

ADDRESS
GRADUATION CEREMONY
17 APRIL 2023
Ambassador Abdul Samad Minty

The Acting Vice-Chancellor,

The Dean of the Faculty of Science

Professors and academics at the University

The Registrar

The Graduants

Parents and members of the family of the Graduants

- and all present.

This is in many ways a truly historic day to celebrate and honour hundreds and thousands of known and unknown persons throughout the world and the African, Asian and Caribbean countries and others for their brave and often long struggle to eliminate the apartheid system and create conditions for peace and development.

Among some of the most prominent and inspiring leaders that I had the privilege to work for and with over several decades included Father Trevor Huddleston, Barbara Castle MP, Oliver Tambo and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, all who also helped to form the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).

Father Huddleston was recalled by the Anglican Church to the UK as he was beginning to present a major threat to the apartheid regime as an outstanding spokesman for the oppressed majority:

Barbara Castle became extremely active during the early 60's including arranging mass mobilisation against South Africa's membership of the Commonwealth and after the Sharpeville massacre worked to transform the Boycott Movement into the Anti-Apartheid Movement;

Oliver Tambo, as Deputy President of the ANC, worked ceaselessly to build-up international solidarity and provided great foresight and leadership to most of the world; and Julius Nyerere as leader of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) appealed for the consumer boycott of South African goods and developed into a

formidable leader of African and other States and was an astute tactician for all.

They were with many others; all founder members of the British AAM.

In 1962, I was asked by Oliver Tambo to become the Honorary Secretary of the British AAM because Barbara Castle had said that if I was elected to that position, she would agree to become the President of the AAM. Mr Tambo told me that AAM should not become an extension of the ANC and I should draw support directly from the British people.

After completing my Masters Degree at University College London, I carried on research into South Africa's defence and security policies and was preparing for a Ph.D.

In 1969, the AAM published a small booklet by me entitled "South Africa's Defence Strategy" which outlined the regimes' determination to expand its war throughout Southern Africa and also begin to look at ways not only to focus on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

All South Africa's major trading partners continued to claim that their nuclear cooperation with South Africa was only for peaceful purposes and that the Pretoria regime did not have any nuclear weapon capability.

Then, on the opening day of an international conference on action against apartheid in Lagos, on 5th August 1977, the world learnt about the secret Kalahari nuclear test site through satellite pictures. Some western leaders appealed to Pretoria not to detonate a nuclear weapon. The AAM asked how the Pretoria regime could explode what they apparently did not have.

Among the western leaders who were at the Lagos Conference included Olof Palme of Sweden, David Steel of Britain and Prime Minister Odvar Nordli of Norway.

In view of the urgency of this development, after consultations, the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid appealed to the AAM in

Lagos to establish a World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa with me as Director.

The AAM agreed and Norway offered to host it in Oslo jointly with Sweden.

It was a small office but anti-apartheid movements and others across the world supported it and it was able to play a key role in exposing South Africa as a growing military and nuclear threat.

It functioned from 1978 to 1994 under the Patronage of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and other Front Line Heads of State with the sponsors including Olof Palme, David Steel and Coretta Scott-King.

The UN Security Council then adopted a mandatory arms embargo against SA, which did not include nuclear but despite this shortcoming, it was important because the apartheid regime was expanding its war against the African Front Line States and others.

The western countries did not allow the Security Council to establish an effective Committee to monitor the arms embargo so the World

Campaign had to do much of that work and expose violations through various conferences, seminars and via the Front Line States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN.

The AAM and the World Campaign had to work against very heavy odds as some even attempted to plant misinformation, which if used, by us, would expose us for making false claims and decisively damage our credibility.

But we made no false claims and were not found to be wrong in any of our allegations over the years so could not be undermined in this way. We therefore managed to retain our credibility by relying on truth.

During 1960 – 1961, there began an initiative to nominate Chief Albert Luthuli, President of the ANC for the Nobel Peace Prize. I was at Leeds University and found that some of our academics and members of national legislatures were among those who could nominate candidates and I lobbied some of them including Labour MP, Richard Crossman and others to do so.

Thus in 1961, the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize was conferred on Chief Albert Luthuli in Oslo.

Later, in 1984, Desmond Tutu was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1993, Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk.

During the early 60's, I was appointed as the representative of the South African Non- Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) and when Dennis Brutus, its leader, was arrested in SA, I was asked to represent SANROC at the 1962 Olympic Conference. We lobbied all representatives at the Baden – Baden Conference and in 1963 South Africa was suspended from the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The international sports boycott thereafter developed greater momentum.

In 2008, democratic South Africa nominated me for the post of Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be decided by the pro-western IAEA Board of Governors. I wanted to

ensure that developing countries would be allowed to create real capacity to promote atomic science for peace.

What used to happen was that experts from developing countries would be taken to different northern countries for short courses but they were not given much equipment to build their own capacity and expertise to advance themselves and promote scientific and economic development in their countries. This could not be done without having appropriate nuclear technology and equipment.

Some claimed that what South Africa had developed was a credible nuclear deterrent, but the question arose as to whom it was meant to deter since no developing country had any nuclear weapons.

Indeed, deterrence in this case was not to deter the nuclear weapon capacity of others but instead to threaten and dominate them and create fear among those who supported or were involved in the African liberation struggle.

Indeed, what was new is that certain Western countries even argued at times against further sanctions and other anti-apartheid measures because they claimed that the apartheid regime was desperate and could unleash a nuclear catastrophe.

Thus in this context no one should confront the Pretoria regime.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the University of the Witwatersrand for today having conferred upon me an Honorary Doctorate in Science not only for the work I did but for all the many others all over the world, who often at great cost, actively supported us in the struggle against apartheid and for peace and development.

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