

(Annotation: "W.Sisulu's statement on which his evidence was led")

WALTER MAX SISULU will state:

1. I have taken part in the activities of the banned A.N.C. I left my home and went underground to continue the struggle. I knew of the activities of the M.K. and was consulted by its High Command from time to time, even though I was not a member of it. (Annotation: "except at the last stages")
2. I did these things because of my hatred of oppression of my people and not because of any ideology. I did them despite the fact that I knew that the course that I took was full of difficulties and dangers.
3. My political outlook is a simple one. I want to see in South Africa a democratic government that guarantees equal opportunities to all human beings who are citizens, irrespective of the colour of their skin or their creed.
4. The state for purposes best known to itself has tried to make out that we are communists. (Annotation: "to doubt there are a few communists amongst us in the liberatory struggle but...") I want to show that our struggle for freedom and a democratic government guaranteeing equality for all is a struggle that has grown here in South Africa. If we recently received any inspiration from anywhere it has been from our brothers in Africa, in whose freedom we have rejoiced.
5. I was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1912 at Engcobo, Transkei. I attended at All-Saints

Anglican /

Anglican Missionary Institution up to Standard IV. Thereafter I left school and proceeded to the Rand mines to seek work. Years later I continued with my studies up to J.C. standard.

I am married and have five children.

I have worked on the mines, in factories and in financial houses. I have also carried on business different times on my own up to the time when I was placed under house arrest.

6. The history of our country in modern times has been characterised by bloody struggles over the question of land and freedom of movement, which is restricted by Pass Laws. The Pass Laws have not only brought about the greatest measure of suffering from the economic point of view, but more than that they have wrought humiliation and insults, broken up homes, torn husband from wife, and children from parents. (Annotation: "413,631 Africans were arrested for pass offences in 195?") These twin measures, Land and Pass Laws, were deliberately designed to make the African dependant on his White master. No other measures have caused greater friction between our two main communities, nor embittered the African more than the Land and Pass Laws. There is perhaps no single issue which has done more harm than the pass laws, and certainly none has exercised greater influence on my way of thinking, which finally forced me to enter active politics at the time. Like millions of my fellow countrymen I, together with members of my family, have suffered under this system. I do not think there is a single African adult male,

living /

living in an urban area, who has not been affected in one way or another, by this system.

7. That is why from its inception the A.N.C. made the pass laws a cornerstone of its struggle. In its history of 50 years, it has launched no less than 10 major campaigns against this notorious system, but in spite of its non-violence policy, much blood has been shed on this issue. The last of these campaigns occurred in 1960. What took place in Sharpeville and Langa is still much too fresh in our minds to require going into detail here.
8. I do not live in town. I live in the location. As such I have experienced the occasional midnight and daybreak police raids in the locations. I have experienced the same raids on the streets of Johannesburg. I cannot remember how many times I have been arrested in different parts of South Africa under the Pass Laws. I, however, would like to mention one or two occasions recently, to illustrate my point.
9. At the end of 1961 I was arrested by W/O Dirker for failure to produce a Reference Book. I was kept in the cells for almost two days until the bail was fixed. I was sentenced to 90 days or £15 fine. Two months later I was arrested for fraud on the same question of having obtained two certificates that my pass was

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lost. I was kept incommunicado for 2 days before a Certificate from the Attorney-General was issued remitting me to custody for 12 days. The case was finally tried and I was acquitted. (See the facts of the case).

10. My 73-year old mother came to listen to my case and that of Chief Lutuli in Pretoria with Mrs. Nokwe, mother of Adv. D. Nokwe. They were arrested and kept in the cells until bail was fixed. My 15-year old son was also arrested in Pretoria in the presence of his mother, who explained who she was and the age of the child, but he was thrown into the cells until my attorneys intervened.
11. I am well-known to the police. Both my business and home addresses are known to them. Numerous raids have been conducted by the Special Branch of the Police since 1952 in my offices as well as in my house. I have been served with various restrictive orders, including a 24-hour house arrest, served on me on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April. This order I decided to break on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1963. My house has been closely watched since 1960, day and night. Some days the police would visit my house three times a day. I have made several complaints to Col. Spengler about the effect this has had on my children, who were all young at that stage.
12. From July, 1961 to July, 1963, I had been arrested ten times. One of these arrests took place at my house. My old, aged mother died on the 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1962. When the neighbours heard the news they came to pay

their /

their respects as was customary to do. When I arrived from town I found the people in the house. My wife informed me about the death of my mother. When the police came in I told them of what had happened, and that I was trying to get permission from the Minister through my lawyers. I was arrested in spite of this explanation, and was kept in custody until I was bailed out the following day. I was more shocked when the officer in charge of the case, seeing the publicity in the press, said he was also charging me with assault on the police. This case was subsequently withdrawn. I have no doubt that my case is reproduced many times among Africans. It only explains how an African lives in the land of his birth. He does not require "agitators" to know that he is ill-treated.

In fact, there has been no change recently. Things are worse.

Let us take the government's grand scheme of Bantu Homelands which, the government claims, is the best solution of our problems, and its effect in regard to Pass Laws, leaving aside all other legal aspects of the scheme.

It means uprooting well-settled communities from the areas they have occupied for generations. To do this the government makes use of Pass Laws, under Urban Areas Act, which denies the right of an African to settle permanently in the Urban Areas. He is a stranger in the land of his

birth /

birth with no security whatever, either for himself or his wife and children.

Nearly all Government Commissions before and during the Union over the last sixty years have in one way or another pointed to the inherent dangers in the system.

The [artificial](#) boundaries which failed during the Frontier Wars can hardly be expected to be a solution in a modern industrialised South Africa.

In any event it has been accepted that the Bantustans will provide a "homeland" for only one third of the present African population of South Africa. I.e. approximately 4,000,000 people. The 7,000,000 will be in what some whites want to call "White South Africa". In any event the coloured and Indian citizens of this land are not taken into account. Furthermore the Bantustan policy does not take into account that there are innumerable completely detribalised people who were born and bred in towns. You cannot for long force people to do what you want them to do against their wishes and interests.

These are the realities of our situation, however bitter they might be. We have consistently pointed out to the government, and the Europeans of this country, that no one-sided solution will ever solve our problems. No matter how brilliant the rulers are, South Africa must, like all other democratic countries, be governed with the consent of its citizens, the overwhelming majority of whom are Africans.

13. In the early thirties I listened to African leaders of the A.N.C. and the popular I.C.U. in their respective public meetings. In these meetings such issues as the land question, Pass Laws and the working conditions of Africans were discussed. They described how humiliating and degrading these laws were. I was already a converted man, not as a result of attending these meetings, but because of police

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actions and their manner in which they handled the African people. I took an interest and attended meetings of the Resident and Vigilance Associations, which were local bodies. These organisations dealt largely with matters I have already referred to. In 1960, after joining the Vigilance Committee, I took on even greater interest in all matters that affected my people.

14. In 1940 I found a real political home in the A.N.C., which I decided to join. Three years later, in 1944, a group of the younger members of the A.N.C. became impatient with the older leadership, which still insisted on sending deputations and positions to the Authorities. I, together with others, formed the A.N.C. Youth League in terms of a National Conference Resolution. The basis of its policy was African Nationalism, which I still strongly believe in. (?) This was an era of freedom. There was an upsurge of nationalism throughout Asia and Africa countries long held in subjection were now mounting powerful struggles to gain their independence. Events in the world did not go unnoticed by us. The Atlantic Charter was not just words for us. We were inspired by it.

These then are the conditions which have produced me and my political outlook.

15. MY POLITICAL VIEWS AND BELIEFS

My political views are influenced by the desire to achieve for Africans national emancipation from European domination and oppression. Like all patriots in the national struggle, I am inspired by African nationalism, based on the belief that unity of Africans must lead to final victory. I have never had any doubt in

my /

my mind about the final outcome that African freedom was as inevitable as the rising of the sun. I have expressed these views in my speeches and writings.

In my political life I have endeavoured to follow political events at home and abroad. I have observed by my study of the situation that there are two main trends in the world today, namely, capitalist world outlook and socialist world outlook. I would rather have the best of both. I have been influenced in my beliefs by Socialism. I have never been a member of the Communist Party, because I believe that the issue today in South Africa is one of national oppression, and not a class struggle. Where there are haves and have-nots there must be some re-distribution of wealth, otherwise freedom may be meaningless.

I am convinced that the broad policy of the A.N.C., that is acceptance of all Africans from all classes, is the most correct thing to do at present. The A.N.C. is for the capitalist as well as for the socialist. They are both welcome provided they have one loyalty to the A.N.C. and strive for the National Liberation of the people.

16. In 1949 I was elected at a National Conference of the A.N.C. into a position of Secretary-General on a specific policy and programme of action, which included, amongst other things, non-collaboration, strikes, civil disobedience and boycotts. One of the very first matters for the consideration of my executive was one day national stoppage of work in terms of the programme. Sharp differences between Communist and non-Communist members of the Executive existed and this stage over the strike on May Day.
17. The Government introduced an Unlawful

Organisations Bill which was later called the Suppression of Communism Bill, as a result of which my executive decided to shelve all differences and face the greater danger to the existence of their organisation, because, in spite of the change in the title of the Bill, the A.N.C. was convinced that this measure would sooner or later be directed against any effective opposition to the government, including the A.N.C. I was directed to convene a Conference of all non-European national organisations, including the Communist Party of South Africa, and the following were invited:-

Unity Movement

A.A.C.

A.P.O.

S.A.I.C.

A.N.C.Y.L.

Non-European Council of Trade Unions, and C.P.S.A.

This invitation was a call by the A.N.C. for unity. Several differences emerged at the Conference, but were smoothed out in an open debate. The Conference finally decided upon a national stoppage of work throughout the country. The basis of this decision was that every political organisation including the C.P.S.A. was entitled to remain as a legal organisation and it was entitled to advocate its point of view whether or not such views were unpopular with the government of the day. The Conference decision was not just in defence of the Communist Party, but the A.N.C. was convinced then that in spite of the change in title of the Bill, the law was directed against itself. The debate on the differences which now and again occur between the C.P. and the A.N.C. in particular, was openly aired. This was a non-political organisation to which both Eastern and Western countries were affiliated. A deliberate decision to unite was taken. A strike action was decided upon, which finally took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1950.

I went to England, Poland, U.S.S.R., China and Israel in 1953 under the auspices of the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

13. The next major campaign to be considered by my Executive, on my suggestion, was the Defiance Campaign, which took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1952. It was conducted jointly by the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C. As a result of this campaign, I was charged, together with 20 others, and we were convicted and sentenced to nine month's imprisonment, suspended for two years. By this conviction I was made a statutory communist.

19. Other important campaigns, carried out or initiated during the period that I was the Secretary-General, were the Anti-Bantu Authorities, Bantu Education, and Western Areas Removal. In these campaigns, during my period of office, I toured the country, addressed very big and small meetings. I wrote articles, gave interviews to the press, emphasizing all the time the non-violence character of our campaigns.

20. After the adoption of the Freedom Charter in December 1956, I was arrested with 155 others – freedom fighters – on a charge of high treason. We were discharged in March 1961, because it was not proved that the policy of the A.N.C. was a violent one.

21. The A.N.C. is not a political party, but a national organisation of the African people. It is a nationalist organisation, established to fight and defend the rights of the African people in South Africa. It has since its inception put forward a democratic policy,

clearly /

clearly stated in the African claims drawn up in 1943 by the African leaders who came from all walks of life.

This list of names of the committee paints a clear picture of the nature and character of the A.N.C. It includes the leading African intellectuals, conservatives and communists, all united by their desire for freedom for themselves and all the people who have made South Africa their home. This policy is even more clearly stated in the Freedom Charter which was initiated by the A.N.C. and adopted at a mass conference of African and other racial groups. Both in policy, programme and practice, the A.N.C. and its leadership have chosen the most sober and reasonable road for the unity and harmony of its citizens. They have been patient and reasonable and tolerant over all the years. To this the Europeans of this country, through their political representatives, have refused the settlement of our problems by peaceful means, and have chosen to make South Africa an armed camp. To all the demands of Africans they have turned a deaf ear and adopted almost as a slogan "no concessions whatsoever", "no negotiations with agitators". The oppression has been intensified in the last ten years. Instead of abolishing passes they have extended them to women and children. Meetings and peaceful protest demonstrations have been completely suppressed. Leaders of the people are being thrown into gaols, banned and banished. The government has made a decision to heed or listen to no voice of protest. What was now left was only for African leaders to consider new tactics in the light of the new situation created by the completion of the construction of the granite wall between the people and the Nationalist Party Government.

22. It must be clear to everyone that no self-respecting African leader would accept such a situation, whatever the consequences

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may be, particularly people like myself, who have addressed meetings and assured them that we will never abandon them until we reach the promised land. The choice seemed clear, - either you leave the struggle or take the only road open to freedom fighters, however difficult this might be.

23. By 1960 we had reached cross-roads. The peoples patience had been exhausted. Some of the most loyal members of the A.N.C. had on their own and without the consent of the A.N.C., formed small groups and pledged to go over to a violent struggle. We still thought some efforts should be made to stage political demonstrations. We made a call to the country to demand a National Convention so that the situation in the country could be seriously examined. Once again the government dismissed this, one of the most popular demands, with contempt. A strike was called as a protest. The government introduced new laws to break the strike. Thousands of people were arrested, and the army and police force were called out.
24. The preaching of non-violence has never been an easy matter. It has always been questioned. Even ordinary masses felt that we were just idealists.

At first we could argue that the economic pressure through boycotts and strikes would finally divide European voters, and bring about some change. But when the government banned meetings, leaders and organisations, and made strikes and boycotts illegal and, in addition, used ruthless force, our argument could no longer hold.

The demand for a change of policy grew, particularly after Sharpeville, when the Pondoland situation arose, and people demanded that they should be armed and that preparation for an

armed /

armed struggle should begin. The resistance of the A.N.C. was not because they were pacifists, but because of the practical considerations of our situation.

The Africans in South Africa are among the best informed about the situation in the Continent. They know that other countries began their struggles only recently and have succeeded in attaining their freedom. They witness one country after another winning their independence. It is surprising that that when they see in their own country that their leaders are not getting anywhere near their cherished ideals, they begin to get impatient? This is by no means unreasonable, for they want freedom like everybody else.

25. I was fully convinced that violence was inevitable in our struggle in South Africa, and that it was better to find ways and means to give direction and control thereto. Similar views were expressed in private discussions and finally in the A.N.C. meeting of the Executive after the May strike.

Although the Executive did not undertake this task it was agreed not to condemn those who were engaged in this form of the struggle. It was confirmed that the main task of the A.N.C. would be to continue to educate the people of the A.N.C. to continue political campaigns in spite of the difficulties. I hate destruction of property and men. In fact, I believe that the only time human society can claim to be civilised is when it has successfully worked for the prevention of wars by eliminating the causes. I am, however, not an idealist. I am prepared to be guided by the realities of the situation. I am of the strong opinion that the oppressed people have a moral right to free themselves even by revolution. I accordingly analysed the situation in my own country.

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