conservative and so-called reformist wing of the dominant racist party *or* on their face value. The split in the ranks of this criminal cabal is ~~over~~ *on* the question of how best to achieve objectives they hold in common and is occasioned by the bitter struggles of the oppressed.

The racist regime cannot be judged on the basis of the rhetoric of self-seeking politicians and their foreign friends. It must be judged by the existence of nine million Africans who have been forcefully deported from their homes in the urban and industrial centres to resettlement camps in the Bantustans; by the millions who are annually criminalised *for* because of some minor infraction; by the thousands of innocent babies who die each year before they reached the age of four!

Apartheid is not merely segregated sport, separate ~~facilities~~ *facilities* for education, culture and recreation. It is a brutal system of national oppression, embedded in economic exploitation and institutionally entrenched by a monopoly over the political process by a small white minority. Apartheid is neither dead nor dying. It will and must be put to death by the power of the oppressed people.

investors and for arms manufacturers and dealers from west European countries, the United States and Japan.

In its struggle for survival, the apartheid system relies on the support of its powerful international allies. The overthrow of one of the most brutal systems of oppression in the world is our responsibility, but it is also your responsibility. And our meeting here today is an expression of our common determination to achieve that objective.

Secondly, the struggle against apartheid is an international responsibility because apartheid as a system has gone far beyond its borders in escalating aggression against the states of Southern Africa. The racist army today occupies Namibia. Its tanks, heavy artillery, and fighter-planes — manufactured by European patent, supplied by European countries — have invaded the People's Republic of Angola, and continue to occupy parts of that country. Where is the international outcry? Why is South Africa allowed to commit this flagrant breach of national sovereignty and international law with impunity? Why has the United States administration consistently vetoed efforts to impose sanctions against this criminal regime?

Scandal of our Time

It is one of the scandals of our time that the states of the West and the Western Contact Group have raised the Pretoria regime, the aggressor, to the status of fellow mediator in the resolution of the Namibian issue, even while the racists are in illegal occupation of that country and are violating the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Angola.

Angola is the victim of South Africa's most blatant aggression, but the racist army and its generals have active contingency plans for the destabilization of all the countries of Southern Africa. We are witnessing the unfolding of grave dangers: As the liberation struggle reaches new heights, the racist regime has extended to the whole region the type of aggression it first launched against Angola in 1975.

This is blatant aggression, open war. Pretoria's strategy also leans heavily on economic destabilisation. In our region of the continent, colonialism left a legacy of countries locked into dependence on the

industrialised economy and infrastructure of South Africa. The nine states of the region are today struggling to break this economic dependence, and the regime is retaliating with economic obstruction and sabotage. No state in our region is safe from aggression. For as long as apartheid survives, no independent African state is free. Africa herself remains captive. In its turn, the overthrow of apartheid will usher in an era of unprecedented reconstruction of these African countries, under conditions of peace and security.

Racist aggression is not a sign of strength. Pretoria has a formidable, well-equipped and highly mechanised military force. But in attacking neighbouring states it is revealing its greatest weaknesses — its incapacity to destroy the armed liberation fighters, who have become well entrenched amongst the people, and to break the close bonds between the liberation movements and our African allies. The heroic victories scored by the growing mass support for the People's Liberation Army of Namibia inside that country, and the resolute determination of the Angolan people to support the Namibian struggle, provide a dramatic example of the fascist regime's weakness and failure.

Our Increasing Strength

The chief features of the South African situation today are, on the one hand, the profound crisis being experienced by the oppressor regime, and on the other hand, the increasing strength, resilience and growing legitimacy of the armed liberation struggle in the eyes of our people.

The African National Congress diagnoses the South African system as ^{being} in crisis. It is an organic crisis, one that cuts to the nature of the system. It is a crisis that could last some time, but the duration does not lessen its severity. For this is a crisis of authority, a crisis of power, which the apartheid system cannot resolve. It is the fact of this crisis, inter alia, which reinforces our firm belief in the certainty of victory.

Within its own ranks, the regime has abandoned the pretence of cabinet government. Since 1972 we have seen the increasing militarisation of practically all aspects of government, and the so-called State Security Council, comprising top