

3.8.1  
SPEECH OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,  
NELSON MANDELA, AT THE RALLY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST  
PARTY: JOHANNESBURG, JULY 29, 1990.

COMRADE CHAIRMAN,

COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DAY IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY.  
IT IS A DAY WHICH SHOULD GIVE COMFORT AND HOPE TO EVERYBODY IN  
SOUTH AFRICA WHO CALLS HIMSELF OR HERSELF A DEMOCRAT. IT IS  
IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT MARKS THE END OF A PERIOD OF EXACTLY 40  
YEARS, DURING WHICH THE DECLARED AIM AND PRACTICE OF THE STATE  
WAS TO SUPPRESS ALL POLITICAL OPINION WHICH WAS NOT CERTIFIED BY  
THE RULING NATIONAL PARTY AS LEGITIMATE AND PERMISSIBLE.

SURELY, THERE ARE, TODAY, HAPPY SMILES ON THE FACES OF THE  
POLITICAL THINKERS WHO SAID THAT, THOUGH THEY MIGHT DISAGREE WITH  
OPPOSING VIEWS THAT SOME PEOPLE MIGHT EXPRESS, THEY WOULD  
NEVERTHELESS DEFEND WITH THEIR LIVES THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF SUCH  
OPPONENTS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS.

THE ANC IS NOT A COMMUNIST PARTY. BUT AS A DEFENDER OF DEMOCRACY,  
IT HAS FOUGHT AND WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY TO EXIST. AS A MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION,  
THE ANC HAS NO MANDATE TO ESPOUSE A MARXIST IDEOLOGY. BUT AS A  
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, AS A PARLIAMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR  
COUNTRY, THE ANC HAS DEFENDED AND WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND THE

RIGHT OF ANY SOUTH AFRICAN TO ADHERE TO THE MARXIST IDEOLOGY IF THAT IS THEIR WISH.

TO US AS A DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, THE LESSON OF OUR HISTORY IS VERY CLEAR. IT IS WHAT THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE LEARNT DURING THE TURBULENT DECADE OF THE NINETEEN THIRTIES, WHEN FASCISM BEGAN ITS ASSAULT ON DEMOCRACY BY LAUNCHING A VIOLENT OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE COMMONISTS.

IT IS THE SAME LESSON THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES LEARNT DURING THE DECADE OF THE NINETEEN FIFTIES, WHEN THE FORCES OF MACARTHYISM LAUNCHED AN ASSAULT AIMED AT UNDERMINING THE DEMOCRATIC HERITAGE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, BY CONDUCTING A VIRULENT OFFENSIVE AGAINST COMMUNIST AND LEFT OPINION.

THEOLOGIANS OF THE GERMAN CHURCH UNDERSTOOD THESE PROCESSES VERY WELL WHEN THEY SAID THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DID NOTHING WHEN THE NAZIS ATTACKED THE COMMUNISTS. AND AGAIN THE CHURCH DID NOTHING WHEN THE NAZIS TURNED THEIR BRUTAL ATTENTION TO THE SOCIALISTS. AND WHEN THE NAZIS TURNED AGAINST CHRISTIAN MEN AND WOMEN OF CONSCIENCE, THE CHURCH FOUND THAT THERE WAS NOBODY TO DEFEND IT.

THIS IS A MISTAKE THE ANC NEVER MADE, BECAUSE WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BANNING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN 1950, WAS BUT A PRELUDE TO THE SUPPRESSION OF ALL DEMOCRATIC OPINION IN OUR COUNTRY. THIS IS A LESSON THAT THOSE WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY, WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE DEMOCRATS, NEED TO LEARN VERY QUICKLY.

THE LESSON THEY NEED TO LEARN IS THAT IT WAS FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG



TO HAVE ENACTED THE SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT IN 1950. THE LESSON THEY NEED TO LEARN IS THAT IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG TODAY TO SEEK TO BUILD AN ATMOSPHERE OF DEMOCRATIC TOLERANCE OF DIFFERENT VIEWS BY ATTEMPTING TO DEMONISE THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO HOLD COMMUNIST OPINIONS. SUCH A POSTURE LEADS TO ONE THING AND ONE THING ONLY, NAMELY, THE DENIAL AND SUPPRESSION OF DEMOCRACY ITSELF.

WE ARE HERE TODAY TO PARTICIPATE WITH YOU IN THE PUBLIC LAUNCH OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, 40 YEARS AFTER IT WAS BANNED. WE DO THIS BECAUSE DURING THE NEARLY 70 YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE, THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS DISTINGUISHED ITSELF AS AN ALLY IN THE COMMON STRUGGLE TO END THE RACIAL OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE BLACK MASSES OF OUR COUNTRY. IT HAS FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE ANC FOR THE COMMON OBJECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION OF OUR PEOPLE, WITHOUT SEEKING TO IMPOSE ITS VIEWS ON OUR MOVEMENT.

IT HAS BEEN AND IS A DEPENDABLE FRIEND WHO RESPECTED OUR INDEPENDENCE AND OUR POLICY. ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DEVOTED CONGRESSITES WHO, AS MEMBERS OF THE ANC, HAVE PROPAGATED AND DEFENDED THE POLICIES OF OUR MOVEMENT, INCLUDING THE FREEDOM CHARTER, WITHOUT HESITATION. THEY HAVE THEREFORE GIVEN STRENGTH TO OUR OWN MOVEMENT, WHATEVER THEIR SEPARATE PERSPECTIVES MIGHT BE AS AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL FORMATION.

ITS LEADERS HAVE BEEN CLOSE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES OF THE LEADERS OF OUR MOVEMENT. THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, COMRADE JOE SLOVO IS AN OLD FRIEND. THERE IS AN OLD ESTABLISHED FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN HIS FAMILY AND MINE. WE WENT TO UNIVERSITY

TOGETHER. WE WERE CO-ACCUSED IN THE TREASON TRIAL OF 1956 TO 1961.

OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE SHARED THE SAME VIEWS ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES TO DO WITH ENDING THE CRIMINAL SYSTEM OF APARTHEID AND THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION OF OUR COUNTRY. TODAY WE SHARE THE SAME VIEWS ABOUT THE VITAL IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY OF ARRIVING AT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, IN CONDITIONS OF PEACE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.

THIS PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN ABLE TO ENDURE OVER THE DECADES PRECISELY BECAUSE JOE SLOVO AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAVE UNDERSTOOD AND RESPECTED THE FACT THAT THE ANC IS AN INDEPENDENT BODY. THEY HAVE NEVER SOUGHT TO TRANSFORM THE ANC INTO A TOOL AND A PUPPET OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

THEY HAVE FOUGHT TO UPHOLD THE CHARACTER OF THE ANC AS THE PARLIAMENT OF THE OPPRESSED, CONTAINING WITHIN IT PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICAL VIEWS, WHO ARE UNITED BY THE COMMON PERSPECTIVE OF NATIONAL EMANCIPATION REPRESENTED BY THE FREEDOM CHARTER.

EVEN WHEN WE GOT TOGETHER WITH COMRADE JOE SLOVO AND OTHERS IN 1961 TO FORM THE PEOPLE'S ARMY, UMKHONTO WE SIZWE, WE UNDERSTOOD THE SPECIFIC ROLE THAT UMKHONTO HAD TO PLAY. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT STATE REPRESSION HAD COMPELLED US TO TAKE UP ARMS, THIS DID NOT MAKE THE ANC A SLAVE TO VIOLENCE.



WE KNEW THAT THE CADRES WHO MADE UP UMKHONTO WE SIZWE WOULD HAVE TO BE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WOULD RESPECT THE POLITICAL AUTHORITY OF THE ANC, AND ALWAYS PROCEED FROM THE POSITION THAT THEY TOOK UP ARMS PRECISELY TO HELP ESTABLISH A DEMOCRATIC ORDER IN WHICH THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE POLITICAL OPINION AND EXPRESSION, WITHOUT FEAR OF INTIMIDATION FROM ANY QUARTER.

SUCH ARE THE VIEWS OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE UP OUR GLORIOUS ARMY. TO SUGGEST, AS SOME ARE DOING THESE DAYS, THAT THESE OUTSTANDING SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF OUR PEOPLE HARBOUR IDEAS OF UNILATERAL MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE PEACE PROCESS, IS AN INSULT MANUFACTURED BY THE ENEMIES OF DEMOCRACY WHO HAVE BUILT CONSPIRATORIAL NESTS WITHIN THE INTERSTICES OF THE POWER STRUCTURES OF THIS COUNTRY.

EVERYBODY, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT, ALSO KNOWS THAT THE ANC IS THE POLITICAL FORMATION THAT DETERMINES THE STRATEGIC USE OF THE WEAPONS IN THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY. OUR MOVEMENT, WHICH HAS A DISTINGUISHED AND UNCHALLENGED HISTORY OF COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS, HAS ITSELF NEVER ABANDONED THE STRATEGY OF NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE, EVEN WHEN THE APARTHEID REGIME DID EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO MAKE SUCH STRUGGLE IMPOSSIBLE. IT CANNOT NOW TURN AGAINST THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN OUR COUNTRY, PRECISELY AT THE MOMENT WHEN SUCH A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION SEEMS POSSIBLE.

THOSE WHO TODAY POSE AS EXPERTS ON THE STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY OF OUR BROAD MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION MUST UNDERSTAND THESE ABC'S OF OUR STRUGGLE. WHAT THESE ABC'S POINT TO IS THE

COMMITMENT OF THE ALLIANCE LED BY THE ANC TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR COUNTRY.

DEAR COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

THE OBJECTIVE WE HAVE PURSUED SINCE OUR FORMATION 78 YEARS AGO REMAINS UNCHANGED. WE MUST MOVE WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED TO ABOLISH THE APARTHEID SYSTEM AND TO TRANSFORM SOUTH AFRICA INTO A UNITED, DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIAL AND NON-SEXIST COUNTRY. WE HAVE ENTERED INTO TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE REALISATION OF THESE GOALS.

BECAUSE WE HAVE AN URGENT TASK TO ATTAIN OUR EMANCIPATION, WE INSIST THAT THE TALKS MUST GO ON. OUR FREEDOM SHOULD NOT BE POSTPONED OR DENIED SIMPLY BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE HAVE A SECRET AGENDA TO SUSTAIN AN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNIST OPINION.

BUT WE ALSO INSIST THAT THE TALKS MUST PROCEED IN CONDITIONS OF PEACE. THEREFORE THE VIOLENCE OF THE POLICE AGAINST THE PEOPLE MUST COME TO AN END. THE VIOLENCE OF THE BLACK AND WHITE VIGILANTES AGAINST THE PEOPLE MUST COME TO AN END. IF IT IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PEACE AND NEGOTIATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT MUST ACT TO BRING ABOUT THIS RESULT.

WE WISH TO REPEAT HERE WHAT THE ENTIRE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT OF OUR COUNTRY HAS SAID IN THE PAST - THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF AN END TO STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PEOPLE AND A POLITICAL PROCESS LEADING

TO THE LIQUIDATION OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM, WE OURSELVES ARE  
READY TO DISCUSS THE SUSPENSION OF OUR OWN ARMED ACTIONS TO  
ENSURE THAT PEACE AND STABILITY PREVAILS THROUGHOUT OUR  
COUNTRY.

WE CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THESE  
POSITIONS, TO ABANDON THE ATTEMPT TO CREATE NEW OBSTACLES BY  
WHIPPING UP AN ANTI-COMMUNIST HYSTERIA, TO ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE  
MANNER IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL OUR PEOPLE, IN THE INTEREST OF THE  
CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE.

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY:

WE KNOW WE CAN COUNT ON YOU TO STAND WITH US AS WE PURSUE THESE  
GOALS. IT IS OUR PROFOUND DESIRE THAT YOU, LIKE ALL OTHER  
POLITICAL FORMATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY, SHOULD BE ACTIVE  
PARTICIPANTS IN THE HISTORIC PROCESS WHICH SHOULD LEAD TO THE  
PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING OUR COUNTRY AND  
PEOPLE. WE EXTEND TO YOU THE BEST WISHES OF THE PEOPLE'S  
MOVEMENT, THE ANC, AND LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING COOPERATION IN  
THE COMMON STRUGGLE TO BRING FREEDOM, PEACE AND SECURITY TO ALL  
THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

VICTORY IS CERTAIN!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!