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Conversations with the
President



NEVER AGAIN MUST THE WORLD CLOSE ITS EYES TO GENOCIDE

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

THIRTY years ago, in the space of just a hundred days, one of the worst mass murders in recent times happened on African soil.

Approximately 1 million men, women and children were slaughtered within a period of 100 days in Rwanda in an orchestrated campaign of violence that involved organs of state, civilians, militias, the local media and even churches.

The Rwandan genocide was one of the darkest chapters in human history. It was an atrocity that unfolded as the world looked on and failed to act. There was little intervention from the international community.

Despite a warning from the head of the United Nations deployment stationed in Rwanda at the time that a mass extermination of Rwandan Tutsi people was imminent, the UN peacekeepers failed to prevent the killings, arguing that their mandate was limited and that they lacked authority to intervene.

Instead, the peacekeepers were ordered to focus on evacuating expatriates desperate to flee the country.

The first big massacre of the genocide was at a school in the capital, Kigali, which was being guarded by UN peacekeepers. Just hours after the UN troops withdrew, the feared Interaham-

we militias stormed the school and killed 2,000 people who had sought shelter there hoping the UN would protect them.

Several western countries, some of which had a presence in Rwanda at the time, would later say they were not aware of the extent of the killings. Thirty years later, no country or international body can any longer say **'we didn't know'** and use that claim as justification for a failure to act.

The advent of 24 hour news, the proliferation of social and community media and the speed with which information is disseminated in the digital age makes it nearly impossible for mass atrocities to occur under conditions of secrecy.



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

At the numerous Rwandan genocide 30th commemoration memorials, one finds the words **'Never Again'**.

This phrase, 'Never Again', also appears on memorials to the Nazi holocaust, and is evoked as a reminder to the world of the horrors perpetrated by humankind and of the collective responsibility we share to ensure that this dark history does not repeat itself.

The holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel has called the phrase "*a prayer, a promise, a vow, never again the glorification of base, ugly, dark violence*".

It is because of our stated commitment to never again allow atrocities of this kind, that the world cannot stand idly by as another genocide is carried out, this time against the people of Palestine in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Nobody can claim ignorance about what is happening in Gaza, because, unlike in Rwanda in 1994, these atrocities are being televised, written about, tweeted and live streamed.

It is now close to six months since Israel unleashed a campaign of violence on the people of Gaza in response to the atrocities committed by Hamas.

More than 32,000 Gazans have been killed. According to the UN Children's Fund, approximately 13,000 of these casualties are children. Civilians, non-combatants, women, persons with disabilities, journalists and even aid workers have not been spared.

Late last year, South Africa instituted proceedings against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague for

violating its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, with respect to its actions in Gaza.

The International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the UN, pronounced on a set of provisional measures that Israel should take to prevent the commission of all acts falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention. The Court directed Israel, among other things, to ensure that its military does not commit such acts, to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide, and to enable the provision of urgently needed basic service and humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

In clear defiance of this legally-binding order, Israel has intensified its violence against the residents of Gaza. These people are now also facing starvation and famine as the delivery of aid continues to be disrupted, including the killing of humanitarian and aid-workers.

Last week, the ICJ issued additional measures, ordering Israel to take the necessary and effective measures to ensure 'unhindered provision at scale' of basic services and humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

The Court accepted South Africa's argument that, contrary to what Israel claimed, the UN agencies are not being assisted to get aid flowing into Gaza.

The court also ordered Israel to 'ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group' under the Genocide Convention.

When the Rwandan genocide unfolded in 1994, the Genocide Convention had been in existence for nearly half a century, having been adopted in 1948 in the aftermath of the Second World War.

In spite of this, the atrocities in Rwanda didn't just happen, but were allowed to happen in the face of callous indifference by the international community.

It was only several decades later that a number of these 'bystanders to the genocide' apologised for failing to act as the killings happened. As they were for the families of those who perished in the Rwandan genocide, for today's genocide victims, apologies are too little, too late.

It should never be, and must never be, that atrocities, gross human rights violations and genocide should somehow carry less weight because of the race, ethnicity or religious affiliation of the victims.

We owe it to the victims of all the world's genocides to not betray their memories by looking away, by failing to act, or worst of all, by claiming we didn't know.

The terrible events in Rwanda in 1994 took place in the year we as South Africans attained our freedom.

We are ever mindful that with that freedom comes a responsibility to work for peace, justice and human rights everywhere.

It is a duty and a standard we will continuously strive to uphold, not just for ourselves but for all peoples, everywhere.

MOTHERING A NATION: In Remembrance of Comrade Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

■ By **SARAH MOKWEBO**

DURING Comrade Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's funeral, and the days preceding it, even the days after it, South Africa shared a mutual feeling of despondency at the loss of what at the end of the day, every single person considered "*the Mother of the nation*".

A mother had died. "*Maaama...*", one politician would ceaselessly lament before any quibble at the podium during her funeral service. "*Maaama this*", and "*Maaama that*"; it was reminiscent of any ordinary home in which women that have children lived, where the offsprings would shout out for the mother at every opportunity, except this was at the funeral of the said Mother, and she would unfortunately not answer to one of her children's needless bellow. Comrade Winnie Mandela, as a Mother of not only her children, but that of millions of South Africans, young and old, would know what to do at such a time, but she had passed away, and the nation was left motherless.

Although there is no specific period at which one could describe as the point at which the name of Cde Winnie became synonymous with maternal mastery, it



President Cyril Ramaphosa delivering befitting eulogy at the funeral of MamWinnie Madikizela-Mandela.

is an uncontested view that she eventually epitomised the crest of what is believed to be a true African woman – one that single-handedly saved her children, her husband and every other member of the community that needed maternal support. This is despite her political activism, her resourcefulness as an individual and her "*disagreeable attitude*" as some have claimed. Cde Winnie ultimately rested and is remembered as a **Mother of the nation**, a term that would avow

her contribution in the apartheid struggle despite her subsequent defaming, and confining her to the life of Cde Nelson Mandela, as "*A father of the nation*".

I do believe that after the incarceration of Madiba, Comrade Winnie as a Mother and as Wife, had to and did perform above the abilities of most ordinary beings, to sustain the memory of her husband whilst also fighting a system that was intent on breaking her at every turn. Perhaps the



narrative should move from Comrade Winnie as a Mother and as a Wife, to Comrade Winnie as an individual. A member of the African National Congress and the African National Congress Women's League (amongst others), an Activist, an unrelenting proponent of black liberation, a great friend, a pioneer and an absolutely intelligent person, who was not only sharp; but was hilarious and had an inspiring sense of style. Although I agree that Mothers can be all of the above and still be Mothers, I have learnt that there is a particular sense of loneliness in being considered merely and especially, as a Mother when one is so much more. This is not an attempt to negate the essential role of motherhood and its challenges, but rather a plea to society to view women and especially women that are Mothers, as individuals that can and do offer more beyond the cap of motherhood.

Comrade Winnie was a mother at a biological and non-biological level, a comrade, an activist, a patriot, a black woman.

On this 6th anniversary of the death of a stalwart, a trailblazer, a guerrilla, a freedom fighter, and a leader; I implore all of us, to begin to view contributions of women in the struggle for freedom through a multi-faceted lens. We must at

some point be able to appreciate women's contribution to community building beyond the inherent biological bias that would affiliate any effort they do to the fact that they're women and should be maternal and must only be ascribed maternal endearments.

Although it can be agreed that many viewed Comrade Winnie as a Mother, she also existed in many other facets that are honest to the narrative about her life and story, representing the majority of the South African black women that look up to her.

I as a young black woman, existing in a society that women like Winnie Mandela fought for, rarely ascribe the privileges and opportunities I have to any maternal proficiency. I relate more to Winnie Mandela the individual and young woman, than I do her as a Mother or a maternal figure with an ability to comfort and resolve all challenges. I believe a narrative that is true to the lives of many young women like me about Comrade Winnie should be multi layered, and honest to the many abilities, successes and failures of Comrade Winnie, in a way that represents the textures of what makes black womanhood in South Africa beyond motherhood and maternal accolades.



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Winnie Mandela: 'A Rebel and Revolt'

■ By **SINOXOLO DUMA**

SIX years ago, on the 2nd of April 2018, Mama Nomzamo Winifred Madizikela Mandela succumbed to death. As a country, this sudden loss rearranged our world, but we were comforted by the global community which bent its back ten-folds to commiserate with us.

The mourning was rather short-lived because, in the same way that Mama Winnie lived her life, her death became a territory of debate and discourse. Her passing, forcing many of us to not only defend her legacy but to explore and contextualise her activism in the face of a white supremacist and patriarchal media culture. Her death presented us with several of her popular accolades. *"She was the wife of former President Nelson Mandela"* (since this is seen as an achievement). There is also an acknowledgement of Winnie's political activism as an anti-apartheid stalwart. She became the face of the fight against apartheid, revered as the 'Mother of the Nation'; the one who courageously faced the monster and fought against white minority rule in South Africa. Winnie was valiant, she was a symbol of perseverance, she was fearless even in the face of the gruesome vio-

lence, torture and stripping of dignity that was continuously meted out against her by South African authorities.

However, this heroic narrative of Winnie is always accompanied by a silent "BUT". That while her life has been dedicated to the liberation struggle, she is simultaneously referred to as a *"powerful yet controversial figure"*. This assertion by various news broadcasters is often followed by her less impressive "accolades" or rather her notoriety, which has successfully overshadowed her contribution to our emancipation. *"She was implicated in the murder of Stompie Seipei"*, *"She was romantically involved with a younger man"*, *"She was guilty of gross human rights violations"*.

This is not an attempt to de-

nounce the coexistence of good and bad on her part. The issue is not about this complete narrative we are always presented with where Winnie is concerned. After all, her life was not a single story but, it reflected her complexity and multiple overlapping events which ultimately made her who she was. To use Maureen Isaacson's description, Winnie was a *"complex combination of flaws, foibles and strengths."* The trouble however was that she, a Black woman, had to become a symbol of the full narrative.

I spent some time cross-analysing Winnie Mandela and FW De Klerk's death announcements on the same news broadcasters, and the hypocrisy was astounding. While the former is presented as a "controversial", the latter is presented as some hero who



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freed the Israelites from the rule of Pharaoh. De Klerk was eulogised as the man who freed Nelson Mandela and helped bring an end to decades of apartheid. This description was followed by an old video of him announcing the government's decision to release Mandela from prison. He was described as the man who brought an end to white supremacy in South Africa and there is total omission of the gross human rights violation that his security forces meted out against Black South Africans. While he enjoyed a front-row seat and had the best view of the brutality of the apartheid regime, this narrative is successfully omitted.

Ironically, Winnie Mandela's life is referred to as "ambiguous", her reputation said to have declined and forever tainted. Meanwhile, De Klerk's legacy remains decorated and cosmeticized right through to the end. Perhaps given the stark intersectional differences between these two individuals, it is naïve of me to not expect these double standards. The same double standards that, if further investigated would lay bare the hypocrisy of the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission that, as Combrinck and Gray highlight, indirectly attempted to hold into account the actions of the liberation movement in the same light as the apartheid dispensation. Winnie, being at the receiving end of that hypocrisy.

Winnie Mandela's life exposed the double standards borne out of the patriarchal social order. This made her relatable to many women from different walks of life; young, old, black (mostly), white, activists and apolitical alike. While her political activism may have produced a larger than life individual, her experiences as a Black woman reduced her to the level of ordinary, allowing women to see her as a point of convergence, allowing us to see her as a woman we share a racial, gendered, and social position with. As women, we are able to explore our bodies using her as our template.

When we look at her life as just an ordinary woman, we begin to see the over-scrutinization of her body, the double standards of fidelity with which society expected and judged her. We begin to see

Winnie, not as the "face of Mandela's fight against oppression" but as a symbol of longing, loss, and endurance. We begin to see her as what Njabulo Ndebele describes as "the waiting woman." A woman who spent 27 years waiting, preserving, and upholding her husband's name. A woman who gained strength in spaces that were designed to strip her off her power and dignity. Through Winnie Mandela, we have learnt that we can liberate ourselves in spaces that are meant to trap and tame us. We learnt that we can unapologetically defy patriarchal orders that are designed to keep women subjugated.

Through Winnie Mandela, we learn how to be fully-fledged beings who can articulate what they want, to cement ourselves as subjects and not objects.

As Lisa Combrinck and Rosemary Gray write, Winnie Mandela "cannot be finalised, or turned into a voiceless object." There is no conclusion and no epilogue to her story because she is infinite.

As the mantra goes: **She did not die, she multiplied!**



MamWinnie Madikizela-Mandela did not die, she multiplied!

Do not bury the history of the revolutionary **Solomon Mahlangu** – his name **symbolizes freedom** for the youth

■ By **TLHOLOGELO COLLEN MALATJI**

WE owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to those who fought tirelessly for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Among those courageous individuals stands Solomon Mahlangu whose life is the ultimate testament to our hard-won freedom.

He represents the *“unbreakable will and determination of the African people to spare no effort or life in order to attain our goal – the total liberation of South Africa from white racist domination”*. To achieve such a noble goal, to fight for the realisation of such a lofty ideal, no sacrifice could be too great.

This year marks 45 years since Solomon Mahlangu’s passing on the 6th of April. His death was not by choice or natural causes but a consequence of the oppressive apartheid regime rooted in racial discrimination against black people, a system that perpetuated injustice and division.

But what is critical about this day, which we must always remember in our days and in the future? Solomon Mahlangu is not just a rev-

olutionary who paid with his life to end national oppression, but he sacrificed his life for the people of South Africa to live in peace and in a stable society where there is no injustice against anyone.

Unfortunately in our contemporary society, most of the youth re-

main oblivious to those who paid the price for our national freedom. Solomon Mahlangu is one of them. The national oppression of apartheid has reincarnated itself in multiple ways, which our youth need to fight. Apartheid, though dismantled persists in various ways, one of those being



REMEMBERING

SOLOMON KALUSHI MAHLANGU

A LEGACY OF COURAGE

10 JULY 1956
6 APRIL 1979

LET'S DO MORE, TOGETHER. VOTE ANC

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the scourge of substance abuse which disproportionately affects the youth of South Africa.

Most of the youth in South Africa are dying due to the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The youth, who are supposed to be the currency of development and improvement in our society's social standing, are contributing to its decay through their overindulgence in drugs and alcohol.

What would Solomon Mahlangu say about the state of the youth in our country? Solomon Mahlangu was a fearless youth who envisioned a better society for all. The state of our youth would be devastating to him, as upon his death, he made an oath that:

"My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight."

In essence, his death seems to be in vain as our youth throw their lives away into intoxicating and debilitating substances. Solomon Mahlangu's life was sacrificed for the youth of South Africa and Africa to be free from national oppression. However, the shackles that once oppressed the youth on the basis of race have shifted to substance abuse, which is now the main oppressor.

According to the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted in high schools, almost 50% of learners have used alcohol and 13% have indulged in cannabis use in their lifetime. Overall, South Africa has a drug problem, with drug usage reported to be twice the world norm, more than 15% of the population has a drug problem.

It would seem that the blood of

Solomon Mahlangu did not nourish the tree that bore the fruit of freedom. Instead, wicked challenges manifest themselves in multiple ways. Despite our youth facing problems with drugs and alcohol, there is a monster in the room – unemployment and inequality. Sociologically, it can be argued that the shackles of oppression through drugs and alcohol for our youth stem from the problems of unemployment and inequality, as more than 70% of the youth of South Africa are burdened by unemployment.

It is our core responsibility to honour the memory and history of Solomon Mahlangu. It is through the revolutionary lens that we must ensure that the memory and history of Solomon Mahlangu are not forgotten and that we use them to inspire our youth and free them from the fetters of unemployment, substance abuse, and inequality.

While history cannot repeat itself by his death to address our contemporary challenges, we as the youth must fight and help liberate the youth of South Africa from this scourge.

Guided by the spirit of Solomon Mahlangu, we must find the courage to assist our country in breaking free from the chains of contemporary oppression. As the ANCYL, we are committed to ensuring that Solomon Mahlangu's sacrifice is not in vain. Therefore, we will continue the fight, just as he did, to liberate South Africans from the plague of oppression.

Our youth, comprising more than 40% of the population in this country, must take charge of South Africa and ensure that all of us benefit from the fruits of freedom that were nourished by

the blood of Solomon Mahlangu. Economic freedom and social change are needed now, not later, to free the youth of South Africa.

Economic freedom and social change entail liberating the youth from the bane of drugs and poverty. This can be achieved through the institutionalization of the export quota system. South Africa possesses large volumes of mineral deposits, with coal and platinum being the most dominant. Platinum, particularly in demand for catalyst converters in environmentally friendly and sustainable products such as New Energy Vehicles (NEVs), is widely spread on the African continent. South Africa alone holds over 80% of the world's reserves.

We have appealed to President Ramaphosa to legislate mineral beneficiation through export quotas, meaning that only 30% of the minerals would be exported while the remaining 70% would be used for benefiting South Africans through manufacturing and job creation.

To honor the life of Solomon Mahlangu, it is crucial to establish a state-owned bank, mutual, or corporate bank and ensure that all transactions involving state workers' salaries and any other state-related transactions take place in the state-owned bank.

Solomon Mahlangu's death should not be in vain, as the youth must free itself from the fetters of oppression, allowing everybody a chance to celebrate the fruits of freedom nourished by the blood of Solomon Mahlangu.

Tihologelo Collen Malatji is President of the ANC Youth League.

ANC Veterans League OR Tambo Region
Solomon Mahlangu Memorial Lecture

NOURISHING THE TREE THAT BEARS THE FRUITS OF FREEDOM

■ By **JOEL NETSHITENZHE**

THE notion of leadership is used advisedly because assembled here are leaders of communities in intellectual thought, in traditional and cultural spheres, in economic activities, in religious and spiritual sustenance, and in youthful renewal and verve.

We meet here today to celebrate the legacy of Solomon Mahlangu, who at a young age taught us what it means to attain the mantle of leadership. Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue to fight; my blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom, were his last words, exactly 45 years ago, as he bravely defied the gallows. Indeed, love for the people and selfless service are the fountain from which the privileged position of leadership should derive.

This lesson, so clearly displayed by Mahlangu, has even deeper meaning at this juncture in the history of South Africa.

Long years ago, before the advent of colonialism, communities in what is South Africa today, experienced moments of rich harvest and famine, and even wars



among themselves. We then endured the humiliation of colonial conquest, in spite of the wars of resistance that spanned hundreds of years.

That experience taught us that poor strategy, under-developed economic and military capabilities, and divisions among the people are the Achilles heel that can only lead to defeat and sub-

jugation. That is why the African National Congress, after it was formed, at the turn of the last century, strove to bury the demon of tribalism and unite the people across ethnicity, language, race and gender.

As a consequence of these efforts, and inspired by the injunctions of the Freedom Charter, we emerged in 1996 with a constitu-

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tion that enjoins us, among others, to:

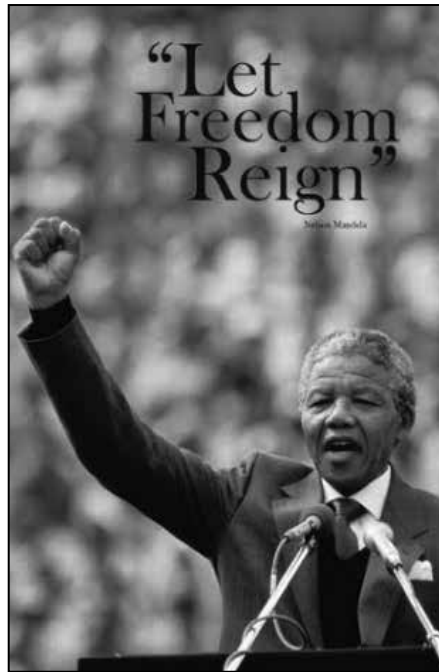
- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The journey of the new South African epoch had started and, in the words of Nelson Mandela on his inauguration in May 1994: *“Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another... Let freedom reign. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.”*

Why, you may ask, is this background necessary on a day on which we celebrate Solomon Mahlangu?

In part, this is because the 6th of April was chosen for the judicial murder of Mahlangu as part of arrogant symbolism by the apartheid regime: a day on which the first long-term European settlers arrived in the Cape, to establish a colony and launch what became 342 years of colonial domination, in its various forms.

Solomon Mahlangu saw his mission as a contribution to the reversal of that historical injustice and to the attainment of an ideal that inspired generations: a soci-



ety based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. An uMkhonto we Sizwe trainee of unique qualities, he stood out for immediate deployment in 1977; and his conduct, under the most difficult circumstances, confirmed that assessment. He was a soldier of the real MK and not of a ragtag organisation that blindly follows a frustrated individual who is in conflict with the law and is afraid of the renewal of the ANC and of society.

Lest we forget, like Solomon Mahlangu, many others went through the gallows during various phases of struggle. Lest we forget, hundreds of thousands perished during centuries of colonial subjugation and resistance: from the Khoisan who were hunted like vermin and the communities of the Eastern Cape in the intermittent 100-year war; to the children, women and men who were butchered by the apartheid security forces and their bantustan stooges well into the 1990s.

Today, we are at an epoch-making juncture. The choices that

South Africans make on 29 May 2024 will define this country for decades – if not centuries – to come. It is a moment that presents major opportunities which need to be seized with both hands. But it is also a moment pregnant with dangers that can imperil Mandela’s injunction that the sun should never set on so glorious a human achievement. I’m certain that, as we celebrate 30 years of freedom, all of us are aware of narratives that seek to underplay and denigrate the fundamental changes that have taken place since 1994.

The first manifestation of this discourse is that, because we are currently facing difficulties, democracy has not been of any socio-economic value to the people of our country. Though ironic, it is understandable that these loud claims should come from people who benefited from the system of white domination. Curious are the voices which echo these falsehoods, from some people who were historically subjugated, and whose lives have immeasurably improved under the democratic dispensation.

It is therefore our solemn responsibility to point to the realities of social transformation, in the lived experiences of the majority of South Africans. It is our responsibility to demonstrate, through facts and figures, how people’s lives have changed in terms of, among others, access to health services, education, water, electricity, and social security. On education, for instance, which is the great liberator, the percentage of people who are 20 years of age and older who have completed secondary education has more than doubled from around 16% in 1996 to about 37% in 2022; and African students today make up

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75% of those in tertiary education compared to less than half in 1994.

The second manifestation of the dangers we face is a draining pessimism propagated on most established platforms. This is that South Africa is incapable of high rates of growth and broadening access to economic opportunities.

We should challenge these shameless claims by pointing to data about:

- the size of the South African economy which has tripled since the attainment of democracy;
- the doubling in the number of employed people in South Africa, extensive measures to improve the rights of workers and the introduction of a national minimum wage
- the increase in the number of black people, including women, in skilled occupations from which they were excluded under apartheid, such as scientists, pilots and engineers, to the extent that black people are today the majority in 'skilled technical' and 'professionally qualified' categories; and to which we can add...
- changing patterns of ownership across the economy – with about 39% of mining assets today owned by black people – including ownership participation by workers and women.

Of course, many of the changes could have been implemented faster. The quality of the services can be much better. The absorption of people, especially the youth, into meaningful economic activity can be more intensive. Social scourges such as crime, including gender-based violence

and drug abuse, can be managed better. But these weaknesses do not subtract from the qualitative forward movement that only became possible with the attainment of democracy.

And so, if Mahlangu and other freedom fighters acquired the skills necessary for that phase of struggle, and were prepared to pay the supreme sacrifice, the Solomon Mahlangu of today need better to master the science and art of governance and the logic of ideas and effective communication. This will enable us to confront those who seek to dampen our spirits by characterising everything since 1994 as a failure, and by creating an impression that there is no hope.

It will arm us to defeat the divide-and-rule tactics similar to those of the erstwhile colonial overlords; and to expose attempts to pull wool over the eyes of the people by presenting a fantastic 'radicalism' while in fact trying to bring back systemic corruption and state capture.

At the global level, we have to appreciate that the world political economy is not entirely favourable to the cause of social transformation. Unipolarity in terms of the global economic system and

a military hyperpower remains the dominant characteristic of the current environment, though there may be emergent shoots of multipolarity. Sanctions and technological restrictions are used more extensively as instruments of industrial policy. Genocidal practices are being employed with gay abandon right in front of the eyes of humanity; and geopolitical expansionism is the order of the day. In countries that try to assert their sovereignty, fifth columns of disruption are used even to manipulate and undermine democratic processes.

However, it is heartening that the mass of humanity is taking up issues of social justice, including social inequality, environmental degradation and selfishness as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we navigate this global situation, we should remember that, even when the odds all seemed stacked against Solomon Mahlangu and his movement, with the apartheid regime having powerful supporters sympathetic to white supremacy, the ANC and the broad democratic movement did not relent.

Following in the footsteps of these heroes, we have to pursue



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the cause of freedom with focused determination.

Most critical in the current situation are the immediate interventions to address the effects of multiple crises from which South Africa is emerging: the global financial crisis, state capture, COVID-19 when everything came to a halt, intermittent natural disasters, and the July 2021 attempted insurrection. At the same time, we have to acknowledge to society that, objectively, the process of recovery will not always be as fast as we prefer.

It is encouraging that across all the spheres of government and within the ANC, the dangers we face are helping to focus the mind. The interventions in energy and freight logistics are steadily starting to register significant improvements. Reports indicate that in many provinces and municipalities, political leaders and government operatives are putting shoulder to the wheel, to attend to problems in service delivery.

But, we also have to own up to the subjective weaknesses that slow down our efforts at recovery and renewal. For instance: how are we managing the Mthatha and broader OR Tambo District municipality; are we utilising all the resources allocated for building and maintaining infrastructure and for indigent policies; and are we relating to communities with humility and a sense of service rather than arrogance and selfishness! Is there any conceivable reason that there should, anywhere, be raw sewage flowing in the streets, uncollected garbage, roads that are not properly maintained, and taps that run dry? How do we intensify the fight against crime, such as gender-based violence, drug



abuse, taxi violence, extortion of businesses and even of grant recipients. And we do indeed hope that the summit on crime being convened by the mayor will bring both immediate and long-term sustainable solutions.

This is not to suggest that the problems we face can be resolved all at once. The fundamental question is whether we are doing our best, in such a way that the people can believe us when we echo Mahlangu's words that we love them, and that our efforts are capable of nourishing the tree that should bear the fruits of freedom!

What we can say with confidence is that, over 30 years, Solomon Mahlangu's organisation, the ANC, has acquired the experience in governing a democratic society; it has a keen understanding of success and failure; and it has a clear programme on how to improve performance. The ANC proceeds with realism about what needs to be done, how it can be done, by whom and by when – not mere wishes to gain cheap popularity. It is an organisation with

the reach to straddle all sectors of society; one that is capable of uniting South Africa's people and forging social cohesion.

In this context, clear building blocks of reconstruction and recovery have been outlined, indicating how, in the medium-term, to place the country on a new path of growth and development to attain the ideals for which Mahlangu paid the supreme sacrifice.

This entails intensifying the infrastructure programme, implementing Master Plans for sectors of the economy with potential; strengthening economic relations especially with sub-Saharan Africa; and paying practical attention to economic interventions that absorb unskilled and semi-skilled workers, which should include speedier land reform, low-end manufacturing and support for micro and informal enterprises.

It means attaining rates of investment and growth that would create millions of jobs; implementing public sector employment initiatives that provide work opportunities especially to the youth; and improv-

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ing social security such as social grants, no-fee paying schools and school nutrition, as well as free basic electricity and water, so that no one is left behind.

It means investing in people, so we multiply the Tintswalos of our democracy.

To achieve this, we need to strengthen the state so it can meet its objectives to the people, including employing more police officers and enhancing their skills; strengthening the prosecution authorities so they can deal with those who break the law irrespective of their standing in society; and better effectiveness by our intelligence agencies so they can identify and ferret out saboteurs and other malign elements who want to create mass discontent and destroy our democracy.

In this way, we shall defend and advance the freedom for which many laid down their lives. We shall steadily but surely advance towards social justice as enjoined by South Africa's constitution, and defeat the machinations of those who subsist on nostalgia for white supremacy, for bantustan rule, and for systemic thievery and state capture.

The march to social justice continues. Progress has been made.

There have occasionally been detours forced on us by the terrain; and there were also setbacks due to our own weaknesses. But we are set on the path of renewal, reconstruction and recovery. We know the destination and we have learnt from experience.

As Solomon Mahlangu taught us, the people must feel that we love them, and they will reward that with enhanced support.

A LEAF OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORY

PURSUING THE VALUES AND VISION OF PEACE IN SA AND IN COUNTRIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

Speech by Nelson Mandela on being awarded the **Chris Hani Award** at the 10th National Congress of the South African Communist Party (SACP), 1 July 1998

(Extracts from Smith, Janet and Beauregard Tromp, "Hani: A Life Too Short", Jonathan Ball: 2009, pp. 299 – 301)

■ By **CASTRO KHWELA**

THIS peace prize recognises the message that Comrade Chris articulated at the time of his death, an objective to which he dedicated his life of struggle. **The mark of great leaders is the ability to understand the**

context in which they are operating and act accordingly. As a brave and dedicated fighter for liberation, Comrade Chris pursued the mission of our organisation, which at all moments he participated in defining.



HEROES MONTH

He did this as an ordinary cadre and soldier; as a political leader; as Chief of Staff of our military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. At each turn he executed his duties with the discipline and foresight that is expected of a cadre of our movement. And when the moment arrived, he participated with the same energy and discipline in negotiations for a peaceful settlement in our country.

This is a lesson for all of us to live our lives by: that the ways in which we will achieve our goals are bound by context, changing with circumstances even while remaining steadfast in our commitment to our vision. That was Chris Hani. And it was because of that very vision, that passion to achieve in reality the ideal of equity and justice, that the enemies of change demonised Chris

to the end, helping to create the climate in which our nation was robbed of one of its giants. The people of this country will never forget that day, nor will they be satisfied until the truth about his death is known.

This award is also precious because it is bestowed by an organisation that has been a key part of the struggle for so many years.

Throughout our struggle for liberation, one of the many things that we learnt from the Communist Party was the importance of international solidarity; that no struggle could be waged effectively in isolation. In building a new country, the same holds true. It is not possible to believe that the achievements of peace, justice and reconciliation in the

confines of the borders of one country will be meaningful in the long term.

South Africa's concern with peace across the globe is not just a selfless one. It is in the deep interests of our country to ensure that the same principles of freedom and democracy that we hold to be true find resonance in other parts of the world. It is only through working together, especially as countries of Africa and the South, that our voice is properly heard, our vision properly articulated. And it is incumbent on us to redefine the parameters for more favourable conditions for developing nations.

This 10th Congress of the SACP comes at a critical time for us all in South Africa. It comes when the assault on our alliance has reached an all-time high; it comes at a time when opposition forces are attacking our very existence; it comes at a time when in our own ranks, tactical differences are exaggerated into principled divisions.

The role of our alliance is as important as ever as we continue along the part of reconstruction and development along which we have started, in order to better the lives of our people, especially the poorest of poor South Africans.

But at the same time, the distinct identities of each and every component of the Alliance and Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) formations need to be properly outlined. The delegates to this Congress must go back to their localities knowing precisely what makes a Party branch distinct from an ANC branch, from a SANCO branch, from a League


REMEMBERING

CDE CHRIS THEMBISILE HANI


28 JUNE 1942 - 10 APRIL 1993

// I've never wanted to spare myself because I feel there are people who are no longer around and died for this struggle. What right do I have to hold back, to rest, to preserve my health, to have time with my family, when there are other people who are no longer alive - when they sacrificed what is precious: namely life itself. //

- Cde Chris Thembisile Hani




LET'S DO MORE, TOGETHER. VOTE ANC



ANC




African National Congress




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
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
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
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
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A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

HEROES MONTH

branch, from a COSATU local. The delegates of this Congress must go away with a clear understanding of how we strengthen one another not only in theory, but in actual practice.

This 10th Congress comes at a time where a vision of and for the poor in the new millennium needs to be programmatically defined. Left forces across the globe and in South Africa are watching with a deep sense of urgency and interest in the outcome of this Congress. It has implications for us all.

Chris Hani loved this Party. He loved its vision, he loved its commitment to the working class and the poor; he loved what it stood for. I was greatly dismayed when Comrade Chris resigned from being Chief of Staff of MK in order that he could serve at the helm of this organisation. We wanted him to stay on. But he listened to the voice of members of the Party and, with humility, took up the post of General Secretary.

May this Congress invoke Chris Hani's spirit to lead us forward in revolutionary unity. Let this Congress inspire the perspective of peace and equity across the nations of the world.

My acceptance of this Chris Hani Peace Award does not represent merely the celebration and acknowledgement of my own participation in the struggles of the people of South Africa. Rather, I see it as an acknowledgement of all heroes of our struggle and as a challenge to all of us to continue to pursue the values and vision of peace in this country and, indeed, in countries across our globe.



Will May poll be a step towards right-wing authoritarianism?

By **ABBA OMAR**

“**A** dark shadow of creeping authoritarianism looms over India as it prepares for its 18th general election,” wrote Yamini Aiyar, Indian policy analyst in this week's *The Economist*. Will May 29 lay the basis for SA's inexorable descent, similar to that of India, to a right-wing, homophobic, xenophobic and perhaps even tribalist regime?

Globally, progressive forces committed to non-racialism, democracy and liberalism are involved in a battle to the death with the

forces of repression and nativism.

In the past week we have seen the stunning victory in local elections of Turkish opposition forces against the governing AKP party, which had seen its leader accumulate vast, unchecked powers around his office.

We also saw the victory of the anti-immigrant coalition in Slovakia, a trend that resembles developments in many parts of Europe, including Germany and France, where until recently migrants were warmly welcomed.

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Apart from India's April 19 to June 1 elections for the lower house, the other major election is in the US on November 5, where the outcome is bound to remain hotly contested long after election day. Then we will know whether right-wing forces have definitely ascended to the point of dictating the global agenda on trade, conflict and human rights. Such will be the effect of a Trump presidency.

This gives us a sense of what is at stake in our elections. In its election manifesto the ANC has committed to *"build a better Africa and world, by supporting development and peace efforts on our continent, strengthen trade and investment links with other countries and work towards the reform of international bodies"*.

Given the gravity of the global situation it is astonishing to see the limited attention being paid by opposition parties to what SA's international relations should be. Perhaps they are guilty of what Greg Mills and Ray Hartley of the Brenthurst Foundation accuse the ANC of: considering *"foreign policy a relatively cost-free domain"*.

We will also need to do much soul-searching the day after our elections as to what the measures being taken around our elections mean for the long-term survival of our constitutional democracy. The ANC needs to continue embodying the constitutional values it helped draft and ensured were the basis for our post 1994 democratic, non-racial order.

This especially requires not succumbing to the xenophobic rhetoric of opposition parties, the staple of right-wing politics, which lays the basis for violence

against "the other", whether it is cast in race, nationality or class terms.

Such rhetoric is in plain view:

The IFP and Action SA speak of denying migrants the right to certain forms of livelihood, with the latter's leader, Herman Mashaba, declaring that *"we are not going to sit back and allow people like you to bring us ebolas"*.

Gayton McKenzie of the Patriotic Alliance calling for the children of migrants to be denied access to schools, and for the mass deportation of Zimbabweans.

Such parties trying to score cheap points by policing the border along the Limpopo River.

The EFF encouraging its supporters to "inspect" restaurants to determine the number of migrants employed.

Former president Jacob Zuma promising to separate teenage

mothers from their children and send them to Robben Island, attacking gay rights and pushing for the strengthening of powers of traditional authorities.

Richard Pithouse, based at University of Connecticut, points out that the DA and the IFP are, with organisations such as the Brenthurst Foundation and the Institute for Race Relations, engaged *"in a vigorous and increasingly shrill right-wing project that demands that SA uncritically affiliate itself to the West, presented as a democratic actor"*, despite the history of US-backed coups and proxy wars.

Pithouse's warning is worth repeating here: *"If we wish to avoid a hard-right alternative to the ANC, possibly an alternative with fascist elements, we need to move fast to draw and defend basic ethical and political lines."*

Abba Omar is director of operations at the Mapungubwe Institute.



DA leader John Steenhuisen addressing fellow members of the rightwing "moonpact".

ONLY A DECISIVE VICTORY BY THE ANC CAN SAVE OUR FLEDGLING DEMOCRACY AND SOVEREIGNTY FROM FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

■ By **SEPHOKA DAVID SEKGOBELA**

ONE of the things that our fledgling democracy would not survive is the DA-led governance and/or disruptive and chaotic coalition arrangements thereof. Contrary to the predictions of sponsored polls and analysts that are aimed at influencing the outcome of the elections, the ANC, with all its shortcomings, should come back as the ruling party, and not the opposition from the opposition benches, to continue fighting the triple challenges bedeviling South Africa, namely unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

The South African electorate needs to be wary not to dig their own graves by voting for the opposition parties like the DA with anti-poor policies that would subjugate them into slavery. The electorate needs to be extremely vigilant, and be able to distinguish between the wood and the tree. They need to see through all registered parties for who they truly are, and not be gullible to believe all the lies and empty promises. Should the DA and its like-minded coalition partners like Freedom Front take power, they would obviously reverse many or all progressive pro-poor policies regarded as tenets of our democratic dispensation – social se-



curity policies, affirmative action, employment equity, BB-BEE, etc. They have openly said that they would do those themselves. Therefore, the DA, and its coalition partners would have to be contained only as the opposition, and not be allowed to take over the reins.

As the organization that fought for and brought democracy in South Africa, the ANC would not necessarily like to rule alone and roughshod over everyone, because it understands that, for the health of our fledgling democracy, there should also be strong opposition to keep it in check, especially in governance, in order to protect it

against itself, not a bunch of buffoons and racists masquerading as opposition parties. As a democratic organization, the ANC certainly enjoys robust discussions and constructive criticism by the opposition, and not some disruptive and chaotic howling in parliament and municipal councils. Current chaos and disorder emanating from frivolous motions-of-no-confidence by coalition arrangements at local government level should under no circumstances be imported to the national and provincial levels of governance.

Opposition politics are healthy for any democratic regime. The role

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of the opposition is very crucial for the health of any democratic state. The term, “opposition” should not sound like a swear word, but regarded as sign of maturing democracy in any society. Even if the ANC could attain two-thirds majority, it would still prefer shared governance with the opposition, and not unrestrained and unfettered autocratic governance. As the saying goes, *“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”*. The phrase was first coined by John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, better known as Lord Acton, when writing a letter to Anglican Bishop Creighton in 1887, concerned that the same moral standards should be applicable to all men, political and religious leaders included, and this has since been used to call for the restraining of the authorities not to abrogate to themselves too much power that would make them autocratic.

However, one of the reasons why the DA should not be given the opportunity to assume power is its treasonous relationship with foreign forces. It is a puppet of

the west, including the US. For instance, DA is conniving with Zionists in NATO and its western allies to remove the ANC from power. Given the opportunity, DA would invite foreign occupation of South Africa by NATO and its allies. Hence, the DA’s Emma Powell attended NATO 2024 Security Conference, and even wrote letters to the US, and other western and Scandinavian countries, asking for assistance to remove the ANC out of power in the forthcoming elections. Therefore, should the DA’s wish to unseat the ANC become a reality:

- They would start by declaring the Western Cape independent, like they are trying to do with the Western Cape Powers Bill.
- They would gradually sell land to their Zionist masters until the whole of the country falls into foreign forces. We are likely to see NATO and/or US bases on our land. What is currently happening in Gaza would be like a Sunday picnic, because the Zionists will literally muzzle native

South Africans into bondage and servitude.

- They would review the entire international relations policies, recall all the diplomats deployed by the ANC.
- They would withdraw South African cases against Israel at the ICC and ICJ.
- They would withdraw South Africa from BRICS membership.

Apparently, over 350 parties, including independent candidates, are registered with the IEC for the forthcoming elections. It is, however, not expected that 350 political parties registered with the IEC will ultimately participate in the elections. Some of them have already been disqualified for one reason or another.

A sizeable number of those new parties registered with the IEC are established or headed by former high-ranking disgruntled politicians, the majority of whom being discredited and controver-

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sial individuals who have fallen from grace, with some of whom still facing criminal charges. They are hoping to draw support from their followers in their erstwhile political parties, or the disillusioned and undecided voters from the other parties. The ANC is unfortunately the main target of poaching of the electorate. To them, the idea is not necessarily to win the elections. They have been heaped with huge amounts of money to cut the ANC to size. Corporate sector moguls like the Oppenheimers are bankrolling smaller parties with the main aim of weakening the ANC, and the expectation is that they would all feed from the ANC like eating an elephant – bit by bit. Hence, *“There has been a proliferation of new parties registering, at least 27 of them, in the last quarter of 2023 alone”*.

Though it is relatively easy for anyone to register a political party to contest the elections, it should not be forgotten that, “It takes a significant amount of resources to run a political campaign and with over 300 parties canvassing a very small pool of donors, it will be interesting to see just how many of them will be able to survive.” Therefore, forming a political party in South Africa could be easy, but sustaining it, is another, because it requires a lot of funds.

It has to be remembered that political parties that broke away from the ANC since the dawn of democracy in 1994, have not been able to make a significant dent on the ANC’s powerbase. The notable ones among them that were created by former leaders of the ANC include the UDM, COPE, EFF, ACT, and now lately MK Party. There are also many others like SARA, BOSA, Xiluva, Action SA, Rise Mzansi, and

ELF-SA. All these newly established political parties intend to draw membership or supporters from their erstwhile political parties like COPE and the DA, but mainly from disgruntled ANC members.

However, what makes this myriad of political parties different from one another, and what do they really have to offer that others do not? Absolutely nothing! None of these breakaway smaller political parties has anything to offer, because the ANC government already caters for almost everything that they are propagating. **The bulk of their manifestos or policies are just cut-and-paste ideas stolen from the ANC.**

The opposition is in disarray, and the Moon Pact Coalition partners have already started to turn against each other even before the elections. The DA has been behaving like an abusive partner in a polygamous relationship. Facing the real possibility of losing the Western Cape, the DA leader, John Steenhuisen, took a swipe at smaller political parties campaigning in the Western Cape, lamenting that new parties are *“looking to loot only lucrative province left in South Africa”*. He

is referring to parties like the Patriotic Alliance (PA), Rise Mzansi, GOOD Party and the National Coloured Congress (NCC) as “mercenary” parties “looking to pull off the biggest bank heist ever witnessed”. Labelling them as “political opportunists out to line their own pockets”, he is lamenting that, instead of coming together as one formidable entity, and offering the ANC a run for its money, smaller parties are further splitting and weakening the opposition.

In conclusion, the ANC does not have any credible competition, but that does not mean that it has to be complacent. None of the existing opposition parties, in any form whatsoever, including the so-called Moon Pact Coalition, would bring down the ANC, because they are no match to the ANC, in its imperfections.

The majority of those parties do not have any sense of direction, and their main objective is just to unseat the ANC. Their mission would be accomplished, and they have no other plan thereafter.

What the ANC needs the most is decisive victory and effective opposition.



CONCENTRATE EFFORTS ON INFLUENCING THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO LEARN LESSONS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE 30 YEARS AGO

■ By **SNUKI ZIKALALA**

AT the end of January, there was a public exchange between the Minister of Justice, Ronald Lamola and the leadership of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) about the alleged rise of anti-Semitism in South Africa. Providing figures about an alleged increase in attacks on South Africans because they are Jews is not evidence that the South African government is anti-Semitic and that Jews are no longer welcome in South Africa.

The ANC and the ANC government have never been against the Jewish community, and dedicated struggle heroes like Ray Alexander, Ben Turok, Denis Goldberg, Joe Slovo, Ronnie Kasrils, Albie Sacks and many others have assumed leadership positions in our movement irrespective of their Jewish roots.

The ANC government has and continues to take stands against all forms of discrimination, victimisation, racism, xenophobia



and Islamophobia. Anti-Semitism is not a particular category to be treated differently, as some Zionist organisations and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies would want the South African government to believe.

Human lives must have equal value.

We agree with Joshua Marcus, a member of the South African Jews for Palestine (SAJFP), who wrote in a News24 article

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recently: “By conflating Zionism and Judaism, Zionists attempt to turn every criticism of Israel into an argument about anti-semitism, distracting from the ongoing apartheid, settler colonialism, and genocide in Palestine while presenting a blatantly distorted image of what it means to be a Jew.”

The ANC Veterans’ League applauds the efforts of the SAJFP and calls on other Jewish leaders in South Africa to instead concentrate their efforts on influencing the Israeli government to learn the lessons of the South African experience 30 years ago – where internal rapprochement and a home-grown peace process produced a South African Constitution that guides us daily in healing the divisions of the past.

We are excited that Rina King, chairperson of the SAJFP and ANC veteran is on the national list to Parliament. It demonstrates yet again the ANC’s anti semitic and stand against any racist practice and our support for Jews who recognise that the future of the Israeli people is bound up with their fellow countrymen, the Palestinians.

Presently, the Israeli government and their Western allies only want a ceasefire and an end to war on their terms – which means the destruction and obliteration of the Palestinian state. However, as our struggle showed us, lasting peace will only be achieved if the Israeli and Palestinian people are the drivers of a peace process supported by the international community.

Snuki Zikalala is President of the ANC Veterans’ League.



The Courage of the Haitians against all forms of adversity

■ By **AMBASSADOR PHATSE JUSTICE PIITSO**

THE symbolism of the Haitian revolution, as the epitaph of the struggle of the African slave people, whose heroism, resilience and courage led to the birth of the first independent Black Republic, still occupies the centre stage of the world political and socio-economic arena. The republic of Haiti is undoubtedly the cradle of the world revolutionary struggles against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

A group of slaves clandestinely gathered during a sacred ceremony in a dense mountain forest of Haiti, sparking a revolution which would give birth to what

was referred to as the first independent slave republic. One of the chief organisers of the insurrection, Boukman Dutty, closed the historic meeting with the following solemn prayer:

“The god who created the earth; who created the sun that gives us light. The god who holds up the ocean; who makes the thunder roar. Our God who has ears to hear. You who are hidden in the clouds; who watch us from where you are...The white man’s god asks him to commit crimes. But the god within us wants to do good. Our god orders us to revenge the wrongs. It’s he who will direct our arms and bring us the victory...Listen to the voice

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for liberty that speaks in all our hearts.”

The sacred ceremony heralded the turning point in the history of the struggles of the oppressed people of the world. The momentum, agitated by the African slave people led to the burning of plantations and killing of many slave owners. It shook the edifice of the new world of industrial capitalism.

The unprecedented revolt sent devastating shockwaves throughout the world. The US and European colonial powers became concerned that this revolt would signal the end of their lucrative slave trade. This is the reason which propelled the then French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, to dispatch a warship carrying more than fifty thousand troops to quell the revolution in the Caribbean Island.

Louverture Toussaint, an educated slave who emerged as the leader of the revolution made a clarion call to his fellow country men and women to take up arms and liberate themselves from oppression and exploitation. The following was his renowned rallying cry for the unity of his people: *“I want liberty and equality to reign in San Domingo. I work to bring them into existence. Unite yourselves, brothers, and fight with us for the same cause”*.

After the powerful army of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte captured and deported him to France, where he was imprisoned and starved to death at Fort de Joux in the Jura mountains, his fellow compatriots continued to heighten and intensify the struggle under the slogan *‘Liberty or Death’*, which culminated into the defeat of the most powerful French army



Louverture Toussaint

during the battle of Vertieres.

The decisive victory of the African slave people against the French regime occasioned the declaration of independence with the following earth moving phrase: *“Let us vow to ourselves, to posterity, to the entire universe, to forever renounce France, and to die rather than live under its domination; to fight until our last breath for the independence of our country.”*

In her masterpiece book ***The Fear of Black Republic: Haiti and the birth of Black internationalism in the United States*** Professor Leslie Alexander, poses a fundamental question:

“How did Haiti go from being of ‘Pearl of the Antilles’ in the 18th century to being the most impoverished nation in the Americas in 20th century?” The truth is that it was not an accident of history; it was by design.

From the birth of Haitian independence in 1804 until the present day, the United States and other western European nations

have used their economic and diplomatic strength to isolate and impoverish the island nation often referred to as *“The Black Republic.”*

The cardinal sin began when the African slaves, who were forcefully captured and sold as commodities into the American hemisphere, vowed to liberate themselves and declared the freedom and sovereignty of the first African state in the Americas. The bounds of their sacrifices carried the pain of our freedom.

Addressing the plenary session of the First Congress of the People of the East held in Baku in 1920, the renowned woman leader of the world progressive movement, Najiye Hanum, had this to say: *“True, we may stumble in pathless darkness, we may stand on the brink of the yawning chasms, but we are not afraid, because we know that in order to see the dawn, one has to pass through the dark night”*.

The coming generations must know that the republic of Haiti was the wealthiest of all the colonies of European imperialism. Dependent on the free labour from millions of the African slaves, good climate and rich soil, the colony became the greatest exporter of the world coffee, indigo, rice, sugar and cocoa.

Her powerful economy accounted for 40 percent and 60 percent of the world supply of sugar and coffee respectively. It also accounted for a substantial supply of gold to most of the European stock markets.

After the triumph of the historic revolution, threatened by the growing uproar against the slave trade, the United States and most

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of the European colonial regimes imposed unilateral economic and socio political embargo on the newly founded slave republic in order to undermine her influence on the world stage.

The French colonial regime demanded reparations of over 20 billion dollars, in compensation for the loss of property and profit by the French plantation owners and merchants during the revolution. More sanctions were further imposed in demand of compensation, for the loss of the slave labour force, which French colonial regime regarded as part of its national assets.

For the past centuries since the Declaration of Independence, Haiti has been paying exorbitant loans to the French commercial banks with high interest rates. The unilateral sanctions plunged Haiti into one of the poorest countries of the world.

During my tenure as the Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba, I had the honour to represent my country during the international donor conference for the reconstruction of Haiti after the devastating earthquake that rocked the beautiful Island. The conference was held in the Dominican Republic under the auspices of the United Nations, to mobilise the international community to assist the struggling nation.

More than three hundred thousand people were killed, two hundred thousand injured, five million people left homeless and destitute, and the bulk of the infrastructure destroyed. The painstaking truth is that more than ten years of the deadly earthquake, most of the commitments pledged during the conference have not yet be honoured.

The Republic of Haiti has been turned into a haven of chronic chaos, led by criminal gangs and international drug syndicates which have taken over the administration of the democratic government of the people. Millions of the people have been displaced, as criminal gangsters have taken the law into their hands, in full view of the international community.

There is absolute lawlessness, with gangs running amok, opening gates of prisons, closing hospitals and schools, killing and raping women and girls with impunity and thousands dying of hunger and disease. We see atrocities and horrible acts of genocide against the poor people of Haiti.

The world community of nations has the moral responsibility to restore peace and stability in Haiti and ensure that there is a democratic government, based on fundamental universal principles of free and fair elections. The return of constitutional democracy is a guarantee for a prosperous

future of the people of the Island.

The world has a moral obligation to demand from the governments of the US and the European superpowers, to pay back what has been stolen from the poor nation of Haiti. We cannot dream of a better world of humanity if they do not become remorseful to the atrocities they have committed over the years.

In our age and time, ours is to liberate our mother earth from the vestiges of barbarism. There is no one but the millions of people of the world themselves, who can realise a better future of peace and prosperity.

We must take it to ourselves that even if we cannot change the past but we can change the future.

Haiti is the epitome of the world of freedom and equality.

Ambassador Phatse Justice Piitso is a member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. He writes in his personal capacity.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

13 – 19 April 2024

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives, Africa Today/Yesterday and The Africa Factbook (2020)

13 April 1935 Artist Sydney Khumalo born

South African artist Sydney Alex Khumalo was born in Johannesburg. He began studying at Polly Street Art Centre in 1952, where he worked with Cecil Skotnes and later Edoardo Villa. He was an art instructor at the centre until 1964, when he became full-time artist. He toured the USA and Europe in the 60s, 70s and 80s, had several exhibitions between 1958 and 1988, won several awards and completed seven commissions.

13 April 2002 Court settles Ethiopian-Eritrean border

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague defined the 1 000-km shared border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, ending a dispute that sparked one of Africa's bloodiest wars (1998-2000) between the two nations. Although the war ended, hostilities between the two countries continued, dubbed as a no-war-no-peace situation. In 2018, new Ethiopian Prime minister Abiy Ahmed made overtures that led to a peace agreement between the neighbours.

13 April 2011 Andries Tetana killed by police during protest

Andries Tetana, a community activist was shot and killed by police with rubber bullets during a

service delivery protest in Ficksburg in the Freestate. None of the police officers charged with his death were found guilty.

14 April 1886 Artist Maggie Laubser born

Maggie Laubser, award-winning SA painter and print-maker was born on the farm in Malmesbury. Along with Irma Stern, Laubser is regarded as one of the pioneers of Expressionism in South Africa. Laubser was a member of the South African Society of Artists (SASA) and received many art awards during her career. Maggie Laubser died on 17 May 1973, according to accounts "with an unfinished canvas on her easel."

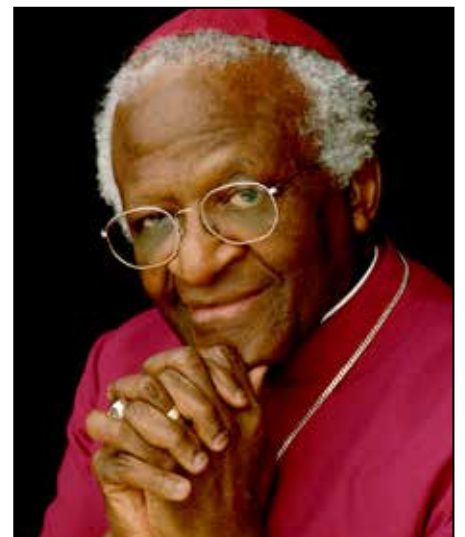
14 April 1970 UN Special Committee calls for ban of Racist SA sports

The United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid urged a boy-



cott of all South African racist sporting organizations and supported the African bloc's proposal to exclude the country from both the Munich Olympics and the Olympic Movement itself. Subsequently, on 15 May 1970, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) extended South Africa's ban. This resulted in the country's exclusion from the tragic 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

14 April 1986 Rev. Desmond Tutu elected as Archbishop



The Most Rev. Desmond Mpilo Tutu was elected Bishop of Cape Town, thereby becoming Archbishop of South Africa, heading the Anglican Church of South Africa. He was installed at St Georges Cathedral, Cape Town in September 1986. This charismatic but humble spiritual leader was the first Black person to hold this office. He occupied the posi-

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



“Ubuntu tells us that we can create a more peaceful world by striving for goodness in each moment, wherever we are.”

- DESMOND TUTU

tion until 1996, when he retired to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

14 April 2014 Chibok girls seized

Boko Haram gunmen seized girls aged between 12 and 17 from the Government Girls Secondary School in the remote town of Chibok in northeastern Borno state, Nigeria on April 14. The girls were forced from their dormitories onto trucks and driven into the bush. Some 57 manage to flee in a daring escape. Over the years, some of the 219 girls escaped, were rescued and exchanged for Boko Haram rebels. Over one hundred of the girls still remain unaccounted for.

15 April 1906 Pixley Seme received award for Regeneration of Africa speech

The first African student to enroll at US Columbia University, Pixley ka iSaka Seme was awarded the university's highest oratorical

award and was profiled in the New York Times for his speech, *The Regeneration of Africa*. Seme passed the bar in 1910 to become a lawyer and was one of the founders of the SA Native Congress in 1912.

15 April 1912 SA Weather Bureau formed

After the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, the Weather Services of the four provinces were merged into the Union Weather Service, which issued its first weather forecast by AG Howard on this day from Cape Town.

15 April 1950 Taliep Petersen born

Taliep Petersen, renowned composer, singer and director was born in District Six, Cape Town. He first sang at age 6 during the annual New Year's Cape Coon festival, performed in musicals and went on to direct such musicals as *District Six*, *Kats* and

the Kings, *Poison and Ghoe-ma*; and also created a sitcom *Alie Barber*. He passed on in 2006.

15 April 1978 Matthews Motshwarateu, breaks national 5,000m record

Black athlete Matthews “*Loop en val*” Motshwarateu, recently allowed into the racially exclusive SA Amateur Athletics Union, breaks the national 5 000m record in Stellenbosch, so entering the annals of South African athletics.

16 April 1867 Eureka Diamond discovered by children in Hopetown

The Eureka diamond, which weighed over 21 carats, was discovered by two children in Hopetown, N Cape. This started the diamond rush of Kimberley and the beginning of the current minerals complex in South Africa. The then governor of the Cape bought it and took it to London, where it remained for 100 years. In 1967, De Beers bought the Eureka diamond back and it is still on display at the Kimberley Museum.

16 April 1924 Inji Aflatoun born

Egyptian painter, activist and women's rights champion was born in Cairo. A pioneer of Egyptian modern art, she was a Marxist and joined Egypt's Communist Party at the age of 18. She founded a league of university women and represented Egypt in global women's conferences. She was the author of political pamphlets such as *Eighty Million Women with Us* (1948) and *We Egypt-*

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

tian Women (1949) in Arabic, linking class and gender oppression, and connecting both to imperialist oppression. She held exhibitions of her paintings during the 60s and 70s in Rome, Paris, Dresden, Warsaw, Moscow, Sofia, New Delhi, and Prague, and collections of her works was displayed at the Amir Taz Palace in Cairo. Inji Aflatoun died in Cairo on 17 April 1989 at the age of 65.

16 April 1976

Alek Wek born

Iconic Sudanese supermodel and designer Alek Wek was born in Wau, in a Dinka community. She fled the civil war at age of 14 with her family to the UK, where she enrolled at the London College of Fashion and studied Fashion Business and Technology. In 1995, at the age of 18 she was discovered by a fashion scout and rose to become a global icon, changing perceptions of what constitute beauty. She was named Model of the year by MTV in 1997 and was the first African model to appear on the cover of Elle magazine.

16 April 1988

Home Affairs Minister warns Community newspapers

Community newspapers formed by anti-apartheid activists and



journalists, Grassroots, Saamstaan and Out of Step officially were warned by Minister of Home Affairs Mr Stoffel Botha, that the contents of their publications were “causing a delay in the termination of the state of emergency.”

16 April 2004

Early Stone Age Jewelry found

Jewelry dating back 75,000 years ago was found in the Blombos cave, overlooking the Indian Ocean. It is believed to be the oldest known jewelry found. The Stone Age jewelry is a set of beads with holes drilled into it, as part of a necklace. The discovery is believed to be the oldest known jewelry, as the beads are more than 30,000 years older than any other known human jewelry.

16 April 2019

Rare Blue Diamond unveiled

The state run Okavango Diamond Company unveiled the 20.46 carat blue diamond in Botswana on this day. The gem is one of the rarest, and a once in a lifetime found a year earlier at the Orapa mine. The Botswana Okavango Blue diamond is on show at the American Museum of Natural History, on loan from its home country.

17 April 1658

School for slaves open in Cape

Jan van Riebeeck, commander at the Cape, wrote in his diary that a school for slaves had been started, with Pieter van der Stael as the first teacher. To reward pupils (mainly adults) for their presence, they received a glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco each day. The aim of the school was

to increase the usefulness of the slaves to their owners. A second school, attended by 12 White children, four slaves and one Khoi-Khoi, was opened in 1661.

17 April 1954

FEDSAW launched and first Women's Charter adopted



The Federations of South African Women (FEDSAW) was formed as the first non-racial women's movement. FEDSAW was the brainchild of trade unionist Ray Alexander, working together with women such as Lillian Ngoyi, Amina Cachalia, Hilda Bernstein, Dora Tamana, Ruth Mompati and Helen Josephs to bring together women's organisations. The FEDSAW launching conference adopted the first Women's Charter as a common platform against apartheid, for women's equality, education, equal work for equal pay and a better life for all children. FEDSAW organized the historic march to the Union building of 9 August 1956.

17 April 1958

Belgium opens a Human Zoo

On this day, Belgium staged the

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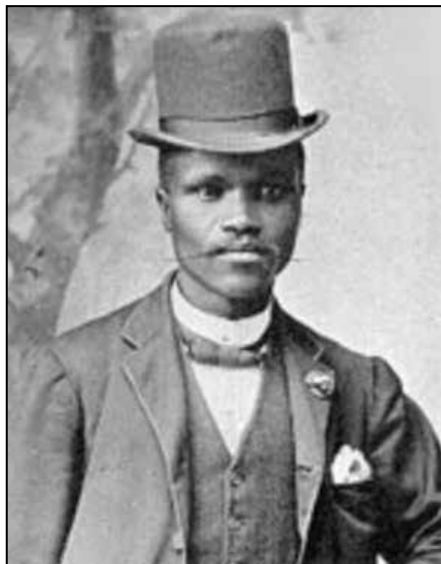
opening of a human zoo at the 1958 world fair in Brussels, “a glittering 200-day celebration of postwar social, cultural and technological advances. It also had a live display of black men, women and children from the Congo in “native conditions” laid on for the education and amusement of white Europeans. It was the world’s last “human zoo”, the first being in 1897, when King Leopold II imported 267 Congolese for display.

17 April 1986 Author Bessie Head passes away



Bessie Emery Head, author of *A Question of Power*, *Maru*, *The Cardinal* and a book of short stories about her adopted country, *Botswana The Collector of Treasures* passed away in Serowe. Head was born in 1937 in a mental institution in Pietermaritzburg, to a white mother and a black father. Bessie landed up in the foster care system, trained as a teacher and married very early. She gave up teaching, and started working as a journalist, writing for the *Golden City Post* and *Drum*. Head left South Africa for Botswana with her son in 1964. Here she worked as a lecturer, eventually gaining Botswana citizenship in 1979, living in Serowe, and writing until her passing on this day.

18 April 1905 Composer Enoch Sontonga passed on



Enoch Sontonga, the composer of *Nkosi Sikilel’iAfrica* died a young 32. When he composed this African classic, that became part of South Africa and other national anthems, Sontonga was only 24 years old. Enoch Sontonga was born in Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape, attended Loveday college and taught at the Methodist Mission school. He performed *Nkosi Sikilel’iAfrica* in his choir, which toured the country. Samuel Mqhayi later added several verses to the hymn.

18 April 1964 Neville Alexander and others guilty of sabotage

Dr. Neville Alexander and four others were found guilty of sabotage and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. The judge found that the accused participated in the activities of the National Liberation Front (NLF), an offshoot of the Yu Chi Chan Club (YCCC), whose aims was to advance the revolution through violence. In 1974, Alexander was released from Robben Island, but banned and placed under house arrest for five years.

18 April 1994 Photographer killed in violence ahead of 1994 elections

On the eve of the first democratic elections, photographer Ken Oosterbroek covered the political violence in townships of the now Gauteng province and KZN. Oosterbroek got into photography whilst doing his SADF military service in Angola, and won a number of Photographer of the Year awards, working at *The Star* newspaper. He was shot on duty in Thokoza. A judicial inquest could not uncover the truth and it was later found he was killed by the then National Peacekeeping Force.

19 April 1906 Bambatha Rebellion



In one of the last stance in centuries of wars of resistance against colonial occupation of South Africa, the Bambatha Rebellion took place near Greytown in KwaZulu-Natal, prompted by the introduction of a new £1 poll tax on top of existing hut and dog taxes. Mining companies needed cheap labour, but most African people lived off the land as farmers, tenants on White farms or in reserves created by the colonial

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

government. The tax was instituted to force Blacks from rural areas to the cities to fulfil the labour needs of mines. In 1906 Chief Bambatha and his people refused to pay the tax, and led an uprising against white rule. After the killing of two policemen, martial law was declared and soldiers sent in. Huts of suspected rebels were burned, their possessions taken and a violent rebellion started. Over 7,000 British troops were called out to suppress the Zulu uprising and 4 000 rebels lost their lives in the battle. The number of Zulu males working on the Witwatersrand mines increased to 60% and by 1909, 80% of all males in Zululand were migrant labourers working away from home.

19 April 1960 Formation of SWAPO



The South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) was formed in Windhoek, to fight against apartheid occupation. After a long liberation struggle led by SWAPO, often fighting and campaigning together with the ANC and other Southern African liberation movements, Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990. Sam Nujoma was elected president of SWAPO of this day, and became the first President of a free Namibia.

19 April 1986 Another death in detention

Johannes Mashego (26) died in police custody in Parys (Free State). His relatives reported



extensive bruising and swollen face upon identifying the victim's body. The police claimed that he died during interrogation.

19 April 2001 Big Pharma drops lawsuit against cheaper Aids drugs

After a prolonged battle to produce and buy cheaper, generic AIDs drugs, global pharmaceutical companies which banded together, dropped a lawsuit against South Africa, ending an international battle over patent rights and profit. This allowed the country to get millions of people onto anti-retroviral treatment.

LET'S DO MORE, TOGETHER.

VOTE ANC

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

13 – 19 April 2024

Source: www.un.org, www.au.int, *The Africa Fact Book (2020)*, www.daysoftheyear.com

15 April

World Art Day



World Art Day is a celebration to promote the development, diffusion and enjoyment of art, on the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci. The day helps to reinforce the links between artistic creations and society, encourage greater awareness of the diversity of artistic expressions and highlight the contribution of artists to sustainable development. It is also an occasion to shine a light on arts education in schools, as culture can pave the way for inclusive and equitable education.

16 April

World Voice Day



Our voices – whether speaking, singing, oratory – form an important part of how we communicate and this day celebrates what makes our voices possible. The theme for 2024 is **“Resonate, Educate, Celebrate.”**

16 April

Save the Elephant Day

There are currently three species of elephant spread across Africa and Asia: the African bush elephant, the African forest elephant and the Asian elephant. Huge and with highly adept trunks, these creatures are intelligent, social and largely gentle giants. They display a range of emotions such as joy, anger and grief and live in complex social structures – matriarchal herds for the female cows and calves and a solitary lifestyle or bachelor herds for the male bulls. The ivory trade and human expansionism have resulted in the numbers of elephants fast reducing.

17 April

International Haiku Poetry Day

Haiku is a form of traditional Japanese poetry, renowned for its simple yet hard-hitting style. Rules include three lines, no more than 17 syllables, first line 5 syllables, second 7 syllables and the third 5: The journey was long
And now thirty years later
Defend Freedom, Vote.

17 April

World Hemophilia Day

Hemophilia is a very rare disease where a person's blood does not clot due to the absence of the necessary blood-clotting proteins. They therefore bleed for a long time and this can become uncontrollable if it's a large injury. It is particularly a concern if the bleeding happens internally, because it can damage organs and become life-threatening. The disease is genetic and is treatable.

18 April

International Day of Monuments and Sites

Monuments remind us of the past, as they commemorate events or persons, and what they meant. Mon-

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uments depend on how history is regarded and who decides what is important history to be celebrated. It is therefore very contested, as we've seen with the #RhodesMustFall movement in our country. After

1994, we continue to work to ensure that the history of the majority, including the history of the liberation struggle, is commemorated.

19 April World Jackal Day

Jackals are related to dogs, foxes, coyotes and wolves, but they are a unique species of their own occurring in Africa, Europe and Asia. There are three species of Jackal in Africa: the Common or Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*), found in East and North Africa and the Black-Backed Jackal (*Canis mesomelas*) and Side-striped (*Canis adustus*), that are more widely spread over the continent.

MYANC PLEDGE ELECTIONS INITIATIVE



A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

TO PLEDGE



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OR GO TO

www.anc1912.org.za/pledge

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44892

to PLEDGE R20

42053

to PLEDGE R30

PLEDGE FOR A
DECISIVE VICTORY
AND A BETTER
LIFE FOR ALL!

African National Congress



ANC



X-WORD

30 Years of Freedom (1994-2024)



ACROSS

- 3. A Constituent ... drafted the final Constitution adopted in 1996.
- 6. Leader assassinated a year before Elections 10 April 1993.
- 10. Since 27 April 1994 elections on basis of one person, one ...
- 11. Speaker of first democratic Parliament.
- 14. Judge Arthur Chaskalson was first President of new ... Court in 1994.

DOWN

- 1. ANC 1994 campaign slogan
- 2. President Nelson Mandela was ... at the Union Buildings on 10 April 1994.
- 4. Famous speech by President Mbeki at adoption of Constitution in 1994.
- 5. ANC enduring commitment for a ... life for all.
- 7. SA's first elections was held on the basis of the ... Constitution.
- 8. 27 April was South Africa's first ... elections.
- 9. Reconstruction and Development Programme.
- 12. Negotiations that led to the democratic transition of 1994.
- 13. First democratic government was one of national ...

WORD BANK

RDP	non-racial	Chris Hani	Frene Ginwala	better
Sekunjalo ke nako	Interim	CODESA	inaugurated	Assembly
Im an African	Constitutional	vote	unity	

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