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THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Adopted at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, Johannesburg, on  
June 25 and 26, 1955.

We the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the  
world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black  
and white, and that no government can justly claim  
authority unless it is based on the will of all the  
people;  
that our people have been robbed of their birthright to  
land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded  
on injustice and inequality;  
that our country will never be prosperous or free until  
all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights  
and opportunities;  
that only a democratic state, based on the will of all  
the people, can secure to all their birthright without  
distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore we, the People of South Africa, black and white together -  
equals, countrymen and brothers- adopt this Freedom Charter. And  
we pledge ourselves to strive together sparing neither strength nor  
courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as  
a candidate for all bodies which make laws;  
All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the  
country;  
The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour  
and sex;  
All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities  
shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in  
the schools for all national groups and races.  
All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages and to  
develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

ALL SHALL BE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial;

No one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonments shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

ALL SHALL ENJOY EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship, and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from the police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE WORK AND SECURITY!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The State shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

THE DOORS OF LEARNING AND OF CULTURE SHALL BE OPENED.

The Government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space shall be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the State;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all with special care for mothers and young children;

Slums shall be demolished, and new suburbs built where all have transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the State;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;

Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

THERE SHALL BE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation - not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The people of the protectorates - Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland - shall be free to decide for themselves their own future;

The rights of all the peoples of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:

"THESE FREEDOMS WE WILL FIGHT FOR, SIDE BY SIDE, THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, UNTIL WE HAVE WON OUR LIBERTY."

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM IS VIA THE CROSS.

(Albert Luthuli)

....As for myself, with a full sense of responsibility and a clear conviction, I decided to remain in the struggle for extending democratic rights and responsibilities to all sections of the South African community. I have embraced the non-violent Passive Resistance technique in fighting for freedom because I am convinced it is the only non-revolutionary, legitimate and humane way that could be used by people denied, as we are, effective constitutional means to further aspirations.

The wisdom of foolishness of this decision I place in the hands of the Almighty.

What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, flogging, banishment and even death. I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving, for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, to make it a true democracy and a true union in form and spirit of all the communities in the land.

My only painful concern at times is that of the welfare of my family but I try even in this regard, in a spirit of trust and surrender to God's will as I see it, to say: "God will provide".

It is inevitable that in working for Freedom some individuals and some families must take the lead and suffer: The Road to Freedom is via the C R O S S.

Mayibuye!

Afrika! Afrika! Afrika!

## APPENDIX

1. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

Summa Theologiae, 2a2ae, question 40, article 1.

QUESTION: Is it always a sin to wage war?

REPLY: Three things are required for any war to be just.

The first is the authority of the sovereign on whose command war is waged. Now a private person has no business declaring war; he can seek redress by appealing to the judgement of his superiors. Nor can he summon together whole people, which has to be done to fight a war. Since the care of the commonwealth is committed to those in authority they are the ones to watch over the public affairs of the city, kingdom or province in their jurisdiction. And just as they use the sword in lawful defence against domestic disturbance when they punish criminals, as Paul says, He beareth not the sword in vain for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil (Romans 13.4), so they lawfully use the sword of war to protect the commonwealth from foreign attacks. Thus it is said to those in authority, Rescue the weak and the needy, save them from the clutches of the wicked. (Psalm 81.4). Hence Augustine writes, The natural order conducive to human peace demands that the power to counsel and declare war belongs to those who hold the supreme authority.

Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked are just attacked because they deserve it on account of some wrong they have done. So Augustine, We usually describe a war as one that avenges wrongs, that is, when a nation or state has to be punished either for refusing to make amends for outrages done by its subjects, or to restore what it has seized injuriously.

Thirdly, the right intention of those waging war is required, that is, they must intend to promote the good and to avoid evil. Hence Augustine writes, Among true worshippers of God those wars are looked on as peace-making which are waged neither from aggrandisement nor cruelty, but with the object of securing peace, or repressing the evil and supporting the good. Now it can happen that even given a legitimate authority and a just cause for declaring war, it may yet be wrong because of perverse intention. So again Augustine says, the craving to hurt people, the cruel thirst for revenge, the unappeased and unrelenting spirit, the savageness of fighting on, the lust to dominate, and suchlike all these are rightly condemned in wars.

2. PIUS XII. Radio message for Christmas 1956.

Provided a representation of the people and a government have been elected by free vote, they may, in extreme need, availing themselves of the legitimate means of external and internal policy, take measures of defence and make arrangements that they deem necessary; neither is their behaviour immoral, so that a Catholic citizen may not make an appeal to his own conscience as ground for refusing to give his service to the state, and to fulfill duties affixed by law. (AAS Vol. XXXIX, 1957, p.19).

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