

BY

GOVAN MBEKI

Comrade chair, Comrades, friends, ladies and gentlemen, the people of the Transkei, the people of South Africa and the world are today witnessing here an event which will go down in history as a turning point because it is the beginning of the road to a re-united South Africa. This day is significant because for the first time in the history of these territories we have here representatives of an organisation - the African National Congress (ANC) which has for seventy-seven years been engaged in a struggle to unite all the peoples of this country against forces that have since the formation of the union of South Africa sought to divide and keep us in small separate entities which would be helpless to fight against national oppression and exploitation.

We wish to express our appreciation to the President and the Military Government of these territories for allowing us to have the opportunity to address you today.

PAGE TWO

After the end of the Wars of Dispossession towards the end of the last century the Africans sought to be involved as equals in the body - politic of this country. They did so because they had come to accept the fact that both black and white had come to make South Africa their home.' But unfortunately the whites in this country have persistently refused to face up to that reality. Instead they have continued to hold the view that they set aside reserved areas like they do for animals for the occupation of the Africans. Over the years they have given different names for these areas. At one time they called them Native Reserves; at another the Bantu Areas; later the Bantustans; and today the Homelands. When the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948 it sought to carry out this policy to its logical conclusion - to drive the Africans into the Native Reserves from where labour would be drawn to satisfy the needs of the whites for African labour. The tragedy of this situation was that there were Africans who agreed to be used by the Nationalist Party government as instruments to enforce the Bantu Authorities Act.

3/...

PAGE THREE

They accepted policies under this Act that divided and set one African group against another; that set the brother against the brother.

That tragedy was played out here in November 1955 when the United Transkeian Territories General Council (UTTGC) accepted the myths that the honey-birds of the Native Affairs Department - the secretary of Native Affairs, the Chief Native Commissioner and Native Commissioners unfolded before them. Yet as one writer observed that in a Transkei which was supposed to be free and independent in accordance with apartheid policy when the members of that parliament came out to buy refreshments at the nearest cafe they had to drink them on the pavement. Such is the freedom of apartheid. Encouraged by their successes they moved from one reserve to another until they had finally succeeded to build their Bantustan structures. But in embarking on these pernicious schemes the Nationalist Party government had ignored a crucial factor - it ignored the people. It ignored the peasants in the reserves and the workers in the urban areas.

4/...

PAGE FOUR

These are the major factors which continuously were and are still in the forefront of the struggle against racist apartheid. These are the forces that have borne the brunt of the struggle against racism. For three decades we experienced the banishment of leaders of this struggle into remote and desolate areas. Amongst them SKEI GWENTSHE, MSUTHU, MOROA MOSHE. GODFREY SKUKUNI. KHUMANI GANYILE, JOYI and many others. Here in the Transkei too, people have been uprooted from their homes and thrown into banishment under regulation #00 with which the Nationalist Party government armed its puppets to force people to accept the Bantu Authorities Act. We have witnessed the peasant struggles which resulted in the loss of hundred of lives in areas such as Pondoland. Skukuniland, the Western Transvaal, Peddie and other areas.

a

We are happy that the Military Council here has begun to set in motion a process to restore to the people of the Transkei their heritage. Here we see the beginnings of the formation of an army that is prepared to defend the cause of the people which is to establish a United Non-Racial Democracy in a South Africa "which belongs

PAGE FIVE

to all who live in it"; a South Africa in which
"the people shall govern". That is your heritage
that is our heritageSX And we call upon you and
all the people of South Africa as well as all
those who administer apartheid in the Bantustans
and in Urban Local Councils to stand up against
apartheid. Let us drown the voices that preach
racism and divisions amongst the people of our
land with the harmonious song that tells us of
peace and a United Non-Racial Democratic South
Africa.

----oooOooo----