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26TH AZAPO NATIONAL CONGRESS STATE OF THE NATION SPEECH

The Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) held its 26th National Congress outside Tshwane last weekend. The main focus of the congress was to review policy and develop a comprehensive strategy for the national election scheduled for next year. The congress, attended by delegates from all the provinces, received messages of support from various people including PAC President Mzwanele Nyhontso and SAFTU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

The following is the full speech delivered by AZAPO President Cde Nelvis Qekema:

2023 26TH AZAPO CONGRESS SPEECH

A SPEECH DELIVERED BY AZAPO PRESIDENT, CDE NELVIS QEKEMA, AT THE 26TH AZAPO CONGRESS HELD IN TSHWANE ON 6-7 MAY 2023

It is pleasing to see the Delegates in their massive and reassuring presence at this 26th AZAPO Congress.

Countless attempts have been made by the "system" to erase AZAPO from the political map of the liberation struggle. That included physical liquidation, financial strangulation and media blackout. However, this Movement of Biko has managed to swim against the current and has stood the test of time.

Physical liquidation could not work because AZAPO will always be alive for as long as Black people continue to breathe in Azania. It would take a complete genocide of Black people to liquidate AZAPO. Financial strangulation failed to lynch AZAPO because the absence of money cannot frustrate the will and determination of an oppressed people to be free. Money depreciates under

a negative economic environment, while the will of a people intensifies even under the most ruthless persecution. The revolution is seldom newsworthy where the people don't have the means to own the media houses. Our faces may not be on the television screens. Our voices may be silenced from the radio speakers. What matters is for AZAPO to be in the hearts and on the lips of the people.



Indeed, it is better to live one day in a free Azania than to exist a thousand days in an unfree South Africa.

But where are we now in South Africa - our Azania? That is, politically speaking. To put it conveniently, we may say our country went through the pre-colonial, colonial and white settler-colonial stages. The land struggles took root right from the colonial stage till the present stage, which we characterise as a neo-colonial stage in AZAPO.

Neo-colonialism is the most elusive and dangerous stage. It is the stage where the masses are hoodwinked and given the impression that they have achieved that which they were fighting for. It is the stage in which they are made to celebrate an illusionary victory. When the people are made to believe they are victorious, they will lower their guards and stop fighting. This is the time when they will be vulnerable. This is the time when the liberation struggle will be set back 100 years.

In this neo-colonial setup, white settler-colonialism steps back and invite the native managerial class, the mantshingilanes of white capital, to act as a buffer between itself and the struggling masses. The native elites and their political organisation that serve as part of the liberation movement are offered political office from which to play their buffer role. Settler-colonialism, or the white ruling class, makes sure to keep economic power and the means of creating wealth in their exclusive hands.



Neo-colonialism is the stage of demobilisation and immobilisation of the struggling masses. It is the stage when the native elites instruct them to "throw your guns into the sea", while the enemy keeps theirs loaded, corked and pointed. We are counselled to "let bygones be bygones" when nothing has gone by. When we seek to avenge the murder of Cde Chris Hani, we are reminded that the hand that pulled the trigger may have been white, but the eye that witnessed and exposed that murder was also white. We are therefore conditioned to "forgive and forget". The Azanian masses are here urged to forget the white hand and remember and celebrate the white eye.

Of course, you can't fool all the people all the time. The people continue to realise that they could never have sacrificed their lives for shacks and RDP houses. They are not worth dying for. Onkgopotse Tiro, Bantu Biko, Mangaliso Sobukwe and Thembisile Hani could

never have sacrificed their lives for the attainment of democracy. It is not worth dying for. The Sharpeville Rebellion and the June 16 Uprising were popular acts of bravery for the struggle for land repossession. The land was, and remains, the principal demand of the Azanian Revolution.

Yes, neocolonialism is a disarming stage in which the people march with anger to confront the white ruling class only to be intercepted by the buffer native elites with whom they take selfies and forget about the fight for the realisation of their freedom. It is an awkward stage in which the masses find it difficult to sing struggle songs against Ramaphosa, and rather settle on going against a PW Botha or FW de Klerk. In a sense, the people are made to wage an "enemy-less" struggle in this stage of neocolonialism. As and when it happens that the people "embarrass" the buffer natives and their political parties to the white ruling class, then the Marikana Massacre erupts. The buffer natives waste no time in unleashing the brute force of the State against their own people. Racism has so damaged their minds that self-hatred makes them not to think twice to order 4000 rounds of ammunition and 4 mortuary vans in preparation for the murder of 34 Black workers in Marikana.

Dismantling the Colonial Structure

The theme of this 26th AZAPO Congress is "Towards Dismantling the Structure of Neocolonialism in Azania". This theme is informed by an understanding that the white settler-colonialism was not defeated in 1994. What it did was to remain constant and even stronger by changing its form into neocolonialism. This means that coloniality is alive and enslaving Black people in Azania. This theme springs from the awareness that the post-1994 political dispensation can never be referred to as a "post-colonial state" because the country has not moved beyond colonialism. Therefore, the description "post-colonial" must be rejected as part of the trickery by the State to use sugarcoated language to manufacture consent.

For instance, instead of "shacks", they use "informal settlement". Instead of "eradicating poverty", they use "pushing the frontiers of poverty". They run away from "Black institutions" and hide in "historically disadvantaged institutions" as if that "disadvantage" is a thing of the past. They avoid saying "Black people" by opting for the term "our people" as if they own Black

people as their political objects. Every time we raise our clenched Black fists sky-high and chant that Azania is the land of Black people, they drown our message with their loudhailers and smuggle the sellout notion that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". When Black people start to realise that they are the absent "colour" in the "nation-building project", they turn around and mumble Black people into some "rainbow nation". What they forget is that it takes a glass prism to expose that the colours of the rainbow combine to make the colour "white". In this instance, our glass prism is Black Consciousness.



The illusion of the rainbow never goes beyond Black and white people watching a Springbok rugby match in a stadium. They gave us a Black captain that is paraded from city to city to reinforce the illusion. But, after the match, white people return to the comfort of their mansions in their leafy suburbs, while Black people return to the miseries of their shacks in their slums. On Monday morning, Black people have to wake up as underpaid wage labourers to report to work at the companies owned by their fellow white rugby fans.

Part of the reason why AZAPO is strong in the push for the dismantling of the structure of neocolonialism is for the restoration of the humanity and dignity of Black people. Consider that in 2004 there were still 231 660 Black households using the dehumanising bucket system in a democratic South Africa. This number is not the headcount of people using the bucket toilet system, but only the households. That number of households is said to have been reduced to 42 434 in

2019. But there was a drastic climb to 47 130 in 2020, which represented a rise of 4 696. There is no reason - absolutely no reason - why Black people are condemned to bucket toilets almost 30 years into democracy. Black schools continue to be condemned to pit toilets where Black children drown to their deaths.

More than 5 million Black people are still trapped in shacks in the country of their forebears. Indeed, a shack is not a home but a shelter to cover your head. There is no privacy as you can listen to the night conversations taking place in the nearby shack till the next morning. Spare a thought for the children where the night conversations are taking place. But where else should the parents conduct their night conversations if not in their one-room shack where everyone sleeps?

Shacks and bucket toilets are a crime against Black people. It is a human rights violation that must be outlawed. What kind of a government prides itself in delivering shacks or RDP houses to a people that fought, bled and died for liberation? What kind of a government that offers to Black people a dehumanising job of carrying on your shoulders and running around with human waste? If the rainbow nation has many colours, why is it only Blackness that is condemned to shacks and bucket toilets? Besides, the colour Black is not even part of the rainbow in the first place.

It goes without saying that there needs to be conducted some radical redistribution of the wealth in favour of Black people to redress the marginalisation created by racism and apartheid. As freedom fighters, we should not tolerate any reactionary attitude that seeks to tell us that the development of Black people will be a heavy cost on the fiscus. Surely, the cost of our development cannot be heavier than the cost on our lives during the struggle for liberation.

Anti-colonialism is one of the fundamental principles of AZAPO. A genuine anti-colonial struggle has to be a struggle for land repossession. Any struggle that falls short of dismantling colonialism and repossessing the land is a betrayal of the Azanian Martyrs. AZAPO is primarily a liberation movement that sometimes conveniently positions itself as a political party for the purposes of electoral politics. AZAPO cannot shed its liberation movement status because the struggle to dismantle colonialism and repossess the land cannot

be fought within the disarming confines of electoral politics whose preoccupation seems to be to win seats and representation in the various legislatures. This form of struggle is best fought outside the limited scope of Parliament. It must be fought in the communities and on the streets. AZAPO has to develop a definite fighting capacity for it to mobilise and lead the masses in this struggle.

We are not there yet. A lot more still needs to be done to Build AZAPO Brick by Brick to be battle-ready for this struggle. We are consciously building an action-oriented organisation. Therein lies the concept of Platoonism, by which we mean the regimentation of the cadreship into manageable ground forces to march into action and protest where racism and injustice rear their ugly heads against the people. AZAPO has to be carved into a shield and a spear in the hands of the people.

In his 1970 paper "National Liberation and Culture", Amilcar Cabral emphasises the point that,

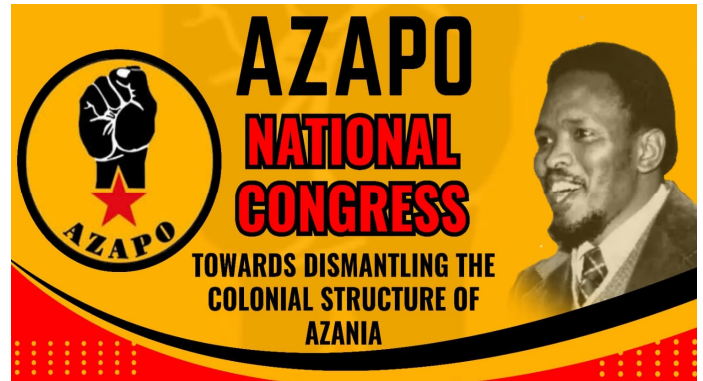
"... the chief goal of the liberation movement goes beyond the achievement of political independence to the superior level of complete liberation of the productive forces and the construction of economic, social, and cultural progress of the people".

For AZAPO, this is what it means to wage the struggle beyond the attainment of democracy, which should itself be a means to an end that is the "superior level of complete liberation". It should now make sense as to why the political language of AZAPO has a sharper and rougher intellectual tone that is rarely found in "well-mannered" political parties represented in Parliament. Our political language and tone resonate with the challenges that go with an anti-colonial and land repossession struggle.

Colonialism and Racism

Colonialism and racism are twins that are joined at the hips. They go together. They kill and enslave others together. Just like colonialism changed shape into neo-colonialism and coloniality in the era of the democratic dispensation in South Africa, racism pretended to

go with apartheid when apartheid was removed from the statute books. However, racism is too smart to hide in the statute books.



In AZAPO we know that racism is the oppression of one group by another for the purposes of economic gain or control. Further, we know that the exercise of racism requires those practising it to have some power. Politically speaking, it is impossible for a powerless and isolated individual to practice racism against a group with power. Racism is a power-based system. In AZAPO we know the difference among racism, racialism, ethnicity and ethnocentricity. We are not that intellectually lazy to interchangeably use these terms as synonyms.

Other than the power-based racism, the other terms are essentially anchored on attitude. In a nutshell, they are based on the absurd belief that your racial or ethnic group is biologically and culturally better or superior than the others. Well, it is not unlikely that a jobless, homeless and poor Black person might harbour an attitude that Black people are biologically and culturally superior than billionaire Oppenheimer and his white folks. Because he and his group lack the necessary power, the Black person's attitude is incapable of being converted into a system that oppresses the other groups for economic and other advantages.

White people who have been in power for hundreds of years in South Africa can shed political office to Black people and still control those buffer natives running the political office. They can do so because they have retained the economic power and the means of creating wealth. Their racism of centuries is so dangerously subtle that it is now interwoven and hidden in the

institutions of society. That is what is called institutionalised racism. It is not in the statute books, but in the structures and systems of society.

Granted this background, AZAPO knows that a racist does not become a racist only when they verbalise their racism. It is this grave mistake that has fooled the ruling party to think it can fight racism by setting up a so-called Equity Court to prosecute racists who blunder by calling Black people monkeys. According to this flawed approach, Black people can also be guilty of racism by, for instance, calling white people pigs. The fundamental flaw here is the assumption that a racist is not a racist if they were not to verbalise their belief that Black people are monkeys. Believing and treating Black people like monkeys would appear not to be a problem insofar as this whitewashed definition of racism is concerned.



If racism is a twin of colonialism, colonialism cannot be defeated without defeating racism. The humanity and dignity of Black people cannot be restored when racism remains active in our country. As a matter of urgency, the colour of our skin should be liberated from being judged as a badge of shame. Moreover, there should be no justification for us to try a futile attempt to bleach ourselves out of our skins. The natural texture of our hair should not be a picture of misery and frustration. Therefore, the straightening and shaving of our hair should not amount to an attempt to shave off our straightened miseries and frustrations. We should never blame God for thinking it wise to let our hair to grow towards the sun.

It is the result of racism that Black people have townships, while others have towns. Besides the fact that

that is where we are trapped, a township is nothing to boast about. It is nothing more than a geographical manifestation of racism. The embracing of terms like "township economy" or "ikasi lami" should not mislead those in power to think that Black people have accepted living in townships. We don't. Tragically, the ruling party gives us the impression that they deem Black people to deserve less than townships. They made that statement by building Black people the so-called RDP houses.

We have to reject the concept of township because it represents the colonisation of space. Most of the narrow lanes in those townships indicate that the apartheid "town" planners never thought Black people would own and drive cars. As close as we are to the nature that we are, Black people find it difficult to plant trees in their yards as a result of the lack of space. The downside is that this lack of vegetation leaves the townships open and vulnerable to the forces of nature. Yes, there are no lawns because the resources are not made available to grow and maintain such lawns. As such, it is by design that the townships are dusty, when the leafy white suburbs interpret such a blowing wind as a breeze.

The township lack of space has culturally suffocated and derailed many Black people. For some Black people, a household is never complete without a court and a kraal. Yet, the lack of space makes it impossible for some Black people to have those necessary spiritual symbols. The conclusion is therefore inescapable that the apartheid spatial development is a hostile negation of our culture.

Overhaul the Constitution

One of the major steps towards dismantling the colonial structure in Azania is the overhaul of the present Constitution. To be sure, the 1996 Constitution was drafted under circumstances that favoured the white minority, and against the Black majority. It was drafted under the treacherous atmosphere of secret deals and compromise. Tragically, it was drafted under the imposed constraints that it could not shake off the limiting and straightjacketing 34 Constitutional Principles passed by the white settler-colonial Parliament as

the cornerstone of the 1993 Interim Constitution, which was also proudly passed by the same apartheid Parliament.

The same praise singers are uncritically excited by terms like “Constitutional Democracy”, “Supreme Law” and “Bill of Rights” without critically evaluating the context in which those principles would find application. In themselves, those terms mean nothing. Of course, the 1996 Constitution enjoys the power of being the Supreme Law in this democratic dispensation. Do you think the apartheid regime, which was pulling the strings during the negotiations, would have allowed this Constitution to be the Supreme Law if it did not favour them and guarantee white minority rights”? Carried over from the 34 Constitutional Principles, the Constitutional Court does little beyond playing a “mantshingilane” role to check that nothing comes into law and implementation if it interferes with the white minority rights guarantees traded during the negotiations. That is what a Constitutional Democracy means within this product of a negotiated settlement. Apart from it being corrupt and devoid of liberatory policies, we should now understand why the government is found wanting when it has to pass a few legislations in favour of Black people.

Nothing makes the Black elites as hilarious as the mention of the term “Bill of Rights”. However, they forget that “fundamental rights” in a document do not mean much if the bearer of those rights does not have the resources to enforce those rights. That is why an audit of court cases in this regard will show that it is white people and their organisations who have had the resources to litigate. In the few instances where Black NGOs have also litigated, deeper digging will show that they got their funding from white people and their institutions. The Bill of Rights does make the “right to life” a fundamental right, yet 34 Black workers were mowed down by their own democratic government in what we now know as the Marikana Massacre. In fact, the Comrades of the murdered workers escaped being charged for killing their own Comrades under the apartheid “Doctrine of Common Purpose”. To date, no one has gone to jail for the killing of the workers.

Yes, the Bill of Rights does make the “right to dignity” a fundamental right. However, Black people contin-

ue to have their dignity denigrated by living in shacks and condemned to bucket and pit latrines. A number of Black learners have lost their lives by drowning in pit toilets. NGO Section 27 has been in and out of court trying to force the government to eradicate pit toilets in schools. Why is it that only Black people are condemned to the bucket and pit toilets under “the best Constitution in the world”? Well, some Black liberal apologists have argued that the Constitution is let down by lack of implementation by the ruling party. They seem not to realise just how structural the lack of implementation is when it comes to Black people.



Within the same Bill of Rights, somebody must tell us which landless and propertyless Black people could have written the proudly supported s25(1), which stipulates that “no one may be deprived of property...”. Some Black people strangely boast that the “freedom of expression” is a fundamental right in South Africa. Again, you need resources to enjoy your hollow right to freedom of expression. Just check out who owns the media houses. Check out who owns music recording and book publishing companies. The preponderant majority is white. Black writers and musicians will tell you how they don’t recognise their scripts and compositions every time they return from the publishing and recording companies. The less said about the commercial mass media, the better. The point being made here is that your fundamental right to freedom of expression is meaningless if you don’t have resources and institutions to enforce it.

It should by now be clear why it is that AZAPO strongly moves for the overhaul of the Constitution and the writing of not just “the best Constitution in the world”, but a liberatory one. Unlike this Constitution that

forces Black people to “believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it”, we need a Constitution that “tells no lies” and “hides no truth”. Your mere living in our country Azania cannot be enough to make you an owner of our land. For AZAPO, the land is the principal demand of the liberation struggle. The ownership of the land should vest in the people of Azania and held in trust by the State. Therefore, no individual or foreigner should own land.

Let us further explain why AZAPO calls for the overhauling of the Constitution. Following the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiating process, which later collapsed, 26 political groups gathered at Kempton Park in November 1993 to draft an “Interim Constitution”. The 26 political groups were an assortment of apartheid political parties and their puppet homeland regimes together with the ANC-aligned organisations. The balance of forces favoured the apartheid Nationalist Party (NP) regime. The Interim Constitution would serve as the basis of governance for the “Government of National Unity” (GNU) that would result from the 1994 General Elections. Those elections were to be based on a “one person-one vote” or universal suffrage. Because the negotiations were taking place under the supervision and control of the apartheid regime, it had to ensure that nothing came out of the process that undermined the protection of white minority. It is for that reason that the Interim Constitution had constraining 34 Constitutional Principles from which the “final” 1996 Constitution could not deviate. Further, the Interim Constitution, which was drafted by an unelected body with no mandate by the people, had first to be “quality-controlled” by the apartheid Parliament to double-check if there was nothing that went against the guaranteeing of white minority rights. Tragically, the Interim Constitution passed the test with flying colours, and was adopted by the apartheid Parliament in 1993 as Act 200 of 1993. It came into effect on 27 April 1994.

What do we mean when we say the body that drafted the Interim Constitution had no mandate from the people? By that we mean the members of that body were not directly voted for by the electorate of the people. They simply imposed themselves and usurped powers they never had. It is for this reason that the unmandated Interim Constitution had to be legitimated by the Parliament reconstituting itself into a Constitution Assembly in 1996. This was a short cut to bypass the need for the necessary Constituent Assembly, for which AZAPO called.

As a matter of fact, the whole negotiating process and its product was so good in guaranteeing white minority rights that even when the racist Conservative Party (CP) mobilised against the process, the ruling racist NP convened in 1992 a whites-only referendum which proudly and confidently passed the negotiating process and its product as safe in guaranteeing white minority rights.



However, it is important to note that the CODESA negotiating platform collapsed after the Boipatong Massacre. After the collapse the NP and ANC continued the negotiating process among themselves. They agreed that in future they needed to first agree on issues among themselves before they tabled them to the broader negotiating platform. This bilateral approach angered the racist groups like the CP and the Bantustan IFP to form a counter-lobby group called the Concerned South Africans Group (COSAG). On 1 April 1993 a Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MPNP) met at the World Trade Centre to revive the negotiating process under refreshed agreements. Of importance, is that the agreements were to be reached on a “sufficient consensus” basis. Your attention is drawn to the fact that the 208-member and 26 political groups favoured the apartheid ruling NP. Please don’t ignore the political irony that the “trading” process was taking place at the World Trade Centre.

The Dedollarisation of the Global Economy

As a liberation movement and a socialist organisation, AZAPO's ideological direction is favoured by the global besieging of the US dollar. The defensive invasion of Ukraine by Russia has set in motion the transformation of the balance of power in international

politics.

Our socialist position should naturally drive us to stand on the side of the working classes and masses of both Russia and Ukraine. AZAPO is aware of the undesirability of war and how the working people and the masses are always at the receiving end of such wars. This is true for both Ukraine and Russia. More so, with Ukraine. AZAPO is also aware that the working people and the masses of the various countries live in sovereign states whose peoples are entitled to national self-determination. It is within this context that we appreciate that Russia is justified to be worried when its security as a superpower is threatened by political and military rivals and enemies. What we are not sure about is whether war was the best remaining option for Russia to protect its geopolitical interests. Similarly, we doubt if Ukraine should have dared a superpower at the expense of its own stability and peace.



Be that as it may, it is good for global stability and peace that the dollar is at the backfoot. The status of the dollar as the global reserve currency has positioned the US to weaponise the dollar to frog-march the nations of the world to forcefully do as the US commands. If a country doesn't dance to the tune of the US, it is brought down through sanctions or locked out of the dollarised global financial system. The false strength of the US economy is anchored on the bubble of the dollar as the reserve currency. It gained this advantage after the Bretton Woods Agreement appointed the dollar as the reserve currency. The Agreement also established global institutions of economic and development control like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Apart from NATO, it is also through these institutions that the US bully the nations of the world.

There was a time in history when the global socialist forces had a world power like Russia that could stand up against US imperialism. That era was referred to as the Cold War. Both the socialist and imperialist forces had their respective world power reference to cushion their ideological and development path. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s through Perestroika and Glasnost was a major setback for the development of socialism in the world. That power imbalance resulted in a unipolar world dominated by the US. The rebuilding and repositioning of both Russia and China as formidable superpowers has once again rearranged the balance of power in favour of the socialist forces. The world witnessed China standing toe to toe with the US in the recent currency war. We now see Russia doing the same. They started by outwitting the US in the recent war in Syria.

There is no doubt that we are seeing a new world order in the making. The BRICS nations are offering an alternative to the West. With the seed money \$50 billion, BRICS launched the New Development Bank as a viable alternative to the IMF and World Bank. About 20 countries are poised to join BRICS and free themselves from the US and dollar domination. They include Nigeria, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, Mexico, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and the UAE. This BRICS expansion will, according to the economists, position the entity with a GDP that would be 30% larger than the US and its allies. The block would also have over 50% of the global population and control 60% of global gas reserves.

More countries have started making arrangements to use the Chinese Yuan as a currency through which to conduct cross-border international trade. These developments are welcome. The reduction of the world domination by the US and its dollar is bound to introduce favourable conditions for the liberation movement and socialist forces.

United Front of the Left Forces

Our political analysis has convinced us that it will take a United Front of the Left Forces to shift the balance of power in our favour in this money-based electoral democracy. Up until now, it has not been easy for the Left to work together because the institutional chauvinism of the various organisations is narrowly channeling them to compete against each other in the stampede to win seats in the legislatures. Instead of

seeing one another as formidable allies, they view one another as fierce competitors. The unfortunate result is that they are fragmenting their vote, while spreading their meager resources way too thin to have a meaningful impact.

Unlike other political organisations, AZAPO is talking about a United Front that will not amount to a post-elections coalition to rationalise for mayoral and similar advantages. We are talking about a United Front that will be forged on the basis of a Minimum Programme to fight for land repossession and against neocolonialism and racism. Such a United Front must be conceived outside the Parliamentary confines and away from Elections. It must be a United Front that fights alongside the masses in our communities. It must act as a platform on which to consolidate Black Power and set the popular agenda from outside Parliament.



In this electoral democracy, the liberation struggle must be fought on two fronts – outside and inside Parliament. The struggle for land and against neocolonialism and racism cannot be effectively waged within the structural limitations of the bourgeois Parliament, where you speak for 3 minutes followed by a “show of hands”. We know for a fact that any talk about land repossession and anti-colonialism is regarded as “un-Parliamentary language”. That struggle must be waged on the streets where the people set the rules and the agenda of the day. The struggle land for land repossession and against neocolonialism and racism is a struggle that the people cannot hope to fight through “public representatives. It is a struggle they must fight on their own and for themselves. In this way, the people will be setting the agenda for Parliament.

In February 2021, AZAPO piloted this United Front by forging a Cooperation with the PAC. That Cooperation

has helped to consolidate and maximise the resources and capacities of the two political organisations into a force to be reckoned with. It is still early days. However, we have set out to grow this Cooperation by inviting more organisations of the Left. Once again, AZAPO piloted this venture when it opened up the Biko Pilgrimage in September 2022 to invite organisations of the people like the PAC, SAFTU, UDM, EFF and ATM.

The December Four Leadership is leading AZAPO into a political environment where the organisation should turn its back on politics of purity and self-marginalisation. AZAPO cannot hope to stay “pure” and “safe” in the liberation struggle. That can happen only if AZAPO is not involved the struggles of the people. Sometimes AZAPO will find itself walking on “unholy” grounds if that is what it would take to fight for liberation. Tactically walking on unholy ground doesn’t mean you are ungodly. There will be times when AZAPO will forge tactical alliances with organisation whose ideological character bears no proximity with ours. Dialectics and the method of resolving contradictions will necessitate that we take calculated political and strategic risks and venture into practical politics where you sometimes emerge bruised and with a bleeding nose.

As a People’s Movement, AZAPO cannot enjoy the luxury of being perfect and pure if that perfection and purity does not advance the liberation.

“The Q Amnesty”

The Q Amnesty is about the public call made by the President of AZAPO to all the Comrades who left AZAPO under the belief that they were wronged by the organisation. The resources, time and energy we have are very limited. We tend to preserve those for waging the liberation. Therefore, we don’t have the time to sit down and critically adjudicate on a case-by-case basis. AZAPO takes this opportunity to apologise all those Comrades who feel aggrieved. That apology is coupled with an open invitation to all our Comrades to unconditionally return to the organisation and engage in the work of liberating Black people. There will be no questions. Just come back home and help Build AZAPO Brick by Brick.

Similarly, there are Comrades who wronged AZAPO in the course of the liberation AZAPO. The struggle is about opinions and views. Sometimes we don’t always agree on those opinions and views. Sometimes the

organisation adopts a position we don't like, and find ourselves at odds with our organisations. These are contradictions and inner-party struggles that must be resolved within the realm of the inner-party democracy. Once more, AZAPO forgives those that wronged the organisation. That forgiveness is coupled with an invitation to all affected Comrades to come back home and help Build AZAPO Brick by Brick. There will be no questions asked. Just jump onto the bandwagon and contribute to the struggle to liberate Black people and the land.



White people belong to the racist group that dispossessed us of our land and enslaved us in the country of our forebears. Yet we smile and greet them as and when we meet them. There is just no reason why we cannot forgive one another for the mistakes committed in the course of the struggle. We are not enemies, and can never be enemies. We are flesh of the same flesh, blood of the same blood, and bones of the same bones. Let us hold hands and embrace as we build the Movement of Biko.

Mainstream Black Consciousness

It is true that AZAPO is the custodian of BC and Biko. That is true to the extent that AZAPO has a political and moral responsibility to guard against the distortion, misapplication and abuse of BC. As a matter of fact, BC is a way of life and an attitude of mind of Black people in Azania. In this regard, AZAPO cannot prescribe that Black people who are not card-carrying members cannot positively associate with BC. By virtue of their Blackness, Black people do not need permission from AZAPO to positively associate with BC. Of course, AZAPO harbours the political wish to

persuade all Black people that subscribe to BC to join the organisation.

Granted this background, AZAPO makes a conscious call to all Black people and their organisations and institutions to adopt and mainstream BC. If you are a preacher, preach BC. If you are a congregant, embrace and spread BC. If you are a teacher, teach BC. If you are a learner, learn BC. If you are a journalist, give your readers, listeners and viewers an BC perspective. Well, the arts without BC are unimaginable. Whether you are in the sports, business, labour, divinity, legal practice, social work and counseling, commerce and industry or a government official; do your thing with BC. That's the Black Thing.

#ReLioniseAZAPO

The point must be stressed that AZAPO cannot remain stagnant and hope that the weakness of its political competitors will translate to its own strength. The dedollarisation phenomenon we have just talked about is but an external and remote factor that cannot immediately help AZAPO in the domestic politics. AZAPO must, as a matter of urgency, build strength to favourably participate in the country's politics. That is the primary form of struggle available to political organisations at the moment.

Armed struggle is for now not an option. It has been compromised and sidelined by the advent of democracy. Resentment about the unfavourable rules in the electoral politics is not going to help AZAPO. Our organisation must develop a thick skin and find the way to turn the tide in its favour. We just have to master the game and create spaces for us to thrive. Revolutionaries never looked at the armies of occupation and gave up. They developed the guerilla warfare that suited their own strengths and weaknesses and engaged the superior enemy. Remember that AZAPO did not start by collecting guns before it formed the AZANLA Forces. Cadres were recruited and trained, and guns were organised later. When others go to the stadiums, we must go to the communities. When they invade the homes of the voters through television and radio, we must invade the hearts and minds of the voter through human touch. When they offer the people food parcels and money, we should empower the people with the truth.

All these efforts cannot happen if AZAPO does not know that it is a Lion. The danger with that lack of

self-knowledge is that AZAPO's rivals and enemies know that AZAPO is a Lion. And so, they immediately attack the Lion that doesn't know its identity. As the leading organisation of the BCM, and the custodian of BC and Biko, AZAPO must be reminded that the BCM had nothing but the will when it ignited and provided leadership to the June 16 Uprising. We may not have had the arms at that stage, but we had the revolutionary attitude. AZAPO members must be reminded that the Lion is not the strongest animal in the jungle. Yet it has the attitude and the strategy to conquer even the strongest. The Lion is not the fastest animal in the jungle. Yet it has the attitude and the strategy to neutralise that speed through the element of surprise. You are wrong if you thought a Lion was free of fear. It overcomes its fear through its positive attitude. Most importantly, Lions are not followers. They lead to an extent that they are prepared to go it alone rather than follow the rest. That is why the Lion is the King of the Jungle. With that positive attitude of self-belief, AZAPO should assume the centre stage of politics and be the organisation of choice.

and make organisational culture dynamic to embrace the necessary renewal of the organisation. While we have to defend our old legacies, but we must also introduce new land progressive legacies to respond to the changing times and political landscape. The best way to do that is populate the organisation new members, especially women, youth and students.

We are making AZAPO a lion again. Let it roar, leap, pounce and break backbones.



Let us remember that Muhamad Ali waited for no one to say he was The Greatest. Even before he was The Greatest, Ali bravely stood up and declared to the whole world that "I am the greatest!"

The noble work of conscientising and organising Black people may not go a distance if AZAPO is not strong. This work cannot be done if AZAPO does not renew and refresh itself. Old members help a lot with reference to organisational culture. But they can be conservative and resist change if we do not mix them with new members who will rock the boat with new and fresh ideas, some of which may sound reckless. In this regard, both organisational culture and legacy need to be checked because they tend to be conservative and backward-looking. Our political duty is to renew