

PAPER DELIVERED BY ADVOCATE DULLAH OMAR, VICE-PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS OF SOUTH AFRICA TO CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY COMPROMISO DE JUSTICIA AT SANTIAGO, CHILE, ON 29 NOVEMBER 1990

INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege for me to participate in the proceedings of this conference and as a democratic lawyer and freedom fighter in South Africa, I convey warm comradely greetings to you, your organisations and the struggling people in your country. I have been asked by my organisation, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers of South Africa, to greet you in the name of Human Rights and Democracy. Nadel hopes that closer ties will be built between democratic lawyers all over the world.

In South Africa today, the struggle for liberation from apartheid oppression and economic exploitation has achieved significant successes. Victory is in sight but not yet guaranteed. Change is taking place in South Africa, but is not irreversible. The reason for this is that the South African apartheid regime continues to resist change. It is supported by the Western imperialist countries which seek to impose a neo-colonial solution on our country. Despite these massive problems which we must still overcome, it is true to say that the sustained struggles of the National Liberation Movement led by the African National Congress of South Africa, supported by all our friends in the international world, have led to major victories over apartheid oppression (which has been the major ruling class strategy since 1910) to maintain a system of super profits for monopoly capitalists. Whilst recognising the change is not as yet irreversible, the masses of South Africa's oppressed people move into a new and more complex situation with greater confidence and we want to take this opportunity of thanking all of you, your organisations and your people all over the world - all those who have participated internationally in the anti-apartheid struggles - we want to thank you for your support and solidarity.

The struggle for human rights in South Africa is inexplicably tied to the struggle for democracy. Like elsewhere, in South Africa, there can be no human rights without democracy and no democracy without human rights. The struggle for democracy and independence is therefore the struggle for human rights. In thanking our friends throughout the world, we would like to make special mention of one tiny nation to which the people of Southern Africa owe a special word of gratitude. I refer here to the people and government of Cuba.

ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

It may be asked why do we single out Cuba? Perhaps we should explain. The decade of the 1970's was a period of great successes for the liberation struggles in Southern Africa. It was in that period that Mozambique and Angola fought and defeated Portugese imperialism and achieved independence.

Zimbabwe achieved its independence at the end of that period. It was a period of great excitement in our part of Africa but these very successes led to US and South African intervention. There was military intervention by apartheid South Africa which did not end until very recently. The United States government bought arms and money to reactionary forces in an attempt to reverse the anti-colonial gains. The US and South Africa have been responsible for massive devastation and loss of life, starvation and human suffering.

The ultimate objective of the South African defence force supported by Western countries was to split Angola into two and to restrict the MPLA government to the northern part of Angola and to install Jonas Savimbi as dictator of Southern Angola. The effect of this would have been to make the independence of Namibia impossible or farcical and to put back the struggle in our country for many years.

It is the heroic efforts of the people and government of Cuba which prevented Southern Africa from being carved up in this way. The Cuban-Angolan victory over the SADF ensured the creation of a new situation in which:

1. Angola remained a united Angola (despite the fact that USA still supports UNITA and continues its policy of destabilisation).
2. Peace has become a reasonable possibility in Southern Africa.
3. Namibia has achieved independence (despite continued domination of the economy by multinationals).
4. The apartheid regime under F.W. De Klerk has been compelled to negotiate with the liberation movement (despite De Klerk's dubious agenda).

And so, speaking on the continent still suffering from domination by the same US imperialism - we place on record our appreciation to the courageous people and government of Cuba. Thank you for your sacrifices and contribution to the liberation of the people of Southern Africa.

#### **END US INTERVENTION**

We also say that inasmuch as apartheid is an affront to the international community and a violation of human rights, the present US blockade of Cuba is a violation not only of international law, but of human rights. How can a mighty nation such as the United States ever justify its attempt to strangle and starve to death a tiny nation which poses no threat to it whatsoever? The hypocrisy of the US - having invaded Grenada and Panama (and how many times have the US marines not invaded countries in Southern and Central America

over the past decades?) It is self-evident - as the Deputy President of the African National Congress said in Paris recently. We believe that we must speak out against US aggression - whether it be in relation to Cuba, other countries of Central or Southern America, Southern Africa, but today in particular in relation to the Middle East. Insignificant though we may be, we say quite categorically that the US must get out of the Middle East. It has no right to be there - leaving aside the rights and wrongs of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The excuse of an expansionist Soviet communism no longer exists. Human rights and its effective exercise is only possible if the right of self-determination of the countries of the world is recognised. The main form of domination and intervention in the world today is the same in the Americas, in the Middle East and in Southern Africa and that is Yankee imperialism and domination. We say to the United States: "Get out of the Middle East! Get out of the Americas! Stop your support for repressive regimes in the world! Stop your support for Unita and other repressive forces in the Southern African region! Apartheid South Africa, which has not been subjected to the same kind of sanctions as Iraq, but which has continued to enjoy British and American support in many ways (let me remind you) has never adopted the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

#### NEED FOR UNITY

Specifically we believe that our internationalist duty demands that we call on the US government to end the blockade of Cuba and to allow Cuba's people to decide their future for themselves in a democratic manner.

The changed situation in the world - particularly the changes in Eastern Europe - impacts on the struggle of all third world countries and peoples for human rights, democracy and self-determination. Monopoly interests seek now to increase their stranglehold on our countries and economies. They make us poorer and weaker. They want us to submit to their dictates and demands. It is clear that no single third world country, acting on its own, will ever be able to resist such domination or to achieve self-determination - which is a basic human right - hence the only option for the third world is to build a world-wide anti-imperialist and anti-domination movement based upon the principle of the right of all nations to self-determination, the right of all people to development and peace and the right of all people to be free from exploitation and oppression.

It is for this reason that we welcome the opportunity to be with you and hope that we shall be able to build closer links between our struggles and the struggles in the Americas, the rest of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, together with our friends and allies in other countries.

Let me now turn to the current human rights situation in South Africa