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A MESSAGE TO THE AFRICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR
ALLIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN THE
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

It is right and fitting that as your President-General, I should give you a message as we approach "June 26th", a date that has become a landmark of special significance to the African People and their Allies in the fight for freedom in the Union of South Africa.

My message takes the form of a special call to my people and our Allies. I have every confidence that the call shall have a cordial reception which will result in a fruitful response from all.

THIS IS THE MESSAGE AND THE CALL.

(1) Ever since 1950, June 26th has become a special day in the Calendar of the African People of South Africa. Unlike the other days, which are usually singled out for special marking in the South African Calendars, this day has not been fixed as a statutory Holiday by the White Parliament of the Country. It is a day, which has a special significance for the African People and their Allies, because it was chosen for them by their own Organisation, the African National Congress; it was not set aside for them by those who have in other respects taken so much from them. For them it is not a day of rejoicing of frivolity but one of commemoration and dedication.

(2) It is a day of Commemoration, because on this day as directed by our "Parliament", the African National Congress, we must call to mind all those men and women from all walks of life - chiefs and commoners, educated and uneducated, leaders and followers of various movements - who at different times in our history have laid down their lives or made other sacrifices in the struggle for our rights and our freedom. On this day in every place where Africans foregather - at home, at work or at play - they are called upon to recount to themselves and to others the heroic deeds of our forebearers in defence of their homeland and of their rights as free men, not only in the past but also during the recent campaign.

It is a day of Dedication, because Africans, remembering the past and bearing in mind their duty for the future must dedicate themselves afresh to work for the objectives for which they made the supreme sacrifice. "Not for nothing did they do it" - must be our watchword.

(3) A year ago on this day the African National Congress in conjunction with their Allies launched the campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws - a campaign whose significance lay not alone in the fact that thousands of Africans and their Allies made the sacrifice and paid the price called for by it, but also in the fact that an even greater number chose the path of freedom and having put their feet on that road are resolved not to turn back. The mental and spiritual freedom achieved goes far beyond the physical coercion imposed and endured.

(4) As is known to you all the attack of the Powers-that-be directly upon our leaders and indirectly upon our Organisation is proceeding apace. Almost daily reports are appearing about fresh bans and further restrictions imposed upon this or that leader of the African National Congress for alleged promotion of feelings of hostility between Black and White. Responsible leaders of the African National Congress have never stood for nor preached any such hostility: this is also true of the leaders of our allies. On the contrary ever since its inception the African National Congress has advocated peace and goodwill between the races in South Africa on the only basis on which it is convinced such a state of affairs can be

permanently achieved - on the basis of equal rights for all. The African National Congress has asserted that it is a denial of such rights to certain sections of the population which is poisoning the relations between the different groups represented in South Africa. The silencing of individuals or groups by means of bans and orders will not disprove this fact, to say nothing of the fact that it will not alter the convictions of members of the African National Congress about the essential justice of their claims.

THE CALL.

What then shall we do on June 26th 1953, to commemorate our honoured forerunners and to renew our resolve to keep alive the sense of devotion which they demonstrated and the spirit by which they were inspired? I am inspired to call upon all Congress Branches and members - and in this call I include our gallant Allies - to show our commemoration in the following manner: -

- (i) On the evening of Friday June 26, 1953, in the home of every member of the African National Congress - and in fact in the homes of all freedom-loving people, especially Non-European - let there be a special act of commemoration and dedication, so that members of our households, young and old, may be reminded about the significance of this day. Let the older members of the household tell the younger, so far as they know it, the story of the struggle of the African people in particular and the Non-Europeans in general for their liberation, both in the area in which they are located, and elsewhere in the country. Mention specifically the names and the deeds of those known to them who have made their contribution to the struggle, whether they were members of the Congress or not: for all those who were not against us were for us. Those who are away from their homes should be able to find suitable ways in which they can carry out this aspect of my call.
- (ii) At a time when this is going on we should light a fire outside our homes or place a lighted candle or a lantern as a symbol of the spark of freedom which we are determined to keep alive in our hearts and a sign to our followers - freedom-lovers - that we are keeping the vigil on that night. What a mighty inspiration it would be to us if we were to see all these lighted fires all around at a fixed hour to remind us of the undying flame of freedom which must inspire our struggle until our objectives are achieved!! Let this fixed hour be 9 p.m.
- (iii) Each Branch is asked to approach all the Ministers of the local Churches to observe the Sunday following June 26, 1953, namely June 28, as a day of commemoration and dedication. On that day let everyone who can attend the special service decided upon, share in the act of commemoration and dedication.
- (iv) These injunctions are not intended to be exhaustive and so, in addition, any Branch may embark on other activities in keeping with the spirit of the day.
- (v) All Branches are required to send in a special report to Provincial Head-quarters indicating how June 26, 1953, was observed in their areas. Provincial Head-quarters in turn are required to report to the Head Office of how the commemoration was carried on throughout the Province. These reports should be collated and published in a special issue of the Provincial Bulletin for the information of all the Branches in the Province. The National Head Office will also in turn publish a special Bulletin for the information of all Provinces as to how June 26, 1953, was remembered throughout South Africa.
- (vi) N.B. This message, in all its sentiments and force, is intended equally to the communities associated with us in our

struggle for freedom. I commend it to the leaders of these communities and respectfully request them to accept it and graciously convey it to their respective communities for acceptance and action.

Yours in the National Service: AFRIKA!!

(Signed)

ALBERT J. LUTULI

PRESIDENT-GENERAL : AFRICAN NATIONAL
CONGRESS.

June 15, 1953.

P. O. Grootville Mission,
Via Durban, Natal.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE.

Let me take this opportunity to publicly welcome back to South Africa Professor Matthews, our Provincial President of the Cape Province.

We are sorry for the uncereemonial reception accorded him by members of the South African Police (Detectives of the Political Staff). For ourselves we are extremely proud of the manner in which Professor Matthews so honourably and fittingly represented Afrika during his stay in the United States. We are glad that he is now back to help on in the struggle and we are sure that his zeal and inspiration will mean much, not only to his Province, but to the whole Union.

I would like to assure Professor Matthews that during his absence the work in his Province was carried on magnificently by his deputy, Dr. Jongwe, and other colleagues. The struggle in the Cape reached a high water-mark far above that of any other Province. Indeed, the Cape showed that it is not only the oldest Province in the Union, but it is the premier Province, which in Colonial days stood for Democracy for all.

(Signed)

A. J. LUTULI
PRESIDENT-GENERAL: AFRICAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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