

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE ADDRESS BY DEPUTY PRESIDENT
KGALEMA MOTLANTHE AT THE LILIESLEAF TRUST'S
COMMEMORATIVE GALA DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE
HAROLD WOLPE TRUST ON 14 JUNE 2012.**

Thank you very much Nic for your warm words of welcome. Good evening to Anne Marie and Peta and all the eminent guests, Your Excellencies - High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps.

I am humbled by this invitation, really, to come and address this gala dinner on the subject of "revisiting the political economy of social change in contemporary South Africa" and I am also inspired by the fact that we're doing all of this in the name of one of South Africa's greatest sons, Harold Wolpe, who was at once an activist, a lawyer and of course, later, one of the best sociologists of his generation.

Harold Wolpe was known for his rigour in analysing and summing up situations. He was a member of the Congress of Democrats, a member of the South African Communist Party, a member of Mkhonto Wesizwe and a member of the ANC. And so, as we dialogue in his memory we do so mindful of the fact that this year also marks the centenary of the African National Congress.

And in some of our discussions in the ANC we are grappling with the state of the organisation we are grappling with the need to determine what the next step will be with this great country of ours which should become in practical terms a truly united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous nation.

Now, in this strategic goal of creating a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous South Africa lies three tasks, not only for the ANC but for all South Africans, because whatever we do we should always have these tasks in mind and it is proving to be very difficult to do that, even in the ANC as the governing party and the difficulty was articulated by His Grace the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Mangaung on the 8th January 2012.

He gave a profound sermon about dry bones. He said if you were a hundred years, celebrating 100 years, you would gather here celebrating dry lifeless bones and that if our organisation is over-

laden with dead ideas because of age being a hundred years old and so on, he said that is not what we should celebrate.

He said in the sermon that we should take a leaf from the book of those who lived before the invention of the mirror. He said before the mirror was invented, even the most handsome and the most beautiful people could not see themselves. They had to see beauty in others and celebrate the beauty of others.

And he said today, because of the mirror, we are severely disadvantaged. We look at ourselves in the mirror and talk to ourselves and that's what determines our limitations. And so, as we celebrate the ANC's centenary, we cannot afford to be sentimental about it.

If the ANC represents dry lifeless bones it then means it is incapable of leading South Africa towards the creation of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous nation. So the ANC has got to, on a continuous basis, renew itself and accept that it has got no monopoly of wisdom and that society's challenges can best be overcome if it mobilises the best available talent in our country.

In 1994 after the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the South African Communist Party, the ANC published a booklet entitled 'How to join the ANC'. That was the title of the booklet. In its introduction the booklet had a section which explained that the ANC as a legal organisation, is free to publicise its policies so that South Africans of all persuasions can, on the basis of its policies, freely decide whether to join it or to support it or to oppose it.

I was reminded of the importance of this section when it dawned upon me that we are slowly but surely drifting into the direction where we would begin to regard opposition as enmity and yet this pamphlet of the ANC says South Africans have the right to join, support, or oppose the African National Congress.

I'm saying this because, in our renewal debates as we discuss how best to renew the ANC, and this is a debate started in 2000 when we convened the National General Council, we became aware that the ANC member is no longer the same as the member who joined the ANC in the days of illegality, because those who joined at that time were men and women who understood that

there would be no reward for them other than the liberation of all South Africans. There would be no personal rewards or decorations and that the possibility existed of being eliminated or imprisoned or hounded into exile or maimed and so on. And they were a different calibre altogether.

The ANC in 2000 had been in government for about six years and we realised that not only were some of the new members treating the ANC as a legitimate stepping stone to opportunities of self-enrichment.

Not only were some of the new members guilty of that; but even some of the old members were being overwhelmed and overcome by the temptations of power. I think it was Benjamin Franklin who said; *“nearly all men are capable of dealing with any adversity, but if you want to know the real character of somebody, give them power”* because power has an intoxicating effect.

In 2000 reports were flowing into our offices indicating that we were not covering ourselves in glory in the manner in which we executed our responsibilities as government. And so we asked the question, what steps are required if we are to defend and protect the true character of the ANC as an agent for change and a servant of the people.

We asked that question, we debated, at the end we said well, we must create a new cadre, we must create a new cadre. And how were we going to create a new cadre? We thought that could be done through political education.

I must say that part of the difficulty from the alliance between the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress arises, not because of what these parties represent, but because historically the Communist Party had a policy of training all its members. There's a book written by Nabothe Mokgatle entitled *“The Autobiography of an Unknown South African”*.

In it he explains how the Communist Party used to train its members. They'd bring them to Johannesburg – night schools were used for literacy classes and the content of those classes also explained that society is divided into classes.

So Naboth Mokgatle explains in this book that the party brought them to Johannesburg for one month and every day of that month they would be attending classes where they were taught the following subjects: philosophy, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, political economy, how to take minutes in a meeting, administration, bookkeeping and so on.

When they emerged from this school, he for instance, just to illustrate the point, went back to Pretoria to organise workers and establish trade unions. He had an attitude towards the pass system, so you know about the pass and the police. The police got to know him so well as someone who never carried a pass and they knew that whenever they wanted to pick him up they always could do so.

And eventually the government slapped him with a banning order. He had no pass and so without a pass he couldn't apply for a passport, not even an exit passport. So he drafted an affidavit explaining who he was and went to the Native Affairs Commissioner and persuaded the commissioner to authenticate the affidavit.

He wrote to people in England and they promised to host him, so arrangements were made for him to fly out of South Africa.

He went to the airport armed only with the affidavit written by himself in his own hand.

The customs official asked him for his passport and all he could produce was his hand written affidavit. The official pulled him out of the queue and allowed all the others to board the plane before phoning the police in Pretoria.

The security police confirmed that they knew him very well – and they advised the customs official to explain to him that if he leaves the country without a valid passport no country would accept him and that even South Africa would not accept him back so he should know that he will be without a country.

So the officer then explained to him and Naboth Mokgatle accepted the explanation and got on the plane. His trip was long. He had to go to Vienna, from Vienna to Switzerland, from there off to London and, to his great surprise the lady sent to collect him

from the airport was none other than Mary Benson. Mary Benson was born in Pretoria.

Naboth Mokgatlhe knew Mary Benson's father and so he was among friends and family in England. He lived in England until his death.

I'm explaining this because the ANC became a radically progressive organisation at a particular time of its evolution and development.

It was at a time when the dual membership of the Communist Party and the ANC was accepted. And the ANC benefited immensely from these members who were also members of the Communist Party because they brought into the ANC the training they had received in the Communist Party. And they helped the ANC in terms of always correctly analysing the situation in order to determine what the next step would be, because in politics the burden is always to read the situation accurately. It's a burden of leadership.

If a leadership engages in horse betting and doodling and so on and doesn't analyse a situation, that leadership will get somewhere but it may not be in the right direction.

And so, when we analyse and try to understand the weaknesses in the ANC today as we try to renew the ANC we've got to understand what it is that made the ANC to be a progressive organisation. What is it that made the ANC to become a non-racial organisation? What is it that made the ANC to posit non-racialism against the notion of white supremacy at a time when it would have been very easy to simply posit black supremacy against white supremacy?

But the ANC elected to say South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. And of course, that stance, that understanding caused such internal ruction that it gave birth to the Pan Africanist Congress. And so today we hear from time to time pronouncements from the ANC, even at leadership level, which harp on the note of racism. And yet the responsibility of the ANC is to lead South Africans towards the strategic goal of non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous, and united democratic country.

But once you have through pronouncements, through action, the ANC communicating a message which says it has the majority of numbers on its side to impose its will regardless.

For instance in the National Assembly the onus and responsibility of the ANC is to use the force of persuasion. It must mount more compelling arguments in the house than to rely on superior numbers. Because when it relies on superior numbers in the house the message which it communicates to those who, for whatever reason, may believe that they don't have the numbers on their side, the message that they hear is that because they don't have the numbers they will be dealt with in short shift by the ANC.

And so we have to understand that in the absence of training for its members ultimately the ANC will lose its character. The ANC will lose its prestige and authority to lead and the ANC will become ordinary. If it is ordinary then South Africans will of course choose to associate with other parties other than itself.

So the renewal has to be informed by a rigorous analysis of what it is that makes the ANC to be a progressive organisation. Can the ANC today rely on the Communist Party members? The answer is no. The answer is no, because the Communist Party doesn't train its members. The training by the Communist Party is the same as that conducted by the ANC. It is training on topical issues. At the time of CODESA it would be around negotiations and negotiating strategies. At the time of globalisation it would be about globalisation, whatever it means. At the time of nationalisation of mines, it would be about nationalisation.

So it is training on topical issues, whereas the training that made the ANC members to be progressive was not only on topical issues. It was methodical. It left them with the ability to analyse and read the situation. And it is that type of training that is required.

And of course part of the disadvantage arising from this relationship is the language, the vocabulary. I mean now we are preparing for a policy conference. If you pick up ANC policy discussion documents now and read them, the language, the vocabulary in certain instances does not convey what the ANC wants to convey, in certain instances, because it is language which is inherited from the past.

For example, this second transition, the second transition. From what or from where to where? What constituted the first transition? What were the tasks of that phase? Have all of those tasks been accomplished or not? But the language used is of that nature, a smattering of Marxist jargon, if you like.

But of course trained minds know the exact meaning of concepts and what they are meant to convey. So we can't be reckless with words because unfortunately words are not like a finger. There is an idiom in Setswana that says: "*Lefoko gale boe go boa monwana*". Literally the translation is that once you've uttered a word you can't take it back - only a finger can be pulled back. That is what it means.

And so part of the responsibility of leadership is to ensure that the statements that we issue convey what we want to convey and not just words, and that is why the stalwarts of the Communist Party and the ANC, men like Harold Wolpe, Bram Fischer, Ben Turok, Moses Kotane, Joe Slovo, Walter Sisulu always took the trouble to ensure that the words that they put together convey the message which they want to convey. And I am saying this because today it is very easy to throw in all these words and get away with it.

When the ANC was still a banned organisation in South Africa and could not communicate directly with South Africans, it relied on issuing the statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of its birthday on 8th January and that statement was always anticipated by activists inside South Africa because it constituted a programme of action for the year. It gave the reading of the global situation, the internal situation and what the theme and the tasks for that year would be.

So in a word, the statement was a set of orders for activists. But now we are not just a free people. We are also the governing party. So we are a governing party and as such the State of the Nation Address delivered in Parliament is the State of the Nation but we still carry on to give a January 8th statement. And my discovery, to my shock, was that in fact the statement is now read on that day only. Once people are done with it on the day it does not inform their other programmes. As they develop programmes they are not informed by the January 8th statement of the National Executive Committee.

These are some of the debates we used to have with former President Thabo Mbeki when I was still the Secretary General of the ANC. So, my view is that the ANC has to renew itself and the process of such renewal must be preceded by rigorous analysis of the ANC as it exists today as well as an assessment and evaluation of how successful we have been in implementing the decisions and resolutions adopted so that the strong points and the weak points can be laid bare and the prescribed remedies should be informed by that kind of self-criticism and analysis. But of course it calls for the ANC to be able to stand back, to pull back, and take a hard look at itself, free itself or rid itself of sentimentalism because if we do not do that – if we do not renew the ANC, the reality is that there will be a realignment of forces. Because nature does not allow for inertia, nature exists in motion, all the time.

So the notion, the notion that “*as it was so shall it be*” is a great barrier to progress. It is a great barrier to progress. And it is very easy when you have a glorious past to say these are the standards, these are the standards - we will live by these standards only. And so we must become suspicious of new ideas. You become worried when what you are familiar with, when the rationale underpinning institutions is being questioned. You become worried by that because when we celebrate the past and also allow that glorious past to be the beginning and the end then of course we are conservative because we are conserving the truths of yesterday.

That which was true yesterday may not be true today, and that is the danger that the ANC needs to guard against. It needs to guard against conservatism, being conservative to conserve the truths of yesterday. So I am saying all of this because our country is South Africa.

The South African nation is really no different from the American nation. In fact the parallels are quite striking. Here in South Africa we have always had an influx of people who came to South Africa and that was eloquently displayed during the hosting of the FIFA World Cup because nearly all 31 teams that came here easily found support bases in and amongst South Africans because that's who we are. That is who we are. History tells us that when Jan van Riebeeck arrived here and we were made to memorise at primary school the names of the rafts

and the yachts that he used – Dromedaries, Reiger and Goedehoop. When he arrived here he brought with him soldiers and his mandate was to establish a refreshment station and so the first question which arose was: on whose land is he going to establish such a refreshment station? So the land question arose almost immediately as one of the difficulties that South Africa would have to deal with.

The second question was okay, they have a piece of land now but who is going to till it because soldiers are not normally trained to till the land to produce fresh vegetables and so on.

And so the next question which arose almost immediately was labour. Where does the labour come from to produce supplies for the passing vessels?

And so slaves had to be brought in – slaves from Malaysia, India, Java and later on when the British annexed the Cape Colony they became very generous to the French Huguenots who were being persecuted in France. So they asked for refuge in England and the British said well, we want workers, please come, we have a place down south. So they brought them here, and thanks to that we are today the greatest producers of wine on the continent.

It is thanks to the French Huguenots and many other people who came to our shores – indentured labourers in the sugar cane plantations, in the mines, Chinese labourers, artisans in the mines, fortune hunters, many people from all over the world and this is who we are as a nation.

If you know the history of South Africa, today when the people speak of xenophobia and Afro-phobia it is an oddity because our very nature, the tapestry of the South African nation is made up of people from all over the world.

That is why the circle is completed when Professor Philip Tobias helps us understand our origins at the Cradle of Humankind, but in fact it may very well be that every human being originates from here and so those who came felt like they were coming home. But of course if we are not courageous enough to understand our own history and who we are these fault lines of racism, of fear of strangers will rear their ugly heads from time to time.

Now, I also want to deal with the current political and socio-economic situation in South Africa. I think we have made strides in terms of consolidating our democracy. Every day we learn lessons which only serve to strengthen our commitment as a democracy.

We have a transformative constitution which recognises our recent history of discrimination, oppression and deprivation and it says we must address these. It directs us to address these accumulated disabilities.

At the same time we live in a country that is made up of two parts. The one part is developed – the social infrastructure is that which can be found in many capitals in the world.

The other part is under-developed. And so apartheid exists today in the form of backlogs in social infrastructure. When you are up in the air and low-flying, like in a helicopter, when you see green lush areas with trees you know that this is a white suburb - white folk live here. When you see a rugged, dry area you know that black folk live there. It is that which we have to eliminate. If we could eradicate that, apartheid would be gone.

A recent example of what I am saying is, when in 2010 the Blue Bulls qualified for the semi-final of the Super 14, at the time when their home ground, Loftus Versveld, had been taken over by the FIFA Local Organising Committee, and the Blue Bulls needed to find an alternative stadium within driving distance so that their supporters could be there without having to fly and so on. They searched around for an alternative stadium and they found it in Soweto. Orlando Stadium had been renovated, it was fine, it met their requirements.

And so on that day supporters of the Blue Bulls, some of them had never set foot in a township in their lives, could not resist going to support the Blue Bulls. So off they drove in tandem to Orlando Stadium. And of course the people of Soweto, because Johannesburg is cosmopolitan – these are people who lived in townships that were integrated – Prospect Township, George Goch, Sophiatown - who were forcibly removed from there as part of the apartheid social engineering – Sowetans are very enterprising. Once they got to know that the Blue Bulls would be coming, most of them in Orlando East painted their fences and some of them

even their houses as well in blue and white and created braai stands in their yards.

So the supporters of the Blue Bulls felt most welcome. And of course they made a discovery as well. You know that the taverns in Pretoria, charge for a pint of beer a price which in Soweto fetches you 750ml, so there was a bonus. They played very well. The supporters were happy. They won and went through to the finals so they took the finals back to Orlando Stadium. What this tells us is that if we can create the same social infrastructure everywhere people will settle everywhere. They'll become neighbours, they'll play together and it will be wonderful.

Kallie Kriel of Solidarity, the trade union Solidarity, which has given itself the mission of protecting the interests of white workers who believe that there is reverse discrimination against white workers – their children don't play rugby they play soccer and so they find that over weekends they must drive their children to play in the townships. And I'm saying to myself, I mean, the schools are there and if the schools have all the sports facilities they would very easily settle wherever they wish to.

So this apartheid social engineering would be resolved not by legislation, not because people are compelled to do so, but because people feel that this is a wonderful country they are free to live anywhere.

So that is the challenge which faces us today – how to eliminate apartheid as it exists now in the form of backlog in social infrastructure.

But of course South Africa is not an island. Today's economy is globalized and so our markets, the people who buy from us raw materials and value added commodities and the people from whom we also buy certain things. This economy, the global economy is going through a severe crisis, a severe crisis indeed.

In Europe today the only country whose economy is growing is Germany. Only the German economy is growing and from the time when Germany emerged out of the Second World War, having been defeated, settled with the responsibility to reconstruct the country, to pay war reparations, they entered into a system of co-determination where government, organised labour, business work

together. And they have maintained that system up to this day. If you want to get a correct analysis of economic projections in any sector in Germany you must go and ask the trade unions.

Their analysts are better than the ones that do analysis for Bloomberg. And that's how they determine their wage demands. They don't just say we want x% and so on. They do an analysis of their sector first and foremost. If it is a metal union, they will do their own analysis and projections for their own sector. Once they have done that they then factor that into an analysis of the whole German economy and determine where to pitch their wage demands. And by agreement the German workers have been taking less wages.

A few years ago they decided that they did not want to accumulate huge deficits and so they systematically prepared to ensure that they did not end up in debt.

Now that the Euro zone is in trouble, in order to stimulate the economy to ensure that even the flat growth that they are achieving is maintained they have decided deliberately that, rather than taking the money and going abroad to invest in other countries, they have decided to give handsome increases to the working people so that the working people can then stimulate economic growth by increasing demand.

So today when Greece, Italy and Spain are trying to find ways of stimulating economic recovery, the prescription is austerity measures. So you go to people who already cannot afford to buy basics and you say tighten up your belts – so education will no longer be free and so on and so forth.

Now I suppose earlier in the sessions Professor Ben Fine must have dealt with these questions of how to stimulate the economy. We have to ask the question. We have to pose the difficult question because only a few decades ago China had 250 million people living under the poverty datum line. And the Chinese Communist Party did an analysis which made them understand that with all the enterprises owned and controlled by the state they could not generate enough capital. Now this is very instructive because you see there's talk and debate of nationalisation.

The Chinese owned everything – the state owned barber shops, everything, all enterprises. And yet the amount of capital that they could generate and mobilise was far less than what was required to kick-start economic development. And so they had to ask themselves a hard question, a difficult question because you can't distribute poverty.

The whole idea of doing away with class exploitation pre-supposes a flourishing economy and that society would be able to produce plenty, so much that there will be enough and surplus for everybody. But when people are rationed with basics, when foodstuffs are rationed you can't eliminate class stratification. It is not possible to do that.

And so the Chinese Communist Party did an analysis and their conclusions were very interesting, very instructive, because they said they had committed a fundamental mistake by believing that they could jump out of capitalism into socialism. That is what the Chinese Communist Party said. And they said instead there is an intervening stage which they jumped which they designated as the primary stage and they identified the tasks of this primary stage – three tasks.

Only three! One, that they should raise the overall education level of the entire nation.

Two, they should modernise their forces of production. That means innovation, equipment, technology and the skills to go with that.

Three – they should close the gap between urban and rural. The Chinese are 1.3 billion in number and they can't afford to take decisions and not work out how those decisions are going to be implemented.

So they had to ask the question, what are the time lines for achieving these three tasks? And they gave themselves an answer which I found quite instructive. They said it would take them 100 years to accomplish these three tasks. 100 years! Once they had decided on that, they then asked another question.

How were they going to access capital in order to stimulate economic growth? Remember they own everything. The state owns everything inside China. So they concluded that the capital

they need did not reside inside China but outside China in private hands.

And so they developed an open door policy on how to attract this capital from outside of China. Of course, at that time they were also resolving the question of Hong Kong and so the initial capital also came from Hong Kong because they're a huge market. If you produce any article that you can sell to the Chinese for one dollar a piece and you get 500 million Chinese to buy it, you are printing money. And so the investors started flooding China with requests; the Chinese authorities said come, we have the labour, here is the land, build your factory. You are free to repatriate your profits to your countries.

The South African Breweries, SAB Miller, has got 15 plants in China now as we speak. They went in there to access that huge market but the Chinese said it is on a 30-year lease basis. These plants are yours; make your money, but its 30 years. Once 30 years lapse, these become state-owned enterprises. Because they say their goal is to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. Now within a short space of time they have reduced the number of people living below the poverty datum line from 250 million to 10 million and still managed to accumulate reserves of hard currency.

The Chinese say they are not interested in developing an atomic bomb and so on. They are interested in building up reserves of hard currency. They go into Angola next door here and they say to the Angolans, how can we be of help to you? We are interested in oil and other minerals.

The Angolans say well, we have three railway lines that are in disrepair, damaged during the civil war. We want them rehabilitated. The Chinese agree. They have all the finances to bring 2 billion US Dollars with them. At that time our people at Spoornet were still negotiating with the Angolans, still negotiating for a contract to rehabilitate the railway lines and of course they were still going to have to come back to arrange the finances. So the Chinese go there with the finances. So they got the contract and they say they will provide 70% of the workforce.

The Angolans must put up the remaining 30%. The Angolans agree they sign off – wonderful! They use the platoon system, in shifts, so they work 24 hours. The Angolan workers are not used to

that kind of work ethic and arrangements. So they desert – after a month they desert. So the Chinese don't complain. They just replace them with other workers from China. That's how aggressive they are today.

Now I'm narrating all of this because it does seem like, it leaves us with a question as to whether these measures that are being applied to try and revive and re-stimulate the economies, in Europe, here in Africa and elsewhere, whether these measures are appropriate or not.

That question arises because here in Africa, Africa is very rich naturally – richly endowed with all minerals including oil, but it is under-developed. None of these regions have been exploited and developed so infrastructure is under-developed and our people are poor, our people are unemployed.

Some of the countries on the continent who are very rich rely on global injections even for their national budgets. But now to Europe and America, austerity measures mean that the surplus that was used as aid to Africa is running dry. But of course, those who have the resources will migrate to areas where there are prospects of growth because now in some of these countries in Europe and the United States interest rates are almost zero, so the incentive for people to save is almost zero as well. So the ones who have cash reserves will migrate to countries where prospects for growing their capital and wealth are pretty strong.

So we have almost travelled in a circle. The same rationale which inspired Cecil John Rhodes to come here and build Groote Schuur, contribute to the University of Cape Town and so on, will apply to those who have the skills and resources in the developed countries today. They will start looking for investment outlets abroad as long as there is political stability, transparency, accountability and protection of investments.

They will migrate and when they migrate with those resources the situation in their home countries will be exacerbated and the crisis will become even more severe and so the critical question that I want to leave you with is, what other options should be explored to address this crisis? These investors will say we must try the same old prescriptions. That's what they will say. But we are challenged to explore alternatives and I think the old people in our midst would

have been grappling with these questions. They would have been grappling with these questions and that is why I thought it is important to pose this question as well.

And I want to leave you, having posed a question, because I have no answer myself – I want to leave you with Terry Eagleton's quotation when he says: "if you do not resist the apparently inevitable, you will never know how inevitable the inevitable was".

And I thank you for your attention.