UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

GRADUATION SPEECHES

1992

Dr O R Tambo, the Chancellor, constitutes the congregation.

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

(AN INTEGRATED VERSION OF ADDRESSES DELIVERED ON 8 and 9 MAY 1992)

by

PROFESSOR SME BENGU

Mr Chancellor: Dr Oliver Reginald Tambo
The Chairperson and Members of the Governing Council
The Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, Professor Jakes Gerwel
Distinguished Guests
Colleagues and Graduation Students
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to welcome you all to this historic graduation ceremony. This University, in its 75-year history, has had many graduation ceremonies, but none so unique and so symbolic.

Its uniqueness rests with the fact of who is presiding over it, what they represent, and what their mission has been in our conflict-ridden society. Led by the new Chancellor, Dr Tambo, new Council and Management, this ceremony is presided over by a leadership whose history of opposition to apartheid is well known, but even more importantly they are individuals whose commitment to upliftment of the socio-politically and economically disadvantaged members of our society has grown to influence the mission of this great institution.

This means that if, during the missionary era of this University's development, we were Junior partners in a marriage of convenience, and in the apartheid era subordinates and sometimes determined opponents of the Bantu Education system, today we have seized the reins of power. With the balance of forces firmly in our favour, we stand poised to articulate the true mission of this great University.

If, in the past, that mission was decided by apartheid ideologues, henceforth it shall be determined by the people as a whole. The people, as members of society, shall decide and determine, not only the destiny of what we produce, but also its quality.

We take great courage in the fact that we enjoy the support and partnership of not only the University of the Western Cape, but also its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jakes Gerwel - a pioneer, against great odds, of the people's university project. We stand to benefit from their experience, and hope that the correctness and justice of our common perspective will one day be vindicated.

Today, therefore, marks a break with the past. Our mission is to produce graduates who will surpass their predecessors in terms of the quality of degree and knowledge they obtain from this University. If, in the past, students were prepared to serve bantustan structures or occupy junior positions both in the public and private sectors, our vision is undoubtedly different. We look to produce leaders in all spheres of society whose contribution will always be held in very high esteem.

We seek to produce a quality of student measured, not only against his or her white counterparts, but better still, measured in terms of his or her contribution to our society.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is not without significance that our Chancellor, Dr Tambo, presides over this ceremony. A science graduate of this University, he has served as a teacher who taught not only at school, but many in his community to be true to their principles and conscience; a lawyer, who not only sought justice in the corridors of the racist judicial system, but a stern advocate of our people; a people's leader of international reputation;

a selfless and gallant soldier of justce, freedom, democracy, non-racialism, and a non-sexist future; a man who, for his convictions, sacrificed not only his lucrative career and his own health, but also suffered many years of exile. Our students who will be capped by him are most fortunate, and their counterparts elsewhere are jealousy admiring them. Yet more important is the challenge that his capping entails. It is, that you live up to his teachings and learn from his good ways.

In conferring the degrees and diplomas on these graduates, he is telling the world that not only is he satisfied that these students have met the requirements stated in University Regulations, but also convinced that they have a potential, given the opportunity, to play leadership roles in various spheres of society.

Graduating Students

You, together with your colleagues who are remaining with us, played a heroic role, building on the contribution of many before you, in bringing the kind of change witnessed by this University, You will know more than any other pesons that the change of leadership only means that the democratic forces have won a major battle, but not yet the war. As we continue with that struggle we want to believe that we can always count on your support.

As a University which draws candidates mainly from a disrupted educational background and economically disadvantaged community, we believe that preparation of students for a leadership role in society only marks the first step; an even greater challenge is to force a society, as racist as ours, to shed its backward attitude and tap the talent we make available to it. This is your new challenge; you must take it with the courage and determination you have always shown during your time at this University. In doing so, you must be assured that you are not alone, but enjoy our support.

Mr Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Is it not surprising that we set such high and ambitious goals from what may appear to be a hopeless situation? We set these goals, not because we imagine that the road ahead will be an easy one to traverse, but because we sincerely believe that they embody the true aspirations of our people. It is these aspirations which influence our vision and less the obstacles ahead.

For this reason, it is not without significance that we have with us today Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the President of the African National Congress: a towering giant and a gallant and fearless fighter for justice and freedom : a world leader and statesman of international standing. He never let the seemingly overwhelming odds determine his vision. He lived to articulate the aspirations of his people, and for that he suffered enormously. In sharing this great occasion with you, Mr President, it is that endurance and determination in pursuit of a good cause with which we seek to be associated.

Your great talent laid buried for twenty-seven years in the dungeons of the apartheid prison; the nation and the world as a whole were denied the benefit of your tremendous wisdom. They did this to you at the same time as they were actively under-developing, dwarfing, and disarticulating the talent of many black children through the racist education policies. Not only did they enact legislation to effect such a process, but they also systematically under-resourced black education. They were castigating us into the subordinate role in society.

Like you, Mr President, we were being mowed down as we were defenceless. In doing so, they were merciless, killing the young Abraham Tiro in 1973, Hector Peterson in 1976, Steve Biko in 1977, Lungile Tabalaza in 1978, and many others for their cry for better education. They imagined that we would give in. To their surprise, we fought back with increasing strength and dedication. We remain true to the ideals and aspirations of those who gave their lives in that struggle and many who were incapacitated, by seizing the reigns of power to ensure that their noble dreams come true.

Our strength rests not with constant relaying of the past, but in noting important lessons from it, only to advance with caution. Our glory is found not so much in never falling, but in rising up each time we fall, only to march forward with greater determination. This University has had many falls. It has now risen to play its role in the production and development of black leadership.

In rising, we count on the support of people with interest in the vision that we have expressed. Our supporters include these graduating students and other convocants, who will remain sons and daughters of this great Institution for many years to come. They include the parents of these graduating students. They took from nothing to invest in a brighter future, not only for their children, but also for the nation as a whole. Once a parent, always a parent. They have an interest in the way this Institution develops. The list is endless, and includes the sponsors, local community, and many others.

We wish to urge the international community that, in the wake of the relaxation of the cultural and academic boycotts, they should not integrate South African in a manner that perpetuates the racial disadvantages of the past. Their intervention in educational programmes should be sensitive to help redress the imbalance of the past.

We challenge multi-national corporations planning to reinvest in this country, as we do the private sector, to join us in a project aimed at the development of black leadership in that sphere of our society. They should not stand on ivory towers and passively cry standards without being part of a new project to help improve the situation.

In line with the vision outlined here we have embarked on a major institutional self-evaluation and strategic planning exercise, which we believe will help us sharpen our mission. This has been made possible with the assistance of the Mellon Foundation of the United States. It is a participatory process involving all sectors of the University community and the wider community.

We have also established a number of projects and programmes to help this forward movement. We are undertaking a major project to establish a Centre for Cultural Studies. All the major players in black politics have agreed to donate their archives to the Centre (including the ANC, PAC, and Unity Movement, and great leaders like A C Jordan and others). We also have a Staff Development Programme involving both academic and administrative staff. To enhance our research capacity we have established the Govan Archibald Mbeki Fellowship, named after one of the members of Council and a long-standing associate of this University. As part of the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG), we have research projects on the reincorporation of the bantustans in South Africa, which assists the work of CODESA. For the same objective, we also have advanced plans for the establishment of a Centre for Industrial and Labour Studies, Centre for Development/Southern African Studies, and Education Policy Unit. In line with our commitment to reaching out to the community we have also introduced such outreach programmes as the Adult Basic Education Project (ABEP) funded by the EEC, and a Legal Aid Clinic and Street Law Project, funded by the Ford Foundation. Our students, on their own initiative, have organised an Education Support Project, to upgrade the Matriculation results of pupils at schools in this region. About 650 student attend classes at the University on a regular basis.

The need for more financial assistance to students is overwhelming. The student body is attracted from the most disadvantaged section of our community. The lack of such assistance has contributed to the destabilisation of their education.

In the same vein, the need for institutional development cannot be over-emphasized. Our need for financial and other material assistance is overwhelming. We are therefore in search of partnerships with anyone who shares our vision. We look to traverse this road, not alone, not only with this nation, but also with the rest of the world. Let us, together, build a new Fort Hare for a new South Africa.

Allow me to conclude by congratulating our graduates. Farewell: With love, dedication and honesty, go and serve the nation.

THANK YOU

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR J GERWEL

CHANCELLOR, VICE-CHANCELLOR, CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF SENATE, STUDENTS AND WORKERS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, COMRADES AND FRIENDS.

We are greatly honoured by the invitation to be part of a graduation ceremony at an institution which has a distinguished position in the history of education in this country, and which the social engineers of racist ideologies have so perversely forced it from.

To be part of a ceremonial affirmation of the new Fort Hare becoming once more like the old Fort Hare is not only an honour, but also an inspiration. The current developments at Fort Hare remind one in a special way of some essential features of the national quest for liberation; Fort Hare reminds us that we are a people with a history, that liberation is not a baseless stumbling into some dark and unchartered terrain of which we know nothing but that liberation is both a forward reaching and a reclaiming of an autonomous past, on which we can build and transform in terms appropriate to the future.

I owe it to the university community of Fort Hare to let them know how much we, at UWC, owe to the memory of Fort Hare what we might have succeeded in achieving at UWC. The University of the Western Cape embarked upon a process of what is now referred to as "transformation", challenging the destructiveness which apartheid education sought to impose upon it, and harnessing its intellectual and educational resources and energies for the resistance against apartheid and towards the building of a non-racial democracy.

On more than one occasion, in discussing that project, I said or wrote that what we were aiming at was to recreate something of the spirit and the enterprise of the old Fort Hare That history of Fort Hare was, therefore, Mr Chancellor a real force of inspiration and motivation at our institution.

Friends at Fort Hare, of course, also know that I always cherish the opportunity of returning to these parts where I was born and grew up. Had it not been for the iniquitous Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which forced us to go to ethnic universities, I would have come to Fort Hare as a student. That is after all, where my teachers had studied; it was the name that meant "university" to us. So, it is always a home-coming to visit my would have been alma mater.

Mr Chancellor, may I bring to you and your institution our warmest congratulations on this day, which is always a central and auspicious one on the calendar of a proud university.

We extend a particular word of congratulations to the graduands of the day. What you ceremoniously celebrate on this occasion could only have been achieved through hard work, application, and in many cases, through sacrifice. We are continually reminded of our communal responsibility, of our obligation to collective effort; and that is correct, for without that commitment to the common good, we cannot build a better world. This emphasis on the communal may, however, not be understood to mean an obliteration of the individual, and of the individual sense of the own.

Without the commitment of the individual, without the individual pride in the quality of his or her achievement, we cannot build communal quality. It is that individual application, that individual pride in the quality of achievement, that we also celebrate today. At the end of the day, the quality of university study and of intellectual work is built in the loneliness of a library, a study, or a room.

And the remarkable thing is that most parents find ways to cope with that demand under those circumstances. We salute you this morning, and we trust that in some way your own life will benefit from the success of your son or daughter.

Mr Chancellor, my reference to the economic plight of parents and students touches on a matter of grave concern to all our universities, particularly our black universities, namely the increasing difficulty students have to finance their studies. This is, of course, a function of the general economic situation in the country; even colleagues at some of the Afrikaans universities, which traditionally served economically better - endowed communities, have told how they have started to feel the effects of impoverishment, with students unable to meet fully or timeously their financial obligations. You can, then, imagine the situation at black universities.

My own university this year began with an amount in outstanding fees of R9,6 million rand. Of course no university can survive long with such a situation pertaining or continuing.

We have to insist on payment in order to protect the base of what we believe is an important educational institution for and of our people. But, what then of those students, particularly, who had proved their ability to succeed at university, but who are unable to continue because of lack of funds?

We must appeal to our national leadership to assist us in pressing for some form of national scheme for the financing of tertiary students with proven need. We shall have to revisit the Freedom Charter in this respect, where it speaks of a national scheme of assistance based on merit.

Those are issues of great complexity, given our economic difficulties and challenges in the nation and given the massive history of discrimination and inequality, and therefore need to redress historical imbalances. But it needs to be tackled.

Mr Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and colleagues.

I come here this morning also to signal to this institution the wish of my university to find ways of formalizing co-operation between our two universities.

The Academic Planning Committee of UWC, in the course of mapping out its own development plans for the next two decades, has entrusted me with the responsibility of finding ways of co-operation between the two of us. We are two very notable education beacons in the history of the oppressed; we are neighbours; we have different kinds of expertise which we can share.

I hope that we can soon put together a small task-force from our two universities, to advise on the possibility and feasibility of such co-operation.

Mr Chancellor, I have no doubt that Fort Hare will grow from strength to strength, once more becoming an intellectual service house for Africa. CONGRATULATIONS, BEST OF LUCK.

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

ADDRESS BY BHEKI KHUMALO, PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chancellor
The unifier of the nation and the organiser or victory,

The President of the African National Congress, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.
Mr Vice - Chancellor
Distinguished Guests
Deans of Faculties, Heads of Departments and Academic Staff
Fellow Graduands
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the collective leadership of the SRC, allow me to extend a special word of greeting to Dr Nelson Mandela, President -General the ANC, the Commander-in chief of the glorious Umkhonto Wesizwe, and Chancellor of the University of the North.
I would like to express tremendous pleasure and sincere appreciation to the University Administration for allowing me the honour of addressing this illustrious gathering, and affording me the opportunity to congratulate Dr Mandela on his being awarded an Honary Doctor of Laws degree. May I also congratulate our new graduands.

I feel honoured and privileged to be amongst the first graduates of Fort Hare to be conferred a degree by you, Mr Chancellor. I feel I am of a generation of graduands who reflect a living dynamic at the University of Fort Hare. We are being conferred degrees by the University under a new leadership which we fought to see realized, and yet the body of Fort Hare, from the Deans of Faculties to the Heads of Departments, the

lecturers, supportive administrative staff, and hierarchical structure of the workforce have not changed. Our degrees are conferred by those whom we respect, admire, and seek to emulate in life, and yet we have gone through the hands of the teaching community structured within the framework of the old regime. I read two things in that dynamic: that I have gone through an education system at the time when the dominant ideology prevailing on campus was still that of producing a people destined to play a subordinate role in society, but that amongst those teachers and lectures were many who fought in the same trenches with us to ensure that we occupy a leadership position in society. Like you, president Mandela, Professor Gerwel, Professor Bengu, and many others against odds we frustrate that vision.

MR CHANCELLOR

In accepting our degrees we do so humbled and honoured indeed by the fact that we have you as Presiding Officer over the ceremony. Many graduands throughout our country would wish that they were part of this great experience. The significance of this moment, articulated so well in the Vice - Chancellor's address earlier, extends beyond those fortunate enough to be graduating here today.

It extends to include those castigated and discarded by the racist policies of previous regimes in black educational institutions. Many, like you, President Mandela,were excluded from this University before completing their degrees, because they dared to express their true convictions and demanded democracy. Many were imprisoned, exiled, murdered by the previous regimes. They could not complete their degrees because they dared demand to be treated as human beings deserving a just and equal education.

We receive this honour, both in our personal capacities, but more importantly in our representative capacity as members of the student body of this country, which is emerging from a generation whose aspirations have been to seek preparations in order to occupy a rightful place in a just , free, and democratic South Africa.

MR CHANCELLOR

It would not be naive for anybody to assume that the removal of the old Administration, and its replacement by a credible Chancellor, Governing Council, and top Management, amount to a major victory which only sets a new terrain of struggle. The great benefit is that we now have a legitimate leadership which shares with us and understands our vision. Yet, in this visible break with the past, we are painfully aware of the enormous obstacles and the understandable impatience on the part of both students and our allies in the University community.

MR PRESIDENT

Is it conceivable that we can build stability, discipline, and a favourable atmosphere of learning under what are desperate living conditions for students.? You will know more than anyone else that many of us come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds,and the rising cost of education is working to systematically deny us the noble aspiration of assuming the skills required to prepare us for a new South Africa.

The transformation process does not merely imply improvement of reactionary and probably barren standards set by the racists' apartheid ideologies, but also the definition of new standards premised on our perception of preparing new cadres to take their rightful place.

This entails overhauling the curriculum, the prevailing system of preparation of students, and a radical scrutiny of the commitment of the academic community to those principles. Our commitment to transformation and our strategic planning exercise rests with our conviction that it will deliver a clear definition of our way forward. As we undergo that process the needs of the student body,such as the improvement of quality of life, both in the lecturer halls and residences, continue to be a thorn in the flesh towards the creation of a climate conducive to learning.

It is against this background that we believe that there is an unprecedented need for a major financial intervention by those who are concerned enough about these issues, and

the stability of our learning process,to ensure that we make this transition as smooth as possible.

MR CHANCELLOR

The conditions of transformation , affecting not only Fort Hare but the rest of the country as well, impose a new agenda for the student body of today. It is the kind of agenda that will bring into question the suitability of strategies of student representation and articulation of their positions that have been used thus far.

Our struggles of the past have created conditions which forced the reactionary forces to give way to the champions of progress. The retreat has created a space which we have been quick to occupy. This is a challenge to us, to assert new perspectives, strategies, and tactics in line with the conditions of today. For instance, if in the past the old Administration shut us out of decision - making processes, the fact that the new Management and leadership recognizes our presentation, and challenges us to constructively engage them without betraying the aspirations of the student community.

This challenge demands of us that we define in a concrete way what these aspirations are, in order to ensure that they find place in the policies of this University.

IN CONCLUSION, MR CHANCELLOR

To the remaining students

If for us it was difficult to understand that relationship, it was because we ere never exposed to it before, and if, in seeking to understand it, we appeared untrue to our aspirations, it was because we knew no better, It is for you to take to note and advantage of the prevailing situation, drawing from our experience and ensuring maximum benefit for your colleagues. You have a chance that no generation before you has had.

Do not miss it

Finally

To the graduands I say that no many students can count among their victories one so important as being a major player in a process which disposed of what seemed to be an invincible regime, and that speaker volumes about what conviction, combined with determination, resilience, and steadfastness can do.

YOU HAVE SHOWN GALLANTRY AND IMPATIENCE WITH THE INJUSTICE THAT PREVAILED ON THIS CAMPUS. Communities, and the nation as a whole, will demand no less .

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

ADDRESS BY DR NELSON MANDELA

PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ON RECEIVING AN HONORARY LLD DEGREE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE, 9 MAY 1992

Mr Chancellor, Comrade O R Tambo, Reverend and long-standing leader of our people
Mr Vice-Chancellor and Rector, Professor S M E Bengu
Chairperson of the University Council, Professor Francis Wilson,
Members of the University Staff and Students, Friends

It is a great honour that this University bestows on me, and through me on the African National Congress and all democratic organisations dedicated to the creation of peace.

This happens at a time of transformation, a time of change or prospective change in South Africa as a whole as well as in this University. We all have a responsibility, wherever we are to contribute to the successful outcome of this process in the institutions where we are, as well as in the country as a whole.

This ceremony takes place at a moment of decision for our country. Either we move forward to democracy and peace, or into ever-increasing violence - the fruits of years of apartheid. Either the people govern, establish a truly democratic state and ensure that the violence ends and that there is no reason for fratricidal warfare, or we consent to the continued rule of those responsible for apartheid, those responsible for Bantu Education, poverty, malnutrition, landlessness, homelessness and all the crimes of apartheid.

Clearly, there is only one future that we can contemplate and that is for us to take our place amongst the democratic nations of the world. That is the precondition for peace.

Without democracy there cannot be peace.

It is a moment of decision. But who makes that decision? For all the talk of negotiations, our experiences with the Government continue to leave the impression that they do not think that the decision is one for the people of South Africa.

We and other organisations put our positions. We have diverse perspectives and our views may represent that of a smaller or greater constituency.

These positions will be more or less carefully considered by the cabinet. The ultimate decision, they feel, will be made by themselves, and this is against the background of their quest to retain power in perpetuity.

That may be their thinking, but those days are over! The intentions of the apartheid regime can no longer determine what happens. They are no longer the main actor on the South African political scene. They are in fact clinging to a role for which they have been cast by a small minority of our population - a role that millions will always reject.

They need to come to their senses and perhaps we need to help them come to their senses. They must understand that it is not their right to decide how much democracy we will be allowed, to offer us a "share" of power. We want democracy as universally understood. We want no more uniquely White South African versions of democracy which are, in fact, denials of the rights of a people to choose who should rule and in what manner.

The ANC is not interested in pursuing narrow political interests. It is a national liberation movement charged with the task of building a new nation. We want that new national entity to incorporate all who live in South Africa and to evoke their loyalty. We are willing to make compromises to achieve this. We are willing to listen to other people or organisations' suggestions as to structures and institutions of government. We know we don't have all the answers and we want the contribution of the widest range of people towards building a country of which we can justly feel proud.

It is in this context that the transformation of Fort Hare attains its full significance. The transformation of your University into a truly people's University is, in itself, a contribution to building the new South African nation. It is also a return to the motivating factors for the establishment of Fort Hare.

The movement for the founding of an African institution of higher learning began in 1902, with famous leaders of the South African Native Congress as prime initiators - leaders of the calibre of Dr Walter Benson Rubusana and Alan Kirkland Soga, Editor of Izwi Labantu newspaper. The initiative also involved prominent missionaries such as Dr Henderson of Lovedale.

Virtually every famous leader of the period became involved; Tengo Jabavu, Joel Goronyana, Thomas Mapikela, Reuben Twala, Sol Plaatjie, Pixley Seme, Enoch Mamba, John Alfred Sishuba, Martin Lutuli, Abner Mtimkulu - leaders of the then newly formed ANC.

Through the combined efforts of these men, the University College of Fort Hare was established in 1916. This response to the absence of higher educational institutions for Africans was a parallel development to the political unification of Africans through the formation of the ANC which, in turn, was a counteraction to the exclusion of Africans from the Union of South Africa.

This parallel development is being continued today, as Fort Hare marches forward as one of the institution that will play a significant role in building a democratic education system, that serves all the people of South Africa.

Let me say a little more about Fort Hare and the community.

The people who are graduating today and the people who are still studying represent a very privileged sector of our community. You have acquired skills that can either be

used to enrich yourselves, benefit yourselves, or which can be put at the service of our country.

I want to appeal to you to acknowledge that the community has a claim on your skills. I want to appeal to you to use those skills to help empower our people. Democracy is not fully established without a democratic government. That is just one step, albeit a crucial one.

One of the lessons of our times is that a transfer of power to a democratic organisation does not mean that ordinary people necessarily have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights. One of the things that we have learnt is the necessity to encourage popular organs of civil society, that is, institutions outside of the state that contribute to the overall democratic process, and the social and economic development of all our peoples.

Fort Hare is itself such a popular institution of civil society. The products of this University can play a crucial role in the professions and in society in general in developing popular organs in every sphere of existence. We cannot build a strong, vibrant, democratic culture merely from a government department. We need strong cultural organisations in the communities.

We cannot build a strong and democratic economy from a Ministry in Government buildings. It needs the participation of the trade unions and all other organs representing people in their various spheres of interests.

The list is endless but the realization of this type of democracy is not easy. Our people have not only been denied the vote, but have been disempowered in numerous other ways. By virtue of your education, you have some of the skills that can empower these people. You have in your hands what a future government cannot do. I urge you not to fail our people. I urge you to act as true patriots and build our new nation, reach our people wherever they are, and help them play a part in their own future.

In a more specifically educational manner, Fort Hare can make a very significant contribution to future developments in this country. Much of the research conducted in South African Universities is not directed to solving the problems that are most pressing. The most serious problems are those relating to the social and economic disabilities of our people. We do not always have the data on which to develop adequate policies. Researchers can obtain this. We do not always know of all the alternative ways of tackling problems, ironically it is those who are least interested in the betterment of our people who have researched these questions. Fort Hare can help us develop answers that truly address the questions most pressing to our people.

Let me also say something about the future relationship between a democratic Government and this University. We hope that we are correct in assuming that the ANC will be a dominant factor in any future government. What does that mean in terms of our relationship with this university?

I am conscious and gratified by the honour that you have bestowed on me and our organisation today. But that does not lead me to regard Fort Hare as an ANC institution. We do not want ANC Universities. We want independent institutions operating without dictation from us. Naturally we expect Fort Hare to operate within the overall goals of creating and developing democracy. But it is not for the ANC or any other organisation to prescribe to you.

We want all educational institutions to contribute to the creation of the new, democratic and non-sexist South Africa.

But that does not entail supporting every position of the ANC. We have made mistakes, and perhaps through constructive criticism, scholars at this university can save us from further mistakes. I urge you, therefore, to act as you think is correct and most useful in furthering the overall democratic goals that we share.

The fact that this ceremony takes place at all is a result of a centuries long struggle for freedom. This is a struggle for which many people have made the supreme sacrifice. This is a struggle for which some brave comrades, regrettably remain incarcerated, contrary to agreements which we have negotiated.

This struggle has made possible a peaceful transition to democracy and we in the ANC have used this opportunity to the full. One of the fruits of this process has been Codesa. In a matter of days we enter Codesa 2. We in the ANC are determined that something meaningful should come out of this meeting. There is no reason for delay and we do not see why we cannot move swiftly towards interim arrangements and elections.

If this does not happen, those responsible for the blockage must feel the people's anger. They must feel it in a way that makes them understand that the price of resisting freedom is higher than that of conceding our rights.

We want to move swiftly to an environment where Fort Hare can truly thrive. But that is a process. Democracy is a process and democracy in a university is a process that we will have to work at every day. This is not the time for complacency.

This is the time for hard thinking about difficult problems and clear and decisive action. I am confident that this university and the men and women who graduate today can be relied upon to do what the community expects of them.

Thank you once again for the great honour you have bestowed on me. Best wishes.

Dr R N Mandela being capped by Dr O R Tambo, the University Chancellor.

An intimate and joyous moment with the "new graduate"