

Resolutions of the All-In African Conference held in Pietermaritzburg.

25-26 March 1961

Chief Lutuli and other ANC leaders convened a Consultative Conference of African Leaders in Orlando, Johannesburg, in December 1960, to consider united action following the banning of the ANC and PAC and several months of a state of emergency, as well as a whites-only referendum on declaring a Republic. The Consultative Conference decided to call an All-in Conference and set up a Continuation Committee.

The All-in African Conference, held in Pietermaritzburg on 25-26 March 1961, was attended by 1,398 delegates from all over the country, though the government had arrested a majority of members of the Continuation Committee and took other measures to hinder the conference.

Nelson Mandela addressed the Conference.

The government rejected the demand of the Conference for a representative national convention to prepare a non-racial democratic constitution, and used massive show of force to suppress protests against the Republic in May, thereby precipitating a prolonged conflict.

A grave situation confronts the people of South Africa. The Nationalist Government after holding a fraudulent referendum among only one-fifth of the population, has decided to proclaim a white Republic on May 31st, and the all white Parliament is presently discussing a Constitution. It is clear that to the great disadvantage of the majority of our people such a Republic will continue even more intensively the policies of racial oppression, political persecution and exploitation and the terrorisation of the non-white people which have already earned South Africa the righteous condemnation of the entire world.

In this situation it is imperative that all the African people of this country, irrespective of their political, religious or other affiliations, should unite to speak and act with a single voice.

For this purpose, we have gathered here at this solemn All-In Conference, and on behalf of the entire African nation and with a due sense of the historic responsibility which rests on us...

* WE DECLARE that no Constitution or form of Government decided without the participation of the African people who form an absolute majority of the population can enjoy moral validity or merit support either within South Africa or beyond its borders.

* WE DEMAND that a National Convention of elected representatives of all adult men and women on an equal basis irrespective of race, colour, creed or other limitation, be called by the Union Government not later than May 31st, 1961; that the Convention shall have sovereign powers to

determine, in any way the majority of the representatives decide, a new non-racial democratic Constitution for South Africa.

* WE RESOLVE that should the minority Government ignore this demand of the representatives of the united will of the African people -

* We undertake to stage country-wide demonstrations on the eve of the proclamation of the Republic in protest against this undemocratic act.

* We call on all Africans not to cooperate or collaborate in any way with the proposed South African Republic or any other form of Government which rests on force to perpetuate the tyranny of a minority, and to organise and unite in town and country to carry out constant actions to oppose oppression and win freedom.

* We call on the Indian and Coloured communities and all democratic Europeans to join forces with us in opposition to a regime which is bringing disaster to South Africa and to win a society in which all can enjoy freedom and security.

* We call on democratic people the world over to refrain from any cooperation or dealings with the South African government, to impose economic and other sanctions against this country and to isolate in every possible way the minority Government whose continued disregard of all human rights and freedoms constitutes a threat to world peace.

* WE FURTHER DECIDE that in order to implement the above decisions, Conference -

* Elects a National Action Council;

* Instructs all delegates to return to their respective areas and form local Action Committees.

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