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ADDRESS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
ANC TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER;

JUNE 26, 1980

Compatriots,

We greet you in the name of the National Executive Committee of your  
vanguard organisation, the African National Congress,

Today is June 26th, 1980, the 30th anniversary of South Africa Freedom  
Day, When the call was made in 1950 to observe the first Freedom Day,  
on June 26th, the then President of the African National Congress Dr,  
J.S. Moroka, said: "If ever there was time when the African people

were required, to put their eight-million force behind the principles  
of democracy, in alliance with other freedom-loving members of the  
South African Community, that, time has come

Without denying the importance of this 30th anniversary, today we want  
to draw your attention particularly to another historic event of our  
struggle which occurred 25 years ago. That event was of course the  
adoption of the Congress of the People in Kliptown, Johannesburg of  
the Freedom Charter. We want also in this context to focus attention  
on exactly the message contained in the words that Dr Moroka uttered  
25 years ago,

June 26th 1980 is the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom  
Charter, It is: this event that we are celebrating today and during  
this year of the Charter,

As an oppressed and exploited people we have very few national days  
on which we can join together in millions and genuinely and joyfully  
celebrate. This June 26th, this 25th birthday of the Freedom Charter  
should certainly be one of those national days.

But why should we celebrate! We should celebrate the great achievement  
that the Freedom Charter, the instrument that was brought into being by  
the Congress of the People, the only genuinely democratic and representa-  
tive 'Constituent Assembly that our country has ever seen, is today,  
at 25 years old, as beloved to all of us and as central to the satisfac-  
tion of our aspirations as it was when it was adopted,  
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The Freedom Charter is a creation of the people in struggle. Exactly  
because it was born in united mass struggle and expressed the resolve  
of the people to be free, the Freedom Charter has successfully withstood

many onslaughts aimed to blot it out the political reality of our  
country,

You Will remember that in 1956, the year after the Charter was adopted, 156 of our national leaders of all races were arrested and charged with treason, the basis of the charge being that they had united to fight for the realisation of the demands contained in the Charter. The charge of treason, the same as that with which the apartheid regime confronted the stalwart James Mangos and other combatants\* of Umkhonto We Sizwe, in the Pietermaritzburg trial, normally carries the death penalty. It is with that seriousness and fright that the racist regime viewed the Freedom Charter. The Botha regime continues to shiver at the prospect of the implementation of the Charter. That is why it consistently bans publications which reproduce it in full.

There have also been other exXeir.en.ts\_ over the last twenty five years who, while not being part of the racist regime, have also sought to discredit the Freedom Charter in the eyes of the people by claiming that it is not a product of the people's creative and democratic vision, but something imposed on us by foreign forces. By continuing to adhere to the perspective that is contained in the Charter, you the people have also decisively rebuffed this counter-revolutionary ideological offensive as you have successfully rebuffed the attempts of the enemy to destroy the Charter by murdering, imprisoning, banning and banishing all active fighters for its realisation...-yrf, s-T,;

Thus 'can we truly say today, the Charter lived: the Charter lives:

the Charter will live! The National Executive Committee of the African National Congress takes this opportunity to salute all the thousands of patriots who over the last twenty five years have sacrificed their

lives, their liberty and comfort in the struggle to defend, and, advance the cause so brilliantly announced in the Freedom Charter; h .

We salute the patriots inside the country who, during the last few months, have once more openly and fearlessly drawn attention to the fact that the Freedom Charter constitutes the only basis for a just, and democratic solution of the South African problem...-r-; . ...

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We send our Warm greetings to that great fighter and patriot Comrade (Helen Joseph Who, at the age of 75, through new banning orders, has been denied the opportunity publicly to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, a document in whose birth she participated.

That the enemy continues to be so scared of you at the ripe age of, - 75 is indication of the power of the message that you have been conveying over so many decades. The day is not far off when people's power in South Africa will guarantee that never again will you be banned and that you live in the kind of society which the Freedom Charter visualises.

The National Executive Committee of the African National Congress further takes this opportunity to make the following important announcement: by virtue of the authority vested in it, and, in the name of the people of South Africa, the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress hereby wishes to announce the, -- ,

conferment of the high rank of Tsithwalandwe on the following; v ^

Govan Archibald Mvuyelwa Mkeki who, though currently serving life imprisonment on Robben Island, continues to play his role as a leader of our people and whose 70th birthday we shall be celebrating on the 10th of July in this the Year of the Charter\*,

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Bishop Ambrose Reeves who, having been deported by the apartheid regime to England in 1960 for opposition to racist tyranny while working as Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, continued as;member and honorary President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement to struggle for the liberation of the people of South Africa, and whose 80th birthday we celebrated last year.

We offer our sincere congratulations to these two heroes of our people and pledge to follow faithfully in the path they have, charted..

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This year also marks the 60th birthday of one of the distinguished sons of our people that the fascist regime has locked up on Robben Island for life, namely Raymond Mhlaba. This first leader of the ANC to be arrested on June 26th, 1952 at the beginning of the historic Defiance Campaign, Raymond Mhlaba remains to this day as committed as ever to seeing the Freedom Charter translated into reality in the country of his birth. We call on all who love liberty to observe his 60th birthday in a fitting manner.

By imposing life sentences on our leaders such as Govan Mbeki and Ray Mhlaba the apartheid regime had hoped both to smash the popular struggle and to create for itself such conditions that it would be able to groom and impose on us its own hand picked leaders. The Free Mandela Campaign you are waging today in your thousands is a fitting rebuff to this enemy manoeuvre. It is the task of all patriots to intensify this campaign, to draw our people in their millions to be active combatants for the release of our leaders and the formation of a genuine government of the people, for the realisation of the demand contained in the Freedom Charter that people shall govern.

Let everyone who has signed the Free Mandela petition view himself or herself as an organiser and activist for people's power. All signatories to the petition should themselves go out to organise more signatures and draw ever increasing numbers of our people into the heroic struggle,

to free Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners, to lift all bans and banishments to draw over increasing numbers of our people into the struggle for the formation of a people's government.

At periods such as the one through which our struggle is going, when the enemy begins to sense his impending demise, it has often been the strategy of reactionary forces to find spokesman from among the oppressed people to intercede between the oppressed and the oppressor

in favour of the latter. We are now seeing the implementation of this strategy in South Africa also.

As you all know, your vanguard organisation, the African National Congress was born as an instrument in the hands of the people to unite them and all the democratic forces of our country into one army of struggle for a democratic South Africa. To this day this remains a principal objective that we pursue. It has been for the achievement of this goal that we have, over many years, worked to bring even to the Bantustan leaders back to the fold of the mass army for the genuine liberation of our people. As educators and organisers of all our people we have avoided public condemnation of those whom we felt were proceeding in wrong directions from genuinely mistaken positions.

But the conduct of one such as Chief Buthelezi of the Kwa-Zulu Bantustan especially over the recent past can no longer be seen as proceeding in

wrong directions from genuinely mistaken position. Rather it has become clear that Buthelezi has placed himself in the position of an interlocutor between the oppressed and the oppressor in favour of the oppressor.

To organise bands of armed men to terrorise the striking school children back to school and to an inferior and racist system of education, as Buthelezi has done, is openly to join the enemy's forces of repression. To denounce this or that patriot as a member of the African National Congress, knowing that mere membership of the ANC carries obligatory sentences of long imprisonment, as Buthelezi has done, is to act out the vile role of a police agent. To seek to

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turn the anger of the people away from the apartheid regime and direct it against other sections of the black people; for example the "Indian" people, as Buthelezi has done, is to participate in the commission of the crime of apartheid. To call for the formation of black vigilante groups to fight against our people's army, Umkhonto. V/e Sizwe, as Buthelezi has "done, is to assume the rattle of a collaborator. To urge the masses of our "people to desist from struggling for the release of Nelson Mandela and all our leaders, as Buthelezi has done, is to place oneself among the ranks of the jail warders who keep not these leaders and other patriots in bondage but also the millions of our people, 1 / n

Those who place themselves in the path of the struggling masses, shall inevitably be swept away together with their racist masters whom they serve. In our region that is a lesson which has been confirmed in the recent past by the victories of Frelimo, the I. PLA and the Patriotic Front Alliance in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe: respectively. South

Africa will be no exception. Indeed the Very same lesson is being confirmed in Namibia today.

We wish to reiterate the position of the ANC that you know-that our liberation can only come about through our own actions. Only united mass struggle -can bring us the results for which so many of our people have perished, including the heroes who were shot down only last week when we were observing the 4th Anniversary of the June 16th uprising.

No just negotiated settlement of the South African problem with those who murder our people in such cold blood is possible. No dialogue impossible with such confirmed racists as Eennie Smit to whom there is no difference between an African and a baboon. Those who urge that /we must lay down our arms and allow only the enemy to be judged; those who

call on us not to engage in mass action so as to give them a chance to have easy chats with the enemies of the people are objectively serving to increase the lifespan of the apartheid regime and accordingly to lengthen our period of slavery.?

The time has come that all our people should in unity reject and isolate these would-be leaders whose leadership consists in telling us to--sit down and do nothing about our liberation. By engaging in mass struggle around all issues that affect us we will be showing such rejection of these false leaders. — ;

V/e have already as a people built up considerable experience of mass struggle which we must use to advance the struggle. As we speak major mass battles are raging in the Western and Eastern Cape. Our youth, has once more shown us what it is to be a descendant of the heroes of Isandlwana. Earlier v/e had had the battles of the textile workers in Natal, the bus boycott in the same province, the heroic battles at Bloemfontein, the birthplace of the African National Congress, the struggles among the Batlokwa and so on.

What these battles prove .is that nothing will change unless v/e ourselves  
in our millions rise up, under the guidance and command of our own  
organisations and our own leaders to confront the Botha regime. The poin  
t  
has also been proved especially in the Western Cape that all our struggle  
s  
belong together\*. We are one people with one destiny. When the meat  
workers are on strike it is correct that the rest of us boycott meat.

V/hen workers are on strike in this or the other factory, mine or farm, it is  
necessary that those of us who are working should collect even a few cen  
ts  
to support the striking workers. When the students are on strike for a  
democratic and free system of education it is vital, that the rest of the  
community should come out actively in support of the struggling students.

This is what, mass united action means. It is this path and not dialogue  
with the racists, v/hich gaurantees our victory.

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Mass struggle has resulted in the collapse of the separate development Coloured Person's Representative Council and the projected South African Indian Council. Mass struggles must also be launched to destroy other such institutions like the Bantustans and community councils.

Mass action has aborted Botha's plans for what he calls a new constitutional dispensation, including: his Presidential Council as well as his constellation of Southern African States, Mass action has introduced further divisions among the white population, sections of whom are beginning to see that apartheid spells their destruction as a people, and liberation their survival in conditions of peace, security and prosperity.

The fact that we struggled against all odds to form our own democratic trade union movement genuinely representative of the workers, has forced the Botha regime to make limited concessions on this issue, while trying everything in its power to seize control of these unions and render them harmless. Organisation, mass action, our own strength will defeat this enemy manoeuvre.

The seizure of power by the people, the strategic goal which we pursue, demands that we defeat the tyrannical regime of the racist. The blows that Umkhonto we Sizwe delivered at Sasolburg and Secunda are an affirmation of the determination of our people's army, under leadership of the ANC, to carry out its historic mission of being the revolutionary striking force of our people. We must all join in the struggle to strengthen this combat force within the country.

On this occasion, the 25th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, we salute the newly independent people of Zimbabwe who by their actions, both political and military, have shown us the way forward. We greet Comrade Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, as well as the leadership, members and combatants of the Patriotic Front Alliance,

We salute also our comrades-in-arms in SWAPO and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia as well as the sister people of Namibia. The blows you are delivering against the common enemy are a material factor bringing closer our own liberation.

We greet our brothers and sisters in the Front-line states, in Africa and the rest of the world, convinced that your support for our just cause will continue to grow

To our people in their millions, to the members of the ANC and Umkhonto we

Sizwe and other formations of the alliance of democratic forces for the liberation of our country, we wish to repeat what J.S. Moroka said 30

years ago, with a few amendments:

If ever there was a time when the black people were required to put their twenty-million force behind the principles of democracy, in alliance with other freedom-loving members of the South African community, that time has come\*

To all of you, on the glorious occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, the National Executive Committee of the ANC says:

The Struggle continues!  
Victory is certain!  
Amandla Ngawethu!

Forward to a People's Government!