

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHARPEVILLE

March 21, 1970

Address by Victor
L. Mayekiso, P.A.C.
Chief Representative
in the U.A.R.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests
and fellow Comrades-in-Arms,

The Pan Africanist Congress, the vanguard liberatory organisation of the politically oppressed, economically exploited and socially degraded combative people of Azania (South Africa), welcomes you to this commemorative rally marking the 10th Anniversary of Sharpeville.

On this solemn occasion the militant people of Azania derive tremendous inspiration from your attendance because it is a physical re-affirmation of your solidarity with our just struggle to liberate our country from the clutches of Nazi-inspired racist South Africa that is bolstered and maintained by imperialists, with the United States imperialists at their forefront.

I welcome you in the name of our beloved President, Mangaliso Sobukwe, who was jailed and sentenced to three years hard labour after his arrest on March 21, 1960. On completion of his sentence in 1963 a special law, now known as the "Sobukwe Clause" of the General Law Amendment Act was passed to detain him on Robben Island, a former leper colony, because, in the language of J.B. Vorster, the fascist Premier, he has "a magnetic personality, outstanding organising ability and a sense of divine mission"; and, in the language of the present fascist Minister of Justice and Prisons, P.C. Pelser, "He is a leader, a man who had the entire country in a turmoil within the space of a few months".

Sobukwe in 1960, using the oppressors courts as a platform for exhorting the African people into making a determined and sustained assault on the fascist regime, said that the African people felt no moral obligation to obey laws in whose making they had no part. These laws were made by a white minority to protect its own interests, and were implemented and administered exclusively by it. Sobukwe did not see how an unjust law could be justly applied. Because of mounting pressure for Sobukwe's release the fascists have tried to dupe the public into thinking that they are according him humane treatment. Last year he was taken from Robben Island and placed under house arrest in Kimberley under severe restrictive measures.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the Government of the United Arab Republic and the people of the UAR who have consistently backed, not only our Party and the Azanian struggle, but have been on the forefront of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle on our sacred continent. This rally has been made possible by this stand on principle by the UAR. We humbly ask the UAR Government representative who will also be addressing this rally to kindly convey to President Nasser, that illustrious champion of the African revolution, our sincere thankfulness for this principled support. The people of Azania will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Egypt along this trench of revolutionary combat against the forces of colonialism, neo-colonialism, Zionism and imperialism, headed by United States imperialism.

We also extend our gratitude to His Excellency, Comrade G. M. Njihula, the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania for having taken ~~some~~ time off to be with us and deliver inspiring words to the people of Azania and African revolutionaries. Tanzania's contribution to Africa's redemption is well known. President Nyerere has been an indefatigable champion of justice and peace based on the destruction of imperialism in all its exploitative manifestations.

Our thanks also go to the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) and its Secretary General Dr. Fawzy El-Sayed who have always lent support to the exploited workers in Azania and have active interest in the welfare of the working class on our beloved continent and everywhere where workers are groaning under ruthless capitalist exploitation.

We thank all the various speakers and comrades who will share the platform with us and pledge to them that their inspiring words shall not be in vain.

This day, March 21, marks the 10th Anniversary of Sharpeville. On March 21, 1960, the Pan Africanist Congress launched the first phase of an unfolding programme of action directed towards the destruction of the fascist, racist, settler regime in South Africa. This Positive Action Campaign snowballed by the afternoon of that day, over a million workers were out in the streets whilst all the African workers had downed their tools. The fascists panicked and opened fire on unarmed Africans, murdering 83 and injuring 365 others at Sharpeville. The word Sharpeville has been added to the South African lexicon and has come to mean callous mass murder by a fascist regime in an attempt to stem the tide of revolutionary movement directed against it.

The Pan Africanist Congress had been formed barely 11 months before this earth-shaking event -- April 6, 1959. From its very inception the P.A.C. had made it abundantly clear that it is not just a political organisation but a liberatory movement. Positive Action against the oppressor would be its watch-word. Therefore the initials P.A.C. of the Positive Action Campaign are no mere coincidence with the initials of the Pan Africanist Congress. The P.A.C. supplanting protest reformist politics which had rendered the earlier liberation movement sterile with action.

As a result of this campaign a State of Emergency was declared, the Pass Laws were temporarily suspended, over 5,000 activists were arrested and the Pan Africanist Congress was banned. On being banned the movement, having come out of the loins of the masses, could not die out so long as the masses are there. It automatically went underground because it had already a strong mass base. At this time even old men joyfully expressed their readiness for death having witnessed the dawn of a new era; the resurgence of an African's dignity which would be the motive force to the redemption of the Fatherland. The events leading to H.F. Verwoerd being shot, the Prime Minister of South Africa at the time, are well known. The fleeing of thousands of settlers and the flight of capital, leading to the United States imperialists coming to South Africa's economic rescue has distinctly shown who the real enemy is in our struggle.

On this day we have held commemorative rallies every year. To the Pan Africanist Congress as the vanguard and spearhead of liberation in Azania, it is a day of re-dedication; of solemn but resolute determination to even steer the ship of liberation through the stormy seas of struggle

until we reach the shores of freedom and independence.

To us this day is one of solemn tribute to the memory of martyrs who died to nourish the tree of freedom with their precious blood in order that we may be free in the land of our fore-fathers. On this day we once more re-dedicate our lives to the cause of freedom and renew our vows to make certain that they did not die in vain.

We remember the noble sacrifices that our beloved leader, President Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, is making with great ~~stoutness~~ ~~in~~ incarceration. Many insults have been heaped on Sobukwe by the South African fascists. These fascists should know that Sobukwe is a leader of the African people. It is not Sobukwe that the fascists will now account to but to the entire Azanian masses. The African people cannot tolerate this calculated insult to their leader. Last century when the Boer renegade, Piet Retief, treated Sekonyela similarly shabbily, Dingane's Councillor which watched Retief's cunning treachery, was horrified and restlessly awaited nightfall when he slipped back to the Royal kraal to report how the Boers treated the leaders of the people. He told how Sekonyela was tricked into letting the Boers handcuff and then torture him, having subtly asked him to try on the bracelets of the "British Queen".

The Boer, Piet Retief, was later completely wiped out with his treacherous forces by Dingane's warriors.

Vorster's treatment of Sobukwe is no less diabolical than that of Retief upon Sekonyela. We cannot forget or forgive this insult.

We remember the martyrs who heroically sacrificed, and with their blood, watered the tree of national emancipation and independence.

We remember those who along this trodden path, have since that day, served, suffered and sacrificed. The 97 youths who have sacrificed their lives; 10,000 who suffer in the concentration camps and gaols of Vorster and his clique; the millions who serve the cause of liberation for the creation of a new non-racial South African society -- the Socialist Republic of Azania.

This day, has since 1966, been recognised by both the United Nations Organisation and the Organisation of African Unity as an "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination".

On the race question afflicting our country the position of the Pan Africanist Congress has been clearly stated in our Manifesto.

The African people are very much proud of their race -- the human race. They recognise no inescapable fundamental differences among members of even the main branches of that race: the Caucasoids, the Mongoloids and the Afrinoids.

They do not subscribe to the theory that there are inherent mental, emotional and psychological differences among members of the main branches of the human species. They hold that the granting of "rights" on the basis of ethnological origin to be the entrenching of sectional arrogance and the continued maintenance of contempt for human worth and disregard for human dignity.

They regard the differences that exist among various groups or sub-groups of man to be mainly acquired in environmental and through the individual factors

in the acquisition of group characters.

They deny the foreigners any right to balkanise or pakistanise their country. The African people are neither racists nor racialists, and they unreservedly condemn all forms of racialism, including multi-racialism. Multi-racialism implies that there are such basic and insuperable differences between the various national groups that the best course is to keep them permanently distinctive. We stand for non-racialism in which the colour of ones skin and the shape of ones nose will count for nought. The African people do not nurse any crude hatred for the European peoples, but they do cherish a deep-seated detestation for the Herrenvolk system.

Our beloved President, Sobukwe, said: "In Afrika the myth of race has been propounded and propagated by imperialists and colonialists from Europe, in order to facilitate and justify their human exploitation of the indigenous people of the land".

We hold that "everyman is his brothers keeper. For every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main, because he is involved in makind".

British imperialism which conveniently used the tool of racism during the search for raw markets with the rise of the industrial revolution in Europe, propounded this racial myth to justify the subjugation and exploitation of colonial peoples. But whenever the pampered ladies of the British aristocracy came upon a wealthy African King, or a rich Sheikh or Maharajah, they would not hesitate in bending their backs backwards to woo him, looking forward to an affluent life. The race question is founded on economic factors, it is a by-product of imperialism. Ours is to crush imperialism then racism will be swept to oblivion.

In Azania we have accepted the truth that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun". We learnt, by negative example, from the earlier movement before PAC was born that "the oppressed peoples and nations must not pin their hopes for liberation on the 'sensibleness' of imperialism and its lackeys. They will only triumph by strengthening their unity and persevering in their struggle."

We have prepared ourselves for a protracted struggle because the fascists are tactically superior in striking and destructive power. Strategically, they are weak particularly in view of the fact that a very essential element is absent --- the toiling masses of Azania who are implacably opposed to and hate them. The high industrialisation of South Africa may appear to be the fascists source of power but in fact it is their Achilles heel. No economy can stand a prolonged and sustained guerilla war without collapsing. The collapse of the economy means the collapse of the orderly city government. Agriculture as another economic mainstay in South Africa is under heavy pressure from our guerillas. The white farming community is strewn over the length and breadth of the country and comprises of the most rabid racists. Farming, as a third of the gross national income is also under heavy pressure, more as the farms are large and isolated. Though these farms maintain, telephone and radio contact they are surrounded by a sea of Africans. It is from this ruthlessly exploited African peasantry that our guerillas have widest support and coverage. The peasantry is, to our guerillas, what water is to a fish.

The writing of the doom of the South African fascists is glaringly on the wall for those who can decipher it.

We value the support that our struggle in Azania gets from the rest of independent Afrika which acts as our reliable rear area. Though there are isolated renegades like Leabua Jonathan of Lesotho who have come out unashamedly as lackeys of imperialism. This is a purely transitional period in the continental showdown between the forces of imperialism and the African forces; we have to learn by negative example.

This renegade Jonathan, assisted by the South African racist regime, arrested the leaders of the progressive Basotuland Congress Party headed by, Ntsu Mokhetle, immediately after E.C.P. won the General Election held in January, this year. Jonathan went further to arrest 20 leading members of our Party and threatens to hand them over to the South African fascist regime. Leabua Jonathan's seizure of power, undressed of his diversionary prattling, was directed at the protection of South Africa from Mokhetle's uncompromising stand and his support for the P.A.C. The revolutionary arm of the Azanian people may have to swing towards this enemy of Africa.

We stand unreservedly with the just stand of the United Arab Republic in her war against Zionist megalomania.

The Zionists as a tool of U.S. imperialism have repeatedly unleashed wars of aggression against the UAR because, in the flight of their imagination, they dream of substituting illustrious President Nasser's Government with a puppet regime that will be amenable to imperialist manipulation. This is an imperialist day-dream that has been hatched without a clear knowledge of the Egyptian people's determination to be forever masters of their own destiny. Let the imperialists continue digging a deeper grave for themselves.

We stand full-square behind the struggle of the Palestinian people whose country has been usurped by a foreign minority at the behest of imperialism. In Azania we hold that the inalienable rights of the indigenous people cannot be compromised by the length of stay of a foreign minority that has acquired living space by running rough-shod over the rights of the indigenous people. This principle applies equally to Palestine where a foreign Zionist minority has arrogated all power to itself, disregarding the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people to the extent of endangering the lives and of committing atrocities against the Arab indigenes and Jews who are not of Zionist persuasion. The Palestinians are now fighting an honourable battle for their land.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
That to himself hath never said:
This is mine own, my native land".

We support the just struggle of the Vietnamese and Korean people whose southern territories are occupied by the United States imperialists, propping up long discreted administrations. We look forward to the re-unification of Vietnam and the re-unification of Korea in the best interests of the Vietnamese and Korean peoples without United States interference.

We regard Chinese territory as inviolable and look forward to the liberation of Taiwan with China taking her rightful seat in the United Nations.

We support the Cuban people against continued U.S. imperialist intrigue.

We stand with all

socialist countries,

.....6/with

with all progressive anti-imperialist people in the western world, especially the black power movement in the United States. In the main, we address ourselves to the anti-imperialist forces and appeal for genuine support, and not sham support which in reality is betrayal.

"IZWE LETHU" (our Land)

oooooooooooo

THE PASSING OF UNCLE HO

HO CHI MINH, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, beloved "Uncle" of the revolutionary people of the world, is no more! In paying tribute to his memory, we can do no better than

convey to our people the monumental moral lesson of ~~Uncle~~ Ho's mission in life vividly expressed by the Vietnamese people on the occasion of his 79th birthday last May as follows:

"In this month of May, when President Ho Chi Minh is having his 79th birthday, the Vietnamese people, in both North and South, are happy to see him standing at the helm, as always deeply human, sensitive to all the aspirations of the people, as always firm and unyielding concerning the nation's fundamental rights, as always clear-sighted, able to adapt himself to the ~~most~~ complex realities, and to practice with great ingenuity that art of the possible which makes great statesmen.

"For the Vietnamese people, the person of Ho Chi Minh evokes even more than the age-old aspiration to national independence.

"When a Vietnamese thinks back along the centuries, he hears the unbroken clamour of hungry and oppressed crowds.

"With Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese people have understood that to get rid of the foreign occupier would be a fruitless enterprise if that combat did not open up new social prospects.

"The landless peasant, the slave-worker, the 'coolie' in the scornful words of the colonialists, the intellectual held in bondage, the highlander looked down upon as a sub-human being --- all have found in the course charted by Ho Chi Minh the way to their own liberation.

"Every man's destiny is now closely bound to that of the fatherland. Independence and freedom are welded into an indissoluble block against which the American war machine has crashed.

"In these days when the fight against American aggression is entering a decisive stage, the Vietnamese people, in both North and South, turn to their President and, to wish him a happy birthday, simply tell him: 'We shall fight on until victory!'"

And now he is no longer with us. He has joined the immortals. A sad loss for the Vietnamese and for us all. Let us make it an occasion for re-dedication to the struggle for national salvation and social liberation which was so dear to Uncle Ho's heart.

We send our deeply felt condolences to the fraternal people of Vietnam, North and South and to say with them, Let us fight on until victory!!!

- Azania News

oooooooooooo